

The 'true use of reading' : Sarah Fielding and mid eighteenth-century literary strategies.

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**The 'True Use of Reading':
Sarah Fielding and Mid Eighteenth-Century Literary Strategies**

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to explore, by examining her life and works, how Sarah Fielding (1710-68) established her identity as an author. The definition of her role involves her notions of the functions of writing and reading.

Sarah Fielding attempts to invite readers to form a sense of ties by tacit understanding of her messages. As she believes that a work of literature is produced through collaboration between the writer and the reader, it is an important task in her view to show her attentiveness toward reading practice. In her consideration of reading, she has two distinct, even opposite views of her audience: on the one hand a familiar and limited circle of readers with shared moral and cultural values and on the other potential readers among the unknown mass of people. The dual targets direct her to devise various strategies. She tries to appeal to those who can endorse and appreciate her moral values as well as her learning. Her writings and letters testify that she is sensitive to the demands of the literary market, trying to lead the taste of readers by inventing new forms.

The thesis opens with an overview of Sarah Fielding's career, followed by a consideration of her critical attention to the roles of reading. I go on to examine the narrative structures and strategies she deploys, with a particular emphasis on her use of the epistolary method. The following chapter deals with her attention to the reading of the moral message tangibly embodied in her educational writing. It is followed by an analysis of the activity which earned her a reputation as a learned woman. Various as the forms of her works are, they invariably reflect her attempt to balance herself between the two demands of inventiveness and familiarity.

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List of Abbreviations

<u>Cleopatra and Octavia</u>	<u>The Lives of Cleopatra and Octavia</u>
<u>Cry</u>	<u>The Cry: A New Dramatic Fable</u>
<u>David Simple</u>	<u>The Adventures of David Simple: Containing an Account of his Travels Through the Cities of London and Westminster, in the Search of a Real Friend</u>
<u>Dellwyn</u>	<u>The History of the Countess of Dellwyn</u>
<u>Familiar Letters</u>	<u>Familiar Letters between the Principal Characters in David Simple, and Some Others, to which is added A Vision</u>
<u>Governess</u>	<u>The Governess; or, Little Female Academy. Being The History of Mrs. Teachum, and Her Nine Girls. With Their Nine Days Amusement. Calculated For the entertainment and Instruction of young Ladies in their Education</u>
<u>Ophelia</u>	<u>The History of Ophelia</u>
<u>Remarks on Clarissa</u>	<u>Remarks on Clarissa, Addressed to the Author. Occasioned by some critical conversations on the Characters and Conduct of that Work with Some Reflections on the Character and Behaviour of Prior's EMMA</u>

To Akihito

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation attempts to synthesize analyses of Sarah Fielding's life, her works, her literary career, and the mid-eighteenth century literary milieu. Her perception of a readership provides a key perspective. Her attention to the roles of the writer and the reader is prominent in her works and she is particularly specific about the function which her work is to fulfil in order to act on her reader. I assume that her concern about readership was strongly influenced by intellectual and practical circumstances: her purposes in her writings and strategies in appealing to readers are significantly related to her financial situation, her scholarly propensities, and her moderately detached position in society.

Her reading was quite extensive and she made conspicuous use of her reading to create her works. So ~~tracing~~ various influences on her will be helpful ~~in discerning~~ her achievements in context. Among the forces of influence, her personal connection with Henry Fielding (1707-54) and Samuel Richardson (1689-1761) has overshadowed and marginalized her own literary achievements. One of my aims is to provide a fuller picture of Sarah Fielding than the one half-concealed by the two canonical figures. It is true that these connections were important to her in literary as well as practical aspects; in literary terms she admired both novelists and accepted their advice on styles and plots; in practical relationships she most probably made the acquaintance with Andrew Millar (1707-68), a publisher, through Henry; Samuel Richardson, as a printer and a distributor of books, helped her in the process of getting her work printed and in selling her books.¹ The importance of

¹ Sarah Fielding is said to have been Henry's favourite sister and Battestin even suggests a shadow of incest between Henry and Sarah. See

these connections was overemphasized when she began to draw scholars' attention in the earlier half of this century.² This approach often brought about negative criticism accusing her of 'her wrong approach to the art of fiction', with a few good marks for the good techniques in her writing attributed to the influences of Henry Fielding or Samuel Richardson.³

M. C. Batestin, 'Henry Fielding, Sarah Fielding, and the Dreadful Sin of Incest', Novel 13(1979): 6-18; Martin C. Batestin and Ruthe R. Batestin, Henry Fielding: A Life (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 27-30, 32. Richardson printed her Governess, Cleopatra and Octavia, and Countess of Dellwyn. Eaves and Kimpel describe her relationship with Richardson as follows: 'Richardson's connection with Henry Fielding's sister [Sarah] and friends was fairly close for a brief period, and he never quarrelled with them, but they were not among his closest intimates' (p. 204). See T.C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel, Samuel Richardson: A Biography (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), pp. 202-04. For the two men's rivalry and Sarah Fielding's possible intermediary position, see Alan D. McKillop, 'The Personal Relations between Fielding and Richardson', Modern Philology 28(1931): 423-33; idem, Samuel Richardson: Printer and Novelist (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1936), pp. 78, 166. For a simplified view of the two men's different attitudes towards women, the one based on male protection and the other on more sympathetic encouragement, see Katharine M. Rogers, 'Sensitive Feminism vs. Conventional Sympathy: Richardson and Fielding on Women', Novel 9(1976): 256-70; and for a modified view, see Anthony J. Hassall, 'Critical Exchange; Women in Richardson and Fielding', Novel 14 (1981): 168-174.

² E.A. Baker, as early as at the beginning of this century, even remarks that: 'It is possible that The Adventures of David Simple would have been far better known as a work of some importance in the early development of English fiction had the authoress' name not been Fielding.' See the introduction to Sarah Fielding's The Adventures of David Simple (London: George Routledge & Sons, New York: E.P. Dutton, 1904), v.

³ Arnold Edwin Needham, 'The Life and Works of Sarah Fielding', University of California, Ph.D. 1942, p. 5; see also p. 65. In the first half of this century, valuable studies of Sarah Fielding appeared, though they tended to be critical of Sarah Fielding's fictional technique. Needham finds solid consistency in Sarah Fielding's choice of a theme -- he regards the conflict between benevolence (Shaftesburian) and egoism (Hobbesian) as her central argument, while he finds fault with her fictionalization. Werner carefully collected reviews and compiled in his appendix an index to literary references in her works as well as considering questions of attribution and collaboration. Werner is doubtful about Sarah Fielding's talents as a novelist, finding particular fault in her use of inset stories, her supposed lack of originality, and her unconvincing plots and characters. See Herman

A.M. Parrish discerningly criticises the earlier scholars for occupying themselves in discovering 'a patchwork of influence' on her, and for using anachronistic criteria borrowed from later novels.⁴ She attempts a more positive reading, proposing to consider Sarah Fielding as 'a conscious artist with aims and style'.⁵ Parrish finds Sarah Fielding's achievement in experiments in search of new forms of her own. I follow the lead of her approach. My emphasis is on how Sarah Fielding incorporated various traditions to adapt her writing to the needs of herself and her time rather than seeking mere novelty.

In the last twenty years attention to the works of women novelists in the eighteenth century has increased, bringing about more complex and sympathetic ways of reading them, spotlighting women authors themselves as independent figures.⁶ In this development, Sarah Fielding's use of 'feminine' subjects and techniques has attracted particular attention. D.W. Downs-Miers replaces the earlier fault-

Oscar Werner, 'The Life and Works of Sarah Fielding', Harvard University Ph.D., 1937.

⁴ Ann Marilyn Parrish, 'Eight Experiments in Fiction', Boston University Graduate School, Ph.D., 1973, p. 28.

⁵ Parrish, p. 28.

⁶ See for example, Jerry C. Beasley's introduction to a special issue on Women and Early Fiction, Studies in the Novel 19(1987): 239-44; Mona Scheuermann, 'Woman's Place: Finding and Evaluating Women's Contributions to Literature in English', in The Age of Johnson: A Scholarly Annual ed. Paul J. Korshin 5(1992): 391-419; for a comprehensive grasp of eighteenth-century women writers in the context of broad changes and developments, see Jane Spencer, The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986); Janet Todd, The Sign of Angellica: Women, Writing, and Fiction 1660-1800 (London: Virago, 1989); Catherine Gallagher, Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace 1670-1820 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994). See also Deborah Ross, The Excellence of Falsehood: Romance, Realism, and Women's Contribution to the Novel (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1991); Elizabeth Bergen Brophy, Women's Lives and the 18th-Century English Novel (Tampa: University of South Florida Press, 1991); Cheryl Turner, Living by the Pen: Women Writers in the Eighteenth Century (New York & London: Routledge, 1992), esp. pp. 31-82.

finding arguments with more appreciative analyses of Sarah Fielding's textual techniques. She pays much attention to the importance of women characters in her works.⁷ L.F. Carpenter places Sarah Fielding as a mid-century link between Mary Astell (1666-1731) and Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-97) on the grounds that Sarah Fielding often mentions distressed women (although there are distressed men as well in her works). She focuses on Sarah Fielding's concern for women's questions, notably, education, marriage, and independence.⁸ C.J. Woodward goes further than this. She characterizes her works as 'feminocentric' and argues that her narratives are 'a way for a woman to regain her lost subjectivity'.⁹

Recently a book-length study of Sarah Fielding by Linda Bree has appeared. Her well-balanced approach lets Sarah Fielding emerge more fully than ever. At the same time, she offers a particular perspective to analyse her; revealing Sarah Fielding's subversive qualities behind the mask of acceptability, Bree examines how provocative her principles were, and how discordant with most of popular fiction her writing was. As the usual route to become acquainted with Sarah Fielding is through her canonical brother, with additional information about her connection with his rival, Samuel Richardson, it seems to be a necessary task to focus on her originality in order to let her escape from the shadows of the two giants and stand in her own right. Although the experimental nature of her works had been already pointed out, only Bree has tried to place her originality in a detailed context, explaining in what way

⁷ Deborah Weatley Downs-Miers, 'Labyrinths of the Mind: A Study of Sarah Fielding', University of Missouri, Ph.D., 1975; see also idem, 'Springing the Trap: Subtext and Subversions', in Fetter'd or Free?: British Women Novelists 1670-1815 ed. Mary Anne Schofield and Cecilia Macheski (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1987), 308-23.

⁸ Lissette Ferlet Carpenter, 'Sarah Fielding: A Mid-Century Link in Eighteenth-Century Feminist Views', Texas A & M University, Ph.D., 1989.

⁹ Carolyn Jane Woodward, 'Sarah Fielding and Narrative Power for Women', University of Washington, Ph.D., 1987.

her view and literary style are unique. This approach helps to secure a place for Sarah Fielding as a more assertive, if not radical feminist, writer in the history of women writers.¹⁰

Sarah Fielding's 'feminocentric' outlook is undoubtedly important, not only for a general understanding of Sarah Fielding but also for my focus on her perception of her readership and her strategies to organize it. I attempt to incorporate these viewpoints and connect them with a wider social and cultural perspective. My emphasis is her constructing position as a mediator between the intellectually and culturally privileged and disadvantaged, rather than as a subversive challenger. To facilitate this exploration, I shall describe the material facts of her life, providing a bare skeleton first, followed by particular features and issues that are relevant to my theme.

A younger sister of Henry Fielding, Sarah Fielding (1710-68) was born a gentlewoman, whose family was connected with flourishing relatives.¹¹ She spent her childhood probably well-provided, having a French governess, with her parents, brothers and sisters, and Lady Gould (?-1733), who lived with them for a time. However, from the moment her mother died in 1718 and especially after 1733 when she lost her grandmother, Lady Gould, her circumstances involved insecurity.¹² Even

¹⁰. Linda Bree, Sarah Fielding (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996).

¹¹. Her family on their father's side was connected with the nobility, Earls of Denbigh and Desmond. It was the family on their mother's side that had greater influence on her childhood. The parents of her mother were Sir Henry Gould and Sarah, Lady Gould. Sir Henry Gould was made Judge of the King's Bench in 1699. See Battestin, Henry Fielding, pp. 6-10; Jill E. Grey, Introduction to Sarah Fielding's The Governess (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 2-11.

¹². After her mother died, her father, Edmund Fielding (1680-1741), immediately remarried a catholic. Sir Henry Gould, Sarah Fielding's grandfather on her mother's side, had bought a substantial farm at East Stour, Dorset, for his daughter and her children, leaving it in his will in trust when he died in March 1710. In 1720 Edmund sold most of the estate which was intended to be preserved for the children to Awnsham

her whereabouts are only sporadically known before she moved to Bath for reasons of health in the 1750s.¹³ Not only are her geographical whereabouts uncertain, but also she slipped out of her socially and economically established and secure position, as she lost her portion of an estate and the support and protection of the senior members of her family. Meanwhile she began her literary career, contributing to her brother's works and periodicals. Her own first book appeared in 1744 and afterwards she published eight works of fiction and a translation.¹⁴ She died on 9 April 1768.¹⁵ In her memory there is a tablet in the church of Charlcombe, and another by Dr John Hoadly (1711-76) in the Abbey, Bath. Hoadly describes her virtuous character together

Churchill, landowner and bookseller (Battestin, Henry Fielding, p. 19). These circumstances alarmed Lady Gould. Consequently, a law suit was brought by Lady Gould against Colonel Fielding for the interest of the children's property and their custody. Lady Gould won the case and the custody of the children. For details of her family circumstances and the law suit, see Battestin, Henry Fielding, pp. 11-23, 30-37. Churchill later subscribed to Sarah Fielding's Cleopatra and Octavia (1757).

¹³. Between her mother's death in 1718 and Lady Gould's death in 1733, Sarah Fielding is thought to have been in Salisbury with Lady Gould. It is probable that between 1733 and 1739 she was at East Stour, frequenting London, that between 1739 and 1744 she was with her sisters in Westminster where one of them inherited houses, and that between 1744 and 1748 she was in Henry's household. She moved to Bath for its waters; the Bath waters seem to have been helpful to her: 'Sally Fielding is surprizingly recover'd by ye Bath Waters' (Samuel Richardson to Mrs Sheridan, 19 Dec 1756, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania). She was thought to have lived in Yew Cottage, Widcombe, thanks to Ralph Allen until his death in 1764. However, her letters show that around 1754 she moved to Bath, living in Bathwick until 1760, when she purchased a cottage at Walcot. See Battestin, Henry Fielding, pp. 19-23, 34-7, 375, 410, 413, 446, 507, 619-22; The Correspondence of Henry and Sarah Fielding, ed. Martin C. Battestin and Clive T. Probyn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 127-75.

¹⁴. See the list of her works.

¹⁵. 'Mrs. Sarah Fielding from Bath buried in ye entrance of the chancel close to ye Rector's seat. Received for breaking ground £2.2s.0d. Erecting a monument to her memory £3.3s.0d.' (The Charlcombe parish register dated 14 April 1768, quoted in Grey's introduction to Governess, p. 35).

with her intellectual superiority: 'Her unaffected Manners, candid Mind,/ Her Heart benevolent, and Soul resign'd,/ Were more her Praise than all she knew or thought,/ Though Athens' Wisdom to her Sex she taught.'¹⁶ Not long after Sarah Fielding died, her achievement was decked with this lukewarm praise in The Female Advocate by Mary Scott: 'Twas FIELDING's¹⁷ talent, with ingenuous Art,/ To trace the secret mazes of the Heart./ In language tun'd to please its infant thought,/ The tender breast with prudent care SHE taught./ Nature to HER, her boldest pencil lent,/ And blest HER with a mind of vast extent;/ A mind, that nobly scorn'd each low desire,/ And glow'd with pure Religion's warmest fire.'¹⁸

The aspects in her life that I should like to emphasize are firstly her financial difficulties; secondly her intellectual background; thirdly her position in society; and finally her longing for a mutually understanding community. These are, as I stated above, all related to her perception of a readership and the construction of her works.

Her life was not easy or secure by the standard of those of similar status by birth and education. She remained unmarried, and suffered from financial hardship. In search of independence, she struggled to earn a living by literary activities.¹⁹ Although the claim of financial

¹⁶. Quoted in Grey, pp. 35, 36.

¹⁷. [The Original footnote by Scott] Mrs. Fielding, sister to the late Henry Fielding Esquire, and author of 'The Adventures of David Simple;' 'Letters between the principal Characters in David Simple;' 'The Governess, or, the Female Academy;' 'The Lives of Cleopatra and Octavia;' and 'of a translation, from the Greek, of Xenophon's Memorabilia of Socrates.' [Cry, Dellwyn and Ophelia are not included.]

¹⁸. Mary Scott, The Female Advocate: A Poem. Occasioned by Reading Mr. Duncombe's Femiiniad (London: Joseph Johnson, 1774), pp. 22-3.

¹⁹. For the life of independent women in this period, see Peter Earle,

necessity had become a merely conventional justification for embarking upon a literary career, in Sarah Fielding's case it seems to have been genuine.²⁰ She had to sell her portion of the estate her grandfather had left her in 1739, beginning her literary career in early 1740s.²¹ In her works she frequently mentions the humiliation and difficulties of the lives of dependant women.²² As if projecting her own yearning for security, her virtuous benevolent characters offer help to those distressed in their dependence,²³ although easy identification between biography and work should be avoided.²⁴

She did not live a comfortable life especially in her later years

A City Full of People: Men and Women of London 1650-1750 (London: Methuen, 1994), 146-55.

²⁰. Patricia Crawford, 'Women's published writings 1660-1700', in Women in English Society 1500-1800 ed. Mary Prior (London and New York: Methuen, 1985), 214-24; Harriet Guest, 'A Double Lustre: Femininity and Sociable Commerce, 1730-60', Eighteenth-Century Studies 23 (1990): 479-501.

²¹. Apart from the estate her grandfather left, she could expect part of her uncle's fortune but his will was contested; it is not certain what she did with her portion. For details of the estate transaction, see Battestin, Henry Fielding, pp. 248-49.

²². Examples of humiliation of a companion to a wealthy lady are found in the cases of Cynthia in David Simple and Mrs Herner in Ophelia.

²³. For example, David Simple in David Simple, Mrs Bilson in The Countess of Dellwyn and Lord Dorchester and Ophelia in Ophelia are eager to be of assistance to the financially distressed and this eagerness is regarded as tangible evidence of virtue. To be able to sympathise with the impoverished well-born is represented as the staple of good nature: 'Ferdinand so humanely deplored the unhappy circumstances of a young creature born and bred in affluence, and now reduced to the necessity of undergoing the taunts and insults of her former companions' (Cry, I, p. 77). Gillian Skinner finds in David Simple an idealization of a direct and close link between sensibility and financial generosity, and its impossibility in society. David Simple is regarded as a Mandevillian fool rather than simply a sentimental hero. See Gillian Skinner, 'The Price of a Tear': Economic Sense and Sensibility in Sarah Fielding's David Simple', Literature & History 3rd series 1(1992): 16-28.

²⁴ Paula R. Backscheider, 'Women Writers and the Chain of Identification', Studies in the Novel 19(1987): 245-62.

after she lost her siblings and intimates between 1750 and 1755.²⁵ Her straitened circumstances are illustrated by her borrowing from Samuel Richardson.²⁶ When she decided to settle in Bath in 1754, she did not have sufficient resources and had to borrow ten guineas from Richardson.²⁷ Although she earned some money through her publications, she found it difficult to repay him her debts. She counted on the sale of Dellwyn but there was little prospect of earning enough to pay the debts; she wrote to Richardson: 'Millar's Bill [for printing] is so high that I cannot contrive it unless it comes to a second Edition'.²⁸ Unfortunately, it did not sell well enough to justify a second edition. Indeed, Richardson offered additional support.²⁹

Another benefactor was Ralph Allen (1694-1764). Allen, who was a model for Allworthy in Tom Jones and whose virtues are praised in Sarah Fielding's Familiar Letters, is said to have invited her to dinner quite often at his residence at Prior Park and Claverton.³⁰ He was one of the

²⁵ Her sisters who died around 1750 were: Catherine (1708-1750), Ursula (1709-1750), and Beatrice (1714-1751). Henry Fielding died in 1754 and Jane Collier in 1754 or 1755.

²⁶ Thomas Secker also recorded giving some money to 'Mrs Fielding' (The Autobiography of Thomas Secker Archbishop of Canterbury, ed. John S. Macauley and L.W. Greaves [Lawrence: University of Kansas Libraries, 1988], p. 49).

²⁷ See Battestin and Probyn, pp. 127, 128 n1, 128, 149.

²⁸ Battestin and Probyn, pp. 149, 150.

²⁹ See Battestin and Probyn, p. 150 and p. 151, n1.

³⁰ 'I dined [at Claverton] more than once with Mrs. Fielding, the author of 'David Simple' - 'The Cry', and some other works; ... Mr. Allen very generously allowed her one hundred pounds a year.' See R. Graves, The Triflers (London: Lackington, 1806), p. 77. Samuel Derrick, a Master of the Ceremonies at Bath, described the Allens as 'the parents of the industrious poor, the protectors of the really distressed, and the nourishers of depressed genius' (Letters Written from Liverpool, Chester, Corke, the Lake of Killarney, Dublin, Tunbridge-Wells, Bath (London: L. Davis and C. Reymers, 1767), pp. 94-5). Pope's praise seems to be rather modest: 'Let low-born (in the second edition, 'humble') Allen, with an awkward Shame, / Do good by stealth and blush to find it Fame.' (One

mediators for Sarah Fielding to socially and literarily prominent people visiting Bath; his guests included Alexander Pope (1688-1744), Henry Fielding, Samuel Richardson, David Garrick (1717-79), Lord Chesterfield (1694-1773), and Richard Graves (1715-1804, a cleric and the author of The Spiritual Quixote).³¹ But he seems to have been no more than an occasional host and benefactor to her. Although he left her £100 when he died in 1764, Elizabeth Montagu (1720-1800) expressed something close to resentment about the sum.³² She thought Allen left Sarah Fielding

Thousand Seven Hundred and Thirty-Eight, 1:135-36). In Sarah Fielding's Familiar Letters, Cynthia describes a virtuous and sociable man and his wife (probably alluding to Allen and his wife) and the magnificence and grandeur of their house at a small distance from where she lodged for her health:

I confess to you I am apt to imagine, wherever a great Superiority of Fortune is very apparent, that I shall be treated with a formal Ceremony, and made to feel a Restraint, which takes away the pleasure of all Conversation. But how was I surprised! when the Lady of this House received me with a good-natured Freedom, that plainly proved she was innocent of even a Thought that might offend another, and never harboured a Suspicion, that any one could have an Intention of dropping a word, that might tend in the most distant view to hurt her... And the Gentleman seemed to enjoy his Fortune, only as it gave him an Opportunity of serving his Acquaintance and being beneficent to Mankind... The Joy and Serenity that reigned in their Countenances was diffused throughout the house... (Familiar Letters, I, pp. 172-73).

³¹. Peach writes that Sarah knew Allen earlier than Henry did (Historic House in Bath, p. 32; The Life and Time of Ralph Allen (London: D. Nutt, 1895), p. 133). Benjamin Boyce follows Peach, though admitting there is no documentary support. He suggests that it is possible that the Goulds, the family from which Henry and Sarah's mother came, knew Allen before, because one of them was engaged in law in Bath (The Benevolent Man: A Life of Ralph Allen of Bath [Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967], p. 128). Battestin deduces that Henry's friendship with Allen began in 1741 (Henry Fielding, p. 315).

³². Ralph Allen's will reads 'I give to the 3 children of Henry Fielding, esqre, deceased, the sum of £100 each, and to their Aunt, Sarah Fielding, I give the sum of £100, which said 4 last named legacies I will be paid in 12 months after my decease.' There was also a memorandum for around 1744 and 1745: 'An account of my money to be apply'd to... Mrs. Fielding,] 20'. See Peach, The Life and Times of Ralph Allen, pp. 236, 120; and also Austin Dobson, At Prior Park and other Papers (London: Humphrey Milford & Oxford University Press, 1925), p. 28; Boyce, The Benevolent Man, pp. 128, 159, 172, 243, 247, 270.

an undeservedly low amount in his will:

It was a great pity Mr Allen did not leave poor Mrs Fielding a decent maintenance for life, sixty pounds a year added to what she enjoys had made her happy, for she lives retired by choice, But I know not how it is that people seldom use their last opportunity to do good.³³

Elizabeth Montagu sympathized with Sarah Fielding in her difficulties, sending her wine and food, and also trying to make contact on her behalf with her half brother, Sir John Fielding (1721-1820), through Lord Lyttelton (1709-73). She also offered an annuity of ten pounds (although what she thought would make her happy was sixty pounds per year), which Sarah Fielding did not enjoy long.³⁴

Her literary activity brought her some reward including annuities and hospitality, besides payments by the publishers, although the income does not seem to have been enough for her to live comfortably. Her earning pattern marks one phase in the transition from aristocratic (personal) patronage to commercial dealing with booksellers: the co-existence of older, intermediary, and new systems. She sought for patronage, collected subscriptions, and sold copyright to the

³³. MO 3155, Montagu to Carter, 1 Oct. [1765] (The Montagu Collection, The Huntington Library).

³⁴. Sir John Fielding helped Sarah Fielding to buy a cottage at Walcot in 1760, but when she was dying, she received no assistance from him. E. Montagu takes pity on her: 'Sir J: Fielding has not yet sent any Person to pay the money if Mrs Fielding in the mean time shd want any pray supply her for me, her condition must be expensive tho the generosity of her Physician saves her the great & heavy charge of sickness' (MO 5881, Mar 28 1768, Montagu to Scott). Montagu's care for Sarah Fielding is recorded in the letters between her and Scott: MO 5292, MO 5821, MO 5829, MO 5832, MO 5834, MO 5319, MO 5856, MO 5872. She writes to Sarah Scott about an annuity: 'Mrs Fielding is to receive ten pounds from me always at this Season, if more be necessary you will advance it & I will pay' (probably Dec. 1767) and 'I will assist in making her able to lie at Hitcham by doubling or trebling ye ten pd per ann' (MO 5872, MO 5879).

publishers.³⁵ She dedicated The Governess to Mrs Poyntz (-1771), who was closely connected with the court and Cleopatra and Octavia to Countess Pomfret (1698-1761).³⁶ Both of them subscribed to her translation, but neither became her chief patroness. Among her books, Familiar Letters, Cleopatra and Octavia, and the translation of Xenophon's (c.428-c.354 B.C.) Memoirs of Socrates were published by subscription.³⁷ Sarah Fielding's own relatives, Allen's connections, and James Harris's helped to increase subscribers. Andrew Millar published for her, David Simple, Familiar Letters, The Governess, David Simple Volume the Last, Cleopatra and Octavia, Dellwyn, and Memoirs of Socrates. Remarks on Clarissa was printed for J. Robinson.³⁸ The Cry was published by R. Dodsley and Ophelia by R. Baldwin.³⁹ Andrew Millar was generous in his payments to authors, for example, he paid £183 for Joseph Andrews, for which another bookseller had offered only twenty five pounds, and £600 in advance and probably more for Tom Jones.⁴⁰ It is not certain which

³⁵. See Turner, Living by the Pen, pp. 102-16, 119-21, 122-23.

³⁶. Anna Maria Poyntz (nee Mordaunt) married Stephen Poyntz who was influential at court. See Chapter Four for details. The Countess of Pomfret, Henrietta Louisa Fermor was a daughter of 2nd Baron Jeffreys, married (1720) Thomas Fermor (1698-1753), later 1st Earl of Pomfret. She was Lady of the Bedchamber to Queen Caroline. She was an old friend of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who was a relative to Sarah Fielding.

³⁷. William Strahan's ledgers record an amount of 10s.6d. payable by Andrew Millar for Strahan's printing of 600 subscription receipts for 'Miss F's Octavia' (BL, Add.MSS 48800, fol.77^v; Battestin & Probyn, p. 137).

³⁸. Publisher, 1737-58, dealt with extensive miscellaneous literature.

³⁹. Bookseller and publisher 1749-1810, nephew and successor to R. Baldwin.

⁴⁰. Henry Fielding was happily surprised to be offered such an amount. See Battestin, Henry Fielding, pp. 325, 440. Boswell reports Johnson's comment on Millar: 'Johnson said of him, "I respect Millar, Sir; he has raised the price of literature."' Boswell's Life of Johnson: Together with Boswell's Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides and Johnson's Diary of a Journey into North Wales ed. George Birkbeck Hill and L.F. Powell, vol I The Life (1709-1765) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934), vol.I, pp. 287-88.

amount is for which work, but between 5 Oct 1750 and 6 Oct 1752 Millar paid Sarah Fielding £256.1.0 in total.⁴¹ Later she sold the copyright of Dellwyn to Millar for 60 guineas with a prospect of another 40 guineas if a second edition was issued.⁴² A similar amount was paid for The Cry; in 1753 Dodsley agreed with Sarah Fielding to buy half of the copyright for a little more than £52. Dodsley paid for the printing and the profit was to be shared between Sarah Fielding and Dodsley.⁴³

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762), her relative, famously pitied her for having to earn a living by her pen;^{in her letter to Lady Bute, 23 July [1754]} 'I ... heartily pity her, constrain'd by her Circumstances to seek her bread by a method I do not doubt she despises.'⁴⁴ Lady Mary's pity is based on incorrect attributions; she assumes that besides Sarah Fielding's own David Simple Volume the Last, three other works published between 1752 and 1753 were all written by her.⁴⁵ So she wrongly assumes Sarah Fielding's overproductivity. Nevertheless, she is right in seeing in Sarah Fielding an example of a struggling single woman writer in the eighteenth

⁴¹. Millar paid her £20 (5 Oct. 1750), £57 (5 Jan. 1750/51), £50 (7 May 1751), £50 (16 Nov. 1751), £58.1.0. (3 June 1752), and £21 (6 Oct. 1752). See Battestin, Henry Fielding, p. 712.

⁴². Battestin and Probyn, pp. 144-49.

⁴³. Sarah Fielding's signed receipt is dated 19 November 1753 for £52.10.0. See The Correspondence of Robert Dodsley ed. James E. Tierney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 31, 514.

⁴⁴. The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu ed. Robert Halsband 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965-67), III, p. 67. Lady Mary also regrets that Henry Fielding is forced to waste his genius by being pressed by his financial difficulties. Fielding's grandfather, John (c.1650-98), the Archdeacon of Dorset, was a brother of William (1640-85), third Earl of Denbigh and second of Desmond, who was the grandfather of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.

⁴⁵. The Complete Letters, III, p. 67. The other three works she mentions are: Jane Collier's The Art of Ingeniously Tormenting (1753), Charlotte Lennox's Female Quixote (1752), and the anonymous Sir Charles Goodville (1753).

century.⁴⁶

For her intellectual development, it was the Salisbury connection that was particularly important. She stayed mainly there through the receptive and formative years of her teens and early twenties. It is probable that she enjoyed the use of the library of Sir Henry Gould (1644-1710) when she lived there with her grandmother. The legal connections of the Gould family brought about opportunities to be acquainted with professionals and the socially and culturally privileged. So, she was in a position to feel the stimuli of Salisbury's scholarly atmosphere.⁴⁷ Among her acquaintances in Salisbury, Dr John Hoadly, son of the Bishop of Winchester, was to compose an epitaph for her memorial tablet in the Abbey in Bath. He was a prosperous clergyman with numerous rectorships and was a chaplain to the Prince of Wales's household.⁴⁸ More importantly, Sarah Fielding made friends with the Collier family. She might have known the Rev. Arthur Collier (1680-1732), who was an important metaphysician.⁴⁹ And she certainly knew three of his four children,

⁴⁶ For women writers' struggle in the eighteenth century, see for example, Turner, Living by the Pen; Gallagher, Nobody's Story.

⁴⁷ Probyn traces the idealistic intellectual atmosphere of Salisbury, which was represented by Gilbert Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury (1643-1715), John Norris (1657-1712), Arthur Collier (1680-1732), Thomas Chubb (1679-1747), and James Harris. He also catalogues names closely related with Salisbury: John Dryden, Thomas Hobbes, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, William Pitt, Sir Philip Sidney, Bishop Seth Ward (Professor of Astronomy at Oxford, founder member of the Royal Society), and Sir Christopher Wren, not to mention Henry Fielding. See Clive T. Probyn, The Sociable Humanist: The Life and Works of James Harris 1709-1780, Provincial and Metropolitan Culture in Eighteenth-century England (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp. 24-33, 8.

⁴⁸ Around the time when he was received into the household of Prince of Wales, Stephen Poyntz was governor and steward of the second son of George II, and created a privy councillor (1735). It is said that Sarah Fielding knew Mrs Poyntz through Samuel Richardson, but it is also possible that she became acquainted with the Poyntzs through Hoadly.

⁴⁹ DNB states that his doctrine coincidentally resembled Berkeley's. His publications include Clavis Universalis, or a new Inquiry after Truth.

Arthur (1707-77), Jane (-1754/55), and Margaret (1717-1794). Arthur Collier, became a tutor to Hester Lynch Salusbury (Mrs Thrale/Piozzi, 1741-1821), who reports that he taught Sarah Fielding Latin and Greek.⁵⁰ Margaret Collier was reputedly an intelligent woman who had a strong personality.⁵¹ Jane Collier was also of very bright mind and strong character, and she was perhaps the most influential on Sarah Fielding.⁵² She was herself the author of An Essay on the Art of Ingeniously Tormenting (1753). According to de Castro, 'Miss Collier's comprehensive

being a demonstration of the non-existence or impossibility of an external world (1713); A Specimen of True Philosophy... not improper to be bound up with the Clavis Universalis (1730).

⁵⁰. 'Doctor Collier taught her with prodigious Assiduity' (Thraliana: The Diary of Mrs. Hester Lynch Thrale (Later Mrs. Piozzi) 1776-1809 ed. Katherine C. Balderston (Oxford at Clarendon Press, 1942), p. 78; Battestin, Henry Fielding, p. 381). However, Sarah Fielding did not think she had been taught Greek: when she was engaged in translation of Xenophon, she wrote: 'I think it no shame to be ignorant of what I have never been taught' (Battestin and Probyn, p. 159). In 1745 Arthur Collier's financial troubles began to worry Henry Fielding and James Harris (Battestin, Henry Fielding, pp. 393-95, 405). There was a law suit against Arthur. Henry Fielding and Harris 'did become Pledges for the said Arthur' (J. Paul de Castro, 'Fielding and the Collier Family', Notes and Queries, XII Series, II, 104-6). In the spring of 1745 Arthur met in Bath a wealthy woman, whom he courted, but the courtship ended in a failure in 1747 (Lawrence Stone, Uncertain Unions: Marriage in England 1660-1753 (Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 68-77 [Case-Studies 4. Moseley v. Collier, 1746-1747: Cross-class courtship in the Bath marriage market]).

⁵¹. She went with Henry Fielding and his family on his last journey to Lisbon. She was a witness to the execution of Henry Fielding's will. There was some friction between her and the Fielding family in Portugal (de Castro, 'Fielding and the Collier Family', 104-6). Henry Fielding hints at her severely as 'the most artfully wicked B---- in the world' and in turn her opinion about Henry's Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon is bitter: 'it was so very bad a performance, and fell so far short of his other works'. She was 'sadly vexed' to know that people thought she, not Henry Fielding, was the author. See Huntington Library Quarterly 35(1971): 70; Correspondence of Samuel Richardson, ed. Anna Laetitia Barbauld (London: Richard Phillips, 1804), II, pp. 77-8; Dobson, At Prior Park, pp. 144-45.

⁵² For the interests and topics Sarah Fielding and Jane Collier shared, see Betty Rizzo, Companion Without Vows (Athens, Georgia: the University of Georgia Press, 1994), pp. 41-60.

indictments and flashes of caustic wit recall her father's controversial methods in his letters'.⁵³ Sarah Fielding and Jane Collier were also literary allies. Jane Collier wrote a letter to Samuel Richardson to defend Sarah Fielding's The Governess, and a letter to James Harris (1709-1780) together with Sarah Fielding.⁵⁴ The preface to Sarah Fielding's David Simple Volume the Last was most probably written by her. They are usually regarded as co-authors of The Cry (1754).

Among Sarah Fielding's Salisbury connections, another important figure was James Harris.⁵⁵ He was an eminent scholar in philology. His family was prominent in Salisbury culturally, economically, and politically; his mother was a sister of the third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713), the family's estate was ever increasing, and he became an MP.⁵⁶ He was thoroughly a gentleman scholar with more than comfortable resources, and could thus devote himself to scholarly pursuits without any consideration of earning his bread. He claims that he published without any purpose of financial reward.⁵⁷ Henry Fielding, who spent

⁵³. de Castro, 'Fielding and the Collier Family', p. 104.

⁵⁴. Jane Collier served as a mediator between James Harris and Richardson. Her brother Arthur talked to Richardson of Harris's suggestion for a new version of Clarissa, with which Richardson was pleased and asked 'the Favour of a few lines from [Harris]'. Arthur was reluctant to write to Harris and Jane instead wrote to him for Richardson. Dated Oct 25, 1749 (9M/73/B45, Malmesbury papers, Hampshire Record Office).

⁵⁵. See Probyn, The Sociable Humanist.

⁵⁶. Harris's father encouraged him in music and poetry, 'but it was Elizabeth Harris who transmitted to him her family's interest in philosophy' (Probyn, The Sociable Humanist, p. 37). He was Secretary to Queen Charlotte, and MP for Christchurch 1761-80.

⁵⁷. Probyn interprets Johnson's dismissive comment on Harris as Johnson's misunderstanding of a scholar's different way of life: 'There was nothing in Harris's life of which Johnson could disapprove, but a great deal that he might have coveted. When Johnson imagined the scholar's life he projected a life constrained by Toil, Envy, Want, the Garret, the Gaol, or the Patron.' Harris was far from any of these restraints. Probyn describes the positions of Harris and Johnson: 'The former has been placed, if at all, in the vanguard of cultural resistance to the new, the latter, indisputably, is seen as one of the great makers of

his Eton holidays in Salisbury with his grandmother, was one of Harris's earliest friends. Sarah Fielding became acquainted with him presumably in her Salisbury days and continued to be one of his literary friends till late in her life. Most of her extant letters are addressed to him as she asked for his help in her translation of Xenophon and he wanted her to assist him in writing and publishing his biographical sketch of Henry Fielding.⁵⁸ As his busy political career had just begun and he wanted to keep his authorship of the sketch secret, she became an agent in his dealings with the publisher, Andrew Millar, whom she had opportunities to see in Bath. However, as far as we can see from the result of the negotiation, she was not a competent agent; she did not know that Millar had already chosen an introductory essay to Henry Fielding's Works by Arthur Murphy (1727-1805) rather than Harris's. Although Murphy's version was unsatisfactory to Henry Fielding's friends and Sarah Fielding (Murphy did not know him personally), Harris withdrew his. He did not need to promote himself by publication but could gain satisfaction elsewhere, in philosophical pursuits and his newly-begun political career.

Her acquaintances in Salisbury were mainly the culturally and literarily sophisticated. As may be gathered from the scholarly emphasis in the Salisbury circle, Sarah Fielding's world was quite bookish. Elizabeth Montagu characterized her as a 'Bel esprit'; from the viewpoint of Montagu, Sarah Fielding was too unworldly to know much of the worldly business.⁵⁹ Indeed, there are signs which suggest Sarah Fielding was inward looking and enjoyed the scholarly exercise of the

his age's character'. See The Sociable Humanist, p. 4.

⁵⁸. I shall examine Harris's influence on Sarah Fielding in her translation in Chapter Five.

⁵⁹. MO 5873, Montagu to Scott, 1 Jan 1768; Henry Fielding describes her as 'in appearance, so unacquainted with the World' (David Simple, p. 8); Sarah Fielding herself refers to her ineptitude: 'I never understood [my own business] perfectly' (Battestin and Probyn, p. 150).

mind very much. Not only do her letters present this tendency, but her characters in her works support it. The praiseworthy qualities of her characters are associated with knowledge learned from books. Or rather, to be familiar with books can be a confirmation of a good character. A description of David Simple is one example: 'That David's amiable Behaviour, joined to a very good Understanding, with a great Knowledge which he had attained by Books, made all their Acquaintance give him the preference'.⁶⁰ Two virtuous characters in an inset narrative in David Simple are called 'Bookworms'.⁶¹ On the contrary, a deplorable character cannot appreciate a person's bookish knowledge. While Portia, the heroine in The Cry, very much respects her lover, Ferdinand for his knowledge, Melantha, an ill-natured character, thinks him 'a dull kind of a philosopher, who minded very little besides his books'.⁶² A sensible clergyman in Ophelia 'conversed less with [genteel people] than with his Books, and the Poor of the Parish'.⁶³

However attached to books, her knowledge was not confined to sedentary pursuits. Sarah Fielding in her twenties witnessed the stimuli of wealth and literary energy of eighteenth-century London.⁶⁴ She began to seek her fortune as a writer there. It is not certain whether her literary ambition attached her to London or London awakened her to literary enterprise, but the London experience sensitized her to know how the literary market worked and what it demanded. Her direct experience of the metropolis enriched her works in topical grasp and

⁶⁰. David Simple, p. 15.

⁶¹. Marquis de Stainville and Dumont in David Simple, p. 214.

⁶². Cry, II, p. 139.

⁶³. Ophelia, II, p. 25.

⁶⁴. On London's prosperity as a market for literature, see J. Paul Hunter, Before Novels: The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1990), pp. 110-37; Roy Porter, London: A Social History (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1994), pp. 131-84.

provided her with subject matter. When her David Simple decides to set out for his journey in search of a friend, he stays in London rather than travel to foreign countries as he thinks that 'he could sooner enter into the characters of Men in the Great Metropolis where he lived'.⁶⁵ Esther Lewis (fl.1747-89) in her poem 'To Miss Fielding in London, the writer of David Simple and other Publications' addresses her as a representative 'in the joyous town', while placing herself 'in lonely cot' surrounded by 'flow'y meads': 'You midst gay crouds reside, I hid in shades'.⁶⁶

Another flourishing town Sarah Fielding witnessed was Bath.⁶⁷ Her life in Bath is better documented than that in London, and it well represents what I should like to underscore, her particular position in society. In her fiction she made use of the society in Bath and Bristol.⁶⁸ For writers Bath in the eighteenth century was a convenient place to observe characters and make sketches: 'We shall find there at all times, Beauties of all ages who come to show off their charms, young Girls and Widows in quest of Husbands, married Women who seek Solace for the unpleasant Ones they possess...'.⁶⁹ It flourished as a very fashionable health and amusement resort, which was regarded as in some

⁶⁵. David Simple, p. 27.

⁶⁶. Esther Lewis, Poems Moral and Entertaining: Written long since by Miss Lewis Then of Holt, Now, and for almost Thirty Years past, the Wife of Mr. Robert Clark, of Tetbury (Bath: S. Hazard, 1789), pp. 298-300.

⁶⁷. According to Peach, she settled in Bath as early as 1739 (Historic Houses, II, p. 32), but it was in 1750s that she finally settled in Bath and lived there until her death in 1768.

⁶⁸. Although the actions in David Simple are concentrated in London, some of the letters in Familiar Letters are dated at Bath. David Simple: Volume the Last gives an explanation that Cynthia goes to Bath for her health. Dellwyn includes scenes in Bristol.

⁶⁹. The Abbé Prévost, 'Pour et Contre' (1734) no. 38, p. 173, quoted in A. Barbeau, Life and Letters at Bath in the XVIIIth Century (London: William Heinemann, 1904), p. 80.

sense an epitome of the world, where one could see every kind of character.⁷⁰ Peter Borsay points out that the assemblies and walks of such resort towns served as arenas of display, for the purpose of showing and of being seen.⁷¹ A literary stereotype of Bath as a vicious city of pleasure for thoughtless people was being established; the conspicuous materialism of Bath provided a convenient butt for writers.⁷² Literary people criticized Bath, declaring how loathsome its fashionable vices were. In particular women visiting Bath were easy butts for ridicule on account of their supposedly giddy way of life. Nevertheless, while criticizing the vices of Bath, writers were attracted to the city and actually numerous writers visited it, enjoying its social life and describing its people. Sarah Fielding was one of the writers who criticized the urban milieu and frivolity and yet never detached herself completely from urban sophistication; she was one of those who chose

⁷⁰. Barbeau, Chap. IV; R.S. Neale, Bath 1680-1850: A Social History or A Valley of Pleasure, yet a Sink of Iniquity (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), Chap. II; Peter Borsay, The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town 1660-1770 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), Chaps. 9 and 10. For description of the prosperity of Bath, see for example, Tobias Smollett, The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker (London: J.M. Dent, 1943), pp. 32, 36, 37; John Wood, A Description of Bath (London: W. Bathoe, 1765), p. 446; MO 293, Montagu to the Duchess of Portland, 4 Jan. 1740.

⁷¹. Borsay, The English Urban Renaissance, chap. 6.

⁷². Bath provided subjects for verse, mostly satirical; see A Description of Bath: A Poem (London: J. Roberts, n.d.); The Diseases of Bath: A Satire (London: J. Roberts, 1737); The Bath Miscellany: for the Year 1740 (Bath: W. Jones et al, 1741); Bath A Poem (London: Longman and Shewell, 1748); A Poetical Address to the Ladies of Bath (Bath: R. Cruttwell, 1775); Bath: Its Beauties, and Amusements (Bath: W. Goldsmith, 1777); Bath, A Simile (London: T. Whieldon, 1779); The Belles of Bath: with a Satire on the Prevailing Passion: and a Model for Emulation (Bath, 1782). Among a variety of prose fiction satirically dealing with Bath, see Smollett, Humphry Clinker. As for fashionable society there, see O. Goldsmith, The Life of Richard Nash (London: J. Newbery, 1762); Lewis Melville, Bath Under Beau Nash (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1907). As for descriptions with an emphasis on the literary importance of Bath, see Joseph Hunter, The Connection of Bath, with the Literature and Science of England (Bath: R.E. Peach, 1853); G. Monkland, The Literature and Literati of Bath (Bath: R.E. Peach, 1854).

to live in Bath. She did not prefer living in a remote province or in the middle of unfrequented nature, but placed herself not far away from urban life. Residence in Bath enabled her to call on and be visited by other literary figures including Elizabeth Montagu, Sarah Scott, and Frances Sheridan (1724-66).⁷³

She was not rich enough to live at the centre of the town, but instead lived on the outskirts of Bath, perhaps at Widcombe, Walcot and later Bathwick.⁷⁴ She lived a secluded life there and at times visited the city centre. Her reports about the city are often second-hand: 'I am told that the Bath is very full this Season, but I only know it by hear-say, for I have no Inclination to go amongst them only when my particular friends come'.⁷⁵ Since she went there for her health, she took opportunities to drink spa water which was provided in the centre. She also visited acquaintances in the centre as Sarah Scott (1723-95) reports: 'One day this week, poor Feilding having an opportunity of being brought to Bath came to spend it with me'.⁷⁶ Thus she placed herself at the margins of the convivial city, keeping in touch with her acquaintances. To be not too far away from nor too close to the eminent social gathering provided her with opportunities to socialize with people of fashion without being too involved. To put it in another way, without compromising her standpoint as an observer.

⁷³. Alicia Lefanu records that Sheridan frequently visited her (Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Mrs. Frances Sheridan [London: F. and W.B. Whittaker, 1824], p. 95).

⁷⁴. Neale gives examples of expenses at Bath in the second part of chapter II.

⁷⁵. To James Harris, Bathwick, 21 Oct [1758] (Battestin and Probyn, p. 144); see also Battestin and Probyn, p. 137.

⁷⁶. MO 5317, Nov 10 [1765]. Scott tends to spell her name as 'Feilding'. On this particular occasion, Sarah Scott was indisposed and Sarah Fielding could not gratify her expectation; Scott writes: 'unluckily I was so ill I cou'd pass only part of it with her, & then in a way not to give her any gratification'.

This position is mirrored by her literary standpoint; she prefers the viewpoint of the moderately detached observer. In Familiar Letters, for example, Cynthia stays at Bath, where she spends days as many people did in Bath, going to the Pump Room, the coffee-room, and a ball, and paying visits to friends. She lets Camilla know what it is like to be in Bath and what she thinks about people there. Cynthia observes men and women at Bath, jolted by 'their lifeless Shadow, Foppery and Dress, Impertinence and Folly!'. She sees ladies wearing capuchins, bonnets, and muffs, in spite of the extreme heat, simply in order to follow the fashion. People's eagerness to join tumultuous and thronged card tables is beyond her understanding. She hears some ladies talking of the merit of putting up with crowded card-tables: 'the Variety there relaxed their Thoughts, and kept them from the Pain of Thinking, which was not good with the Waters.'⁷⁷ Though she hates frivolity there, she does not hate the city, and she takes pleasure in being an observer.

Although Sarah Fielding seems to have been at ease in her stance as a detached observer such as Cynthia is, it was not that she willingly separated herself from every community. There were some she wanted to join. In her works she cherishes the importance of familiar company formed by mutual understanding and stimulating conversation. Her longing for an understanding and close community increased especially after she successively lost her sisters, Henry Fielding, and her intimate friend, Jane Collier by the mid-1750s. In 1755, shortly after she lost Henry Fielding and probably Jane Collier as well, she wrote a suggestive letter to Richardson. She congratulates Richardson for what he has with him:

To live in a family where there is but one heart, and as many good

⁷⁷. Familiar Letters, I, p. 90.

strong heads as persons, and to have a place in that enlarged single heart, is such a state of happiness as I cannot hear of without feeling the utmost pleasure.⁷⁸

Later, she wished to join the circle of Sarah Scott, Lady Barbara Montagu (-1765) and others.⁷⁹ However, just as she lived at a certain distance from the city centre, she remained at some distance from the group; they took care of her while not regarding her as an equal member of their circle. Sarah Fielding intended to join them at Bath Easton in 1757, but Elizabeth Montagu interfered with the plan. She describes Sarah Fielding's eagerness and her opinion of her:

She is impatient to get to Bath Easton where she intends to reside. I said all I could to divert her from ye scheme for tho she is good sort of Woman I think you & Lady Bab will not want her in a long summers day nor a long winters evening. How is ones time taxed by civility and humanity & real & artificial devoirs? I grow savage in my disposition tho social & affable in my manners, & I felt for you & Lady Bab the hours of leisure & retirement she wd rob you of.⁸⁰

⁷⁸. Battestin and Probyn, p. 130.

⁷⁹. Sarah Scott met Lady Barbara in Bath in 1748, and after her marriage came to an end in 1752, she settled in Bath with Lady Barbara. They had one house in the centre and another in Bath Easton. Scott's ideal community of women in Millenium Hall (1762) is thought to be a reflection of her own life with Lady Barbara. See Janet Todd, Women's Friendship in Literature (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), pp. 342-44; Neale, pp. 317-20.

⁸⁰. MO 5766, Montagu to Scott, 9 June 1757; Elizabeth Carter agrees that Sarah Fielding is not a cheerful vivacious person, but she is more sympathetic to her reserved character: 'I am very sorry for the loss [Mrs. Scott] is likely to have of poor Mrs. Fielding; though she is not a lively companion, she is a friendly and good woman, and such a character will always be tenderly regretted' (Carter to Montagu, Nov. 25, 1767, Letters from Mrs. Elizabeth Carter, to Mrs. Montagu, between the Years 1755 and 1800 ed. Montagu Pennington (London: F.C. and J. Rivington,

Evidently Sarah Fielding's polite behaviour makes a distance and Elizabeth Montagu cannot treat her as a comfortable friend. At that time, she was prejudiced against Sarah Fielding's character and her work as well; she subscribed to Cleopatra and Octavia (1757) only to find that the content of the work did not interest her much: 'the pages that gave me most pleasure were those that contained the names of the subscribers.'⁸¹ Ultimately, Sarah Fielding failed to be given a secure place within this female community. Generally personal connections formed circles, which were helpful for each member, and this was a great strength of the bluestocking circle, but they could easily become exclusive.⁸² Consequently Sarah Fielding was not accepted into the inner circle of Scott and Lady Barbara, although she maintained friendly terms especially with Scott.

To Sarah Fielding's consolation, Scott remained more sympathetic to her than Elizabeth Montagu, willing to help her and often taking opportunities to see her. Presumably their intimacy grew after Scott's intimate friend, Lady Barbara, died in 1765; Scott mentions 'Mrs Feilding' more frequently in letters to Elizabeth Montagu after that year.⁸³ Sometime in 1766 Sarah Fielding spent days with Scott and a Mrs Cutts. After coming to stay at Scott's partly for the waters and probably more for her longing for Scott's company, she was reluctant to go back alone to Bathwick: 'I [Sarah Scott] find she [Mrs. Feilding] does not

1817), I, p. 369).

⁸¹. MO 5766, Montagu to Scott.

⁸². For details of the bluestocking circle's personal connections, see Sylvia Harcstark Myers, The Bluestocking Circle: Women, Friendship, and the Life of the Mind in Eighteenth-Century England (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

⁸³. Lady Barbara left Sarah Fielding an annuity of ten pounds (Montagu to Carter, quoted in Needham, 'The Life and Works of Sarah Fielding', p. 357).

intend returning any more to the house she is now in, finding it I believe too lonely'.⁸⁴ The fear of smallpox made Scott change her lodging, which luckily enabled Sarah Fielding to join Scott, Mrs Cutts, and a Miss Arnold. Sarah Fielding was getting weaker and weaker at this time, and 'she much wants revival' but she spent her days happily in this small circle of sisterhood as Scott wrote: 'she thinks herself much happier since she came'.⁸⁵ This temporary happiness presumably ended when the danger of smallpox subsided, with the result that Scott returned to her former abode and the cosy co-habitation came to an end.

Meanwhile, Elizabeth Montagu planned to live at Hitcham with Mrs Scott, Mrs Cutts, and Mrs Freind in 1767. The original plan did not include Sarah Fielding. Montagu was aloof and not very kind to her: 'I like vastly the thought of inviting Mrs Fielding as a Guest, seeing her happy will be a noble payment for her board & Lodging'.⁸⁶ On reconsideration, thinking it would be a pity to leave Sarah Fielding out 'if it were to cost that good Woman all her happiness', Montagu decided to help Sarah Fielding to join them. Yet she remained businesslike; in her thoughts about the possibility of Sarah Fielding's joining the community, practical financial considerations came first. As she knew Sarah Fielding could not afford to join in the scheme, she offers in a letter to Scott to pay the difference without letting her know her dependence, pointing out that 'my friend Fielding is too much of a Bel esprit to know a better of ye ordinary affairs of life' 'so we can cheat her as to knowledge of ye expence & let her imagine her present income equal to it I had much rather she did not know she was assisted in it'. Sarah Fielding's attachment to Sarah Scott's company was such that Elizabeth Montagu was worried about her sense of alienation if Scott

⁸⁴. MO 531, Jan 30 [1766].

⁸⁵. MO 5321, Feb 9 [1766].

⁸⁶. Quoted in Needham, 'The Life and Works of Sarah Fielding', p. 359.

left Sarah Fielding to join the Hitcham scheme: 'I am afraid some rumors of this scheme of Hitcham sh^d reach her ear & kill her'.⁸⁷ In the event, at this time Sarah Fielding was too ill to move house. Montagu let Elizabeth Carter (1717-1806) know about her poor health: 'Poor Mrs Fielding is declining very fast, she is at Bath. My sister sees her every day.'⁸⁸ She tried to make contact with a surviving family member, Sir John Fielding, but she could not at least until five days before her death.⁸⁹

So far I have focused on Sarah Fielding's longing for a community of mutual understanding in her life. As is partly evident in my account above, this desire for community involves a gender issue, not simply because sisterhood was important to her. Here C. Woodward's analysis of a community in David Simple provides a bridge between the problems of searching for community and gender. She maintains that Sarah Fielding constructs David's community as an alternative system to patriarchy, founded on feminine values such as non-hierarchical sharing, innocence, and self-effacement. However, she subsequently destroys the utopia, which Woodward argues indicates that Sarah Fielding is aware of the limit and negative effects of feminine values, which turn out to be 'oppression that controls from within', in the existing social order. Woodward interprets this dissolution as Sarah Fielding's call for a reform of patriarchal society.⁹⁰ Here she raises two important issues. One is the

⁸⁷. MO 5873, Montagu to Scott, 1 Jan 1768.

⁸⁸. Quoted in Needham, 'The Life and Works of Sarah Fielding', p. 361.

⁸⁹. 'No news of S^r John Fielding. L^d Lyttelton has been out of Town almost a Month I believe he has no connections with S^r John...' (MO 5882, Montagu to Scott, 4 April 1768).

⁹⁰. Carolyn Woodward, 'Sarah Fielding's Self-Destructing Utopia: The Adventures of David Simple', in Living By the Pen: Early British Women Writers, Dale Spender, ed. (New York and London: Teachers College Press, 1992), 65-81.

ambivalence and precariousness of a small close-knit community.⁹¹ In her works she often communicates anxiety about the ruinous force the larger society has on the small comfortable utopia she creates; she always has an attachment to the idea of a small community, formed out of the bonds of understanding, and threatened by the surrounding majority. Her good-natured characters are usually powerless against the mighty structures of society, remaining as observers or satirists at best. The sense of tension and contradiction between the minority and the mass hovers around the issue of authorship, too. Here again she is on the side of minority, the cultural and moral elite. Feeling urgently the need to appeal to a wider audience, she attempts to fashion her work as a vehicle to bridge between the two groups. Here lies her dilemma as a writer; while she was attached to an exclusive and small community, she wished to step out into a public domain. She did not confine herself within the private circle of learned elite, but exposed her literary ability to a wider culture of print.

The other issue Woodward raises is Sarah Fielding's ambivalence towards feminine values. In particular, the debilitating aspects of feminine values have been called to attention in the context of sensibility. In this respect, the importance of David Simple, of all her works, has been highlighted. The sentimental quality of Sarah Fielding's works was focused on as early as 1937 by R. P. Utter and G.B. Needham in their study, Pamela's Daughters.⁹² Janet Todd draws attention

⁹¹. I assume that Sarah Fielding's interest consists in skilfulness in observation from a detached position rather than in involvement in reform. Alice Browne argues that the critical and satirical comments made by women writers before the end of the eighteenth century did not have actual social applications but rather provided topoi where skills in satire were exerted. See The Eighteenth Century Feminist Mind (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1987), pp. 3-4.

⁹². They regard David Simple as 'the first out-and-out novel of sensibility', characterizing David as a lachrymose hero, Ophelia as a woman of feeling and a child of nature before Rousseau. See Robert Palfrey Utter and Gwendolyn Bridges Needham, Pamela's Daughters (London:

to the feminine emphasis of the cult of sensibility. She regards David Simple as typical of works of sentimentality which '[grapple] with the philosophical and narrative problems of what to do with the man of feeling who has, in an unfeeling world, avoided manly power and assumed the womanly qualities of tenderness and susceptibility but who cannot be raped and abandoned.'⁹³ With the mid-eighteenth-century emphasis on sentimentalism and the cult of sensibility in literature, complying with the ideology of femininity was not incompatible with becoming a writer. The respectability of the woman writer was secured as a result, as is shown in Todd's and Spencer's perceptive maps of the images and stances of eighteenth-century women writers and their works.⁹⁴ This conformity with femininity restricted the subject matter for women writers in the mid-century, as compared with the bold and defiant Restoration and early eighteenth-century women writers; nevertheless, such receptiveness to cultural demands was at the same time their strength. Sarah Fielding is regarded as a typical modest woman writer of the mid-century. David Simple epitomises the sentimental values in its emphasis on tenderness and the sympathetic heart.⁹⁵

Jane Spencer draws attention to 'the terms of acceptance' of women writers: acceptance on the basis of their femininity. Sarah Fielding is cited as a characteristic example of a woman writer who is offered 'gallant compliments' by male writers, notably Henry Fielding. She secures masculine approval by 'disclaiming any intention to overturn the sexual hierarchy'.⁹⁶ On the other hand, Spencer perceptively

Lovat Dickson, 1937), pp. 114, 98, 123-4, 53.

⁹³. Janet Todd, Sensibility: An Introduction (London and New York: Methuen, 1986), pp. 88-9.

⁹⁴. See Todd, The Sign of Angellica; Spencer, The Rise of the Woman Novelist.

⁹⁵. Todd, The Sign of Angellica.

⁹⁶. Spencer, The Rise of the Woman Novelist, pp. 75-103; pp. 75, 91, 94.

underscores the satirical and rebellious aspects of David Simple and The Cry. However, she considers that these qualities are muted in her later works; Sarah Fielding becomes more anxious to demonstrate respectability and submissiveness as her literary career progresses.⁹⁷ Sarah Fielding is regarded as characteristic in this sense as well of women writers' augmented 'new need to conform'.⁹⁸

Although the picture of Sarah Fielding as a modest respectable writer of the mid-century drawn by Spencer and Todd is convincing, in this thesis I shall attempt to focus on Sarah Fielding's more positive attitude to publication in her struggle to balance her intellectual pursuits with the merchandising of her text. She presents, indeed, a modest sign. Yet, as I shall explore in the chapters below, it is also carefully supported by uncompromising and assertive strategies, even if hidden by a veil of modesty.

In this context Catherine Gallagher's recent brilliant analysis of female authorship is very helpful. She explores the interdependence and interaction of the concepts of "woman", "author", "marketplace", and "fiction".⁹⁹ She argues that women authors exploited contradictions generally implicit in authorship in the context of the exchanges in the marketplace; they intensified and took advantage of the elusiveness of authorship and disembodiment of the text. By this disclaiming of authority, paradoxically, women authors eventually heightened the respectability of female authorship in the course of the century.¹⁰⁰

Each woman writer searched, without a defined given role model,

⁹⁷. Spencer, The Rise of the Woman Novelist, pp. 92-4, 118-22.

⁹⁸. Spencer, The Rise of the Woman Novelist, p. 119.

⁹⁹. Gallagher, Nobody's Story, xviii.

¹⁰⁰. She traces the different stages of authorship by examining Aphra Behn (1640-1689), Delarivier Manley (1663-1724), Charlotte Lennox (1729-1804), Frances Burney (1752-1840), and Maria Edgeworth (1768?-1849).

for a type of female authorship suitable for herself. To develop Gallagher's argument, the disembodiment of the text in the process of becoming a market commodity made a space for freedom; the author could make use of the space for manipulating a public image of an author. My concern in this thesis is how Sarah Fielding negotiated models of authorship and fashioned an authorship for herself. In Gallagher's analysis, a mid-century writer, Charlotte Lennox's (1729?-1804) strength lies in that she effectively 'broadcast her dispossession' of authorship and made use of fictional narratives which are invented and non-referential, thus in Gallagher's terms 'nobody's'.¹⁰¹ In Sarah Fielding's case as well, the core concepts of Gallagher's analysis are similarly useful since the disembodiment is keenly recognised in her search for authorship: the relationship between the author and the text, or how to make use of self-effacement in the marketplace.

Sarah Fielding's construction of an authorship involves the fashioning of a suitable readership. She invested great efforts in appealing to readers. With echoes of her concerns in real life, a community of mutual understanding is a significant literary issue. She shares the Augustan poets' expectation of a fairly closed circle of well-educated readers who have values in common with the writer.¹⁰² From this cultural community, more or less piquant satire can be directed against the world outside. Her works show her expectation that the reader will understand and appreciate her knowledge and reading, classical and modern.¹⁰³ She makes frequent use of quotation and allusion.

¹⁰¹. Gallagher, Nobody's Story, pp. 145-202.

¹⁰². For Augustan poets', especially Pope's, attention to polite community and threats to it, see Thomas Woodman, Politeness and Poetry in the Age of Pope (London and Toronto: Associated University Press, 1989).

¹⁰³. As for Cleopatra and Octavia, C.D. Johnson in his critical edition searches for the ancient and modern sources of and influences on Sarah Fielding's description of Cleopatra and Octavia (Christopher Dyer Johnson, 'Sarah Fielding's "The Lives of Cleopatra and Octavia": A Critical Edition', University of Delaware Ph.D., 1991).

Her last work, a translation from the Greek was a scholarly exercise.

On the other hand, her aim extends to creating a more or less anonymous mass readership; her writing and letters testify that she was sensitive to the demands of the literary market, trying to take a positive stance and to lead the taste of the readers by transforming existing genres and inventing new forms of literature. Her strategy of attracting more readers by new ideas and techniques is in keeping with the cultural ethos of eagerness for novelty which J.P. Hunter describes.¹⁰⁴ More directly it derives from the influence of Henry Fielding and her friend, Jane Collier.

Thus, in terms of deliberation on the reception of her work, she consciously addresses two different readerships. This consideration leads her literary ambition in two different ways. The first one is her aspiration for recognition and appreciation of her knowledge, judgment, and skill by the highly educated and discerning reader. She seeks for 'the reader's favour, his or her approbation of her learning and expertise. The second one is her eagerness to amuse and instruct the reader. She endeavours to bestow lessons on the reader. Underlying all these is her literary and intellectual ambition, especially her sense of a writer's responsibility to instruct, her recognition of ^{the} need to appeal to more readers, her desire for literary and intellectual satisfaction, and also her need to earn more. All these needs and desires interact with each other and she attempts to develop literary strategies to satisfy them all.

The chapters below explore the issues I have delineated. The strategies of appealing to more readers by means of new inventive styles and the concept of an inner-circle of readers who can share her values were to be adjusted in accordance with her manifest statement of her

¹⁰⁴. Hunter, Before Novels, esp. pp. 3-28.

intentions, what she thinks an author should do, and what the reader is expected to do; I shall examine this, the author's messages to the reader and her offer to negotiate with the reader, in Chapter One. As she reveals the folly and perversity of an unsympathetic audience, she tempts her readers to avoid such an attitude and to join on her side. In so doing, she pays much attention to the way messages in language are conveyed; her particular concern is about the benefits and problems in conversation and reading. Moreover, according to her thinking a work of literature is produced through a collaboration between the writer and the reader; as the writer needs insight and good understanding, so does the reader. Consequently she emphasizes the importance of grasping the intention of the author.

The construction of her narratives is examined in Chapter Two: what narrative devices she uses to communicate her messages. While Chapter One focused on the author's attention to the negotiation between the author and the reader, this chapter highlights her manipulation of the text. She sought for her own style, and incorporated a number of different generic elements into her work. I examine her literary models and how she incorporates them and constructs her narratives. In most of her texts an accumulation of several episodes makes up her narratives; each episode has a core argument, observation, or lesson, and it is expanded and developed by being given fictional circumstances. In the core element, satiric observation plays an important role.

The next chapter is concerned with her conception of 'familiarity' and deals in detail with her 'familiar letters'. Epistolarity was a major literary characteristic of the eighteenth century. The eminent success of Richardson in the field of the epistolary novel emphasises the epistolary form as a 'feminine' genre exemplified by the private letter writing of virtuous heroines. The form of private, intimate letters is thought to be an acceptable space for women. But Sarah Fielding depended on a fundamentally different

notion of such familiarity. Examining Sarah Fielding's personal letters and her Familiar Letters, I argue that her notion of familiar letters or familiarity was different from those assumed by the fashion of familiar letters epitomised by Richardson. In so doing my attention is ^{directed} to the relationships between the characters in her text.

The process of making a community of familiarity and understanding without any intervention from the outer larger society is depicted in her educational narrative. Here, the importance of the development of equal rational conversation is underscored. The emphasis is on friendship among those who can share the values of social virtues, and the narrator herself poses as a friend. Comparison with Mary Martha Sherwood's (1775-1851) version of The Governess (1820) illuminates Sarah Fielding's view of a model social order. In Sherwood's, the focus of attention is transferred to the instructor, who is dominant and authoritative, and so is the author. Examination of the two versions also marks a parallel of the construction of the relationships of the teacher and the student in the text, and the author and the reader.

Sarah Fielding's management of the standpoint of the writer is also examined in the last chapter: Sarah Fielding as a translator. Elizabeth Carter's circumstances, a famous mid-century example of success in the publication of a translation, offer a useful comparison. I regard Sarah Fielding's undertaking of translation as a difficult process of transforming the private scholarly exercise of a learned woman into a published public text.

Chapter One

'Introducing the Author to the Acquaintance of the Reader'

I. Introduction

Our address is to the candid reader; to the morose critic we know that all address is vain; ... if to carp and find fault should be [a man's] choice, his inclination will not fail of producing proofs enough of his having found an object of his splenetic delight: ...

[The Cry] twisted and wrested Portia's words into a thousand different meanings, which she never so much as thought of; ...¹

In The Cry, Sarah Fielding envisions a fault-finding reader who is called 'the morose critic' and puts Portia, her heroine, before a still more perverse audience whom she calls 'the Cry'. Mary Anne Schofield interprets this awareness of the danger of distortion of meaning as witness to women's difficulties in particular in the male-dominant world of language. She maintains that The Cry investigates the corruption of language the male has brought about.² Schofield points out that '"turba" is the result of male teaching'; it is a term which Portia coins to represent both 'the evil passions' such as 'wrath, hatred, malice, envy, etc.' 'which are the disturbers of man' and 'the very disturbance itself'.³ It is true that Sarah Fielding pays attention to the

¹ Cry I, pp. 1-2; I, p. 59.

² Introduction to a facsimile reproduction by Mary Anne Schofield The Cry (Delmar, New York: Scholar's Facsimiles & Reprints, 1986), pp. 7-10.

³ Schofield, Introduction, p. 7; Cry, I, pp. 194-5. Linda Bree points out the subversiveness of the invention of words in an age when linguistic

deceptiveness of male language. Portia persuades women to recognize the true meaning of the man's sweet and flattering language of gallantry and courtship. Although a courting man worships a woman as if she were his angel or goddess, this is '[a]n Adulation, which translated into plain English' means no more than 'it will conduce much to my pleasure and convenience, if you will become my wife' and he is declaring that when she does not fulfil her duties, 'you will then have given me a legal power of exacting as rigid a performance of it as I please'.⁴ However, Sarah Fielding's awareness of the precariousness of language is more related to her sense of authorship and of audience, I would argue, than her sense of female victimization by male language.

Her notion of the power and control of the author is complex. She does not place total confidence in the author's personal view, its autonomy, and its complete dominance. She does not push forward the absolute authority of an individual's perception; she does not insist that the authority of her language resides entirely in the author herself.⁵ She is clearly conscious of the reader's autonomy; she knows, as I show below, the reader will read what he or she wants to read in the text.

However, she resists the text's independence of the author when it becomes a public property. The text is perceived as a link between the author and the public, neither a totally public nor a personal instrument. She fears the separation of the author and the text, what

stability was especially valued (Sarah Fielding (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996), pp. 102-3.

⁴ Cry, I, p. 70.

⁵ Donald E. Pease compares the medieval notion of the 'auctor' whose authority was based on divine revelation and the notion of the 'author' who 'himself claimed authority for his words and based his individuality on the stories he composed'. See his 'Author', in Critical Terms for Literary Study ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), 107.

Catherine Gallagher calls the text's disembodiment, especially by the intrusion of 'critics' who represent (always distorting) autonomous constructions of meaning beyond the author's control.⁶ Consequently, she tries to impress the author's presence and intention on the text and communicate them to the reader.

J. Paul Hunter reminds us that 'texts did not come naked into the world' in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.⁷ He relates the forwardness of the author to the residual presence of an oral culture: the author's direct address to the reader provided a substitute for the lost communication and community for the sake of those increasingly isolated urban readers. Especially the emerging genre of the novel responded to their cultural desires. According to this argument, the modern novelists felt the necessity to appeal to the reader's nostalgia for community in contrast with the traditionalist Augustans' pessimistic and exasperated attitudes toward the reader.⁸ His image of the novel reader as an isolated ignorant youth longing for communication and information helps to explain the eighteenth century's attachment to didacticism: '[Didacticists] created the pretence that here was a communal fund, socially arrived at, from which readers could draw as they individually chose to do.'⁹

The scope of Sarah Fielding's readership is not necessarily confined to such ignorant and receptive youths as Hunter assumes.¹⁰ It

⁶ Catherine Gallagher, Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace 1670-1820 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

⁷ J. Paul Hunter, Before Novels: The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1990), p. 158.

⁸ Hunter, Before Novels, pp. 156-64.

⁹ Hunter, Before Novels, pp. 225-47, 238.

¹⁰ For some doubts about Hunter's argument, see Pat Rogers's review of Before Novels, Eighteenth-Century Fiction 4(1992): 269.

involves not only these youths but also more knowing and well-educated readers, including both the 'candid' and the 'perverse'. Expecting all these as her readers, she felt no less need to address them directly. Through consideration of the sense of communication and community, she constructs her identity as an author and the role she expects the reader to fulfil. In the course of this construction she always fights against the supposed determined outsider of the community and persuades the reader to join on her side.

In this chapter I shall examine the roles of the writer and the reader which she defines in the prefatory parts of her works, the way she attempts to fulfil her role, and the mechanism and use of reading activities she tries to initiate. With her authorial moral design, the forms enabling her moral control are various. Like Henry Fielding's authorial persona, her narrators sometimes speak directly to the reader, for example, in David Simple, and Dellwyn.¹¹ Like Richardson in his withdrawal of the presence of the author, she sometimes creates dramatic scenes, where authorial intermediaries between the presented world and the audience are kept to a minimum.¹² However, even in the dramatic form of presentation adopted in The Cry, Sarah Fielding's characters do not play the same controversial and involving parts as Richardson's do.

It is in the prefatory parts to her narratives that Sarah Fielding

¹¹ For Henry Fielding's assertive authorial persona and narrator, see Henry Knight Miller, 'The Voices of Henry Fielding: Style in Tom Jones', in H.K. Miller, Eric Rothstein, and G.S. Rousseau, ed. The Augustan Milieu (Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1970), 262-88; Howard Anderson, 'Answers to the Author of Clarissa: Theme and Narrative Technique in Tom Jones and Tristram Shandy', Philological Quarterly 51 (1972): 859-73.

¹² For Richardson's narrative devices (other than authorial intrusion) as means of unifying and controlling the fictive world, see Fred Kaplan, '"Our Short Story": The Narrative Device of Clarissa', Studies in English Literature 11(1971): 549-62. For comprehensive analysis of Richardson's subtle deployment of techniques instead of 'any presiding authorial voice', see Tom Keymer, Richardson's Clarissa and the Eighteenth-Century Reader (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

as an author is most assertive about her own writing, as she clearly declares:

The writing a Preface to a Book seems to be invented for the Purpose of introducing the Author to the Acquaintance of the Reader; and hath been so general a Practice, that from Custom it appears to be established almost as a necessary Rule; and as every well-bred Man, when he presents Strangers to each other, informs them who they are to address, so doth the Author, in his Preface, acquaint his Reader in some degree what is the Nature of his Design; or what he thinks so necessary to avoid, that he is careful it shall not be found in his Writing.¹³

Following this declaration, she attempts to explain the purposes of her writing. She states that the efforts she invests in producing the text are directed toward disentangling 'the intricate Labyrinths of the human Mind'.¹⁴ This unravelling of the human mind is undertaken in order to achieve the 'two principal ends' of the fiction, that is, 'to entertain and to instruct'.¹⁵ And in addition, there is 'another principal view' when she presents the work to the public: some financial reward.¹⁶ These purposes interdependently support and restrict her works. To unravel the labyrinths of the human mind undoubtedly contributes to amusement

¹³. Dellwyn, I, iii.

¹⁴. Dellwyn, I, xv.

¹⁵. Cry, I, p. 4.

¹⁶. 'Perhaps the best Excuse that can be made for a Woman's venturing to write at all, is that which really produced this Book; Distress in her Circumstances: which she could not so well remove by any other Means in her Power' (David Simple, 1st ed., Advertisement to the Reader); 'not to mention another principal view, which hath undoubtedly produced more volumes than either of the former [the ends to entertain and to instruct], but, however seriously important to the writer, is too ludicrous to find more than this cursory notice here' (Cry, I, pp. 4-5).

by arousing curiosity. It is, in her expectation, also calculated to instruct and improve the reader. And the claimed merits might gain a wider readership and earn more money.

Although Sarah Fielding assumes that it 'hath been so general a Practice' to use a preface for the purpose of 'introducing the Author to the Acquaintance of the Reader' or defining the roles of the author and the reader with the help of the mediation of the text, it is not so general a practice among her contemporary female writers. She is assertive in emphasising the point she aims to make in the text and more importantly in her registered concern about how her work is to be read. As Janet Todd argues, the mid-eighteenth century women writers, who were sandwiched between more assertive writers at the beginning and the end of the eighteenth century, did not present conspicuous self-advertising signs.¹⁷ This is exemplified by their apologetic use of the preface and even by the lack of it. In the sense of presenting no sign of authorial self or endeavouring after effacement, their prefaces indirectly reveal something about the writer and thereby introduce 'the Author to the Acquaintance of the Reader'. In their use of it, a preface embodies the author's modesty and apprehension.¹⁸

This point is exemplified by several writers. For example, Elizabeth Griffith (1727-93) erects multiple façades of introductions by the editor, a letter from a reader to the bookseller, a letter to a character in the epistolary novel itself, a letter from a protagonist to the editor, a letter from the editor to the public, a dedication, a heroine's dedication, and the protagonist's preface. Despite this

¹⁷. Todd, The Sign of Angellica.

¹⁸. Paula Backscheider points out that the apologetic tone of introduction worked as a mere convention for male writers, but was not understood as a convention in female writers. Since it was very close to the accepted characteristics of the female, in women writers' works it was perceived as 'proper extension of sex roles' (248). See 'Women Writers and the Chain of Identification', Studies in the Novel 19(1987): 245-62.

deliberate preparation, she offers no comparable commitment to the relationship between the author and the reader through the text. Indeed, this proliferation of prefatory parts leads to the effacement of the author who hides behind the editor, the bookseller, and the protagonists.¹⁹

Even when a female writer articulates her attention to authorship, her main emphasis tends to be on her anxiety as an author in terms of the way the book is to be received rather than on her active role in shaping the reader. Charlotte Lennox is a typical example.²⁰ The focus is on her expectation, anxiety and trepidation about the reputation of the book and its author rather than the way it is read:

The Dread which a Writer feels of the public censure; the still greater Dread of Neglect; and the eager wish for Support and Protection, which is impressed by the Consciousness of Imbecillity; are unknown to those who have never adventured into the World; and I am afraid, my Lord, equally unknown to those, who have always found the World ready to applaud them.²¹

Similar anxiety and diffidence become the matter of apology. Sarah Scott is very interested in the position of the author, but she has a particular conception of the function of a preface and the

¹⁹ Elizabeth Griffith, A Series of Letters, between Henry and Frances 6 vols. a new edition (London: J. Bew, 1786). For Frances's awareness of the precarious position of a woman writer, see Susan David Bernstein, 'Ambivalence and Writing: Elizabeth and Richard Griffith's A Series of Genuine Letters between Henry and Frances', in Eighteenth-Century Women and The Arts ed. Frederick M. Keener and Susan E. Lorsch (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 269-75.

²⁰ For Lennox's consciousness of authorship, see Gallagher, Nobody's Story, pp. 145-202.

²¹ Charlotte Lennox, The Female Quixote; or the Adventures of Arabella (London: A. Millar, 1752), dedication to the Earl of Middlesex, iv.

declaration of the author's aims is only part of it. She usually includes an apologetic precaution. When she writes about the history of the house of Mecklenburg, where Queen Charlotte (1744-1818), who recently married George III (1738-1820), has come from, she acknowledges that the timeliness of the book and curiosity of the world would spare her any excuse. Nonetheless, she continues to say:

but I must confess that a due consciousness of the censure which this hasty performance deserves, would fill me with very uneasy apprehensions, if I did not depend on the generous indulgence of my readers; who I trust will at least be pleased with my desire of imparting satisfaction to their curiosity, although I may have been so unfortunate as to fail in the manner of conveying it. If this attempt prove an inducement to any person, better qualified, to do justice to the subject, I shall think myself entitled to claim some merit with the public, and shall find therein a better excuse for the defects in this performance, than in my desire to gratify universal curiosity, or the haste with which it has been attempted. The latter is but a poor apology, but if it can ever be allowed of any weight, I think it must be on such an occasion; since curiosity is necessarily accompanied with impatience, and the best recommendation this work can claim, is a speedy endeavour to satisfy so restless a passion....²²

Her ambition to make timely use of public curiosity is transformed into excuses for hastiness and a modest wish to be serviceable to more qualified writers. Moreover, in another preface Scott even writes that

²². The History of Mecklenburgh, from the First Settlement of the Vandals in that Country, to the Present Time; Including a Period of about Three Thousand Years. The second edition (London: J. Newbery, 1762), vii-viii, xiii-xiv. Charlotte Sophia married George in 1761.

'The usual intention of a preface, I apprehend, is to make the Author's apology': she might in part mean by an 'apology' an argument in defence of her work, but she asks for pardon for her attempt as well.²³ It is true that she maintains that she doubts the propriety of such a custom, but in spite of her apparent reluctance, she nevertheless follows the convention with an excuse for her brevity:

The doubt I am in as to this particular, will make me, though I comply with the custom, endeavour to do it in as few words as possible; and with all convenient brevity attempt my excuse for offering to the public the following sheets.²⁴

She repeats the claim that she is making no apology in another work, but in fact offers plenty of excuses: 'As I cannot hope to defend to any purpose the faults that will appear in the following performance, I shall not add to them by attempting an apology, which would be treating it with an air of seriousness and importance ill suited to so trifling a work'.²⁵ Although Scott professes to reject the custom, it is she who is perpetuating it. She is basically immersed in the decorum of the defence of the author and the entreaties for the reader's patience and tolerance, and all that with a claim of reluctance to follow it. In so doing, her attention is confined to the management of the act of producing the text, and to the reader's generosity.

Sarah Fielding is different from these writers in her use of the prefatory parts of her books; she offers a definition of the relationship

²³. The History of Sir George Ellison second edition (London: F. Noble, 1770), iii.

²⁴. The History of Sir George Ellison, iii.

²⁵. The Test of Filial Duty in a Series of Letters between Miss Emilia Leonard, and Miss Charlotte Arlington. A Novel (London: for the Author, 1772), ix.

between the author and the reader. Unlike Sarah Scott, who regards the purpose of a preface as 'to make the Author's apology', Sarah Fielding aims to 'introduc[e] the Author to the Acquaintance of the Reader', that is, to step forward to attempt to play an active role in promoting the reading practice the author wishes to establish. In order to realize that, she attempts to maintain the author's presence by asserting specific aims and designs in the prefatory parts of her works. She envisages the way her reader is to activate the instruction of the written text in real life, which is declared to be the aim of reading activity; thus she is inclined to concentrate her attention on the aim of instructing the reader.

Sarah Fielding is keen to convey her intention, presumably because she is aware that this very process of instruction is particularly vulnerable. Even though the narratives are calculated to instruct and improve the reader, she knows this function depends on the reader's behaviour in reading. She tries to overcome this precariousness by impressing on the reader how important it is to try to understand the author's intention. However, this solution produces a still more difficult question. The problem is that her strategy is circular; in spite of her intention to instruct and enlighten, and thus to improve the reader through the links of moral sympathy, her scheme of reading presupposes a common moral and intellectual milieu which will predispose the reader to a positive identification with the author's aims. This dilemma of expanding and contracting the readership emerges also in terms of a third 'principal view': to earn her bread.

I shall first discuss the addresses to the reader in Sarah Fielding's works with an attention to the claim to novelty; it is a part of her strategies to negotiate with the reader, attracting the attention by the inventiveness of experimental forms and by topical subjects. Secondly I examine Sarah Fielding's construction of a relationship with the reader. Not only does she declare, in common with a great many writers

of this period, the aims of amusement and entertainment, but she analyses carefully how reading can provide these. Another theme I examine in this chapter is her commitment to describing in her texts the reader's reactions. She shows examples of impediments to her purposes and contrasting exemplary models as well. What is distinctive in her is that she not only pays considerable attention to the audience in her prefatory comments, but also repeatedly describes the reactions of the audience as that attention's embodiment in the texts.

II. Novelty and the Literary Market

As Hunter argues, cultural demand in the early eighteenth century was characterized by a search for novelty.²⁶ To a certain degree this remained the case at mid-century. Hunter explores the ways Henry Fielding and Samuel Richardson 'codif[ied] and extend[ed] the bold novelty' of the earlier wave of the vogue for novelty, 'creating a broad consciousness among readers and potential writers that a significant and lasting form had been created'.²⁷ It is very probable that these two writers exerted a great influence on Sarah Fielding's own attentiveness to novelty. Claiming novelty was important for her as part of effective appeal to the reader in the strategies to attract the reader's attention. The dilemma for Sarah Fielding is that there is a tension between such an awareness of the demand and her quest to satisfy herself by trying styles unfamiliar to her. Increasingly, however, scepticism towards and burlesque of formal and topical innovation coexisted with the fascination with novelty, as I show below. In this respect, it is Jane Collier that I place special emphasis on, among those

²⁶. Hunter, Before Novels.

²⁷. Hunter, Before Novels, p. 22.

influential figures on Sarah Fielding who display these subtle mixed feelings toward novelty. Collier had sensitive antennae to detect the demands of the literary market. Her sensitiveness probably contributed to Sarah Fielding's construction of a relationship between the author and the reader.

Jane Collier was one of the acquaintances Sarah Fielding made in Salisbury. She was the author of An Essay on the Art of Ingeniously Tormenting; with Proper Rules for the Exercise of that Pleasant Art (1753).²⁸ Although contemporary evidence does not fully support the assumption of collaboration, The Cry is generally thought to be a collaborative work by Sarah Fielding and Jane Collier.²⁹ Even if Jane

²⁸. A recent facsimile reprint has a useful introduction by Judith Hawley, see An Essay on the Art of Ingeniously Tormenting (1757 edition) (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1994), v-1.

²⁹. Although Jane Collier wrote to James Harris three substantial letters about her Art of Ingeniously Tormenting in 1753, she does not mention Cry which came out in the following year. As she wrote to Harris, she did not want to publish her book in 1754--Cry was published in that very year (Malmesbury papers, 9M73/B54, 9M73/B59/71). Cry's publisher, Dodsley, made a payment on behalf of Sarah Fielding alone: the receipt of £52 for half the copyright to Cry dated 19 November 1753 (The Correspondence of Robert Dodsley ed. James E. Tierney [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988], pp. 31, 514). Contemporaries who mentioned Cry assumed that its author was Sarah Fielding. Richardson definitely believed Cry was written by her alone (FM XI, f 82, Forster Collection, National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum; Barbauld, II, p. 108-9). The reviewer in The Monthly Review regards it as 'the production of a lady' but a note is added at the bottom of this review article: 'When this was wrote the author of David Simple had not laid claim to the Cry' (for April 1754, vol. 10, p. 282). Elizabeth Carter (14 Sept 1754) and Catherine Talbot (26 Nov. 1754) believed it was written by Sarah Fielding (A Series of letters between Mrs. Elizabeth Carter and Miss Catherine Talbot, II, pp. 183, 188). Lady Mary Wortley Montagu thought 'Sally Fielding' wrote Cry, although her attributions are not always correct; she attributed all of Cry, Art of Ingeniously Tormenting, and Female Quixote to Sarah Fielding (The Complete letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, ed. Robert Halsband [Oxford Clarendon Press, 1967], II, p. 88). The source of the information concerning Sarah Fielding's authorship might have been Dodsley, the publisher; Richardson wrote just before its publication in 1754 that it was, 'I am told, written by a Lady who has a good Heart as well as Head', and the reviewer or the editor of The Monthly Review might have been told in the same way. When Richardson suggested another edition in 1757, Jane Collier was dead and

Collier did not write in partnership with Sarah Fielding, she was nevertheless an important influence on her. They had known each since girlhood, and from the late 1740s they were particularly close. In 1748 Jane Collier wrote to Samuel Richardson in defence of Sarah Fielding when he suggested some revision to The Governess. They wrote a joint letter in 1751 when James Harris presented them with a copy of his Hermes (1751).³⁰

As far as the extant letters of these two friends are concerned, Jane Collier is more eloquent on literary topics and less reserved than the other. Brought up in the intellectual atmosphere of the household of the learned Rev. Arthur Collier, she was bright and liked for her outspoken forwardness. Henry Fielding complimented her intellect and virtues when he set out for Lisbon. He gave her a copy of Horace as 'a Memorial.../ of the highest Esteem for/ an Understanding more than/ Female, mixed with virtues almost / more than human'.³¹

Jane Collier was a person who combined intellectual prowess and common sense wisdom. She was more pragmatic in consideration of book-sales and more alert to the demands and the tastes of the market than Sarah Fielding. One illuminating example is her letter to Richardson in defence of Sarah Fielding, which I have just mentioned. Richardson requested Sarah Fielding to be more specific about the modes of punishment to be applied in her fictional school. On reading his

naturally the letter was addressed to Sarah Fielding alone. If Jane Collier worked together with her, the secrecy of her co-authorship was extremely well kept. It is true that Jane Collier did not want her authorship to be made public; she wanted her authorship of Art of Ingeniously Tormenting kept secret, at least before she could be sure of its favourable reception (9M73/B54). Yet even in this case, 'all the People' around her knew that it was hers: 'My being the author is now one of those profound Secrets that is known only to all the People that I know' (9M73/B59/71). For convenience in this dissertation I shall regard Sarah Fielding as Cry's sole author.

³⁰. Barbauld, II, pp. 61-5; Battestin and Probyn, pp. 124-25.

³¹. Battestin, Henry Fielding, p. 393.

letter to Sarah Fielding, Jane Collier reminded him of the variety of different ideas on educational principles that the possible readers of The Governess might have, and persuaded him to leave the matter open.³² Evidently she had a sort of worldly-wise commercial calculation; she seems to have tried to secure as many readers as possible by evading the question which Richardson had posed. Another illustration is her letter to James Harris when she was finishing preparing for publication her own work, The Art of Ingeniously Tormenting. Sending her manuscript to him, she asked for his opinion. In this letter she is anxious to get her manuscript back as soon as possible, since London's publishing season is nearing its close. She is alert to information about the state of the book trade and the literary market; she knows Richardson will publish Sir Charles Grandison (1754) the next season and expects it will sweep the field. So she foresees that if she misses this season, her book will suffer:

I hope this will plead my excuse for begging the favour of you to return me the Manuscript as soon as you possibly can; for, unless you tell me (and I beg your sincere Opinion) that it is not fit to appear in publick at all, I shall immediately on the receipt of it put it to the Press: For I am told that there is a much better opening for a thing of this kind this year than there will be the next; when Richardson's Work is to come out, and several other things that I have heard a good report of.³³

With this keen grasp of publication circumstances, she took the initiative in deciding the fate of her literary production, even though

³² Barbauld, II, pp. 61-5; for details see Chapter Four of this thesis.

³³ Malmesbury papers, 9M73/B54, 27 Jan. 1753. The book was published in March 1753.

she needed Harris's encouragement.

Driven by her active intellect and her sense of market demands, Jane Collier is in writing a preface especially concerned with novelty. Her attitude to novelty is not straightforward but sophisticated and even playful. Although she makes much of novelty herself, her argument concerning novelty seems to be a performance which parodies its pursuit. While she confesses that novelty is essential to literary work, she burlesques the cult of novelty. At the beginning of The Art of Ingeniously Tormenting, she jokingly regrets the lack of novelty which she supposes the reader has reasons to expect in a book: 'One requisite for approbation I confess, is wanting in this work; for, alas! I fear it will contain nothing new.'³⁴

Collier's complex and playful attitude towards novelty was deployed on another occasion when she contributed a preface to Sarah Fielding's David Simple Volume the Last, which was published in the same year that Collier's work appeared.³⁵ As David Simple was a relatively popular work, the idea of issuing a sequel might have led to success, but she perceived that a sequel needed some justification. To defend the practice of writing a sequel, she adds a twist to the notion of novelty by regarding the usual notion of novelty as consisting merely of unfamiliarity or grotesque strangeness. To present the same material with a new title and names, as often practised by popular booksellers, she states, is only a 'pretended Appearance of Novelty'. Instead of such novelty, she recommends the reader to appreciate a more subtle kind.³⁶ She asks questions of those whose 'earnest Thirst after Novelty' does not allow such a sequel:

³⁴. Art of Ingeniously Tormenting, p. 5.

³⁵. The preface 'a Female Friend of the Author' was most probably written by Jane Collier.

³⁶. David Simple Volume the Last, David Simple, p. 309.

In what does the Novelty so much required in these kind of Writings consist? Not in Characters so entirely new, as never to have been met with or heard of! For such must be what the French call Outré, or what we may say are either faultless, or hideous Monsters that the World ne'er saw. Not in Circumstances of situations entirely new, such being equally impossible to find. To suppose it consisted in new names is both childish and trifling. Must it not therefore be said to consist in putting known and remarkable Characters into new Situations?³⁷

By stressing the absurdity of the superficial novelty which is confined to new names and represented by 'Monsters', she makes clear the meaning of the novelty to be achieved. As 'these kinds of Writing intend to represent' 'real Life', the novelty is necessarily defined within the framework of a reasonable and probable perception of life. She calls this the 'Novelty of Variation', referring to the harmonious composition of music, where novelty is acquired 'not from new simple Sounds, which it is impossible to make, but from a melodious Variation on the same Notes'.³⁸

Although Jane Collier attempts to do her best to defend the author by turning the disadvantage into a new definition of novelty, her defensive tone in the preface suggests she is afraid that a sequel is unlikely to be well received. Her precaution was rightly conceived. Her fear that a sequel would not appeal to the reader was justified, as can be seen from a letter by John Upton (1707-1760), a classical scholar and friend of Henry Fielding and James Harris. He wrote:

³⁷. David Simple Volume the Last, David Simple, p. 310.

³⁸. David Simple Volume the Last, David Simple, p. 310.

Mrs Fielding has published a 3d volume of David Simple; the world think it a meer 3d volume and not a new story, and thus the book stops with the booksellers. She should, I told her, have changed the title; for Novelty is the charm of the present age.³⁹

As far as Upton saw, Sarah Fielding and Jane Collier's speculation on the possibility of a sequel's commercial success failed. Yet it remains true that Jane Collier knew what she should emphasise in the preface and she strives to arouse new interest in the reader.

Probably under Jane Collier's influence, in the introduction to The Cry Sarah Fielding underscores novelty: 'stories and novels have flowed in such abundance for these last ten years, that we would wish, if possible, to strike a little out of a road already so much beaten'.⁴⁰ The author claims she means to explore a new field since in the established kinds of stories and novels she would neither wish to rival superior novel writers nor join the ranks of the numerous trifling and easily forgotten hack writers. To be sure, the novelty of this undertaking is obvious. Even the frame of the work is unusual: the work consists of five parts, each of which has a prologue, and at the end an epilogue is affixed. The author's concern to probe into 'the labyrinths of the human mind' takes the form of this new device within a theatrical setting. What are ordinarily called chapters are 'scenes' except in the second part which has no sub-division. The work's subtitle is: 'A New Dramatic Fable'. With these 'dramatic' facilities, the scenes are also represented as if they take place in a court of law; the heroine speaks for herself, confronting the opposition of 'the Cry' before Una, the judge.⁴¹ After this statement of method and purpose, again a defence

³⁹ Harris Papers, vol. 31, pt I, 82.

⁴⁰ Cry, I, p. 8.

⁴¹ Her family's legal connection might have influenced the scheme of

of novelty is put forward:

besides the avoiding a worn-out practice, and the plea of variety, which we make for this our method (whose novelty perhaps may give offence rather than pleasure to some sort of critics) we cannot help flattering ourselves, that we shall be the better enabled by these means to give life and action to our history.⁴²

Certainly, the form of the work was new and the device served to convey the 'inward mind': a non-epistolary method of letting the characters express themselves. Richardson thought that 'the Authoress shews a great Knowledge of Human Heart' by this theatrical device of making the 'inward mind' known to the audience.⁴³

The device of The Cry seems to have been too new, or too strange for some contemporary readers. Certainly such a formally innovative work requires explanation and guidance for the reader rather than simple advertisement that it is new. Indeed, a contemporary reader, Sarah Westcomb, was puzzled by the book and asked Richardson, who sent a copy

the work. Miss Churchill in a letter to Richardson points out that Henry Fielding's experience as a magistrate could be sources for his fiction, though she thinks of plot and character materials, not the manner in which stories are told: 'He has I believe a fund of humour which will never be exhausted[sic] and I suppose his new profession of the Justice of the Quoram will furnish him with fresh supplies of matter to set in an entertaining Light, if he has a mind to it' (30 June 1749; FM 48 E 9, ff. 22-3).

⁴² Cry, I, p. 16. The idea of giving 'life and action to our history' reminds us of Le Bossu's thought and terminology: 'we must look for the Nature of the Epopéa in that of the Fable and consider That as the chief Foundation of the Poem, as the Principle that gives Life and Motion to all its parts, and sets all its Faculties on work.' (Treatise on the Epick Poem (Gainesville, Florida: Scholar's Facsimiles & Reprints, 1970), p. 13).

⁴³ FM XIV ff. 135-56, Richardson to Westcomb, Aug 9 1754; he mentions 'Authoress' in the singular and he thinks Sarah Fielding is the sole author.

to her, how to read it: 'Will you my good Papa give me y^r Opinion of the "Cry" to enable me (on proper reason) to form my own'.⁴⁴ It is true that Richardson was sympathetic enough to the work while he testifies that it did not sell well: 'I think it deserves, on the whole, a better Reception than it has met with.'⁴⁵ In his reply, what Richardson is more interested in is the management of the plot than its novelty. Rather, he is a little sceptical toward its formal innovation. Importantly, Richardson called it 'a new Species of writing': 'The Piece is a new Species of writing, as I may say; The Plan, the Design, at least is new'.⁴⁶ Although he applied the phrase 'a new species of writing' to his Pamela in order to distinguish it from 'the pomp and parade of romance-writing' in 1741, the same phrase used for The Cry more than ten years later implies some reservation about such newness.⁴⁷ Here he did not welcome formal novelty for its newness. He reacted to a more innovative work than The Cry, Tristram Shandy (1759-67) in a more explicitly hostile way. Asked about his opinion, he describes it as 'execrable' and 'too gross to be inflaming'. He then approvingly transcribes 'a young lady's' comment

⁴⁴. FM XIV ff.133-34, Westcomb to Richardson, Aug 7 1754.

⁴⁵. FM XIV ff.135-36, Richardson to Westcomb, Aug 9 1754. Though he suggested to Sarah Fielding that she should improve the character of Ferdinand in order to be more worthy of the heroine in a future edition, the book was not popular enough to be reissued (Barbauld, II, 108-09). Hester Lynch Piozzi also mentions its unusual style with approving comments that its contents are worthy of greater sales (The Piozzi Letters: Correspondence of Hester Lynch Piozzi, 1784-1821, ed. Edward A. Bloom and Lillian D. Bloom [Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1991], II, p. 249).

⁴⁶. FM XIV ff. 135-36, Richardson to Westcomb, Aug. 9 1754.

⁴⁷. Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson ed. John Carroll (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), p. 41. The same phrase was publicly applied to Henry Fielding's writings in An Essay on the New Species of Writing founded by Mr. Fielding with a Word or Two upon the Modern State of Criticism (London: W. Owen, 1751). For Richardson's personal animosity towards Henry Fielding, see Alan D. McKillop, 'The Personal Relations between Fielding and Richardson', Modern Philology 28(1931):423-33; Battestin, Henry Fielding, pp. 330, 378-9, 445.

for the enquirer, in which she suggests the imprudence of appreciating a work which attracts readers by coating impropriety with novelty:

little is its merit, though great has been the writer's reward! Unaccountable wildness; whimsical digressions; comical incoherencies; uncommon indecencies; all with an air of novelty, has caught the reader's attention and applause has flown from one another, till it is almost singular to disapprove.⁴⁸

For this correspondent of Richardson, novelty is only a kind of deceptive compensation. 'Novelty' is no longer a panacea to this reader. Instead, it is a source of her critical reaction.

Sarah Fielding herself seems later to have come to a similar recognition and she stopped laying special emphasis on novelty. Her tendency toward formal innovation culminated in the publication of The Cry. Subsequently she produced work in genres which were established, albeit new to her. In place of claims for novelty, she stresses seriousness of moral purpose, which I deal with in the next section. It is concerning the author's moral intention and how it works that she addresses the reader more ardently.

III. The 'True Use of Reading': the Author and the Reader

Sarah Fielding is concerned with reading practices and attempts to instruct the reader how to read; she agrees with 'an Observation, I believe it is in La Bruyere, ... That many Persons have endeavoured to teach Men to write; but none have taught them to read'.⁴⁹ Her notion

⁴⁸ Barbauld, V, pp. 146, 147-48, Richardson to the Rev. Mark Hildesley, Sept 24, 1761.

⁴⁹ Dellwyn, I, xxxiv.

of reading does not stop at the mere passive act of going through pages. She further attempts to teach the reader how to apply what he or she has imbibed through reading. Indeed, she makes much of the application of knowledge to the reader's reflection and experience: 'Tis the application alone which gives value to any sort of knowledge, and renders it either useful or agreeable.'⁵⁰ Thus, she attempts to persuade the reader to participate in reading for moral improvement.

Wolfgang Iser's reception theory throws light on the mechanism of the reading process Sarah Fielding attempts to create. He argues that the reader, as an active participant in the composition of the meaning, is as significant as the author in the creation of the text. Seen from the position of the reader, realization of the self and its transformation take place when the reader recognizes dissimilitude between unfamiliar codes in the text and his or her own. Through this difference, the reader realizes the hitherto unknown aspects of himself or herself.⁵¹ Iser analyzes Henry Fielding's 'preoccupation with' the reader's role for 'the realization of the text': 'in Joseph Andrews the meaning is clearly waiting to be formulated.' Through the author's address to the reader, his reader is 'simply offered a frame of possible decisions'.⁵² Following Iser's approach to the act of reading, Susan K. Howard discusses Henry Fielding's use of this kind of technique in Amelia. She argues that 'the artistic and moral realization of the text is... dependent on communication between author and reader' and that 'the most productive relationship between author, text, and reader is one in which the author does not give the reader all he needs but

⁵⁰. Cry, I, p. 182.

⁵¹. Wolfgang Iser, The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response (London and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), pp. 152-59, 163-231.

⁵². Wolfgang Iser, The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), pp. 35, 46, 55.

challenges the reader to aid him in achieving the reality of the literary work'.⁵³ She relates the precariousness of the text created by such dependence to the uncertainty of 'modern' life.⁵⁴

These insights of Iser's and Howard's can be fruitfully applied to illuminate Sarah Fielding's narrative strategies. She is 'preoccupied' with the reader's role. She offers to share with the reader responsibility for constructing the text. However, her offer is accompanied by precaution. In effect, her idea of the reader's active participation puts more emphasis on the reader's transferring literary knowledge to his or her real life than on the construction of the meaning of the text. She knows the reader can assume freedom in interpretation. This awareness leads her into anxiety concerning the possible abuse of the reader's role. In consequence, her address to the reader is more straightforward than Henry Fielding's and she is more critically aware of the gap that can generate misunderstanding. I assume that her assertive appeal to the audience in this matter derives from the apprehension of an author equipped with both traditional cultural knowledge and an urgent wish to grasp the ~~current~~ ^{of the reading public} needs, rather than from the self-satisfaction of the author who represents the uncertainty of 'modern' life, in Howard's interpretation. Sarah Fielding articulates in her prefaces how she intends to direct the course of the reading process and represents in her text her anxieties about possible deviations on the reader's part. I deal with the former in this section, and the latter in sections IV and V.

In her first attempt at authorship, the only significant point Sarah Fielding makes about the work is that she regards it as a 'Moral

⁵³ Susan K. Howard, 'The Intrusive Audience in Fielding's *Amelia*', *Journal of Narrative Technique*, 17(1987): 287-88.

⁵⁴ Howard, 'The Intrusive Audience', 293-94; 'To exert too much force against this uncertainty is ... to fall away from a realistic and productive view of life' (294).

Romance'. She even hesitates to call it a 'Moral Romance' and leaves the categorization to the reader: 'or whatever Title the Reader shall please to give it'. She writes briefly and quits the 'Advertisement to the Reader', as if she would flee from the reader's scrutiny, by declaring that '[Success] must chiefly depend upon the Entertainment the world will find in the Book itself, and not upon what she can say in the Preface...' Nevertheless, this appellation, 'Moral Romance', suggests one fundamental aspect of her writing, the importance she lays on morality and didacticism. Her attention to the reader, 'the world', is already there. The reader is perceived as a positive agent who weighs the value of the work, by searching for entertainment in it. More importantly, in her perception, there are two kinds of readers, namely, 'the good-natured and candid Reader' and others who find 'the many Inaccuracies ... in the Style, and other Faults of the Composition'.⁵⁵ This perception of the different kinds of readers is mentioned unemphatically here, but is later to be developed into one of her major concerns.

In The Governess, Sarah Fielding for the first time declares her position openly in the dedication to Mrs Poyntz and in the 'Preface' to 'My young Readers', stating clearly what the author's intention is in this book.⁵⁶ Although the preface includes two stories to illustrate the folly of inappropriate attitudes in learning and the actual length given over to her opinions as the author is brief, this preface does suggest her desire to construct a certain kind of relationship between the reader and the book she is offering. In her opinion the reader should be conscious of the purpose of reading which is to improve the mind. In order to improve the mind by making use of books, the reader is supposed to prepare an appropriate condition of the mind, and once this is done,

⁵⁵ David Simple, first edition, Advertisement to the Reader.

⁵⁶ For details on Governess, see Chapter Four.

the principle of reading for instruction and entertainment at once is fulfilled:

Before you begin the following Sheets, I beg you will stop a Moment at this Preface, to consider with me, what is the true Use of Reading; and if you can once fix this Truth in your minds, namely, that the true Use of Books is to make you wiser and better, you will then have both Profit and Pleasure from what you read.⁵⁷

She makes use of this preface to suggest her concern for 'the true Use of Reading', which is to run through all her literary career. The phrase 'to make you wiser and better' is too broad and too much of a commonplace to have any special weight, but she not only mentions this, but demonstrates examples of reading practices throughout the text, and how she thinks reading should operate is gradually disclosed in The Governess and her other works.⁵⁸ Considering this phrase in the context of her overall concern about reading, its apparently casual expression begins to take on a larger significance. She has begun to use the preface to express herself directly to the reader on the topic of reading.⁵⁹

Her idea of 'the true Use of Reading' depends on her fundamental conception of the literary work, the construction of which involves both author and reader. She regards the construction of literature as follows: the author takes materials from nature, composing a text, from which the reader takes materials useful in practical life into consideration. To construct this kind of literature, the reader as well

⁵⁷. Governess, vii.

⁵⁸. Sarah Fielding regards education as the preparation of the reading attitude. See Chapter IV.

⁵⁹. The same year produced Remarks on Clarissa. This does not have a substantial prefatory statement, but the entire work testifies the same interest of hers. I shall deal with it in the next section.

as the author should be equipped with intellectual capacity and flexibility; the reader is expected to receive the observations, employing the same capacity with the author and the willingness to follow the intention of the author. The author employs his or her good moral judgment, and the reader is expected to do the same. The author makes his or her language and meanings clear, and the reader is expected to receive them as they are. Then, the reader is expected to make practical use of the knowledge of human nature which the author imparts.

In the introduction to The Cry, she declares her view of art, in which she is attentive to reading practices. There is a juxtaposition of the relationships between Nature and the poet and between the text and the reader. In the discussion of invention in The Cry, invention is understood as discovery; as writing is discovery by the poet from Nature, so is reading by the reader from the text.⁶⁰ As for what is to be discovered, she expresses her belief that there is a truth to be reached, whatever obstacles and deceptions lie between it and human beings.⁶¹ Quoting 'an ingenious author', Sarah Fielding explains that invention is not 'a creative faculty', or the power to imagine non-existent impossible things, but 'no more ... than discovery, or finding out; or to explain it at large, a quick and sagacious penetration into the true essence of all the objects of our contemplation.'⁶² The poet is distinguished from those who are inclined to 'a perverse shutting of this mental eye when we have not an inclination to perceive the things

⁶⁰. Cry, the prologue to part the third. A negative use of 'discovery' is also described in Cry, as discussed below: the Cry as the 'discoverer' of unintended meaning.

⁶¹. For the Augustan assumptions of nature and art, art as imitation of nature, and artist as recapitulator of the creative activity of Logos, see Martin C. Battestin, The Providence of Wit: Aspects of Forms in Augustan Literature and the Arts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), esp. pp. 49-54, 56-7; see also Maynard Mack, Alexander Pope: A Life (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), esp. pp. 173-4.

⁶². Cry, II, p. 1.

offered to our internal view.'⁶³

The role of the poet is explained again in Dellwyn; the terms 'imitators' and 'mimicks' as applied to the poet do not mean 'a Capacity at catching at some Peculiarity of Gesture or Behaviour':

But the Poets were considered as Imitators of Nature in a very different Light from that narrow and confined sense, as Searchers into the inmost Labyrinths of the human Mind; as penetrating the Force of different characteristic Bent of the various Dispositions of Men towards their conduct in Life, and then placing them in such Circumstances, as given an ample Field to display, by the Examples they bring into Action, the fatal effects of indulged Passions, and the happy Result of restraining all Passions and Tumults of the human Breast within the proper Limits prescribed by Reason;...⁶⁴

So, the first task of the writer is to explore and analyse the human mind and detect a particular ruling factor in it. She applies the Jonsonian conception of 'humours' to both the quintessential quality of the author and the characters the author describes. First, there is a 'humour'--what we might call an identity -- peculiar to the author, and this lies in the ability to disentangle the complexity of the human mind. She defines the author's activity as discerning the reigning Humour, or in another favourite phrase of hers, as clarifying 'a sort of Key to every Action': 'what we call Humour in an Author is the Capacity of penetrating that peculiar Quality', which in her quotation from Ben Jonson (1572/3-1637) 'Doth so possess a Man; that it doth draw / All his Affects, his Spirits, and his Powers, / In their Confluxions, all

⁶³. Cry, II, p. 2.

⁶⁴. Dellwyn, I, xvi-xvii.

to run one Way'.⁶⁵ Then, what such an author reaches for is:

that peculiar Quality, which hath taken such strong Possession of the Character he would represent to his Reader, that it in a great Degree flows through every Action of his Life, and even influences him in the Workings of all his Passions.⁶⁶

In her theory when such authors as are endowed with this penetrating capacity make use of it, they 'in ... very intelligible a Manner [acquaint] their Readers with the true Characteristic of their Heroes'.⁶⁷ Although human characters seem to be complicated, the complication is only the appearance and the simple truth is certainly hidden behind the façade, to be unravelled by insightful authors. Thus in this first function authors are explorers of the mind.

With this ability to represent clearly 'a sort of Key to every Action', the writer, in the second stage of composition, creates fictional circumstances which optimise the effects of the search. In Henry Fielding's analysis of her first work it was 'a vast Penetration into human Nature, a deep and profound Discernment of all the Mazes, Windings and Labyrinths' that was praised.⁶⁸ To this insight she adds a second aspect of the writer's role, that is, *placing* the results of her insight in such circumstances as will illuminate them. In this

⁶⁵ Dellwyn, I, xv, x. This idea was similar to Henry Fielding's. Mary Poovey maintains that 'the movement of [Henry] Fielding's fiction is not toward delineating the complexities of character, but toward the ultimate clarification of those essential qualities by which each character is defined' ('Journeys from This World to the Next: the providential promise in *Clarissa* and *Tom Jones*', *ELH* 43(1976): 309).

⁶⁶ Dellwyn, I, x-xi.

⁶⁷ The model writer in this respect is Plutarch for her. She finds his skill in presenting 'a Sort of Key to every Action' exemplified in his description of Alexander the Great (Dellwyn, I, xiv-xv).

⁶⁸ David Simple, p. 5.

function the author becomes a director of situations; for an organizing author, there are skeleton 'humours' at hand and what the writer does is to give them concrete circumstantial realization, rather than posing as the explorer of an unknown region in search of 'a key'. In other words, she is a controller of labyrinths rather than an explorer in the preparation for the composition of stories:

The Combination of Circumstances, which is necessary to display characteristic Humours, and set them a flowing into their proper Chanel, is at the Option of the Author; and when these Circumstances are judiciously chosen, the Fact will appear to the Reader not only as a Probability, but also will carry with it an Air of real Truth.⁶⁹

An author is, in her definition, able to discern the humours or various keys to the labyrinths of the human mind, and also able to create surrounding events and relationships which are 'judiciously chosen' 'within the proper Limits prescribed by Reason'. It is at the author's discretion how he or she manages the 'sort of Key' and its surroundings; in effect, the author can control the degree of the room for the reader's participation.

Then, it is the reader's turn to engage in invention: 'The reader also may be said to partake of the invention of the author, when he finds his own acquaintance in the true representations of nature.'⁷⁰ So, the invention of a text does not end when the poet has finished writing, but the reader is responsible for completing it. In order to derive a true observation from their participation, the reader must have a basic knowledge of human nature:

⁶⁹. Dellwyn, I, ix.

⁷⁰. Cry, II, p. 4.

here it may be observed, that as the Writer must be thoroughly acquainted with the Bent of the Dispositions of the Miser, the Lover, the Friend, and the Parent, before he can make any of them act with Propriety on this or any other Occasion, so must the Reader also have some Degree of Knowledge of them before he can judge truly whether they are represented right or wrong, or distinguish what is natural from the wild Fancies of the Poet's Brain.⁷¹

Her idea of collaboration with the reader requires of the reader the same discerning mind as the insight the author shows in detecting resemblances:

as it is requisite for a Writer, whenever he compares one Object to another, or illustrates a Thought by something else that resembles it, that he should first acquaint himself thoroughly with every minute Difference, lest he should confuse, instead of clearing his Meaning; so also it is necessary that the Reader, who delights in making Applications, should first be cautious in considering whether he hath informed himself of every circumstance relating to the Two Pictures which he would represent as like each other, before he draws the Parallel, ...⁷²

In addition to this preparatory knowledge, the reader needs candour, in just the same way the poet needs it in composing a text, because it is a quality required in the search for a truth:

I know not whether it would be too bold an assertion to say, that

⁷¹. Dellwyn, I, xiii.

⁷². Dellwyn, I, v.

candour makes capacity; yet it is I believe indisputably true, that by this alone it hath the power of fully exerting all its vigour....truth meets those who affectionately invite her, and is unattainable by none but those who detest her embraces, and fly her as their enemy.⁷³

In accordance with the degree of the author's endeavour to penetrate into the mind and discover the truth, the reader is requested to follow the same method. The author claims how sincerely she is trying to do so, expecting hopefully the reader will do the same. In Pope's (or partly Samuel Johnson's (1709-84)) words: 'A candid judge will read each piece of wit,/With the same spirit that its author writ.'⁷⁴

The reader's role is not confined to the discernment of wisdom on the surface of the text. Sarah Fielding focuses on the reader's active use of reading, stressing the importance of the function of reading to induce the reader's self-reflection. She declares that her aim is to 'enrich [the mind] with ... copious Instruction, or ... engagingly tempt it to look into, and know itself'.⁷⁵ She repeats her emphasis on the activity of looking into one's own mind which reading induces, and

⁷³. Cry, I, pp. 13, 14.

⁷⁴. Pope's 'An Essay on Criticism' quoted in Johnson's Dictionary as an example of the use of 'candid'. The Twickenham Edition reads as follows:
A perfect Judge will read each Work of Wit
With the same Spirit that its Author writ, (ll. 233-34)
Pastoral Poetry and An Essay on Criticism ed. E. Audra and Aubrey Williams, vol I of The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope general ed., John Butt (London: Methuen, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), p. 266; a study of 1709 manuscript compared with 1711, 1713, 1717, 1736, 1744, and 1751 editions shows there is no edition where the 'perfect' was replaced with 'candid'. See Robert M. Schmitz, Pope's Essay on Criticism 1709: A Study of the Bodleian Manuscript Text with Facsimiles, Transcripts, and Variants (St. Louis: Washington University Press, 1962), p. 46; for Pope's ideas about critics in 'An Essay on Criticism' and its reception, see for example, Mack, Alexander Pope, pp. 167-84.

⁷⁵. Cleopatra and Octavia, i.

declares that she aspires to write such works that 'give us juster Notions of ourselves'.⁷⁶

Thus she insists that the reader should recognize his or her own role in collaborating with the writer and in completing the process initiated by the author. Her idea of literature as collaboration between the author and the reader represents both her promotion of the reader's active participation and her desire to control the text. The preface works as the author's dual message to the reader; she states that she respects the reader's freedom, and she also articulates that she wishes to control and limit the scope of the freedom. In other words, she offers, on one hand, to share the responsibility of constructing the text with the reader. On the other hand, she maintains that the reader should grasp the same thing that the author has seized as an 'invention' or 'discovery'.

The chronology of her literary career shows that this assertiveness in the definition of the process of reading declined toward the end of her career. As the affirmation of innovativeness diminished after The Cry, so did the strong claim on the reader's participation after Dellwyn. Accordingly her work did not draw readers into the once proposed mechanism of reading. In the last two works, Ophelia and a translation of Xenophon, the prefaces have dwindled in length and importance. In Ophelia the author of David Simple disguises herself for the first time as an editor of the text, claiming that she found a draft, the authenticity of which she claims she cannot verify. So, Sarah Fielding hides behind this discovered manuscript convention; she does not speak to the reader directly. She seems to have given up persuading the reader of the attraction and merits she has emphasized. The advertisement is followed by an introduction, where the supposed author dwells pleadingly on the necessity of probing into the most minute

⁷⁶. Cleopatra and Octavia, iii.

details in epistolary writing, rather than on the question of reading process.⁷⁷ The author's voice is internalized in the text as Ophelia's thinking about her own writing. Through this design, the author indirectly appeals to the reader to take notice of her moral intention; the advertisement and the introduction point to the importance of Ophelia's moral observations: the reader is expected to notice 'the reflections scattered throughout the book', 'an exact account of...my thoughts' and 'the impressions I received'.⁷⁸ However, one contemporary reader, Lady Bradshaigh, paid no attention to 'the reflections'. She was interested in the events which she did not think highly of: 'uncomon, full of very odd, I am afraid some of them, unnatural Circumstances, a Most Romantic opening'.⁷⁹ Richardson 'did open this Book, but read it not'. He gives the reason for not having read it; he asked the opinion of two of his daughters who 'made no such a Report of it, as excited my Curiosity'.⁸⁰

IV. Readers' Reactions

Considering the importance laid on the reader's participation in the text, it is no wonder that Sarah Fielding should be attentive to the way the text is received. Throughout her literary career, especially explicit in the two long prefaces, Sarah Fielding presents herself as a writer who attends to the reader's needs. She is concerned not only about what she wants to write, but also about the aftercare of the text, the way the reader will behave. Of course, the reader did

⁷⁷. Ophelia, introduction, no page number.

⁷⁸. Ophelia, advertisement and introduction, no page number.

⁷⁹. FM XI f 266-67, Lady Bradshaigh to Richardson, June 8 1760.

⁸⁰. FM XI f. 268, Richardson to Lady Bradshaigh, 20 June 1760.

not always receive her message as she intended. For example, David Simple Volume the Last intends to show, however pessimistically, the fortitude and inward happiness of virtuous people in whatever circumstance. But Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, for one, did not read it in that way. She is well aware of what the claimed intention is, but consciously refuses to follow it. Her reading is not parodic as Henry Fielding's reading of Pamela to produce Shamela, but she cynically interprets the story as a warning against simplicity and trustfulness rather than recognizing inward happiness embraced by the simple and trusting characters in their unfortunate situation. She wrote to Lady Bute (1718-94): '[David Simple Volume the Last] conveys a usefull moral (tho' [the author] does not seem to have intended it); I mean, shews the ill consequences of not providing against Casual losses, which happen to almost every body.'⁸¹ A later publisher or editor of an abridged David Simple understood the essence of the story in a similar manner. The original emphasis on the importance and possibility of true friendship is changed into a warning against wickedness, or the need to be vigilant, to protect oneself by knowing the cunning and deceitful nature of people. This abridged edition's subtitle is: 'With the many droll and whimsical tricks that were played him by those he confided in. Intended as an Example for young People not to put too much Confidence in hasty Friendship.'⁸²

Sarah Fielding had in mind the need to pay attention to the perception of the reader. She not only declares her concern about reading but she even turns the readers' responses into text as examples of various reactions. One example is seen in the description of the development of the reading attitude in The Governess, which I shall

⁸¹. The Complete Letters, III, p. 67.

⁸². The Remarkable and Surprising Adventures of David Simple; Containing an Account of his Travels through the Cities of London and Westminster, in the Search of a Real Friend (London: R. Snagg, 1775).

discuss later; another is in Remarks on Clarissa issued in the same year. And this perspective is expanded in The Cry.

In Iser's reading, Richardson's invitation for the reader to construct the meaning is weak, as his text leaves less to the reader to decide, in comparison with Henry Fielding's.⁸³ Contrary to his reading, Tom Keymer argues that Richardson, especially in Clarissa, leaves the meaning to be constructed by the reader, and attempts to re-cast the understanding and sentiment of the reader. Richardson effaces the author's presence but his manipulation of the reader is still working. This apparent contradiction is to be resolved by making use of the nature of epistolary technique: the reader is thrown into the imminent situation of the character and asked to exert his or her own moral judgement in the character's situation simulated as his or her own trial. When reading, the reader is involved in the process of crystallizing the thought and sentiment which exist latent in himself or herself. The reader follows the feelings of the character and simultaneously judges the character's behaviour. The room for the reader's judgment is supplied by the unreliability of an individual's perception illuminated by Richardson's use of multiple letter writers. Thus Richardson attempts to gain a moral and didactic control consistent with the 'authorising' of the reader. Here his expectation is that the reader is led to exercise good judgement which remains latent unless he or she is thrown into the virtual situation.⁸⁴

Sarah Fielding responded to this text in her private letter to Richardson and also in a published text.⁸⁵ In both she expressed her

⁸³. Iser, The Implied Reader, pp. 29-56.

⁸⁴. For Richardson's use of multiple epistolary form to draw the reader into the created world and induce their judgment, and the degree of success in his expectation of the reader's response, see Tom Keymer, Richardson's Clarissa and the Eighteenth-Century Reader (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

⁸⁵. For her letter to Richardson, see Battestin and Probyn, p. 123.

admiration for Clarissa and asked for his approval of her candour and good understanding of the work. To use her concept of the reading process, she took an opportunity to participate as a reader in bringing Richardson's text to completion. Apart from the private letter, the publication of Remarks on Clarissa has a particular significance. This is her experimental transformation of the reader's role into writing. It explores layers of the relationship between the text and the reader. By writing down the possible or actual reaction of the readers, and presenting it to Richardson, who was revising Clarissa, she is supposed to have contributed to the re-making of the book. The sample readers in Remarks on Clarissa not only interpret the text, but also had the possibility of becoming involved in the expansion of the text and to be able to assist other readers in reading the text of Clarissa.⁸⁶ In this sense the possibility of the role of the reader is enlarged here. On the other hand, however, this is a means to regulate and define the reader's response. So the enlargement of the writer's role is also pursued at the same time. She publicly assumes the role of judging and defining an appropriate reading attitude. In this dimension she insists that the reader should try to grasp the author's intention. Her point is the same as the one she articulates in her prefaces, but what is achieved here is that she places herself in the position of the reader. This can be seen as her anxiety about indeterminacy in his text. So this is a sign of her concern, or rather overconcern, with the reader's response.

It is true that the obvious purpose of Remarks on Clarissa is to speak for the author of Clarissa and show her appreciation for his achievement.⁸⁷ However, more importantly, it is an expression of Sarah

⁸⁶. Introduction by Peter Sabor to a reprint of Remarks on Clarissa (Los Angeles: the Augustan Reprint Society, 1985), vi.

⁸⁷. Richardson showed it to Stinstra, Clarissa's Dutch translator. Stinstra wrote to Richardson: 'I was also most delighted to read the

Fielding's interest in the readers' reactions. Whole pages are devoted to the reactions of Clarissa's readers, ranging from banal objections to the very sympathetic response. The writer addresses herself to Richardson, reporting people's opinions on Clarissa she has overheard in conversation and read in letters. Objections are raised about its length, the doubtful usefulness of the details of a private family's story, characterization, Clarissa's faults and so on. Mostly Miss Gibson, a mouthpiece of the author of Remarks, tries to persuade the other interlocutors to understand Richardson's intentions, defending his prolixity and Clarissa's actions. Bellario, one of the participants in the conversation, is especially impressed by her understanding of the fiction and praises her for having persuaded him to appreciate Clarissa better.

Not only does the focus on the reader's understanding of the author's intentions dominate the scenes of the conversation in Remarks on Clarissa, but indeed the characters articulate attention to that matter and try to show their grasp of the author's intention: 'it plainly appears, the Author's Intention is to impress deeply on the Reader's mind, the peculiar Character of each Person in that family whence his Heroine is derived...'; 'story is considered by the Author, as he says in his Preface, but as the vehicle to convey the more necessary Instruction'; 'Mrs. Harlow's Faults might not be thrown on the Author, unless it could be proved that he himself intended her Conduct should

criticisms of Clarissa (Remarks, etc.), which you have shown to have come from feminine hands. When the need arises to dispel similar objections, if perchance they turn up here, it will be easy to translate them into Dutch' (The Richardson-Stinstra Correspondence and Stinstra's Prefaces to Clarissa, ed. William C. Slattery (London and Amsterdam: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969), p. 10. Peter Sabor in his introduction to Remarks on Clarissa regards this as 'not a conventional critical work'. He argues that Sarah Fielding starts as an awkward critic, turning soon to a practised novelist (v, vi-vii). Linda Bree regards Remarks on Clarissa as Sarah Fielding's reading of a reinforcement of her own moral concerns.

deserve no Censure'; 'I think the author has a just Right to be heard out before his Heroine is condemned'; 'if I can guess any Thing of the Author's Intention by what is already published, ...'; 'Miss Gibson was so much pleased with seeing Bellario enter so heartily into the design of the Author of *Clarissa*'; 'nor am I ashamed to confess, that the Author's Design is more noble, and his Execution of it much happier, than I even suspected till I had seen the whole'.⁸⁸ They put forth in chorus that the most important thing in reading is to probe into and judge the author's intentions. And only after the reader grasps the true meaning of the author, can the characters, the work, and 'the Management of his whole Story' be judged.⁸⁹ A reader of good taste, Bellario, reaches a whole-hearted agreement with Richardson by the help of a conversation he has had, especially with Miss Gibson, so much so that he writes that 'to say more on that Head would be but repeating [the author's] Words'.⁹⁰

The notion of the author's intention can work as a versatile weapon. So it is implied that it is susceptible to abuse. Even Miss Gibson, who is the foremost advocate of *Clarissa* and the grasp of the author's intention, is reminded of its importance by another lady. This lady attributes what she thinks is Miss Gibson's inaccurate idea of companionate marriage to her insufficient understanding of the author's moral intention. She thinks that Miss Gibson cannot approve of Mr Hickman because she is misled by the cheerfulness and wit of Lovelace and consequently cannot grasp the author's moral instruction that a Mr Hickman would make a good husband:

Ah! Miss Gibson, replied the Lady, in every Word you speak, you prove how necessary the Author's Moral is to be strongly

⁸⁸. Remarks on Clarissa, pp. 8, 9, 17, 18, 29, 34.

⁸⁹. Remarks on Clarissa, p. 31.

⁹⁰. Remarks on Clarissa, p. 49.

inculcated; when even your serious and thoughtful turn of Mind will not suffer you to see through the Glare of what you call Humour and Spirit with that Clearness which would enable you to distinguish how very seldom that Humour and Spirit is bestowed on a Wife.⁹¹

When asked which she would choose, a Lovelace or a Mr Hickman, Miss Gibson is lost for words. Seeing this, the judicious Bellario intervenes, referring again to the design of the author. He transforms the argument from the choice between wit and insipidity into the necessity of a solid basis for a character:

If I had not thought so before, I should now be convinced by this Conversation, how judicious the Author of Clarissa was in setting forth so very strongly as he does, the Necessity of Sobriety and Goodness in a Husband, in order to render a married State happy.... The steady Principles of Mr. Hickman was a firm Basis to depend on, for Protection and good Usage.⁹²

In order to argue this, he declares his admiration for Richardson's shrewd perception of women's prejudice against a Mr. Hickman and regards his treatment of Mr Hickman as a timely warning and amendment to curb their inclinations. In short, he switches the focus from the estimation of a character to an appreciation of the discretion of the author in representing a fundamentally reliable quality of a man, which is almost impossible to argue against. And the key concept of his argument is also the appreciation of the author's design.

The participants in the conversation project their own

⁹¹. Remarks on Clarissa, p. 28.

⁹². Remarks on Clarissa, pp. 28-9.

situations onto the characters in the story, and accordingly defend or criticize them. Sarah Fielding induces both sympathetic identification with fictional characters and divestment of them; the mediating point lies in whether or not the reader can learn properly from them. Although an identification can enhance the reader's involvement, in this work she lays more emphasis on the distorting effect of such a projection which prevents impartiality in the reader. For example, an old gentleman with a rheumatic pain ascribes the perversity of Clarissa's father to his pains, conflating his own pain and rough attitude with those of Mr Harlowe. The lady quoted above, who embarrasses Miss Gibson about Mr. Hickman, has three marriageable daughters; thus her opinion is affected by her own standpoint as a mother who seeks for steadiness and reliability in potential sons-in-law. A ridiculous consequence of narrow interest is illustrated by the story of a man whose only attention is concentrated on a peripheral part of the whole, 'the Skirts of the Saddle', when he looks at a fine picture.⁹³ This is an extreme example of too restricted association. The ideal commentators, Miss Gibson and Bellario, are described as readers who are open-minded and receptive, free from such narrowness.

Among other things, the participants agree that Richardson is successful in presenting his heroine to his reader as if Clarissa were a real person, although all understand that the story is fiction. A crucial part of the author's intention is understood as that of inducing the reader to think about the character of the heroine. In this respect of the presentation of his heroine as a character of reality and inviting the readers to become involved and to judge for themselves, a point which Keymer argues is Richardson's aim, the author is successful and the readers created by Sarah Fielding implicitly comply with his intention. Opinions about Clarissa's character vary so much that it is difficult

⁹³. Remarks on Clarissa, pp. 12-3.

to begin a defensive argument. But at least people agree in the presupposition that she is different from other imaginative heroines, and the verisimilitude and intimacy invite lively discussion: that Clarissa 'is treated like an intimate Acquaintance by all her Readers, the Author may thank himself for. I dare say, the authors of Cassandra, Clelia, with numberless others I could name, were never in any danger of having their Heroines thought on, or treated like human Creatures'.⁹⁴

Thus, while pointing out Richardson's various technical and moral achievements by describing readers' reactions, Sarah Fielding emphasizes the importance of understanding the author's true intention and leads her readers to appreciate his work. At the same time, she is concerned with the way her own work is received and the way her intention is understood and misunderstood. A similar idea about the importance of understanding the author's intention is found in one of Jane Collier's letters. Her letter to Richardson shows that she supports him in his description of the fire scene in Clarissa with explanations of the reason why it is necessary for the story of Clarissa, how effective it is to illustrate the heroine's virtue, how judicious the author is to choose Lovelace to report it, and so on.⁹⁵ By addressing to the author all these sympathetic analyses, Jane Collier takes upon herself the part of an ideal representative of an author, a very sympathetic critic, or an exemplary 'candid reader'. She is keen on showing the author that she understands what the writer wants the reader to do in reading. She wrote to Richardson:

should any Improper Ideas arise in my Mind, I shall always condemn myself and know that it can proceed from no Reason but not keeping within the Bounds you intended to prescribe; but this is only

⁹⁴. Remarks on Clarissa, pp. 14-5.

⁹⁵. FM XV 24/8, Jane Collier to Richardson, 9 July 1749.

judging for myself; and I pretend not to affirm what Deference other People ought to pay to a Person who has shown such an unbounded knowledge of human Nature!⁹⁶

Jane Collier complacently and gratifyingly pays attention to the intention of the author, 'the Bounds [the author] intended to prescribe'. This attitude complies with the role of an ideal reader defined by Sarah Fielding in the point of receptiveness and willingness to find the author's laudable intentions. She plays the parts of a sympathetic mouthpiece of the author, an understanding critic, and a 'candid reader' of Clarissa in Remarks on Clarissa.

In stark contrast with this kind of an understanding reader, an image of perverse readers haunted Sarah Fielding's imagination:

such a favourable construction on any one's words or actions, never enter'd into the head or heart of the Cry; whose favourite employment is to hunt for some absurdity or contradiction in the words and sentiments of all those who will not enlist themselves amongst their numerous train.⁹⁷

They are an audience in whose minds flourish 'Improper Ideas' far beyond 'the Bounds' intended by the author. In exposing the folly of this ill-intentioned misunderstanding, Sarah Fielding created 'the Cry'.

V. Word-Abusers

The second edition of David Simple, issued soon after the first,

⁹⁶. FM XV, 24/8 , Jane Collier to Richardson, 9 July 1749.

⁹⁷. Cry, I, p. 116.

did not bear Sarah Fielding's brief 'Advertisement to the Reader', but Henry Fielding replaced it with his own.⁹⁸ There he denies the attribution of its authorship to him and in the course of his analysis warmly recommends the work of 'one so nearly and dearly allied to' him.⁹⁹ Tactfully he admits that he is conscious that the author's technical faults are easy to detect and that her skill in 'a vast Penetration into human Nature' is not so easy to discern. His subtle strategy is to invent an imaginary harsh critic, born from his apprehension and protective affection for his sister: 'I believe the warmth of my Friendship hath led me to engage a critic of my own Imagination only: for I should be sorry to conceive such a one had any real Existence.'¹⁰⁰ By stressing his warm affection, he apparently disguises his anxiety, but in fact prohibiting the reader to be such a harsh critic, he steers the reader's reaction. Incidentally, such a critic was also to haunt Sarah Fielding's imagination.¹⁰¹

Sarah Fielding pays considerable attention to the danger of the distortion of meaning, the importance of extracting the author's intention, and the importance of the development of moral values in reading activities.¹⁰² Keymer perceptively argues that in Clarissa

⁹⁸. John J. Richetti maintains that Henry Fielding's condescending preface reveals the perception of women's marginality as speakers, as it acknowledges that Sarah Fielding lacks in 'quite simply everything normally required of a writer: art, learning, and experience' (264); see 'Voice and Gender in Eighteenth-Century Fiction: Haywood to Burney', Studies in the Novel 19(1987): 263-64.

⁹⁹. David Simple, p. 5.

¹⁰⁰. David Simple, pp. 5-6.

¹⁰¹. She describes would-be critics, notably in David Simple (pp. 82-91) and Familiar Letters (II, Letters XX, XXI) and asks the reader not to be a critic who has insufficient candour to accept the author's intention in the prefaces to Cry and Dellwyn.

¹⁰². For Henry Fielding's awareness of corruption of language, see Glenn W. Hatfield, Henry Fielding and the Language of Irony (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1968), esp., pp. 7-53.

Richardson provides a chaos of language through a plurality of writers, throwing the reader into the confusion of mock experience and letting the reader judge.¹⁰³ Richardson, however, was disappointed to find that his expectation was not fully answered; he realized that he relied too much on the reader to construct the meaning out of the chaos of language he provides.¹⁰⁴ The Cry exposes the misunderstanding of the audience and it is vigilant and hostile toward an audience susceptible to misinterpretation or distortion of words.¹⁰⁵ It is critically aware of the abusers of language and alert to the unreliability of the audience.

Although the attention of contemporary readers was apt to be drawn to the plot of Portia's story as represented by Richardson's comment, I should like to invite attention to 'the Cry', which the author made the title role. This mass of people, 'the Cry' itself, contributes to the inventiveness of the work. But not only that. This mostly nameless herd of people play an important part; they are a thoughtless audience introduced into the very body of the text. The whole work, The Cry, shows the author's sense of the dangers of misinterpretation and her plea for an understanding reception of the meanings she provides. In short, as I have suggested above, the entire work of The Cry is an expansion of her concern about the stances of the writer and the reader, and the grasp of the meaning by the reader. Lady Bradshaigh, a keen reader and frequent and intimate correspondent with Richardson, did not fail to recognize the importance of 'the Cry'. Although hers may not be a reading the author intended, she is clearly influenced by the author's idea of an ill-natured audience. She is critical of this work

¹⁰³. Keymer, Richardson's Clarissa, esp. pp. 239-44.

¹⁰⁴. Keymer, Richardson's Clarissa, p. 248.

¹⁰⁵. In David Simple as well, she draws attention to the susceptibility of language to distortion by describing the wayward construction of meaning favoured by Livia, a scheming step mother of Camilla and Valentine, and Mrs Orgueil, a type figure of affectation (David Simple, pp. 144, 153, 408, 410).

and cannot help regarding herself as one of the perverse critics and consequently as a member of 'the Cry'.¹⁰⁶ As she finds faults in the work, she is afraid of becoming 'a pretender to Criticism'; and she ironically admits: 'I am Sorry, but I certainly saw myself more than once amongst the detestable Cry'.¹⁰⁷

The Cry are a mass of people who gather together when they have a common enemy. They do not like the frank manner of Portia's speech and are inclined to distort what she says. Their method of distortion is quite simple; they ignore what they do not want to hear:

Sometimes their looks indicated an insipid inattention, and then would they gape and stare as if they were asking each other the meaning of all the nonsense, as they pleased to term it, which Portia had been talking.¹⁰⁸

They realize that something is wrong in communication, but they do not accept that they are to blame. They obstinately accuse Portia of nonsense: 'they all let themselves hard at work at proving that the fault lay not in their want of candour or capacity, but in her want of meaning'.¹⁰⁹ They do not accept words as the speaker intends; instead, whenever they catch a word which they want to discuss, they cling to it, ignoring the context altogether. Portia notices what the Cry are doing to her words and wants to make it known to themselves:

¹⁰⁶. One of the reasons for her objection to the author of Cry derives from the rivalry between Richardson and Fielding: 'I think she seems to favour the author of Joseph Andrews, that is the thing I least like in her' (FM XI, f. 249).

¹⁰⁷. FM XI f.94, Lady Bradshaigh to Richardson, March 16 1754.

¹⁰⁸. Cry, I, p. 41.

¹⁰⁹. Cry, II, p. 173.

It is not in the power of the most labour'd eloquence, fairly to extort such a conclusion from my words, ... Such wresting false conclusions from plain and simple expressions is your refuge, O ye foolish Cry, from beholding truth.¹¹⁰

She is vigilant to their reaction, asking them: 'Why, O ye Cry, do you by leaving out my words, and putting in your own, entirely change my meaning?'.¹¹¹ They react perversely and accuse Portia:

They twisted and wrested Portia's words into a thousand different meanings, which she never so much as thought of; they repeated their whole catalogue of abusive terms, which they always keep ready to fly to, when any the least ray of truth strikes on their eyes, and concluded with a general declaration, that they believed such romantic stuff as fill'd the head of Portia, was never before thought of by any human creature.

In order to prove [Portia] absurd in her expressions, [the Cry] turn'd and twisted [the word generosity which Portia has just mentioned] every way, and confused and entangled themselves in their own various conceptions.¹¹²

The Cry are, what the author calls, 'discoverers' in conversation, 'whose chief view is indeed the discovery of some absurdity, which they hunt for with as much eagerness, as sportsmen hunt for their chace'.¹¹³ A discoverer of absurdity is compared with a candid listener who is willing to follow the speaker's meaning and logic:

^{110.} Cry, I, p. 52.

^{111.} Cry, I, p. 54.

^{112.} Cry, I, pp. 59, 86-7.

^{113.} Cry, I, p. 117.

Whereas what I call a discoverer, sets out in his search with an inclination to some particular point; he leads his judgment in chains, gives a loose to his imagination, and is sure to prove (at least to his own satisfaction) that the new and desired discovery is made.

A discoverer is continually talking false logic; he multiplies words till he himself (as well as his hearers) hath lost all traces of the true and natural deductions of reasoning.¹¹⁴

The Cry, discoverers, are 'not endeavouring to understand her words, but to censure them; not to examine her sentiments, but to load them with abuse'.¹¹⁵

It is the author's sense of precariousness in the relationship between the writer and the reader that is projected in the interaction between the speaker and the audience in The Cry. Although she attributes all the misinterpretations to the ridiculous ill-nature of the Cry, she recognizes that the nature of language itself permits such constructions and misinterpretation, and she is especially attentive to the threats by the mass of people and unknown and unfamiliar readers of her text. Just as the Cry, a garrulous mass of people, annoys the speaker in their text, so the author is threatened by supposed perverse and morose critics. 'The Cry' and 'critics' are thought to be one and the same category of people just as Lady Bradshaigh identified herself when she finds faults in the book with 'a pretender to Criticism' as well as 'the Cry'. The author, at the beginning of the preface to The Cry, accuses the readers who read in order to find fault in books (she calls them critics). In her perception, the reader can extract from books what he or she seeks

¹¹⁴. Cry, I, p. 119.

¹¹⁵. Cry, II, p. 172.

for; he or she can be one of the 'Cry' in reading. She warns the reader not to be a perverse critic, who is anticipated in the description of the audience embodied as the Cry, twisters of language, 'discoverers' in conversation. Thus she appeals to a candid reader who, without prejudice, is willing to receive what the writer means to convey.

In Dellwyn again, Sarah Fielding shows her interest in the interpretation of languages, communication, and the act of reading. The author describes a refined manner of abusive attack, 'of polite Invention'.¹¹⁶ Here she points out the practice of a pernicious use of double-edged language by a speaker, in addition to her usual warnings against misinterpretation on the recipient's side. The deterioration of the relationship between Lord and Lady Dellwyn is traced in terms of the way in which they exchange language. In the first stage of their rift, 'Hums and Ha's, and Gapings, composed the greatest Part of the sounds' in their conversation and they cannot bear tête-à-tête communication.¹¹⁷ Then, Lord and Lady Dellwyn proceed to the second stage. Lord Dellwyn, praising Mrs Saunders, talks at Lady Dellwyn. This method of 'talking at' somebody is explained in the chapter called 'Several Methods of conveying our Ideas, by diversifying the Use of Language'.¹¹⁸ 'Three Ways of Communication of the human Species by Speech' are categorized as first, 'talking face to face', secondly, 'talking of one another when absent' and thirdly, 'talking at one another'. The last method is explained as follows:

The Third is a Kind of a middle Way between both [the preceding two ways]; which, according as it is managed, may be turned to

¹¹⁶. Dellwyn, I, p. 141.

¹¹⁷. Dellwyn, I, 116. Another married couple (the Saunders) is introduced to make a strong contrast, whose mutual affection makes 'the Addition of more Company' 'never necessary to their Happiness' (Dellwyn, I, 142).

¹¹⁸. Dellwyn, chap. XIV.

any Purpose. It is a Method of talking at one another; that is, when we make Choice of some absent Person, whose Character we describe, intending thereby covertly to convey our Thoughts of some of the present Company; and by this means we may either make a Compliment so elegant, as to extract from it every gross or fulsome Part, or dart the most malignant Satire on any of our Companions; which, should they attempt seriously to resent, it is easy to stare, wonder what they mean, and thus skulk behind the absent Person, whose Name is borrowed on these Occasions, . . .¹¹⁹

This method of sly insult with 'little some Covering' is followed by selfish soliloquies and by 'The Language Contradictory' with 'more open Defiance'.¹²⁰ This manner of 'matrimonial Dialect' is now concerned with the recipient's part in communication. They willingly find fault with, and construct offensive insults in, each other's words:

now if the most apparent truths had come from Lord Dellwyn's Lips, his speaking them, like a magic Wand, had the Power of transforming them into the most glaring falsehoods in the Eyes of his Lady; . . . On the other hand Lord Dellwyn could trace the most ridiculous Absurdities in every Expression of his Lady's, and constantly deduced some sort of Satire, or evil Meaning, from her Words, even when there was none in her Thoughts.¹²¹

This couple willingly misunderstand and distort the looks and words of each other, just as 'the Cry' distort what Portia says.

Another instance of abuse of language is embodied in Mr Lucum.

¹¹⁹. Dellwyn, I, pp. 140-41.

¹²⁰. Dellwyn, I, p. 216.

¹²¹. Dellwyn, I, pp. 217, 218.

Lord Dellwyn's intention to obtain a divorce brings about a loss of favour for the father of Lady Dellwyn, and consequently despair in all his ambitions political and financial as well as in his intended remarriage. His ambition is totally frustrated and he vents his indignation through writing. One addressee is his daughter, the cause of both the enhancement and the disappointment of his ambition, to whom he continually writes 'the most enraged Letter he could dictate'; familiar letters turn to a means of cursing and insulting.¹²² He finds another channel in political writing. He makes of himself a political writer, who in this context of exaggeration, is a most ridiculous abuser of words:

He ... threw forth his inward Spleen at every Man in Power; which Power was itself the Mark at which he shot, without distinguishing who or what the Man was at whom he levelled his Satire, more properly called Ribaldry.¹²³

The consequence is a flood of words which not only no longer properly communicate but also prevent communication, so that 'he buried the plainest Matters of Fact so deeply under a Redundancy of Words, that they could no longer be perceived even by the clearest Understanding' and he lives a life of 'Phrenzy or Distraction'.¹²⁴ He is like a discoverer, as explained in The Cry, who 'multiplies words till he himself (as well as his hearers) hath lost all traces of the true and natural deductions of reasoning'.¹²⁵

^{122.} Dellwyn, II, p. 286.

^{123.} Dellwyn, II, pp. 286-87.

^{124.} Dellwyn, II, pp. 287, 285.

^{125.} Dellwyn, I, p. 119.

VI. The Ways of Reading

In Dellwyn reading is given an important role: reading as a stimulus to contemplation and an inducement to self-analysis. When Miss Lucum reads with her father in retired tranquillity, she enjoys reading very much. Her father's bitter disappointment as a discouraged politician influences her early way of life and way of reading. From him she learns to enjoy satire, the butts of which are eminent people in the active world which he has reluctantly given up; thus she gets used to being a detached reader of a remote world. On the one hand, this gives her the benefit of acquiring a habit of reading, which helpfully employs her time in retirement. On the other, he is a person who cannot get rid of a sense of having been wrongfully treated, and cannot truly direct himself to a contemplative retired life. As a result of having a person like him as a reading companion, this habit of reading does not help her after she quits her retired life in the country.

When she realizes she has to 'live a Lye' in her marriage to Lord Dellwyn, reading turns into an unwelcome revealer of her own folly. The narrator analyses her state of mind: 'to peruse, with Pleasure, true Picture of Nature, requires either a clear or a hardened Conscience' and she has neither.¹²⁶ She feels she herself is an embodiment of what the writers disapprovingly unmask:

mostly she disliked those Authors who have penetrated deeply into the intricate Paths of vanity in the human Mind; for in them her own Folly was continually brought to her Remembrance, and presented to her View, that, like the Clown in the Play, whenever any Person was to be set down as Ass, she could not help saying, tho' perhaps only inwardly (That's I); but such an Acknowledgement

¹²⁶. Dellwyn, I, p. 103.

was always accompanied by a very displeasing Sensation.¹²⁷

She is ashamed of herself, seeing that the follies in the books apply to her: 'Reading was like setting a Glass before her, which represented her to herself in so many deformed Lights, that she could not bear the disagreeable View.'¹²⁸ She has the sensibility--or 'neither a clear or a hardened Conscience'-- to feel ashamed in seeing her character revealed as ugly in the 'Glass'. Lady Dellwyn is responding in part to the example of 'those Authors who have penetrated deeply into the intricate Paths of vanity in the human Mind'; she receives the message of those authors that the way she lives deserves laughter, scorn, or misery. Nevertheless, she is unable to change her situation by the help of a realization of her faults through reading, unlike the girls in The Governess.¹²⁹ The very vanity, the cause of her shame, leads her to escape from confrontation with the revealed self. which would raise 'a very displeasing Sensation', 'the disagreeable View'. This flight only drives her to be caught by vanity still further and to be made still more unhappy. As it makes her reflect, she avoids reading at present. Yet she retains memories acquired by the reading in the past. They serve her not in reflection but in imagining herself as a victim by placing her in the part of an afflicted heroine.

Secondly, reading provides instances of how to express sentiments. This role is illustrated by two negative examples. One example is Lady Dellwyn: hers is an exaggerated use of expressions learned by superficial reading in the company of her father. As she read widely in her retirement in her youth, she has much literature at her command.

¹²⁷. Dellwyn, I, p. 102.

¹²⁸. Dellwyn, I, p. 103.

¹²⁹. As I shall argue in Chapter Four, reading and listening to stories is allotted an important role in the improvement of the pupils.

Misuse of 'the tragic Lamentation of poetic Writers' provides her with a means to alleviate her anger and at once deepens her misery:

Her Memory supplied her with abundance of tragic Expressions, by which means she in some measure vented her Passions, otherwise she might have been in Danger of either being choked, or of bursting with inward Vexation. Instead of gaining any Repose, for a Refreshment to her fatigued and wearied Spirits, she was raving about her Apartment, performing the Part of a tragic Queen, and heroically lamenting her own hard Fortune, as blank Verse or Rhyme occurred to her remembrance, being perfectly convinced that her Fate was very peculiarly unhappy.¹³⁰

The reading in the past of a father and a daughter in their retirement has merely prepared for the father to become an abuser of language, and for the daughter to persuade herself that she is like a tragic queen.¹³¹ The cause of her 'tragedy' was merely that Lord Clermont led Lady Fanny to her chair. The author makes an ironical apology: 'however inadequate to raise such a mental Tumult as this may seem, yet many State Revolutions have at first arisen from Causes as minute, and as apparently trifling'.¹³²

In contrast with Lady Dellwyn's abundant memory for expressions, Lord Dellwyn is free from such adaptations. When Captain Drummond is playing the role of Iago, Lord Dellwyn has no chance of finding a parallel role, because he has not read Othello: 'The noble Peer had never condescended to read any thing so trifling as Shakespeare's Plays'. Or because he has not learned the 'true use of reading', that is, the

¹³⁰. Dellwyn, II, pp. 29, 31-2.

¹³¹. In an earlier part of the story, Mr Lucum likens her also to 'a Queen in a Tragedy' (Dellwyn, I, p. 58).

¹³². Dellwyn, II, p. 32.

application of knowledge: 'if he had perused them, there was no manner of Danger that he should know the Characters again in real Life'.¹³³ Here, Lord Dellwyn is doubly incapable of making use of reading. First of all, he is too 'noble' to read Shakespeare. And secondly, even if he reads, he cannot digest the meaning nor make use of it. As he cannot read intensively, he cannot understand, and he would take what is written for a chimera that exists only on the surface of sheets of books or only 'in the whimsical brains of poetical Writers'.¹³⁴ In her representations of Lady Dellwyn and Lord Dellwyn Sarah Fielding provides two contrasting but equally undesirable examples of behaviour concerning reading: accumulation of superficial knowledge taken from reading and incapacity to absorb anything from reading; theirs are far from the 'true use of reading'.

The chapter (Chap. XI) where Lord Dellwyn's incapacity is described is entitled 'A Capacity to digest, as necessary towards extracting either Profit or Pleasure from Reading, as outward Eyes themselves'.¹³⁵ By implication it expresses how to extract profit or pleasure from reading, or what possibilities, Sarah Fielding thinks, reading has. The profit and pleasure of reading are not automatically given to the reader but are to be extracted by the reader. In order to extract them, the reader should be aware that:

There is a wide Difference between reading with the Attention which is necessary to digest, and extract Utility from Writings, and skimming over the Surface of Authors, with the View only of filling up a Chasm of Time, which is not so fortunate as to be engaged

¹³³. Dellwyn, II, p. 116.

¹³⁴. Dellwyn, II, p. 116.

¹³⁵. Dellwyn, II, p. 111.

to some more entertaining Amusement.¹³⁶

The reader reading with attention knows that reading can be useful and enjoyable because he or she finds nature and real life represented in a book, not chimeras that exists only in a book. In contrast with such a judicious reader, there are those who do not know the role of reading. She calls this kind of people the 'vulgar': if the 'Vulgar' 'were to be told, that any thing which is in a Book is in Nature also, they would be astonished, and give no Credit to such an Assertion'.¹³⁷ Lord Dellwyn is one of the 'Vulgar', and could not identify what Shakespeare described with things in his 'real life'. The method and role of reading discussed in chapter XI is a repetition of what the author emphasizes in the preface. Lord and Lady Dellwyn are two variations of the readers who do not apply knowledge from reading to their lives.

The reader is not expected to think that those described in a book are merely imaginary and to divorce the written world from real life; Lord Dellwyn is, as shown above, an example of one who thinks the written world of literature is merely a product of a poet's brain and has no connection with reality. Lady Dellwyn is another example, whose reading only contributes to her memorizing exercise, and who reads either with such indifference from a distance as she shows when she reads in her girlhood retirement or with such disgust and rejection as she experiences when she reads in her maturity. Also in The Cry, a negative way of reading is discussed. In contrast with Portia, who takes lessons for real life from books, in this case, from philosophers, the Cry, blaming her impertinence, 'with pretended humility', 'talked of such writings as if calculated for the perusal of some other species besides

¹³⁶. Dellwyn, II, pp. 117-18.

¹³⁷. Dellwyn, II, p. 118.

their own, who had nothing to do but to stand at a distance and admire'.¹³⁸ These are the readers who definitely separate the written world from the real; thus, they are opposed to her idea of the use of reading which underscores active reflection and application.

Nor is the reader encouraged to discover a particular model of writing, as in a roman a clef, making too pointed associations. The search for likenesses concerns her mainly because she feels threatened with the danger of losing control over her text. The precaution also derives from the perceived tendency of the audience to identify the author with the character within the work, as this tendency brings about constraint.¹³⁹ She pays attention to this in the context of the reader's misunderstanding and distortion of the author's intention:

The narrow-minded and Illiberal Peruser of Books, who searches only for pointed Satire, and can relish no Character, but such as he finds, or imagines he finds, to partake of the Nature of an abusive Libel on some particular Person, is incapable of being pleased with general Pictures of Nature; but, like the Palate vitiated by habitual Luxury, he requires sharp and seasoned Sauce before he can relish any Food whatsoever; and it is more Matter of Triumph to such Readers to find out a Similitude in any Individual of their Acquaintance to some ridiculous Story, or bad Character, than if they could discover all the Verisimilitudes that were ever thought of.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸. Cry, II, p. 173.

¹³⁹. Paula R. Backscheider draws attention to the various factors that prompted the tendency to identify women writers with their work in 'Women Writers and the Chain of Identification', Studies in the Novel 19 (1987): 245-62.

¹⁴⁰. Dellwyn, I, xviii.

She caricatures the practice by likening it to the recognition of a person in everyday-life: 'Men would run about challenging each other for acquaintance, only because they had Mouths or Eyes, or any other human Feature'.¹⁴¹ Although her precaution seems to derive from a merely imaginary critic, one of Richardson's experiences with readers shows that the trouble Sarah Fielding expects and implores the reader not to raise is not imaginary. She might have known of the difficulties Richardson encountered, or she might have had a similar experience.¹⁴² When Richardson published Pamela part II, one lady representing 'Six Reading Ladies' urged 'the Editor of Pamela' to unfold the secret of the identity of Pamela. Her letters are characterized by mere curiosity, consisting of yes-or-no questions rather than enthusiasm and critical appreciation. She implores him to tell her circle whether the story is genuine or fictional; if genuine, who Mr and Mrs B are, and if not, who the author is. She even threatens him: 'your silence shall not serve you Turn: for we are so desirous to have an Answer to our Question, that we cannot, nor will not, cease Writing, till you favour us with it.'¹⁴³ Richardson dealt carefully with these 'six ladies' by requiring their identities: whether they are really six ladies, and if so, what their names are; he, in turn, cast doubt on the authenticity of a circle of six ladies. He adds that 'when I know each Lady's Name, I must take some Time to inquire into the Character of each'. He also asked them

¹⁴¹. Dellwyn, I, v.

¹⁴². The correspondence seems to have been known among Richardson's acquaintances; Samuel Vanderplank, his landlord at North End, wrote to him: 'I will venture to add to the Number of Impertinents, by telling you that in my Opinion this pretended (Nameless) Lady is no Friend, there's such an Envious sort of Criticism runs through the Whole, ...' (FM XVI f21). Sarah Fielding might have known this episode as well.

¹⁴³. FM XVI f16, 'From Anonymous VI Ladies Post Mark Reading'; Eaves and Kimpel date this Jan-Mar. 1742 (p. 147).

how he could trust them to keep the secret to themselves.¹⁴⁴ Anonymous unknown ladies were not welcome, not because they were not acquainted with him before but because of their almost impetuous and threatening eagerness to learn of an original of Pamela. Henry Fielding's Shamela was a well-known example of a reading out of the author's control.¹⁴⁵ The reading of these acclaimed 'Six Reading Ladies' is another unintended reading of Pamela.

Sarah Fielding's various descriptions of misunderstanding suggest her recognition of the limits of authorial control, but at the same time they are results of her efforts to expand the potential of authorial control. Well aware of the precariousness of the text, Sarah Fielding attempts to define it in various ways. She declares in her prefaces how important she perceives the reader's responsibility to be in constructing the text. She impresses on the reader how important it is to endeavour to grasp the author's intention in fulfilling such a role. Then, she emphasises that the 'True Use of Reading' consists in the application of the author's moral intention to the reader's self-analysis and reflexion. As Henry Fielding uses 'a critic of my own Imagination only' to dissuade the reader not to behave like his perverse imaginary critic, she imagines ill-intentioned readers. She cultivates this image further so that it plays a significant role, embodied as 'the Cry', in her text. This allegorical group, like his imaginary critic, is an instrument to convey a warning to the reader and direct the reader to respect the author's authority.

¹⁴⁴. FM XVI, f18, 'Intended Answer to Reading Ladies. To the Lady who writes in the name of No.6.'

¹⁴⁵. Keymer argues that in Shamela Henry Fielding subverts the basic assumptions about 'epistolary integrity' on the basis of which Richardson presented Pamela, revealing possibilities of misrepresentation and hypocrisy in a letter writer and manipulation of the 'editor' author (Richardson's Clarissa, pp. 29-31).

All these depend on well-meaning interpretation on the side of the reader. Indeed, the reader could seize unintended meanings in her text. Her intention was now and then disappointed, as some contemporary readers' reactions show. As she was not a writer who privately circulated her writings among friends, she was not protected within the cocoon of an understanding circle of readers. Her anxiety is that of a modern professional writer who has to present the text to a mass of anonymous readers; she feels threatened by the mass of an unpredictable audience. However, it is in itself significant that she expresses her concerns about the reader's autonomy and about reading practices. Her fear leads her to attempt to seek for a means to overcome it. The precaution against the reader's abuse of freedom is an indication of her lack of confidence as a writer, but it is simultaneously a demonstration of her self-consciousness as an author who endeavours to explore strategies to establish firm ground for authorship, to challenge distortion and to control her text.

Chapter Two

Narrative Structure and Satirical Point of View

I. Introduction

Although Henry Fielding is regarded as an Augustan writer as well as one of the first novelists, Sarah Fielding is not usually discussed as a writer in the tradition of Augustan culture, but as an early writer of sensibility, a pioneer in educational narrative, or as an author of experiments in various forms.¹ Underlying such a judgment is a dichotomy between the supposed 'masculinity' of Augustan satire and 'femininity' of the novel. In this dichotomy Sarah Fielding is associated with the latter. This manner of placing her, as a pioneer in a 'feminine' genre, underlines her originality and her experimental achievements.² On the other hand, however, the attention to the progressive and novel aspects of her work underestimates the older elements. Especially in the consideration of narrative construction this leads to a view of her work

¹ Martin C. Battestin, The Providence of Wit: Aspects of Form in Augustan Literature and the Arts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974); Ira Konisberg, Narrative Technique in the English Novel (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon, 1985), esp. pp. 100-18.

² For example, John Nichols, Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century (London, 1812-14), III, p. 385; Clementina Black, in The Gentleman's Magazine, vol 265 (1888), 485-91; Ernest A. Baker, Introduction to The Adventures of David Simple (London: George Routledge, 1904), v-ix; Ernest A. Baker, The History of the English Novel (London: H.F. & G. Witherby, 1930, 1934), IV, pp. 118-19, V, pp. 37-8; James R. Foster, History of the Pre-Romantic Novel in England (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), pp. 70, 74-77; Ian Watt, The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding (London: The Hogarth Press, 1987), p. 186; John Butt and Geoffrey Carnall, The Age of Johnson 1740-1789 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), pp. 449-55; Clive T. Probyn, English Fiction of the Eighteenth Century 1700-1789 (London: Longman, 1987), pp. 14, 20-1.

as divided between the old and the new, only the new aspect of which is praised as an isolated pioneering achievement. The scenario is that she experimented with untried forms and styles, but the presence of an older decorum remained, scarring her attempts at novelty.

I should like to highlight the various conventions she incorporated in her work and examine her narrative strategies in the process of such incorporation in order to mediate between her literary knowledge and her originality, between her own aims and the perceived readers' demands. The satirical element in her work has been examined only briefly and chiefly in association with her brother.³ Certainly Henry Fielding must have influenced her tone and method, but to look no further is to confine her works too narrowly. An analysis of her use of narrative voice, viewpoint, and structure will provide a view of her as a writer who both incorporated and developed existing conventions. The critical literature on satire as well as narrative in the eighteenth century is vast. I confine myself to those aspects that are directly related to Sarah Fielding's strategies of inviting the reader to her created world and of realizing the 'true Use of Reading' she aims at as I described in Chapter One.

While Sarah Fielding herself does not use the term 'novel' to describe her narratives, they have been accepted as novels.⁴ If we follow the notion of the novel Ian Watt established in his seminal study The Rise of the Novel (1957), Sarah Fielding's place in the genre of the novel is quite precarious, as his treatment of Henry Fielding suggests.⁵

³ For example, Deborah Weatley Downs-Miers, 'Labyrinths of the Mind: A Study of Sarah Fielding', University of Missouri, Ph.D., 1975, p. 28.

⁴ Congreve famously distinguished the novel from romance in 1692, but it was not until late in the eighteenth century, exemplified by Clara Reeve's definition in 1785, that the notion of the novel was firmly established. See for example, J. Paul Hunter, Before Novels: The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth century English Fiction (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1990), pp. 25-8.

⁵ Watt, The Rise of the Novel, pp. 239-89.

He maintains that 'literary traditionalism was first and most fully challenged by the novel, whose primary criterion was truth to individual experience', and that 'attention to any pre-established formal conventions can only endanger [the novelist's] success'.⁶ In his evaluation, 'Fielding's stylistic virtues tend to interfere with his technique as a novelist', in contrast with Daniel Defoe (1660-1731) and Richardson, who adopted 'an uncompromising application of the realist point of view in language and prose structure, and thereby forfeit other literary values'.⁷ The problems in Watt's definition in terms of both Fieldings are their conformity to traditional practice and their only slight emphasis on individualistic viewpoint.

Watt linked the rise of the novel and the rise of the middle class, realism, and individualism. He views the novel as a reflection of those political and cultural phenomena. It is this reflection theory in particular that recent criticism has questioned.⁸ Recent consideration of the novel has had a more broadened and comprehensive scope. Among these constructive criticisms, in relation to Sarah Fielding's narrative techniques discussed in this chapter, two important reinterpretations of eighteenth-century narratives have been offered by Michael McKeon's The Origins of the English Novel and Nancy Armstrong's Desire and Domestic Fiction.⁹

⁶ Watt, The Rise of the Novel, p. 13.

⁷ Watt, The Rise of the Novel, p. 30.

⁸ Alistair M. Duckworth, 'Michael McKeon and Some Recent Studies of Eighteenth-Century Fiction', Eighteenth-Century Fiction 1 (1988): 53-66; Homer Obed Brown, 'Of the Title to Things Real: Conflicting Stories', Journal of English Literary History 55 (1988): 917-54; William B. Warner, 'The Social Ethos of the Novel: McKeon's Not So Social Allegory of the Novel's Origins', Criticism 32 (1990): 241-53; Robert Folkenflik, 'The Heirs of Ian Watt', Eighteenth-Century Studies 25 (1991-92): 203-17.

⁹ Michael McKeon, The Origins of the English Novel 1600-1740 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987); Nancy Armstrong, Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel (Oxford: Oxford

McKeon regards literature as not simply a reflection of culture, but as an instrument of change in society. His main thesis is that the novel was a response to epistemological and socioethical crises, emerging in the course of a process of dialectical shifts. In his analysis of what he calls the question of truth, 'romance idealism' is challenged by empirical epistemology. In the course of this attack empiricism generates a countercritique which he calls 'extreme skepticism'. It is one of the most important points he makes with regard to the relationship between romance and the novel that 'in refuting its empiricist progenitor, ... extreme skepticism inevitably recapitulates some features of the romance idealism.'¹⁰ He applies the same method to the question of virtue, beginning with the received notion of a unity of the external social order and the intrinsic moral order in 'aristocratic ideology'. The instability of the social order leads to confrontation between 'aristocratic ideology' and 'progressive ideology'. And 'progressive ideology' generates its own critique, 'conservative ideology', which seeks for 'the alternative to both progressive and aristocratic injustice'.¹¹ McKeon argues that the novel confronts these crises of truth and virtue and mediates between them.

Sarah Fielding who often crosses boundaries between ideologies and established genres, one of the
In examining the works of *^* McKeon's view enables us to see the novel as *problems lies in*
a comprehensive and mediatory form. In addition, his strong grasp of *the question of*
traditional narratives before the emergence of the novel prepares us *what constitutes*
the novel.

to see the novel in the context of both continuation and change. Starting with criticism of Watt's emphasis on the circumstantial view of life, what he calls 'formal realism' and the rise of middle class, he draws attention to the problematic (problematic if we accept Watt)

University Press, 1987).

¹⁰ McKeon, The Origins of the English Novel, p. 21.

¹¹ McKeon, The Origins of the English Novel, pp. 20-21, 174.

'persistence of "romance" and "aristocracy"'.¹² As his approach does not locate the novel as a simple replacement of older traditions, his consideration involves the explanation of complex relationships between traditional narrative and the novel. Moreover, his analysis breaks fresh ground permitting discussion of both Samuel Richardson and Henry Fielding within the same framework.¹³ This helps examination of Sarah Fielding's ^{works} as a unity rather than ^{being} polarized between simple notions of the old and new.

Armstrong focuses on fiction's role in fabricating reality. She argues that the novel promoted the middle class's empowerment 'through the dissemination of a new female ideal' and that 'the domestic novel antedated ... the way of life it represented'.¹⁴ Although she inherits Watt's emphasis on the middle class, she points out that he underestimates women writers and female features in the novel. She maintains that the process of creating the genre is located in the private sphere of family. She argues that domestic fiction's political role of social control was generated by, paradoxically, the denial of a political public basis for the novel and a preference for private feminine sensibility. This view of the novel as a vehicle of social change is closely related to the role of conduct books. She locates the novel's function of instructing in conduct-book strategies, as exemplified in the eighteenth century by Richardson's Pamela.

¹². McKeon, The Origins of the English Novel, pp. 2-4, 19.

¹³. Armstrong as well as Watt emphasises Richardson and pays limited attention to Fielding. Mary Poovey constructively compares the two concerning their concepts of the relationship between the absolute and the quotidian ('Journeys from This World to the Next: the providential promise in Clarissa and Tom Jones', ELH 43(1976):300-15). In this dissertation I tend to confine myself to focusing on the Fieldinguesque aspects of Sarah Fielding since her Richardsonian features have already been highlighted. See for example, Robert Palfrey Utter and Gwendolyn Bridges Needham, Pamela's Daughters (London: Lovat Dickson, 1937); Ruth Perry, 'Clarissa's Daughters, or the History of Innocence Betrayed: how women writers rewrote Richardson', Women's Writing 1 (1994): 5-24.

¹⁴. Armstrong, Desire and Domestic Fiction, p. 9.

I shall discuss the fiction by Sarah Fielding specifically presented for instruction in Chapter Four. In this chapter I deal with Sarah Fielding's narrative devices and an alternative model to sensibility designed to produce the active promotion of virtuous ideals. Janet Todd as well as Armstrong finds a close connection between instruction and feminine sensibility. Todd points out the assumption in the eighteenth century novels of sensibility that life and literature are in close proximity. Through this closeness, 'literary emotions herald active ones'. At least at the beginning of the cult of sensibility, sentimental literature instructed readers how to behave and express themselves by showing exemplary emotional responses.¹⁵

Sarah Fielding's David Simple in particular bears out this point. However, her other works are not so deeply implicated in sensibility as David Simple. Her didactic attention is equally strong and sensibility is not the sole tool she uses. What I examine here, her use of narrative parallels and layers, and a satiric point of view, are other forces deployed in David Simple as well as in her other works. Firstly I examine her deployment and arrangement of multiple parallel stories at various levels of narrative. Secondly I deal with her use of a satiric point of view, from which she discloses human follies and instructs the reader. Together with Sarah Fielding's devices employed in order to shape the reader's response, my interest is in her use and modification of preceding literature in the process of creating her novels.

Sarah Fielding's moral tendency has been discerned by various commentators. One reviewer is pleased to find in Dellwyn the judicious satirical description of the dissipation of the polite world: 'our sensible novelist's description of the bustle of high life, and the futility of publick amusements'. The reviewer adds that her 'manner

¹⁵ Janet Todd, Sensibility: An Introduction (London and New York: Methuen, 1986), p. 4.

of moralizing' is agreeable.¹⁶ 'A Lover of Virtue', after cautiously warning that recent literature has a 'bad and pernicious tendency', pinpoints the positive moral quality of Sarah Fielding's writings: 'none of [Richardson's] brother romancers are, in my opinion, entirely free from [this censure], except the moral and ingenious authoress of *David Simple*'.¹⁷ How, then, does Sarah Fielding prepare her moral and how does she attempt to convey her intention?

In his preface to *David Simple*, Henry Fielding maintains that the merit of this work is the accessibility of its moral lesson through narrative entertainment, writing that 'every Episode bears a manifest Impression of the principal Design'.¹⁸ This statement indicates Sarah Fielding's fundamental idea of writing. It involves a commitment to what she calls 'fable'. This 'fable' consists of an entertaining fictional narrative centred around a moral lesson, as Johnson defines fable in his dictionary: 'A feigned story intended to enforce some moral precept'.¹⁹ There is first of all a core argument, lesson, or opinion, as Le Bossu (1631-80), one of Sarah Fielding's favourite reference authors, maintains: 'The first thing we are to begin with for Composing a *Fable*, is to chuse the Instruction, and the point of Morality, which is to serve as its Foundation, according to the Design and End we propose to our selves.'²⁰ And then it is expanded and animated by fictional

¹⁶. The Monthly Review vol. 20 (1759): 381.

¹⁷. Critical Remarks on Sir Charles Grandison, Clarissa, and Pamela: Enquiring whether they have a Tendency to corrupt or improve the Public Taste and Morals. In a Letter to the Author. By a Lover of Virtue. (London: J. Dowse, 1754), p. 39.

¹⁸. David Simple, p. 7.

¹⁹. See Thomas Noel, Theories of the Fable in the Eighteenth Century (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), esp. chap 9. In Johnson's dictionary, this is one of the five meanings of 'fable'.

²⁰. René Le Bossu and Voltaire, Le Bossu and Voltaire on the Epic, René Le Bossu, Treatise of the Epick Poem (1695) and Voltaire, Essay on Epick Poetry (1727), facsimile reproduction with an introduction by Stuart

circumstances. Throughout her writing career she is consistent in her idea of narrative construction, keeping her dual objects in view. Her purposes as a writer are first of all to offer moral lessons founded on clear and penetrating observation and secondly to provide them with illustrating fictional circumstances. Both need literary skill and one purpose is as important as the other.

In this chapter, I shall examine the structure and framework of Sarah Fielding's works which embodies her dual concern. First, I examine her ideas concerning two elements in her literary practice: lesson and fiction, and secondly, the arrangement of each narrative episode. She constructs her texts by accumulating parallel stories which are variations on the fictional element, based on key moral lessons deduced from observations on people's behaviour. Thirdly I consider an important cultural source for the core observations: the satirical point of view. My argument is that Augustan verse satire, a most prestigious literary mode of the early eighteenth century when the young Sarah Fielding was educated to read, significantly shaped her literary practice.

II. Lessons and Fictionalization

What sort of fiction served as Sarah Fielding's model? It is easier to point out what she avoided. She does not seem to have consulted prose fiction published in the early eighteenth century such as Defoe's, Aphra Behn's (1640-89), and Delarivier Manley's (1663-1724). Her references to and quotations from such works are markedly missing, considering that her references and allusions to other types of literature are numerous. In analysing various narrative patterns,

Curran (Gainesville, Florida: Scholar's Facsimiles & Reprints, 1970), p. 15.

Richetti categorizes the popular fiction of the early eighteenth century: the stories of rogues and whores, the travel literature of pirates and pilgrims, the scandalous roman à clef, the erotic novella, and 'the novel as pious polemic'.²¹ None of Sarah Fielding's works falls exactly into these five categories.²² Especially, she insists that her fictions should not be read as romans à clef, one of Richetti's categories.²³ Further, she explicitly declares that she does not follow contemporary popular narrative conventions and makes very limited use of them: 'stories and novels have flowed in such abundance... that we would wish, ... to strike a little out of a road already so much beaten'.²⁴

There were forms of literature from which Sarah Fielding consciously learned about basic principles in writing but which she did not choose to practise. The most important of these forms were non-fictional, the biography and the essay.²⁵ She adopts the analytical study of human nature of the biographers; she agrees with the respected essayists who she thinks properly instruct by their penetrating mode

²¹ John Richetti, Popular Fiction Before Richardson: Narrative Patterns 1700-1739 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

²² David Simple is sometimes regarded as a picaresque novel. See for example, Julia Kavanagh, English Women of Letters (Leipzig: Bernard Tauchnitz, 1862), pp. 27-34; Herman Oscar Werner, 'The Life and Works of Sarah Fielding', Harvard University, Ph.D., 1937), p. 90; Ann Marilyn Parrish, 'Eight Experiments in Fiction', Boston University Graduate School, Ph.D., 1973, pp. 47-8. And Ophelia shows more elements of popular fiction than any of her other works, and it has been considered as an attempt to produce a best seller, a compromise with the popular taste. See Werner, pp. 207-9; Parrish, pp. 202-4.

²³ The two basic conflicts, 'latent social antagonism' and 'sexual antagonism' (p. 124), which Richetti finds in Manley's scandalous fiction (pp. 119-67), are very weak in Sarah Fielding's works. For the distance mid-century women writers placed themselves at from personal slanders, see for example Gallagher, Nobody's Story, pp. 162-74.

²⁴ Cry, I, p. 8.

²⁵ Donald A. Stauffer, The Art of Biography in Eighteenth Century England (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), esp. chap. II, pp. 66-7; Jerry C. Beasley, Novels of the 1740's (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1982).

of observation. Biography offers, Sarah Fielding argues, amusement, instruction, and inducement for reflection: 'Few Parts of Writing afford the Mind a more grateful Variety, enrich it with more copious Instruction, or more engagingly tempt it to look into, and know itself, than Biography'.²⁶ Among biographers and historians, Plutarch (c.46-c.126) is her ideal.²⁷ What she admires in him, following Montaigne's (1533-92) opinion, is his ability to pinpoint a convincing key element in the mind that characterises a person. As he knows the labyrinths of the human mind even to 'the secret recesses', he is capable of locating a key to every action and informing the reader of it.²⁸ This is what Sarah Fielding thinks Plutarch achieved, and it is the primary purpose she wishes to fulfil in her own writing. Plutarch is thus a model and what she thinks Plutarch intended and did is of great importance to her. She did not write a biography of a historical person, however.²⁹ Her Cleopatra and Octavia is the closest she approaches to biography, but she chose to present it within a fictional framework:

as the modern Relish for Works of Imagination would almost tempt her to despair of Approbation, without some Mixture of Romance, she has, in Complaisance to this Taste, introduced the Lives of those Ladies, as supposed to have been delivered by themselves in the Shades below.³⁰

²⁶. Introduction to Cleopatra and Octavia, i; see also Stauffer, The Art of Biography, esp. pp. 65-7.

²⁷. Cry, I, pp. 11-2, 83, II, 114, 125, 128; Dellwyn, I, xiv.

²⁸. Cry, pp. 11-12; Dellwyn, I, xiv-xv.

²⁹. Stauffer regards Sarah Fielding's panegyric on biography as an instrument to parry criticism of the fictionality of the novel (The Art of Biography, p. 66).

³⁰. Cleopatra and Octavia, iv-v.

For the same reason, that is, the prevailing taste for works of fancy, she excuses her avoidance of essay writing. And in addition, the negligence and incapability of the writer is detected in the essay style. The straightforward essay, a collection of bare observations, is thought to be a product that lacks something. It is true and very important that she admires Montaigne and some other essayists, and the form seems to appeal to her.³¹ This is because the essay can explore one of the purposes of her writing: presenting analysis of and reflection on people's manners and opinions. However, her attitude to the style of the essay in general is negative. In The Cry, she associates the essay style with the superficiality of fluent expression: 'Essay-writing ... requires little more than what is called a fluency of words, and a vivacity of expression, to avoid dullness'.³² In other words, essay writing is considered to be a selfish indulgence in the part of the author; it is 'the easiest for the author'.³³ This judgment reflects both her view of the current abuse of the form by self-serving authors and her belief that the writer should put the reader first and entertain the reader. Although she is attracted by the moral penetrating aspect of the essay, she thinks more of its contemporary regrettable realities. By means of this explanation, she chooses another style that requires more exertion in seeking to entertain the reader.

She further develops her thinking about the attachment to and the danger of the essay in her last work of fiction. Here, essay writing seems to be tinged more with the author's self-contentment than it did in The Cry. At the same time, she is much inclined to offer her reflections and observations, as she states in the Advertisement that

³¹. Reference to 'the celebrated' Montaigne (Cleopatra and Octavia, ii): Familiar Letters, I, pp. 313, 341; Cry, I, 6-7, 141, 165, 166, 259, 322, III, 34; Cleopatra and Octavia, ii; Dellwyn, I, xiv.

³². Cry, I, p. 7.

³³. Cry, I, p. 7.

Ophelia's narrative (Sarah Fielding pretends she found the manuscript) is worth reading for 'the reflections scattered throughout the book' as well as for the interesting adventures.³⁴ The dual directions of intellectual stimuli and action are indicated in the heroine's ironical language. In *Ophelia*, where extraordinary adventures succeed to one another, Sarah Fielding uses Ophelia as her mouthpiece to admit that simply presenting opinions is tedious and that it is evidence of a lack of creativity in the author. Ophelia self-mockingly abstains from telling details of her life and her opinions of them. Instead, she opts for telling adventurous actions. She begins with self-warning about being interested in analyses of herself and social customs:

[to write about the time she stayed in London] afforded little beside Matter for Reflection on Customs to which I was a Stranger, I may be apt again to turn Moralizer. I must depend on the Actions of others for making my Narration more agreeable to you, than a long Series of my own Thoughts, which are nothing but a Composition of witty Observations that, would make any good-natured Person weep the Poverty of the Imagination, that gave Rise to them; lively Remarks that would prove better Soporificks than all the Opium in Turkey; Dissertations moral, religious, and entertaining, from which, after much Yawning, you may learn, that it is right to do Right, and wrong to do wrong, that Friendship is better than Enmity, and that it is wiser to please than to offend. These great Truths I shall leave to be taught by Persons, who love sporting on an old Sentiment in thread-bare Words; avoiding as much as I can, the Produce of my own Brain; in Hopes of affording you more Entertainment by collecting Exoticks, than from any Plants that arise from so bad a Soil as my Imagination, which is not very fertile

³⁴. *Ophelia*, advertisement, no page number.

of any Thing but Weeds.³⁵

Evidently Ophelia thinks reflections are important, but not to the taste of the reader who requires more exciting entertainment. Although the work actually abounds in the kind of observations and opinions on manners and society expected in essays, the abundance of extraordinary experiences is foregrounded in Ophelia. Indeed, Lady Bradshaigh commented on it as 'uncomon, full of very odd, I am afraid some of them, unnatural Circumstances'.³⁶

Sarah Fielding is often apologetic about her use of fictional forms to deliver moral lessons. She attributes the reason for fictionalizing to the modern taste of the public. By way of extenuation, she maintains that the demands of the market force her to ornament her ideas.³⁷ Certainly she must have felt these two pressures, as she was ambitious for literary and economic success. She might have thought she was compelled to write fiction as she wanted to live by the help of her pen. This does not mean, however, that she wrote fiction against her will. Her apologies are made as if she wishes to do without fictional amplification, but these statements are not to be taken at face value. After all, she takes it for granted that what she should do is to compose fiction.³⁸ While she claims that she condescendingly purports to be pandering to contemporary tastes, she is actually doing what she thinks a good writer should do: she is in favour of writing fictitious stories. In other words, her inclination toward fable corresponds well with the

³⁵. Ophelia, II, pp. 108-9.

³⁶. FM XI 48 E 5, f 266-7, Lady Bradshaigh to Richardson, May 20 1760[at the beginning] then June 8.

³⁷. Cleopatra and Octavia, iv; Dellwyn, I, xix.

³⁸. Catherine Gallagher explores the mid-century's *high opinion of* overt fiction in the contexts of emphasis on sympathy and 'the birth of the author-proprietor' (p. 174). See Nobody's Story, pp. 162-95.

taste for fiction, and she takes advantage of this. Thus, taking into consideration the publication circumstances and her own leaning, she replaced, in effect conveniently, the compromise of pandering to popular 'vitiating' taste, with self-encouragement to show her own skill as a writer and develop her own potential. This aspiration leads her to make innovative experiments. So, the perceived need to conform to current popular taste is incorporated and transformed into a positive urge for her own original style.

As is most clearly seen in the explanation of her attempt at fictional biography, Sarah Fielding defines her work as something founded, like biography and essays, on the examination of human nature, which is ornamented by imagination and made into fiction or 'Romance' as she calls it, or in another phrase of hers, is given 'the Combination of Circumstances'.³⁹ It is important to her to analyze people's behaviour, probe into the motives for actions, and present her study to the reader.⁴⁰ At the same time she makes much of the writer's skill in offering an imaginative world. In short, from her point of view, books need two elements: the core observation produced by the author's insight for the use of the reader's moral improvement, and a fictional narrative vessel for that observation to be actualized and made an example. She regards this fictionalization as the process of spicing observation with romance.

For her, fictionalization is a very important element in writing.

³⁹ She calls her work a 'Moral Romance' in her advertisement to David Simple; Dellwyn, I, ix.

⁴⁰ For contemporary ideas about new prose fiction see Novel and Romance 1700-1800: A Documentary Record ed. Ioan Williams (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970); and also Novelists on the Novel ed. Miriam Allott (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959). For Henry Fielding's idea of fiction in particular, see for example John J Burke, Jr., 'History without History: Henry Fielding's Theory of Fiction', in A Provision of Human Nature: Essays on Fielding and others in Honor of Miriam Austin Locke ed. Donald Kay (Alabama: the University of Alabama Press, 1977), 45-63.

It is closely connected with her ideas about romance. Sarah Fielding uses the term 'romance' in a variety of ways. She calls David Simple a 'moral Romance' to indicate that it is not a biography of a real person but a fictitious story. She employs the term without the disapproval many commentators expressed. On the other hand, she describes the folly of a romance reader who is infatuated by the desire to be sought after like the heroine of a romance.⁴¹ 'Romantic' is an epithet for girls in such a situation, deserving ridicule, and ''tis no more than an act of kindness to laugh them out of such absurdities'.⁴² Elsewhere, her image of romance involves such stereotypes as a virtuous heroine thrown into a dangerous situation, a gloomy castle, savage beasts, a cruel giant, and a faithful knight to save her, and she has a sense that these are different from what her narrative is about.⁴³

The element in romance she wants to emphasize is its potential to invite the reader into the controlled world of the author's creation rather than its intoxicating attraction. The unique innovative device of The Cry is explained by the help of the reader's familiarity with the convention of romance. She compares the setting of The Cry to that of romance - 'the puzzling mazes ... are the perverse interpretations' and 'the lions, tigers, and giants... are the spiteful and malicious tongues of [the heroine's] enemies' - thus, the narrative is a figurative romance and brought closer to romance.

Her thinking about the 'novel' is also fluctuating, but always approving.⁴⁴ She draws attention to the creative freedom the styles of the novel as well as romance give to the author. In this sense, she does not make much of distinction between the genres. In Familiar

⁴¹. David Simple, pp. 53-6.

⁴². Cry, I, pp. 60-1.

⁴³. Cry, I, pp. 12-3.

⁴⁴. As for the term 'novel' see Hunter, Before Novels, esp. pp. 25-8.

Letters, 'novel' merely signifies a short story as opposed to a voluminous romance.⁴⁵ Camilla describes as a novel a narrative of Belinda which her acquaintance has lent her. It is less than twenty pages long, and literally a short story inserted within another longer structure. In the following instance, however, the term is used differently. She detects similarities between romance and the novel, rather than distinguishing them: 'From the same Taste of being acquainted with the various and surprising Incidents of Mankind, arises our insatiable curiosity for Novels or Romance'.⁴⁶ In reading either, the fictional world inspires our imagination. When reading novels and romance:

we draw these fictitious Characters into a real existence; and thus, pleasingly deluded, we find ourselves as warmly interested, and deeply affected by the imaginary Scenes of Arcadia, the

⁴⁵ In Johnson's dictionary, 'Novel' is: 'A small tale, generally of love', and his example from Dryden: 'Nothing of a foreign nature; like the trifling novels which Ariosto inserted in his poems.'

⁴⁶ Cleopatra and Octavia, ii. In the same way a contemporary critic regards romance and novel (before Henry Fielding) as belonging to the same category: 'Sometime before this new Species of Writing appear'd, the World had been pester'd with Volumes commonly known by the Name of Romances, or Novels, Tales, &c. filled with any thing which the wildest Imagination could suggest. In all these Works, Probability was not required: The more extravagant the Thought, the more exquisite the Entertainment. ...A deluge of Impossibility overflow'd the Press. ... and Common sense was kicked out of Doors to make Room for marvellous Dullness. The Stile in all these Performances was to be equal to the Subject -- amazing: And may be call'd with great Propriety, "Prose run mad." ' An Essay on the New Species of Writing founded by Mr. Fielding with a Word or Two upon the Modern State of Criticism (London: W. Owen, 1751), p. 13, 14. Sarah Fielding does not give particular reference to or criticism of these romances, novels, tales, and stories, except for the works of Henry Fielding and Samuel Richardson, but only expresses a perception similar to this critic's that these kind of books 'have flowed in such abundance for these last ten years' (Cry, I, p. 8). Also see McKeon, The Origins of the English Novel, pp. 273-314; Geoffrey Day From Fiction to the Novel (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), chap. I; Irène Simon, 'Early Theories of Prose Fiction: Congreve and Fielding', in Imagined Worlds: Essays on Some English Novels and Novelists, ed. Maynard Mack and Ian Gregor (London: Methuen, 1968), 19-35.

wonderful Atchievements of Don Quixote, the merry Conceits of Sancho, rural Innocence of a Joseph Andrews, or the inimitable Virtues of Sir Charles Grandison, as if they were real, and those romantic Heroes had experienced the capricious Fortunes attributed to them by the fertile Invention of the Writers.⁴⁷

Thus, what is common in novel and romance is the device of fictitious characters in imaginary scenes created by 'the fertile Invention of the Writers', which are read with pleasure. The advantage for the author is that the author can make use of the power of imagination and the skill in creating fictional circumstances as 'the author, like a painter, may so colour, decorate, and embellish [works of fancy], as most agreeably to flatter our humour, and most highly promise to entertain, captivate and enchant the mind.'⁴⁸ This captivating power of entertaining imagination draws the reader into the created world. She is attracted by these 'romances or novels' and regards it as her challenge to create an imaginary world interesting and attractive enough to stimulate the reader's imagination. Despite her apologies for writing fiction, she perceives its constructive power.

III. Layers and Parallels

Sarah Fielding's narratives consist of units of episodes in which lesson and fiction are combined. This section first deals with the organizing method which controls the narratives. She organizes the episodes with particular intention to make correspondences, including parallels and contrasts, between the units. Not only does she make

⁴⁷. Cleopatra and Octavia, ii-iii.

⁴⁸. Cleopatra and Octavia, iii.

parallels between her episodes, but her characters make use of them. At another level, she encourages the reader to draw parallels between the circumstances she presents and other authors' expressions and story lines, by references and quotations.

This linkage of one story to another is her invitation to the reader to learn. Parallels and contrasts provide repetition and clarification of differences or similarities between each unit, and underline the points she wants to make. Allusions and quotations are also an invitation she offers for the reader's instruction, by showing the reader a model performance. She shows examples of how to use the sentiments and opinions of other writers that have stimulated her own thinking, thus offering examples of what she thinks the 'true use of reading.'

The system of narrative construction Sarah Fielding employed was not always welcomed by the reader. Although she enjoyed Sarah Fielding's writings and generally admired her, Catherine Talbot (1721-70) pointed out a weakness in the structure of her work:

'Tis vexatious in the last-named book [Mrs. Fielding's] to find such a Mixture of refinement a perte du vue proceeding from her inclination to support, I fancy, a false system, and deduce every variety of action from the sources of pride and vanity.⁴⁹

This reader finds it monotonous that Sarah Fielding reduces various kinds of behaviour to the motives of pride and vanity; she can see a single lesson through diverse episodes. Indeed, Sarah Fielding's episodes and inset narratives repeatedly point out the same moral. Seen the other way round, some core arguments and observations generate a variety of

⁴⁹. Talbot to Carter, July 21 1753, A Series of Letters, II, p. 131; she also mentions Sarah Fielding's too much 'refinement' in other two letters to Carter (II, pp. 183, 188).

fictionalization. She attempts to achieve the process of imaginative fictionalization of each episode and accumulate the episodes in a planned order. This accumulation of fictional variations is supposed to clarify and reinforce the moral lesson.

It has often been suggested that in Sarah Fielding's works seemingly incongruous digressive stories are accumulated.⁵⁰ She herself is aware, as I show below in the case of Cylinda's story, of doing something that needs defence. Henry Fielding points out this tendency in his preface to David Simple, but he also finds unity in the text. He describes the work as 'a Series of separate Adventures detached from, and independent of each other, yet all tending to one great End'. According to him, lack of 'Unity of Action' is an expected charge, but the unity of intention holds the episodes together.⁵¹ This unity of 'one great End' is brought about by parallels and contrasts often made with the inset narratives. Sarah Fielding sees them as an instrument to promote the reader's understanding of the main story. Parrish calls this structure 'architectonic': 'characters and incidents illuminate each other by elaborate systems of parallels, balances, repetitions,

⁵⁰. For the novel's discursive elements and its inclusiveness, see Hunter, Before Novels, pp. 47-54; Jerry C. Beasley, 'Life's Episodes: Story and Its Form in the Eighteenth Century', in The Idea of the Novel in the Eighteenth Century ed. Robert W. Uphaus (East Lansing, MI: Colleagues Press, 1988), 21-45. Henry Fielding's digressive tales have been defended and recognized as a positive narrative instrument. See, for example, Homer Goldberg, 'The Interpolated Stories in Joseph Andrews or "The History of the World in General" Satirically Revised', Modern Philology 63 (1966): 295; Jerome Mandel, 'The Man of the Hill and Mrs. Fitzpatrick: Character and Narrative Technique in Tom Jones', Papers on Language and Literature 5(1969):26-38; Henry Knight Miller, 'The "Digressive" Tales in Fielding's Tom Jones and the Perspective of Romance', Philological Quarterly 54(1975): 271); Paul J. Hunter, Occasional Form: Henry Fielding and the Chains of Circumstance (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1975), 151-61; Carl R. Kropf, 'Dialogical Engagement in Joseph Andrews and the Community of Narrative Agencies', in Compendious Conversations: The Method of Dialogue in the Early Enlightenment ed. Kevin L. Cope (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1992), 206-17.

⁵¹. David Simple, p. 6.

contrasts'. She points out that there are correspondences between episodes.⁵² I further examine this structure on various levels, and consider its purpose. As this structure allows variations on the same theme, it sometimes leads to a strengthened unity which consists of parallel and contrasting stories, and sometimes to a somewhat tedious repetition of the same lesson and observation. Henry Fielding finds it a merit while Talbot thinks it 'vexatious'.

Analogous stories illuminate the main narrative and induce the reader to think about the relation between the narrative and lesson. This is most evident in David Simple, where she shows a contrast of two groups of friends in corresponding positions. The friendship and marriages between David and Camilla, her brother Valentine and Cynthia, form the main plot. An acquaintance of Cynthia's, called Isabelle, tells a tragic story of a sister and a brother and their partners. Isabelle is as virtuous as the four protagonists, but misfortunes befall her. Her brother, the Marquis de Stainville, stabs Dumont to death, who was his intimate friend, Isabelle's suitor, and in his misled belief his wife Dorimene's seducer. Isabelle tells all her grievous distresses to David and his company.⁵³ Thus the denouement of happy marriages is illuminated by this comparison and at the same time shadowed by it. The happiness of David and his company seems to be complete, but the unhappy Isabelle, too, enjoyed a period of rosy hopes and tranquillity of mind;

⁵². She briefly argues that the parallels between Lady Dellwyn and Mrs Bilson, Lady Dellwyn and Lady Fanny, Lady Dellwyn and Miss Cummysns, Lady Dellwyn and Lord Dellwyn, Lady Fanny and Miss Cummysns, or that of country and town, are elaborately knitted in Dellwyn. She also points out that in David Simple the story of Isabelle, which seemingly is an interpolated story with no substantial connection with the main story of David's adventures, enriches the whole story as it is a shadowy threat to the four-way friendship and double weddings. See Parrish, pp. 184-96, 66; for the narrative structures of Henry Fielding, see Sheridan Baker, 'Fielding and the Irony of Form', Eighteenth-Century Studies 2 (1968): 138-54; as for eighteenth-century stories-within, see Hunter Before Novels, pp. 47-54.

⁵³. David Simple, pp. 193-250.

in her recollection she remembers that 'This was by much the happiest Part of my Life, and on this little Period of Time, I wish I could for ever fix my Thoughts'.⁵⁴ The precariousness and instability of friends' relationships is at least implied.

In The Cry, a similar kind of apparent digression needs an explanation, as Cylinda appears almost out of the blue before Portia, Una, and the Cry. The author attempts to justify such a 'digression' and cites an authority in her defence. A variation from the main story with a significant difference illuminates the main plot or its character and impresses the reader, helping the reader to understand the main point. In introducing Cylinda in the middle of Portia's story, she refers to Le Bossu. Cylinda begins to talk about her life story, which is considerably long even though it turns out to be related to the family of Ferdinand with whom Portia is in love and in addition, Cylinda was a person whom Portia's mother made Portia avoid when she was young. The significant link of Cylinda's life story to Portia's narrative is not that Cylinda's life is related to Portia's in various ways, but that a similar intellectual vivaciousness is given to them both and yet differently developed. Here in The Cry this kind of interruption of the main story is called 'an episode', 'which... is an interesting incident not absolutely necessary to the fable, nor yet so detached from it, as to carry the reader quite out of sight of the chief personages, or the first intent of the poem'. She adds a twist to Le Bossu and claims that the 'episodes' are more than divertissement and are connected more tightly. In addition to Le Bossu's explanation of an episode, 'another essential to the above description of a proper episode' is stated: 'it ought to be such an incident as is introduced in order to call forth some characteristic virtue of the principal personage'. An example is given: when Ulysses meets with a princess in distress, if he has nothing

⁵⁴. David Simple, p. 219.

to do with her relief, her story is 'absolutely impertinent', but if he rescues her, the reader should know about her character and her oppressors', 'because it would tend towards the exemplification of some of the hero's virtues'.⁵⁵ This example is apparently a little unsuitable as an illustration of the relationship between Portia and Cylinda as Portia's virtues are not illuminated by winning a fight against the 'oppressors' of Cylinda. What Portia does is only to accept and relieve Cylinda warmly. The emphasis of the explanation is on 'the exemplification' 'in order to call forth some characteristic virtue of the principal personage'. Exemplification is more indirect than by the circumstances that give the hero opportunities to show his virtues, and is made by Portia's passive generosity. It is also produced by comparisons between Cylinda and Portia in their reactions toward and management of their intellectual capacity and their given circumstances.

Sarah Fielding's concern for the importance of making parallels and reading their meanings is projected on the characters' use of them at crucial moments of their lives and also the abuses and the suppression of them. The characters in her narratives make use of parallels to make themselves understood, to try to disguise themselves, or to understand their own situations. An episode involving Julie in David Simple is an example in which a parallel story helps one to be understood. When Isabelle perceives that Julie, her friend, is in love with her suitor, which Julie tries to conceal, she finds it difficult to manage the situation; though she wants Julie to know her indifference toward him, she cannot direct their conversation to the topic. Isabelle makes use of a parallel story in order to relieve Julie of unnecessary anxiety:

it came into my Head to tell her a Story parallel to our Case;
where a young Woman, by an obstinate concealing from her friend

⁵⁵. Cry, II, pp. 250-51.

that she was in love with the Gentleman by whom this Friend was addressed, suffered her innocently and ignorantly to marry the Man for whom she had not so violent a Passion; but that she could easily, and would have controuled and conquered it, had she known the Passion of her Friend, and the dreadful Consequences which it afterwards produced to her.

Isabelle's tactic of an analogous story is successful and Julie identifies herself with the woman in the story: 'Julie immediately understood my Meaning, and after several Sighs and Struggles with herself, burst into the following Expressions'.⁵⁶ By the same means of inducing identification, the listener can feel sympathy; Isabelle's description of the sincere friendship between the Marquis de Stainville and Dumont calls for a sense of affinity and thus satisfaction and delight in David and Valentine who compare their own heartfelt friendship to the other pair of friends and find comradeship in all the four.⁵⁷

Because of its potential to induce reflection, an analogous story is susceptible to exploitation for a malicious purpose. In one case in David Simple, though he fails in the end, a villain manoeuvres to take advantage of a parallel story to insinuate that there is another person, not himself, who plots mischief. There is a student who wishes to sever the friendship between Stainville and Dumont, so as to exploit Stainville's money. By impressing the danger of false friendship, he *expects* to bring about a rupture between Stainville and Dumont. He 'would often take Opportunities to tell Stories of false Friends; of People, who under the pretence of Love, had betrayed, and made their own Advantage of the undesigning and artless, and would always conclude with some Remarks on the Folly of People's confiding too strongly in

⁵⁶. David Simple, p. 198.

⁵⁷. David Simple, p. 219.

others'. He intends to encourage Stainville to associate the false friend in his story with Dumont and to suspect Dumont.⁵⁸

Another pattern of exploitation is made through the prevention of associations; it is a contrivance to manipulate another's life. Sarah Fielding shows the dangers of an inability to read in another person's life, to learn from it and to guard oneself. In Ophelia, despite a chance given to her to project another person's situation on herself and protect herself, Ophelia at first cannot read a parallel story in another woman's life and as a result she keeps herself totally ignorant of her own situation. Ophelia has been abducted from the protection of her aunt by Lord Dorchester, who does not have an intention to marry her but only wants to live with her. Ophelia, brought up in seclusion, is ignorant of social custom and does not understand his intention or the danger to her reputation. On their way Ophelia is mistakenly carried away to another aristocrat, who has persuaded a woman into eloping with him. Lord Dorchester knows the nobleman's misbehaviour in defiance of matrimony, so he sees to it that the woman can flee him and go to her aunt's. If Ophelia learns from the other woman's situation and realizes the reason why Lord Dorchester has frustrated the other aristocrat's plot, Ophelia will escape from him, Lord Dorchester knows. For his own scheme to live with Ophelia without getting married, Ophelia's understanding the woman's circumstances is very inconvenient, so he restricts the information given to Ophelia to a minimum and prevents Ophelia from learning from a similar story and becoming aware of her own situation.⁵⁹ At last Ophelia overhears a conversation and realizes Lord Dorchester's scheme. She flies from him with conflicting feelings as she still loves him. Eventually she happens to see the woman, with whom she talks. Now she understands a parallel between this woman and

⁵⁸. David Simple, p. 205.

⁵⁹. Ophelia, pp. 103-26??.

herself in being asked to live together out of matrimony, in being in love with the seducer, having left the lover but not being able to conquer her passion. The parallel invites the same sympathy and comradeship: 'Her Case, in some Degree, resembled mine, which made me accompany her in weeping'; 'The Similitude between this young Lady's Fate and mine, disposed us well towards each other'.⁶⁰

To sum up, Sarah Fielding regards the method of drawing parallels as an important mechanism in defining one's life through finding similarities and differences discerned in another's and learning from them. Thus, within the work parallels provide the characters with warnings and materials to induce reflection, a grasp of their own situation and self-analysis. The same application is expected of the reader by considering the depicted characters and situations. In this way variations of parallel and contrasting units repeat the same message and fortify its impression. Even though some readers thought the system monotonous, the parallels are intended to assist the reader's effective use of reading.

Sarah Fielding does not confine the idea of parallels to the interior of the text. Allusions and quotations are an extension of the same idea. She thinks highly of the writer's ability to make proper parallels; drawing parallels requires a discerning mind, and it provides an opportunity for the author to display her skill:

it is requisite for a Writer, whenever he compares one Object to another, or illustrates a Thought by something else that resembles it, that he should first acquaint himself thoroughly with every minute Difference, lest he should confuse, instead of clearing his Meaning;⁶¹

⁶⁰. *Ophelia*, pp. 220-21, 226.

⁶¹. *Dellwyn*, I, v.

When the writer compares one object in his or her own writing with one in another author's work, it is an opportunity to show his or her proficiency in reading. Sarah Fielding deliberately takes up a well-known story and a famous phrase to construct a correspondence. When it works well, it inspires the reader to remember the feelings and sentiments aroused by the original. The writer can make profitable use of this by adding sophistication or suggesting a better alternative. Such reference sometimes takes the form of simple quotation and sometimes leads to larger thematic or rhetorical developments.

One example of this kind is Sarah Fielding's use of Matthew Prior's (1664-1721) Henry and Emma. It introduces the theme of a woman's love and rationality. In Remarks on Clarissa she shows an interest in this poem and expands the consideration of the love of Emma to construct the story line and narrative agenda of The Cry. Prior's poem, written in 1708, enjoyed a great deal of popularity.⁶² Prior describes how Emma's love is unwavering even when she is told by Henry that he is a murderer and that he must go into the woods to live among rogues, in order to evade punishment. He even declares that he despises her and her sincere love itself. However, no threat can dissuade her. Finally Henry's

⁶². See Jean H. Hagstrum, Sex and Sensibility: Ideal and Erotic Love from Milton to Mozart (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 165. Mrs Poyntz was fascinated by Prior's Henry and Emma: 'To-day I am Prior-mad--- His Henry and Emma is my hobby-horse...' Her respect to Prior: 'Prior outshines all other stars in brightness, no less than magnitude.' See Anna Maria Poyntz, Je ne sçai quoi: or, a Collection of Letters, Odes, etc. (London, no name of publisher, 1769), pp. 64, 67. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was charmed with Prior's ballad of Henry and Emma, about an heiress eloping with a bandit-lover (Robert Halsband, The Life of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), p. 5). The poem itself is based on an old ballad, 'The Nut-brown Maid' (1502), which Prior prefixes to his poem in the collections of his poetical works in 1709 and 1718. Prior's popular poem was performed as a musical drama. See 'Songs in Henry and Emma, or the Nut Brown Maid; a New Musical Drama, taken from Prior: as performed at the Theatre Royal in Covent-Garden. The Musick Composed by Mr. Arne' (London: for the Author, 1749).

dreadful prediction turns out to be only a trial of her love for him, as he reveals himself to be a great man with a large fortune. Prior idealizes, almost consecrates, a woman's constancy, in defiance of a common notion of female fickleness.⁶³ This worship of female faithfulness seems to have appealed to readers. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu reminiscently regrets her own enthusiasm: 'This senseless Tale [Prior's Henry and Emma] is, however, so well varnish'd with melody of words and pomp of Sentiments, I am convince'd it has hurt more Girls than ever were injur'd by the lewdest Poems extant.'⁶⁴

Sarah Fielding published Remarks on Clarissa with 'Some Reflections on the Character and Behaviour of Prior's EMMA'. Here, the tendency to flatter the blindness, praised as constancy, of a woman's love is challenged. An assembly of men and women discuss Clarissa and when the question of Clarissa's love is raised, a gentleman remembers Emma's love in the highest praise: 'nothing less than the lovely Emma's Passion for Henry would be any Satisfaction to him, if he was a Lover.' To this gentleman, Miss Gibson answers:

She had often been sorry that the Poem of Henry and Emma had not been long ago buried in Oblivion; for (continued she) it is one of those things which, by the Dress of Ornaments of fine Language and smooth Poetry, has imposed on Mankind so strong a Fallacy, as to make a character in itself most despicable, nay I may say most blameable, generally thought worthy Admiration and Praise:...no one would more have applauded Emma's Resolution, of loving of all Mankind but him alone, than I should have done: But yet when I see a Woman seriously endeavour to conquer a Passion

⁶³. The Literary Works of Matthew Prior ed. H. Bunker Wright and Monroe K. Spears, 2nd ed. (Oxford: At Clarendon Press, 1971), pp. 233, 234.

⁶⁴. The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu ed. Robert Halsband 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965-67), III, p. 68.

for a Man who proves himself unworthy of her Love it will always be to me a strong Proof of her steady Constancy to a Man she has reason to esteem...The Love that is not judicious, must be as uncertain as its capricious Foundation;⁶⁵

The idea Miss Gibson presents here crystallizes in Portia in The Cry.⁶⁶ Portia is an illustration of a woman whom Miss Gibson would prefer to Emma. A woman's blind love represented by Emma is contrasted with Portia's judicious way of thinking and behaviour. In parallel with the plot of Emma's story, Portia is in love with a man who makes her go through a trial by telling a lie.

Indeed, the love of Prior's Emma provides a theme in The Cry. In talking about love, Portia refers to Prior's Emma, the story of Perdita, an acquaintance of her mother, and also the attitude of an Ephesian matron and Indian women towards their husbands' deaths.⁶⁷ Perdita is what Emma might have become if Henry had turned out to be as he has told her. By offering the contrasting ending in the story of Perdita, who accidentally loves a villain and dies in misery, Portia claims that Emma becomes virtuous only by chance. Portia concludes: 'I would have every action placed in its proper class in our esteem, and not erroneously judged by its accidental consequence.'⁶⁸ She also elucidates what she thinks real love is: 'A sympathetic liking, excited by fancy; directed by judgment; and to which is join'd also a most sincere desire of the good and happiness of its object.'⁶⁹ Portia's virtues are illuminated in

⁶⁵. Remarks on Clarissa, pp. 19, 22.

⁶⁶. Ophelia is also another variation in the theme of a woman's judicious love and passion.

⁶⁷. Scene VII in Part the third in Cry.

⁶⁸. Cry, II, pp. 92-8.

⁶⁹. Cry, I, p. 105; Portia talks on love in the Scenes II to V (I, pp. 47-106).

contrast to Melantha, whose versatile 'love' is motivated by vanity and sometimes seems to be fixed and stable but without reasonable ground, and Cylinda, whose love is always self-centred and fails to find its proper object because of her obstinacy. Making striking contrast with Emma's blind love, The Cry illustrates in Portia the virtue of true faithful love which does not result in being virtuous only by chance, but is based on proper character, principle, and judgment.

However, this variation on Henry and Emma was not persuasive enough for some readers. Prior's plot centres on Emma's blind love. She borrowed the plot without that essential part. Although the new storyline cannot rely on such single-mindedness as Emma's, it remains faithful to the original plot of a faked test of love. So the turn of the heroine's fate seems unconvincing. Indeed Richardson complains of the trial Portia has to endure: the authoress has created a perfectly praiseworthy heroine, 'whose uniform Character ought to have set her above the Necessity of a Tryal'.⁷⁰ He suggested in a letter to Sarah Fielding that Ferdinand should be made more deserving of the virtuous Portia.⁷¹ Portia is an idealized figure, but Ferdinand is not good enough to deserve the love which overcomes the difficulties he prepares as her trial. Portia's sensible love makes sharp contrast with Emma's blind love, but the problem is that the more judicious, reasonable, and affectionate Portia is, the more unnecessary and inappropriate the plot of the trial becomes. Richardson thought the schemer of the trial, Ferdinand, did not deserve Portia. Sarah Fielding might have known that inconvenience, but at the cost of congruity of plot, she continued the scheme of parallel and comparison with Henry and Emma.

⁷⁰ FM XIV, ff 135-6, Richardson to Westcomb, Aug 9 1754.

⁷¹ He proposes revisions and the publication of a second edition, as 'I cannot bear that a piece which has so much merit and novelty of design in it, should slide into oblivion' (Correspondence of Samuel Richardson, ed. Anna Laetitia Barbauld [London: Richard Phillips, 1804], II, pp. 108-9).

Another of Sarah Fielding's modes of making parallels is her use of allusions and quotations. This has not always been welcomed. One contemporary reader definitely found the habit troublesome. Lady Bradshaigh did not approve of quotations in The Cry, although she generally appreciated the moderate and effective use of them. In a letter to Richardson she expresses such annoyance that she virtually caricatures it:

one thing I must observe, that made me pish and pugh fifty times and it was, at the Excessive use that is made of verses, lines, Scraps, of plays, Farces, Songs etc., now and then those things are very well, Nay they are (when aptly and moderately used) ornamental, and sometimes almost necessarily brought in but in every two or three pages, and even two or three times in one. who can bear it? As Such one says, in such a play, such a Farce, and a great many Citations so triffleing. -- I will only out of 500 instance one.⁷²

She is not only annoyed by the quantity of literary references, but by the practice of showing whose authority is borrowed:

If the author ment to guard against accusation of plagiarism, she might as well have added between every word, as somebody says for no doubt the same words had been most of them us'd by somebody.⁷³

For modern readers as well, Sarah Fielding's practice of quotation and literary allusion presents difficulties. This is mainly because this

⁷². FM XI 48 E 5, f. 94, Lady Bradshaigh to Richardson, March 12 1750 [and Mar 16].

⁷³. FM XI 48 E 5, f. 94, Lady Bradshaigh to Richardson, March 12 1750 [and Mar 16].

method of making parallels by using phrases that are supposed to be familiar to the reader is still more unsuitable to the general requirements of the novel.⁷⁴ Werner considers this as irritating and accuses Jane Collier of encouraging Sarah Fielding to make more use of it.⁷⁵

Nevertheless, quotation performs an important role in her work, as more than a mere display of literary knowledge. Quotations are a sign from the author that reassures the reader that they belong to a shared intellectual community. She uses them as an aphoristic summary of her narrative, and a compact description of her characters' complicated and profound feelings. Parrish defends the practice by re-estimating the role of quotation. She understands it 'as a means of establishing rapport with them through the literary heritage shared by mature Englishmen.'⁷⁶ As she argues, quotation is a means to establish a common background of understanding with the least effort. In short, Sarah Fielding uses quotation as a sort of shorthand: relying on the reader's textual memory, she quotes in order to prompt the reader to recall sentiments excited by other texts. She chooses in various cases to take advantage of familiar images and overlap her scenes with scenes

⁷⁴ Judging from the criterion of the novel's focus on the individualistic point of view and experience, this practice is 'very damaging' (Watt, The Rise of the Novel, pp. 12, 13); Hunter lists as one of the features of the novel 'tradition-free language' (Hunter, Before Novels, p. 23); he argues that 'unlike older literary forms, the novel does not depend upon an established community of readers', leading to an understanding of the novel as a response to the cultural demand of the young, ignorant, and anti-traditional (Hunter, Before Novels, pp. 39-46, 66, 75, 76-77); see also his 'The Young, the Ignorant, and the Idle: Some Notes on readers and the Beginning of the English Novel', in Alan Charles Kors and Paul J. Korshin, eds., Anticipation of the Enlightenment in England, France, and Germany (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), 259-82.

⁷⁵ Werner, pp. 42, 119, 210.

⁷⁶ Parrish, pp. 234-9. She refers to Mary Lascelles, Jane Austen and her Art (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939) and Herman Meyer, The Poetics of Quotation in the European Novel trans. Theodore and Yetta Ziolkowski (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968).

familiar to the well-read reader and quote from them, rather than to create her own phrase.

This dependence on other writers derives from her thoughts on the role of writing and reading. Although she attempts to devise her own style at the level of the text as a whole, in terms of particular words and phrases she is a liberal borrower, a practice which does not compromise her conception of the author's originality. Her borrowing is supported by this idea of 'invention': ~~X~~^{by} invention is 'really meant no more (and so the word signifies) than discovery, or finding out'.⁷⁷ In quoting other writers, she accordingly means to show her discovery of literary excellence in them; the degree of excellence in the quoted phrases corresponds with that of the ability of the borrower to recognize their greatness. In addition, the borrower shows how appropriately she can adapt them to the situations she creates. So, the borrower is a student whose capacity to learn from previous literature and whose ability in application are tested. With regard to this position as a receptive writer, she also admires great authors' capacity as learners and regards their candid learning attitude as her model.⁷⁸ When 'the Cry' insult Portia for having learned observations from Ferdinand, the author describes Portia's idea followed by her speech:

as she pretended not to any intuitive knowledge, it was in her opinion matter of praise, rather than reproach, that she should have profited by the conversation and remarks of another.

Portia. That I endeavour to improve myself by such conversation as that of Ferdinand's, is, in my opinion, more to my honour than my shame... no one can make a right use of another's observations,

⁷⁷. *Cry*, II, p. 1.

⁷⁸. She praises Homer, Aristotle, Virgil, Horace, and Le Bossu as candid great learners (*Cry*, vol. II, pp. 11-3).

without a capacity to understand them, and judgment to make the proper applications;⁷⁹

Thus, the proper use of quotations offers the following benefits: making convenient parallels; showing the writer's ability to understand other authors; making a proper application of them; and authorizing one's sentiments even before such a perverse audience as 'the Cry'. In other words, through quotation the writer presents herself as a reader; importantly, quotation, and the application of quotation, offers a model of reading.

However, in contrast with the parallel fictional episodes she creates within her own works, the parallels drawn through allusions and quotations could produce a reverse effect. The former helps even a novice reader to comprehend the author's message. Thus it has the potential to enlarge the possibility of readership. On the other hand, the latter parallels restrict the appreciative readership to those who possess the knowledge and learning needed to identify the original and judge her use of it. In the former, the examples of characters' use and abuse of parallels help the reader to be instructed. In the latter, textual allusion addresses those readers who are culturally privileged but risks alienating those who are not. So, she ventures to show her use of literature asking for approval by well-read people at the cost of the danger of alienating the less well-read. It might be possible to keep a subtle balance between the two and thereby secure a larger readership, but it seems she does not recognize the danger of exclusion and uses literary allusions profusely.⁸⁰ As a result her system of

⁷⁹. *Cry*, I, pp. 187-88.

⁸⁰. Francis Coventry praises Henry Fielding, addressing him in his preface, for his 'master-pieces' that are 'worthy the attention of the greatest and wisest men' and appeal to general readers as well. He perceives that the novel suffers from contempt mainly because 'the pride and pedantry of learned men, who are willing to monopolise reading to

parallels for education as a whole loses its direction. In terms of its relation to readers, her twofold system of parallels produces two effects which are contradictory to each other, and addresses two different sorts of readers with varied skill, experience, and learning.

IV. Satire

As I suggested above, each of Sarah Fielding's units of narrative consists of lesson and fiction. I have examined how she constructs the fictional part with an intention to enforce a lesson. Below I shall consider the lesson element. In her moral observations, she models her role on the satirist's function to instruct, and in many ways she is indebted to the traditions of satire. As is often the case with her, while she incorporates such traditions, she attempts to establish an independent position by reshaping them.

While arguing how Augustan verse satire and the novel are different in terms of objectivity and subjectivity, detachment and immersion, Ronald Paulson points out that the satiric strain was inherited and transformed by the novelists. In Tobias Smollett (1721-71) he finds the character of the satirist as a focused concern. He shows that Sarah Fielding and Samuel Richardson anticipate Smollett in making use of satire in order to produce character types.⁸¹ The

themselves, and therefore fastidiously decry all books that are on a level with common understandings, as empty, trifling, and impertinent' and that Henry Fielding has overcome the difficulties of combining dignity and amusement, understanding demands of different kinds of readers. See Dedication to the Third Edition (1752) of The History of Pompey the Little; or the Life and Adventures of a Lap Dog, in Prefaces to Three Eighteenth-Century Novels (1708, 1751, 1797), selected with an introduction by Claude E. Jones, no. 64 (Los Angeles: The Augustan Reprint Society, 1957), no page number.

⁸¹. Ronald Paulson, Satire and the Novel in Eighteenth-Century England (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967); for discussion of Sarah

tendency to make the satirist himself the subject of writing is noted by Thomas Lockwood in his study of satire in the latter half of eighteenth century.⁸² In addition to this tendency, I aim to discuss Sarah Fielding's management of satiric structure and viewpoint.

Margaret Anne Doody's reading of Augustan poets helps to establish an illuminating context for examining Sarah Fielding. As Doody points out, the complete separation of verse from prose distorts our understanding of not only the Augustan poets but of eighteenth-century literary production in general. Doody builds a bridge between the study of verse and the study of prose in the eighteenth century, by referring to Tristram Shandy, Tom Jones, and even Pamela: 'novels and poems have deep resemblances', she contends.⁸³ She points out various similarities. There is, besides, a resemblance in character description: 'The wealth of the Augustans' poetic characters prefigures the age of the Augustan Novel, and the novelists expand on the poets' discoveries rather than supersede them.'⁸⁴ Not only in character discoveries but also in other characteristics of Augustan verse does Sarah Fielding resemble poets.

Doody shows how dynamic, appetitive, expansive, and new the ethos of the Augustan poets was, despite those impressions often conjured up for them. She characterizes Restoration and Augustan poetry as appetitive in the sense that there is a strong urge 'to reach out and

Fielding and Richardson, see pp. 208-16.

⁸². Thomas Lockwood, Post-Augustan Satire: Charles Churchill and Satirical Poetry, 1750-1800 (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1979), esp. pp. 18-9.

⁸³. Margaret Anne Doody, The Daring Muse: Augustan Poetry Reconsidered (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), chap. VII; p. 211. Survey of studies of eighteenth-century literature shows the shift in attention from poetry toward novel, and we find disruption between them rather than continuation (see for example, Warner, 'The Social Ethos of the Novel', 241; Folkenflik, 'The Heirs of Ian Watt', 203).

⁸⁴. Doody, The Daring Muse, pp. 199, 210, 207.

grab the world'.⁸⁵ Quoting from John Dryden (1631-1700), she maintains that in this period '[g]ood poetry, appetite-provoking, is produced by the appetitive imagination which it then stimulates in others.'⁸⁶ Although Hunter argues that the energy of Pope, Jonathan Swift (1667-1745), and other Augustan writers was directed to counterattack the first cultural wave in pursuit of novelty dating from 1690s, and after the deaths of Pope and Swift there was the second wave represented by Richardson and Fielding, he also maintains that the literary power of Pope, Swift, and others derives from the basic general change in the culture.⁸⁷ In this context then, 'the Augustan effort to preserve a humanist heritage and keep literature on its established course' absorbs and outdoes the first wave of innovation rather than entrenching itself.⁸⁸ The counterattack against a certain sort of quest for novelty operates so as to generate, paradoxically, a more dynamic and powerful novelty. In examining the works of Sarah Fielding, one needs to see interaction and incorporation rather than confrontation between Augustan 'established' writers and new prose writers. Her work inherits the Augustan sense of preserving tradition through innovation in (and via transformation of) genre. In other words, her absorption of tradition contributed to innovation.

To begin with, Sarah Fielding identifies her role as a writer with the poet's duty. As I have shown in the previous chapter, she pays much attention to the role of the writer when she examines the functions of reading. In this concern, her own position as a prose writer switches without any hesitation to that of the poet. It suggests that she has a strong impression that fundamentally poets and she are doing the same

⁸⁵. Doody, The Daring Muse, p. 8.

⁸⁶. Doody, The Daring Muse, p. 9.

⁸⁷. Hunter, Before Novels, esp. pp. 11-2, 170-71.

⁸⁸. Hunter, Before Novels, pp. 11-2.

thing. Although she did not publish in verse and of course she knew prose writing was different from verse composition, she identifies herself with the poet in her discussion of artistic creation in the process of writing. Further, she often refers to poets and theories of poetry very favourably and draws upon them in her writing. In the declaration of what she intends to do in her work she relies heavily on Le Bossu, who was an authority on the theory of the epic poem. She draws on Pope when she discusses an important issue among her major concerns. It is exemplified in her ideas about the essential attitude in reading and about the reigning humour in a character, condensed in Pope's lines: 'A perfect Judge will read each Work of Wit / With the same Spirit that its Author writ'.⁸⁹ Moreover, as Werner and Downs-Miers show, there are numerous references and allusions to poets.⁹⁰

Among literary traditions, the conventions of satire are of particular importance to Sarah Fielding's work. Especially, she deploys a specific technique of typically Augustan satire which Doody calls 'ventriloquism'. Doody points out that there is 'a continuous parodic use of the enemy's voice', a practice which was animated and invigorated by irony in Civil War verse. She calls this technique 'ventriloquism': 'the voice of the "real" speaker (speaking for the poet and his audience) is momentarily cast into the personification of the Opposite or Other; a dummy or puppet-speaker is given a strange voice.'⁹¹ This technique gives a voice to the antagonist. The (expected) effect is the enemy's self-exposure: how foolish and wicked the enemy reveals himself to be. Another element Sarah Fielding combines with this technique is an

⁸⁹. Pope's 'An Essay on Criticism', ll. 233-34. Pastoral Poetry and An Essay on Criticism ed. E. Audra and Aubrey Williams, vol I of The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope general ed., John Butt (London: Methuen, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), p. 266

⁹⁰. Werner, pp. 294-98; Downs-Miers, pp. 259-62.

⁹¹. Doody, The Daring Muse, esp. pp. 44-5.

essential rule in verse satire which M.C. Randolph defines as 'bi-partite in structure':

a particular vice or folly was attacked in 'Part A' and its opposite virtue praised in 'part B'. There is always more attack than praise in satire 'since, paradoxically, in the very act of presenting the negative or destructive sides of human behavior the satirist is establishing a positive foundation on which he can base his specific recommendation to virtue.'⁹²

Sarah Fielding uses these techniques in various degrees of combination. In The Cry ventriloquism is used in the part of 'the Cry', and the story of Melantha which Portia tells is told through this method. Cleopatra and Octavia evidently combines the bi-partite rule and the practice of ventriloquism. Cleopatra's long story (part A), which reveals her wicked intentions, precedes Octavia's story (part B) of modest length. In Dellwyn, too, the story of Mrs Bilson is 'part B' set in the analysis of the development of vanity in the Countess of Dellwyn (part A).

As for the 'bi-partite structure' the skill in analysis is more fully developed in 'part A'. The imbalance of the parts is a consequence of following the 'bi-partite' rule. The reason why description of the virtuous is short is observed by Ophelia:

Whether there is less Variety in good than in Evil, or that we are apt to be more concise in our Panegyrics than our satires I know not.... Folly is extremely various, but good Sense is

⁹². Philological Quarterly 21 (1942): 369, 373, quoted in Howard D. Weinbrot, Eighteenth-Century Satire: Essays on Text and Context from Dryden to Peter Pindar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 11. Randolph discusses Roman satire. Weinbrot offers evidence of English poets' awareness of this rule.

uniform, and from its perfect Consistency is soon described.⁹³

In Cleopatra and Octavia the narrators of parts A and B are respectively Cleopatra and Octavia themselves who have arisen from 'the Shades below' to tell their stories. The author declares that the device of Cleopatra and Octavia telling their own stories, looking back to the period in which they lived, is meant to realize 'a more impartial, distinct, and exact Narrative of their several Adventures, and of the Motives they were influenced by'.⁹⁴ 'Part A' is meant to be 'impartial' in the sense that Cleopatra describes her pride and vanity without any sign of regret. On the surface of the narrative, she discloses her vices analytically, as if sticking to facts.

In Sarah Fielding's use of ventriloquial technique, she lets a character speak from his or her viewpoint, pretending to preserve the life story without reconstructing it. This is a device to make the story undermine itself; she lets the (vicious) Cleopatra follow her own course and disclose her own vice. Cleopatra proudly reveals her own haughtiness and cruelty without any sign of remorse; there is no hint of moral disapproval on the surface of the narrative, but the reader immediately recognizes what to read in her actions and motives. The Cry represent, in particular, the force of scandal, ignorance, and a devotion to untruth, or whatever obstructs a speaker. Portia could speak to Una or directly to the reader without the interruption of the Cry, but the purpose of this ventriloquism is politely to give a voice to the antagonists and, in so doing, to criticize them evidently and obliquely.

In The Cry the author makes Portia explain the merit of the ventriloquial technique. Portia uses ventriloquism when she wants to describe Melantha, a manipulative attention-seeker, who always loves

⁹³. Ophelia, I, p. 214.

⁹⁴. Cleopatra and Octavia, v.

to be triumphant over other women and at present regards herself as a rival of Portia for Ferdinand's love.⁹⁵ Portia chooses to pretend to be Melantha, telling Melantha's story in the first person. This way of telling a story is considered as a method to 'dive into the secret springs which actuate the human heart'. The Cry protest against Portia's knowing 'the secret springs' of Melantha, but Una permits Portia to choose whatever method of narrative she thinks is appropriate since 'it is [Una's] pleasure to trace the most intricate labyrinths of the human heart' and 'It is the subject matter itself [Una seeks]; and to cavil about the manner of conveying it, is trifling and unnecessary'. Speaking in the first person gives an impression that this form allows the speaker to reveal the inner mind of the person concerned. Portia guarantees that her presentation is founded on 'what may be fairly deduced from [Melantha's] actions' and 'strictly gathered from [Melantha's] own words'. Such a narrative mode is chosen only to speak 'in the most lively and intelligible manner'.⁹⁶ So, the emphasized merit of this technique is making a description easier to understand. Besides this supplementary function, however, this technique has a definite merit. As Portia explains, the technique enables an analysis of the enemy to be performed, including even some aspects unrealized by the enemy herself; Portia's description derives from '[Melantha's] own words, although many times she hath been perfectly ignorant, I believe, of the force of her own language'.⁹⁷ The language and the motive are connected as if the inference were natural and logical; the propriety of Portia's conjecture is never questioned even by the Cry. By using this technique, Portia can judge Melantha's behaviour and words, decide on the motives, expose vices, and still pretend to be neutral, not judgmental, as the

⁹⁵. Portia pretends to be Melantha, *Cry*, II, pp. 144-52, 205-09.

⁹⁶. *Cry*, II, pp. 142-44, 154.

⁹⁷. *Cry*, II, p. 154.

speaker is assumed to be Melantha and the analysis is assumed to be made by Melantha herself. Sarah Fielding exploits this technique by allowing herself considerable freedom in description and judgment. In this way, the technique nurtured in the partisan ballads of the Civil War and polished by the Augustan wits is carried on by Sarah Fielding.

The appetitiveness, hilariousness, dynamism, and uniqueness of the poet's imagination are, Doody argues, the Augustan poets' great qualities, assisted by their brilliance in employing resourceful and apposite language.⁹⁸ Sarah Fielding did not perceive these features wholly positively despite her considerable attachment to the traditions of satire. There are instances of cautious remarks about them among Sarah Fielding's contemporaries as well. For example, while Johnson thinks highly of such expansiveness in the Augustan poetry, he is uncomfortable with some aspects of the work of the Augustans.⁹⁹ His unfavourable critical opinion is aroused when he senses the poet's extreme imagination and ill-judgment derive from personal resentment.¹⁰⁰ This cautious ambivalence is also found in Sarah Fielding. In The Cry, Sarah Fielding calls for imagination, but to a limited degree:

⁹⁸. See Doody, The Daring Muse.

⁹⁹. Johnson appreciated Pope's literary energy as follows: 'a mind active, ambitious, and adventurous, always investigating, always aspiring; in his widest searches still longing to go forward, in its highest flights still wishing to be higher; always imagining something greater than it knows, always endeavoring more than it can do'. See Samuel Johnson, Lives of the English Poets, ed. George Birkbeck Hill, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905) III, p. 217; Doody, The Daring Muse, pp. 24-5; Harry M. Solomon, 'Johnson's Silencing of Pope: Trivializing An Essay on Man', in Paul J. Korshin, ed. The Age of Johnson: A Scholarly Annual 5 (1992); 247-80.

¹⁰⁰. He finds '[The Dunciad's] chief fault is the grossness of its images' (Lives of the English Poets, III, p. 242). Thinking that Pope's 'political partiality was too plainly shown', he assumes that his work sometimes 'to a cool reader of the present time exhibits nothing but tedious malignity' and that 'he pleased himself with being important and formidable, and gratified sometimes his pride, and sometimes his resentment' (Lives of the English Poets, III, pp. 179, 181).

'tis necessary to assume a certain freedom in writing, not strictly perhaps within the limits prescribed by rules. Yet we desire only to be free, and not licentious. We wish to give our imagination leave to play; but within such bounds as not to grow mad.¹⁰¹

She feels the need to state that she does not opt for extravagant and excessive wit.

In her last work of fiction, poets come to be regarded as dangerous as their verbal skilfullness dazzles the reader. Ophelia is on her guard when she discusses the poet's deftness in deploying figurative and inflated language: 'as moral truths, and sound Reason, [appear ill], to one who has been accustomed to the Turns and Quibbles of false Wit, the enchanting Jingle of Rhime, or the pompous Sound of high-flown Metaphors.'¹⁰² This exemplary heroine remarks:

Not that I would exclude the Reading of such Authors as I mention. I am not insensible to the Charms of Poetry; perhaps was I more so I might not think it so unfit for young People. But I look upon it as dangerous, before Maturity has fixed some Degree of Taste, some Steadiness of Thought and Principle, as it is apt to render them ever after uninclined to such Studies as are useful, and of more lasting Entertainment. In short, I esteem such Reading as bad for the Mind, as high Meats are for the Stomach; they may create a false Appetite, but will pall a true one, and make all proper Food appear insipid, till by long Use even they grow tiresome, and the true Appetite being vitiated, all alike

¹⁰¹. Cry, I, p. 14

¹⁰². Ophelia, I, pp. 159-60.

disgust.¹⁰³

In Sarah Fielding's perception, hyperactive skilfulness in imagination and language leads to invective. She does not make explicit distinctions between seventeenth-century lampoonists, the Augustan wits, and post-Popean poets, but their perceived general propensity toward invective is a problem for her. The same great poets along with other lesser names could be at times regarded as lampoonists and politically sectarian agitators motivated by personal animosity rather than high cultural performers. Pope and Swift differentiate themselves from 'bad' satirists whose motivation is personal hostility, but in turn their own poems could be understood as privately malicious.¹⁰⁴ Sarah Fielding's repeated warning to the reader not to search for the real contemporary models for her characters is related to her intention to draw universal rather than particular portraits. It is also a reaction to the alarming tendency of scathing political and personal attacks the Augustan poets savoured, refined, yet at the same time disclaimed. She differentiates her works from those sectarian personal attacks and attempts to remove private and personal animosity from literary motivation.

In Dellwyn Sarah Fielding mocks the profusion of venom in a 'political writer' as an outcome of personal resentment. Mr Lucum, who has lost Lord Dellwyn's favour and the position given by him, after his daughter gets divorced, turns to political writing. This 'political writer' writes in order to vent the 'Venom with which he was filled':

He dipped his Pen in Gall, and threw forth his inward Spleen at

¹⁰³. Ophelia, I, p. 160.

¹⁰⁴. Lockwood, Post-Augustan Satire, pp. 33-42; Lockwood mentions Steele's definition of 'true' satire on the basis of the satirist's impersonal and public spirited motivation, not personal or private (Post-Augustan Satire, p. 36).

every Man in Power; which Power was itself the Mark at which he shot, without distinguishing who or what the Man was at whom he levelled his Satire, more properly called Ribaldry. ... [He wrote] till he buried the plainest Matters of Fact so deeply under a Redundancy of Words, that they could no longer be perceived even by the clearest Understanding.¹⁰⁵

Satirists on women are regarded as motivated in the same way. When David Simple learns that Miss Nanny Johnson is wavering between David's love and the equipage of a wealthy old man, he 'raved like a Madman; repeated all the Satires he could remember on Women, all suitable to his present Thoughts'. The reason why they are 'suitable' is stated in parenthesis: '(which is no great wonder, as most probably they were writ by Men, in Circumstances not very different from his.)'¹⁰⁶ The same idea is presented by Delia in Familiar Letters: 'when I read those Satires [upon Women], I pity the Author; because I know, when People vent virulent Reproaches, that they have met with some great Disappointment.'¹⁰⁷ In both cases, the regrettable situation of virulent language is related to the writer's personal revengeful motivation.

Sarah Fielding, therefore, attempts to show that her own satire is not personally targeted. In The Cry, she entirely depersonalizes the target of criticism, directs it against an allegorical assembly, and gives the assembly 'the general name of THE CRY', so as to avoid attacks on individuals.¹⁰⁸ Vices and follies are represented by this

¹⁰⁵. Dellwyn, II, pp. 286-87

¹⁰⁶. David Simple, p. 39.

¹⁰⁷. Familiar Letters, I, p. 267.

¹⁰⁸. Cry, I, p. 20. In spite of her warnings, the reader's propensity was out of her control. For example, Dr Charles Morton (1716-99), the Librarian of the British museum, believed Cry to be a roman-à-clef; Mrs Piozzi supposed Melantha was based on 'a Coquet Lady of Salisbury', Cordelia on Beatrice Fielding, Portia perhaps on Jane Collier (The

allegorical assembly 'to drive off the possibility of malicious application'.¹⁰⁹ To associate a description with some particular person is a 'malicious' and 'pernicious' reading: 'Fully to exclude that pernicious interpretation on characteristic writings, namely, the fixing them down into personal libels, we beg to declare, that so far are we from using feign'd names to signify real persons'.¹¹⁰ '[T]o indulge private spleen, or to gratify malice' is strongly condemned. The names for members of the Cry are deliberately chosen to avoid identification with particular persons, 'for scandal and invective are our utter abhorrence', and these are what the Cry themselves practise and represent.¹¹¹

As I showed above, Sarah Fielding deliberately presents parallel narratives. The layers and repetitions of the images and the stories are constructed to make comparisons and to simplify interpretation. The parallels are products of variation devised in the process of fictionalization. As a result, as Henry Fielding maintains, 'every Episode bears a manifest Impression of the principal Design'.¹¹² Contrary to the practice of the typical satirists who could make one word or a sentence imply layers of interpretation, Sarah Fielding tries to detach herself from this practice and forbids such proliferation and the unintended application of her descriptions.¹¹³ She makes an effort

Correspondence of Henry and Sarah Fielding, ed. Martin C. Battestin and Clive T. Probyn [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993], p. 136).

¹⁰⁹. Cry, I, p. 23.

¹¹⁰. Cry, I, p. 18.

¹¹¹. Cry, I, p. 23.

¹¹². David Simple, p. 7.

¹¹³. For the Augustan poets' tendency to double meanings, see Doody, The Daring Muse, pp. 226-7; David Nokes, Raillery and Rage: A Study of Eighteenth Century Satire (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1987), pp.60-77.

to prevent her text from being multi-layered, open to several different readings. This is why she eagerly impresses on her audience the importance of simplicity in words and the strict application of language. Especially, this attention is seen in Portia's effort not to leave vague the meaning of a word whether commonly used or invented.¹¹⁴

Her distancing herself from powerful satire reflects her keen sense of the taste of the age. Her satire is in a transformed and modified mode, purging the satirical ethos of unacceptably harsh features. Verse satire, extremely appetitive and always transfiguring itself by expansion and novelty in the early eighteenth century, tended to 'dissociate' after Pope.¹¹⁵ Weinbrot instances Christopher Anstey's (1724-1805) New Bath Guide (1766) as a recommendation of a 'subdued form of subdued satire'.¹¹⁶ The Epilogue to New Bath Guide is especially characteristic of this mode. A lady despises a poet for his self-contentment, which is unintelligible to her: 'a hungry poet here, / A happy bard who rhymes and eats, / And lives by uttering quaint conceits / Yet thinks to him alone belong / The laurels due to modern song.'¹¹⁷ In the epilogue the poet, as Guide, is overwhelmed by a catalogue of accusation: 'The Ladies protest that I keep no decorum / In setting such patterns of folly before 'em:' and 'so unfit was my page / To meet the chaste eyes of this virtuous age.' The poet has become very diffident

¹¹⁴. On one occasion Portia criticises the way 'the Cry' loosely use the term 'romantic': 'I hate to suffer any word which implies ridicule to pass indefinite, and to be left at large to be apply'd at pleasure' (Cry, I, p. 60).

¹¹⁵. See Doody, The Daring Muse; Weinbrot, Eighteenth-Century Satire, 'The Dissociation of Satiric Sensibility', pp. 186-203; Lockwood, Post-Augustan Satire.

¹¹⁶. Weinbrot, Eighteenth-Century Satire, pp. 196-7. Christopher Anstey was one of the subscribers to Sarah Fielding's Memoirs of Socrates.

¹¹⁷. Christopher Anstey, The New Bath Guide With an introduction by Kenneth G. Ponting (Bath: Adams and Dart, 1970), postscript to Letter IX.

and miserable, imploring that he should be spared of accusations and asking a lady not 'to torture and cramp an unfortunate bard'. The women accuse the Guide of being coarse, indecent, and out of fashion: 'beyond reason, and decency too,/ Beyond all respect to religion that's due,'/ Your dirty satirical work you pursue.' The first lady knowingly advises him to write more fashionable stuff, such as the epistolary novel:

First Lady.-- Why if thou must write, thou had'st better compose
Some novels, or elegant letters in prose:
Take a subject that's grave, with a moral that's good,
Throw in all the temptations that virtue withstood,
In epistles like Pamela's chaste and devout--
A book that my family's never without.

This First Lady's advice to the Guide, together with the accusations the poet lists, sounds like a declaration of the end of the taste for satiric verse. The second lady professes her preference for a romantic young hero to please the reader rather than robust adventures and satirical sharpness.¹¹⁸ However, recognition of the defects of verse satire leads in turn to satire against the modern taste for the novel. The very points the poet is accused of, coarseness and indecency, are detected in the taste for the novel. The First Lady's warm enthusiasm for the epistolary novel, as respectable, 'chaste and devout' is followed by the Third Lady's questionable taste. The Second Lady's phrases, 'passion', 'tender soft rapture' and 'love' in the last two lines are conveniently taken over by the Third Lady:

[Second Lady]...

His delicate feelings be sure to improve

¹¹⁸. Anstey, The New Bath Guide, Epilogue to the Second Edition of the New Bath Guide.

With passion, with tender soft rapture, and love.
Third Lady.-- Add some incidents too, which I like above measure,
Such as those which I've heard are esteem'd as a treasure
In a book that's intitled -- The Woman of Pleasure.
Mix well, and you'll find 'twill a novel produce
Fit for modest young ladies -- so keep it for use.¹¹⁹

After the ladies' advice a ghost appears to pacify the poet's worried mind. The Ghost reassures the Guide that 'Thy themes are pleasant, and thy moral good', finding in his work nothing 'indecent or obscure' 'That virtue wounds, or taints the virgin's mind:...' The Ghost distinguishes the poet both from 'the caitiff scribbling tribe' which consists of 'the mob who novels lewd dispense' and from 'the infernal crew, detractors base, / Who pen lampoons...'. The Guide cannot defend himself with his own power of reasoning and rhetoric, but needs the protection of a ghost from the accusations made by the ladies. The Ghost is reassuring and encouraging, but as a device it also represents a desperate attempt to maintain the traditions of verse satire. At the same time, however, this epilogue is a vindication of satiric verse; however self-mocking and self-deprecating it tends to be, it marks an attempt to preserve the satiric tradition.

Moreover, Anstey's poem itself was extremely popular: Weinbrot notes that there were as many as twelve editions by 1784.¹²⁰ Horace Walpole enthusiastically attests to its popularity in 1766:

There is a new thing published that will make you bepiss your cheeks with laughter. It is called The New Bath Guide. It stole into the world, and for a fortnight no soul looked upon it, concluding

¹¹⁹. Epilogue to the second edition of the New Bath Guide.

¹²⁰. Weinbrot, Eighteenth-Century Satire, p. 196.

its name was its true name. No such thing. It is a set of letters in verse, in all kinds of verses describing the life of Bath, and incidentally everything else - but so much wit, so much humour, fun, poetry, so much originality, never met together before. ... I can say it by heart, though a quarto, and if I had time I would write it down for it is not yet reprinted and not one to be had.¹²¹

This type of 'subdued' satire was in demand. It is subdued but not silenced. Its key to success consists in its display of diffidence.

Sarah Fielding participated in the transformation of satire into a 'subdued' form.¹²² She made her way in prose and naturally this makes a great difference, but she inherited the ethos of Augustan verse satire as I suggested above, and modified it. Her satirical practice is 'subdued' in the sense that it involves self-doubt. In *Ophelia*, Sarah Fielding deals even with the simple exposure of vice, to say nothing of severe satire and ridicule, with considerable reserve. Ophelia's aunt, who has been driven to despair by being betrayed and deserted, brings up Ophelia in complete seclusion. In educating her the aunt makes it a rule to exclude information about contemporary society: 'she gave me no Account of the Manners and Customs of a People with whom she hoped I should never have any Intercourse.' Satire's acclaimed aim of instruction through exposure of vice is rejected by the aunt and the books selected for Ophelia to read are 'such Histories as served to enlarge and instruct the Mind of the reader, without informing him of

¹²¹. Quoted in an introduction by Kenneth G. Ponting to *The New Bath Guide*, v.

¹²². Paulson points out that in *David Simple* '[t]he satirist is moved to the side as one character type among many', as Sarah Fielding 'attaches the unpleasant dissecting to characters she can discredit' (*Satire and the Novel*, p. 210).

the existence of Vices'.¹²³ The secluded society of the aunt and Ophelia does not need knowledge of vices; it is necessary only in a corrupted world. It is sarcastically suggested that in the 'refined' world, ignorance of vices and follies, 'tho' the Knowledge of them could have no good Tendency', would be a reason to be despised.¹²⁴ In this way like the Guide in *Anstey*, the narrator acquiesces to the opposition to satire.

Sarah Fielding attempts to modify satire for her use. In order to achieve a calm and 'subdued' position from which to expose and analyze the world, she adopts various devices. Firstly, she adopts a narrator who drily analyses manners and customs as if they were scientific facts. Another device is used in *The Cry*, where the main butt of criticism and satire is the assembly of the Cry; they are defined explicitly as 'allegorical' and the author can be free to execute satiric exposure, as the Cry are invented for that very use. A second device is the ventriloquial technique. The ironical emphasis of the partisan Civil War ballads and Augustan poetry has faded and she uses ventriloquism to give an impression of the neutralized viewpoint of the narrator, hiding her moral judgment beneath the surface of narratives. Her use of irony serves to present the exposure in a milder mien rather than openly to attack the enemy, partly because her ventriloquism is applied to people whose vice is incontrovertible.

Thirdly, her exposure is better accomplished by an innocent character ignorant of social decorum. She sets up innocent and reasonable characters who are outsiders to the fashionable world, ignorant of social refinement, affectation, or vice, and borrows their perspective in order to expose vices with an air of innocence, at least on the surface of the narrative. Because of these characters' dispositions, satiric exposure can be achieved without a tone of ridicule.

¹²³. *Ophelia*, I, p. 12.

¹²⁴. *Ophelia*, I, p. 149.

They are caught by childlike surprise at the social decorum and take pity on the vicious, whose motives for the follies and vices are completely unfamiliar to them. The use of an outsider-observer of social vices is most evident in the viewpoint of Ophelia. Her tone is light and sometimes comical, and yet in effect Ophelia is the most ironical. She observes that those virtues she cherishes --thoughtfulness, simplicity, and rationality -- are despised by refined people. This perception makes her give up reflections, as they 'will be thought the Dregs of my recluse Education, and despised as vulgar and puritanical by the free and polite World, who are above such low Restraints as I may be willing to recommend'.¹²⁵ She observes ironically that:

I have learnt, that nothing is a Crime in polite Circles, but Poverty and Prudence. A Person who cannot contribute to the Follies of others, may perhaps be pardoned if she only complies with them; but if she attempts to be rational, she must not hope for forgiveness.¹²⁶

Another method of presenting 'subdued' satire is to describe a satirist with ambivalence. It implies mixed feelings toward a satirist, combining clear dislike of his abusive language with sympathy for the satirist's motives. Mr Spatter in David Simple, who introduces David to the world, is an embodiment of scathing satire. As an incisive satirist, Spatter is confidently good at describing vices and is able to activate a store of vocabulary for such a purpose: 'he always spoke in the Affirmative when he was condemning'. On the other hand, his reluctance to acknowledge virtues and the poverty of his stock of complimentary language is regretted: 'he always spoke ... in the Negative

¹²⁵. Ophelia, I, p. 143.

¹²⁶. Ophelia, I, p. 154.

when he was forced ... to allow the unfortunate Wretch ... any good Qualities.'¹²⁷ David's attitude toward this determined satirist is ambivalent. At one moment, he perceives him as a cantankerous carper. David finds his denunciatory speech intolerable in the end. However, he understands him at another moment as a sensible frank person who really loves people and is concerned about their moral improvement, for which purpose his examination is severe and his words necessarily bitter. In addition, Spatter's shrewd analyses are useful for David in learning to recognize follies and vices, and his good deed is repeatedly remembered by David.¹²⁸

Spatter makes a striking contrast with Mr Varnish, who good-humouredly praises everybody. It is not that Varnish is a thoroughly benevolent character. Spatter's interpretation of Varnish throws David into confusion; as the translator of Varnish's ravishing praises is Spatter, the interpretation is rendered with bitterness but also with perspicuity. David realizes later that Varnish behaves just as Spatter portrays him: Varnish does not act respectably and sympathetically as his sweet speech leads one to expect. According to Spatter, Varnish is deceiving people by his flattering eulogies, which are not founded on his good opinions of others, but only uttered for effect: his good-humour does not arise from good-nature, and 'he is so despicable a Fellow, as to lead a Life of continual Hypocrisy, and affects all that Complaisance only to deceive Mankind.' The motive of his compliments is not good-natured as he knows that 'the praising of People for what they don't deserve, is the surest way of making them contemptible, and leading others into the thinking of their Faults.'

¹²⁷. David Simple, p. 93.

¹²⁸. Jane Spencer observes that Sarah Fielding describes Spatter as 'malicious' but at the same time perceives the he 'conveys the author's satirical judgment' (The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), p. 93).

In comparison with the Varnish interpreted in this way, Spatter looks like a disparager only in speech and in fact seems a very good-natured man: having 'never yet found any Fault with Spatter, but his railing against others', David 'imputed it to his Love of Virtue and Hatred of Vice'. But the next moment, recalling Spatter's vengeful temper, David cannot decide what his view of Spatter should be.¹²⁹ David asks Varnish to unravel the riddle of Spatter's character. Varnish, in his characteristic exalting way, tells David:

You are to know, Sir, Mr. Spatter's Ill-nature dwells nowhere but in his Tongue... What can be the Cause of it, I cannot imagine; whether, as you see, he has a great deal of Wit, and it lies chiefly in Satire, he does it in order to display his Parts; or whether it is owing to a natural Spleen in his Temper, I cannot determine.¹³⁰

He even finds a way of excusing the horrifying temper Spatter has claimed for himself: 'And so great is his Love of Abuse, that when no one else is talk'd of, to give him an Opportunity of displaying his favourite Talent, he falls to abusing himself, and makes his own Character much worse than it is'.¹³¹ Despite this defence, David cannot put up with Spatter's vituperation, and finally he leaves him to live with Varnish, with whom, however, he cannot continue long as he finds Varnish's goodness is utterly superficial. Although Sarah Fielding makes Spatter's vituperation unbearable, she gives him a good nature, which, though hidden, is illuminated by the comparison with Varnish's cold heart concealed behind his compliments.

In spite of her ambivalence and even resistance to satire in her

¹²⁹. David Simple, pp. 72-96.

¹³⁰. David Simple, pp. 97-8.

¹³¹. David Simple, p. 98.

work, Sarah Fielding adopts the structures and the motifs of satiric writing. Her attachment to the satiric mode is found in the repeated emphasis on Spatter's underlying goodness and Ophelia's regretfulness in resigning her reflection on social customs. Even though he needs defence and the foil of Varnish, Spatter's penetrating observation helpfully increases David's knowledge of the world. And it is through Spatter that Sarah Fielding deploys her skills in character analysis. Sarah Fielding's method of managing potentially treacherous satire is to borrow the eye of an innocent observer and to attempt to detach her work from the quotidian world, distancing 'universal' human nature from the indication of particular individuals, rather than to use satire to promote sectarian views. She requires that the reader should not connect her narratives to particular individuals, as the reader's reading them as scandals and innuendos only gives them the pleasure of finding fault with others. Instead, she insists that the reader should treat the problems and lessons of the narratives as their own and finding parallel circumstances which may aid self reflection, like the characters in the novels themselves who learn from similar and contrasting people's lives.

V. The Spectator

As Henry Fielding points out in his recommendation of her earliest work, Sarah Fielding's strength lies in her penetrating observation of the world and human nature.¹³² Underlying this praise is the belief that there is a truth to be reached which only an able observer can detect and a skilled writer can represent. Although Sarah Fielding's pen is most accomplished when she observes and analyses people's behaviour, her confidence as an acute observer is in conflict with underlying

¹³². David Simple, pp. 5, 7, 8.

anxieties; the confidence of the determined satirist coexists with the apologizing diffidence of the 'subdued' satirist. Indeed, the 'subdued' satire needs an addition of a self-mocking confession of anxiety.

Her satiric attitude is always supported by some infallible and absolute agency, as is exemplified in the presence of Una in The Cry. Her value judgment is given by something very reliable and stable such as 'Nature', 'Reason', and 'Truth', and the measure of truth and virtue is not presented as her personal opinion.¹³³ By the help of this kind of intermediary mainstay of values she moves away from personal vengeance and invective, reaching for 'universal' values and judgment. The believed existence of this intermediary agency provides a basis for analytical, impersonal, almost scientific to-the-fact description. So, it gives strength and confidence to her description.

At the same time, however, the presence of Una shows that her belief in the accessibility of truth cannot stand by itself but needs the support of an intermediary agency, or extraordinary presence. Elsewhere it is strongly pressed, as if insistence is vital, that a detached observer can survey the scene as a whole and have an unbiased view; this optimism is paradoxically a sign of the need to make herself believe in the reliability of her own perceptions. Her anxiety, mingled belief and disbelief in the capacities in an observer is carried by her narrators who for the most part confidently observe and satirize other people but sporadically fall into self-doubt. This anxiety tangibly comes to a head in Familiar Letters.

First, a spectator feels the fruitlessness and uselessness of his role. In Familiar Letters the anxiety of being an observer and satirist emerges in Spatter, who has been a determined satirist in David Simple. He knows that however acute his observation is, his satire changes nothing and consequently he feels self-doubt. Nevertheless he

¹³³. See comparison between the Augustan satirist and the post-Augustan in Lockwood, Post-Augustan Satire, p. 16.

is compelled to maintain a satirical point of view. Spatter acknowledges some of his difficulties as a satirist; he is tired of observing the follies of people as their follies are endless, and the time and effort he spends pointing them out will, he knows, bring about no reward or satisfaction, yet when he ceases to see and describe the follies, he completely loses his way:

Was I to enumerate all the ridiculous Affectations, in which these Apes of their Superiors employ their Time, I should fill a Quire of Paper; and at last prove nothing but that they are resolved to feed their Pride with some Marks (as they think them) of Dignity. But I am tired of them, as well as of writing, and think I have already dwelt too long upon them,...

I ... these three days... have lived at home by myself, till I think I am grown quite stupefied, and as dull and senseless a Blockhead, as any of the People I have been describing;...¹³⁴

Thus, Spatter is out of breath, having exhausted himself in exposing people's follies. But when he takes a rest and abandons satirical observation, he loses his *raison d'être*. He believes in the superiority of his insight and judgment and knows that his insight distinguishes him from fools, but he feels the ineffectiveness of his observations.

Secondly, a spectator is thrown to doubt as to whether the 'truth' which the detached position allows the narrator to discern is really true, or only illusory. It is suggested that there is a fundamental

¹³⁴. Familiar Letters, I, pp. 221-22. In Familiar Letters Spatter and Varnish are what they were in David Simple. Spatter characteristically reports about a 'Blockhead', a 'Fool', a man indulging himself in self-praise, a woman in 'her fancied nonsensical affected Distress' (I, pp. 212-22). Varnish writes about the satisfaction and happiness he feels: 'In a word I am the happiest Creature here in the world.' This letter concludes with a cool-hearted postscript to say that his mother has died (I, pp. 223-30).

doubt about the superior insight and the position of an observer. In 'A Vision' attached to Familiar Letters, the narrator takes tours with people but is separated from them by the benefit of her insight. She has acute insight because she comes 'only as a Spectator'.¹³⁵ Everybody else is deceived, of his or her own choice, by the guides called 'Labour', 'Fallacy', 'Illusion' and 'Hope', and 'Deception'. People are deceived not on account of their lack of ability to inspect, but because of their willingness to overlook the reality and 'their great desire of finding [a Shadow] to be real Substance'.¹³⁶ To the narrator's eyes the façade shrinks and the reality is bare; to her eyes, the ticket to the way to 'Wealth' turns out to be the ticket to 'Avarice', and 'Power', 'Pleasure', and 'Virtue' prove to be 'Ambition', 'Disappointment', and 'Pride', respectively. The narrator can see through all the disguises, because 'my Desire of knowing the real Truth, had given me the power to see things as they were'.¹³⁷ In contrast, all others embrace illusions: 'they view every thing according to their own Fancy'.¹³⁸ 'Pride', taken for 'Virtue' by its votaries, holds a formidable grip on them, by the effect of her 'Art of making [her Train] lose all uneasy Sensations'.¹³⁹ 'Deception', the guide to the palace of 'Pride', explains to the narrator how people's behaviour is manipulated:

The moment I have screwed my Picture into the Bosom of my Goddess[Pride]'s Worshippers, they have a power of turning their

¹³⁵. Familiar Letters, II, p. 379.

¹³⁶. Familiar Letters, II, pp. 353, 361. Linda Bree points out this tour is a secular variation of Bunyan's The Pilgrim's Progress (Sarah Fielding [New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996], pp. 53-4).

¹³⁷. Familiar Letters, II, p. 361.

¹³⁸. Familiar Letters, II, p. 379.

¹³⁹. Familiar Letters, II, p. 377.

Eyes inward, and looking at it for the rest of their Lives. In this, and in endeavouring to prove to others that this Representation is Reality, they spend their time, and grow very fond of all those who either do believe them, or tell them they do...¹⁴⁰

'Deception' continues to explain that once its picture is screwed in place, it is painful to get rid of it and people 'hate and never forgive' those who point out that they are deceived. This hatred and unforgiving sentiment is 'the Cause of a very great part of the Discord and Contention in the World'.¹⁴¹ The explanation by 'Deception' reveals that people prefer indulging illusions to the truth.

After the tour over the world of deceitful fancies, the narrator accidentally goes to a place where 'Benevolence' reigns, where 'every seed of real unaffected Virtue was cultivated and improved; and, consequently, all the real Happiness Human Nature is capable of, was here enjoyed, and doubled by the Hopes of yet greater'.¹⁴² The guides to this world are at first 'Patience' and then 'Truth'. The narrator wants to stay there: 'I was so pleased with this Scene, that I wished never to lose the view of it'.¹⁴³ However, 'alas! I awoke, and all the Vision vanished from my Eyes'.¹⁴⁴

As long as the narrator is 'only a spectator', she is able to find her role as an exposé of illusion, but as soon as she recognizes a community of happiness and is inclined to participate in it, she loses her 'Vision'. The spectator ceases to be herself in her ideal world.

¹⁴⁰. Familiar Letters, II, p. 386.

¹⁴¹. Familiar Letters, II, p. 386.

¹⁴². Familiar Letters, II, p. 392.

¹⁴³. Familiar Letters, II, p. 392.

¹⁴⁴. Familiar Letters, II, P. 392.

The spectator's confidence that she can see the truth is powerful only in the world of vices and illusions. Ironically, as 'Deception' explains, however powerful the pen of the observer is in such a world, people spellbound by 'Deception' do not hear but only hate such an observer. As a result the writer makes more enemies by exposing the truth. The spectator could not overcome people's willingness to deceive themselves or awaken and dissuade them out of self-deception however hard she endeavours to do so. Her only comfort comes from her expectation of the power of warning for those who are not (yet) under a spell. Or is this modest confidence an illusion, too? All the scenes where the narrator can believe herself capable of penetrating the illusions disappear from her sight in the end. With this sense of the precariousness of a detached observer, Sarah Fielding continued to retain the viewpoint of the spectator who exposes and analyzes the vices of the world.

Chapter Three

Letters and Epistolary Method

I. Introduction

Letter writing was an increasingly fashionable practice in the eighteenth-century.¹ Material conditions such as the rise of literacy and the development of the postal service served as stimuli.² The ideological outlook of the Enlightenment promoted letter writing as a means to prompt communication and as a substitute for conversation.³ Epistolarity seems thus to be a major characteristic of the age. Besides 'genuine' letters in private and in print, the letter form was put to a wide variety of uses. The epistolary form seems to have had some special

¹ John Butt and Geoffrey Carnall, The Age of Johnson: 1740-1789 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), pp. 326-45; Howard Anderson et al ed., The Familiar Letter in the Eighteenth Century (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1966), esp. 269-82; Bruce Redford, The Converse of the Pen: Acts of Intimacy in the Eighteenth-Century Familiar Letter (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986).

² As to the increase in literacy, see Lawrence Stone, 'Literacy and Education in England 1640-1900', Past and Present 42 (1969): 69-139; R.M. Wiles, 'Middle-Class Literacy in Eighteenth-Century England: Fresh Evidence', in Studies in the Eighteenth Century ed. R.F. Brissenden (Canberra: Australian National UP, 1968). The impact of the rise of literacy on literature is discussed in J. Paul Hunter, Before Novels: The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1990), pp. 62-85. For the development of the postal service, see Howard Robinson, Britain's Post Office: A History of Development from the Beginning to the Present Day (London: Oxford University Press, 1953).

³ Ian Watt, The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding (London: The Hogarth Press, 1987), pp. 187-91; Lawrence Klein, 'The Third Earl of Shaftesbury and the Progress of Politeness', Eighteenth-Century Studies, 18(1984-5): 186-214; *idem*, 'Liberty, Manners, and Politeness in Early Eighteenth-Century England', The Historical Journal, 32(1989): 583-605.

appeal to the writers working in almost every genre. There were verse epistles, model letters, travel journals and educational advice in letters, disputes of religious, political, philosophical, and other matters in epistolary form, and epistolary novels.⁴ A great number of collections of fictitious letters were published. France was an influential predecessor as many collections of model letters were published in the seventeenth-century. Montesquieu's (1689-1755) Lettres persanes (1721) was one of the most successful attempts in pseudo-travel literature; a passionate overflow of emotion in Les lettres Portugaises (1669, translated into English 1678) provided a model for the literature of feeling and sentiment.⁵

The growing awareness of the art of letter writing was an important development. Letter writing itself became a literary genre; styles of letter writing became an object of admiration and criticism. The style of Madame de Sévigné (1626-96) drew much attention, praiseful

⁴ William C. Dowling, The Epistolary Moment: The Poetics of the Eighteenth-Century Verse Epistle (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 21.

⁵ The Portuguese Letters has become a major focus in discussion of the construction of 'feminine' voice in epistolary writing. See Linda S. Kauffman, Discourses of Desire: Gender, Genre, and Epistolary Fictions (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1986), pp. 91-118; Katharine A. Jensen, 'Male Models of Feminine Epistolarity; or, How to Write Like a Woman in Seventeenth-Century France', in Writing the Female Voice: Essays on Epistolary Literature, ed. Elizabeth C. Goldsmith (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1989), 25-45; Elizabeth C. Goldsmith, 'Authority, Authenticity, and the Publication of Letters by Women', Writing the Female Voice, 46-59. The authorship of Les lettres Portugaises is not certain, but there seems to be a provisional agreement that it was written by a Frenchman, not a woman, Gabriel-Joseph de Lavergne de Guilleragues. See the introduction to Les lettres Portugaises in Nastascha Würzbach, ed. The Novel in Letters: Epistolary Fiction in the Early English Novel (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), pp. 3-4; Kauffman, pp. 46, 85, 92-3; Jensen, 27; Elizabeth J. MacArthur brings into focus assumptions in dealing with epistles when she examines the way the critics have handled Les lettres Portugaises (Extravagant Narratives: Closure and Dynamics in the Epistolary Form [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990], pp. 99-116).

or critical.⁶ She was a kind of standard in discussing the epistolary mode. Walpole was such an enthusiastic admirer of her letters that Madame du Deffand (1697-1780), one of his correspondents, expressed jealousy.⁷ In her youth Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, 'without the least vanity', found the merits of her own letters equal to those by Madame de Sévigné. Later in her life she deplored the popularity of Madame de Sévigné's letters, which she came to think were unworthy of serious reading:

How many readers and admirers has Madame de Sevigny, who only gives us, in a lively manner and fashionable Phrases, mean sentiments, vulgar Prejudices, and endless repetitions! Sometimes the tittle tattle of a fine Lady, sometimes that of an old Nurse, allwaies tittle tattle; yet so well gilt over by airy expressions and a Flowing Style, she will allwaies please the same people to whom Lord Bolingbroke will shine as a first rate Author.

Her 'Flowing Style' and 'very smooth harmony', Lady Mary thought, were 'false Eloquence' and her admirers are 'the croud of readers [who] look

⁶ Sévigné's letters, mainly to her daughter, appeared in print after her death. Although they are said not to have been intended for publication, they were widely read both in France and England (in England there were ten editions throughout the eighteenth century). They drew both praise and criticism, e.g., Voltaire praised her style and criticized her judgments. See Goldsmith, 'Authority, Authenticity, and the Publication of Letters by Women', 51-55. An example of recommendation of Sévigné letters to women can be found in The Polite Lady; or a Course of Female Education (London, 1775 [3rd edition]), which advises women to read a collection of familiar epistles; but 'we have none in English, that are proper for the perusal of a young lady' and the French have many, among which 'Madame de Sévigné's letters are finished models' (pp. 145-46).

⁷ MacArthur, Extravagant Narratives, pp. 141-45.

no further' than the superficial façade.⁸ Opinion of this sort suggests that letter writing was regarded as a serious literary pursuit.

Against this background of an awareness of literary values in letters, some apparently private letters were written with the intention of later publication. This is exemplified by Samuel Johnson. While he anticipated the possibility of publication, he emphasises epistolary privacy and his sincerity: 'In a Man's Letters you know, Madam, his soul lies naked, his letters are only the mirrour of his breast, whatever passes within him is shown undisguised in its natural process.'⁹ On the other hand, however, the notion of letters as a literary product led Johnson to cast doubt about the sincerity of other people's letters. He shrewdly detects the manipulative powers of published 'genuine' letters which take advantage of the reader's supposition that private letters reveal 'true' aspects of the self otherwise unknown. He maintains that 'There is, indeed, no transaction which offers stronger temptations to fallacy and sophistication than epistolary intercourse' and reads Pope's letters cautiously:

it must be remembered that he had the power of favoring himself: he might have originally had publication in his mind, and have written with care, or have afterwards selected those which he had most happily conceived, or most diligently labored...¹⁰

⁸ Letters in 1726, 1727, and in 1754, 1759. The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, ed. Robert Halsband (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965-67), II, pp. 66, 75, III, pp. 62, 215; 'Biographical Anecdotes of Lady M.W. Montagu,' In Essays and Poems, ed. Robert Halsband and Isobel Grundy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), p. 51.

⁹ Johnson to H.L. Thrale, 27 Oct. 1777, The Letters of Samuel Johnson ed. Bruce Redford, vol. III (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 89.

¹⁰ Samuel Johnson, Lives of the English Poets, ed. George Birkbeck Hill, vol.III (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905), pp. 207, 159

Johnson's suspicion is placed on Pope's use of letters as a means of manipulating his self image. He perceives letters as not so much a first-hand straightforward revelation of a private self as a representation of it, the degree of sincerity or manipulation of which depends on the writer's personality.

Johnson's insight about the potential gap between the assumption of undisguised self and the constructed self in letters can be extended and applied to 'femininity' in epistolary discourse. Women's affinity for an emotional and seemingly artless kind of epistolary writing became a stereotype.¹¹ The eminent success of Richardson in the epistolary novel emphasises the epistolary form as a quintessentially feminine genre in the eighteenth century, not least because his virtuous heroines scribble privately and he was welcomed by enthusiastic responses especially from women. In this context, this form is regarded as a very important medium in which female voice could find a means of expression. As a result epistolary writing as a feminine genre was cultivated.¹² The proposition that epistolary writing especially suits the female voice has recently met reconsideration in various ways. Underestimation of feminine epistolary style has been rightly criticized.¹³ Importantly, epistolary writing can be a particularly convenient instrument for the construction of femininity, as the male-authored examples of Pamela and Clarissa suggest. The 'temptations to fallacy and sophistication' in epistolary writing have been discussed and reconsidered in terms of women and the representation of women in it; the manipulative potential of

¹¹ Writing the Female Voice, 46.

¹² Christine Mary Salmon, 'Representations of the Female Self in Familiar Letters 1650-1780', University of London, Ph.D., 1991, p. 7; Goldsmith, introduction to Writing the Female Voice, vii.

¹³ Elizabeth J. MacArthur, 'Devious Narratives: Refusal of Closure in Two Eighteenth-Century Epistolary Novels', Eighteenth-Century Studies 21(1987-88): 1-20; MacArthur, Extravagant Narratives; Ruth Perry, Women, Letters, and the Novel (New York: AMS Press, 1980).

letter writing was applied to frame femininity.¹⁴

Linda S. Kauffman proposes a scrutiny of these presuppositions in examining epistolary discourses by focusing on amorous epistles. She traces the influence of the Ovidian model in women's epistolary writing and detects strategies to construct the genre as 'feminine': 'the literary construction of gender is always artificial'.¹⁵ As a result, she throws doubt on various assumptions about women and 'feminine' writing: for example, the concept of women's writing as 'natural' and 'spontaneous'. She maintains that 'discourses of desire pose a radical challenge to traditional concepts of authority and authorship, referentiality and representation'.¹⁶ As she points out, a danger in examining women's epistolary writing is 'reducing the art to the life, as if women were incapable of writing about anything but themselves, and lacked aesthetic control and imagination'.¹⁷

Katharine A. Jensen also explores the presupposition of the epistolary genre's being 'feminine'. She shows that in seventeenth-century France the representative natural and spontaneous 'feminine' writings were in fact prescribed by male authors and purported to be written by women. She maintains that by emphasizing women's emotional power and social skilfulness as exercised in the salon, men in effect styled women's textual patterns. An oral and ephemeral social art is ascribed to women; the written and especially printed world is allotted to men. Once this boundary of separate realms is drawn, men invented 'feminine' literary styles and imposed them on women. Her argument is that through this prescription women were excluded from literary art, stylistic and rhetorical dexterity and that men controlled

¹⁴. Goldsmith, introduction to Writing the Female Voice, vii-xiii.

¹⁵. Kauffman, p. 314.

¹⁶. Kauffman, p. 20.

¹⁷. Kauffman, p. 21.

and narrowed the scope of women's writings, confining them in effect to love letters.¹⁸ The growth of opportunities for women to come into print went hand in hand with the limitation and narrowing of women's writings to an amorous epistolary style. As Patricia Meyer Spacks argues, eighteenth-century English epistolary novels by women are characterised by this double-edged feature of epistolary writings.¹⁹

The 'feminine' tendencies are more frequently found in epistolary novels than in 'genuine' letters. C.M. Salmon claims that in her study of women's letters between 1650-1780 the generation of letter writers who were already adults when Richardson began publishing his epistolary novels were not wholly involved in the vogue.²⁰ 'Feminine' fictional epistolary writing must have influenced letter-writing patterns, but other models and values than those found in epistolary fiction were working in women's patterns of letter-writing. There were women such as Elizabeth Carter and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, whose engagingly interesting epistolary styles were distinguished from such constructed 'feminine' manners. As for Elizabeth Carter, Salmon points out that her image as a virtuous domestic exemplary woman was determined by an early nineteenth-century publication of Sketch of the Character of Mrs. Elizabeth Carter. In contrast she finds in Carter's letters a more vivacious, comic, and wild spirit.²¹ Concerning Lady Mary, Cynthia Lowenthal underscores the theatrically performed 'artistic power of her "textual tapestry"' in her letters.²² She points out that

¹⁸. Jensen, 25-45.

¹⁹. She argues that Jane Austen's Lady Susan is a notable exception which claims female mastery of language. 'Female Resources: Epistles, Plot, and Power', in Writing the Female Voice, 63-76.

²⁰. Salmon, p. 27.

²¹. Salmon, pp. 60, 182, 262, 267, 269.

²². Cynthia Lowenthal, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and the Eighteenth-Century Familiar Letter (Athens & London: The University of Georgia Press,

because of her aristocratic status, Lady Mary's letters present a conflict of public and private life, rather than the typically 'feminine' emotional private experience.²³ Interestingly, she is 'almost altogether resistant both to the standards of female behavior [the novels] advocate and to the values they articulate'.²⁴ Salmon ascribes such freedom as Carter presents to women's political standpoint as outsiders; they can take a disengaged approach, assuming less responsibility, to political and social phenomena.²⁵ Lowenthal draws attention to Lady Mary's deftness in mediating between her position as a similarly disengaged woman and her aristocratic public responsibilities.²⁶

Sarah Fielding knows how women are expected to behave and express themselves and does not openly deviate from such expectations.²⁷ But still, her epistolary discourse is different from what is understood as a typically 'feminine' outflow of emotions. As a well-informed scholarly person, Sarah Fielding has much in common with Lady Mary and Carter. Like them, her viewpoint is disengaged and analytical. I shall examine what she attempts to present in her epistolary discourse, referring to her fictional letters as well as her 'genuine' ones. I focus on her difference from a supposedly 'feminine' style, and then consider her conception of 'familiarity'. In establishing her ideal of 'familiarity', her interests converge on conversation and conversibility. Her epistolary writing is related to conversation not

1994), p. 1.

²³. Lowenthal, pp. 2-4, and *passim*.

²⁴. Lowenthal, p. 155.

²⁵. Salmon, pp. 176-223.

²⁶. Lowenthal, pp. 2-4, 8-9, 80-152.

²⁷. See Jane Spencer, *The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), pp. 75-103.

simply as its substitute but as a vehicle to present it as an agenda for serious consideration.

II. Sarah Fielding's Letters

Critics have found little to praise in Sarah Fielding's 'genuine' letters. The extant letters are not many in number and they are letters of greeting and gratitude, rather than of intimacy.²⁸ They are written in order to express gratitude for kindness and support, as Sarah Fielding was in such a position as to be patronized. One letter to Elizabeth Montagu has been referred to as one of no literary interest: 'the letter, though not of sufficient interest for quotation, is full of bashful gratitude'.²⁹ Considering the situation in which Elizabeth Montagu supported the ageing Sarah Fielding, providing her with food and drink, it is understandable that the letter is full of bashful gratitude. Similar reserve is found in the letters to Richardson, who, having established his fame, gave advice to her about writing and lent her money, and in the letters to Harris, who was her mentor in classical learning. In these letters she does not establish equal terms with her addressees and speak freely to them, but is always deferential.

Elizabeth Montagu paid respect to Sarah Fielding as a literary figure for her translation of Xenophon. Although this respect might have led to mutual friendship, both of them knew that their social spheres of activity differed. Montagu, as a wealthy patroness, offered help not directly but through her sister, Sarah Scott. Her attention to Sarah

²⁸. The Correspondence of Henry and Sarah Fielding, ed. Martin C. Battestin and Clive T. Probyn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 123-76.

²⁹. Reginald Blunt, ed. Mrs. Montagu: 'Queen of the Blues' Her Letters and Friendships from 1762 to 1800 (London: Constable, no date), I, p. 158.

Fielding was always very practical, not out of friendly intimacy, but more in the form of benevolence towards an impoverished woman whose literary activities had not brought her sufficient reward. This distance was emphasized by Sarah Fielding's reserve. In a letter to Elizabeth Montagu she writes: 'True Love ever hesitates, and is bashful, whilst Hypocrisy steps forward with an assured air, and from its intrepid boldness doubts not the obtaining belief.'³⁰ She resorts to this kind of generalized objective discourse rather than to subjective sentences of personal sentiment. She feels constrained by demureness, the requirements of decorum and reserve and has to justify her modesty by assuming unspoken sentiments behind the aphoristic air. She tends to be a reserved and polite moralist, moralizing to herself on her modesty, and not an intimate friend.

However, there are some exceptions where she describes her sentiment in an excited manner. In one of the letters to Richardson she writes:

Pleasantly surprised should I have been, suddenly to have found all my thoughts strengthened, and my words flow into an easy and nervous style: never did I so much wish for it as in this daring attempt of mentioning Clarissa: but when I read of her, I am all sensation; my heart glows; I am overwhelmed; my only vent is tears; and unless tears could mark my thoughts as legibly as ink, I cannot speak half I feel.³¹

Here she feels invited to write down the emotional agitation she

³⁰. Battestin and Probyn, p. 175. In *Cry Portia* also defends modest restraint: 'have I been generally censured for a blameable reserve; but I verily believe that an apparent reserve is very often the effect of a natural openness of temper' (II, p. 45).

³¹. Battestin and Probyn, p. 123.

experienced as a result of reading his work and expresses her reaction in shorter simple clauses as if the words came out naturally and spontaneously, without reasoning or analysis. She states that she tries her best to transcribe her agitation, which she feels is too great for her to describe properly. Although she feels she 'cannot speak half [she feels]', the written result shows a description of the agitation of the writer's mind that is not often found elsewhere in her writings. Her expressions fall into the stereotypical 'natural' and 'spontaneous' patterns of women's epistolary style.

Here, Richardson is successful in drawing out a reader's emotional reaction by letting her read his heroine's sentiments in his novel, or in establishing an intimacy with a reader outside his text, analogous to the familiarity between his characters in his fictional world. He offered a fictional model to follow and Sarah Fielding was one who gave him a response complying with his prescription.³² This is probably an instance of a woman imitating a fictional construction of a supposedly feminine style.

Nonetheless, an overall characteristic of her letters is the absence of such a conscious display of personal sentiments. She does not show a willingness to participate in the exchange of private feelings. Rather, intellectual analysis and the discourse of reason keep the letters from being emotional and intimate. She is as deferential in her letters to James Harris as she was to Elizabeth Montagu. When Sarah Fielding writes with Jane Collier to Harris, the tone of the letter is cautious, dry and rational, even self-restricting with didacticism. It conveys their thanks to Harris, who sent them a copy of his learned book, Hermes. They modestly abstain from commenting on it directly, quoting 'Mr. Pope's observation that "a little Learning is a dang'rous thing"'. Instead they express their gratitude for its helpful effect on them:

³². See Jensen.

turning our studies from the barren Desarts of arbitrary words, into cultivated Plains where amidst the greatest variety we may in every part trace the footsteps of Reason, and where how much soever we wander, yet with such a guide we may still avoid confusion.³³

They fashion themselves as students who have acquired discipline by the help of 'kind Instructor' Harris. This modesty seems to consolidate female submission. Respect and gratitude for his condescension overwhelm and seem to keep Harris at a certain distance and far above them. Not only do they style themselves as students, but they place themselves in a lower sphere, finding themselves in the disorder of language. The role of Harris is to regulate and organize language. They put Harris and themselves in the stereotypical moulds of the male in charge of order and female as embodiment of disorder.³⁴

Nevertheless, this letter underscores a positive characteristic of her epistles behind the apparently very modest manner. A significant point here is that Sarah Fielding and Jane Collier do not remain in the region of disorder. They recognize Harris's power to draw them out of that region. Although the instructor-students relationship is a hierarchical one, they place themselves in the same sphere where Harris is and presides. Thus, with a very careful air of self-restraint, this letter in fact asserts a confidence in their standpoint as conscious agents able to regulate their language. Always respecting Harris as

³³. Battestin and Probyn, p. 125. Thus Jane Collier and Sarah Fielding thought that they were benefited by Hermes, while, in an interesting contrast, Richardson admits he is not learned enough to reap benefits: 'I pretend not to be Scholar enough (Hence my Grief!) to be benefited by the Learning, with which it abounds.' (Harris Papers, vol. 40, pt. 4)

³⁴. Writing the Female Voice, 4, 28-30, 41, 68.

an authority in philology, they show a justifiable pride developed through their studies. Most of Sarah Fielding's other letters to Harris were written when she was preparing her Greek translation. Occasionally she shows him some results of her studies, with witty aphoristic comments and scholarly discussion characterized by a rigorous attitude towards the meaning of words.

The scarcity of the extant letters and the polite reserve which characterizes most of them prevent Sarah Fielding from being classified as a significant writer of familiar letters. Moreover she shows no willingness to participate in exchanges of private feelings; presumably her personality does not allow herself an ostentatious display of sentiment. As we can see from the extant letters, unlike Catherine Talbot and Elizabeth Carter, who enjoyed a mutually beneficial epistolary relationship, she did not have any equals with whom she could freely exchange ideas and enjoy mutual intellectual cultivation. The Collier sisters, especially Jane Collier, were the most likely candidates for such a role, but no letters between them and Sarah Fielding are known. Thus, her situation does not appear to have given her many opportunities to use her epistolary talents in intellectual discourse. How then did she manage them in her fictional world? How did she use the form of letters in her fiction?

III. Fictional Letters

Sarah Fielding's literary debut is thought to be the letter from Leonora to Horatio in Henry Fielding's Joseph Andrews.³⁵ She adopted

³⁵ Henry Fielding declared in a footnote that the letter 'was written by a young Lady'. Most scholars agree that the letter was written by Sarah Fielding. See M.C. Battestin and Ruthe R. Battestin, Henry Fielding (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 332, 379.

epistles primarily in her Familiar Letters and occasionally in her other works, David Simple, and Dellwyn. Ophelia also begins in epistolary mode, addressed to 'Your ladyship', but except for this beginning, it looks more like a memoir than a collection of letters.³⁶ In this section Familiar Letters is the main focus of discussion.

Her Familiar Letters consists of forty-four letters followed by 'A Vision', an allegory.³⁷ Among the letters, one (Letter XXXIX) is ascribed to James Harris, and five (Letters XL-XLIV) were contributed by Henry Fielding, who also wrote the preface. This collection of letters is a kind of sequel to David Simple. At the end of David Simple the double weddings of David and Camilla, Valentine and Cynthia, were celebrated and they all rejoiced in perfect happiness. But Valentine and Cynthia set out for Bath for the sake of Cynthia's health, leaving David and Camilla in London. Thus begins the correspondence between

³⁶. Janet Gurkin Altman discusses works of a borderline nature which adopt the form of epistles but lack reciprocity; see Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1982), pp. 87-115.

³⁷. It was published on 10 April 1747. A printer, Woodfall's Ledger records in the entry for Andrew Millar 'Nov. 23, 1746. 500 8vo. page proposals for Miss Fielding, 6s' (Notes and Queries XI, June 2 1855, p. 419). The True Patriot (Feb. 1746) has a notice of a delay in publication, expecting it the next January, but it was further delayed and the Gentleman's Magazine for April 1747 lists it among the books 'Historical and Miscellaneous' published in that month. The delay in publication may confirm the difficulty Battestin suggests that Sarah Fielding found in 'drawing out her story to a length sufficient to fill the two volumes her subscribers had paid for' (Henry Fielding, p. 414). Battestin places Sarah Fielding in the middle of the rivalry between Henry Fielding and Richardson; he argues that her Familiar Letters illustrates her leaning toward the side of Richardson in that it is a sequel to the novel and that she adopted the epistolary form: 'However injured his pride might be', Battestin writes, 'by Sarah's temporary defection to the enemy, Fielding praised her novel [Familiar Letters] warmly' (Henry Fielding, p. 415). Henry Fielding does not seem to have taken heed of Richardson's letter manual in his classification of epistolary writings in his preface to Sarah's Familiar Letters, although a hint of criticism of Richardson's epistolary novel can be detected (iv-ix). See note 2 to 'Preface to Familiar Letters on David Simple...' in The Criticism of Henry Fielding ed. Ioan Williams (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1970), p. 133.

Bath and London in Familiar Letters. Cynthia and Camilla are the principal writers, who exchange observations on people in the societies of the fashionable town and the metropolis. David, Valentine, Spatter, and Varnish are other writers from David Simple. In the middle of the book (Letters XII-XV, XVIII-XXVII) are letters between new characters. They also report people's behaviour and stories around them. Most of the observations by these people confirm the judiciousness of the main writers' sentiments. The letter-writers and the story-tellers in the letters are sober analysts who pay much attention to the hidden motives of people's behaviour.

The title, Familiar Letters, reminds us of a more famous collection of letters by Richardson, published in 1741.³⁸ To put Sarah Fielding's Familiar Letters in context, it is necessary to examine Richardson's, all the more because Sarah Fielding was acquainted with and influenced by him and particularly because of the title of the book. It is, however, wrong to regard Sarah Fielding's Familiar Letters as an imitation of Richardson's. I would argue that she is more influenced by social values and literary traditions other than those Richardson represents. She depended on a fundamentally different notion of familiarity. In this section I focus on the differences between Sarah Fielding and Richardson, before proceeding in the following section to seek for the meaning of 'familiarity' in her use of the term. Here the issue of gender is intricate. Her conception of familiar letters or familiarity was different from the one assumed by the fashion of 'feminine' familiar letters epitomised by Richardson. I shall examine this apparently minor work of Sarah Fielding with an attention to her ideas about the letter form, and also with a view to connecting her

³⁸. Letters Written to And for Particular Friends, on The Most Important Occasions. Directing Not Only the Requisite Style and Forms to Be observed in Writing Familiar Letters; But How To Think And Act Justly And Prudently, in The Common Concerns of Human Life (London: C. Rivington, J. Osborn, J. Leake at Bath, 1741).

attitude in writing fictional letters with her standpoint in her genuine letters.

Richardson's letter manual, Familiar Letters, is generally read as a preliminary work which led him to write epistolary novels, although it was praised in its own right as a masterpiece of the genre.³⁹ Modern readers look for germs of narrative sequence in the manual and thus a place, even if it is treated as preliminary, in the history of novels, is secured for his Familiar Letters. The same thing cannot be said of Sarah Fielding's Familiar Letters. It does not fit into the conventions of novels, nor can it be helpfully understood as a predecessor to her novels, still less a practical letter-writing manual. One scholar maintains that 'we cannot share the enthusiasm of Miss Fielding's contemporaries for Familiar Letters, a rather dull, uninspired and uninspiring performance.'⁴⁰ It may be true that she found some difficulty in drawing out her work enough to fill two octavo volumes, as the delay of publication and the patchwork-like construction of the

³⁹ Richardson himself regards it as a predecessor to Pamela: 'the little Volume of Letters, to which Pamela owes her Being' (The Richardson-Stinstra Correspondence and Stinstra's Prefaces to Clarissa ed. William C. Slattery (London and Amsterdam: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969), pp. 29-30); for detailed study of letter-writing manuals, see Katherine Gee Hornbeak, The Complete Letter Writer in English 1568-1800, Smith College Studies in Modern Languages XV (Northampton, Mass., 1934), viii, chap. IV.

⁴⁰ H.O. Werner, 'The Life and Works of Sarah Fielding', Harvard University, Ph.D., 1937, pp. 102-3. Scholars tend to regard Familiar Letters as a peripheral work filled with miscellaneous material. Werner also maintains that Familiar Letters is a 'compromise, an amalgamation of a number of literary forms' (p. 99), and that 'her second work improved in no way upon her first' (p. 110); A. E. Needham argues that Sarah Fielding 'subordinated fiction to a theme', and he regards it as an intermediary 'between two forms of literature, the novel and the moral essay', or 'retrogressive, going back to Addison and Steele rather than ahead to the novel of manners' ('The Life and Works of Sarah Fielding', University of California, Ph.D., 1942, p. 118). On the other hand, A.M. Parrish is more sympathetic; she labels it as 'the non-sequel sequel' (p. 86) and 'a superior example of an obsolete fictional form, the literary miscellany' (p. 97) in 'Eight Experiments in Fiction: A Critical Analysis of the Works of Sarah Fielding', Boston University Graduate School, Ph.D., 1973, chap. 4.

work show. However, the unfavourable estimates it has received are largely a consequence of judging it according to the criteria derived from Richardsonian works.

Sarah Fielding may have paid a compliment to Richardson in calling her work Familiar Letters, though Richardson's was not the only precedent.⁴¹ Richardson, in turn, subscribed to her work, and it was these two volumes that induced him to write in flattering terms:

I...have re-perused them with great pleasure, and found many beauties in them. What a knowledge of the human heart! Well might a critical judge of writing say, as he did to me, that your late brother's knowledge of it was not (fine writer as he was) comparable to your's. His was but as the knowledge of the outside of a clock-work machine, while your's was that of all the finer springs and movements of the inside.⁴²

The comparison invites us to identify the merits of Sarah Fielding with those of Richardson because of the similar comparison between Henry Fielding and Richardson by Samuel Johnson. Richardson, in making this comparison, seems to be projecting a version of himself onto her.

⁴¹ Among other publications which bear 'familiar letters' in the titles, there are, for example, The Works of Monsieur Voiture...Containing His Familiar Letters To Gentlemen and Ladies... ed. Thomas Brown (London, 1705); Some Familiar Letters between Mr. Locke and Several of His Friends (London, 1708); John Macky, A Journey Through England. In Familiar Letters from a Gentleman here, to His Friend Abroad (London, 1714); Anonymous, Familiar Letters of Love, Gallantry, And Several Occasions... (London, 1718); Mary Davys, Familiar Letters Betwixt a Gentleman and a Lady in The Works of Mrs. Davys... (London, 1725); Daniel Defoe, The Complete English Tradesman in Familiar Letters... (London, 1726).

⁴² Battestin and Probyn, p. 132. Johnson referred to Richardson and Fielding in a similar comparison; Boswell records it as was mentioned in the conversation in 1768: 'there was as great a difference between them as between a man who knew how a watch was made, and a man who could tell the hour by looking on the dial plate!' Boswell, Life of Johnson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), p. 389.

However, drawing Sarah Fielding too close to Richardson does not help a better understanding of her work.

Richardson's Familiar Letters is a practical letter-writing manual. In this collection of letters there are as many as one hundred and seventy-three letters; some are independent, and others have reply letters in sequence. The most striking character of the collection is its display of model behaviour to be adopted in general daily life. This work is at once a letter-writing manual and a conduct book. And even, as the phrase in the full title shows--Letters...Directing...How To Think And Act Justly And Prudently...--this is instruction not only how to acquire correct behaviour but also how to get into the habit of moral thinking. He retrospectively labels this manual as a work which the writer of Clarissa stooped to offering for the instruction of ignorant and unpolished people: '[the Familiar Letters and Aesop's Fables] were both intended for the lower Classes of People. I omitted several Letters in the former, as too high for the Design.'⁴³ The target of Richardson's instruction is clear: not highly born or highly educated people, but those who can write and read, and want to learn the codes of civilized society. His intention is, in short, to influence the life of 'the lower Classes of People'.

The work is therefore very didactic. In this collection, mentors show both the recipients of the letters and the reader of the manual 'how to act justly and prudently', and those who are given advice by the mentors show the reader how to respond to advice. The mentors in the collection are also model mentors for those who would like to give advice to others. Advice on moral and social codes is given for the

⁴³. The Richardson-Stinstra Correspondence, p. 71. In the previous letter to Richardson, Stinstra somewhat disappointedly confided that he could not find 'the author... of Pamela, Clarissa, and Charles Grandison' in the two works(p. 62). Richardson defended himself, reminding him of the necessity to suppress his 'too high' intention in those for 'the lower Classes of People'.

regulation of the daily life of an apprentice or a tradesman, descending to such details as dissuading a young man from keeping a horse (letter XI). Letters about love are all for the purpose of recommending regulated courtships and subdued passions. There are no letters of lovers passionately in love, and suitors write in order to be endorsed by parents. In these letters the freedom and spontaneity associated with familiar letters are suppressed and discipline is imposed.

Control over life is reinforced by claiming the power of fixed and written words in letters. In a letter of a father to his son (Letter LVI), the father writes that all he had said to his son had been ignored, but that he believes in the power of a letter: 'Yet, once more am I desirous to try what the Force of a Letter will do with one who has not suffer'd mere Words to have any Effect upon him'.⁴⁴ The epistle is here no longer a substitute for real-life conversation, but is endowed with more power than words spoken face-to-face. Writing a letter itself is considered valuable, and neglecting it is almost a crime (Letters XXII, XXIII, XXIV, LVIII, LIX). By inculcating the importance of correspondence, Richardson was able to bring the reader within the epistolary realm of his ethical control. Thus, in his Familiar Letters, letters are used in order to regulate the reader's mind. 'Familiarity' consists in the fact that they are concerned with individuals' private daily lives and are not formal or business letters. And more importantly, it also consists in the author's potential to lead the reader in his moral scheme. Rather than asking for the reader's agreement with it, he gives instruction; the reader is taught to think and act justly and prudently, to establish a sense of morality, and sometimes, possibly, to deceive decently his or her own mind, contrary to the image of familiar letters gathered from Richardson's novels.

He emphasizes in his novels truth and sincerity poured from the

⁴⁴ Richardson, Familiar Letters, p. 71.

heart into familiar letters rather than the tight rein he imposes in his Familiar Letters: '[familiar letter-writing] was writing from the heart (without the fetters prescribed by method or study), as the very word correspondence implied. Not the heart only; the soul was in it.'⁴⁵ Or in other words: 'The nature of familiar letters, written, as it were, to the moment, while the heart is agitated by hopes and fears, or events undecided, must plead an excuse for the bulk of a collection of this kind.'⁴⁶ To the novel written from his principle of familiar letters Sarah Fielding reacted as shown above, and Henry Fielding wrote to Richardson: 'Let the Overflowings of a Heart which you have filled brimfull speak for me.'⁴⁷ Richardson claims that his epistolary novels, targeted at 'admirable' people, have paved the way for 'the Overflowings of a Heart', especially the hearts of women, to be communicated to him, and he is proud of it:

I have been engaged in Epistolary Correspondencies, chiefly with Ladies. I am envied Sir, for the Favour I stand in with near a Score of very admirable Women, some of them of Condition; all of them such as would do Credit to their Sex, and to the Commonwealth of Letters, did not their Modesty with-hold them from appearing in it.⁴⁸

The readers seem to have been drawn into Richardson's world of familiar

⁴⁵. Clarissa (London and Melbourne: Dent, 1932), II, p. 431.

⁴⁶. Preface to Sir Charles Grandison. For Richardson's use of epistolary form, see for example, Carol Houlihan Flynn, Samuel Richardson: A Man of Letters (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982), esp. pp. 263-82; Christina Marsden Gillis, The Paradox of Privacy: Epistolary Form in Clarissa (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1984), pp. 79-134.

⁴⁷. Battestin, Henry Fielding, p. 442.

⁴⁸. Richardson-Stinstra Correspondence, p. 30.

letter-writing, modelling themselves on his characters' responses.

Therefore Richardson produces two kinds of familiar letters. His Familiar Letters are intended to be, as it were, 'fettters prescribed by method or study' because moral discipline dominates every other consideration in the letters of every-day affairs; formulaic politeness and good behaviour are required. Here the term 'familiar' means only concerning daily life, not intimate. So, the letters present an almost diametrically opposite concept to the revelation of the private self. On the other hand, in his novels Richardson favours familiar letters as an expression of emotional agitation and personal sentiments without restriction. Familiarity consists in the special relationship of an addresser and an addressee who share a knowledge of their hearts, exclusive of the other characters. Richardson succeeded in showing such familiarity to the readers of his novels in such a way as is thought to be morally acceptable; it is confessional but not indecent and scandalous. To his way of letter-writing, readers including Sarah Fielding responded in prescribed ways.

Although its title is similar to Richardson's collection of letters, Sarah Fielding's Familiar Letters is not intended as a model for the practical letter-writer. It does not tell how to write a letter nor how to behave as Richardson's mentors and their obedient followers show. Consequently the reader is modelled in a different manner. The reader of Sarah Fielding's Familiar Letters is expected to agree and sympathize with the author rather than to be taught by an imposing author. As Henry Fielding indicates, the supposed reader is a person of the same intellectual milieu as the well-educated author, not an ignorant pupil to be taught the basic codes of society by an authoritative mentor. He underscores the subtleties to be detected by resourceful readers: 'these nice Touches will, like the Signs of Masonry, escape the Observation

and Detection of all those, who are not already in the Secret'.⁴⁹ He also points out that it is a book 'whose Beauties (if it have any) require the same Attention to discover them, with which the Author herself hath considered that Book of Nature'.⁵⁰ In his opinion, therefore, the observations and sentiments are to be shared between the author and the reader who is already in possession of the same values. Although he finds an instructive quality in the book, adding that 'no Book extant is so well calculated for [young Ladies'] Instruction and Improvement', he compares the book to a looking-glass that enables one to reflect and judge for oneself rather than to a source that gives information and instruction: the book 'is indeed a Glass, by which they may dress out their Minds'.⁵¹ The reader is supposed to be more autonomous than the reader who learns from Richardson's letter-writing manual, and is expected to play a more active part in this kind of instruction, looking at the glass and judging for himself or herself.

As for the relationships between the letter writers and the addressees, Sarah Fielding sets them on the same level, not domineering mentors and their submissive juniors. Not only the main characters taken from David Simple but also the new characters such as Delia and Leonora, Ferdinand and Theodosius, Lysimachus and Cratander, Sophronia and Celia, Pharamond and Cleomenes, Aurelia and Silvia, are all on an equal standing with each other. Each writer requires fellow-feeling from the addressed. Most of the recipients know what to grasp in the episodes and narratives told in the letters and can hit upon a similar observation in a different situation: the phrase that 'the story you told me reminds me of the following story' is used quite often to show that they understand the intention and meaning of the correspondents and that their judgement

⁴⁹. Familiar Letters, I, xix.

⁵⁰. Familiar Letters, I, xii-iii.

⁵¹. Familiar Letters, I, xx.

is the same. Sarah Fielding's setting of the relationships between the addresser and the addressee seems to be analogous to the relationship Henry Fielding points out in the preface about the one between the author and the reader. They are supposed to be in the same circle where values are shared. This quality distinguishes her Familiar Letters from Richardsonian practical letter writing manual.

Nor is this work like Richardsonian epistolary novels. The most explicit feature that distinguishes it from the epistolary novels is that it has no coherent plot. And there are other differences. In establishing the narrative's authenticity and plausibility, the epistolary technique played an important role because of the nature of the first-person narrative.⁵² Especially in a collection of letters, the author tends to style himself 'the editor' in order to give the readers an impression that the letters are not 'the editor's' creation but existed autonomously, having been written by someone else, a genuine writer who tells true experiences. Sometimes this pretence is merely insisted upon. Sometimes authors obviously play with such a claim as merely conventional.⁵³

Ophelia, in which Sarah Fielding uses, at least at the beginning, the epistolary method, shows a complex but fundamentally cool teasing attitude to the insistence on authenticity of an epistolary narrative. In the 'Advertisement' she writes:

⁵². See Watt, pp. 191-96; Wayne C. Booth argues that the distinction of person is less important than it seems, in The Rhetoric of Fiction 2nd edition (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987), chap. 6; see also Michael McKeon, The Origins of the English Novel 1600-1740 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), pp. 39-64, 357-58, 414; Cheryl Turner maintains that of women's non-fictional prose the epistolary form had the clearest links with the later novels in Living by the Pen: Women Writers in the Eighteenth Century (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 28.

⁵³. J. Paul Hunter, '"Peace" and the Augustans: Some Implications of Didactic Method and Literary Form', Studies in Change and Revolution: Aspects of English Intellectual History 1640-1800 ed. Paul J. Korshin (Menston: Scholar Press, 1972), 161-89.

I little imagined, when I bought an old beureau[sic], that I was purchasing a work of fancy; for such I must suspect this work to be, though it contains many incidents that bear so much the appearance of reality, that they might claim some share of our belief.⁵⁴

The discovery of papers in an old trunk or bureau was already a literary cliché.⁵⁵ She makes deliberate use of its being a cliché; she is playing with the concept of authenticity, as she employs the cliché and thoughtful suspicion about its validity together. She first claims the discovery in a bureau. The next moment she even declares it to be a work of fancy, though adding that it might be real, as if she were irresolute and sincerely wondering. The supposed editor is very suspicious and probing, taking the reader's suspicion into consideration in advance. Even without such a façade she defies the preoccupation with authenticity in Familiar Letters. In the case of Familiar Letters, from the start, the title shows the letters are fictitious, exchanged 'between the Principal Characters in David Simple'. David Simple was what the author calls a 'Moral Romance (or whatever Title the Reader shall please to give it)', and in Familiar Letters the characters from the 'Moral Romance' write letters.

The impression of their imperfection as letters comes from a lack of reciprocity and confidentiality. They are apparently a reciprocal correspondence, but the role of recipients as internal readers is too undeveloped for the letters to be regarded as truly reciprocal.⁵⁶ This

⁵⁴. Ophelia, no page number.

⁵⁵. McKeon, The Origins of the English Novel, pp. 56-7.

⁵⁶. For epistolary writing lacking reciprocity, see Altman, Epistolarity, pp. 88-92.

lack of reciprocity is related to the absence of confidentiality. Although the letters in Sarah Fielding's Familiar Letters are addressed to specific persons who have specific names, they lack the Richardsonian method of creating familiarity by pinpointing a confidant who is allowed to know what the addresser does not want to reveal to others.⁵⁷ In other words, these are not confidential communications between particular individuals, but assure each other that they share public knowledge and moral judgment. Reciprocity is lost because the recipients of the letters do not play the part of internal readers sufficiently to claim their presence as letter readers, but they quickly turn into writers themselves. The writer's world and the recipient's are not two separate and different private spheres of individuals, but communal. Accordingly the writer does not need to invite the reader to his or her own sphere confidentially. The writer does not intend to exert influence on the addressee's world, but the writer's commitment is only to the area where he or she is. Yet, both the writer and reader know that the domain where he or she is does not have any boundaries of peculiarity, so consequently the observation on it automatically proves to be applicable to the sphere around the recipient of the letters and consequently to the universal. To create the impression of an internal reader is possible as Richardson did in the way Pamela reminds the external readers of the existence of the internal readers, her parents and Clarissa, of Anna Howe, when they are writing, and also in the way Anna Howe shows Clarissa her apprehension and understanding of Clarissa's situation which is caused by her reading of Clarissa's letters. However, where there is no such attention to the particularity of private experience and the complex construction of internal readers, internal readers easily recede in such a way as

⁵⁷. This is the same device of creating an audience as in the Augustan verse epistle in that they have a special addressee named as a symbolic representative with whom a wider audience can identify. See Dowling, The Epistolary Moment, Chap. 2.

'to coincide with the external reader, who could be anyone.'⁵⁸ Therefore, Cynthia, Camilla, Delia, Ferdinand, and others, all seem to speak to external readers. In this respect the letters in Familiar Letters resemble those in periodicals which are addressed to the editor with the supposition of a larger audience and which lack reciprocity.

There is a marked reluctance in this text to enter into personal experience and feelings. When Sarah Fielding opts for writing about personal experience and personal feelings in The Cry, especially of love, she chooses a rather unnatural setting of speakers confessing to allegorical figures: 'If it should be objected, that our mortal persons confess to their audience, what one mortal is not apt to confess to another, let us plead in our defence, that our audience are meerly allegorical.'⁵⁹ She attempts to portray by the heroine's almost public speech to allegorical figures what intimate epistolary novel writers would represent in person-to-person confidential communication.

The same reluctance is suggested by the letter writers in Familiar Letters. The first letter from Cynthia to Camilla begins with Cynthia's telling about herself; she spent the morning very happily, conversing with her husband, but even here, though she focuses on herself and the reader is told that she enjoyed the morning very much, she does not say what they talked about during the morning walk. Shortly after she begins, she switches topics, because 'I need not tell [Camilla] how happily I passed the Morning' with her beloved Valentine, implying that Camilla knows not only how happy she is but also what actually makes her happy. Her attention transfers from herself to the people around her:

From this real, this substantial Happiness, a Happiness, to the attaining of which, so very little Expence is necessary, my

⁵⁸. Altman, Epistolarity, p. 91.

⁵⁹. Cry, I, p. 15.

Thoughts involuntarily wander'd through the various Pursuits and the numberless Anxieties of Mankind, about those things, which when attain'd, only load their Minds with still more Cares, and involve and perplex their brains with ten thousand distracting intricate Labyrinths.⁶⁰

Conversations and events in which the letter-writer is involved are not reported in detail, but her topics in the letter change as her thoughts wander in sketching people's follies. The other letter writers, too, are detached from the events which they describe in their letters. Another typically disengaged writer is found in Letter XXV. The writer Clemenens reflects that he is happy to have been the only sober observer among the others' frenzy of affectation: 'I was pleased to think I was the only Person that was not acting a Part'. All the others are performing their parts of affectation in the event and only he is an onlooker.

Even when the story of an individual is told in a letter, it is not the writer's own story but the story somebody else retrospectively told to the writer. The events in the story are remote; the teller calmly looks at the self in the past; the writer puts down the teller's words faithfully as they are told without any sign of being absorbed in the story. An example of this kind of detached writer is Camilla in Letters II, IV, and VI. In these letters the writer is not even an observer of the events. Camilla tells Cynthia that she heard a story from Isabinda. Camilla reports the story in Isabinda's first-person narrative: 'I took it down from her own Mouth'.⁶¹ This claim is not simply for the purpose of impressing on the reader the authenticity of the story by means of the first person narration, but it also enables Camilla to recede from the story. Camilla is acquainted with Isabinda, but Camilla does not

⁶⁰. Familiar Letters, I, p. 50.

⁶¹. Familiar Letters, I, p. 60.

have anything to do with the events Isabinda tells, nor does she offer any comment while the story is told. In return Cynthia writes about events and people at some distance, repeatedly claiming that she is writing down everything, but everything that 'passed', not currently happening to her.⁶² Cynthia tells Camilla that she is going to describe all she saw the previous day. In this way these writers and their readers are not kept in suspense; they always know the consequence and meaning of the events and stories.

Summing up, both in temporal and personal terms, distance dominates in Sarah Fielding's familiar letters. Her letter-writing characters write about observation and the writer's sentiments about it, and somebody else's story, usually reported in the first-person narrative of the teller (not the letter writer). They are not concerned with an individual's experience and feelings, but their observation consists of the description of other people's behaviour. Other people's stories are told in the form of a memoir and the teller always knows the outcome of the narrative. Several stories are told in the first person, as the letter writers write down what the narrators have told in the narrators' own language. Even conversation is reported in the same way, since: 'I think I can remember everything that was said, and will send it you just as it was spoke in the first Person, as I think that will give you a stronger Idea of the Conversation.'⁶³ In this sense the letter writer turns into a scribe rather than scribbler, losing subjectivity. Sarah Fielding's characters do not expose their own agitation of the heart, but are always in control of themselves either as an observer or a memoir teller. They have little direct personal commitment to the events they tell. Thus she did not follow a typical strategy of epistolary literature in constructing the relationship

⁶². Familiar Letters, I, p. 54.

⁶³. Familiar Letters, II, p. 53.

between the letter-writer and the written events.

The product of such a relationship is different from what an emotionally committed letter writer writes. Here the binary model of the epistolary novel proposed by Elizabeth MacArthur helps to place Sarah Fielding in the context of literary tradition. She argues that the metonymical structure of epistles and epistolary novels has been underestimated by critics who base their formal criteria mainly on the novels of the nineteenth century. She argues that metonymy (which stands for combination, movement, instability, disorder, openness, and desire), contrasted with metaphor (which is marked by selection, stability, closure, and meaning), characterizes both genuine and fictional letters of the late seventeenth century and eighteenth century.⁶⁴ She maintains that the metonymical openness of the epistolary form corresponds to a desire of women to question the problems of meaning and authority, relating the literary form favoured by women to social and political gendered power structures.⁶⁵ Richardson's principle of writing 'to the moment' can be justly fitted in the metonymical form of letters for its orientation toward openness and movement.

In contrast, the letters in Sarah Fielding's Familiar Letters tend to be metaphorical. Their orientation is toward order, closure, and meaning. The writer who tells another person's story knows the consequence of the story when writing a letter. Observations and reports search for the meaning of the events. In addition, there are frequent remarks in generalized terms rather than those emphasizing the particularities of the individual experience. For example, we always

⁶⁴ Extravagant Narratives. Developing Peter Brooks's study of narrative closure, she attempts to liberate epistolary discourse from the values constructed for the nineteenth-century novel, by challenging the view of metaphor-oriented reading which seeks closure and meaning, in dealing with Les lettres Portugaises, correspondence of Madame duDeffand and Horace Walpole, and Rousseau's Julie.

⁶⁵ MacArthur, 'Devious Narratives', 18.

encounter synthesizing comments about general people, or human beings, such as 'all Mankind can travel in [the Paths that lead to Misery] without jostling one another', and 'nothing is so common, as mens ruining themselves'.⁶⁶ The individual experience is justified and concluded by these statements. In this way Familiar Letters seeks for metaphor in the supposedly metonymical form of letters.

Thus Sarah Fielding's Familiar Letters is a defective work when judged by the standards which have been established in estimating the epistolary novels and literary letters characterized by metonymy. It is likely that Sarah Fielding could have availed herself of Richardson's conception of the epistolary novel, of epistolary discourse as the topos of the intimate, private, and confessional. However, she did not adopt the confessional method and the metonymical structure of epistolary novelists. Yet this does not mean Familiar Letters is aimless. She just played a different game.

IV. A 'good Fund of strong Masculine Sense' and an Ideal World of Mutual Understanding

The seemingly stray work, Familiar Letters, suggests a need to rethink Sarah Fielding's notion of 'familiarity'. Examination of the relationships between her characters in these letters helps to construe her sense of 'familiarity'. As I suggested in Chapter One, Sarah Fielding is concerned about negotiation and communication between the author and the reader. In this created world of familiar letters, she is again attentive to the conveyance of ideas. For here she describes the importance of conversation, the mutual exchange of ideas, between her characters. Their concerns in such exchanges are not private,

⁶⁶. Familiar Letters, I, pp. 200, 199.

amorous or political, but public, moral, and social. Her idea of familiarity is not established by the standards of the epistolary novel where the author makes the characters focus on their own actions and inner conflicts by inviting the confidante into their private space. Her familiarity consists in the exchange of ideas to stimulate thinking and in assuring each other of the certainty of common values.

Her Familiar Letters expresses the age's interests in relationships between a man and the outer world and between human beings. The Enlightenment brought about a consciousness of the necessity of politeness in human conversation, conversation in the eighteenth-century sense.⁶⁷ There was a proliferation of texts on conversation, politeness, and familiarity. Among them, Addison (1672-1719) and Steele (1672-1729) advocated urbanized familiar politeness, and both Henry and Sarah Fielding were very interested in the notion of conversation.⁶⁸ Sarah Fielding's conception of familiarity in Familiar Letters depends on her notion of conversation, and this is notably social and intellectual rather than private and emotional.

In his contributory letters as well as in his preface to her Familiar Letters Henry Fielding presents his conception of familiar letters. Of course, this conception is not necessarily identical to Sarah Fielding's, but his models are suggestive in examining hers. In one of his letters (Letter XLI) his exemplars are those who are celebrated

⁶⁷ John Mullan, Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988); Peter Borsay, The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town 1660-1770 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), pp. 257-83; Lawrence E. Klein, 'Liberty, Manners, and Politeness in early Eighteenth-Century England.' The Historical Journal 32(1989): 583-605;

⁶⁸ Jonathan Swift, 'Hints Towards an Essay on Conversation', 'Polite Conversation', 'On Good Manners and Good Breeding', and 'Hints on Good Manners' in A Proposal for Correcting the English Tongue. Polite Conversation, Etc The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift. ed. Herbert Davis, vol. 4 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957). No. 119 of the Spectator is, for example, devoted to 'a great Revolution' in the point of conversation and Good Breeding.

for their sophisticated elaboration of an easy style along with satirical hints; the title of the letter is: 'A Letter from a French Gentleman to his Friend at Paris; an imitation of Horace, Addison, and all other Writers of Travelling Letters.' The chief feature that he considers epistolary writers should achieve is an easy, familiar style, adopted in the discourse of fairly serious subjects.⁶⁹ One of Henry Fielding's avowed models, Horace (65-8 B.C), was a particularly influential figure in epistles written in familiar style.⁷⁰ Horace was held in esteem as an exemplar not only in the context of formal verse satire but of polished elegant style and refined conversation, as Dudley Ryder (16??-1756), who was a very eager student of styles in writing and conversation, admiringly remarks: 'One cannot read any book I believe more fit to learn one the polite way of writing and conversing than Horace'.⁷¹ Addison, another of Henry Fielding's models, epitomised good writing in the familiar style. According to Johnson: 'Whoever wishes to attain an English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison.'⁷² This kind

⁶⁹. See his preface to Familiar Letters. William J. Farrell discusses the role of the commentator in Henry Fielding's novels; although the commentator seems artificial and distancing, the playful familiar style in fact helps to probe into certain aspects of reality. See 'Fielding's Familiar Style', Journal of English Literary History, 34 (1967): 65-77.

⁷⁰. Howard D. Weinbrot argues that though Horace was powerfully influential for his sophisticated art in the eighteenth century, there was also mistrust of his political stance and personality and Pope, usually thought to be Horatian, also had anti-Horatian qualities. He offers a 'tentative hypothesis' that the satiric sensibility dissociated after Pope, who incorporated Horace, Persius, and Juvenal in his satiric identity. See Eighteenth-Century Satire: Essays on Text and Context from Dryden to Peter Pindar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 21-33, 186-203; and also his Alexander Pope: and the Traditions of Formal Verse Satire (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982).

⁷¹. The Diary of Dudley Ryder 1715-1716 ed. William Matthews (London: Methuen, 1939), p. 78.

⁷². Lives of the English Poets ed. George Birkbeck Hill, II (Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1905), p. 150.

of 'masculine' familiarity was available to Sarah Fielding as well as an Ovidian 'feminine' intimacy.

As for travel literature among his models, Henry Fielding mentions George Lyttelton's Letters from a Persian in the preface.⁷³ He picks out Lyttelton's skilful management of public social subjects in an easy manner. He remarks that many of the letters are written 'on the most important Subjects in Ethics, Politics, and Philosophy', and that 'two or three Novels' are presented among the letters.⁷⁴ The construction of this work is followed by Sarah Fielding, in the sense that Familiar Letters consists of letters on the subject of ethics and occasionally philosophy and includes life stories, which Henry Fielding calls (and actually Sarah Fielding labels as) novels. The form of the letters written by a traveller provided Lyttelton with an opportunity to be an observer, often a critical and satirical outsider, commenting on society. Sarah Fielding's letter writers are not travellers; they are distributed over England, but are settled in their places. However, they do not confine themselves within the domestic sphere, but attend gatherings and pay and receive visits so as to monitor various people's behaviour, without being too much involved. They are, as it were, travellers on a very small scale. Moreover, the point of view of moderately detached observers resembles that of a writer of travel literature, and also the personal position Sarah Fielding (especially later in her life) developed for herself, which I described in my introduction.

A discussion of epistolary writing in verse in The Spectator throws light on Sarah Fielding's method in Familiar Letters. The writer

⁷³ For an overview of travel literature, see Butt and Carnall, The Age of Johnson, pp. 244-65; Charles L. Batten, Jr., Pleasurable Instruction: Form and Convention in Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

⁷⁴ Familiar Letters, I, xi.

classifies letters into mainly two groups: Ovidian love letters, and Horatian 'Familiar, Critical, and Moral' letters. According to the writer the qualifications required to follow Horace are masculine insight into social matters and mastery of language:

He ... must have a good Fund of strong Masculine Sense: To this there must be joined a thorough Knowledge of Mankind, together with an Insight into the Business, and the prevailing Humours of the Age. Our Author must have his Mind well seasoned with the finest Precepts of Morality, and be filled with nice Reflections upon the bright and the dark sides of human Life: He must be a master of refined Raillery, and understand the Delicacies, as well as the Absurdities of Conversation. He must have a lively Turn of Wit, with an easie and concise manner of Expression; Every thing he says, must be in a free and disengaged manner.... But let our Poet, while he writes Epistles, though never so familiar, still remember that he writes in Verse, and must for that reason have a more than ordinary care not to fall into Prose, and a vulgar Diction, excepting where the Nature and Humour of the Thing does necessarily require it.⁷⁵

As if he had these requirements in mind and wanted to defend Sarah Fielding's collection of letters with compensating qualities, Henry Fielding anticipates objections to the author's being a woman and not in the world of business. He defends her letters, starting with the assumption that letters in a familiar style are identified as a masculine product: 'The Objection to the Sex of the Author hardly requires an Answer', and 'As such Observations are generally supposed to be the Effects of long Experience in, and much Acquaintance with Mankind, it

⁷⁵ The Spectator, no. 618, Donald F. Bond, ed. vol. V (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), p. 113.

may perhaps surprize many, to find them in the Works of a Woman; especially of one, who, to use the common Phrase, hath seen so little of the World'.⁷⁶

He praises her achievement in such a genre, although with a hint of condescension.

The richness of classical authors in Henry Fielding's library has been noted and the citation from and allusion to classical texts in his works are indicative of his classical learning.⁷⁷ Among classical authors, Horace was the most prominent in both his library and in allusions and citations in his works.⁷⁸ Probably Sarah Fielding enjoyed the benefit of his library and his knowledge as well. Moreover, she herself was a reader of classical authors (and even published a translation). So, it is likely that she was well informed about the tradition of formal verse satire. A list of the literary references made by Sarah Fielding shows the great range of her reading, ancient and modern, verse and prose.⁷⁹ She refers to Horace twenty times in The Cry and once in The History of the Countess of Dellwyn.⁸⁰

In Familiar Letters Cynthia thinks highly of polished conversation. She enjoys conversation with Valentine's visitors very much because of their politeness and sociability. She appreciates their urbane relaxed conversation that is with neither 'restrained Ceremony' nor 'Rudeness'.⁸¹ She is pleased with this company, members of which 'treat her with real good breeding', with not too stiff nor too loose

⁷⁶. Familiar Letters, I, xv, xiv.

⁷⁷. Nancy A. Mace, 'Henry Fielding's Classical Learning.' Modern Philology 88(1991): 243-60.

⁷⁸. Mace, 243, 245, 254, 256, 257, 258, and 259.

⁷⁹. Werner, pp. 294-98.

⁸⁰. Werner, p. 296.

⁸¹. Familiar Letters, I, pp. 95-6.

behaviour.⁸² However, one of the gentlemen is troubling to her. He is endowed with the congenial characteristics The Spectator demanded of those wishing to follow Horace. He has 'a Fund of Wit and Entertainment' and his conversation is 'at once so lively, one can hardly imagine he has time to think, and yet so solid and judicious, it is almost impossible to conceive but every Thought must arise from the most deliberate Reflection'. In short, he is furnished with the best praises an elegant conversationalist can be given. Nevertheless, it is his Horatian sneer that annoys Cynthia; he sneers when he talks of others. The sneer reminds Cynthia of the description of Horace in Persius's (A.D. 34-62) satire, which she quotes in the letter: 'The Croud he sneer'd, but sneer'd with such a Grace, / It pass'd for downright Innocence of Face.'⁸³ His sneer causes disconcertion in her, not simply because it displays displeasing disdain, but all the more because she makes much of his otherwise entertaining conversation, from which she gains pleasant intellectual stimuli.

Sarah Fielding shared an interest in these lines with Henry Fielding, and quotes the same verses by the same translator, Thomas Ewster, that Henry Fielding cites in his 'Essay on Conversation'. He quotes first in Latin, followed by an English translation.⁸⁴ Yet, the purposes

⁸². Familiar Letters, I, p. 96.

⁸³. Familiar Letters, I, p. 96. In another translation (by Dryden and others) of Persius's First Satyr, these lines are:

Unlike in Method, with conceal'd Design,
 Did crafty Horace his low Numbers Join:
 And, with a sly insinuating Grace,
 Laugh'd at his Friend, and look'd him in the Face;
 Wou'd raise a Blush, where secret Vice he found;
 And tickle, while he gently prob'd the Wound.
 With seeming innocence the crow'd beguil'd;
 But made the desperate Passes, when he smil'd.

The Satires of Decimus Junis Juvenalis: and of Aulus Persius Flaccus. 4th edn (London: Jacob Tonson, 1711), p. 427.

⁸⁴. Miscellanies ed. Henry Knight Miller, The Wesleyan Edition of the Works of Henry Fielding (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), p. 150.

of their quotation are different. Henry Fielding quotes the verses in the course of defending raillery: 'I shall recommend to my well-bred Man, who aims at Raillery, the excellent Character given of Horace by Persius.'⁸⁵ In the essay he proceeds from a consideration of good behaviour to that of conversation, reaching at the end a vindication of raillery. He recommends gentle Horatian raillery as a means to enliven conversation, an art of pleasing, because 'in skilful and witty[sic] Hands, I have known Raillery, thus confined, afford a very diverting, as well as inoffensive Entertainment to the whole Company.'⁸⁶

Cynthia's perplexity about the gentleman suggests that Sarah Fielding is less in favour of Horatian sophistication. Cynthia feels unhappy about the able and entertaining gentleman's sneer. Even if it is a sneer made with grace, she perceives a tincture of contempt rather than sheer refinement, and feels ill at ease with 'a Delight in a low Ridicule'. She is reluctant to appreciate his attitude, although she comes to be persuaded that the sneer is not the gentleman's fault, but the fault of people who give him occasions to sneer at, when Valentine tells her:

The Man whose Understanding I so much applauded, would be glad never to have an Opportunity of sneering; that he is a true Friend to every Man he finds worthy of his Esteem, is always glad to meet with an Object of it, and only laughs instead of crying, to keep up his own Good-humour, and that of the Company...⁸⁷

For Cynthia the sneer is more than a foible, which she wishes the pleasant

⁸⁵. Miscellanies, p. 150; Swift also commends raillery as an ingredient of good conversation in 'To Mr. Delany' in The Poems of Jonathan Swift ed. Harold Williams vol. I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), p. 215.

⁸⁶. Miscellanies, p. 152.

⁸⁷. Familiar Letters, I, p. 98.

gentleman were free from, all the more because he is otherwise agreeable and his conversation abounds in intellectual interest which she enjoys very much. Her attitude represents both a willingness and a reluctance to admire Horatian sophistication. So, compared with Henry Fielding's acceptance, Sarah Fielding at least throws doubt on ridicule, raillery, and satire; her ambivalent feelings about Horace suggest that she is seeking for a different style.

Although her characters cannot but point out the ridiculous behaviour of people and be satiric for the same reason that makes the gentleman sneer, they attempt to achieve a critical viewpoint not through sarcasm but through an appeal to a sympathetic agreement based on mutual understanding and shared moral values. Familiar Letters gives an impression that true conversation takes place among the four main characters, Cynthia, Camilla, Valentine, and David. The problem is that the reader is not allowed to know what actually they talk about. Cynthia and Valentine spend hours 'in great pleasure, reciprocally conveying our Ideas to each other, without any Disguise or artful Concealment of our Thoughts'.⁸⁸ The description of their conversation ends here and no concrete topics or dialogues are given. It seems insufficient, but it is the very feature of familiarity in Familiar Letters; significantly, such agreement in general remarks constructs familiarity here. Let us then examine Sarah Fielding's conception of conversation and her ideal familiar relationship.

Concerns about the manner of conversation or about the question of what constitutes 'familiarity' are ever present in Familiar Letters. Sarah Fielding's attention to conversation is expressed almost every time a new character appears. A new character is introduced to the reader by the quality of his or her conversation with less interest in rank, appearance, and inner quality: Aurelia writes to Silvia about Cleora,

⁸⁸. Familiar Letters, I, p. 54.

whose 'Conversation was always agreeable to me', Camilla met a lady whose story she wants to write to Cynthia because 'I was much pleased with her Conversation', and so on.⁸⁹

One of the probable direct sources of her notion of conversation is Henry Fielding. He defines conversation as an essential part of the human activities through which human beings learn truth. What conversation enables people to develop is, importantly, insight and participation in the construction of shared knowledge rather than subjective perception. He explains the word 'conversation' as follows:

The primitive and literal Sense of this Word is, I apprehend, to Turn round together; and in its more copious Usage we intend by it, that reciprocal Interchange of Ideas, by which Truth is examined, Things are, in a manner, turned round, and sifted, and all our Knowledge communicated to each other.⁹⁰

He also remarks that it is 'the only accurate Guide to Knowledge'.⁹¹ According to Henry Fielding again, conversation is a privilege of human beings, who are social creatures; by means of conversation they can attain intellectual advantage as well as satisfaction and also can be emotionally satisfied and happy. Following Henry Fielding, Sarah Fielding moulds the image of conversation, focusing on exchanges of ideas and mental exercise rather than emotion and the heart, as a vehicle to acquire understanding and consequently happiness. The main characters can enjoy conveying ideas to each other and cultivating each other intellectually.

She contrasts such an ideal relationship with the dismal state

⁸⁹. Familiar Letters, II, p. 67; II, p. 124.

⁹⁰. 'Essay on Conversation,' in Miscellanies, p. 120.

⁹¹. Miscellanies, p. 120.

of other people. Those who have experienced blissful mutual understanding notice other people's inability to communicate. What attracts the letter-writers' attention more than mere frivolity as a question of morality is the impossibility of the communication of sentiments between frivolous people. There is a man who 'without either loving or hating anything that surrounds him', 'has no other consideration in his Commerce with Mankind' than gratifying his selfishness; the ladies do not listen to a man's story, nor want to understand him, and they 'all stared each other' as they fail to make out his meanings; 'Every Man thought he was so much concerned in the Debate, that he had no patience to hear another speak...'; 'the Motive to most conversations was nothing more than a Desire of justifying our own Passions, exulting in our Situations, or shewing our own Parts'.⁹² People flock together, talking loudly, but utterance is in one direction only and consequently there is no communication.

Those who are eagerly engaged in one-way utterance do not need to be heard or want to listen to anybody, and consequently there is no development or improvement in their thoughts and argument; one person's utterance does not affect another's verbal or mental activities. This is an illustration of the complete lack of conversation, defined as the 'reciprocal Interchange of Ideas'. In the Pump Room in Bath, people are eagerly talking to such a degree that the music played there is not to be heard. What they are uttering so eagerly is nothing more than comments on the weather.⁹³ When Cynthia reads verse written by a lady for the benefit of the insensitive Elmira and her admirer, Corydon, not only cannot they appreciate it, but also they are carried away by 'an Inundation of Envy and low Spite' toward the authoress, engaging themselves separately in endless one-way arguments about the authoress.

⁹². Familiar Letters, I, pp. 160, 55-8, 140; II, 45.

⁹³. Familiar Letters, I, pp. 82-8.

Cynthia is bored with their interminable eloquence and thinks about the unceasing nature of folly and nonsense:

although Sense and Truth, when all is exhausted that can be said on a Subject, will find a period, the bottomless, the inexhaustible Fund of Nonsense, (especially when supported by an Eagerness that arises from Envy) can find no end.⁹⁴

On another occasion Cynthia is in a company, every member of which seems determined to make others unhappy, for each thinks selfishly that there is nobody worth paying attention to: 'every one affects to confine all the Senses to herself, and will not allow her Companions even to hear or see but in the same manner and degree, as she herself does.'⁹⁵

They live surrounded by a complete illusion of conversing with another person, but in fact their utterance is directed only to themselves and their own satisfaction. Sarah Fielding's letter writers expose such self-deceit. Self-deceit and fancy are repeatedly mentioned because they are great enemies to the contemporary social virtues of communication, familiarity, and sociability. Outside the close-knit world of understanding characters, there is a world where the void of communication and sympathy is emphasized in false lovers. Lovers, who should seek communication with the loved, are prominent deceivers toward the seemingly loved and often toward themselves. The letter writers think that they deserve criticism, not because they are libertines and villains, but because they are too selfish and ironically often deceive themselves. Each character lives in a self-contained world of illusion; a mother remembers 'the multitude of my sincere Lovers (as I then thought them)' who, in fact, turned out to be otherwise; Elmira has an admirer,

⁹⁴. Familiar Letters, I, pp. 94-5.

⁹⁵. Familiar Letters, I, p. 175.

but he 'was much more pleased with his own Speeches, than with the Object to whom he addressed them'; Florio seems tender and affectionate, but 'all that Softness which appeared in his Disposition, could arise from nothing, but an overgrown Tenderness for himself'.⁹⁶ In this world of self-deceiving people love is all illusion; lovers' tenderness and affectionate speeches are not directed to the seemingly beloved ones, but for the sake of the satisfaction of the lovers themselves. In the analyses offered by the awakened retrospective life-story-tellers and by the keen observers, such love consists of imposition on both sides; the loved one 'looked on her Lovers but as so many Looking-Glasses, which were to keep up her Good-humour, by letting her view her own Charms in the fairest Light', and the lovers are intoxicated in pleasing themselves by playing the role of passionate lovers. Even when Corydon pays compliments to Elmira, Cynthia 'thought it was easily to be perceived, that he was much more pleased with his own Speeches, than with the Object to whom he addressed them.'⁹⁷ Apparent enthusiasm and the number of words do not count; words are abused only to gratify the speaker, and not used for communication.

In such a company, there is no real sympathy, but only affected sympathetic utterance:

People are ashamed to confess they feel no Uneasiness from the Sufferings of those, whom they honour with the Name of Friends; and therefore the more effectually to conceal their own Ill-nature, they will not give those Friends leave to judge even of what they feel.⁹⁸

^{96.} Familiar Letters, I, pp. 61, 92, 125.

^{97.} Familiar Letters, I, p. 92.

^{98.} Familiar Letters, I, pp. 177-78.

From Cynthia's point of view, there are groups of people who can make communication with each other through words and even through tacit understanding and the others are isolated individuals without any exchange of sentiment with anybody in spite of their garrulity and apparent intimacy. She perceives the effects of the insincerity of words and the affectation of manners in the latter kind of people.

Self-deception can be a source of pleasure and complacency. Yet it is only a temporary happiness or vain contentment from the view point of shrewd observers:

For, whatever is the most predominant Passion of Mind, is apt to prevail over our Senses, so far as to make us easily believe, we have found an Object to gratify it. And we feel such a Happiness in thus imposing on ourselves, as makes it hard for us to endeavour to find out the Truth.⁹⁹

Sarah Fielding marks the folly and falsity of this complacency by emphasising the existence of perceptive observers who can look through the fallacy. She presents the main characters as observers of this kind, distinguishing them from those who are deluded, but the dividing line between the two groups becomes less clear when Cynthia thinks of the general susceptibility to illusion, comparing this imposition sympathetically with Don Quixote's fancy;

If Mankind were all fairly to examine themselves, I question much, whether they would think Don Quixote's fancying a Country Girl to be a great Princess, and insisting, that she was stringing Pearl, instead of winnowing Corn, was so extraordinary an Effect of the

⁹⁹. Familiar Letters, I, p. 171.

human Imagination, as it appears at first sight.¹⁰⁰

Happiness can be obtained, but only temporarily, through fancy, and people's vulnerability to such fancy is repeatedly described with an emphasis on its seizing power. Although we are always reminded of its weakness by the existence of the narrators who know the difference between deceit and truth, the danger of self-deception is ubiquitous.

Indeed, the circle of the main characters, a group of perfect understanding, is also immersed in the same system of communication as those who practise one-way utterance. Mutual understanding is idealized to such a degree that actual communication becomes unnecessary in this ideal circle of friends. Cynthia and Camilla are apart, one in London and the other in Bath, but Cynthia imagines as though Camilla were with her, not by correspondence as letter writers often feel that letters are a substitute for the real presence of friends and lovers, but by imaginary communication:

As it is one of the great Pleasures of Friendship, reciprocally to communicate our Thoughts to each other; ...I doubly enjoy every new Idea, every fresh Subject of Observation, by reflecting on what you will think or say upon it.

Thus in my Closet, at a hundred Miles distance, I converse with you, previously form in my Mind what will be your Answers; and I am so well acquainted with your way of thinking, that I flatter myself, that, was you present, you would generally speak the Words I in fancy say for you. Thus I contrive all the Methods I can, to make myself some amends for our Separation...¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰. Familiar Letters, I, p. 171.

¹⁰¹. Familiar Letters, II, p. 94-5.

Reciprocal understanding is so heightened as to become possible even in the other's absence or before writing a letter. The same logic works when David Simple omits the conversation between him, his father, and Camilla: 'Now, Cynthia, I have related to you every thing I have heard, except what is uttered by my Father and Camilla, that has given me pleasure ever since I saw you.' Not only does David withhold his own opinion (because he pays attention only to what he heard other people say), but also the remarks of his father and Camilla are excluded from the letter because he assumes Cynthia knows what his father, Camilla, and David himself think of and say about the events and people's behaviour. He takes it for granted that perfect sympathy and agreement reign between them, as real friends, and there is no need to express them in words. He knows 'you partake of all the Sensations of your Friends' and that it is naturally possible that 'I guess your Heart by my own'.¹⁰² His contentment could be the same as that felt by the one-way utterers in that it does not require a reply. The only difference between the one-way utterers and the main characters is that the latter people can be confident in communication and agreement with each other.

This assumption of tacit understanding within a close circle of friends is an idealization of communication. While its complacency ironically precludes conversibility between persons, they can feel assured in comprehending the sentiments of each other. Mutual understanding is in the air, rather than kept in the hearts of the people. In consequence, they do not feel any need to reveal feelings in epistles. This attitude also presents an apparently happier reaction to the threat of scepticism and solipsism. Instead of being caught by scepticism, assuming that other people are 'mere delusive figments of the solitary mind', Cynthia can imagine a friend's thought without feeling the threat

¹⁰². Familiar Letters, I. p. 190.

and fear of isolation.¹⁰³ The father of Jane Collier, Sarah Fielding's intimate friend, was a sceptic.¹⁰⁴ To what degree he directly influenced Sarah Fielding is not known, but this almost excessive emphasis on the hope of silent understanding is her defensive answer to the question of human perception. She imagines a relationship of internalized otherness or externalized self between the friends. Indeed the relationship of Camilla and Cynthia is most familiar and ideal. Their mutual understanding is such that they do not need to send written messages. They are like an internalized friend or an external self to each other.

The assumption of perfect mutual understanding also shows Sarah Fielding's supposition of an understanding and partaking audience. It is in order to secure and confirm a circle of judicious people separated from the mass of absurd people that she shows how people are driven by selfishness, pride, and folly, how meaningless are the words they utter, and how people make themselves miserable. She anticipates a reader who can nod approval at her moral values without being told how to behave; moral values are shared beforehand and what the author is showing is her acuteness in observation, how well she can examine and demonstrate subtleties of the labyrinthine minds of people who are outside the circle. Therefore, because the reactions are presupposed, she does not need to describe what reactions her main characters make to the events and people they encounter so as to let the reader know a model reaction, but can concentrate on external portrayals and their analyses. As shown above, seen in Henry Fielding's preface, this book is for a special audience who are already 'in the Secret'. She writes her text, talking to an

¹⁰³. Dowling, The Epistolary Moment, p. 22. He argues that the eighteenth-century verse epistle is 'an attempt to solve in literary terms the philosophical problem of solipsism' (p. 22).

¹⁰⁴. Her father was Arthur Collier (1680-1732), a metaphysician. DNE describes that his philosophy was quite similar to Berkeley's but 'more technical and scholastic'.

internalized friend who is in exact agreement with her, and expects the sentiments of an external reader to be in harmony with those of her externalized self.

The society of Sarah Fielding's main characters is a world of perfect communication and familiarity where every moral value is shared. They do not feel the need to confess their emotions as they can correctly anticipate the others' reactions. They only exchange ideas about the world around them, confirming their own ideas and further profound understanding. The reader of the letters is expected to share the values and appreciate the writer's acute sense and analysis of motives of people's behaviour. Just like her 'genuine' letters, her fictional letters consist of sober analysis and rational observation. Her familiar letters were not for the exposure of private feelings, but for the exposure of vice in a gentle style and modest display of virtues and intellectual analysis. In terms of the gender categories of the time, Sarah Fielding adjusted the masculine tradition of satire in her gentler, say, feminine style, instead of taking advantage of the vogue of feminine familiar letters.

The Augustan poets tried to overcome solipsism by constructing a world where morality and values are shared and which is an exclusive circle of friends who can be in perfect sympathy.¹⁰⁵ Sarah Fielding also has the threat of solipsism in mind, though she does not express it in a very alarming way. This is shown in Cynthia's idealization of human communication and very critical attitude toward people who live in their own fancy and cannot communicate with others. The society of Sarah Fielding's main characters is an equivalent of the moral sanctuary of the Augustan poets, which is separated from the corruption of the world. The external reader is expected to share the values of the main characters

¹⁰⁵. Dowling, The Epistolary Moment, pp. 45-8, 53-82.

and be satiric about the superfluous garrulous world where real conversation cannot take place. Her Familiar Letters is one of the solutions in eighteenth-century literature to the problem of establishing familiar relationships.

Richardson established sociability and familiarity by the exhibitionistic language of emotion and feeling. Sarah Fielding was ready to appreciate Richardson's manner, but she did not follow his method of cor-respondence. She does not establish familiarity by the confessional language of emotion and feeling nor by constructing the reader as a voyeur. Her ideal human relationship is realized by the exchange of ideas and opinions as suggested in Henry Fielding's 'Essay on Conversation'. Just like her 'genuine' letters, her fictional letters consist of sober analysis and intellectual observation. 'True Love ever hesitates' and a true affectionate relationship does not therefore consist in forwardness, in pouring out one's own sentiments and emotions, but in the exchanging of thoughts and ideas in order to enhance understanding without a breach of modesty and good breeding. Thus she tries to control and give order to her language and narrative, making her text 'cultivated Plains' rather than releasing 'spontaneity' or 'the barren Desarts of arbitrary words'.

Chapter Four

The Little Female Academy and the Governess

I. Introduction

The eighteenth century saw a proliferation of books assuming educational aims: practical guide books, educational tracts, memoirs, and also fiction. Children and young people were increasingly regarded as particular target readers.¹ Children's books are said to have emerged as 'a clear but subordinate branch of English literature' in the middle of the eighteenth century. The landmark of their emergence is John Newbery's (1713-67) entrepreneurial publication of A Little Pretty Pocket-Book in 1744.² Juvenile literature established itself and attracted much attention from major writers toward the end of the eighteenth century.³ Meanwhile this germinating literature saw changes.

¹ J.H. Plumb, 'The New World of Children in Eighteenth-century England', in The Birth of a Consumer Society: the Commercialization of Eighteenth-century England ed. Neil McKendrick et al (London: Europa Publications, 1982), 286-315.

² F.J. Harvey Darton, Children's Books in England: Five Centuries of Social Life 3rd ed. (Cambridge University Press, 1982), p.1; A facsimile reprint has an introduction by M.F. Thwaite, where he assesses Newbery's publication. What he regards as immediate predecessors of A Little Pretty Pocket-Book are 'T.W.'s [Thomas White?] A Little Book for Children (1712?), Thomas Boreman's books of animals and giants (1730, 1740-43), and Mrs Mary Cooper's The Child's New Plaything (1743), and Tommy Thumb's Song-Book (1744). See A Little Pretty Pocket-Book (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 11-18.

³ Ivy Pinchbeck and Margaret Hewitt, Children in English Society: From Tudor Times to the Eighteenth Century 2vols. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969, 1973), I. p. 299; see also S.J. Curtis and M.E.A. Boulton, A Short History of Educational Ideas (Slough: University Tutorial Press, 1977), pp. 256-61; Isaac Kramnick, 'Children's Literature and Bourgeois Ideology: Observations on Culture and Industrial Capitalism in the Later Eighteenth Century', in Culture and Politics from Puritanism to the Enlightenment ed. Perez Zagorin (Berkeley: University of California

The forerunning authors' style and aim in writing as an instructor were different from those of the later writers. One of the great changes as the eighteenth century advanced toward its end was in the author's construction of the relationship between the author and the reader. This was a consequence of changes in attitudes toward juvenile literature and towards childhood, in the choice of target audience, and consequently in the author's method of self-definition.⁴

The emergence of juvenile literature by respectable authors coincides with the appearance of Evangelical educators, 'Sunday School Moralists', such as Sarah Trimmer (1741-1810), Hannah More (1745-1833), and Mary Martha Sherwood. These female writers were in the forefront of literature for children; they produced a massive amount of literature for children, employing a drastically different mode of instruction and assuming a different role from those of the previous age. These authors' attitude toward the learning youth is *ex cathedra* and commanding, locating themselves at the higher level and confirming the subordinate position of the readers, and requiring their implicit obedience to morally superior instructors. This hierarchical relationship is presupposed, and their argument is supported by authority derived from the role they assume as religious reformers. Their construction of authority was a response to complex political and social changes as well as a result shaped by their religious belief.

The modes of instruction practised by earlier educational writers were different from those adopted by these religious educators. One of my aims in this chapter is to place Sarah Fielding's The Governess in the context of the development of educational writing in the eighteenth

Press, 1980), 215; John Rowe Townsend, Written for Children (London: Penguin, 1987), p. 21-9.

⁴. See for example, Janet Todd, The Sign of Angellica: Women, Writing, and Fiction 1660-1800 (London: Virago, 1989), pp. 195-235, esp., pp. 218, 220-22.

century.⁵ The Governess inherits the mechanism of instruction of earlier advice books; it is not authoritative or commanding. It reflects the Enlightenment's optimistic belief in the possibilities of instruction and human reason.⁶ In her other works she underscores the importance of early education as the foundation of virtue, notably in the contrasting cases of the carefully educated Portia and the wrongly instructed Cyllinda in The Cry and the well-principled children of Mrs Bilson and the susceptible Lady Dellwyn in Dellwyn. In each case she attributes the happy or unhappy result to the quality of care each person received when young. In The Governess all the pupils are young and malleable; there is no character beyond reform in this community, so an instructor and moralist does not have to suffer the dilemma of a satirist such as Spatter or the spectator in 'A Vision' in Familiar Letters. Sarah Fielding creates an ideal community free from the anxiety caused by distinctions of social status or wealth and from the pressures of business such as David Simple's law suit. Through this utopia she attempts to present a foundation for a society she yearns for, where values are shared.

Most of these characteristics of The Governess are clearly illustrated by a comparison with a later version of the book which was re-written by one of the Evangelical educators, Sherwood.⁷ The two

⁵ For discussions of conduct books see Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse, ed., The Ideology of Conduct: Essays on Literature and the History of Sexuality (New York and London: Methuen, 1987); Alice Browne, The Eighteenth Century Feminist Mind (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1987); Ruth Bernard Yeazell, Fiction of Modesty: Women and Courtship in the English Novel (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

⁶ For the Enlightenment values I have consulted Roy Porter, 'The Enlightenment in England', in Roy Porter and Mikulas Teich, ed., The Enlightenment in National Context (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 1-18; Roy Porter, The Enlightenment (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1990).

⁷ For her educational writings, see M. Nancy Cutt, Mrs. Sherwood and her Books for Children (London: Oxford University Press, 1974).

versions provide a very striking example of contrast between different attitudes towards education. Moreover, they reveal that the early eighteenth-century writers and those active after the end of the century had different conceptions of authorship.

Jane Spencer explores the development of women writers's authority which depended on the authority of the mother in the eighteenth century. She argues that this was double-edged in regard to the relationship with paternal authority as it both obeys and subverts it. She draws attention to the correspondence between the relationship writers construct within the work and the relationship between the writer and the reader. Thus she maintains that maternal authority in education presented women writers with 'a paradigm for their own literary authority'.⁸

In Sarah Fielding's The Governess it is the sense of fellowship between equals rather than maternal authority that is emphasized. Yet Spencer's insight about the correspondence between the relationships in the practice of education and in the production of literary work remains helpful here. The increase of women's authority in education and in literature toward the end of the century is double-edged in a second sense because it narrowed women's sphere while at the same time enhancing an almost self-righteous confidence in their moral role. On the other hand, the comparatively low-key role played by women earlier in the century in the educational and literary spheres does not necessarily reflect diffidence. Such an approach had its own particular advantages and possibilities. In this chapter I first describe the

⁸ Jane Spencer, '"Of Use to Her Daughter": Maternal Authority and Early Women Novelists', in Living By the Pen: Early British Women Writers, ed. Dale Spender (New York and London: Teachers College Press, 1992), 201-211. Paula Backscheider points out that the use of the mother's role by women writers in the emphasis on the instructive function of writing is one of the incentives to foster identification of women writers with their work; see 'Women Writers and the Chain of Identification', Studies in the Novel 19(1987): 249-51.

programme of education The Governess presents. This is followed by a consideration of the work's emphasis on social relations which it shares with other educational writings before the end of the eighteenth century. I then go on to examine their writers' common attitude towards constructing a relationship with their readers. Finally, by comparing two versions of The Governess, one by Sarah Fielding and the other by Mary Martha Sherwood, I consider the interrelated development in the authority of the instructor within the text and that of the author.

II. The Little Female Academy

Sarah Fielding's The Governess is one of the earliest attempts in English for an author to pay sustained attention to the world of children.⁹ As the first in a tradition of school stories written for educational and entertainment purposes, it has many followers, as Grey points out in her appendix to the 1968 facsimile edition. Grey regards The Governess as a pioneering work, 'the first novel written for children', 'an original creation', and 'one of the most popular and most frequently imitated children's books at a time when the concept of "a literature for children" was only just beginning to emerge'.¹⁰ Its popularity is

⁹ For critical analysis, especially of Sarah Fielding's characterization of ordinary girls, see Humphrey Carpenter and Mari Prichard, The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 216; Darton, Children's Books in England, p. 156; Ann Marilyn Parrish, 'Eight Experiments in Fiction,' Ph.D thesis, Boston University Graduate School, 1973, p. 111. A facsimile reprint of the first edition is accompanied with a substantial introduction and appendix by Jill E. Grey (London: Oxford University Press, 1968). Her introduction includes biographical information about Sarah Fielding and her family, the influence she was under in writing Governess, the influence her book has had on later books for children, and the history of the publication of Governess. Grey finds Sarah Fielding's place in literary history in relation to Richardson and Henry Fielding, and her place in the history of education under the great influence of Fenelon.

¹⁰ Grey, pp. 1, 39, 57; Sherwood writes that 'It is remarkable as having

also testified by several references to the work and the fact that it was reprinted again and again.¹¹

Sarah Fielding's interest in education derived from or was enhanced by her experience of taking care of Henry Fielding's children between the illness of his first wife and his second marriage.¹² Her particular attention to girls' education at school might have developed

been one of the first books of the kind prepared purposely for children', in an introduction to her revised version, The Governess; or the Little Female Academy (Dellington, Salop: F. Houlston and Son, 1820), iii. Margaret Meek writes, 'It is the first full-length novel for children in which the plot has a contemporary setting and characters drawn from life' (quoted in Children's Literature: a Guide to Reference Sources first supplement, completed by Virginia Haviland and Margaret N. Coughlan [Washington: Library of Congress, 1972], p. 57). M. F. Thwaite remarks in From Primer to Pleasure (2nd ed., 1972) that Governess is the 'first continuous piece of fiction written for children... as significant in its way as Newbery's Little Pretty Pocket Book issued five years earlier' (quoted in The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature, p. 216). Geoffrey Summerfield takes Governess to be 'the first English novel written expressly for young readers' (Fantasy and Reason: Children's Literature in the Eighteenth Century [London: Methuen, 1984], p. 89).

¹¹. The author of Education of Children and Young Students... (London: J. Waugh, 1752) admiringly refers to 'an elegant observation of the polite author of the Governess' (p. 16); Richard Lovell Edgeworth (1744-1817) writes, 'When I was a child, I had no resource but Newberry's[sic] little books and Mrs. Teachum' (quoted in Grey, p. 1); Charles Lamb (1775-1834) who thought favourably of the book, in a letter to Coleridge in 1802, laments the disappearance of 'the old classics of the nursery' and cursed 'Mrs. B's and Mrs. Trimmer's nonsense' which almost inundated the book market (Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb ed. E. V. Lucas [London: Methuen, 1935], p. 326 and Grey, p. 73). As for the influence of Governess, the lists of its editions and school story books, see Grey, pp. 1, 64-77, 353-365. The popularity of this work is testified by Grey's long list of editions of Governess (there are 28 editions in her list, among which twenty-two were published in the eighteenth century, and the last of which is the 1827 New York edition of Sherwood's revised work). In addition to the editions in her list, the Eighteenth-Century Short Title Catalogue includes editions published by T. Carnan and F. Newbery in 1770, 1779, and 1786, and in 1768 a part of Governess was extracted as The Story of the Cruel Giant Barbarico, the Good Giant Benefico, and the Little Pretty Dwarf Mignon, published in Boston.

¹². She stayed at Henry Fielding's. Joseph Warton visited Henry and Sarah Fielding at Boswell Court in 1746; see Martin C. Battestin and Ruthe R. Battestin, Henry Fielding: A Life (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 413, 388-89, 404, 412-13.

from her own experience in Mrs Rookes's boarding school in The Close, Salisbury. She was sent there with her sisters to be 'brought up as gentlewomen' while there were problems in the family: following the death of their mother in 1718 when Sarah Fielding was seven years old, Lady Gould, their maternal grandmother, resorted to a lawsuit against their father, Edmund, over their custody and the estate their mother left for them, on Edmund's second marriage in 1719.¹³

In her childhood and girlhood, women carers and instructors were always available to her. Before the death of their mother, the Fielding's household maintained a French governess, Anne Delaborde, and toward the end of their mother's life their great aunt, Mrs Cottington, and a nursery maid, Frances Barber came to help them. Until sometime after the death of Lady Gould in 1733 Sarah Fielding and her sisters stayed in their grandmother's house near The Close in Salisbury. Although men were influential (Sarah was Henry Fielding's favourite, and Arthur Collier is said to have taught her Greek and Latin), Sarah Fielding lived more under female than male care in her formative years. She saw a succession of senior persons in charge, her mother, the French governess, Mrs Cottington, Lady Gould, and Mrs Rookes.

More importantly, it was together with her three sisters, Catherine, Ursula, and Beatrice that Sarah Fielding spent most of her time throughout her girlhood. Even after they were mature, none of them married and for a time they stayed together. When The Governess was in preparation, she was living with her sisters.¹⁴ While they lived in

¹³ Battestin, Henry Fielding, pp. 18-37; Mrs Barber's phrase about the boarding school is quoted in Battestin, Henry Fielding, p. 34.

¹⁴ Ursula Fielding writes about the sisterhood to Mrs Barker, the wife of Dr John Barker of Salisbury, on 25 Oct. 1748: 'All the sisterhood desire much love to you. Kitty [Catharine] is at work. Sally [Sarah] is puzzling about it and about it. Bea [Beatrice] playing on her fiddle, and Patty scribbling' (The Correspondence of Henry and Sarah Fielding, ed. Martin C. Battestin and Clive T. Probyn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 182).

Salisbury they made friends with the Collier family, among whom Jane was especially close to Sarah Fielding. The fact that she was often in her early life with girls of the same generation, her sisters, her schoolmates, and also the Collier sisters may be thought to be one of the factors in her choice of describing the activities of an all girls' community.¹⁵ Bridget Hill explores the recurrent idea of establishing female refuges for the reception of unmarried women as well as for educational purposes.¹⁶ Similarly, Sarah Fielding's academy reflects her wish for a proper education for women and also her longing for a female community. There a girl can take refuge from the gendered, economical, social, and other hierarchies of the world.

The Governess is dedicated to Mrs Poyntz (née Anna Maria Mordaunt), who had been a Maid of Honour to Queen Caroline before her marriage to Stephen Poyntz (1685-1750). Her domestic virtue after she retired from the court is admired in the dedication.¹⁷ After Sarah Fielding's death Mrs Poyntz paid tribute to her, regarding her as one of the excellent modern women writers in her country and regretting her loss: 'as for letters, have not we had, in our country, ... a Behn, a Centlivre, and,

¹⁵ . Linda Bree points out radical nature of this choice against the background of objections to girls' schools (Sarah Fielding [New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996], pp. 60-61.

¹⁶. The women concerned in her materials, though, are older than Mrs Teachum's girls. See 'A Refuge from Men: The Idea of a Protestant Nunnery', Past and Present 117(1987):107-30.

¹⁷. Anna Maria Mordaunt was a famous beauty who was admired in 'The Fair Circassian, a Dramatic Performance' (London: Printed for J. Watts, 1720) by Samuel Croxall. Contrary to the picture of a domestic lady drawn by Sarah Fielding, she did not lose her connections with the Royal Circle even after marriage and her letters are full of court gossip. One of her daughters, Margaret Georgiana (1737-1814) married John, afterwards first Earl of Spencer in 1754, and Mrs Poyntz enjoyed fashionable life even more. See her letters in the Althorp papers (E14, E15); Sir John Maclean, An Historical and Genealogical Memoir of the Family of Poyntz, or Eight Centuries of an English House (Exeter: William Pollard, 1886), pp. 209-10; Alexander Ferguson, ed., Letters and Journals of Mrs. Calderwood of Polton from England Holland and the Low Countries in 1756 (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1884), pp. 191-92.

to the late misfortune of our island, a Fielding?'¹⁸ Stephen Poyntz was engaged in education as a tutor to the sons of Lord Townsend and in the royal household as the Governor of George II's son, William (later Duke of Cumberland).¹⁹ Although The Governess was dedicated to Mrs Poyntz, it was Stephen Poyntz who directly or indirectly inspired Sarah Fielding to pay attention to educational matters. She wishes 'a Design of this Nature would not be unacceptable to' Mrs Poyntz 'particularly, as this Scheme was, in a manner, directed by Mr. Poyntz'.²⁰ Poyntz was well acquainted with John Hoadly, George Lyttelton and Samuel Richardson, connections which might have brought Sarah Fielding to his or their acquaintance and led her to dedicate her educational work to Mrs Poyntz.

Contemporary response to The Governess was favourable.²¹ The following remarks by Sarah Fielding's contemporaries mark out some of

¹⁸. Je ne sais quoi: or a Collection of Letters, Odes, Etc By a Lady (London: [no publisher], 1769), pp. 27-8. This juxtaposition of Sarah Fielding and the two writers seems to be odd when one considers the different characterization of them by such critics as Jane Spencer and Janet Todd, but Poyntz depended on the agreement of their popularity to prove how she regretted Sarah Fielding's death. Gallagher begins her argument on Behn by showing how popular she was until the mid-century (Catherine Gallagher, Nobody's Story [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994], pp. 1-6).

¹⁹. Stephen Poyntz contributed to help another literary woman. He was one of the people who brought about royal financial help for Elizabeth Elstob which was realized through personal connections (George Ballard - Chapone - Pendarves (Delany) - Poyntz (who was Preceptor to Prince William) - Queen Caroline). John Nichols, Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century 6vols (London : Nichols, 1812), IV, p. 714.

²⁰. Governess, v-vi.

²¹. T.C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel point out that the text which Edward Young mentions in a letter to Richardson on Nov.5 1749 is Governess: 'I have read Miss Fielding with great pleasure. Your Clarissa is, I find, the Virgin-mother of several pieces; which, like beautiful suckers, rise from her immortal root' (Samuel Richardson: A Biography (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 202). Young continues: 'I rejoice at it; for the noblest compositions need such aids, as the multitude is swayed more by others' judgments than their own. ... I have disposed of Miss Fielding into five very proper hands' (Correspondence of Samuel Richardson, ed. Anna Laetitia Barbauld (London: Richard Phillips, 1804), II, pp. 27, 28).

the points I should like to argue in this chapter. They concern, firstly, the methods of instruction, secondly, the author's calculation, and thirdly, the correspondence and correlation between the instructor in the text and the author. The Governess found praise in a scandalous memoir of Teresia Constantia Phillips (1709-65). She pays tribute to Sarah Fielding's educational principles and the way she imparts instruction, adorning it with entertainment. She wishes every young girl to study it as a means to learn the virtues:

it were to be wished, the first Book that every young Lady in England would read, were that excellent Performance, lately published, called, The Governess; a Work that has been so much wanted to give the first Fashioning and Improvement to a young Lady's Mind. Prudence and Virtue need not then be taught them by a laborious Instruction; they would become pleasant and amusing, and as natural and habitual, as all other youthful Impressions.

It may be said of that Book, with great Propriety, that it contains Matter for the Improvement of the Mind of every Miss from Ten Years old to Fifty.²²

Her comment that with the help of this kind of book the virtues, if taught early, may be made pleasant and amusing, natural and habitual, without laborious instruction is suggestive; education in The Governess encourages the pupil's positive participation through entertainment rather than authoritative coercion. Also, her impression that the book is suitable for women from ten years old to fifty is what the author intends to give to the reader. She tries to adopt strategies to appeal to a wider audience. Such tactics include the inviting familiar tone of the author. In praise of the concept of education depicted in The

²². Teresia Constantia Phillips, Apology 3 vols (1748-9), vol. III, pp. 90-1, quoted in Battestin and Probyn, p. 184.

Governess, Anne Granville Dewes, a sister of Mary Granville (Pendarves/Delany, 1700-88), wrote to Richardson in 1755: 'I made a little acquaintance with Mrs. Fielding -- like her very much -- believe she would be a charming winter companion -- and wish for her to be a Mrs. Teachum to Mary.'²³ Significantly, she identifies the educational ideas and practices of Sarah Fielding with those of the governess in the book. This is a reader's response to the parallel structure of the author and the teacher in her text.

In The Governess the narrative begins with a description of Mrs Teachum, the governess of the little female academy, informing the reader how her circumstances brought her to become a school mistress. Then, nine girls are introduced, followed immediately by an account of their fierce fight over an apple and the subsequent reconciliation brought about by Jenny Peace, one of Mrs Teachum's students.²⁴ The rest of the book consists of the nine days' amusements which take place in the arbour, including the reading of fairy tales, a play, and a letter, the girls' telling their own life stories, and the description of their excursions. Their reading is quite different from the experience of novel-reading represented in nineteenth or twentieth century texts. While Jane Eyre confines herself as compact as possible to read for herself in a corner of a room, Jenny Peace and the others enjoy reading aloud and listening to it in the outdoor arbour. Reading is experienced not in private in a corner of a closed room, but shared among the girls, who all gather in the arbour for that purpose.

There is a variety of stories for their education and amusement. Each story bears a moral interpretation which is explicitly presented as an explanation by the governess or Jenny Peace for the instruction

²³. Barbauld, IV, p. 109.

²⁴. The girls' fight is compared with 'an adventure of Molly Seagrim's' (Darton, Children's Books in England, p. 159).

of the junior girls. By purporting to make even the smallest girl in the academy understand the moral of the stories, the author can secure a space to articulate the purposes of the narratives very clearly. Each interpretative explanation induces the girls to reflect on their own faults and to improve themselves. In addition to these narratives read in the arbour, the visit of haughty sisters who have newly acquired a title, and the story of a housekeeper about her lord and lady provide the girls with a motivation to reflect on their own faults. As I pointed out in Chapter One, Sarah Fielding emphasises the educational quality of her writing and attempts to promote the application of instruction to the reader's life. In such an educational work as The Governess, where instruction and the proper response to it are both described, she makes her idea of the 'True Use of Reading' clearer as it allows her not only to explain her aim but also to represent the correct application.

Even a play, a form which educators did not always favour, is used as an instructive material. Sukey Jennet is asked to discuss a play before all the members including Mrs Teachum, who would like to know what she has observed in it; thus the reader of The Governess can read Steele's The Funeral, a very popular play at that time, in a summarized form.²⁵ In the play a lord pretends to be dead so as to expose the vices of his manipulative second wife, who has estranged his son from him.²⁶ After Sukey's synopsis, Jenny is asked to comment. She feels the teachings of her mother and Mrs Teachum confirmed by the play: 'Folly, Wickedness, and Misery, all three, as constantly dwell together, as

²⁵ There were 171 performances of The Funeral between 1703-1776 (The Plays of Richard Steele ed. Shirley Strum Kenny (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 6).

²⁶ In the Fielding family there was an incident of a falsely reported death in 1748 when Henry Gould, a cousin of Sarah Fielding, was reported to be dead. Henry wrote an obituary (The Jacobite Journal, 20 Aug, 1748) and the family were all in mourning. In fact Gould was alive. Ursula wrote: 'You know this is an old Trick of his' (Battestin and Probyn, p. 182).

Wisdom, Virtue, and Happiness do.'²⁷

The themes of the narratives are mainly friendship and the importance of preserving peace of mind. The girls who were at the beginning easily provoked and prone to fight against each other learn from these stories how good it is for themselves to be kind and friendly to each other and to keep composure and serenity. The first story, 'The Story of the cruel Giant Barbarico, the good Giant Benefico, and the pretty little Dwarf Mignon', is read out by Jenny Peace. It emphasises that goodness, friendship, and patience bring about happiness. The next day, Miss Dolly Friendly offers to read 'The Story of Caelia and Chloe'. She is certain that it is an appropriate story to be read for the company 'as its Subject was Friendship'.²⁸ In the story Chloe suffers because of a lie she has told for the purpose of gaining the favour of Sempronius, but she confesses her fault and is forgiven. Chloe lives happily with the married couple of Caelia and Sempronius.

The importance of keeping oneself undisturbed is illustrated by three stories: a letter read by Sukey Jennett, 'The Princess Hebe', and 'The Assembly of the Birds. A Fable'. The first one is about a lady who died as a result of excessive envy. Through listening to the second tale the girls learn 'not to lose the greatest Blessing in this World, namely, a calm and contented Mind'.²⁹ In the last story the question who deserves the greatest happiness causes a great contention among the birds. After the garrulous assertions of various birds, a dove is finally elected. Not participating in the aggressive dispute, the dove is the only bird who has shown peaceful and quiet self-contentment.

Their amusements include those which Mrs Teachum is cautious

²⁷. Governess, p. 203.

²⁸. Governess, p.84.

²⁹. Governess, p. 136.

about: fairy tales.³⁰ She displays circumspection in respect of their enrapturing language and supernatural marvellous qualities: 'this high-sounding Language' and 'supernatural Contrivances' are not what she approves of, and she thinks that 'if the Story is well written, the common Course of Things would produce the same Incidents, without the Help of Fairies'.³¹ Yet, she does not forbid the reading of such stories. She takes this as an opportunity to prompt the discretion of the pupils in order to develop an autonomous reading attitude. Of course their discretion does not emerge instantaneously, so at first she is watchful. She asks Jenny Peace how the pupils have spent their time so 'that she might judge from thence how far they might be trusted with the Liberty she had given them'.³²

On knowing that they enjoyed a story of the giants and a dwarf, she feels a need to provide a guideline: 'I have no Objection, Miss Jenny, to your reading any Stories to amuse you, provided you read them with the proper Disposition of Mind not to be hurt by them'.³³ Her instruction is about how to read rather than what to read and she continues to provide the pupils with 'the Liberty' to choose. She asks Jenny Peace to explain to other girls that 'Giants, Magic, Fairies, and all Sorts of supernatural Assistances in a Story, are only introduced to amuse and divert'.³⁴ When another fairy tale, 'The Princess Hebe', is read, the same point is reinforced: 'these Fairies are only intended to amuse you'.³⁵

³⁰. For the popularity and disappearance of fairy tales in relation to the emergence of the novel, see J. Paul Hunter, Before Novels (New York: W.W. Norton, 1990), pp. 142-56.

³¹. Governess, pp. 68, 179.

³². Governess, p. 67.

³³. Governess, p. 67.

³⁴. Governess, p. 68.

³⁵. Governess, p. 181.

After the first story of the giants and a dwarf, advice is given by Jenny Peace to the other girls, and thus to the external readers, on 'the True Use of Reading': 'In order therefore to make what you read of any Use to you, you must not only think of it thus in general, but make the Application to yourselves.'³⁶ Thus the stories are recommended as aids to an individual's reflection and application as well as sources of more general moral precepts. This recommendation is followed by the characters; the moral defects described in the stories and observed around them remind the girls of their own faults and induce them to notice their own errors and enable them to achieve a perspective to look at themselves and recount their own histories. By applying moral lessons taken from the stories, they learn to look objectively at their own temperament and conduct in the past. Through this learning process of communal reading and sharing of their own histories, they nurture a sense of shared values in their community. Thus the ties of fellowship are developed through the realization of one's ability to distance oneself both far and near enough to analyze one's own self.

The main thread of the story consists not in the instruction the governess gives, but in the making of a harmonious community of the girls through the realization and amendment of their own faults. Accordingly, more emphasis is laid on their own redress of faults and the development of the social virtues needed to live in such a community than the coercion of obedience; although the importance of obedience to parents and instructors is illustrated by the narratives they enjoy, they are invited to realize its importance by themselves. The stories are always connected to the girls by means of their realization of faults similar to their own. Therefore, the book gives an impression that it focuses on the girls. The stories are calculated to initiate the girls into thinking about themselves and to encourage the readers to do the

³⁶. Governess, p. 73.

same.

Despite its title, The Governess, the governess herself, Mrs Teachum, is not a dominant figure in the book. Though Mrs Teachum is introduced carefully with all her former circumstances and qualifications as a teacher, she seldom occupies the scenes of education in the book. She interferes with the activities of the young girls as little as possible. The emphasis is always on the way good companionship is fostered rather than on the hierarchical relationship between any members. Mrs Teachum teaches the girls how important it is to be 'gentle, kind, and affectionate to each other' and encourages them to make a cordially friendly circle.³⁷

In this community where equal comradeship is cherished, the position of a teacher is not easy to define. Sarah Fielding addresses this problem by giving a special position to Mrs Teachum; she changes her persona. At first she is an awesome figure. With her commanding eye she is the very embodiment of dignity and authority.³⁸ During play time, she stays apart from the girls, knowing that her presence makes them feel constraints, and that she will stiffen their relaxed atmosphere. Hence her appearances in the book are relatively uncommon. However, once she judges that the girls have shown an improvement toward her standard, she begins to join their amusements during their breaks, trying 'to make her Scholars throw off the Reserve before her' so that she can 'become the Companion of her Scholars', '[discoursing] familiarly with them'.³⁹ When going on an excursion, she allows the pupils to continue 'prattling all the way', helping them to produce the ambience of a happy company.⁴⁰

³⁷. Governess, p. 2.

³⁸. Governess, p. 4.

³⁹. Governess, pp. 149, 150.

⁴⁰. Governess, p. 117.

Jane Collier, taking Sarah Fielding's part in a letter to Samuel Richardson, draws attention to The Governess's emphasis on encouraging civilized harmonious relationships. She maintains that the author intends the book as a direction 'for girls how to behave to each other, and to their teachers'.⁴¹ Sarah Fielding's preface, addressed to 'My young Readers', is expressive of the aim to promote sociable behaviour:

The Design of the following sheets is to prove to you, that Pride, Stubbornness, Malice, Envy, and, in short, all manner of Wickedness, is the greatest Folly we can be possessed of;... Certainly, Love and Affection for each other makes the Happiness of all Societies; and therefore Love and Affection (if we would be happy) is what we should chiefly encourage and cherish in our Mind.⁴²

Here she expresses a secular and moral attitude towards education; what she mentions education should remove are all those kinds of 'wickedness' which make human relations uncomfortable and difficult. Her attention is on the fabrication of good social relations. Secondly, she commits herself to the importance of the initiative taken by the students and expresses a belief in the possibility of human effort. The students are encouraged to judge independently and nurture virtues self-reliantly: it is of our own volition, and not by any body else's command, that 'we should...encourage and cherish [Love and Affection] in our Mind'. The readers are expected to be responsible for their own education. It is taken for granted that they are already endowed with the ability to improve themselves. Thus the role of the author is to encourage the

⁴¹ Barbauld, II, p. 61.

⁴² Governess, xiii.

readers to think and judge by themselves.⁴³

III. Sociability and Friendship

John Mullan has investigated the eighteenth century's orientation toward private sentiment, feeling, and sensibility as an answer to the question of social relations. He argues that literature, especially novels of sentiment, responded to a pervasive anxiety concerning the difficulties of forging social bonds by creating the prospect of a sociable world. Although in different ways from Richardsonian novels, Sarah Fielding also explored this possibility.⁴⁴ In Familiar Letters, Sarah Fielding reacted to this kind of apprehension by distinguishing from the general public a community where mutual understanding is assured. Yet, as I pointed out, this solution itself involves an anxiety, that of solipsism. In her educational fiction, she allows herself the freedom to create a carefree community of small girls: within this sanctuary they are free from worldly burdens and any obstruction from the outside world. Moreover, they are malleable children with immeasurable potential. Thus she can imagine an ideal cultivating ground for future ideal adults. Here in this school she does not choose to construct relationships among the pupils by sentimental or emotional ties, but seeks to build sociability. The school is committed to cultivating communal values and the individual's social identity, not dominated by the preoccupations of private life.⁴⁵ I examine in this section how Sarah

⁴³ Deborah Weatley Downs-Miers points out that Sarah Fielding's works (especially Governess) are heuristic. Jenny Peace is a model 'in order to represent something, to give it meaning (hermeneutics), while we use the workings of the model (heuristics) to explain it ('Labyrinths of the Mind: A Study of Sarah Fielding', University of Missouri, Ph.D., 1975, pp. 49-50).

⁴⁴ John Mullan, Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

⁴⁵ Elizabeth Kraft, 'Public Nurturance and Private Civility: The

Fielding attempts to realize sociability and how far she shared her concept of education of sociability with other writers on education.

In the little female academy Mrs Teachum instructs 'in all proper Forms of Behaviour' or 'a perfect Gentility in their whole Carriage' as well as 'in Reading, Writing, Working'.⁴⁶ Although the author does not fail to comment that Mrs Teachum's 'principal Aim was to improve their Minds in all useful Knowledge', outer deportment (conduct, appearance, behaviour and carriage) is of great importance, because it is thought to be necessary to live well in a civilized society.⁴⁷ In short, the author expresses a secularized goal of a polite society. She focuses on the bridges between humans as social beings. In addition, these bridges take the form of manners in social gatherings rather than on emotional ties in privacy.

One of the most important aims of education focused in the mid-century writings was to bring up a polite accomplished woman.⁴⁸ Female accomplishments severely criticized by later eighteenth-century reformers may be seen in a different light when located within the context of the mid-eighteenth-century ideology of politeness. Although

Transposition of Values in Eighteenth-Century Fiction', Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture 22(1992): 181-93.

⁴⁶ Governess, pp, 1, 2.

⁴⁷ An extreme example of this tenet, including detailed rules, e.g. where to put your feet and hands when standing (illustration added), is found in The Polite Academy or School of Behaviour For Young Gentlemen and Ladies (London: R. Baldwin, 1762).

⁴⁸ Myers and others have shown how similar Hannah More and Mary Wollstonecraft were in their ideas about female education. As reformers, they painted the former age's education as frivolous and inferior. See Mitzi Myers, 'Reform or Ruin: A Revolution in Female Manners,' Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture 11(1982): 199-216; Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, Their Fathers' Daughters: Hannah More, Maria Edgeworth, and Patriarchal Complicity (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 18; Kathryn Sutherland, 'Hannah More's counter-revolutionary feminism', in Revolution in Writing: British Literary Responses to the French Revolution, ed. Kelvin Everest (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1991), 27-63.

accomplishments could serve as a key to admission to polite society, they did not simply imply a mean worldliness and superficial ornament; they were an important part of urbanized and polished society's requirements. One of the influential educational letters of Hester Chapone's (1727-1801) is allotted to explain the importance of politeness and accomplishments.⁴⁹ She makes much of deportment: 'I would not have my dear child neglect to pursue those graces and acquirements, which may set her virtue in the most advantageous light, adorn her manners, and enlarge her understanding' in order to render 'herself more useful and pleasing to her fellow creatures'.⁵⁰ Inner virtues and outer politeness and accomplishments are closely connected here.

In The Polite Lady (1760) by 'Portia', an absolute taken-for-granted aim of education is to learn genteel and polite accomplishments.⁵¹ To assume that something contributes to gentility and politeness spares any other justification and excuse. Here, what is appropriate and what is not is assessed by the standard of gentility and politeness. It is not that the author confines herself/himself to mere appearances but that the inner and outer qualities were closely connected: 'let me recommend you the study and practice of politeness or good manners, which hath such an immediate dependence upon good-nature, that it is no other than that virtue reduced into an art.'⁵² 'Portia' says that without good sense and good-nature, 'a lady be formal,

⁴⁹. Hester Chapone, Letters on the Improvement of the Mind: Addressed to a Lady (Boston: James B. Dow, 1834 [1773]), chap. VIII, 'On Politeness and Accomplishments'. The publication of this book is rather late to be regarded as a mid-century production, but Chapone, forty-six at the time of its publication, is representative of mid-century opinion.

⁵⁰. Chapone, Letters, p. 125.

⁵¹. Portia [Charles Allen], The Polite Lady; or, a Course of Female Education. In a Series of Letters, From a Mother to her Daughter 3rd ed. (London: T. Carnan and F. Newbery, Jr., 1775). The first edition was published by John Newbery in 1760.

⁵². The Polite Lady, pp. 270-71.

ceremonious, precise, or what you will, but she can never be truly polite.'⁵³ The advice 'Portia' gives is how to live in a society of people which is sometimes limited to the family or to a circle of friends, but may at other times be extended to larger social occasions. As women's activities are not thought to be confined to the domestic sphere, they need social skills.

Like 'Portia', Sarah Fielding's conception of education does not necessarily divide inner and outer improvement. She does not start with inner spiritual perfection. It is not that the inner and outer sides are not recognized or that she ignores the inner workings of the human mind. Both inner and outer improvement is an object of education. Like 'Portia', Sarah Fielding's emphasis is on how to live well in society. Her logic in education is that love and affection produce harmonious communities of people supported by gentility of deportment and that harmony returns to an individual as happiness and contentment. Sociability is the key: sociability makes for happy relationships between people and also contributes towards the happiness of an individual.

Together with the ideal of genteel politeness in human relations, friendship was so frequently discussed as to be an almost compulsory subject of early educational writings.⁵⁴ Advice on choosing a friend, what quality is to be sought for, can be found in many tracts. Friendship is regarded as a fundamental unit of larger society:

a State of Friendship and Amity is absolutely necessary to the well-being of Societies in general; and since all Communities are

⁵³. The Polite Lady, p. 271.

⁵⁴. See for example, George Savile, Marquis of Halifax, The Lady's New-year Gift: or, Advice to a Daughter (London: Randal Taylor, 1688), pp. 117-25; Advice to a Young Lord, Written by his Father (London: R. Baldwin, 1691), pp. 86-96; Wetenhall Wilkes, A Letter of Genteel and Moral Advice to a Young Lady (Dublin: for the Author, by E. Jones, 1740), pp. 87-96.

made up of several Particulars; It follows, that what constitutes the Happiness of the Whole, must be necessary to every Individual.⁵⁵

Friendship is highly praised: 'FRIENDSHIP, that social Source of human Joy, / .../ Friendship's exalted Charms with heav'nly Grace/ Grow in her Breast, and smile upon her Face.'⁵⁶

To inculcate the importance of friendship was a vital aim of education. Admitting there are few modern instances of true friendship, 'A Well-Wisher to her Sex' turns pessimism about friendship into an opportunity to urge the necessity of promoting it in education:

But this is more owing to Incapacity, than Ignorance of the Advantage of it.... And this Impediment can only be removed effectually, by those who are employed in the Education of our Female Youth.⁵⁷

Here, as her purpose is to prove women capable of friendship as well as men, the importance of friendship in female education is emphasized, but the writers of advice books for boys also paid much attention to friendship.

The qualities required in a friend are lengthily discussed in earlier educational tracts. Amongst these, discretion and confidentiality are particularly emphasized. The young must be careful in discerning in a possible friend 'Fidelity and Faithfulness; in regard

⁵⁵. Thoughts on Friendship By way of Essay; For the Use and Improvement of the Ladies. By a Well-Wisher to her Sex. (London: J. Roberts, 1725), p. 11.

⁵⁶. Advice to the Ladies. A Poem: with an Elegiac Complaint on the Death of Inimitable Alexander Pope Esq. By a Norfolk Gentleman (London: M. Cooper, 1745), p. 12.

⁵⁷. Thoughts on Friendship, p. 51.

of Secrets and Promises' for reasons that are explained in detail:

For, one of the great Ends of Friendship, being to divide Grief, and double Joy to each Party; therefore there must be a free unreserv'd communication of each other's affairs: In which, it is certain, there must be many Things necessarily conceal'd from the general Knowledge of the World. If therefore we have not well secur'd this Point, instead of friendly Advice and Assistance, equal to our many Exigencies, we shall fall unpitied, by numberless vexations and disappointments, a Victim to our own fond Credulity.⁵⁸

To share each other's secrets is thought to be one of the important privileges of friends. In 'Portia's' advice, secrecy is even included in the definition of a friend; 'what is a friend? It is one to whom we can unbosom ourselves without reserve; to whom we can impart all our secret thoughts, wishes and designs, without the least fear of being betrayed, or haveing them exposed to the view of the world.'⁵⁹ So, the betrayal of secrets is thought to be the greatest offence against the precious notion of friendship. Caution against too lavish confidence is often given: 'the violent Intimacies, when once broken, of which they scarce ever fail, make such a Noise, the Bag of Secrets untied, they fly about like Birds let loose from a Cage, and become the Entertainment of the Town.'⁶⁰ Friendship and its betrayal often provided a topic in instructive writings. Lamentation occasioned by the betrayal of an otherwise worthy friend is a subject of one of Elizabeth Rowe's fictional letters: 'I thought my self the happiest Person in the World, in finding

⁵⁸. Thoughts on Friendship, p. 39.

⁵⁹. The Polite Lady, p. 46.

⁶⁰. Savile, New-Year Gift, pp. 117-18.

a companion so instructive and agreeable' that 'I was not at rest till I had poured out all the Secrets of my Heart to her; which I did without Reserve' but finally 'I found the inmost Secrets of my Soul betrayed, by the Person in whom I had so intirely confided.'⁶¹

The girls in The Governess are also eager to pour out all their own weaknesses, not to a single confidential friend, but to all their schoolmates, to share stories of their past, as a token of having become friends. They make ties not by exclusive secrecy but by sharing their realization of their own faults with all members of the community. In Thoughts on Friendship 'A Well-Wisher to her Sex' supports the idea of friendship among more than two:

Most Writers confine this Union within the narrow bounds of two, or at most three. But I am of opinion, the necessity of thus contracting the Number, is more owing to the general corruption and depravity of Human Nature, than to any defect in the Essence of Friendship.⁶²

The advice given by 'Portia' also includes sociable relationships at school; 'Your next care [after the duty of obedience to the governess] must be to procure the love and esteem of your school-fellows'.⁶³ The attention of the early educational writers to friendship, especially among the young, is even more evident when compared with the lack of concern for such relationships in educational writings at the end of the eighteenth century as I show below.

There was a special friendship highlighted in educational

⁶¹. Letters Moral and Entertaining. In Prose and Verse By the Author of Friendship in Death, Part II (London: Tho. Warrall, 1734), pp. 73-5.

⁶². Thoughts on Friendship, p. 53.

⁶³. The Polite Lady, pp. 2-3.

writings. This is the relationship between a parent and a child, or a special instructor and a learner. 'A Well-Wisher to her Sex' is keen to justify women's capacity of friendship, laying emphasis on the social nature of human beings. Among the various arguments she presents in the essay, what she says of the mother's role is the most remarkable; it is the role of the most intimate and trustworthy friend. She points out a common harmful tendency: 'Most Mothers make Play-Things of their Children at that age, when they are fittest to receive Instruction and Correction'.⁶⁴ Young girls fall prey to flattery and false friendship 'if it be her unhappiness not to enjoy a free Conversation, and open Deportment with her Mother; at that Age when she may reasonably expect to be admitted into a Share of her Confidence and Familiarity'.⁶⁵ Just as Sarah Fielding's governess gradually reduces austerity and becomes friendly, this mother becomes a good friend once some foundation of education is laid:

Would Mothers once be convinced of the Importance of their Charge; and were they capable of performing their Duty in this Point as they ought, we should soon see the happy Effects of it. I will not say none would miscarry, who were well educated, but it is probable very few would; especially if the Work were begun, (as I before hinted) time enough: ... And when the succeeding Superstructure answers this good Foundation, what can be more reasonable, or natural, than for the happy Parent to lay aside the Austerity of a Governess, and admit her, whom she has amply qualified for it, into an entire Friendship and Familiarity with her?⁶⁶

⁶⁴. Thoughts on Friendship, p. 23.

⁶⁵. Thoughts on Friendship, p. 22.

⁶⁶. Thoughts on Friendship, p. 52.

Here the role of mothers is highlighted in the context of social relations between friends. This contrasts with the picture of the mother in later educational writings. The emphasis on the importance of the mother's role in education is one of the instruments employed often in the later writings to justify women's education, and thus to strengthen women's domestic rather than social role as mothers.⁶⁷

An ideal marriage was thought of in terms of a perfect friendship. The idea of domestic happiness is deduced from social happiness, rather than separately constructed in reliance on seclusion from the larger society. The reciprocal pleasure of communication is emphasized in friendship, the ultimate of which is defined as conjugal friendship. 'A Well-wisher to her Sex' writes: 'according to my distinct Notion of that State [marriage], I always thought a perfect Friendship fundamentally necessary to the Happiness of it.'⁶⁸ Another writer, Wetenhall Wilkes, brings social pleasures into the home; his idea of domestic happiness is that of condensed and perfected social delights:

what ever is delightful in human Life is to be enjoy'd in greater Perfection in the married Condition.

When two Persons, of good Education, honest Principles and improv'd Talents, are not only united in the same Interests and Affections but also in their Taste of Life, of the same Pleasures, Desires and Amusements -- then the Pleasures of domestic Life are known.

When things happen thus, Marriage has in it all the Delights of Friendship, all the Delicacies of Reason, all the Enjoyments of

⁶⁷. See for example, Spencer, "'Of Use to Her Daughter'"; Sutherland, 27-63.

⁶⁸. Thoughts on Friendship, p. 15.

Sense and all the sweets of Life...⁶⁹

Chapone advises her niece to establish the intimacy of husband and wife on the basis of a friendly master-pupil relationship with her husband; 'If you can prevail upon him to read with you, to practise music with you, or to teach you a language or a science, you will then find amusement for every hour; and nothing is more endearing than such communications.'⁷⁰ Her companionship is founded on the delight both the husband and the wife can find in sharing time for improvement. The husband is defined as a master and the wife, his pupil, and there is a hierarchical structure. However, the notion of fellowship prevails between this master and his pupil and the ideas of instruction and companionship are closely connected. The instruction is expected to produce mutual pleasure and happiness rather than duty and obligation. Thus social duties and codes are applied to domestic relationships, marital or educational; those codes practised in equal relationship between people provided a basic pattern.

IV. The Polite and Friendly Author

Not only did educational writers talk about friendship in their advice, but also they posed as a friend. In educational writings before the end of the eighteenth century, authors as instructors of the reader assumed a position of friends, not absolute rulers. They presume the same non-authoritative relationship toward the readers as that between the instructor and the students within the work.

⁶⁹. Wilkes, A Letter, pp. 112-13.

⁷⁰. Hester Chapone, A Letter to a New-Married Lady (London: John Sharpe, 1822.[1777]), p. 114.

Educational writings were often written for an author's child or a younger relative. Hester Chapone writes as 'one of your warmest friends' to her niece.⁷¹ The advice of the Marchioness de Lambert (1647-1733) translated in 1729 reads: 'These are not dry lectures, that carry the air of a mother's authority; they are the advice of a friend, and have this merit, that they come from the Heart'; The Polite Reasoner quotes this passage so as to show the propriety of her attitude.⁷² Advice from a parent is not authoritative, but treats a child as a potential equal who is improving. Authors of advice books plead for the attention of the learners rather than commanding their obedience. They also justify their attempt to write on the basis of their benevolent intentions towards the readers, rather than from motives of self-interest: an author asks his niece to esteem the advice 'as a Token of my tenderest Regard for you' 'from a Friend, whose tenderness endeavour'd to make you perfect...', and a father writes to his daughter that 'Some inward resistance there will be, where Power and not Choice maketh us move; but where a Father layeth aside his Authority, and persuadeth only by his Kindness, you will never answer to Good Nature, if it hath not weight with you.'⁷³ A father justifies his enterprise of writing a book of advice by asserting that it is only in order 'to shew you how tender I am of, and what concern I take in your welfare, has been the occasion, and reason which moved me to give you my particular Advice in these several Subjects.'⁷⁴ Another father explains his intention to be serviceable to his child as follows:

⁷¹. Chapone, Letters, p. 13.

⁷². Advice from a Mother to her Son and Daughter (London: Tho. Worrall, 1729), p.3; The Polite Reasoner: in Letters Addressed to a young Lady, at a Boarding School in Hoddesdon, Hartfordshire (London: W. Bent, 1787), p. 13.

⁷³. Wilkes, A Letter, p. 14; Savile, New-year Gift, p. 4.

⁷⁴. Advice to a Young Lord, pp. 9-10.

My great Affection to you and Concern for you, moved and engaged me to write what occurred to my thoughts, as proper for you and useful to you. It is not enough for a Parent to see his Child instructed in the Foundation of useful Learning; but it is highly becoming the Relation, that he provide a proper Impulse and Direction in his Way to true Happiness.⁷⁵

The same father continues that 'It is enough for me that my Ideas are convey'd in such a Manner as to be receiv'd and understood by you' for 'it is your Comfort and Happiness that I intend'.⁷⁶ To display the purpose of friendly kindness and consideration for the reader serves as a device to give a parent a good reason to write and also publish. Publishing educational writings served as an opportunity for a person to show how tender, virtuous, and considerate he or she was. By assuming an eager affectionate interest in the reader's happiness, the advisers could establish themselves as authors; they could do so without presenting their qualifications as instructors and also preclude the criticism that they were primarily seeking fame.

In this genre of benevolently motivated advice, persuasion appealing to the reason of the learners was more important than austere instruction. Advice is not given peremptorily from above, but the authors offer assistance to their pupils to initiate their own procedures of thinking. They try to encourage reasonable thinking, sometimes by showing in detail how to think in an appropriate way and sometimes by emphasizing flatteringly the reader's capacity to think reasonably by

⁷⁵. Father's Advice to His Son: Laying down many things which have a Tendency to direct and fix the Mind in Matters of the great Importance (London: for the Author, by J. Roberts, 1736), iii.

⁷⁶. Father's Advice to His Son, iii, iv.

themselves.⁷⁷ An educational writer asserts that 'I should avoid a dogmatical and positive Air, and would rather chuse to lead his Reason, by assisting him to form his Conceptions of the Nature of God and Man, and the several Duties of Life.'⁷⁸ An educational tract of the mid-century maintains clearly the importance of recognizing children's potential for reasonable thinking and helping to develop it:

The true way of dealing with children is to reason with them; they love to be treated as reasonable creatures, and the sooner you treat them as men, the sooner they will become such. It is use and exercise that makes us reasonable creatures; nature gives us but the seeds of it.⁷⁹

'Portia' also emphasises the dependence of instruction on the child's reason: 'As you are a reasonable creature, I have always treated you as such'.⁸⁰

Sarah Fielding adopts a similar stance in regarding both the girls in the fiction and the actual readers of the book as reasonable autonomous persons. She provides guidelines but does not prescribe what to do and what not to do. For instance, she relies on the reader's discretion and common sense when she incorporates fairy tales in her narrative as

⁷⁷. For example, Wilkes's persuasion of 'evidences of the Divine Existence' (A Letter, pp. 19-28), and 'a well-wisher to her sex's vindication of women's capacity of friendship in Thoughts on Friendship.

⁷⁸. Of Education (London: Tho. Wotton, 1734), p. 25.

⁷⁹. Education of Children and Young Students 2nd edn (London: J. Waugh, 1752), p. 8. The author refers to Sarah Fielding's Governess in a note: 'It is an elegant observation of the polite author of the Governess, That a Head, like a house, when cramm'd too full, and no regular order observ'd in the placing what is there, is only litter'd instead of being furnish'd.' (p. 16) See Sarah Fielding's story of two daughters of Mr. Thomas Watkins in her preface. (xi-xiii).

⁸⁰. The Polite Lady, p. 225.

described above. It is not that she unreservedly approves of works of fantasy and imagination. But she adds a cautionary statement, preparing for an expected attack against fairy tales. This caution is supported by her trust in a student's ability to use her own reason and judgment. Having been given advice by the governess, Jenny Peace tells the other pupils to 'consider the Moral of the Story', with a warning not to 'let the Notion of Giants or Magic to dwell upon your Minds.'⁸¹ She explains what a Giant and a magic fillet stand for, in order to let every girl reap a useful lesson from reading.⁸² Mrs Teachum's attention is to what lesson and moral the students draw from reading by thinking on their own rather than what books they ought to be given.

Belief in the reader's responsibility for judgment allows the author to leave matters undecided. She avoids making her own comments in controversial areas, but leaves them to the reader's discretion. For example, she does not prescribe any particular subject to be learned. The description in The Governess is concentrated on the activities outside the curriculum. The absence of a school curriculum is in some ways disappointing, for we tend to expect in educational writings the author's ideas about, say, classical learning for girls, all the more so as Sarah Fielding herself was versed in the classics. The visits of the writing master and the dancing master are mentioned, so we know they learn writing and dancing besides those subjects which Mrs Teachum herself teaches. But the author does not let the reader visit the girls during class. This is because of her idea that what girls should learn in classes is to be decided by readers and actual teachers. Where she anticipates different opinions, she is very cautious. Religious matters are represented as little as possible. The morning prayer and going to church on Sunday are mentioned, but nothing is said about any

⁸¹. Governess, pp. 72, 73.

⁸². Governess, p. 73.

particular religious doctrine. Instead, Sarah Fielding's concern is with the construction of sociable relationships among the students and between the governess and students. Thus she attempts to manage to mediate differences by focusing on the importance of the skill of mediation between people in the text as well as reserving judgment to the province of the reader. To suspend judgement in search of harmonious coexistence was Sarah Fielding's strategy. And this attitude was also following the tradition of 'Advice' books.

Leaving consideration of the curriculum to the readers and actual teachers was not uncommon in educational writings before Sarah Fielding, especially in 'Advice' books written by parents. A father tells his son that 'I shall be more brief and compendious, because I have wholly as to this Affair [Study] committed you to the Conduct of your Tutor'.⁸³ It might be natural that a parent who was not in charge of the education of his child paid respect to a tutor and was not assertive in the tutor's sphere. But tutors themselves could be cautious in making such recommendations in print: 'it might be thought assuming in a private Tutor to make his Directions publick, as if he affected to prescribe to other young Scholars, who might better be left to take Directions from their proper Tutors.'⁸⁴

Richardson challenged Sarah Fielding's silence concerning a particular kind of punishment that Mrs Teachum inflicts on the girls after the fight over a large apple.⁸⁵ Jane Collier wrote to him in defence

⁸³. Advice to a Young Lord, p. 25.

⁸⁴. Advice to a Young Student with a Method of Study for the Four First Years (London: John Crownfield, 1730), Advertisement by the Author.

⁸⁵. Governess was 'Printed for the Author' and 'Sold by A. Miller' in the imprint, being printed by Richardson; see Eaves and Kimpel, Samuel Richardson, p. 202. The publication of Governess was delayed by Richardson's request for certain changes as Ursula Fielding mentions in her letter to Mrs John Barker. She explains: 'Mrs. Teachum would have waited on you, but she cannot get her cloaths from her mantua-maker. You understand me; a word to the wise', referring to the objection

of Sarah Fielding's choice; conscious of controversy over education, Sarah Fielding chooses a marketing tactic to offend no one and satisfy as many readers as possible. Sarah Fielding in other types of writing insists that the reader should grasp the author's intention and avoid interpreting as he or she pleases, but here she attempts to take advantage of the silence about the punishment and let the reader decide. She tries not to encroach on actual teachers' sphere of practice. The convenience of all possible readers is taken into consideration: young readers as well as instructors, pros and cons for corporal punishment. Jane Collier adds that Sarah Fielding is against corporal punishment like Richardson, but that not to claim such a partiality is a strategy:

I have been farther considering of that part in Mrs. Fielding's proof, which relates to Mrs. Teachum's method of punishing her scholars; and give me leave to tell you my reasons for thinking it rather better to remain as she has left it, than to have it altered even as you proposed.

As this book is not so much designed as a direction to governesses for their management of their scholars (though many a sly hint for that is to be found, if attended to) as for girls how to behave to each other, and to their teachers, it is, I think, rather better that the girls (her readers) should not know what this punishment was that Mrs. Teachum inflicts; but they should each, on reading it, think it to be the same that they themselves had suffered when they deserved it; for though Miss Fielding (as well as yourself) is an enemy to corporeal severities, yet there is no occasion that she should teach the children so punished that their punishment is wrong; for it is the governors only that should be taught that lesson, and this may be done in her Book upon Education; and this

of Richardson, the printer of the book (Battestin and Probyn, p. 182).

is my reason for leaving it as it is with regard to her little readers.

And now, as to her elder readers, I have this reason, which chiefly indeed regards this future Book upon Education.

You know that people are very much divided in their opinions concerning the punishment of children, and in this, as in most other things, they are pretty positive; so that, as soon as it is seen, by this small hint, that Miss Fielding is against corporeal severities, all the party of the 'Thwackums' (as Mr. Fielding calls them) will say at once, that they are sure her notions of education cannot be worth reading, as she already shewn herself an enemy to what they call proper discipline; and so she will lose the very chance of a fair reading from one half of those that read; whereas if she leaves this place as it is, all those aforesaid Thwackums' will say, upon seeing the words, severe punishments etc. 'Aye, this Book upon Education will be worth reading, for I find the lady has a just notion of severities;' which they, of course, will suppose to be bodily; and, when they come to find the contrary set forth in this future Book on Education, as the reasons for it will be there set forth, they may happen to be convinced.

And now, as to the other party, they will easily infer, that as no whipping is mentioned, no whipping is implied, and therefore they also are engaged in favour of this other book.

You see how I have run on as usual upon this thing; but I trust that you will do just what you like best; for Mrs. Fielding desired you would determine upon it; and if you would still have it altered, then be so kind as to put in what you would have, and Miss Fielding will be perfectly satisfied with it, and I am sure I can answer

for myself, that I shall know that you must be in the right.'⁸⁶

Sarah Fielding left the decision to Richardson and he did not alter the text. Jane Collier mentions Sarah Fielding's prospective book on education where she is expected to offer a clear attitude, but in the event she did not offer such a book to the public.

A similar cautious strategy, aware of various contending requirements and expectations of the market of the readers, is employed in establishing Mrs Teachum as a school mistress. Sarah Fielding carefully indicates that Mrs Teachum is a gentlewoman who was married to a sensible clergyman whose special cares before he died were to improve his wife and to discuss with her the education of their children. Mrs Teachum lost her children as well as her husband. Prompted by the ardent advice of her friends, she opened a school. Thus she is presented as a convincingly well-trained teaching mother who has turned her advantages into a useful occupation.⁸⁷ It was by the instruction of her husband that she learned to undertake the task of education. In this way she is supported by her husband's credit, clerical as well as patriarchal. When he was dying, he expressed satisfaction in that his wife was to fully assume the role of an educator of their children. Next, the roles of a mother in a family and a public occupation as a school mistress are calculated not to collide. Aware of a certain kind of criticism directed against female instructors, the author thus tries to secure 'the very chance of a fair reading' without compromising her scheme of a book on a female academy.

Suppression of partiality is carefully based on speculation about possible readers. The Governess is adjusted for the use of adult

⁸⁶ A letter from Jane Collier to Richardson dated Oct. 4, 1748 (Barbauld, II, pp. 61-5).

⁸⁷ Governess, pp. 2-4.

instructors as well as younger learners, of 'Thwackums' as well as anti-'Thwackums'. This suppression derives, as is clearly stated in Jane Collier's letter, from a writerly strategy to reach a wider audience rather than from 'feminine' or any other modesty. The polite and friendly pose of the author also invites readers to read the text. The text can serve as a common meeting ground among people of otherwise different opinions and different situations. Just as she emphasises the fabrication of social relations within the text, Sarah Fielding deploys a tactic, similar to a social skill, of mediating between people.

V. Another Governess

Towards the end of the eighteenth century there was a growing tendency for writers on education to be selective, opinionated, and controlling. Sarah Trimmer, a formidable educationalist active at the end of the eighteenth century, remembered Sarah Fielding's Governess 'as the delight of our childish days', together with nursery room classics, such as Mother Goose's Fairy Tales and Esop (and Gay)'s Fables. However, she came to believe that such amusing reading materials were not suitable for educational purpose: 'They were merely calculated to entertain the imagination, rather than to improve the heart, or cultivate the understanding.'⁸⁸ For some educational writers after the end of the eighteenth century Sarah Fielding's Governess was no longer an appropriate choice.

Indeed one such educationalist, Mary Martha Sherwood, rewrote

⁸⁸. Quoted in Darton, Children's Books in England, p. 96; see also Townsend, p. 29. Trimmer also once wrote that 'when such Works as this cease to be admired and approved, we may regard it as a certain sign, that good morals and simplicity of manners, are banished from the system of English Education, to make room for false Philosophy and artificial refinement' (The Guardian of Education... [London: j. Hatchard, 1802], p. 137).

it.⁸⁹ She indicates both its popularity among the older generation and its deficiency as seen from the viewpoint of an early nineteenth-century instructor. She writes in the introduction to her own version that The Governess by Sarah Fielding is attractive for its nostalgic interest since it depicts a picture of the education of her grandmothers and great-grandmothers as it was their favourite.⁹⁰ Her parent encouraged her to revise it. Once she began to peruse it for revision, she realized that she could not accept its educational ideas and found it 'necessary to make more alterations'. Hence burying the original Governess as a relic belonging to the past, Sherwood virtually abandoned the original. She merely follows the framework of the school story and the names of the children, and produced virtually another work, or a 'bowdlerized version'.⁹¹ She did to Sarah Fielding's The Governess, a fairly popular work, what Hannah More did to popular chapbooks; by intentionally imitating popular forms, they attempted to suppress them, replacing them with their own creation.⁹²

The major alterations of Sherwood take the form of the exclusion of what she calls 'fanciful productions', fable, fairy tales, and a play. Instead, Sherwood infuses Christian doctrine into the text, quoting repeatedly from the Bible, and always emphasizes the need of 'great gratitude to God' and the need to recognize 'the blessing of God'.⁹³ In

⁸⁹ The Governess; or, the Little Female Academy. By Mrs. Sherwood, Author of 'Little Henry and his Bearer,' etc.etc. (London: Printed by and for F. Houlston and Son, 1820). Sherwood deleted the latter part of Sarah Fielding's title, which reads: With Their Nine Days Amusement. Calculated for the Entertainment and Instruction of Young Ladies in their Education.

⁹⁰ Sherwood, Governess, iii.

⁹¹ The Oxford Companion, p. 216.

⁹² Susan Pedersen, 'Hannah More meets Simple Simon: Tracts, Chapbooks, and Popular Culture in Late Eighteenth-Century England' Journal of British Studies 25(1986): 84-113.

⁹³ Everything good is used to remind the reader of 'the blessing of God'

so doing, Mr Teachum's sensible instruction of his wife becomes in her version the instruction of 'a truly pious man', Mrs Teachum's being a prudent mother changes to a pious mother, and even Mrs Teachum's Christian fortitude in overcoming sorrow is replaced with the blessing of God. The merits of the individual characters are changed into the blessings of God and the effect of human efforts is minimized.

The attention to sociability and gentility is abandoned. Sherwood lays aside the emphasis on the behaviour and the achievement of companionship between the students; she omits the paragraph where Sarah Fielding gave an idea of the aim of Mrs Teachum's instruction. Accordingly Sherwood suppresses Mrs Teachum's intention to encourage the students to be 'gentle, kind, and affectionate to each other' and to acquire 'a perfect Gentility in their whole Carriage'.⁹⁴ When politeness is mentioned in Sherwood, this is 'one of the beautiful influences of the Holy Spirit', not a civil human's virtue.⁹⁵

The role of the governess is fortified. Sarah Fielding's Jenny Peace was the person who brought about the girls' reconciliation by persuading them to consider rationally. Jenny played a pivotal role. In Sherwood, Jenny also makes an effort, but what affects them is Mrs Teachum's preaching about human depravity, corrupt nature, and the

and the affray gives an opportunity for sermonizing. Sherwood, leaving the description of the pupils in the middle of the affray, introduces an explanation of the corrupt nature of human beings, remarking that 'Perhaps some of you, ... who peruse this little book, may not have ever heard the subject of human depravity familiarly explained' (Sherwood, *Governess*, pp. 10-12).

⁹⁴. *Governess*, p. 2.

⁹⁵. 'And here we behold one of the beautiful influences of the Holy Spirit in the advancement of true politeness, which does not consist (as worldly persons will have it) in attention to certain forms and arbitrary customs, established and overthrown according to the caprice of fashion, but in the observance of that divine precept, In honour preferring one another. (Rom. xii. 10)' (Sherwood, *Governess*, p. 28).

sinfulness of their conduct.⁹⁶ Mrs Teachum's explication of Christian doctrine occupies many pages and the girls ask their governess to pardon 'their grievous offence', which did not occur in Sarah Fielding's original version.⁹⁷ The focus of the book's attention has transferred from the fabrication of equal relationships between the pupils to the authoritative role of the instructor.

Sherwood despotically abandons Sarah Fielding's stories, or what she calls 'fanciful production'. Sarah Fielding introduces several stories which are read or told to the pupils. Sherwood excludes all these and introduces her own narratives.⁹⁸ She explains her reasons for the changes: 'Several Fairy-tales were incidentally introduced into the original work...But since fanciful production of this sort can never be rendered generally useful, it has been thought proper to suppress' them. In place of these undesirable works she gives 'such appropriate relations as seemed more likely to conduce to juvenile edification.'⁹⁹ She claims she admits one tale of the 'fanciful' kind. However, even this is not selected from Sarah Fielding's stories but is her own creation. Moreover, it is only in order to demonstrate the opposition to the genre that she introduces a fairy tale. Her Mrs Teachum regards fairy tales as 'trifles' and preaches that there are 'better things' to be taught, that is, in her opinion, 'the depravity of human nature, the need of a Saviour, and many other important truths taught in Scripture.' She explains why she opposes fairy tales. Basically believing that it is

⁹⁶. 'Miss Jenny Peace, who had so greatly assisted, with God's blessing, in restoring peace to the little community...' (Sherwood, Governess, p. 26).

⁹⁷. Sherwood, Governess, pp. 15-7.

⁹⁸. Sherwood's new stories are: 'The History of the Princess Rosalinda', 'The History of Albert de la Hauteville', 'The History of Miss Fanny, or, the hard-hearted little Girl', an account of a young lady, and 'The History of the Lady Faulconbridge and her children'.

⁹⁹. Sherwood, Governess, iv.

the ultimate task of education 'to introduce Christian principles as motives of action', she thinks it is obvious that fairy tales are not a proper method to fulfil that task:

although... instruction when conveyed through the medium of some beautiful story or pleasant tale, more easily insinuates itself into the youthful mind than any thing of a drier nature; yet the greatest care is necessary that the kind of instruction thus conveyed should be perfectly agreeable to the Christian dispensation. Fairy tales therefore are in general an improper medium of instruction, because it would be absurd in such tales to introduce Christian principles as motives of action... Children... should be perpetually reminded of this important truth, that no human being can so much as think a good thought without divine help: all stories therefore in which persons are described as acting well without this help have a most exceedingly evil tendency.¹⁰⁰

As the course of her argument suggests, she not only eliminates fairy tales from education, but also she suppresses the belief in autonomous secular human effort and reason by connecting them with an 'evil tendency' of impiety.

Sarah Fielding's Mrs Teachum does not forbid fairy tales, while Sherwood's virtually does. In Sherwood's version, what the children read should be chosen and supplied by the governess. Sherwood's Mrs Teachum tells Jenny Peace to apply to her when reading, in order to furnish the pupils with 'a story of a superior tendency to the common run of amusing tales.'¹⁰¹ It is thought to be impious, even evil, to encourage

¹⁰⁰. Sherwood, *Governess*, pp. 87-88.

¹⁰¹. Sherwood, *Governess*, pp. 88-89.

the students to think and act on their own. Here Mrs Teachum has become a selective, judgmental, dominant, overwhelming, and commanding director. In this way a new version of The Governess constructs a new relationship between the instructor and the students.

The belief in human capacities is replaced by religious discipline. The principle of amusement and instruction -- amusement by the coating of imaginative ornament and instruction learned by the working of the learner's own reason -- is thought to be only amusement because the students' reasoning power is not made much of. In proportion with the increase of the emphasis on religion, the role of the instructor who teaches religion is expanded and strengthened. As shown in Sherwood's introduction to the text, the author's assumed role is also commanding, determining what is appropriate and what is not. In addition, the text of the Scripture is scattered throughout the book and supports the authority of the instruction given by the author.

This revision of Sarah Fielding's Governess was undertaken partly because of Sherwood's personal taste and principles, and partly because of the changes in the overall trend of educational literature. As mentioned above, between the appearances of the two versions of The Governess, there was an important new wave of educational writings. Political and social changes, especially the need to control the education of the poor, helped to bring about this upsurge in the emphasis on the hierarchical structure in education and on the importance of the dominant role of the instructor and pupils' obedience. Women writers' consciousness as religious moral reformers who admonish and correct the commonality was part of this structural change from a stress on relationships based on mutuality to those based on hierarchy. In this rise of the religious educators, the contents of education and the methods they took to try to realize education also changed.

Hannah More deplores the dominance of the epithet 'pleasant' as a commendation, which, she thinks, replaced all the various expressions

of excellence. She implies that the art of pleasing, which the previous generation cultivated assiduously to establish a smooth relationship with others, is a superficial frivolous pursuit. She seeks for inner moral superiority based on religion, and takes little heed of establishing an easy relationship between people. In Hannah More, and Mary Wollstonecraft as well, criticism of accomplishments is intermingled with a wider social concern, including class considerations and the ethics of industry; zeal to learn accomplishments is thought to be an infection the originally industrious middle class should avoid catching from the idle aristocracy. In contrast, as seen above, Sarah Fielding's writings emphasize the importance of conversation, the reciprocal exchange of ideas, among people of an equal standing. In The Governess, this emphasis is evident in her choice of focusing on the relationships between the pupils rather than between the instructor and the pupil.

Although they do not fail to be religious (adding that religion is the most important principle), mid-century writers make much more of self-reliance and self-training. Like Sarah Fielding, Hester Chapone insists on the importance of firmness of mind and believes in the power of that firmness of human effort: 'you must inform your understanding what you ought to believe and to do.--You must correct and purify your heart...You must form and govern your temper and manners'.¹⁰² Attention is centred on the self of the student who is expected to act for herself. She also insists on the potential autonomy of each person: 'The great laws of morality are indeed written in our hearts, and may be discovered by reason'.¹⁰³ In other words, she emphasizes an active working of the subjective self which can make positive use of reason. Sarah Trimmer found Chapone's directions 'defective, as they do not tend to establish

¹⁰². Chapone, Letters, p. 16.

¹⁰³. Chapone, Letters, p. 21.

the young lady's Faith upon decided and steady principles'.¹⁰⁴ Trust in oneself and one's reason was receding among influential educational writers and absolute dependence upon religious instruction was taking its place.

In later eighteenth-century writings, the focus is on absolute instruction from above, not on the fabrication of people's social intercourse. The student is isolated and has only a vertical relationship with the instructor. Even when there is more than one student, their mutual relationship does not shape a leading theme. For example, Tea-Table Dialogues (1796), the title of which naturally leads the reader to expect to encounter the dialogue form, is not interested in conversation and friendship among the students. One student is picked up in turn to converse with an instructor.¹⁰⁵ Likewise, Mary Wollstonecraft's Original Stories From Real Life is only concerned with the instruction the governess gives to each of the girls. The governess dominates the scenes and the relationship between the two girls is not mentioned. Even after the two girls quarrel and kill a bird they both wanted, reconciliation between the girls is not represented in the text.¹⁰⁶

Sarah Fielding's interest in equal relationships shows in her emphasis on accessibility to the level of the instructor or an ideal, too. An ideal, virtuous, leading student in Sarah Fielding's academy,

¹⁰⁴. The Guardian of Education, p. 330. At the time of publication in 1773, according to John Mulso, '[t]he critical Reviewers have confined their Plaudit chiefly to ye religious Turn of the book...' Sylvia Harcstark Myers, The Bluestocking Circle: Women, Friendship, and the Life of the Mind in Eighteenth-Century England (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 231.

¹⁰⁵. Tea-Table Dialogues Between a Governess, and Mary Sensible, Eliza Thoughtful, Jane Bloom, Ann Hopeful, Dinah Sterling, Lucy Lively, and Emma Tempest (London: Darton and Harvey, 1796).

¹⁰⁶. Original Stories from Real Life (London: Henry Frowde, 1906), pp. 14-5.

Miss Jenny Peace, is shown to represent a reachable goal. She is the only one that is not included in the squabble over the apple. Reconciling all the pupils after the fighting, Jenny wins respect and affection from all. The smallest girl, Polly Suckling, most ardently asks for the story of Jenny's past, for Polly wants to know what Jenny was like when as young as herself. Polly is relieved to discover that even Jenny had defects in the past. Jenny's story is told to show that when a little girl she quarrelled with her brother 'about something as trifling as your Apple of Contention'.¹⁰⁷ Thus she confirms that she was like those who participated in the row; as the product of improvement anybody has a certain potential to become like her. Even Polly, the youngest of the pupils, can hope to follow Jenny's course towards perfection. And indeed, the girls do show improvement. A tale read shortly after their reconciliation provided only an occasion to make irrelevant comments. But when a second fairy tale is read, the girls show better behaviour in 'their manner of talking to each other'. To see this improvement fills Jenny's 'whole Mind with the most sincere Pleasure'.¹⁰⁸ At another time when Jenny reads a play, she is 'greatly pleased to find such a Sympathy between her Companions and herself; for they were most of them affected just in the same manner and with the same Parts of the Play, as had before affected her.' Jenny sets a good example and she feels very happy to find the other girls have begun to think and act in the same way. Thus a good example impresses the girls that they are the same, fellow-creatures. Mrs Teachum, too, as shown above, increases affectionate closeness to the girls. The instructors show willingness to welcome the pupil to be equal as they teach.

Before the activities of 'Sunday School Moralists' at the end of the eighteenth century, the writers of educational writings posed

¹⁰⁷. Governess, p. 28.

¹⁰⁸. Governess, p. 178.

as fellow-creatures, advisers, and they were more interested in relationships on the same level, namely friendship, than in authoritative hierarchical ones. They knew they were experienced and able to give advice, and in that sense presented themselves as superior to the addressed, but the gap between them was intended to narrow as their students made progress and can make themselves equal to the instructor, as Mrs Teachum's change in her attitude shows.

It has been pointed out that the Cheap Repository Tracts was Hannah More's deliberate assault on popular culture cultivated in the tradition of the chapbooks.¹⁰⁹ Her intention was to challenge the autonomy of popular culture by providing what she thinks moral superiority. She teaches the readers the goodness of grateful submission in their social status and assumes the indisputable superiority of the material she provides. The moral reformation which she promotes is intended to embrace people of lower social ranks, thus to make a world of universal values. On the other hand, it also helps to make the gap between the elite and the others very clear. The same elitist attitude is adopted even when More writes for ladies of rank and fortune. Her self-definition when she writes is as highly authoritative whether she is writing for the poor or for the upper class. She makes an effort in almost every aspect to remind the majority of them of the necessity of humble modesty in response to a superior writer.

The way Hannah More perceives the difference between serious reading and reading for light amusement throws light on her construction of the writer/instructor and the reader/pupil. For contrast, remarks by Wetenhall Wilkes among mid-century writers are helpful. He persuades women to read 'learn'd and eloquent Authors', and 'to set them before

¹⁰⁹. Pedersen, 84-113.

you as Patterns for your daily Imitation'.¹¹⁰ Giving a caution that it is different from lengthy 'Oratory and Copiousness of Expression', he asks women to imitate true eloquence from excellent models. Hannah More also recommends serious study of serious authors.¹¹¹ She mentions its merit of preparing the mind 'to brace intellectual stamina', but more eagerly she exhorts other benefits.¹¹² She recommends serious study, not for the purpose of, as she says, making 'scholastic ladies or female dialecticians', but in order to know the littleness of one's intellectual power in comparison with the great integrity of the serious authors, to know the gap between the author and the reader. Her hostility towards the popular novel is also expressed in a similar course of argument. She does not follow the position of most contemporary moralists; usually opposition to the novel was based on its propensity to encourage too much imagination. She is against the novel because what the novelists give to their readers lets them form an idea that they, too, can become authors, because the composition of the novel does not seem to require any special qualification.¹¹³ In her words, 'writing a book seems to be now considered as the only sure resource which the idle and the illiterate have always in their power.'¹¹⁴ Thus in her opinion, serious reading is beneficial for it does not make a female scholar nor a lady author.

According to More, the reader should feel that the author is

¹¹⁰. Wilkes, A Letter, p. 102.

¹¹¹. She recommends 'such strong meat, as Watt's or Duncan's little book of Logic, some parts of Mr. Locke's Essay on Human Understanding, and Bishop Butler's Analogy.' (Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education with a View of the Principles and Conduct Prevalent Among Women of Rank and Fortune [London: T.Cadell Jun. and W. Davies, 1799], I. p. 164).

¹¹². More, Strictures, I, p. 165.

¹¹³. More, Strictures, I, p. 169.

¹¹⁴. More, Strictures, I, p. 172.

beyond her reach; good books are those which establish a great distance between the author and the reader. In a similar way in the case of the instructor and the student she requires the construction of distinctions based upon intellectual difference. Her writings for the poor and uneducated relentlessly impress the necessity of their being conscious of their low status. Even ladies of high social status and fortune are supposed to follow her instructions as readers/students.

Another assumption underlying the creation of a remote and superior instructor is the notion of children being categorically different from the instructor. Hannah More attributes one of the causes of the defects of education to a fundamental error in the idea of children as innocent creatures. She reminds the reader of 'the corruption of our nature' and justifies severity as a necessary means of suppressing the evil effects of the corrupted nature.¹¹⁵ For the students' part, they should be accustomed to restraint as they are 'led to distrust their own judgement'.¹¹⁶ Instead of following their own judgement, the students should obey the absolute command of the superior instructor. An assumption here is the natural inferiority of the students and the infallible righteousness of the instructor. Hannah More thinks the knowledge of the human heart is necessary in order to detect and control the natural sinfulness of those to be controlled, while the writers of the mid-eighteenth century made much of the knowledge of the human heart for the sake of knowledge itself.¹¹⁷

In these educational writings, the relationship between the instructor and the students within the work squares with the construction of the author's position toward the reader. Before the end of the

¹¹⁵. More, Strictures, I, p. 57.

¹¹⁶. More, Strictures, I, p. 142; she also adds that 'They must even endure to be thought wrong sometimes, when they cannot but feel they are right' (More, Strictures, I, p. 143).

¹¹⁷. More, Strictures, I, pp. 57-8.

eighteenth century, within the work much interest is shown in conversation and sociable relationship between friends, and in the process of establishing themselves as authors / instructors, educational writers were inclined to represent themselves as friends. Sarah Fielding was one of them. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, within the work the authors emphasised the need to acknowledge human inferiority together with the need to be passive, and toward the reader they assumed a greater authority which was supposed to be the natural property of the author. The change in the teaching structures within the text is intertwined with the manner in which the authors send their messages to the readers and thus with the construction of authority.

Grey contrasts Sarah Fielding's little female academy with the grim nineteenth-century school, focusing on gentility and the kindly atmosphere Sarah Fielding created. Thinking that education progressed from coarseness to gentle and sophisticated modernity, she attributes Sarah Fielding's stance to her educational foresight. The progress of children's literature from 'instruction to delight' seems to have reversed during the eighteenth century. We can find here a 'progressive' attitude in Sarah Fielding. However, it is not only Sarah Fielding's personal foresight that created such an atmosphere. She takes up an issue of the moral philosophy of her time, 'sociability', in her academy. If she did something new, it is not that she anticipated a later age's criticism against the severity of the Victorian school. But her achievement is that she applied the art of coexistence and harmony to the children's world and to her own writerly attitude, borrowing from thought concerning human sociability in general. In this sense, Sarah Fielding creates a miniature adults' world where the concern of the adults' world is applied for the sake of contemplation of the problem in an advantageous condition totally under control of the author. Importantly, she opened a field where a moral writer, especially a female author, can express herself fairly freely for the

benefit of such control. Although her application of this freedom was different from Sherwood's, both made the best use of it in their own ways. The apparent 'foresight' in Sarah Fielding's construction of the children's world is a kind of expression of Enlightenment optimism towards children, human ability, and the possibility of sociability. Moreover, the seeming modest reserve was, from another viewpoint, an effect of positive calculation: seeking acceptance from various contending parties and simultaneously the desiring to establish oneself as an author who appeals to a wider readership.

Chapter Five

Sarah Fielding and Classical Learning

I. Introduction

1) Translation as an Enterprise

The growth of translation of the classics was a remarkable phenomenon in the eighteenth century.¹ It had begun toward the end of the seventeenth century, following its popularity in France.² The eighteenth-century emphasis on the didactic function of literature and rhetoric allowed translation to gain 'gradual respectability'.³ Its favourable acceptance is illustrated by the two remarkable successes of Pope in poetry and Elizabeth Carter in prose. John Clarke (1687-1734)

¹ Lewis William Brüggemann provides an extensive list of translations in A View of the English Editions, Translations and Illustrations of the Ancient Greek and Latin Authors (Stettin: by I. S. Leich, 1797). For readership of the classics, see Penelope Wilson, 'Classical poetry and the Eighteenth-Century Reader', in Books and Their Readers in Eighteenth-Century England ed. Isabel Rivers (Leicester University Press, 1982), pp. 79-82; James William Johnson, 'The Classics and John Bull, 1660-1714', in England in the Restoration and Early Eighteenth Century ed. H.T. Swedenberg, Jr. (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972), 19-23; Wilson also shows that the emergence of translation was not uncontroversial (p. 81).

² There were French precedents for both Epictetus and Xenophon, which Elizabeth Carter and Sarah Fielding respectively translated. James Harris offered them to the two translators. See Elizabeth Carter, Introduction to All the Works of Epictetus, Which are Now Extant; Consisting of His Discourses, preserved by Arrian. In Four Books. The Enchiridion, and Fragments (London: sold by A. Millar, John Rivington, and R. and J. Dodsley, 1758), xxxiii; Sarah Fielding perused François Charpentier's French translation 'for half an hour' and determined to go through the 'Greek and Latin only' (Battestin and Probyn, ed. The Correspondence of Henry and Sarah Fielding (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 153).

³ Wilson, 'Classical Poetry', p. 80.

in his 'A Dissertation upon the Usefulness of Translations of Classic Authors, Both Literal and Free, for Easy and Expeditious Attainment of the Latin Tongue' argues against the opinion that translation would make learners neglect intellectual discipline and mental training. He promotes the benefits of easy and pleasant learning by the assistance of translation.⁴ On the other hand, there were several who criticized the practice: Vicesimus Knox (1752-1821) disapproves of 'those translations, which in many schools, are constantly used', valuing the classics very highly as 'the exertion of mind', and considering translation to be 'so wretched a substitute of the original.'⁵ The argument refers specifically to the methods of learning Latin at school rather than its consumption by the general reader. Even Knox, who is definitely opposed to translation, approvingly attached Elizabeth Carter's translation to a citation from Epictetus (c.A.D.55-135) for the use of his own readers.⁶ There were hardly any objections against owning translations.

Translations of the classics exploited a new readership. Madame Dacier (1651/54?-1720) in her preface to *The Iliad* claims: 'I write for those, who do not know [Homer], that is, for the greater Number, in Respect of whom, this Poet is as it were dead'.⁷ Among the new readers women were significant. Although women's contribution in the expansion of literary culture has been noted more in the genre of vernacular fiction,

⁴ 'A Dissertation...' is affixed to his An Introduction to the Making of Latin, comprising, after an easy, Compendious Method, The Substance of the Latin Syntax 13th edition (London: C. Hitch, 1742), pp. 279-86.

⁵ Liberal Education: or a Practical Treatise on the Methods of Acquiring Useful and Polite Learning 3rd ed (London: Charles Dilly, 1781), p. 92; Knox, Liberal Education, pp. 94, 97.

⁶ Knox, Liberal Education, p. 260.

⁷ The Iliad of Homer with Notes To Which are Prefix'd A Large Preface, and the Life of Homer by Madam Dacier (London: G. James, 1712), xxix.

they also played an important part in the growth of this semi-learned genre. Women's participation in classical literature, the vanguard of male learning, was important to translators and booksellers. Pope gained so much profit from a new female readership of his translation that Samuel Johnson, while warm in praise of Pope's manner of translating the *Iliad*, nonetheless chides that: 'too many appeals are made to the ladies'.⁸ Elizabeth Carter, happily acknowledging how many women have subscribed to her Epictetus, writes to Catherine Talbot: 'Epictetus must comfort himself ... by the civil treatment he meets with among the ladies.'⁹ In another translation project, Sarah Fielding's *Xenophon*, the subscribers include 278 women (and 333 men).¹⁰

Some recollected a time when highly educated women proudly possessed the classics in the original. At the end of ^{the} seventeenth

⁸ Carolyn D. Williams, *Pope, Homer, and Manliness* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 153-55; Samuel Johnson, *Lives of the English Poets*, III, p. 240.

⁹ Montagu Pennington, *Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Carter, with a New Edition of her Poems, Including some which have never appeared before; To which are added, some Miscellaneous Essays in Prose, Together with her Notes on the Bible, and Answers to Objections Concerning the Christian Religion* 4th edn (London: James Cawthorn, 1825), I, p. 211. She mentions 'the neglect of the Universities', for which 'Epictetus must comfort himself', but a substantial number of scholars and libraries are among her subscribers.

¹⁰ A List of Subscribers, *Xenophon's Memoirs of Socrates, with Defence of Socrates Before his Judges: Translation from the Original Greek* (Bath: by C. Pope, 1762). Subscribers include Ralph Allen, Elizabeth Carter, Mrs E. Cutts (who might be the Mrs Cutts, with whom Elizabeth Montagu planned to form a sisterhood), Robert Dingley (who was Treasurer of the Magdalen House), Arthur Collier (who was a brother of Jane), James Harris, Dr. Hoadley (who composed Sarah's memorial inscription in Bath Abbey), Lord Lyttleton, Hester Lynch, Lady Barbara Montagu, Mrs Montagu, Miss Mulso, the Countess of Pomfret (to whom Sarah Fielding's *Cleopatra and Octavia* was dedicated), Mrs Poyntz (to whom her *Governess* was dedicated), Mr Richardson, Mrs. Rook (although Battestin and Probyn identify her as the Mrs. Rookes, whose school Sarah attended, it is more likely that this person is Mrs Rooke of Kent, an acquaintance of Carter and also a subscriber to Epictetus, see Battestin and Probyn, xxxiii; *Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Carter*, I, p. 11; a list of subscribers to Epictetus), Mrs Scott, Miss Talbot, and Saunders Welch.

century William Wotton (1666-1727) deplored the decline of enthusiasm in learning among both men and women (with the implication that even among women learning flourished before).¹¹ He admits that there is a genuine correlation between the apparently flippant vogue for learning and the actual scholarly achievement:

It was so very modish, that the fair Sex seemed to believe that Greek and Latin added to their Charms; and Plato and Aristotle untranslated, were frequent Ornaments of their Closets. One would think by the Effects, that it was a proper Way of Educating of them, since there are no Accounts in History of so many very great Women in any one Age, as are to be found between the Years 1500-1600.¹²

Wotton aims to emphasise the decline of learning and thus he tends to exaggerate its prosperity in the past. However, he was not alone in pointing out that earlier periods were rich in learned women; in the 1670s, for example, Bathsua Makin (1612?-1674?) recorded their achievements retrospectively.¹³

In the mid eighteenth-century, there was a sense that a resurgence or rather a new wave of the promotion and achievement of learning among

¹¹. For Wotton's position in 'the battle of the books', see Joseph M. Levine, The Battle of the Books: History and Literature in the Augustan Age (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), esp. pp. 34-7, 40-6.

¹². William Wotton, Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning (London: J. Leake, 1694), pp. 349-50.

¹³. Bathsua Makin, An Essay to Revive the Ancient Education of Gentlewomen in Religion, Manners, Arts & Tongues (London: Tho. Parkhurst, 1673), pp. 3, 9-11. See also Jean R. Brink, 'Bathsua Reginald Makin: "Most Learned Matron"', The Huntington Library Quarterly 54(1991): 313-26; Mitzi Myers, 'Domesticating Minerva: Bathsua Makin's "Curious" Argument for Women's Education', Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture 14(1984):173-92.

women was taking place. Assured by Carter's Poems on Several Occasions, a reviewer gives an overview of the trend, with a caution that 'we hope our readers will not construe [this train of thought] into mis-timed raillery':

There never was perhaps an age wherein the fair sex made so conspicuous a figure with regard to literary accomplishments as in our own. ... Learning is now grown so fashionable amongst the ladies, that it becomes every gentleman to carry his Latin and Greek with him whenever he ventures into female company.¹⁴

This interest in classical learning, together with the disadvantaged position of women in terms of education in Latin and Greek, directed intellectually aspiring women to reading and learning from translation. The great number of women's names in subscription lists shows the increase in demand for the classics among women.¹⁵ Thus classical works enlarged women's intellectual horizons, albeit not in the original but in translation.

Indeed, to read the classics in translation was recommended to women. In The Ladies Library published in 1714 the author writes: 'young Ladies should be encourag'd to read the Greek and Roman Histories in

¹⁴. The Critical Review 13, 1762, quoted in Vivien Jones, ed. Women in the Eighteenth Century: Construction of Femininity (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 175.

¹⁵. For female scholars who were well versed with the classics, see Makin, An Essay, pp.9-11; Anna Maria von Schurman, The learned Maid... written in Latine... translated into English (London, 1659); W.W., A Letter to a Lady: In Praise of Female Learning (Dublin: by J. Jones,, 1739), p. 11. The catalogue of female scholars who knew the classics well was often made use of to defend education for women. P. Wilson argues that 'In fact the arguments and assumptions that lay behind the exclusion of women from classical learning were challenged more frequently and more forcibly than one might expect', and cites 'many exceptional women' ('Classical Poetry', p. 72).

the best Translations.'¹⁶ The importance of moral instruction, which can be conveyed without knowledge of the original, is emphasised:

[young ladies] will find in [Greek and Roman Histories] wonderful Instances of Courage, Faithfulness, Generosity, and a great Contempt of their own private Advantage when the public Good was in question.¹⁷

Translators and booksellers did not hesitate to swim with the tide. In the preface to his translation of Euripides (c.480-406 B.C.) Robert Potter claims that the translation 'may give an agreeable and a rational amusement to the English ladies, whose education does not generally lead them to an acquaintance with the Greek language'.¹⁸ He also suggests that 'an endeavour to revive the manly simplicity of the antients cannot be unuseful to any persons in any age', female as well as male.¹⁹ Moral lessons to be learned were 'the noble, manly, and generous sentiments', 'manliness, patriotism, and a love of liberty.'²⁰ Since the qualities of the classics were conceived of as explicitly masculine, some argued that women should be excluded from classical learning. However, such exclusive masculinity seems to have been conveniently forgotten by the translators and the booksellers when they attempted to enlarge readership.

¹⁶. The Ladies Library Written by a Lady, published by Mr. Steele (London: Jacob Tonson, 1714), I, p. 20.

¹⁷. Ladies Library, I, P. 20.

¹⁸. Tragedies of Euripides (London: J. Dodsley, 1781), I, xvi. The dedicatee of this translation was a female (the Duchess Dowager of Beaufort, Baroness of Botetourt).

¹⁹. Potter, Tragedies of Euripides, I, xvi.

²⁰. Knox, Liberal Education, p. 177; see also M. L. Clarke, Greek Studies in England 1700-1830 (Cambridge University Press, 1945), p. 13.

Sarah Fielding decided to try her pen in this growing and promising field of translation. Her awareness of market demand was sufficiently acute to take on a project of translation, and her choice of Xenophon was sensible. Naturally, those who stressed the usefulness of translation in the acquisition of moral lessons did not recommend all the classics.²¹ Promoters of classical learning tended to be selective, 'as morality is of great importance in early youth, and as it may be learned in great perfection from the Greek authors'.²² For example, Aristophanes (c.450-c.385 B.C.) and Lucian (c.A.D.120-c.180) were thought to be unfit for moral study, while Xenophon and Epictetus were commended as decent and revered authors.²³ Xenophon, especially, was very highly appreciated for his morality and 'the purity of his heart, the solidity of his understanding, and the sublimity of his genius'.²⁴ As for the type of the text, biographies were thought to be particularly useful; Knox upholds the usefulness of biography for moral instruction:

History has been called philosophy teaching by examples.... But an exact and authentic account of individuals, who have greatly excelled in any of the departments of active or contemplative life,

²¹. Clarke, Greek Studies, pp. 12, 155; P. Wilson, 'Classical Poetry', p. 74.

²². Knox, Liberal Education, p. 128.

²³. James Beattie, 'Remarks on the Utility of Classical Learning, Written in the year 1769', in Essays on Poetry and Music, as they affect the Mind. On Laughter, and Ludicrous Composition on the Utility of Classical Learning (Edinburgh and London: William Creech and E & C Dilly, 1776); Knox, Liberal Education, pp. 128-9. Interestingly, Henry Fielding attempted translations of Aristophanes, and Lucian was the second most frequently named Greek author in the Baker Catalogue of his library. See Henry Fielding and William Young, Plutus, the God of Riches. A Comedy. Translated from the Original Greek of Aristophanes... (London, 1742); Nancy A. Mace, 'Henry Fielding's Classical Learning', Modern Philology, 88 (1991), p. 245.

²⁴. The Critical Review, for the Month of March, 1762, 176-7.

seems to be a mode of instruction best suited to an animal, like man, prone to imitation.²⁵

So Memoirs of Socrates was a particularly attractive item among Xenophon's works. M.L. Clarke notes that the main eighteenth-century source of Socrates's life (469-399 B.C.) and discourse was Xenophon, not Plato (c.429-347 B.C.).²⁶ Recent editors of Xenophon agree: 'Europe in the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries found [Xenophon] edifying.'²⁷ As for Xenophon's literary style, Knox praises him as one who 'presents us with a style flowing with honey.'²⁸ James Harris extols Xenophon's unpretentious dignity and purity.²⁹ Thus, if translation gained respectability for the ancient writings' moral teachings and stylistic neatness, a biographical account by Xenophon was a very appropriate text to be translated.

Socrates was held in great esteem.³⁰ According to M.L. Clarke, although the eighteenth century regarded history 'as a source of anecdotes and moral lessons' for which there was a demand, Greek

²⁵. Knox, Essays, Moral and Literary (London: Edward and Charles Dilly, 1778), pp. 210, 211 (referring to Bolingbroke's definition of history).

²⁶. Clarke, Greek Studies, p. 114; Clarke quotes from Monthly Review (1762) that 'Plato is unfashionable' (p. 112).

²⁷. Introduction to Xenophon, Conversations of Socrates ed. and trans. Hugh Tredennick and Robin Waterfield (London: Penguin, 1990), p. 8.

²⁸. Knox, Essays, p. 212.

²⁹. James Harris, Hermes: or a Philosophical Inquiry Concerning Language and Universal Grammar (London: H. Woodfall, 1751), p. 423.

³⁰. K.L.H. Berland describes images of Socrates in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries especially as the type of a moral man and a pleasant moral teacher. See 'Didactic, Catechetical, or Ostetricious? Socrates and Eighteenth-Century Dialogue', in Compendious Conversations: The Method of Dialogue in the Early Enlightenment ed. Kevin L. Cope (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1992), 93-104.

philosophy was almost ignored.³¹ And yet the figure of Socrates was widely and highly admired. Socrates was regarded as the wisest man of the ancients.³² The following particular features of Socrates, which Charpentier (1620-1702) articulates, must have interested Sarah Fielding. He maintains that '[Socrates] chose for his principal object, human Virtues: He believ'd that the true Study of Man was to learn to know himself, and to render himself serviceable to his Friends and his Country'.³³ He repeatedly emphasises that there are two other roles performed by the philosopher: the exposure of vices and the instruction of friends, especially of the young. He explains that Socrates 'made it his chief Business to search into the Vices of Persons of all Conditions, and expos'd them without fear'.³⁴

In short, Sarah Fielding's decision to take up a work of

³¹ Clarke, Greek Studies, chapters VIII & IX; see also Berland, 'Didactic, Catechetical, or Ostetricious?', 101.

³² François Charpentier, Life of Socrates (1650) trans. in Edward Bysshe, The Memorable Things of Socrates, written by Xenophon, to which are prefixed the Life of Socrates, from the French of Monsieur Charpentier, . . . and the Life of Xenophon, collected from several Authors; with some Account of his Writings (London: G. Sawbridge, 1712); John Gilbert Cooper, Jr., The Life of Socrates, Collected from the Memorabilia of Xenophon and the Dialogues of Plato (London: R. Dodsley, 1749). For example, 'Socrates, the wisest man among the wisest people. . . ' Critical Remarks on Sir Charles Grandison, Clarissa, and Pamela: Enquiring whether they have a Tendency to corrupt or improve the Public Taste and Morals, In a Letter to the Author. By a Lover of Virtue. (London: J. Dowse, 1754), p. 10; Sir William Cornwallis, the Younger, writes that 'Socrates was the wisest man of his time, and his ground for that was his turning all his acquired knowledge into morality' in Essays ed. Don Cameron Allen (Baltimore: the Johns Hopkins Press, 1946), p. 191; see also Knox, Liberal Education, pp. 128-29; Elizabeth Montagu writes to Sarah Scott when travelling: 'I had little hopes of disposing of them [Mrs Fielding's receipts, for subscription to her translation] here, not but we have very ingenious & agreeable people in this Town to whom Socrates is no stranger but they know little of Mrs Fielding or of me' (quoted in Needham, p 327).

³³ Charpentier, The Life of Socrates, prefixed to The Memorable Things of Socrates, by Bysshe (London, 1712), p 18.

³⁴ Charpentier, p. 21.

translation was a promising enterprise. She was stepping into a potentially profitable sphere of literary activity. In the first place, the translator could appeal to an expanding readership. Secondly, a translation of Xenophon was likely to be favourably accepted in terms of the respectability of the subject-matter. It conformed to the taste of her time, and simultaneously was compatible with her own interests in writing.³⁵ It could provide her with financial rewards, scholarly fulfilment, and writerly satisfaction.³⁶

Indeed, by her choice of translating Xenophon, Sarah Fielding made herself more respected, as is evident in Elizabeth Montagu's changing attitude to her. Montagu knew her in her later life when she was in need of financial support and usually assumed the role of a charitable benefactor rather than a literary friend. When Montagu, who did not appreciate her fictions very much, tried to collect in advance subscription for her translation, she was ironical about the modish project.³⁷ However, her attitude changed when she saw Sarah Fielding's expertise in translation. After she read the translation, more forthright praise took place of the teasing tone and she wished that her competence would be used in serious genres, not in rendering French amatory tales which she was far from approving of:

I desire my particular compliments to Mrs Fielding on her excellent book. I know nothing of the heathen greek, but Socrates in her

³⁵ Berland points out Socrates's appeal to educational writers, in whose view 'Socrates taught to cultivate the active participation of their students in their own discoveries' (101). This feature must have appealed to Sarah Fielding as well.

³⁶ Although translation from the classics is not given focus to, the role of translation as an initiator to the literary world, especially for female writers, is discussed in Sherry Simon, Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 39-58.

³⁷ MO 5281, 1760 June 20? E Montagu to S Scott.

translation speaks in character.... The peculiar simplicity, brevity, & point of his style she has express'd, other translations did but stammer at it. May the work get her all the solid pudding & the empty praise an author much more avaricious & vain could desire. Let the encouragement this work has met with animate her Muse. Her genius points to the Portico & Academick groves, never let it saunter in the tuilleries translating les amours & amourettes of Mr Le Marquis de ---- or les Memoires d'un homme de qualité retiré du monde.³⁸

Thus, Sarah Fielding advanced moderately in Montagu's esteem. Yet still her ironic tone remained and Sarah Fielding struggled to gain solid credentials and respect. The next section considers what she failed to achieve in her enterprise.

2) Obstacles to Publication

In spite of the variety of views on the values of classical learning, the classics were still regarded as an essential part of gentlemen's cultural and social skills, as Chesterfield surmises:

Classical knowledge, that is, Greek and Latin, is absolutely necessary for everybody; because everybody has agreed to think and to call it so. And the word illiterate, in its common acceptation, means a man who is ignorant of those two languages.³⁹

³⁸. MO 5787, ? 1762, E Montagu to S Scott.

³⁹. Patrick Cruttwell quotes from various sources conflicting views on the classics, 'The Eighteenth Century: A Classical Age?', Arion, 7 (1968): pp. 110-32. See also British Education, (1756), 221; H.C. Barnard, A History of English Education from 1760 (London: University of London Press, 1961), p. 14. See also a letter to his son, 27 May 1748, The Letters of Philip Dormer Stanhope, 4th Earl of Chesterfield, ed. Bonamy Dobree (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1932), vol.3, p. 1155.

As this remark shows, the possession of classical learning worked as an important social criterion separating the 'literate' from the 'illiterate'.

The notion of classical learning as an ingredient of gentlemanly politeness presented difficulties to female translators. Although translation made female access to classical literature easier, the gender barrier in the core part of learning was hard to overcome. Much more disturbing apparently than women's participation as consumers of translation was their being scholars or translators. Questioning the aptitude for classical learning accentuated the different social roles allotted to men and women; if classical learning was essential to gentlemen to perform their social role, it was understood as inconsistent with the female role in the domestic sphere. There were warnings, satire, and criticism against the promotion of classical learning in women.⁴⁰ A correspondent of Samuel Richardson's points out a widely-held objection to classical learning in women, although he himself criticizes such prejudice:

Till this world is mended, a Lady perhaps may be justified in
fearing least she should be looked upon (as Har[riet] says) `like

⁴⁰. See for example, Alice Browne, The Eighteenth Century Feminist Mind (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1987), 102-21; Angela J. Smallwood provides a helpful list of publications discussing women between 1680-1760, including those dealing with women's education, conduct, and learning in Fielding and the Woman Question: The Novels of Henry Fielding and Feminist Debate 1700-1750 (New York: St Martin's Press, 1989), pp. 176-97; Sylvia Harcstark Myers, The Bluestocking Circle: Women, Friendship, and the Life of the Mind in Eighteenth-Century England (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. 3-; for general conditions of and attitudes toward women, see Robert H. Michel, 'English Attitudes Towards Women, 1640-1700', Canadian Journal of History 13 (1978): 35-60; Felicity A. Nussbaum discusses mainly satire targeted at lust, infidelity, wantonness, and Amazonian boldness, but some parts of her account deal with female learning, see The Brink of All We Hate: English Satires on Women, 1660-1750 (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1984), pp. 126-29, 131, 148-49, 152-54.

an Owl among the birds,' and should lose more credit with the majority, than she can gain with the few. The prejudices against a learned wife (such I mean as are free from pedantry, and neglect not their proper duty to acquire their learning) are absurd, irrational, and often flow from envy; but they are strong, inveterate, and too general.⁴¹

Yet, as he himself testifies, there existed 'the few' who readily appreciated women's ability. Through personal negotiation with the appreciative few, the gender barrier could be overcome. There were those, like him, who are ready to articulate an encouraging attitude in spite of the general opposition.⁴² Especially when referring to identified

⁴¹. FM XII 48 E 6, ff. 108-9, Thomas Edwards to Richardson, July 18 1754. Edwards (1699-1757) was a critic whose controversy with Warburton was well known. In Richardson's Sir Charles Grandison Mr Walden and Harriet Byron discuss classical learning: 'Know you, Madam, said he, any-thing of the learned languages?

No, indeed, Sir -- Nor do I know which, particularly, you call so.

The Greek, the Latin, Madam.

Who, I, a woman, know any thing of Latin and Greek! I know but one Lady who is mistress of both; and she finds herself so much an owl among the birds, that she wants of all things to be thought to have unlearned them' (The History of Sir Charles Grandison ed. Jocelyn Harris (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), I, p. 49).

⁴². Jean E. Hunter points out a considerable sympathetic awareness of women's problems in the Gentleman's Magazine in 'The 18th-Century Englishwoman: According to the Gentleman's Magazine', in Woman in the 18th Century and Other Essays ed. Paul Fritz and Richard Morton (Toronto: Samuel Stevens, 1976) 73-88; Miriam J. Benkowitz describes concepts of women held by women themselves as made not only with reference to the emotions but by confidence in their reason and education, 'Some Observations on Woman's Concept of Self in the 18th Century', Woman in the 18th Century and Other Essays, 37-54; Charmaine Wellington, 'Dr Johnson's Attitude Towards the Education of Women', New Rambler (1977), 49-58; Isobel Grundy examines patterns of Johnson's encouragement and patronage to in her 'Samuel Johnson as Patron of Women', The Age of Johnson: A Scholarly Annual 1, ed. Paul J. Korshin (New York: AMS Press, 1987), 59-77; James G. Basker shows how sympathetic Samuel Johnson was in spite of his famous remark ('A woman's preaching is like a dog's walking on its hinder legs') in 'Dancing Dogs, Women Preachers and the Myth of Johnson's Misogyny', The Age of Johnson: A Scholarly Annual 3, ed. Paul J. Korshin (New York: AMS Press, 1990), 63-90; Annette Wheeler Cafarelli

individual learned women, they were supportive. This is exemplified by the cases of Elizabeth Carter and Sarah Fielding, both of whom published translations from Greek, regarded as quintessentially unfeminine. Their fine scholarship persuaded learned people around them to encourage their highly intellectual literary pursuit. Their sheer scholarship attracted mentors to give them generous help. Both their own efforts and assistance from people around them helped them to overcome existing cultural barriers. So, they could develop their intellectual pursuits within protective networks of sympathetic friends, cocooned away from critics of female learning.

In considering the issue of female learning, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's well-known cautionary attitude is very suggestive. When she is discussing issues of gender, she also raises the question of the distinction between private and public. In her advice for the education of her granddaughter, what she regards as the 'most absolutely necessary' caution is: 'to conceal whatever Learning she attains, with as much solicitude as she would hide crookedness or lameness.'⁴³ On the other hand, of course, she is not opposed to learning for women: 'Learning is necessary to the Happiness of Women, and Ignorance the common foundation of their Errors, both in Morals and Conduct.'⁴⁴ As long as learning is confined to the individual's private sphere, it does nothing but contribute to a woman's happiness. Lady Mary takes it for granted that there is nothing wrong in her granddaughter's attaining learning, that is, privately, and what she pays attention to is its expected negative effect on her social life, including her prospects of marriage.

attributes the currency of this myth to Boswell's attempt to masculinize Johnson in 'Johnson and Women: Demasculinizing Literary History', The Age of Johnson: A Scholarly Annual 5, ed. Paul J. Korshin (New York: AMS Press, 1992), 61-114.

⁴³. The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu ed. Robert Halsband (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), III, p. 22.

⁴⁴. The Complete Letters, III, p. 83.

She wants her granddaughter to be cautious about looking too overtly an intellectual. These famous comments of Lady Mary's show that the questions of gender barriers and the distinction of the private and public spheres often overlapped. A prominent feature of eighteenth-century social life, the salon was a kind of conveniently expanded private space where the public and the domestic were conjoined.⁴⁵ In its protected social milieu, women could be active culturally and intellectually in social practice.⁴⁶

Elizabeth Carter and Sarah Fielding managed to cross the educational and language boundaries in acquiring classical knowledge. They were keen to render Greek into English accurately and with all their possible exertion, and tended to concentrate on achieving scholarly perfection. There was still a hurdle to overcome: in contrast with well-educated men who were brought up imbibing the notion of classical learning as a social requirement, they had to make their ways off the beaten track, searching for their styles and goals in that discipline. As their pursuit of linguistic accuracy left them little energy to consider other elements in showing learning, they both needed advice and help from their mentors and friends.

⁴⁵. Erica Harth, 'The Salon Woman Goes Public ... or Does She?', in Elizabeth C. Goldsmith and Dena Goodman, ed. Going Public: Women and Publishing in Early Modern France (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), 182-3. My concern about private and public is limited within what Habermas calls the private realm. My focus is on the transmission of learning from the private sphere to the 'authentic' public sphere within the private realm. See Jürgen Habermas, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), pp. 27-43; Irene Q. Brown, 'Domesticity, Feminism, and Friendship: Female Aristocratic Culture and Marriage in England, 1660-1760', Journal of Family History, 7(1982): 406-24; Dena Goodman, 'Public Sphere and Private Life: Toward a Synthesis of Current Historiographical Approaches to the Old Regime' History & Theory 31(1992): 14-20;

⁴⁶. Sylvana Tomaselli, 'The Enlightenment Debate on Women', History Workshop 20(1985): 105-6.

Elizabeth Carter's entrance into publication was exceptionally smooth and untroubled. Her learning was like a passport which gained her admission to the sphere of publication.⁴⁷ Yet when she undertook translation, there was a problem, which she could not foresee by herself. As I show below, she at first applied herself eagerly to the translation's linguistic element and concentrated on rendering the text into elegant English. When the translation began to become a publication project, she had Catherine Talbot and Thomas Secker (1693-1768) as advisers, who sent her detailed opinions and requests from the standpoint of both general and learned readers.⁴⁸ By them she was given advice both on matters of literary style and theological debate, including the issue of presenting stoic philosophy within a Christian culture. In other words, she was given advice on how to make her scholarship appeal to the public in an effective social way.

Sarah Fielding's management of her learning was less successful. Her translation of Xenophon's Memoirs of Socrates was published in 1762. The publication of a translation of Xenophon was a potentially rewarding attempt to introduce her private exercise of learning into the public sphere. She was equipped with an ability to make it happen; the quality of the translation itself or as a philological achievement was praised by her contemporaries and the fact that her translation was printed even in this century testifies to its accuracy.⁴⁹ However, she could not achieve the reputation and financial reward enjoyed by Elizabeth Carter

⁴⁷ Myers, The Bluestocking Circle, pp. 46-7.

⁴⁸ Using the term suggested by Ruth Perry, Kowaleski-Wallace recognizes Talbot's role as mothering Carter's mind, taking care of her emotional uneasiness and supporting intellectual development. See Beth Kowalwski-Wallace, 'Two Anomalous Women: Elizabeth Carter and Catherine Talbot', in Eighteenth-Century Women and The Arts ed. Frederick M. Keener and Susan E. Lorsch (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 19-27.

⁴⁹ Socratic Discourses by Plato and Xenophon (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, New York: E.P. Dutton, 1910), 'Apology, or the Defence of Socrates', trans. by Sarah Fielding, 152-61.

or Pope, two of the more prominent and successful eighteenth-century translators. While Carter's life was made very comfortable by the profit of her translation, Sarah Fielding suffered from financial difficulties toward the end of her life. I regard Sarah Fielding's undertaking of translation as an awkward process of transforming a learned woman's inclination toward a private scholarly exercise into a published public text. In terms of fiction writing, she is always attentive to the demands of the literary market as well as to her own abilities and disposition; she knows that she needs a clear strategy to attract readers when writing fiction. However, in translation she loses her awareness of the recipient's demands. The direction Sarah Fielding headed for was not well suited for public favour. In the end she achieved inward scholarly satisfaction, but not the widespread reputation of a respected scholar nor the financial reward which she sought. This is most clearly observed in a comparison with Elizabeth Carter's performance. Publication of translation from Greek contributed greatly to their reputation as learned women. Carter won the fame of an impeccable female scholar; Sarah Fielding not so marvellous a reputation. Their ways of making their learning public were important in constructing their images.

If they were faced with a gender barrier, it was not criticism against learned women but the absence of codes for female scholars who publish. They tended to overlook the fact that displaying classical learning needed more than linguistic knowledge and accuracy; it had a social function and one needed skill to make public a representation of one's own learning. When they ventured into the world of publication, leaving their protective networks, they adopted different stances. The difference between their managements of and solutions to the difficulties they faced in entering the public sphere is the focus in this chapter. Besides the factual differences, of their family background, of the groups of acquaintances and patronage, and of the genres they mainly operated in, one in prose fiction, the other as a

poet, there was a significant difference in their approaches which brought about the production of different kinds of translation. I argue that they made different social use of their literature and learning. As the comparison between their performances reveals, for these women, what mattered was the way their production of a socially acceptable and marketable artefact of an intellectually high standard was managed. They needed to develop strategies to successfully transform the knowledge they enjoyed in their closed studies into the socially acceptable form of print.

II. Sarah Fielding as a Learned Woman

But lives there one, whose unassuming mind,
Tho' grac'd by nature, and by art refin'd,
Pleas'd with domestic excellence, can spare
Some hours from studious ease to social care,
And with her pen that time alone employs
which others waste in visits, cards and noise;⁵⁰

At the mid-eighteenth century, learned women received the praise of John Duncombe's (1729-86) Feminiad and George Ballard's (1706-55) Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain.⁵¹ These works emphasized the remarkableness of the achievements of those women who combined intellect and virtue. So glorified were some of the learned women that they became

⁵⁰. John Duncombe, The Feminiad. A Poem (London: M. Cooper, 1754), p. 11.

⁵¹. George Ballard, Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain. Who Have been Celebrated for Their Writings or Skill in the Learned Languages Arts and Sciences (Oxford: W. Jackson, 1752); Ruth Perry, 'George Ballard's Biographies of Learned ladies', in Biography in the Eighteenth-Century ed. J.D. Browning (New York: Garland, 1980), 85-111.

surrounded with special, exceptional, and even superhuman aura.⁵² This was regulation as well as praise; the glorification at the same time codified acceptable conduct for learned women. They should be sociable in the familiar interpersonal society as well as through epistolary exchanges, able to achieve intellectual recognition without affectation, able to fulfil other duties, notably never neglecting the domestic virtues, and far from morally dubious.

Numerous instances in the eighteenth century suggest that literary reputation was affected by the person's performance in social intercourse. People of high literary reputation, notably Johnson, Hume, and the Bluestocking ladies, added to their literary credentials through conversation and personal letters.⁵³

Elizabeth Carter, though her shyness in gatherings was well-known, could express her brilliance in personal letters; they were her channel to impress people of the depth of her scholarship as well as her hidden sociable personality.⁵⁴ She was determined and assertive when

⁵² Lisa Jardine draws attention to the idolization of learned women, arguing that some celebrated Italian learned women actually were 'minor humanists along with all the other minor figures who move in the shadow of the great male'; see "'O Decus Italiae Virgo' or The Myth of the Learned Lady in the Renaissance', The Historical Journal 28(1985): 799-819.

⁵³ Habermas writes: 'There was scarcely a great writer in the eighteenth century who would not have first submitted his essential ideas for discussion in such discourse, in lectures before the académies and especially in the salons (p. 34); for the importance of correspondence in the salon culture ('Letter writing was a responsibility and necessity for the successful salonière' (341)), see Dena Goodman, 'Enlightenment Salons: The Convergence of Female and Philosophic Ambitions', Eighteenth-Century Studies 22(1989): 340-50; see also The Familiar Letter in the Eighteenth Century ed. Howard Anderson et al. (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1966), 274; Bruce Redford, The Converse of the Pen: Acts of Intimacy in the Eighteenth-Century Familiar Letter (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), pp. 3-7; Elizabeth J. MacArthur, Extravagant Narratives (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 43-4, 119.

⁵⁴ In spite of his remark that 'A man is generally better pleased when he has a good dinner on his table than when his wife talks Greek', Johnson's admiration of Elizabeth Carter is well known: she 'could make a pudding as well as translate Epictetus, and work a handkerchief as

she wrote about literary subjects within her familiar circle.⁵⁵ In the 'authentic' public sphere she was known for laudable qualities in her personality as well as her talents in learning.⁵⁶ Consequently, she gained an impeccable reputation as a scholar in her life time and it was embellished afterwards by Montagu Pennington's Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Carter.⁵⁷ Her early nineteenth-century biographer confirmed the image of Carter 'as a deep and elegant scholar', with

well as compose a poem.' She was fortunate to be protected by Johnson, who 'liked to grant not only whatever goods might lie in his power --- shelter, money, food --- but also the power to gain', 'by nourishing talent, by fostering confidence, and by insisting on professional standards' (Grundy, 'Samuel Johnson as Patron of Women', 61). Lady Hertford wrote of Carter that 'I am well informed that she is an admirable Greek and Latin scholar; and writes both these languages, as well as French and Italian, with great elegance. But, what adds to the wonder she excites is, that all this learning has not made her the less reasonable woman, the less dutiful daughter, or the less agreeable and faithful friend' (Correspondence Between Frances, Countess of Hertford, and Henrietta Louisa, Countess of Pomfret, Between the Years 1738 and 1741 ed. William Bingley [London: R. Phillips, 1805], I, 96-7). Although Carter was fortunate to be supported by male mentors, her own determined scholarly attitude, piety, and rectitude were her main strengths. Claudia Thomas emphasises Carter's active role in creating the image of a moral professional literary woman in 'Th'Instructive Moral, and Important Thought': Elizabeth Carter Reads Pope, Johnson, and Epictetus', The Age of Johnson: A Scholarly Annual 4, ed. Paul J. Korshin (New York: AMS Press, 1991), 137-69.

⁵⁵. Myers, The Bluestocking Circle, esp. pp. 69-76; Thomas, 'Th'Instructive Moral...', 137-69. Thomas emphasises that she refutes Pope and while she adopts his poetical images, she presents an alternative, more pious, female poetic tradition (144-52).

⁵⁶. As Thomas observes, this image of the immaculate female author constricts and stifles women's activities, while it enabled her to gain benefits in publication ('Th'Instructive Moral...', 143).

⁵⁷. On Carter's publication of translation of Epictetus, the Monthly Review honoured her: 'Many Ladies have been very witty; some few have been very learned; but we have never, till now, seen these accomplishments united with an acute understanding and solid judgment, sufficient to unravel the intricacies of Philosophy.' Monthly Review, 18, 1758, quoted in Jones, Women in the Eighteenth Century, p. 175. Portia in Cry pays compliment to Carter for her learning and virtues (I, pp. 145-51).

admirable christian and feminine virtues.⁵⁸

Although she refers to the importance of conversation in her works, Sarah Fielding was not a very sociable person. Rather, she experienced some difficulty in this kind of activity. It is true that people acquainted with her appreciated her goodness: she was a 'good sort of Woman', 'a virtuous maiden', and 'a Lady who has a good Heart as well as Head'.⁵⁹ However, she was not friendly and congenial enough to make cordial relationships in society, and still less was she to become outstanding in social activities. Joseph Warton records that he enjoyed cheerful conversation with Henry Fielding, but Sarah retired very early when he visited them.⁶⁰ Elizabeth Montagu did not think of her as an entertaining companion for her sister.⁶¹ Richardson chides her for having missed an opportunity to open conversation with Lady Bradshaigh when she did not introduce herself as the author of David Simple.⁶² Overall, she did not invest much effort to make herself socially attractive. In addition, as I discussed in Chapter Three, she did not

⁵⁸ Sketch of the Character of Mrs. Elizabeth Carter (Kelso: A. Ballantyne, 1806), pp. 13-4. Christine Mary Salmon points out that this short book established the respectable image of Elizabeth Carter in part through omitting to mention her comic spirit and subversiveness, leading in turn to a twentieth-century estimation of her as dull. See 'Representations of the Female Self in Familiar Letters 1650-1780' (University of London, dissertation, 1991), p. 60, n.27.

⁵⁹ The first two quotations from MO 5766, Elizabeth Montagu to Sarah Scott, 9 June 1757; FM XI, 48 E 5, f. 82, Richardson to Lady Bradshaigh, 14 Feb 1754; Catherine Talbot wrote to Carter about Sarah Fielding's character: 'there is a goodness of heart and a delicacy of sentiment that makes me think you happy in her acquaintance' (July 21 1753, A Series of Letters, II, p. 131).

⁶⁰ 'I spent two evenings with Fielding and his sister, who wrote David Simple, and you may guess I was very well entertained. The lady indeed retir'd pretty soon, ...' quoted in Batestin, Henry Fielding, p. 413.

⁶¹ MO 5766.

⁶² 'Why did you not tell Lady Bradshaigh, when you saw her at good Mrs. Bowden's that you were my much esteemed Sally Fielding, the author of David Simple?' (Correspondence of Samuel Richardson ed. Anna Laetitia Barbauld (London: Richard Phillips, 1804), II, p. 101).

use epistles to impress her addressees with her letter-writing skills: her extant letters show that she did not conceive of letters as vehicles for literary self-projection. So, she did little to cultivate an image either in the interpersonal society or in her correspondence.

This was detrimental to the making of her reputation and the fact that she was reputedly learned worked to her disadvantage. Lady Bradshaigh argued for the incompatibility of learning and femininity.⁶³ She expressed her antagonism against 'masculine' women:

I own I do not approve of great learning in women... I hate to hear latin out of a woman's mouth. There is something in it, to me masculine. I would fancy such a one weary of the petticoat, and talking over a bottle.⁶⁴

Hester Thrale, too, drew an unfavourable picture of a learned woman. Her criticism fell onto Sarah Fielding, in particular. She reports a libellous rumour about Sarah Fielding in line with Lady Bradshaigh's image of a learned woman talking over a bottle. She criticizes her supposed 'masculinity' while adopting a stance of a disinterested reporter, adding 'I never from Doctor Collier heard any thing but good of her [Sarah Fielding]'. Nonetheless she provides the material for a definitely negative picture. She contrasts Sarah with Beatrice, her sister, who was reputedly adept at feminine accomplishments: according to Thrale, Beatrice Fielding 'had an exquisite hand upon the harpsicord, and was otherwise finely accomplished'. She continues: 'but Sally was

⁶³ Richardson tried to persuade her not to discourage 'sweet souls from acquiring any learning' (Barbauld, VI, p. 60). On another occasion, he asked Margaret Collier to make women themselves aware of the importance of promoting their own worth: 'let me desire you to whisper in the ear of the ladies you mention --- "Who, my dears, shall vindicate the honour of a sex, the most excellent of which desert themselves?"'(Barbauld, II, p. 94).

⁶⁴ Barbauld, VI, p. 52.

the Scholar; I have since heard from Mr Johnson that She was accused of drinking'.⁶⁵ So, here is a picture of a female 'scholar' with a bad habit, whose sister, so as to make a strong contrast, is praised for her feminine accomplishments.

Her mixed, or rather unfavourable, feelings toward Sarah Fielding derive from her complex views towards learning in women, and may also have been influenced by Arthur Collier and Samuel Johnson's opinions about men around Sarah Fielding. Troubles had soured the relationship between Collier and Fielding, so the person who left substantial comments on the effect of Sarah Fielding's learning is not unprejudiced. Johnson was critical of Henry Fielding and almost carping towards James Harris, her mentor.⁶⁶ According to Thrale, Johnson displayed hostility to Harris and disapproved of his learning: 'One said James Harris is a learned Man; for ought I know replied Johnson, but learning should not be trusted in such hands --- tis giving a Sword to a man that is paralytick.'⁶⁷ She also notes that Johnson pointed out Harris's grammatical faults in Hermes, his acclaimed scholarly achievement.⁶⁸ Thus the remarks on Sarah Fielding's learning involve the shadows of the personal relationship between male mentors.

⁶⁵. Thraliana: The Diary of Mrs. Hester Lynch Thrale 1776-1809 ed. Katharine C Balderston (Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1942), pp. 78-9. Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire saw an affected learned woman in Mrs Thrale herself: 'Mrs. Thrale was ridiculous, she play'd at whist and was affecting inattention to her game, and talking Latin and quoting verses' (Georgiana: Extracts from the Correspondence of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, ed. The Earl of Bessborough [London: John Murray, 1955], p. 40).

⁶⁶. See Battestin, Henry Fielding and Clive T. Probyn A Sociable Humanist: The Life and Works of James Harris, 1709-1780 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), esp. pp. 3-4, 140-42, 147-50.

⁶⁷. Thraliana, p. 35.

⁶⁸. '[Dr Johnson] said that tho' but 14 Lines long [James Harris' Dedication to his Hermes], there were 6 Grammatical faults in it' (Thraliana, p. 208).

In addition, she undermines Sarah Fielding's literary abilities. She first attributes to Sarah Fielding the verses sent to her. Then she triumphantly points out that the verses are banal and that moreover there are grammatical inaccuracies in the composition.⁶⁹ This reveals Thrale's antagonism toward 'Sally Fielding who translated the Dialogues of Socrates'---of all Sarah Fielding's works she purposefully chooses to mention the translation to make it clear that she was a classical scholar and she particularly states that the classical scholar was inattentive to English grammar. She apparently laments the mistakes with a comment that 'she was an able Scholar both in the Latin Language and the Greek.'⁷⁰ Here she tries to find the deplorable consequences of being engaged in studying learned languages at the expense of vernacular English.

Still more, she describes a report allegedly told by Dr Collier, that Henry Fielding was jealous of Sarah's abilities in the classics. Thrale writes down a stereotypical critical portrait of a learned woman for Sarah Fielding, who invited jealousy of her brother and made herself disagreeable. She implies reproach both of his jealous narrowness and of her encroachment, pity for her and for him:

[Dr Collier] used to mention Harry Fielding's behaviour to her as a melancholy instance of narrowness; while She only read English Books, and made English Verses it seems, he fondled her Fancy, & encourag'd her Genius, but as soon [as] he perceived She once read Virgil, Farewell to Fondness, the Author's Jealousy was become stronger than the Brother's Affection, and he saw her future progress in literature not without pleasure only --- but with

⁶⁹. Thraliana, p. 259.

⁷⁰. Thraliana, p. 78.

Pain.⁷¹

Again in a letter to Leonard Chappelow she writes about the worsening of relations between the brother and sister brought about by her learning:

Miss Fielding was wholly unassisted by her Brother whatever She Wrote; for I know Dr. Collier has often told me that though they lived upon the tenderest Terms before, yet after She had by their common Friend's assistance made herself a competent Scholar, so as to construe the sixth Book of Virgil with Ease -- the Author of Tom Jones began to teize and taunt her with being a literary Lady &c. till at last she resolved to make her whole pleasure out of Study, and becoming justly eminent for her Taste and Knowledge of the Greek Language, her Brother never more could perswade himself to endure her Company with Civility -- This Anecdote I do not recollect to have read in Mr. Murphy's Account of him, though curious enough; and most undoubtedly true.⁷²

These remarks show on the one hand that Thrale is critical of Henry's hostility toward a learned woman and sounds even sympathetic toward the isolated struggle of Sarah Fielding for intellectual independence. On

⁷¹. Thraliana, p. 79.

⁷². Mrs Piozzi to Revd Leonard Chappelow on 15 Mar 1795 (Battestin, Henry Fielding: a Life, p. 381). The first passage of this quotation is wrong as Henry Fielding helped her correct the text of the second edition of David Simple and wrote prefaces for it and her Familiar Letters, for which he also contributed epistolary pieces. It is not certain at what stage Thrale means by the phrase 'becoming justly eminent', but Henry Fielding died long before Sarah Fielding's translation was published and thus her knowledge of Greek became widely known. Arthur Murphy describes Sarah Fielding in his 'An Essay on the Life and Genius of Henry Fielding, Esq.' as a person of 'a lively and penetrating genius in many elegant performances, particularly DAVID SIMPLE, and the letters' (I, p. 7), not mentioning her learning or her translation of Xenophon, see The Works of Henry Fielding, Esq; with The Life of the Author (London: A. Millar, 1762), I, pp. 5-49.

the other hand, however, she suggests Sarah Fielding's obstinacy and unsociable behaviour due to her scholarly pride. Reinforcing the idea that classical languages belonged to a special and privileged province of learning, Thrale highlights the Sarah Fielding who adamantly chooses to be a scholar and refuses to deal reasonably even with her own brother. Considered together with Thrale's other remarks, her accounts seem to be coloured by prejudice rather than impartiality. Whether they are true or not, what is important here is that a stereotypical image of an over-learned woman is projected on Sarah Fielding.

Confirming Thrale's account, biographers of Henry Fielding have drawn a critical portrait of Sarah Fielding. The image of an unsociable, vain, learned woman was convenient for exonerating Henry Fielding's severe attitude toward learned women. In his biographical sketch in 1810 William Mudford suggests a connection between Henry Fielding's unkind treatment of women and his feelings about his sister:

Whether Fielding saw in [Sarah] some of those pernicious consequences which are commonly supposed to result from female learning; or whether he drew from general observation, cannot now, perhaps, be ascertained: but in all his works, whenever he wishes to represent a woman disadvantageously, he generally makes her erudite.⁷³

W.L. Cross is more confident in tracing the connection. Cross's imagination invented a rather vivid depiction of an ill-managed home:

[Mudford's] surmise was that [Henry] Fielding had perhaps observed 'the pernicious consequences' of 'female learning' in his sister Sarah, who, I suppose, let his stockings undarned or his dinner

⁷³. The British Novelists (London: for the Proprietors, 1810), IV, p. 3.

uncooked in order to finish her book.⁷⁴

Smallwood maintains that Cross was responsible for disseminating a masculine image of Henry Fielding.⁷⁵ This masculinity involves good-natured generous magnanimity and his narrow-mindedness about women must therefore be ascribed to a particular cause.⁷⁶ The reputation of Sarah Fielding is thus sacrificed in order to excuse Henry's attitude toward learned women, as if to think of his sister's neglect of the feminine duties made his disparaging attitude understandable. Neither Mudford nor Cross seem to have any evidence to tell whether Sarah Fielding was good at household work or not, but their syllogism is: a learned woman neglects household duties; Sarah Fielding was a Greek scholar; therefore, she necessarily failed to be a good mistress of a household.⁷⁷

The unfavourable picture of Sarah Fielding as a learned woman seems to owe less to the impressions of her contemporaries than to later constructions proposed by Hester Thrale and other writers. The people around her were in general encouraging towards learning in women and

⁷⁴. Wilbur L. Cross, The History of Henry Fielding (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1918), III, p. 202. Cynthia's unkind sister rails at her bookishness in a similar way: '... undoubtedly her Husband will be mightily pleased, when he wants his Dinner, to find she has been all the Morning diverting herself with Reading, and forgot to order any' (David Simple, p. 108).

⁷⁵. Smallwood, Fielding and the Woman Question, pp. 15-27.

⁷⁶. Cross maintains that Barbauld and Mudford, who both edited a series of novels including Henry Fielding's, misrepresented Fielding and assumes that his alleged unkind treatment of literary women in his novels is owing to his unpleasant experience with Sarah Fielding (The History of Henry Fielding, III, pp. 200-2).

⁷⁷. In Cry there is a young ignorant girl who finds faults with Miss C[arter]. Miss C--- is allegedly a lazy slattern, proud of her learning. Portia exposes this girl's wrongful course of thinking: 'she first invented faults to throw on miss C--- which she never had, and then cast the blame of those faults on that part of miss C---'s character, which she had most inclination to censure (I, pp. 149-50).

appreciated her own scholarly achievements.⁷⁸ Henry Fielding showed respect rather than jealousy to another learned woman among his intimate acquaintance; he presented his copy of Horace to Jane Collier with 'the highest Esteem for an Understanding more than Female, mixed with virtues almost more than human'.⁷⁹

Among her writings, Sarah Fielding presents an ideal image of the learned in 'The Life of Octavia'. Octavia is not only learned but an embodiment of virtues. She is gentle, graceful, and determinedly brave. She is 'an Example of all those Graces and Embellishments worthy the most refined Female Character' and 'of truly Roman Spirit, in sacrificing her private to the public Good'.⁸⁰ Thus she combines social, sociable and intellectual merits in her heroine to delineate a pleasing ideal character; she supports the learned Octavia with the elegant qualities to shine in social life. However, she made no comparable effort to project an image of herself as a learned woman who was acceptable and praiseworthy for her sociability or to create a reputation as a socially active and attractive person, through conversation and correspondence, which were eagerly pursued activities in polite eighteenth century society.

III. Carter's Strategies and Success

J.M. Levine traces the dispute between advocates of the ancients and the moderns, characterizing them through their different views of history. The former, whom he summarizes as gentlemanly, emphasised the

⁷⁸. Carolyn D. Williams argues that Henry Fielding's attitude to learned women is more favourable than is generally thought: see 'Fielding and Half-learned Ladies', *Essays in Criticism* 38(1988): 23-34.

⁷⁹. Battestin, *Henry Fielding*, p. 392-93.

⁸⁰. *Cleopatra and Octavia*, dedication, xxxix.

importance of rhetoric learned from the ancient writers, and were concerned with writing well and persuasively, while the latter, committed to antiquarian and philological analysis, pursued historical veracity and accuracy. The battle ended in a draw.⁸¹ Levine concludes his description of the battle of the books by finding a kind of solution in Edward Gibbon (1737-94) who 'managed to achieve the unlikely conjuncture of a scholarly career and the life of a gentleman'.⁸² With a similar concern, Clive T. Probyn maintains that the objective of James Harris, though highly renowned for his literary archaeology, was 'neither to bring forward the past, nor to roll back the present, but to synthesize both'.⁸³ He focuses on the great variety of Harris's cultural achievements and his harmonious integration of them. Probyn's description of Harris, like Levine's of Gibbon, highlights the later eighteenth century attempt to synthesize the qualities of the ancients and the moderns, rather than taking either side. And yet the degree of integration differed according to a scholar's background and conception of the use of study. Both Elizabeth Carter and Sarah Fielding were strict in their philological concerns and at the same time attentive both to their rhetorical style and moral interpretation. However, their emphases on the balance of scholarly concerns and what they attempted to offer to the reading public took very different courses.

Whatever happened within the learned world, if we look at translation as a bridge between the learned and polite walls, the ancients carried the day. Madame Dacier's successful translation of Homer published in the middle of the Querelle was a product of the side of

⁸¹. Joseph M. Levine, The Battle of the Books: History and Literature in the Augustan Age (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991).

⁸². Levine, The Battle of the Books, p. 415.

⁸³. Probyn, The Sociable Humanist, p. 240.

the ancients.⁸⁴ Levine describes the characteristics of her translation in terms of a clear contrast between the ancients and the moderns:

Madame Dacier had no intention of distracting her readers with either philology or antiquities; she deliberately avoided the typical classical commentary. Thus, despite her very real learning, she was a true 'ancient', in the sense that Temple and Swift and Boileau and her husband all approved. She offered few citations and little obvious erudition, although she knew most of what had been done. Instead, she concentrated on the defense of her poet, the vindication of Homer against his critics past and present. ... In meticulous detail and point by point she could now elaborate the arguments of her preface: the perfection of the Iliad in form and style, the wisdom of Homer in all matters, the usefulness of the poem as a guide to life, its consistency with holy Scripture. From time to time she explained a difficulty in the text or a strange custom from the heroic past, but more often she insisted on her main purpose: 'to explain the principal Beauties of the Poem,' so that her readers might come fully to appreciate them.⁸⁵

Although neither Sarah Fielding nor Elizabeth Carter, active at mid-century, joined either side, they produced their translations in the wake of this battle. Carter's translation, in line with Dacier's, was a remarkable success, while the erudite philological superiority of Sarah Fielding won the admiration of fewer readers.

In the making of Carter's literary career, her father Nicolas Carter, Edward Cave (1691-1754), the publisher of the Gentleman's

⁸⁴. Levine, The Battle of the Books, pp. 133-47.

⁸⁵. Levine, The Battle of the Books, p. 139.

Magazine, Samuel Johnson, Thomas Birch (1705-66), Catherine Talbot, and Thomas Secker were all influential.⁸⁶ Of these people, Talbot with her mother and Secker were the crucial figures in the making of her translation of Epictetus.⁸⁷ By them she was given advice both on matters of literary style and theological debate. In other words, she was given advice on how to make her scholarship appeal to the educated reading public. Consequently, her performance in translation contributed toward making her reputation as an excellent scholar and virtuous woman. Carter's All the Works of Epictetus was published in 1758, with an impressive list of socially and culturally eminent subscribers, including the Prince of Wales, Lady Bradshaigh, Rev. Dr. Birch, Earl of Chesterfield, James Harris, Miss Highmore, Samuel Johnson, Lord Lyttleton, Miss Mulso, Duchess of Portland, Mrs. Poyntz, Mr. Richardson,

⁸⁶ Nicolas Carter, Perpetual curate of the Church of St George the Martyr at Deal, gave Elizabeth a classical education and encouraged her learning and career. He was a friend of Cave. Johnson's praise and encouragement were influential. Thomas Birch, who was treasurer of the Society for the Encouragement of Learning and became Secretary of the Royal Society, knew Algarotti, whose book he recommended Carter to translate. His praise of Carter's grace and gifts was almost embarrassing to her. Thomas Secker, who later became Archbishop of Canterbury, was a very important adviser in her translation of Epictetus. Catherine Talbot, who lost her father before she was born, and her mother were helped by Secker and his wife, living within his household. See Dictionary of British Women Writers ed. Janet Todd (London: Routledge, 1989); The Feminist Companion to Literature in English ed. Virginia Blain, Patricia Clements, and Isobel Grundy (London: Batsford, 1990); Edward Ruhe, 'Birch, Johnson, and Elizabeth Carter: An Episode of 1738-39', PMLA 73 (1958): 491-500; A.E. Gunther, An Introduction to The Life of the Rev. Thomas Birch D.D., F.R.S.: 1705-1766: Leading Editor of the General Dictionary...1741. Secretary of the Royal Society and Trustee of the British Museum (Suffolk: Halesworth, 1984); Sylvia H. Myers, The Bluestocking Circle: Women, Friendship, and the Life of the Mind in Eighteenth-Century England (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

⁸⁷ See Myers, The Bluestocking Circle, pp. 161-69; Secker finds his participation in this project very pivotal (Thomas Secker, The Autobiography of Thomas Secker, Archbishop of Canterbury, ed. John S. Macauley and R.W. Greaves [Lawrence: University of Kansas Libraries, 1988], p. 36).

Rev. Mr. Secker, Mrs. Talbot, Miss Talbot, and libraries of colleges.⁸⁸

The friendship and correspondence between Elizabeth Carter and Catherine Talbot began in 1741. Their letters suggest the wide range of reading undertaken by both: they exchange fairly candid opinions of recently published works, including books by Pope, Richardson, Henry Fielding and Sarah Fielding (whom Talbot calls 'a Favourite with us all').⁸⁹ Talbot and her mother seem to have asked Carter to translate Epictetus for them when they saw each other in London in 1749, as Talbot gladly claims: 'I shall have the secret satisfaction of attributing to your kindness for me, your first undertaking so valuable and excellent a performance'.⁹⁰ Carter occasionally enclosed 'scraps', which Talbot transcribed for her and for her mother's use. At first the translation was for their own use only.

Talbot was well suited to conduct such a project as this. She was an eager reader of translations and knew what she was supposed to appreciate in reading them: the value of translation as literature in itself. When she read Pope's *Odyssey*, she communicated her opinion of the translation:

I will assume a more serious language to reprove you for all the wicked things you say about Homer. I cannot possibly agree in your sentiments of the *Odyssey*, for it has been always a very favourite poem of mine. See the benefit of ignorance! perhaps you too, if you had never read any *Odyssey* but Mr. Pope's, would be fond of it. I read it last year in very agreeable society,

⁸⁸. All the Works of Epictetus, Which are Now Extant; Consisting of His Discourses, preserved by Arrian, In Four Books, The Enchiridion, and Fragments (London: A. Millar, 1758). It was printed by Richardson.

⁸⁹. They mention Sarah Fielding in the following letters, A Series of Letters, I, p. 33; II, pp. 131, 182-83, 188, 252, 302-03.

⁹⁰. A Series of Letters, II, p. 138.

and very great amusement it gave us.⁹¹

To this accusation Carter replies: 'I am heartily ashamed of the abuse I have thrown upon the *Odyssey*. My only excuse is that I have never seen Mr. Pope's.'⁹² In the case of the *Odyssey*, Talbot turns the inconvenience of her inability to read in the original into the advantage of being able to enjoy translation itself as literature. As for Epictetus, she turns it into an opportunity for Carter to translate for her, subsequently encouraging its publication for Carter's benefit. Apart from the literary interest of the work, Talbot, as a committed promoter of this project, was also attentive to the demands of general readers. Claudia Thomas points out the attentiveness of Carter and Talbot to the public demand when they complained that Johnson made very few efforts to attract a larger public for his *Rambler* essays.⁹³ It proved to be Carter's strength to have an opinionated person who could place herself on the side of the purchaser of literary products, a reader, and regular translation-reader, as her adviser.

Thomas Secker soon joined her as another adviser. Having seen Carter's pieces and having sent his own specimen and listened to Carter's defence of her style, he sent advice on the principles of translation to her.⁹⁴ By June 1751, Talbot handed part of the translation to Secker, and the preparation for publication really begun. From then on, Talbot representing well-educated readers of translations and Secker as a learned and religious authority counselled Carter as a joint force. In

⁹¹. A Series of Letters, I, p. 171.

⁹². A Series of Letters, I, p. 180.

⁹³. Thomas, '"Th'Instructive Moral..."', 154.

⁹⁴. Dated 13 Sep. 1749, see John Nichols, Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century. consisting of Authentic Memoirs and Original Letters of Eminent Persons ... (London: Nichols, 1817), pp. 486-87.

addition, Secker was not without worldly-wisdom; he made sure that there would be no rival translation coming to the market: he 'has made all possible enquiry by Miller, and can hear no tidings of a Scotch Epictetus, so I hope there is none.'⁹⁵ The pieces were sent back to Carter accompanied with '[the Bishop of Oxford's] own excellent remarks, some of Mr. Harris's', and with Talbot's enthusiastic encouragement to make the performance public. She pushed this enterprise forward, earnestly reminding Carter that Secker's labours should be rewarded by its publication.⁹⁶

Not only did she play the role of an agent asking Secker and Harris for advice and urging Carter to complete the work, she also acted as an organiser and planner of the project, asking for 'some kind of prefatory discourse', in order to communicate the nature of the work to the public and make it more acceptable. As a committed promoter of this project, her suggestions included such matters as the book's contents and appearance. Representing the needs of 'uninformed readers', she asks for a substantial explanatory appendage to the text:

When this main matter is done, it will perhaps be time enough to think of some kind of prefatory discourse, for the information of us uninformed readers, giving such accounts as can be best collected of the life and character of Epictetus, and the plan of the stoick philosophy, in doing which, or in your notes, you will have good opportunities to mark out those points in which it is false, wild, and defective, and to draw comparisons between that and, the only true philosophy, the Christian.⁹⁷

⁹⁵. A Series of Letters II, pp. 31, 35. Carter had heard of another project proceeding in Edinburgh and asked for an enquiry in the previous letter dated 21 May 1751 (II, p. 30).

⁹⁶. A Series of Letters, II, p. 138.

⁹⁷. A Series of Letters, II, pp. 138-39.

In response to Talbot's request, she declares that 'I will endeavour to give some little account of the stoical philosophy, which you seemed to think would be right, if my poor head will give me leave.'⁹⁸ Carter tried to avoid the task: 'Whoever that somebody or other is who is to write the Life of Epictetus, seeing I have a dozen shirts to make, I do opine, dear Miss Talbot, it cannot be I.'⁹⁹ She refuses to write biographical sketches, not simply because shirt-making occupied her mind, but because writerly consideration of the scantiness of materials led her to such a conclusion: 'seriously I did think of the thing, but there are so very few particulars to be met with upon this subject, and those few so universally known, that it seemed to me quite unnecessary.'¹⁰⁰ For all this reluctance, she in the end complied with the request. She writes later in the same letter: 'If my Lord and you really think all the few particulars relating to Epictetus, and the still fewer to Arrian, should be collected together, why I will do it as well as I can.'¹⁰¹ Eventually brief lives of Epictetus and Arrian were presented in her introduction.¹⁰²

Towards its completion the translation was assiduously examined by Secker: 'The Bishop of Oxford shut himself up with him for near a month, never leaving his study but for his morning ride and afternoon walk.'¹⁰³ His help at the latter stage was thus valuable, but his advice

⁹⁸. A Series of Letters, II, p. 192.

⁹⁹. A Series of Letters, II, p. 202.

¹⁰⁰. A Series of Letters, II, p. 202.

¹⁰¹. A Series of Letters, II, p. 203.

¹⁰². Secker writes in his autobiography: 'I ... wrote a considerable Part of the Preface' (Secker, The Autobiography, p. 36).

¹⁰³. A Series of Letters, II, p. 210. Secker records his exertion in the following manner: 'I corrected, with great Labour, every Page, as she wrote it, & transmitted it to me' (Secker, The Autobiography, p. 36).

at the outset was equally important. It was he who set out guidelines for the style of translation and set the tone of the text. He thought that the style of Carter's first pieces was too graceful and elaborate.¹⁰⁴ To this objection she at first resisted. She replied that she thought the writings of the ancients were sometimes so abrupt that they needed elaborate explanatory rendering:

should it not, therefore seem necessary to translate such a book rather in a paraphractical way? ... moreover books of morality, which have no sacred authority to recommend them, will find it difficult to recommend themselves without some little external helps.¹⁰⁵

In reply Secker attempted to persuade her not to be so ornamental in style as to falsify the tone of the original, nor so faithful as to interfere with the readability and the flow of the argument. As for the style most appropriate for the presentation of 'the old man's good heart', he recommends simplicity, with which he thinks Epictetus opposed the 'florid and panegyrical' style in vogue in his own time.¹⁰⁶ Talbot communicated Secker's advice thus: 'unless you can prove to him that

¹⁰⁴. In his autobiography he describes her style in a different and more critical way: 'I put her at first into a right manner of translating, which else would have been loose & spiritless' (Secker, The Autobiography, p. 36).

¹⁰⁵. Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Carter, I, p. 166. Although Montagu Pennington assumes that until Carter's stay in London in 1753, there was no intention to publish the translation, Carter here mentions 'the generality of readers' for the benefit of whose understanding of the reasoning of the ancient works she thinks she tends to be 'ornamental'.

¹⁰⁶. Nichols, Illustrations, III, p. 486.

Epictetus wore a laced coat, he will not allow you to dress him in one'.¹⁰⁷ He makes her think of an appropriate style to convey 'that warm and practical spirit', the tone and meaning of the original.¹⁰⁸ His preference is, to borrow the remark of Levine on Dacier, 'to explain the principal Beauties' of the text 'so that her readers might come fully to appreciate them':

a Translator should represent him in our tongue such as he appears in his own: not indeed copying the peculiarities of the language he speaks in, but still preserving his genuine air and character, as far as ever is consistent with making him rightly understood.¹⁰⁹

The scope of his advice includes technical matters, too:

Where the terms of his philosophy are now become obscure, or the manners of his age and country unsuitable to ours, I allow the one to be cleared up, and the other softened, to a requisite degree, in the Translation itself, and still more in a short note. Nay, some parts, those for instance where he digresses into logical niceties, provided a general notice be given of what nature they are, I think they may be passed over.¹¹⁰

His priority is to make the philosopher 'rightly understood', for which purpose he recommends that the reader should not be led into too scholarly

¹⁰⁷. Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Carter, vol.I, p. 165.

¹⁰⁸. Nichols, Illustrations, III, p. 487.

¹⁰⁹. Levine, The Battle of the Books, p. 139. Dated 13 Sept. 1749 included in John Nichols, Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century. consisting of Authentic Memoirs and Original Letters of Eminent Persons . . . (London: Nichols, 1817), III, p. 486.

¹¹⁰. Nichols, Illustrations, III, p. 486.

concerns. He wants the translation to consist of readable narratives rather than an erudite analysis of the text.

Carter amended her pieces probably shortly afterwards. Talbot responds to the revisions with enthusiastic support:

I admire Epictetus more and more every day, and this last chapter about storks nests especially. There is a nobleness in its simplicity very striking. A superiority of thought, and shortness of expression, that makes both my mother and me wish for more.¹¹¹

So, the style of Carter's sentences was altered so as to be appropriate, as Secker and Talbot thought, to the author's austerity. In a later letter Talbot repeats praise of Carter's decision to comply with their request to use simple diction:

What force, what life, what strength, and shortness of expression! What excellence of sentiment! What dignity and authority of reason, and common sense! And what an excellent reproof and lesson has the honest, plain old man given to me, (thank you a thousand times for transmitting it.)¹¹²

Originally Carter intended to offer 'some little external helps' by way of oratorical cramming, but the advisers urged an alternative way of conducting the readers. It is not certain whether the idea of a 'prefatory discourse' and brief biographies of Epictetus and Arrian came from Secker or Talbot herself, but it was Talbot who asked Carter

¹¹¹. 4 Nov. 1749, A Series of Letters, I, p. 317.

¹¹². Dec. 5 1749, Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Carter, vol. I, pp. 171-72.

to write them. She also perceived that classical authors needed some commentary from a Christian standpoint, thus appealing to a broader readership which included those who were not familiar with 'pagan' philosophy. In particular, she requested that the 'prefatory discourse' should warn the readers against that philosophy: 'It is terrifying ... to think what effects a book so mixed up of excellence and error might have in this infidel age, if it be not sufficiently guarded with proper notes and animadversions.'¹¹³ Carter at first felt no need for such precautions, for she thought the book would be read 'by none but very good Christians'.¹¹⁴ Talbot and Secker were not persuaded as they expected a larger audience. Carter came to believe that if Epictetus was in need of such warnings, he should not be translated at all. Carter was not aware of an unexplored market for the classical author. She also suspected the usefulness of translation per se:

Your Lordship seems to be of opinion, that this translation may do mischief, and I cannot help being a little alarmed and terrified about it. Epictetus, however well guarded in the translation, will, I fear, do but very little good to the unhappy people your Lordship mentions; and is it not therefore better that he should remain buried in Greek, where we may be pretty well assured he will do them but mighty little harm? Indeed I was always of opinion that the book would be of no use, but to those who the least need its assistance; but it never entered into my imagination that it would do any body any hurt. God forbid it should!¹¹⁵

Talbot continued her advice on what should be addressed in the

¹¹³. Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Carter, I, p. 187.

¹¹⁴. Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Carter, I, p. 188.

¹¹⁵. Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Carter, I, pp. 189-190.

introduction with detailed arguments; the topics included suicide and human perfection. Even then, Carter did not immediately withdraw her objections but at the end of her reply the persistence of her advisers begins to make her falter:

You say, indeed, that with proper notes and animadversions, the translation may be an excellent work. But it is surely a dangerous experiment to administer poison to try the force of an antidote. For my own part, I never had the least apprehension that an author who enjoins so strict a morality, who censures even the fashionable vices which fine gentlemen at present consider as mere trifles, and who discovers so deep a sense of religion, could be studied by bad people; or if he was, that the effect would be any other than the convincing them that there was nothing to be gained, though an infinite deal to be lost, by their turning Heathens. At present I know not what to think. The Bishop of Oxford and you, I hope, will think for me.¹¹⁶

She then gives way to doubt and reconsiders her own attitude: 'It is a secret to myself if I have by a long intimacy with Epictetus contracted any such fondness for him as to give me any unreasonable prejudice in his favour.'¹¹⁷ She misplaces the question; rather than recognizing the opportunities presented by an expanding readership she was hesitant about the project, distrusting the propriety of Epictetus's philosophy and her own role in translating it. After presenting all the arguments she could muster, Carter lost confidence in her own views and decided to follow her advisers' opinion.

In contrast Talbot was confident about what the book should be;

¹¹⁶. Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Carter, I, pp. 199-200.

¹¹⁷. Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Carter, I, p. 202.

she wanted it to be a new Epictetus different from the bare original on the basis of the idea that a translation was a different work of literature: 'With the cautions at which I have hinted, the English Epictetus will be a most excellent book, whatever objections I have made to the Greek one.'¹¹⁸ Thus, it was Talbot and Secker, as representatives of, respectively, the novice and learned readers of the classics, who chose what to present, in addition to the translation of the text itself. Nearly losing confidence in her own belief, Carter ultimately entirely conformed to their requests. In short, not only was she given advice on the technical aspects of translation, but also on a strategy designed to make an ancient philosopher more fully and safely understood by Christian readers. They recommended the translator to step forward to serve as a readers' guide. They promoted to fabricate a new version of the classics based not only on solid scholarship but also on a certain grasp of the needs of the contemporary reader.

What their advice had in common with Madame Dacier's successful example was their intention to fabricate a new version of the classics based not only on solid scholarship but also on a certain grasp of the needs of the contemporary reader. Dacier is quite explicit in her manifestation of her aim in the translation. She is aware that she presents her own version of Homer; she intends to convey the greatness of Homer, with full acknowledgement of the difficulties involved in accomplishing it in French prose, for the sake of those 'spoil'd by reading great numbers of idle and frivolous Books'.¹¹⁹ She admits that 'it is not Homer alive and animated', but asserts that 'still it is Homer; ...he will still retain lively colours enough to make it doubtful

¹¹⁸. Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Carter, I, p. 196. The judgment on translations by the court of Chancery is quoted in Catherine Gallagher, Nobody's Story: the Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace, 1670-1820 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994, p. 157.

¹¹⁹. The Iliad, ii.

for a Moment, whether there are not yet some Remains of Life in him'.¹²⁰ Her preface runs to an impressive sixty pages, followed by 'The Life of Homer'.¹²¹ Pope also followed her format of translation.¹²² A substantial scholarly and clear-sighted introductory essay contributed to the translation's successful formula.

In the long introduction to her book, Carter gives an interpretation of Stoic philosophy and an estimation of Epictetus. As she foretold to Talbot, the introduction depends much on the comments of Talbot and Secker: 'I am extremely obliged to the Bishop of Oxford and you for the admirable remarks you have been so good as to send me, and which, if the book is ever published, will make the most valuable part of it.'¹²³ From the perspective of a firm belief in the superiority of Christianity, the introduction explains Stoicism.¹²⁴ It points out the differences between Stoicism and Christianity in their ideas of suicide, the nature of the human soul, and so on, and subsequently sums up the defects of Stoicism, which is one of 'so many striking Instances of the Imperfection of human Wisdom'.¹²⁵ She invites the reader to assume the standpoint of an eighteenth-century Christian in reading an ancient moral author. In so doing, she introduces an explanation of only one term, avoiding leading the reader into technical complexities. What the finished product attempts is not to show her erudition and philological minuteness, but to invite the reader to discern the merits

¹²⁰. The Iliad, xxxi.

¹²¹. See also Levine, The Battle of the Books, pp. 133-47.

¹²². Levine, The Battle of the Books, p. 194; while Pope and his fellow-translator, Broome, followed Dacier's example, they are sometimes hostile towards her (Carolyn Williams, Pope, Homer, and Manliness, pp. 147-53).

¹²³. Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Carter, I, p. 203.

¹²⁴. All the Works of Epictetus, xv-xvi.

¹²⁵. All the Works of Epictetus, xxv.

and demerits of the Stoic philosophy from the viewpoint of a Christian. Showing her critical opinion, she makes it clear what one should warn oneself against and what one should learn from Epictetus.

The translation finally appeared in 1758 with the support of more than one thousand subscriptions. The introduction Talbot assiduously requested Carter to add was welcomed. Lord Lyttelton wrote:

I have lately read over again our friend Miss Carter's preface (meaning the introduction, for preface there is none) to Epictetus, and admire it more and more. I am also much struck with the poem prefixed to it by another female hand (Mrs. Chapone). The English ladies will appear as much superior to the French in wit and in learning, as the men in arms. [the additions in the brackets by Pennington]¹²⁶

Edward Young extols the frame of thought she gives in the introduction for the reader of her Epictetus: 'Miss Carter has my high esteem for showing us in so masterly a manner that Christianity has a foil in one of the brightest jewels of Pagan Wisdom, a jewel which you will allow she has set in gold.'¹²⁷

Hester Chapone in 'The Story of Fidelia' expresses the same view that the Christian faith should be the first essential although ancient philosophers had a superior moral sense from which much was to be learned by a Christian.¹²⁸ This is a story of a girl who is trained by her father

¹²⁶. Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Carter, I, pp. 212-13; Carter was pleased: 'I am sufficiently vain of my Lord Lyttelton's approbation of the Introduction to Epictetus' (October 20, 1762, Letters from Mrs. Elizabeth Carter, to Mrs. Montagu, between the Years 1755 and 1800 ed. Montagu Pennington (London: F.C. and J. Rivington, 1817), I, p. 175).

¹²⁷. The Correspondence of Edward Young 1683-1765 ed. Henry Pettit (Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 526.

¹²⁸. Miscellanies in Prose and Verse (London: E. and C. Dilly, 1775), pp. 68-124; the story was first printed in the Adventurer nos. 77, 78, 79

in her study of ancient philosophers, ruined by temptation, and finally saved by religious instruction. Fidelia's sense of morality, taken from 'the examples of antient sages and philosophers', is very strict, forbidding herself to consent to a marriage of convenience.¹²⁹ She leads a life of virtue, but with it she feels she gains nothing and comes to think: 'I sought for happiness in what is called virtue, but I found it not: shall I not try the other experiment, since I think I can hardly be more unhappy by following inclination, than I am by denying it?'¹³⁰ She yields to the seduction of Sir George Freelove and is subsequently abandoned: 'my innocence, my honour, was the sacrifice to passion and sophistry'.¹³¹ She is, in despair, about to commit suicide, when an old clergyman stops her. He and his wife teach her the principles of Christianity. She concludes her story with the remark that 'though VICE is constantly attended by misery, VIRTUE itself cannot confer happiness in this world, except it is animated with the hopes of eternal bliss in the world to come.'¹³² Fidelia before conversion is an embodiment of what is supposed to be inferior in stoic philosophy to Christianity: the pride of human reason without divine help, acceptance of suicide,

(1753). Sarah Chapone, when writing on George Ballard's behalf to Richardson, emphasises an advantage which Ballard claimed for women who are unlikely to make light of Christianity in their pursuit of classical learning: 'The pious and ingenious Author give his Reasons for undertaking this Work in his Preface. He hopes these Memoirs will shew the Women of the present Age, that Instances of Learning and Piety in their Sex have been frequently found together; and that great natural Talents, joined with high Degrees of acquired Knowledge have not yet (as far as he can inform himself) been misapplied to propagate or defend ill Principles by any of the Women eminent for those Perfections as they frequently are and have been by the other Sex' (FM XII, 48 E 6, 2, f.16, Nov 24 1750).

¹²⁹. Miscellanies, p. 93.

¹³⁰. Miscellanies, p. 103.

¹³¹. Miscellanies, p. 104.

¹³². Miscellanies, p. 124.

lack of belief in the world to come. In this story, Fidelia's uncle, who is a 'Christian by habit' and 'by no means qualified to "adorn the doctrine" which he professed to believe', blames her for her reading and supposed tendencies to romantic absurdities. Here Chapone's message is that the philosophical woman is not to be blamed for her learning itself (although the unthinking uncle thinks it is a vice), but for indulging herself in pagan philosophy, shunning Christianity. The advice given to Carter by Talbot and Secker and Chapone's moral fable have much in common. To state this mingled attitude toward the ancient philosophy, combining respect for its sense of virtue and pity for its lack of Christian principle, seems to have appealed to contemporary readers.

IV. Sarah Fielding's Translation

In The Cry, concerns about philosophy and Christianity are deployed in the same strain of argument as those of Carter and Chapone. Cylinda is a learned philosopher similar to Fidelia, but with a more emphatic arrogance in taking herself for 'the goddess of wisdom'.¹³³ Her father's 'principal delight was to instruct me; and he chose to educate me just in the same manner as if I had been a boy.'¹³⁴ She was, by the age of sixteen, 'an exceeding good latin scholar, and was pretty far advanced in greek.'¹³⁵ Because of her instructor's lack of religion, she 'had no fixed principle, but suffered my imagination to rove and play amongst the heap of unregulated stuff that my memory had heaped

¹³³. Cry, I, p. 256.

¹³⁴. Cry, I, p. 254.

¹³⁵. Cry, I, p. 254.

together'.¹³⁶ She learns the love of virtue from her father, but such virtue does not help her in her distress. Then she 'grew half weary of all philosophy, and began to wander after some other pursuit, some outward object of entertainment', indulging in pleasures without being 'caught in the snares of matrimony'.¹³⁷ When she reads and studies a letter from the wife of her last lover, she is 'by degrees awakened as from a dream' to realize the wife's Christian fortitude:

She could talk of hope in a situation wretched enough to drive almost the strongest mind to distraction; whilst I with all my boasted philosophy, for the meer gratification of a wild appetite, had from raging jealousy suffered inexpressible torments. From her christian faith and dependence on the promises of GOD, she had formed (she said) that hope on the surest and strongest foundation: she declared too, that although her heart could not but feel when she saw her husband unhappy, yet whilst she preserved that hope entire, no transitory evils could have power to sink her into a miserable despair.

I first learnt to read, 'tis true, out of the Bible; and had in my childhood read enough to remember some of the principal facts: but as in all my conversation which by my father's acquaintance fell chiefly amongst men of learning, and great literature, I had never heard the sacred writings mentioned with half the reverence which was paid to the heathen authors; I looked on christianity as well as every other religion, only as a piece of policy invented to keep the ignorant vulgar in awe; and I should have prided myself more in remembering a verse of Homer, Virgil, or Horace or a sentiment in Plato, than in knowing the whole doctrine of the old

¹³⁶. Cry, I, p. 258.

¹³⁷. Cry, II, pp. 5, 23.

and new testament.¹³⁸

She looks back with 'shame and remorse' which she thinks 'are doomed to be my companions, and comfortless and friendless must I wear out the remainder of my wretched days'.¹³⁹

However, Portia offers her friendship, saying, 'God forbid that true and humble repentance should ever want assistance or protection!'.¹⁴⁰ Portia too is a learned woman. Her parents saw to it that in her education:

I might have all the learning I was capable of attaining, and this for a very uncommon reason; namely, that I might not look up to it with a preposterous admiration as if it was something dwelling in the clouds, and the whole center of true wisdom. To persuade men against too high an admiration of any worldly and transitory advantages seems the whole drift of an eminent ethical heathen writer [Epictetus]; how much more then should a christian look with indifference on the trifling acquisitions which are no way productive of the happiness promised by his Saviour!¹⁴¹

Portia is a well-balanced woman. When Cylinda talks about her infatuation with the writings of Shaftesbury, Portia shows her discretion.¹⁴² Portia 'would by no means deny the author of [the

¹³⁸. Cry, II, pp. 101-02.

¹³⁹. Cry, II, p. 104.

¹⁴⁰. Cry, II, p. 285.

¹⁴¹. Cry, II, p. 107.

¹⁴². Shaftesbury was, according to Catherine Talbot, 'that bigotted heathen', and Elizabeth Carter 'was charmed with his imagination and language, but thought him a very bad reasoner, and greatly offended at his levity.' (A Series of Letters, II. pp. 137, 192).

Characteristics] his due praise', admiring him as a writer for his 'strong and elegant strokes' and 'his taste' and 'his understanding'.¹⁴³ She leads her argument from Shaftesbury to Socrates through a consideration of slander and true reputation. She explains: 'Anytus, on some private pique, sought to take away the life of Socrates' but he and his friend found 'the character of Socrates was too much honoured and revered, for them to hope success from any slanderous accusation against him.' They applied to 'the witty Aristophanes'. In his comedy 'by false ridicule' he tried to 'depreciate the man whose wisdom soar'd far above his reach.' Portia puts forward her sentiments concerning Socrates and appeals for recognition of the fraudulence of an indictment laid against him:

Socrates was loaded with false accusations, as being the head of a sect who denied the being of the gods; ... Those accusations, which were first swallowed in the form of jesting on the theatre, now became serious in the forum; and thus, by the force of ridicule, of funn, of burlesque, (meant undoubtedly only to make folks merry) was laid the true foundation for the fall of the wisest and best man that ever yet appear'd in the heathen world.¹⁴⁴

Portia's attitude shows partiality for Socrates, and the author has information and knowledge about him to offer to the reader.

However, Sarah Fielding did not attach her moral opinions or commentary on Socrates or Xenophon to the translation. She might have thought that Socrates was too well-known to need such an introduction. The nature of the text as memoirs was likely to prevent her from following the typically successful format of translation which was preceded by the translator's original introductory comments and essays or

¹⁴³. Cry, II, pp. 302-03.

¹⁴⁴. Cry, II, pp. 304-06.

biographical sketches. Another possible reason is that she could not spare time to do anything further than translation; when she finished the text, she was well behind the schedule because of her illness.

Yet she did at least feel the need to ask Harris if she should expand her explanatory comments about Socrates. She apparently made an enquiry to him about the preface. Having been given his answer, she writes to him: 'I am very glad of having your Opinion that the simplest account of the Genius of Socrates is the best, as I believe is the case wherever there is long and intricate debates on any subject.'¹⁴⁵ Accordingly, in the preface she mentions the merits of the material briefly, only by claiming 'that the Memoirs of SOCRATES, with Regard to the greatest Part, are held in the highest Estimation, is most certain'. She does not offer explanation or instruction. Paraphrasing Samuel Johnson, she takes it for granted that the reader shares her appreciation of the classics:

This Candour is more particularly becoming us in the Perusal of the Works of ancient Authors; of those Works which have been preserved in the Devastation of Cities; and snatched up in the Wreck of Nations: Which have been the Delight of Ages; and transmitted as the great Inheritance of Mankind, from one Generation to another; and we ought to take it for granted, that there is a Justness in the Connexion, which we cannot trace; and a Cogency in the Reasoning, which we cannot understand.¹⁴⁶

She proceeds: 'The Translator of the following Sheets, would willingly bespeak the same Candour, in reading the Translations of the ancient Writers, which hath above been thought so necessary, for judging right

¹⁴⁵. Battestin and Probyn, p. 160.

¹⁴⁶. Memoirs of Socrates, iv; The Adventurer, No. 58, Sat. 26 May, 1753, The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson (New Haven and Yale: Yale University Press, 1958-90), vol. II (1963), pp. 371-72.

of the Originals.'¹⁴⁷ Her preface is very brusque, while the examples of Dacier and Carter displayed authority, offering unyielding directions for reading the text in their introductions. As for notes, she depends on Harris's etymology, Carter's Epictetus, and Potter's, and there are few of her own. So, she does not step forward as an interpreter and guide to the reader; she keeps herself as silent as possible.

The chief, or probably sole, mentor in Sarah Fielding's translation was James Harris, an authority on philology. As Probyn puts it, 'Harris is always the sympathetic mentor keen to enlarge his reader's awareness by sharing his own discoveries' and he 'tried hard to revivify classical philosophy as a homogeneous and universal system of conduct for "men of action and business; men of the world".'¹⁴⁸ His scholarly assistance and his kindness were precious to her; his answers to her questions are detailed and seem to have been very helpful.¹⁴⁹ Having received a letter of instruction from Harris, she writes to him:

for Instruction and that only I took the Opportunity of your granted Indulgence to transcribe that Paragraph, which End the Translation you was so pleased to send me has fully answered, for I see therein clearly the fine address of that Passage, which before was surrounded with much more Obscurity.¹⁵⁰

Harris also guided her in punctuation and arrangement of the sentences:

You have also set me free from a chain about the smaller Divisions, which before much perplexed me, for tho I often perceived a seeming

¹⁴⁷. Memoirs of Socrates, iv-v.

¹⁴⁸. Probyn, The Sociable Humanist, pp. 87, 105.

¹⁴⁹. Battestin and Probyn, pp. 162-62.

¹⁵⁰. Battestin and Probyn, p. 160.

necessity for the Continuity of a sentence without making a full stop, yet as this is the only Edition I have seen, could not be sure that it was not necessary to keep to the form in which the Greek is printed.¹⁵¹

She expresses whole-hearted gratitude for his scholarly help:

If your own kind Assurances had not encouraged me to apply to you in this Manner, I should think my self very importunate and troublesome but on them I rely, and think I am following the advice of Socrates, whilst, wherein, I find my own Ignorance, I apply properly for Information.¹⁵²

Harris was a reliable and helpful mentor on questions of meticulous scholarly expertise. However, he was not such a committed adviser as Secker and Talbot in the project of publishing a translation. Around the time Sarah Fielding asked his help he was extremely busy with preparations for a parliamentary election. He managed to spare sufficient time to offer advice in his strongest fields, etymological and philological concerns, but otherwise did not influence her performance. Before she received his opinion, she had already published an advertisement soliciting subscriptions. The urgent situation in which Sarah Fielding asked him to help her -- in contrast with Carter's nearly ten years' preparation -- might have prevented him from becoming involved with the practical aspects of seeing the work through the press. But in any case he was not the sort of the person to help to produce a translation which would have a wide-ranged appeal and consequently produce financial gains. He was a very wealthy gentleman, above

¹⁵¹. Battestin and Probyn, p. 160.

¹⁵². Battestin and Probyn, p. 170.

speculating in publication, who was qualified to claim in the preface of his Hermes that 'as his studies were never prosecuted with the least regard to lucre, so they are no way calculated for any lucrative End.'¹⁵³

In contrast with Sarah Fielding's overall gratitude, Elizabeth Carter, whom Harris also offered his assistance, expresses unease with Harris's guidance.¹⁵⁴ She is of course grateful for Harris's help. However, his attention to 'logical niceties', which according to Secker's advice 'may be passed over', baffles her:

I find, to my sorrow, that Mr. Harris insists on the translation of that wicked logical chapter from which my Lord had in great clemency absolved me. To be sure it would be an excellent piece of revenge to prevail on him to do it himself; but I really know not how to make him such a request; so I must even attempt to do it as well as I can. It is but leaving it just as unintelligible as I find it. I am greatly obliged to Mr. Harris; and I hope my Lord will be so good, when he has an opportunity, as to mention my grateful acknowledgments of the favour he has done me.¹⁵⁵

Harris's method of learning and writing was 'that of a scientifically rigorous examination of sources and an unswerving devotion to logical rigour'.¹⁵⁶ His priority in etymological concerns, which Sarah Fielding records in her notes, acknowledging his contribution, was not really

¹⁵³. Hermes: or a Philosophical Inquiry Concerning Language and Universal Grammar (London: H. Woodfall, 1751), vi.

¹⁵⁴. Harris also offered help to promote a subscription for Carter; she writes to Harris: 'I am very sensible of the Honour I shall receive from our appearing to interest your self in my Success' (dated Jan 24, 1758, 9M/73/B44).

¹⁵⁵. Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Carter, I, p. 181.

¹⁵⁶. Probyn, The Sociable Humanist, p. 86.

compatible with the principles of translation adopted by Carter's team. They did not ignore scholarly concerns, but they were more interested in producing a book which provides the reader with educated yet comfortable reading.

Harris's habits of advice matched Sarah Fielding's inclination towards focussed scholarship. When he sent her a copy of a French translation of Xenophon, she thanked him for his kindness, but set aside the French version. The reasons she mentions are revealing her priorities:

because I have a double view in this Translation the Improvement of the Greek as well as the Substantial Utility which my Situation makes Needful, and if I had the French before me it might encline me not so thoroughly to search the Greek Lexicon, for to spare pains, and more especially at my time of Life, is natural.¹⁵⁷

The two purposes she expresses here are both worth consideration. First, she aims at the scholarly improvement of her Greek. Of course she intended to prepare a good translation as a product, but her primary intention is to exercise and improve her proficiency in Greek. Her aim is to polish and perfect her intellectual abilities, by applying herself to the labour of scholarship, so as to achieve intellectual self-contentment.

As I have suggested above, translation provided the potential of achieving a literary reputation and financial rewards. Sarah Fielding was not being fanciful in opting for translation for the purpose of 'the Substantial Utility'. However, her intention to earn by

¹⁵⁷. 4 Dec. [4 Jan. 1760?], Battestin and Probyn, p. 153; a note to this passage points to her poverty to explain 'the Substantial Utility', and her letters to Samuel Richardson in 1758 and 1759 mention repayment of money she borrowed from him (Battestin and Probyn, pp. 149, 150).

translation put her under pressure; she was pressed to meet deadlines and did not devote enough time to preparing the translation. As Harris had not replied to her enquiries for a considerable time, taking his silence for his politeness, she wrote that she was ashamed of 'a Translation, or rather a Schoolboy's Exercise', which she discussed as 'that premature attempt of mine'.¹⁵⁸ Nevertheless she felt unable to abandon the project. Her scholarly motivation was forced to struggle with the situation of a needy writer who had already issued an advertisement calling for subscriptions. She is desperate to justify her persistence by emphasising her improvement: 'I have since taken a good deal of pains, and hope it is a Proof of my having made some Improvement as it has served to shew me how greatly I often erred in that premature attempt of mine.'¹⁵⁹ Indeed, in the postscript to the same letter, she is far from withdrawing the project but asks for Harris's assistance in gathering subscriptions: 'I hope you will give me leave to credit my List with your Name.'¹⁶⁰ Since the name of Harris, as an established author of *Hermes* and a man of respectable family, would advertise the book, she asks for his assistance in its promotion, although in the very same letter she deeply suspects her performance was not good enough.

The book was published at the beginning of 1762. In March Sarah Fielding expresses to Harris the feelings of a translator about its reception. She satisfies herself with appreciation by the acquainted few:

I am really and honestly rejoiced at the Approbation you express

¹⁵⁸. 25 Dec [1759], Battestin and Probyn, p. 151.

¹⁵⁹. 25 Dec.[1759], Battestin and Probyn, p. 151.

¹⁶⁰. As shown in a note (Battestin and Probyn, pp. 155-56, n. 7), Harris's family (as many as seven members) and his relatives appear in the subscription list.

of Xenophon &, for tho when I put myself on the public I would wish not to be over anxious for fame, yet ye favourable Opinion of ye few, & more particularly of those friends whose Judgments are estimable, certainly gives great pleasure I shall be happy if you do not find a great many Mistakes when you look into the Greek- some I doubt not, for tho Xenophon in general is not very hard for Greek - yet there are passages pretty perplexing.¹⁶¹

She expresses the satisfaction of a scholar who has devoted herself conscientiously to accuracy. But this contentment is tinged with the resignation of someone defeated in the market place. Even if she 'would wish not to be over anxious for fame', she did wish for a commercial success. This thankfulness towards the few is a consolation for her failure to appeal to a larger public.

The successful translators such as Madame Dacier, Pope, and Carter, made their own books from the classics, with detailed introduction and analysis, making their learning accessible to the public. Indeed, they created products of their own from the classics by way of offering their own estimation and interpretation. Dacier argues against those who regard translation as 'no Creation'.¹⁶² Carter made her private knowledge public with the assistance of members of her circle. In inviting the readers to share their knowledge in an approachable and sociable way, they transformed their private expertise into a public project.

Sarah Fielding was less skilful in taking advantage of her own learning and making it public, being more occupied with the translation as a private exercise for scholarly accuracy. She was endowed with remarkable attentiveness to scholarly linguistic concerns which she

¹⁶¹. Battestin and Probyn, p. 174.

¹⁶². The Iliad, xxxv.

could communicate to her learned mentor. She was well-read in philosophy and could have exhibited her knowledge. However, in publishing a translation she made less use of her sensitiveness to the tastes and requirements of her audience than when she wrote fiction. Her sense of the need to negotiate with the reader is suspended in her project of translation. After all, classical knowledge to her was primarily a private engagement conducted behind closed doors. She did not recognize, or attempted to ignore, the contradiction between the private exercise and public appeal in this project.

As she did not invest much in building a self-image as a virtuous learned woman, so she did little do to expand the potential use of her learning. Fundamentally learning was to her an inward-looking pursuit for self-discipline and satisfaction. Practical profits apart, this convergence was a kind of what learning should be to her. In the project targeted at fairly well-educated readers, unlike in fiction intended for a wider readership, Sarah Fielding had no need to fear distortion at the hands of a broad audience of unknown readers. Furthermore, by concentrating her attention on her academic pursuits she liberated herself from the prevalent disapproval and criticism against female learning. As in Lady Mary's advice for her granddaughter, female learning was not too problematic as long as it was confined to the study. Importantly, however, Sarah Fielding made public the products of her scholarly self-discipline. She carried the attitude in the study to the world of print and thus put herself above being attentive to the decorum and codes required of a female writer. Paradoxically, she was able to perform this non-gendered achievement within the seemingly gendered sphere of learning by means of a translation which could be valued for its superior accuracy irrespective of a general public response.

Conclusion

This thesis attempted to focus on how Sarah Fielding constructed the relationships between the author, the text, and the reader. Sarah Fielding's literary activities present one typical pattern of a well-educated person in the eighteenth century; she was attempting to secure a literary place for herself among the unfathomable and unpredictable forces of commercialization in the expanding printing business. Her education and extensive reading prepared a resourceful literary stock in her, equipping her with 'a mind of vast extent'.¹ Basically her literary concerns were rooted in the traditional established culture and they were nourished with topical interests. Her situation did not allow her to live like an aristocratic or gentlemanly amateur of literary pursuit, but it played a significant part in making her aware that her literary resource could be profitable. It prepared her to a certain degree to be attentive to the market's demands, although she did not accommodate herself entirely to current literary fashions. Neither did she become wholly entrenched in established genres, though she imbibed their culture, but attempted to produce something different from them.

One indicator of her stance is her ambivalent attitude toward the cult of sensibility. She draws on the fashion but always seeks to control its effect. The sentimental novel offered accessibility to those who were concerned about their social and cultural position even if they were not equipped with education or intellectual privilege. Markman Ellis, examining its political role, sheds light on this openness and special capacity to appeal to a wider public. The involvement of

¹ Mary Scott, *The Female Advocate: A Poem. Occasioned by Reading Mr. Duncombe's Feminead* Augustan Reprint Society, 224 (Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1984[1774]), p. 23.

the wider audience contributed to its forming a cultural and political phenomenon. The significant new group who took part in the trend was women. This new readership is associated with the gendered reform of manners and transformation of ethics, which contributed to ideological, social and political changes. Here sentimentalism meant more than just shedding tears. Although or rather because sentimentalism was such a significant political force, it generated a great controversy, as Ellis argues. The focus of the controversy was the effect of the sentimental novel on the susceptible and ignorant, that is, the young and women. The elite who willingly accepted sentimentalism as part of polite reform for themselves could oppose it as a dangerous corruptive force toward the young and women.² *Sarah Fielding, taking advantage of sentimentalism's capacity to be understood and made a practical force by a wider audience, simultaneously sends a message of warning about the danger of its possible misuse.*

In terms of sentimentalism, women are considered as a group, as a new rising cultural identity.³ Here, women are representative of those who newly acquired access to literature and of those who are treated mainly anonymously and collectively. Then, women who imbibed more knowledge than ordinary women did and were already familiar with literature and culture, were standing in a problematic position. Although female, they were not at all culturally susceptible and ignorant. They resist such simple categorisation. *Though the phenomenon of sensibility tended to be thought to capivate women*, well-educated women took a more complicated and cautious view of it. As one of the intellectually privileged, Sarah Fielding's attitude toward sentimentalism shows two contrary stances. She appears to have resorted to a typically sentimental type of writing, but even the most sentimental of her works offers a

² Markman Ellis, The Politics of Sensibility: Race, Gender and Commerce in the Sentimental Novel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), esp., pp. 2-3, 23-8, 35-48, 190-221.

³ For the various aspects of gendering of sensibility, see G.J. Barker-Benfield, The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

force to resist it. Hers is a combination of advocating sentimentalism on one hand and opposing it on the other. In this sense, she adopts the stance of the cultural elite, usually male.

David Simple is often thought to be representative of the novel of sensibility. The scenes of compassion are described with the sympathetic characters' shedding tears; these characters' words fail them and their tears express their emotion. When the distressed Camilla asks David to take good care of her suffering brother, David serves her with a heart 'moved by the suffering or distress of another, and by the desire to relieve it'.⁴ He runs to arrange for what they need, 'with his Heart ready to burst, and his Eyes overflowing'.⁵ Camilla replies with overwhelming gratitude: 'she was unable to speak, or to refrain any longer from bursting into a Flood of Tears, which was the only means she had left to express her Thoughts'.⁶ They are not the only ones that are unable to speak; the narrator also admits the scene is beyond her expression: 'as Tenderness, when it is come to the height, is not to be described, I shall pass over the rest of this Scene in Silence'.⁷ When David and Camilla are in great distress for the deaths of their children, the narrator recedes from description with this notice: 'The true Reason why I dwell not on that Concern, is, that Words cannot reach it - the sympathizing Heart must imagine it - and the Heart that has no Sympathy, is not capable of receiving it'.⁸ The silence frustrates the modern reader and is possibly a product of an inexperienced writer.

⁴ A definition of 'compassion', OED.

⁵ David Simple, p. 128.

⁶ David Simple, p. 129.

⁷ David Simple, p. 189.

⁸ David Simple, p. 412.

However, this preference for the tacit understanding of feelings rather than the persuasive depiction of a skilful writer appealed to the readers, as a result of which David Simple was the most popular of Sarah Fielding's works and is indeed now considered her principle achievement. The taste of the readers permitted and welcomed the non-eloquence of the writer. The silence was understood not as a defect of description but a tool to invite readers to take part in the simulation of sentimental experience.

On the other hand, David Simple conveys warnings against the misapplication of sensibility. Sarah Fielding is as aware of the danger of indulgence in reason as of the susceptibility of sentimentalism's falling into mere affectation and self-victimization. While Mr Orgueil is an exaggeration of cold reason and logic, Mrs Orgueil is an extreme of sensibility, a caricature of affectation in David Simple Volume the Last. Even in the earlier volume, a really thoughtful person represents the importance of the silent communication of feeling hearts, not pompous display of emotions. The dying mother of Valentine and Camilla avoids uttering touching words which would make their separation harder to bear: 'As she knew our Sufferings, and that losing her was as much as we were able to bear, she avoided saying any thing tender, lest she should add to our Sorrows; but in her Looks we read what any one, who had less Consideration, and yet had a Mind capable of feeling, would have said'.⁹ This is a warning against the easily palpable expression of emotions like Mrs Orgueil's. Contrary to Mrs Orgueil's overt way of grieving her own misfortunes, truly moral weeping is weeping for others; the virtuous characters do not weep for their own suffering in David Simple. The absence, not the emission of words or even tears, tells of their affliction. On the verge of losing his beloved Camilla, '[David] could

⁹ David Simple, p. 136.

not weep - he sat as one stupified'.¹⁰ At her death, heavy grief overwhelms him but he is calm with 'patient resignation', without a flood of tears. Thus the author makes much of absence of sentimental display.

It is the question of communication that she raises here. As long as it is a way of responding to others' plight, a flood of tears can be an indication to let others know that a person understands their suffering. It should not be a tool to advertise one's own grief as a person indulges in it; just like the flood of trifling words of incommunicable people, Mrs Orgueil's tears are of one-way expression and do not contribute to communication. So the author points out that sentimentalism as well as language can be both a means of communication and an obstacle to it.

Both John Hoadly and Mary Scott, who wrote in Sarah Fielding's memory, draw attention to her ability to teach through writing.¹¹ She is a writer who is almost always conscious of the need to persuade the reader into moral improvement and also is aware of the resistance of an incommunicable mass of people. So, her world consists of two kinds of parties: one of the understanding and compassionate and the other of the vain and incommunicable world. In her fictional situations, there is always a small community of mutual understanding, which is surrounded by the harsh unsympathetic world of the majority. The former attempt to search for one another in the vast sea of the latter. Her protagonists seek for a comfortable small niche in the harsh world. Some of her fictional characters, notably Cynthia and Portia, are well aware of the threatening mass of the majority and critical of their superficial understanding, vanity, selfishness, and brash false importance. They might be disappointed with the impossibility of communication with these

¹⁰ David Simple, p. 413.

¹¹ The tablet in the church of Charlcombe by Hoadly and Mary Scott, The Female Advocate, pp. 22-3.

people and suffer from their distortive interpretation, but however harsh and despairing the outer world is, they can retire to the protected nook of warm social relationships.

Sarah Fielding, as an author of works intended for publication, was well aware of the peril of publication that her texts, once published, could not be retained in such a nook. While she was attracted to the limited community of shared values, she attempted to set out from it with a fundamentally optimistic view that she would be able to work on the reader. Her literary activities were kept on a balance of expectation and fear of publication. This anxiety and the optimism coexisted in her. Indeed, her ardent appeal to the reader derives from the mixture of these feelings. Moreover, motivated to publish for the sake of financial rewards, she knew that she should appeal to the majority. In other words, she was very conscious of the need to conceive of her readership and seek for effective means to reach it. In search of methods to work on the reader, she did not choose to depend on describing individual perceptions and feelings. Rather, she made her appeal to communal reason and sympathy. Her chosen strategies were: first the stance of sympathetic reassurance to the readers who already shared values with her. Secondly she attempted to enlighten, educate, and persuade the majority to agree with her and correct their principle and manners. These dual purposes produced conflicts and at the same time were a source of her strength.

The two kinds of images of addressees she presents, the candid and the perverse, play a more complicated role than they at first appear to. Even the division itself becomes problematic. Just as the notion of politeness was the standard of the elite which could be on the one hand open for the aspiring and on the other exclusive of many, the two groups of expected readers have no tangibly defined border. Codes and conditions of qualification depends on the reader's perception; any

reader can feel and claim that he or she is included in the chosen few and can throw a critical glance at the imagined troublesome majority. So, any reader could identify with the select few by his or her own judgment and be pleased with the privileged position while reading. In this sense the emphasis on the select few could be a convenient marketing technique of an author to gratify the majority rather than the minority.

In the first chapter I discussed Sarah Fielding's conception of authorship. First of all she believes in the worth of literature as an active and useful instrument to construct and amend the reader's moral personality. She does not leave this notion as an unsaid presupposition, but articulates it. She relies on the potency of the author's control and tries to exercise it. To impress the importance of the function of reading she has in mind, she makes much use of her prefaces and also exemplifies ways of reading in the texts. She addresses the reader about the author's responsibility for moral improvement and about the reader's role. What she stresses is that the use of literary products is realized in the collaboration between the author and the reader. As she expects the reader to take care that the text should become part of the reader's contemplation and practice, she invites the reader to share the responsibility. This united force of the author and reader is activated, in her analogy with a personal meeting, by introducing the author's intention to the reader and displaying that the author has a sound grasp of the reader's needs.

However, she is plagued by an anxiety. She is significantly attentive to the danger of the reader's misunderstanding once the text is set free from the author's hand. It is because of this perceived danger that she repeatedly asks the reader to behave like a candid learner, not like a perverse critic. She therefore repeatedly attempts to impress the importance of grasping the author's moral intention and of applying the reflection and instruction conveyed in it to the reader's life. Her awareness of the danger and also of the tenaciousness of the distortive

tendency is presented in her description of the stubborn, malicious, and incommunicable mass of people, the 'Cry'. The tension between a willingness to share responsibility and the sense of the danger of distortion is not resolved however often and insistently she asks for candour. Nonetheless, she tries to persuade the reader into joining her side.

The following chapter examines her management of the novels' constructive force in her narrative patterns, in particular, the narrative strategies she employs to attract the reader's attention and direct the reader to 'the true Use of Reading'. In considering her narrative strategies, I paid attention to the characteristic of the novel as a comprehensive, synthesizing, and mediatory practice. She absorbs various types of traditional genres and practices, specifically biography, essays, fables, theories of epic, popular poetry, and satire, combining and modifying them for her own use.

Sarah Fielding's narratives are constructed with a dual avowed concern of instruction and delight. She makes much of the author's skills both in acute observation of human nature for instruction and in fictionalization for entertainment. Influenced by the function of the 'fable', she presents each core lesson embellished with entertaining fiction. In arranging fictional episodes, she favours the use of parallels so as to clarify her moral intention. Analogous stories reinforce the moral lessons she attempts to convey, and the device of her characters' recognition of similar life stories and learning from them within the narrative invites the reader to draw parallels between the text and the reader's practice. The parallels she makes in the form of quotation and adaptation also display a model of reading; she shows her own use of reading in order to induce the reader to follow her example.

In her narrative patterns of moral observation and parallels, there lies a controlling agent, her spectating observer. The observer is employed to disentangle and analyze the complication of the human

mind. The disentanglement is accompanied by the exposure of unexpected truths for the reader's pleasure of discovery. This agent is characterized by a penetrating satiric point of view. However, her tone of satire is subdued and modified with a display of diffidence. This self-reflexive attitude coexists and keeps balance with the confidence of an instructor and spectator.

The third chapter focuses on one of the most fertile genres of writings in the eighteenth century: epistles. The manipulative potential of letter writing has long been recognized, and doubt has been cast on the conventional gendering of the epistolary genre as 'feminine'. Indeed, Sarah Fielding's epistolary writings are motivated not by an individual's 'feminine' emotional involvement but by the detachment of a spectator. Criticism of the underestimation of feminine epistolary style has yielded valuable results, but its emphasis tends to constrain the scope in reading women's epistles. The treatment of Sarah Fielding's personal and fictional letters signals a need for reconsideration. Rather than being communicated through confessional letters, her 'familiarity' consists in rational conversation and a tacit mutual understanding of shared values. For her, familiar letters were a vehicle not for exposure of individual's private feelings but for the exposure of vices, a modest display of virtues, and sober intellectual analysis, confirming the consensus.

The ideal small community of her 'familiarity' of mutual understanding is not without its own anxiety and the threat from the outside world. But when she presents a protected community of malleable children, the ideal becomes more explicit. Here in the protected world of children the process of instruction and learning, the application of what one has learned to one's life, is fully realized. Significantly the characters receive narratives as a material for self-reflexion and amendment rather than being dictated to by a teacher. In the same way the reader is expected to take an active part in his or her own education.

In this education the focus is on the learner's ability to improve him or herself. Sarah Fielding inherited from earlier educational writings not only this optimistic belief in the human reason and the possibilities of nurturance but also the stress on the ideal social relationship. She underscores the building up of friendly equal relationships. Similar to the stance of the teacher within the text, the author does not take a domineering authoritative position. This attitude is connected with modesty in contrast with the confident commanding authority of the writers at the end of the century. However, her case testifies that this apparent modesty was a result of careful consideration of the readership and a part of her conscious literary strategies.

In the last chapter, I examined her inclination to retreat into her comfortable personal space in her non-fictional project, translation. Here she could easily retire to her pursuit of scholarly pleasure in private exercise. She earned herself respect by her minute attention to linguistic and philosophical concerns among specialists, but her performance did not award her with a widely acknowledged scholarly reputation or monetary reward. Among her contemporaries, Elizabeth Carter skilfully bridged the gap between her scholarly private exercise and her literary output for publication. As a comparison with Carter's project reveals, Sarah Fielding's desire to engage a public usually deployed when writing fiction did not go further than taking up translation, which itself was an opportunity to enlarge her audience. Her sense of the need to negotiate with the reader was suspended in this project. After all, classical knowledge to her was primarily a private engagement of self-discipline in the study behind the closed door. She did not recognize, or attempted to ignore, the contradiction, for learned women in particular, between private exercise and public appeal in this project. This can be her inability, but from another viewpoint this can be understood as her brave challenge to the world of letters. Here as she focused her attention to her study, she could ignore disapproval

against women's learning. She audaciously brought the attitude of self-discipline in the study into the world of print.

Another contradiction of modesty and confidence can be seen toward the end of her career in writing fiction. She describes the endless demand of the printing world which she perceives that she scarcely keeps up with: 'I hope the Great Mouth of the Press will be satisfied pray let it be contrived to do if it can....'¹² She feels exploited rather than she is exploiting her talents in the medium of print. The sense of achievement or pride in finishing the composition of a story is not at all dominant in this letter she wrote to Richardson on the completion of Dellwyn. She is filled with the sense of writing herself out. She declares that she cannot do any additional work: 'if it is necessary I must write a small Preface but I had rather not for I am quite weary.'¹³ Thus she is well aware of the voraciousness of the publishing world and the powerlessness of herself. However, it is in the substantial preface of Dellwyn that she confidently defines her own role and the role of the readers. In addition, she pushes forward her reading principle by the help of the examples of Lord and Lady Dellwyn within the story. Although her drafts might be swallowed by 'the Great Mouth of the Press', she attempts not to lose hold of the reins. In the printed text she impresses the reader with the active image of a controlling author.

My overall concern has been Sarah Fielding's attention to the reader and the strategies she employed to expand the readership. As a writer at the time of 'the rise of the novel' and 'the rise of the woman novelist', she groped her way toward fashioning her own style. Examination of her endeavours provides one pattern of female authorship in the mid-eighteenth-century literary milieu. Not overtly authoritative, it is a locus of subtle complexities of anxiety, ambition,

¹² The Correspondence of Henry and Sarah Fielding, ed. Martin C. Battestin and Clive T. Probyn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 149.

assertiveness, and manipulation. Her intellectual energy tended to be introverted and spent on self-training, but as her search involved the construction of the consumer of her literary product, that inward-looking self-discipline was in search of^a dynamic voice to communicate with the reader. The printing world and the mass readers behind it threatened her and made her flinch. Even so, she continued to step forward into the public sphere.

¹³ Battestin and Probyn, p. 149.

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² David Simple 'By a Lady' was first published in May 1744, which was reported in the Gentleman's Magazine for 1744, p. 288. A second edition with Henry Fielding's preface was published in the same year.

³ The True Patriot in February 1746 has a notice of delay of publication, expecting it 'in January next', but the date was further delayed. The two volumes were published by subscription on 10 April 1747. The 507 subscribers include Ralph Allen (5 sets), the Earl of Chesterfield, Dr. Collier, Mr. Dodsley (6 sets), Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and Mr. Richardson.

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⁴ It was first published in 1757 bound in quarto by subscription with the dedication signed 'S. Fielding'. In the list of the 491 subscribers to Cleopatra and Octavia we find Ralph Allen (2 Books) and Mrs Allen (2 Books), the Earl of Bath, the Earl of Chesterfield (3 Books), Rev. Dr. Delany (10 Books), Mr. Dodsley (6 Books), David Garrick, Dr. Hoadly, James Harris, Mr. Hogarth, Lord Lyttelton (2 Books), Lady Barbara Montagu, Mrs. Montagu, Edward Wortley Montague (10 Books), Mr. Millar (6 Books) Mr. Richardson (4 Books), Miss Talbot, and Saunders Welch. In the following year a second corrected edition was published in 12mo (London and Bath: sold by Millar, Dodsley, and Leake, 1758).

⁵ Ralph Allen (3 Books) and Mrs. Allen (3 Books), Burke, Mrs. Elizabeth Carter, Mrs. E. Cutts, Dr. Arthur Collier, Rev. Dr. Delany (7 Books), Robert Dingley, Rev. Mr. Greaves, James Harris, Rev. Dr. Hoadley (4 Books), Right Hon. Lord Lyttleton, Mr. J. Leake, Jun., Miss Hester Lynch, Rt. Hon. Lady Barbara Montagu, Edward Montagu and Mrs. Montagu, Wortley Montagu (4 Books), Miss Mulso, Mr. Newberry (3 Books), William Oliver, Right Hon. the Countess of Pomfret, Hon. Mrs. Poyntz, Mr. Richardson, Mrs Scott, Miss Talbot, Saunders Welch were among the 606 subscribers to Memoirs of Socrates.

⁶ Wilbur L. Cross, The History of Henry Fielding (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1918), II, 40. But the Wesleyan edition does not agree with Cross's attribution. See The True Patriot and Related Writings ed. W.B. Coley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 245n.

⁷ Cross, II, 92. The Wesleyan edition does not deny Sarah Fielding's authorship. See The Jacobite's Journal and Related Writings ed. W.B. Coley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), p. 317n.

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