A 'Plea of Humanity'? Emotions and the Makings of Lunacy Reform in Britain, c.1770-1820.

MARK NEUENDORF

BA (Hons) History (First Class), University of Adelaide

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
Department of History, Faculty of Arts,
University of Adelaide.

June 2017

Declaration

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

I also give permission for the digital version of my thesis to be made available on the web, via the University's digital research repository, the Library Search and also through web search engines, unless permission has been granted by the University to restrict access for a period of time.

Signed _____

Date _____

Acknowledgements

I would never have contemplated attempting a PhD (least of all in early modern history!) if it wasn't for the support of my principal supervisor, Dr Claire Walker. For over ten years, as a teacher, mentor, and friend, Claire has been a constant source of inspiration, encouraging me to pursue my interests, and always ready to offer assistance. I could not have completed this thesis without her guidance, and for that I will always be grateful.

Special thanks also to David Lemmings and Katie Barclay, for their extensive assistance throughout my candidature. As my co-supervisor, David, too, has provided support and feedback over a long period, and I have been fortunate to benefit from his extensive knowledge of eighteenth-century history. Though having less direct involvement, Katie has nonetheless also had a profound influence on my work. Besides reading and commenting on the thesis draft in full, Katie has always been generous with her time, and her critical feedback and probing questions have challenged me to develop my ideas in new ways.

This project was made possible through the support of the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions. Apart from financial assistance, I have benefited greatly from the guidance of the Centre's extensive network of researchers and distinguished international visitors, and the administrative support provided by Jacquie Bennett and Janet Hart. The research for this thesis could not have been conducted without the assistance of numerous archivists and librarians, both within Australia and abroad. There are too many individuals to name here, though particularly generous with their time and resources were: the staff at the Borthwick Institute of Archives, York; the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh; Colin Gale, at the Bethlem Hospital archives; and Janet Bloom, from the Clements Library at the University of Michigan. I am also particularly indebted to Margaret Hosking and Maria Albanese from the Barr Smith Library, who worked tirelessly to locate and source materials for this project.

Thanks also need to be extended to the people who have provided advice and feedback on the project. Eric Parisot, Amy Milka and Tom Mackay read and commented on chapters in full, while audiences at various work in progress seminars at the University of Adelaide offered further useful criticism. Amongst the staff and students in the University's History

Abstract

This thesis utilises theoretical frameworks for the historical study of emotions to challenge conventional narratives of mental health reform in early modern Britain. In particular, it contests prevailing explanations for the emergence of lunacy reform at the turn of the nineteenth century which, following the path-breaking work of Andrew Scull and others, have typically attributed changing attitudes towards insanity to the proliferation of new ideas about the innate sensitivity of the insane, and concomitant shifts in popular sensibilities. This thesis, by contrast, locates the emergence of lunacy activism in a shift in 'emotional regimes' in the closing decades of the eighteenth century which, it is argued, modelled the norms of the period's distinctive manifestations of 'humanitarian' fervour.

Eighteenth-century attitudes towards madness reflected the ambiguous attitudes towards other-directed feeling expressed in the writings of contemporaneous moral philosophers like Adam Smith and Edmund Burke. Though Enlightenment dogma naturalised displays of sentimental affect towards distress, in the hands of these writers the definition of 'sympathy' itself was simultaneously moulded to adhere to the individualist doctrines of the consumer revolution. This encouraged the contemplation of pleasing or submissive subjects, while sanctioning the disavowal of subjects that challenged the polite spectator's ease. It is suggested that the performances naturalised by this contemplative model of sympathy provided an obstacle to political engagement on the issue of the treatment of the mad, and that the erosion of these ideals and norms in the late eighteenth century was the precondition for a concerted lunacy advocacy movement. As industrialisation undermined the legitimacy of sentimental emotion, ambitious members of the ascendant middle-classes sought to distinguish themselves from 'fashionable' society by projecting an emotional style that emphasised courage, fortitude and aggression – traits which came to exemplify the emotional habitus of the first wave of social reformers. Encouraged by the new norms, these individuals showed increasing interest in the treatment of insanity: actively seeking the spectacle of madness as a means of proving their courage and self-command, while imposing themselves on political debates surrounding the lunacy question, believing that aggression and bravado reflected a sincere or 'disinterested' public spirit.

Such findings have broad implications for the study of Western humanitarianism. A consideration of the influence of emotional regimes on political action can offer a corrective to traditional accounts of the development of humanitarian sensibilities, which typically

locate the genesis of modern social activism in the eighteenth century 'culture of sensibility'. Whatever the influence of sentimental doctrine on 'natural rights' discourses, it is clear that advocates' responses to suffering were the product of specific social and material conditions, rather than any nascent extension of humane regard. Moreover, such an approach undermines any assumption that political agitation is simply a 'triggered response', activated by some deeply held 'principles', instead offering support for Monique Scheer's assertion that the attitudes and thought patterns of intentionality, characteristic of the 'liberal self', can be conceived of as practices, mapped onto the habitus by the prevailing emotional regime.

Table of Contents

Abbreviations & Notes

BGC	Bethlem General Committee Papers.
HO	Home Office Papers, The National Archives, Kew.
ODNB	The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.
Parliamentary Debates	*Hansard*, British Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons).
Parliamentary History	William Cobbett's *The Parliamentary History of England, from the Earliest Period to the Year 1803*.
Philanthropist	*The Philanthropist: or Repository for Hints and Suggestions Calculated to Promote the Comfort and Happiness of Man*, 7 Volumes, 1811-19.
RCP	Archives of the Royal College of Physicians, London.
RET	York Retreat Papers, Borthwick Institute of Archives, The University of York.
Walpole's Correspondence	W. S. Lewis ed. *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, 48 Volumes.
Wakefield MS	Wakefield Papers, National Library of New Zealand, MS-Papers-9512-31/32.

The Wakefield MS were accessed via microfilm (Additional Papers to AJCP film M 2794-5), which did not clearly differentiate file records. Identifying details have been included in the citations where possible.

Original spelling has been retained for direct quotations.

Introduction: Emotions and Britain's 'Age of Reform'

In 1815, the superintendent of Spring Vale Asylum in Staffordshire, Thomas Bakewell, published a letter criticising the 'general treatment of the Insane' in institutions across the nation. Addressing his treatise to the parliamentarians recently charged with investigating the conditions in Britain's institutions for the insane, Bakewell lamented the general inefficacy of the therapeutic regimes peddled by even apparently respectable practitioners, contending that the wider system of care was 'an outrage to the present state of knowledge, to the best feelings of enlightened humanity, and to national policy.'[1] Such remarks are typical of the literature of the so-called 'lunacy reform' movement: the disparate group of philanthropists, parliamentarians, medical practitioners and former asylum inmates who advocated for, and, subsequently 'brought about a radical transformation in the care and treatment of the insane' from the first decades of the nineteenth century.[2] Animated, they claimed, by the 'plea of humanity', these agitators publicly censured what they had come to see as 'barbaric' or 'inhumane' methods of dealing with madness, advocating for wholesale changes in the management of both private and public asylums.

While early historians of the Whig tradition embraced such rhetoric fairly uncritically, writers since the 1960s have treated the reformers' claims with scepticism. Humanitarian zeal was largely erased from French sociologist Michel Foucault's pioneering studies into psychiatric history. In his view, these claims of progress and enlightenment papered over a more insidious system of bourgeois oppression: a silencing and sequestration of unreason throughout the eighteenth century (denoted the 'great confinement'); and the subsequent imposition of the 'gigantic moral imprisonment' that was modern psychiatry.[3] Though more recent, revisionist accounts of psychiatry's emergence have generally been more engaged

---

[1] Thomas Bakewell, *A Letter, Addressed to the Chairman of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, Appointed to Enquire into the State of Mad-Houses: to which is Subjoined, Remarks on the Nature, Causes, and Cure of Mental Derangement* (Stafford, 1815), 7.

[2] Peter McCandless, 'Insanity and Society: A Study of the English Lunacy Reform Movement 1815-1870' (PhD Thesis: University of Wisconsin, 1974), 5-12 (qtd. 12).

[3] Michel Foucault, *History of Madness*, ed. Jean Khalfa, trans. Jonathan Murphy and Khalfa (London & New York: Routledge, 2009), 511; *idem*, *Psychiatric Power: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1973-1974*, ed. Jacques Lagrange, trans. Graham Burchell (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008). On Foucault's broader critiques of apparatus' of power, see *idem*, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1977); *idem*, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Vintage Books, 1994); *idem*, *The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality, Volume 1*, trans. Robert Hurley (London: Penguin Books, 1998).

with the attitudes and emotions of lunacy reformers and early psychiatrists, these works have typically viewed any shifts in sensibilities as linear developments, dependent on wider social or cultural processes. As Akihito Suzuki puts it, psychiatry's modern historians – whatever their background – are united in the assumption 'that the progress of humanitarianism and the benign intention of psychiatrists should not be the major analytical framework for understanding the history of nineteenth-century psychiatry in England.'[4] However, recent research into the history of emotions has challenged orthodox assumptions about emotional life, and the development of sensibilities. The experience and expression of emotion has been found to be more variable across time and place than social historians have acknowledged, and an increasing number of scholars have started to re-evaluate the potential for emotional change to *drive* wider social processes. With these considerations in mind, the following study re-examines the progress of British lunacy reform in the long eighteenth century to determine the extent to which changing conceptions about emotional life – and concomitant shifts in emotional practices – can be said to have animated the actions and behaviours of this growing band of zealous advocates.

I. Historiography

The core of the scholarly literature on the history of British psychiatry was produced in the 1980s and 1990s, and largely in response to Foucault's earliest critique of European cultures of madness, *Folie et Déraison* (1961, first published in English as *Madness and Civilization* in 1964).[5] Challenging Foucault's view that bourgeois society's intolerance of unreason initiated a 'great confinement' of the insane in the eighteenth century – that is, a policing of madness alongside a wider, undifferentiated mass of undesirables – scholars have offered more nuanced interpretations of insanity's gradual sequestration from polite society, and indeed the proliferation of British psychiatry and its institutions from the turn of the nineteenth century. Through an analysis of the records of the seventeenth-century spiritual healer Richard Napier, Michael Macdonald challenged the validity of the 'abstractions' employed in Foucault's work, demonstrating that attitudes towards madness at the parish level were far more variable than had previously been acknowledged, and moral, medical

---

[4] Akihito Suzuki, *Madness at Home: The Psychiatrist, the Patient, and the Family in England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 5.
[5] For the purposes of this study I am using the most recent – and complete – English translation, Foucault, *History of Madness*.

and spiritual interventions more sophisticated and widespread.[6] While treatment methods differed, and confinement was certainly widely sanctioned as a means of securing the community against unruly subjects, examinations of parish records have undermined the centralisation thesis, emphasising the vagaries of local and provincial responses to madness and disorder, the importance of private ventures to the management of lunatics of all classes, the complexities of institutional politics, and the negotiation and conflict that characterised the administration of insanity's 'mixed economy of care'.[7] Addressing the almost uniform disparagement of private institutions for the insane found in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century reformist propaganda (as well as subsequent Whig histories), William Parry-Jones, in *The Trade in Lunacy* (1972), demonstrated that respectable proprietors of these 'private madhouses' – 'the principal form of institution catering for the insane in anything

---

[6] Michael Macdonald, *Mystical Bedlam: Madness, Anxiety and Healing in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). Subsequent studies have supported Macdonald's general assertions about the significance of folk responses to madness in the early modern period. See David Lederer, *Madness, Religion and the State in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Yasmin Haskell ed., *Diseases of the Imagination and Imaginary Disease in the Early Modern Period* (Turnhout, Brepols, 2011); Jeremy Schmidt, *Melancholy and the Care of the Soul: Religion, Moral Philosophy and Madness in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

[7] On the governance of the insane at the level of the parish or household, see, for example, Akihito Suzuki, 'Lunacy in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century England: Analysis of Quarter Sessions Records Part I', *History of Psychiatry* 2 (1991), 437-456; *idem*, 'Lunacy in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century England: Analysis of Quarter Sessions Records Part II', *History of Psychiatry* 3 (1992), 29-44; *idem*, *Madness at Home*; Peter Rushton, 'Lunatics and idiots: Mental disability, the community, and the poor law in North-East England, 1600-1800, *Medical History* 32, no. 1 (1988), 34-50; Rab Houston, 'Poor Relief and the Dangerous and Criminal Insane in Scotland, c. 1740-1840', *Journal of Social History* 40, no. 2 (2006), 453-76; Audrey Eccles, '"Furiously Mad": Vagrancy Law and a Sub-Group of the Disorderly Poor', *Rural History* 24, Special Issue 1 (2013), 25-40. On the institutionalisation of the insane, the 'mixed economy of care', and the history of institutional politics, see Joseph Melling and Bill Forsythe, *The Politics of Madness: The State, Insanity and Society in England, 1845-1914* (London & New York: Routledge, 2006); Joseph Melling and Bill Forsythe ed., *Insanity, Institutions and Society, 1800-1914: A Social History of Madness in Comparative Perspective* (London & New York: Routledge, 1999); Leonard Smith, *Lunatic Hospitals in Georgian England, 1750-1830* (New York & London: Routledge, 2007); Peter Bartlett, 'The Poor Law of Lunacy: The Administration of Pauper Lunatics in Mind-Nineteenth Century England, with special Emphasis on Leicestershire and Rutland' (PhD thesis: University of London, 1993); Elaine Murphy, 'Mad Farming in the Metropolis. Part 1: A Significant Service Industry in East London', *History of Psychiatry* 12 (2001), 245-82; *idem*, 'Mad Farming in the Metropolis. Part 2: The Administration of the Old Poor Law of Insanity in the City and East London 1800-1834', *History of Psychiatry* 12 (2001), 405-30; Elizabeth Malcolm, '"Ireland's Crowded Madhouses": The Institutional Confinement of the Insane in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Ireland', in *The Confinement of the Insane: International Perspectives, 1800-1965*, ed. Roy Porter and David Wright (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 315-33; Rebecca Wynter, '"Horrible Dens of Deception": Thomas Bakewell, Thomas Mulock and Anti-Asylum Sentiments, *c*. 1815-60', in *Insanity and the Lunatic Asylum in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Thomas Knowles and Serena Trowbridge (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2015), 11-27; Bernard Melling, 'Building a Lunatic Asylum: "A Question of Beer, Milk, and the Irish"', in Knowles and Trowbridge ed., *Insanity*, 57-69.

approaching a specialized way until the mid-nineteenth century' – were sensitive to therapeutic developments, and often strove to provide a suitable level of patient care.[8] Following his lead, a number of writers have produced detailed studies of individual institutions, so as to challenge stereotypes about England's early 'mad-trade'.[9] Important perspectives from gender and cultural studies have also added depth to this scholarship.[10]

---

[8] William Parry-Jones, *The Trade in Lunacy: A study of Private Madhouses in England in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), 282-3.

[9] See, for example, Anne Digby, *Madness, Morality and Medicine: A Study of the York Retreat 1796-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Jonathan Andrews, 'Bedlam Revisited: A History of Bethlem Hospital c1634-c1770' (PhD thesis: QMUL, 1991); Jonathan Andrews et al., *The History of Bethlem* (London & New York: Routledge, 1997); Patricia Allderidge, 'Bedlam: Fact or Fantasy?', in *The Anatomy of Madness: Essays in the History of Psychiatry*, ed. W.F. Bynum, Roy Porter, and Michael Shepherd, vol. 2: Institutions and Society (London & New York: Tavistock, 1985), 17-33; Charlotte MacKenzie, *Psychiatry for the Rich: A History of Ticehurst Private Asylum* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1992); Leonard Smith, 'A Gentleman's Mad-Doctor in Georgian England: Edward Long Fox and Brislington House', *History of Psychiatry* 19, no. 2 (2008), 163-84.

[10] Particularly in the wake of Elaine Showalter's pathbreaking feminist critique of Victorian-era psychiatry, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830-1980* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), writers have outlined the gendering of madness in Britain from the early modern period, and psychiatry's ambiguous role in the policing of sexuality and gender norms. See, for example, Susan E. Cayleff, '"Prisoners of their own Feebleness": Women, Nerves and Western Medicine – a Historical Overview', *Social Science & Medicine* 26, no. 12 (1988), 1199-1208; Elizabeth Foyster, 'At the Limits of Liberty': Married Women and Confinement in Eighteenth-Century England', *Continuity and Change* 17, no. 1 (2002), 39-62; Dana Gliserman Kopans, '*The English Malady*: Engendering Insanity in the Eighteenth Century' (PhD thesis: Carnegie Mellon University, 2006), spec. Ch. 4; Joan Busfield, 'The Female Malady? Men, Women, and Madness in Nineteenth Century Britain', *Sociology* 28, no. 1 (1994), 259-77; Helen Deutsch, 'Symptomatic Correspondences: The Author's Case in Eighteenth-Century Britain', *Cultural Critique* 42 (1999), 35-80; Helen Goodman, '"Madness and Masculinity': Male Patients in London Asylums and Victorian Culture', in Knowles and Trowbridge, *Insanity*, 149-65; Mark Micale, *Hysterical Men: The Hidden Story of Male Nervous Disease* (Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press, 2008); Jade Victoria Shepherd, 'Victorian Madmen: Broadmoor, Masculinity and the Experiences of the Criminally Insane, 1863-1900' (PhD thesis: Queen Mary University of London, 2013). Allan Ingram has pioneered a range of probing studies into the literary representation of madness and the self in the eighteenth century, which has culminated in a number of impressive collaborative studies associated with the Leverhulme Trust funded research project 'Before Depression'. See, for example, Allan Ingram, *The Madhouse of Language: Writing and Reading Madness in the Eighteenth Century* (London & New York: Routledge, 1991); *idem*, 'Death in Life and Life in Death: Melancholy and the Enlightenment', *Gesnerus* 63, no. 1/2 (2006), 90-102; Allan Ingram, Stuart Sim, Clark Lawlor, Richard Terry, John Baker and Leigh Wetherall-Dickson, *Melancholy Experience in Literature of the Long Eighteenth Century: Before Depression, 1660-1800* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Leigh Wetherall Dickson and Allan Ingram, eds., *Depression and Melancholy, 1660-1800*, 4 vols. (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012); Allan Ingram and Michelle Faubert, *Cultural Constructions of Madness in Eighteenth Century Writing: Representing the Insane* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Clark Lawlor, *From Melancholia to Prozac: A History of Depression* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Michelle Faubert, *Rhyming Reason: The Poetry of Romantic-era Psychologists* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2009). Other important critiques of madness in eighteenth century literature include George Rousseau, *Nervous Acts: Essays on Literature, Culture and Sensibility* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); and Max Byrd, *Visits to Bedlam: Madness and Literature in the Eighteenth Century* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1974).

The landmark study of popular and intellectual responses to madness in Britain across the long eighteenth century is Roy Porter's authoritative survey *Mind Forg'd Manacles* (1987; revised in 2004 as *Madmen*).[11] Seeking to put to rest the notion of a 'great confinement' of the mad in eighteenth-century Britain, he synthesised these strands of scholarship into a lucid narrative, which situated the emergence of proto-psychiatry within the consumer revolution. Drawing inspiration from the 'medical market-place' model that he had already begun to popularise – that is, the concept that pre-modern medicine was a relatively open and mutable practice, governed by the whims of a flourishing market society[12] – Porter rejected the notion that the eighteenth century saw a centralised incarceration of unreason, or the emergence of an insidious psychiatric *esprit de corps*, rather positioning the 'Georgian lunacy trade … as one aspect of the emergence of a thriving service sector in the *laissez-faire* economy at large': a business opportunity for ambitious physicians or entrepreneurs.[13] Moreover, Porter's account was optimistic, situating contemporary theories of mind firmly within the longer cultural and intellectual currents of the British Enlightenment.[14] Nerve theory and Lockean associationism stripped unreason of its terror; new cultural thought, which attributed nervous disorder to an over-indulgence in luxury or civilisation made melancholy fashionable again; and sentimental and Romantic tastes encouraged sympathy with the disordered mind – indeed, identified genius in excess imagination.[15] This work has stimulated the field, influencing scholars like Jonathan Andrews, who has situated his analysis of society's attitudes towards the mad in the long eighteenth century within this wider cultural context.[16] Indeed, Porter's ideas have attained

---

[11] For the purposes of this thesis I will reference the most up-to-date version: Roy Porter, *Madmen: A Social History of Madhouses, Mad-Doctors & Lunatics* (Stroud: Tempus, 2004).

[12] See, for example, Roy Porter, 'The Patient's View: Doing Medical History from Below', *Theory and Society* 14, no. 2 (1985), 175-98; *idem*, 'Medical Lecturing in Georgian London', *British Journal for the History of Science* 28 (1995), 91-99; *idem*, *Bodies Politic: Disease, Death and Doctors in Britain, 1650-1900* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 139-49; Dorothy Porter and Roy Porter, *Patient's Progress: Doctor's and Doctoring in Eighteenth-Century England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989).

[13] Porter, *Madmen*, 169; *idem* 'Rethinking Institutions in Late Georgian England', *Utilitas* 6, no. 1 (1994), 65-80.

[14] Porter was, of course, a champion of the Enlightenment, stimulating new research into the social history of intellectual endeavors in the long eighteenth century. See Roy Porter, 'Was there a Medical Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century England?', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 5, no. 1 (1982), 49-63; *idem*, *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World* (London: Penguin Books, 2000); *idem*, 'Science, Provincial Culture and Public Opinion in Enlightenment England', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 3, no. 1 (1980), 20-46.

[15] Porter, *Madmen*, Ch. 2; *idem*, 'The Rage of Party: A Glorious Revolution in English Psychiatry?' *Medical History* 27 (1983), 35-50.

[16] Andrews, 'Bedlam Revisited'; Andrews et al, *History of Bethlem*.

something like an orthodoxy in the historiography; and, aside from some minor revisions, his account of the social and intellectual development of the mind sciences has gone largely unchallenged.[17]

Though sharing some affinity with Porter's social history, a more critical examination of the rise of asylumdom is provided by Andrew Scull, whose *Most Solitary of Afflictions* (1991) refocused the study of the 'trade in lunacy' on the social and economic imperatives driving both the sequestration of the mad and, perhaps more importantly, the professionalisation and specialisation of psychiatry.[18] Though critical of Foucault's methods, Scull takes a firmer line than Porter and his followers, suggesting that the reformation of lunatic asylums represented a significant rupture with previous practices, a paradigm shift wrought by the disassembling power of industrial capitalism. Like Foucault, Scull contends that the implementation of reformed 'moral treatment' in asylums from the late eighteenth century (that is, the move away from physical coercion and depletion to more consciously 'mental' approaches, aimed at internalising the lunatic's restraint) was not 'kindness for kindness' sake'.[19] Instead, he suggests that widespread desire to intervene in the treatment of the insane – and subsequently incarcerate them in monolithic institutions – was the product of social and economic forces: the necessity that efficient reformatories be built to cure or warehouse troublesome lunatics; and the desire of a growing band of ambitious medical men to sculpt a new field of professional specialisation.[20]

---

[17] Noteworthy critics are Akihito Suzuki, who has challenged Porter's generalisation of the influence of Lockean associationism on the development of the British mind sciences ('Dualism and the Transformation of Psychiatric Language', *History of Science* 33, no. 4 (1995), 417-44); Paul Laffey who, *pace* Porter, argued that the Georgians maintained an absolute distinction between sanity and insanity, rather than gauging madness along a continuum ('Insanity in Enlightenment England' (PhD thesis: University of Western Australia, 2001)); and Heather R. Beatty, whose engaging study of 'nervous disease' in Georgian Britain undermines orthodox conceptions of these 'fashionable' maladies as grossly affected performances (*Nervous Disease in Late Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012)).

[18] Andrew Scull, *The Most Solitary of Afflictions: Madness and Society in Britain, 1700-1900* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1993). See also *idem*, *Social Order/Mental Disorder: Anglo-American Psychiatry in Historical Perspective* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); *idem*, 'The Insanity of Place', *History of Psychiatry* 15, no. 4 (2004), 417-36.

[19] Scull, *Most Solitary of Afflictions*, 99; *idem*, *Madness in Civilization: A Cultural History of Insanity from the Bible to Freud, from the Madhouse to Modern Medicine* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2015), 207-8.

[20] See, in particular Scull, *Most Solitary of Afflictions*; *idem*, *Social Order/Mental Disorder*, Ch. 2. Psychiatry's professionalisation, and medicine's dubious monopoly over the mind sciences and asylumdom has remained a constant focus of Scull's scholarship. See, for example, Andrew Scull, Charlotte MacKenzie and Nicholas Hervey, *Masters of Bedlam: The Transformation of the Mad-Doctoring Trade* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996); Jonathan Andrews and Andrew Scull, *Undertaker of the Mind: John Monro and Mad-Doctoring in Eighteenth-Century England*

Though addressing psychiatric history from different perspectives, both Scull and Porter, and the writers that have followed them, have drawn similar conclusions about the historical conditions that gave rise to the 'lunacy reform' movement in Britain. Rejecting both earlier, Whiggish explanations for the emergence of this movement (which unproblematically associated psychiatric 'reforms' with the onward march of science and rationality), as well as the Foucauldian assumption that early psychiatric reform simply ushered in a 'gigantic moral imprisonment' of the insane, these more recent studies have sought to explicate the social and cultural forces that prompted, in Scull's words, the necessary 'shifts in the intellectual and cultural horizons of the English bourgeoisie' that shaped the reformers' goals and actions.[21] Porter provided an optimistic account of the development of this reforming culture, suggesting that 'new currents of "progressive" thought' encouraged 'sympathy' with the plight of the mad, which, coupled with the emergence of a radical critique of Britain's *ancien régime*, provoked an attack on the shadowy system of private madhouses, and 'public' charity hospitals.[22] Though more sceptical of the reformers' motives, Scull provides a similar assessment. As a growing cabal of 'consciously enlightened' critics abandoned the early modern conception of the insane as debased, or fundamentally animalistic, they grew increasingly repulsed by traditional methods of treating them.[23] Spurred on by the simultaneous realisation that industrial society was capable of 'radical transformations of nature', the reformers moved to intervene in the

---

(Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); *idem*, *Customers and Patrons of the Mad-Trade: The Management of Lunacy in Eighteenth-Century London; With the Complete Text of John Monro's 1766 Case Book* (London & Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Andrew Scull, *Madhouse: A Tragic Tale of Megalomania and Modern Medicine* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2005). Scull's sociological approach has not gone unchallenged, with a number of writers suggesting that his sweeping narrative undersells the intricacies of British psychiatry. This criticism is, however, fairly schematic, and generally fails to engage in any close reading of Scull's work. See, for example, Gerald Grob, 'Marxian Analysis and Mental Illness', *History of Psychiatry* 1 (1990), 223-32; J. L. Crammer, 'English Asylums and English Doctors: Where Scull is Wrong', *History of Psychiatry* 5 (1994), 103-15.

[21] Scull, *Social Order/Mental Disorder*, 43. For characteristic examples of the Whig interpretation of psychiatric reform see Kathleen Jones, *Lunacy, Law, and Conscience 1744-1845: The Social History of the Care of the Insane* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1998); Hubert Norman, 'Some Factors in the Reform in the Treatment of the Insane', *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine* 24 – 8 (1931), 1068-74. For Foucault's less optimistic view see *History of Madness*, 463-511.

[22] Porter, *Madmen*, (qtd. 98). For this general theme see, also, Dora Weiner, 'The Madman in the Light of Reason. Enlightenment Psychiatry: Part I. Custody, Therapy, Theory, and the Need for Reform', in *History of Psychiatry and Medical Psychology. With an Epilogue on Psychiatry and the Mind-Body Relation*, edited by Edwin Wallace and John Gach (New York: Springer, 2008), 255-77.

[23] Scull, *Most Solitary of Afflictions*, 87-96.

treatment of the insane, so as to impose more effective means of restoring the lunatic to the 'bourgeois ideal'.[24]

Underpinning both of these interpretations is the assumption that the impetus for lunacy reform was provided by a shift in sensibilities, affected by Enlightenment belief. Parry-Jones perhaps encapsulated this thesis most succinctly when he wrote that '[t]he progressive modification and humanizing of the conditions and of the treatment of the insane has to be seen … not as an isolated sequel to the previous handling of the insane, but as a part of the general awakening of social conscience in defence of the wronged and the afflicted members of society.'[25] What Parry-Jones was alluding to here, and what Porter, Byrd and Andrews addressed more comprehensively in their works, was the enduring influence of a novel emotional culture across the long eighteenth century – the so-called 'culture of sensibility' – which imposed a new set of behavioural standards on the social elite.[26] This culture's guiding doctrine – sentimentalism – has been described as a 'movement discerned in philosophy, politics and art, based on the belief in or hope of the natural goodness of humanity and manifested in a humanitarian concern for the unfortunate and helpless.'[27] Responding to widespread fears of social upheaval in the wake of commercial and industrial expansion, sentimentalists praised the virtues of benevolent emotions, thus encouraging their cultivation and replication in everyday life.[28] Cultural works nursed this pathos, offering up scenarios though which idealised victims communicated their suffering to a feeling audience. Indeed, owing to the democratisation of culture that followed the consumer revolution, sentimentalism's characteristic emblems and tropes came to saturate novels, plays, sermons, and news reports, thus indelibly shaping British culture through the eighteenth century and beyond.

In his famous study of the rise of 'affective individualism' in the Atlantic world, Lawrence Stone identified the half-century from 1770 to 1820 – sentimentalism's high watermark – as giving birth to 'a new attitude towards man's inhumanity to man.' In his conception, the culture of sensibility fostered an 'upsurge of new attitudes and emotions',

---

[24] *Ibid.*, 83-114.

[25] Parry-Jones, *Trade in Lunacy*, 290.

[26] G.J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992).

[27] Janet Todd, *Sensibility: An Introduction* (London: Methuen, 1986), 7.

[28] *Ibid.*; Barker-Benfield, *Culture of Sensibility*; William Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), Ch. 5.

making it 'fashionable to express emotional anguish' in the face of pointless cruelty, 'a distress which finally opened the way to remedial legislation and institutional reform.'[29] Though recent writers have gone further than Stone in delineating the ideological predispositions that shaped the humanitarian push, the general assumption that the proliferation of sentimental doctrine was a catalyst for Anglo-American social reform has dominated the recent literature.[30] By assuming that 'humanitarian' responses were learnt or

---

[29] Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1977), 238.

[30] The most authoritative study of sentimentalism's political import is Barker-Benfield's *Culture of Sensibility*, spec. Ch. 5. Barker-Benfield outlines the link that was established between sentimental emotion and the eighteenth-century's 'culture of reform', an association that is also examined in *idem*, 'The Origins of Anglo-American Sensibility', in *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History*, ed. Lawrence Friedman and Mark McGarvie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 71-89; Norman Fiering, 'Irresistible Compassion: An Aspect of Eighteenth-Century Sympathy and Humanitarianism', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 37, no. 2 (1976), 195-218; A.R. Humphreys, '"The Friend of Mankind" (1700-60). An Aspect of Eighteenth-Century Sensibility', *The Review of English Studies* 24, no. 95 (1948), 203-18; Mary Lenard, *Preaching Pity: Dickens, Gaskell, and Sentimentalism in Victorian Culture* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999). Probably the most studied manifestation of sentimental humanitarianism is the Anglo-American literature of abolitionism, which scholars have conceived as, variously, a vehicle for rights claims, or a means exercising paternalism. For a general survey of this literature see Brycchan Carey, *British Abolitionism and the Rhetoric of Sensibility: Writing, Sentiment, and Slavery, 1760-1807* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Elizabeth B. Clark, '"The Sacred Rights of the Weak": Pain, Sympathy, and the Culture of Individual Rights in Antebellum America', *Journal of American History* 82 (1995), 463-93; Philip Fisher, *Hard Facts: Setting and Form in the American Novel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Benjamin Lamb-Books, 'Angry Abolitionists & the Rhetoric of Slavery: Minding the Moral Emotions in Social Movements' (PhD thesis: University of Colorado, 2015), 90-105; Lynn Festa, *Sentimental Figures of Empire in Eighteenth-Century Britain and France* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006); Karen Halttunen, 'Humanitarianism and the Pornography of Pain in Anglo-American Culture', *American Historical Review* 100 (1995), 303-34; P. Gabrielle Foreman, 'Sentimental Abolition in Douglass's Decade: Revision, Erotic Conversion, and the Politics of Witnessing in *The Heroic Slave* and *My Bondage and My Freedom*', in *Sentimental Men: Masculinity and the Politics of Affect in American Culture*, ed. Mary Chapman and Glenn Hendler (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 149-62; Michael A. Chaney, *Fugitive Vision: Slave Image and Black Identity in Antebellum Narrative* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2008). Historians have also examined the influence of sentimentalism on revolutionary political movements in the Atlantic world, over the long eighteenth century. In particular, Gordon Wood (*The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, (New York: Vintage Books, 2002), 215-8), Sarah Knott (*Sensibility and the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009)), and Nicole Eustace (*Passion is the Gale: Emotion, Power, and the Coming of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008)) have all examined the sentimentalist underpinnings of the American revolution. Thomas C. Buchanan provides some interesting insights into the importance of sentimentality to the development of a working class consciousness in nineteenth-century America ('Class Sentiments: Putting the Emotion back in Working-Class History', *Journal of Social History* 48, no. 1 (2014), 72-87). Finally, in research that is particularly pertinent to this study, historians have started to recognise the significance of polite codes of conduct and sentimentalist philosophies to the development of medical ethics and conventions in the long eighteenth century. See, for example, Mary Fissell, 'Innocent and Honourable Bribes: Medical Manners in Eighteenth-Century Britain', in *The Codification of Medical Morality*, ed. Robert Baker, Dorothy Porter, and Roy Porter (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1993), 19-45; Laurence McCullough, *John Gregory and the Invention*

inculcated, writers can treat their representations as valid categories for analysis, without accepting the reformers' claims that they had located some unequivocally disinterested capacity for moral feeling. Indeed, in this sense, the sentimental revolution can be seen as a product of ideology, a vehicle for paternalism.

However, despite the relativist claims of many of these authors, much of this work is still based on universalising assumptions about emotional life. Much of this research is underpinned by the fundamental presupposition that humanitarian zeal is ultimately the product of some transhistorical capacity for sentimental affect, which is subsequently excited by certain, core associations and representations. For Lynn Hunt, a leading proponent of this field, it was the proliferation of sentimental novels in the eighteenth century that stimulated the drive for human rights in the modern West, these epistolary fictions exciting moral reflections that unlocked the biologically hard-wired capacity for 'empathy' in middle-class readers.[31] Another line of thinking, drawn from the work of Thomas Haskell, attributes such feelings to the promptings of a nascent 'principle'. In two influential articles on the emergence of abolitionism, Haskell put forward the theory that the 'humanitarian sensibility', as it emerged in the modern West, was the product of new practices of causal attribution, ushered in by a modern, 'market-oriented form of life'.[32] In his formulation, new mental competencies demanded by commercial capitalism – long-range planning, and a commitment to the principles of contract and obligation – provided the impetus for the abolitionist movement in the long eighteenth century.[33] Significantly, in his formulation, this 'rise of antislavery sentiment' – a process driven by 'an upwelling of powerful feelings of sympathy, guilt, and anger' – was directly stimulated by this 'change in the perception of causal relations': that is, deeply held 'principles' *provoked* emotions, which subsequently led to political action.[34] Even accounts of emotional change inspired by sociology, though tending to be more sceptical of appeals to biological universals, have provided similarly

of Professional Medical Ethics and the Profession of Medicine (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1998), 81-114; Wayne Wild, *Medicine-by-Post: The Changing Voice of Illness in Eighteenth-Century British Consultation Letters and Literature* (Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi B.V., 2006); *idem*, 'Doctor-Patient Correspondence in Eighteenth-Century Britain: A Change in Rhetoric and Relationship', *Studies in Eighteenth Century Culture* 29 (2000), 47-64.

[31] Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007), Ch. 1.

[32] See Thomas Haskell, 'Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility, Part 1', *The American Historical Review* 90, no. 2 (1985), 339-61; *idem*, 'Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility, Part 2', *The American Historical Review* 90, no. 3 (1985), 547-66.

[33] Haskell, 'Humanitarian Sensibility, Part 2'.

[34] Haskell, 'Humanitarian Sensibility, Part 1', 343.

'linear' accounts of the development of sensibilities. This is undoubtedly owing to the influence of Norbert Elias on the field, whose seminal text *The Civilizing Process* (first published in 1939) heralded modern civility as the product of a long-term suppression of base drives, and internalisation of restraint – an account that rests on an equally universalising assumption about human nature.[35]

It is with recourse to such linear models of emotional change that historians have typically interpreted the development of modern attitudes towards the insane, or the emergence of lunacy reform. In Scull's view – replicated by many in the historiography – the compulsion many felt to ameliorate the condition of the insane, from about the year 1800, stemmed from a newly discovered appreciation of the sensibilities of the insane, which, in triggering some innate sympathy with the human condition, drove dissatisfaction with traditional methods of managing and coercing them.[36] More critical is Jonathan Andrews's examination of the nuances of such emotional labour in his PhD thesis, which underscores the literary bases of sentimental emotions, as well as the intrinsic self-interest of purportedly disinterested observers. However in the published form, expanded upon by Roy Porter in *The History of Bethlem* (1997), the sequestration of the mad, and the collective anxiety that drove it, is ultimately explained as part of the 'civilizing process' as defined by Norbert Elias: a by-product of the progressive sanitisation of arenas of polite conduct.[37]

However, recent research into the history of emotions has problematised such narratives, emphasising, instead, the historical specificity of emotional repertoires. Adopting critical approaches from disciplines as disparate as sociology, cultural anthropology, and cognitive neuroscience, historians in this field have stressed the malleability of emotions and their expression across different cultures and epochs: distinctions that have been attributed to the unique behavioural norms that govern each society or social grouping.[38] Concepts like

---

[35] Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1994). On the 'civilizing process' and the development of modern humanitarianism see Steven Pinker, *The Better Angels of our Nature: The Decline of Violence in History and its Causes* (London: Penguin, 2011); Andrew Linklater, 'Norbert Elias, The "Civilizing Process" and the Sociology of International Relations', *International Politics* 41 (2004), 3-35.

[36] Scull, *Most Solitary of Afflictions*, 87-96. See also McCandless, 'Insanity', 13.

[37] Andrews, 'Bedlam Revisited', Ch. 2; Andrews et al, *History of Bethlem*, 194.

[38] For surveys of the recent literature on the history of emotions see William Reddy, 'Historical Research on the Self and Emotions', *Emotion Review* 1, no. 4 (2009), 302-15; Susan J. Matt, 'Current Emotion Research in History: Or, Doing History from the Inside Out', *Emotion Review* 3, no. 1 (2011), 117-24. Influential early works on the significance of social prescription in shaping the expression of emotion see Arlie Russell Hochschild, 'Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social

William Reddy's 'emotional regimes' (the sets of rituals and prescriptions imposed on subjects by a political regime to assert conformity of emotional expression) and Barbara Rosenwein's 'emotional communities' (smaller, and more fluid groupings within a society, that are united by a constellation of values and associated emotional expressions) have provided historians with analytical tools to re-examine the normative emotions of different groups and cultures, as well as outlining causes and patterns of emotional change.[39] The result of this work has been to undermine any assumptions about the universality of human responsiveness (including the notion of some core of 'basic' emotions), or the linear development of sensibilities or internalised restraint.[40] Indeed, summarising the findings of the growing scholarship on the history of emotions in European and American culture, Susan Matt has concluded that there is little evidence of any uniform shifts in emotional styles, but rather 'fluctuations, relaxations, new restrictions.'[41]

What this does is refocus studies of sensibilities to account for the influence of distinctive emotional regimes – constellations of emotional practices that habituate responses in any particular time or place (see below). Indeed, it is telling that historians of emotions who have closely examined modes of emotional expression across the so-called 'Age of Sensibility' have stressed the *dis*continuities evident in this period. In his now-seminal re-interpretation of the role of emotions in the French Revolution, William Reddy has shown that while sentimental prescriptions can be seen to have fostered the Jacobins' militant zeal, the high performative demands of this mode of expression were too taxing and unpredictable for a stable political regime, thus necessitating their eradication in the aftermath of the Terror.[42] Historians of Britain's 'culture of sensibility' have acknowledged a similar shift in norms in this period. While religious and literary cultures had for several

---

Structure', *American Journal of Sociology* 85, no. 3 (1979), 551-75; Peter Stearns and Carol Z. Stearns, 'Emotionology: Clarifying the History of the Emotions and Emotional Standards', *American Historical Review* 90, no. 4 (1985), 813-36.

[39] See Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*; Barbara Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 2006); *idem*, 'Worrying about Emotions in History', *The American Historical Review* 107, no. 3 (2002), 821-45; *idem*, *Generations of Feeling: A History of Emotions, 600-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Mark Seymour, 'Emotional Arenas: from Provincial Circus to National Courtroom in Late Nineteenth-Century Italy', *Rethinking History* 16, no. 2 (2012), 177-97; Linda A. Pollock, 'Anger and the Negotiation of Relationships in Early Modern England', *The Historical Journal* 47, no. 3 (2004), 567-90.

[40] Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, 11-15; Monique Scheer, 'Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (and is That What Makes Them Have a History)? A Bourdieuian Approach to Understanding Emotion', *History and Theory* 51 (2012), 206.

[41] Matt, 'Current Emotion Research', 120.

[42] Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*, Ch. 5-7.

decades endorsed tearful emotion as expression of fine sentiment, by the 1790s, in the wake of mass social upheaval (invariably attributed to sentimental 'enthusiasm'), and the seemingly hysterical affectation of manners amongst the *beau monde*, moralists began to lament that sentimentalism was in fact fostering idleness and decadence, and – significantly for our purposes here – undermining traditional values like charity and benevolence.[43] Indeed, as Thomas Dixon suggests, it was just this anxiety about unlicensed emotionalism that led to the eventual petering out of tearful displays, and affirmation of the 'stiff upper lip' as the idealised English identity.[44]

Emotion in the late eighteenth century was thus indelibly tied to political change, a notion that has significant implications for our understanding of the development of humanitarian reform. If, following Scull, we accept that emotions *did* play a significant role in concentrating the lunacy reform movement at the turn of the nineteenth century, then it is likely that this shift in emotional regimes – rather than any stable progression of sensibilities – provided the impetus for this push. Indeed, loose support for such a chronology can be found in Michael Brown's recent study of the politics and ideology of early lunacy reform. Re-examining the reform of the York Lunatic Asylum in 1813-15 – in which the authority of the hospital's genteel patrons and officers was eroded by a zealous cabal of outsiders – Brown has shown that the controversy derived from competing conceptions of 'public spirit'. Owing to the reformers' mistrust of the apparent secrecy surrounding the Asylum's medical space – a suspicion that was shaped by their wider ideological predilections – the reformers strived to open the institution's management to a nascent (and figurative) 'public' authority'.[45] Though Brown views this as a largely political process – the substitution of traditional medical identities with a utilitarian ideal reflecting wider cultural and structural changes in British society – this reconceptualisation of political philosophy largely replicated the simultaneous shift in emotional styles identified by Dixon and others.[46] It is thus pertinent to re-examine the emotions surrounding early lunacy reform in light of this new research, to determine the extent to which emotional change may have shaped, or indeed

---

[43] Todd, *Sensibility*, 129-46.
[44] Thomas Dixon, *Weeping Britannia: Portrait of a Nation in Tears* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), spec. Ch. 8.
[45] Michael Brown, 'Rethinking Early Nineteenth-Century Asylum Reform', *The Historical Journal* 49, no. 2 (2006), 425-52.
[46] Michael Brown, *Performing Medicine: Medical Culture and Identity in Provincial England, c.1760-1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011).

provoked this species of zealous advocacy, which emerged so suddenly at the turn of the nineteenth century.

II. Methodology and Sources

Recent frameworks for the historical study of emotions have stressed the importance of norms and 'feeling rules' to the processes of historical change, with distinctive regimes and scripts guiding individuals in the appropriate expression of emotion in particular circumstances – while also delimiting certain possible responses.[47] Since, as performance theories have shown, 'emotions are not passive, but active in the construction of identity', the practices by which feelings and expressions are articulated and habituated becomes a viable path to the emotions of people in the past.[48] As Reddy has shown, particularly with regard to rigid, political regimes, distinctive rituals and prescriptions are utilised to impose a required emotional style on subjects. 'Emotives' are one such practice: performative emotional utterances that interpose on the individual's (perhaps unconscious) goal-management. Tania Colwell has usefully described an emotive as 'a temporary translation of an emotional position, the very utterance of which loops back into the sensory inputs acting upon one's thoughts'. Their utilisation may 'confirm or alter one's emotional standpoint', and the constant repetition might 'intensify an emotional effect or affect over time.'[49] Emotives, in Reddy's analysis, can thus be seen as 'transformative' agents of change: the vehicles by which political regimes can issue conformity from their subjects (by inculcating particular emotional styles), or, if an individual's goals do not align with those of the wider emotional regime, impose 'emotional suffering' on them.[50]

Expanding on Reddy's work, Monique Scheer has put forward a theory of emotional life that stresses the role of the body in the production of emotions. Utilising Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus, Scheer emphasises 'the embeddedness of minds, bodies, and social relations' in the production of feelings, conceiving of an emotion not simply as a biologically hardwired *response* to stimuli, but as a 'practical engagement with the world …

---

[47] See, for example, Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, 199.

[48] Katie Barclay, 'Performance and Performativity', in *Early Modern Emotions: An Introduction*, ed. Susan Broomhall (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 15.

[49] Tania Colwell, 'Emotives and Emotional Regimes', in Broomhall, *Early Modern Emotions*, 7; Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*, 96-110.

[50] Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*, Ch. 4.

emerging from bodily dispositions conditioned by a cultural context'.[51] According to this perspective, such dispositions – constitutive of the self, and any associated concepts of interiority – are 'executed outside of consciousness and rely on social scripts from historically situated fields.'[52] The history of emotions, then, can be conceived as the history of the scripts that enact these embodiments, what Scheer terms 'emotional practices':

> Emotional practices are habits, rituals, and everyday pastimes that aid us in achieving a certain emotional state. This includes the striving for a desired feeling, as well as the modifying of one that is not desirable. Emotional practices in this sense are manipulations of body and mind to evoke feelings where there are none, to focus diffuse arousals and give them an intelligible shape, or to change or remove emotions already there. In other words, they are part of what is often referred to as 'emotional management' and the ongoing learning and maintaining of an emotional repertoire.[53]

Scheer categorises four key practices – the mobilization, naming, communication, and regulation of emotion – which are fluid enough to incorporate existing concepts for the study of emotions. An emotive, for instance, can easily be conceived as a kind of emotional practice: 'an utterance that characterizes the self and … others in emotional terms.'[54] Broadly speaking, emotional practices 'aim at the mobilization of psychophysical capacities in order to achieve aesthetic experiences and embodied forms of meaning': that is, they work to sustain an idealised emotional disposition.[55]

Thinking of emotions as embodied practices in this way is useful, as it restores the body's central place in the study of emotions, thus skirting tired debates about the cognitive bases of feeling states, and the primacy of language and discourse in the construction of the self.[56] Scheer's theory also provides historians with a model for understanding the influence

---

[51] Scheer, 'Emotions', 199, 193. For an earlier attempt to apply the concept of habitus to the historical study of emotions see Fay Bound Alberti, 'Introduction: Medical History and Emotion Theory', in *Medicine, Emotion and Disease, 1700-1950*, ed. Fay Bound Alberti (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), xviii.

[52] Scheer, 'Emotions', 207.

[53] *Ibid.*, 209.

[54] Colwell, 'Emotives', 7; Scheer, 'Emotions', 212.

[55] Scheer, 'Emotions', 212.

[56] For an earlier attempt at theorising the history of the body and feelings see Joanna Bourke, 'Fear and Anxiety: Writing about Emotion in Modern History', *History Workshop Journal* 55 (2003), 111-33.

of the social structure on the body, without denying the potential for individual agency.[57] Indeed, in denoting emotions as processes, Scheer undermines the commonplace assumption that emotions are 'essentially *re*actions' imposed on a subject, suggesting, instead, that what are often described as '"triggers" of emotional "reactions"' are in fact 'constituted [as such] by those emotional acts'. In this view, rather than simply 'searching the historical record for the "trigger" to explain the emotion that followed', the historian can re-interpret emotions 'as the meaningful cultural activity of ascribing, interpreting, and constructing an event as a trigger.'[58]

Despite their differences in emphasis, these writers provide some general principles from which a study of emotions and historical change can be conducted. For one, it is clear that emotional styles are mutable, varying even within societies depending on particular groups' values and practices. Moreover, far from being instinctive reactions to stimuli, emotions can be fruitfully considered as goal-directed processes, subject to manipulation and regulation through culturally situated rituals and practices. Whether the target of this emotional management is the exterior display of emotion, or the location and structuring of an idealised 'inner' state, loosely defined, it is evident that this 'domain of effort', as Reddy terms it, is central to appraisals of virtue, authenticity, and selfhood.[59] Taken together, these concepts can open up a new research program for historians, reorienting historical inquiry towards the values and practices that provoke or shape emotional experience: a field of study that may 'cut across standard categories through which power hierarchies are created in social theory'.[60] Such concepts have been fruitfully applied to the study of medicine across the eighteenth century though, as Jonathan Andrews notes, the full potential of emotions frameworks to upend traditional models of health and wellbeing 'has yet to be realised'.[61] Rab Houston, in a historiographical review of the literature on early modern British psychiatry, has similarly acknowledged the possibilities of the as-yet unexplored reappraisal of psychiatric history through the lens of emotions theory.[62] Recent studies by Catharine

---

[57] Scheer, 'Emotions, 203-4.

[58] *Ibid*., 206.

[59] Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*, 55-7.

[60] Bourke, 'Fear and Anxiety', 124.

[61] Jonathan Andrews, 'History of Medicine: Health, Medicine and Disease in the Eighteenth Century', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 34, no. 4 (2011), 509-10. For recent studies that engage with emotions theory see Bound Alberti ed., *Medicine, Emotion and Disease*; Lynda Payne, *With Words and Knives: Learning Medical Dispassion in Early Modern England* (London & New York: Routledge, 2016).

[62] Rab Houston, 'A Latent Historiography? The Case of Psychiatry in Britain, 1500-1820', *The Historical Journal* 57, no. 1 (2014), 307-8.

Coleborne and Jade Shepherd into the 'theatre of emotions' that characterised the politics of committal to and discharge of patients from nineteenth-century Anglosphere asylums certainly demonstrate the potential for such concepts to revise the historiography, and bring to light issues that historians have typically overlooked.[63]

Following their lead, and taking in a wider scope, this thesis examines the influence of emotional regimes on the development of the lunacy reform movement over the period c.1770-1820 – the half-century or so in which Lawrence Stone identified the genesis of Western humanitarianism.[64] Yet while Stone (and most of the writers that followed him) attributed this rush of activism to the development of the sentimental emotional regime, this study argues, rather, that it was the proliferation of a competing emotional style in the latter decades of the eighteenth century that provided the stimulus for a concerted humanitarian reform movement. It is suggested that as sentimental norms demanded ever more excessive and formalised responses to suffering, observers became increasingly frustrated in their attempts at emotional management, prompting ambitious members of the professional classes and intelligentsia to assert a new range of norms and performances which, ultimately, encouraged a more 'zealous' response to the treatment of the insane, and the individuals charged with their care.

The primary aim of this thesis is to sketch this shift in dominant emotional styles, so as to illustrate how the new sets of practices and rituals prompted this more active engagement with the lunacy question. Such an approach is not without precedent. Historians have recognised the effects of behavioural norms on the treatment of the insane, particularly with reference to polite strictures pertaining to the mocking of unruly and seemingly comical lunatics, which I discuss below. Yet while this work acknowledges the centrality of emotional display to the production of cultural capital, the importance of emotional management to self-appraisals of virtue and sincerity has not been adequately addressed, nor have historians given serious thought to whether competing emotional norms amongst different subsets of the cultural elite could drive conflict and change. As I demonstrate in

---

[63] Catharine Coleborne, 'Families, Patients and Emotions: Asylums for the Insane in Colonial Australia and New Zealand, c. 1880-1910', *Social History of Medicine* 19, no. 3 (2006), 425-42 (qtd. 437); Jade Shepherd, '"I am not very well I feel nearly mad when I think of you": Male Jealousy, Murder, and Broadmoor in Late-Victorian Britain', *Social History of Medicine* 30, no. 2 (2017), 277-98; *idem*, 'Victorian Madmen', Ch. 5.
[64] Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*, 238.

this thesis, a consideration of such issues can revise the historiography of lunacy reform in interesting ways.

A key issue here is the nature of the emotional utterances made by philanthropists and interested observers when reflecting on their relation to the insane other. In assuming that the lamentations over the treatment of the insane made by nineteenth-century philanthropists were the natural result of a new 'cultural understanding of madness', Scull has dismissed such remarks as being 'without analytic utility' – evidence, simply, of the inculcation of a distinctively 'modern' attitude towards mental disorder.[65] However, if, following Reddy and Scheer, we view emotions as processes, dependent on culturally specific scripts and rituals, then such emotional utterances become subjects of enquiry in their own right – as carefully cultivated emotional practices, utilised in the ongoing management of an emotional disposition.[66] The driving assumption of this thesis is that while the 'social affections' (pity, affection, compassion, benevolence) were elevated by the eighteenth-century 'cult of sensibility' as culturally-valued performances, their normative expression was fundamentally shaped by the dominant norms of a particular society, and so as these norms changed, so too did people's expectations of the associated 'aesthetic experiences and embodied forms of meaning', as Scheer put it. Put simply, appraisals of compassion changed over time – sometimes quite rapidly – and this had significant implications for the ways that people engaged with the issue of insanity. Since spectacles of madness changed depending on their composition, polite spectators were faced with an array of potential emotional responses to them, many of which threatened to subvert specific norms, thus placing greater pressure on the individual to manage their feelings appropriately. This, in turn, had implications for the treatment of the mad, as it encouraged the valorisation of particular forms and expressions that could excite the correct feeling, while simultaneously discouraging engagement with mad people who may frustrate such performances.

The subsequent study thus places a greater emphasis on the aesthetics and performativity of the social affections than is found in the existing historiography of madness and lunacy reform. The analysis draws from cultural studies the idea that the modern culture of spectacle is implicitly organised around dual poles of representation and experience, or

---

[65] Scull, *Most Solitary of Afflictions*, 91.

[66] In this sense Scull's offhand remark that claims of disinterested benevolence puffed the reformers' 'sense of self-righteousness' appears to me to be closer to the point (*Most Solitary of Afflictions*, 91).

'structures of feeling', to borrow Raymond Williams's terminology.[67] Sentimentalism, as we have seen, is one such mode: an emotional style characterised by pleasure, warmth and control, and represented in the display of stereotypically 'benevolent' responses, primarily tears.[68] Complementing (though often set in contrast to) the sentimental is sensationalism: a mode of expression generally associated with humility, horror and abjection, and characterised by flinches, shocking tremors, and theatrical rejections.[69] Traditionally, work on these aesthetic paradigms has focused on their popular reception, detailing, for instance, how the different registers shaped unique genres of literature, as well as the cultural or political implications of their consumption. This is Andrew Scull's emphasis, in one of the few studies to document the utilisation of these dual structures of feeling in the literature on madness: sentimentalism and sensationalism being seen to define the representation of madhouses in separate bodies of literature, aimed at distinctive classes of readers.[70] This study takes a more critical approach. In assuming that emotional performances and 'aesthetic experiences' are constitutive of selves, it re-examines appraisals of responses to the spectacle of insanity across the period 1770-1820, both in literature and art, so as to determine the extent to which particular responses – sentimental tears or sensational flinches – were assessed as moral or virtuous in different contexts. The implications of this cultural politics for the treatment of the insane will be explored in more depth over the first three chapters in particular.

Broadly speaking, this thesis works from the assumption, derived from the work of Scull and Klaus Doerner, that this particular species of 'humanitarian' reform was motivated by material factors: the desire to construct and maintain reformative asylums reflecting both the pressures of industrialisation (the widespread need to provide institutions to house an otherwise troublesome population), as well as the professional ambitions of the proto-psychiatrists, who sought to secure a new field of specialisation.[71] This study extends these

---

[67] See Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 132.

[68] On sentimentalism's culture of display see John Jervis, *Sympathetic Sentiments: Affect, Emotion and Spectacle in the Modern World* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015).

[69] On the cultural construction of sensation see Tiffany Watt-Smith, 'Darwin's Flinch: Sensation Theatre and Scientific Looking in 1872', *Journal of Victorian Culture* 15, no. 1 (2010), 101-118; Ann Cvetkovich, *Mixed Feelings: Feminism, Mass Culture, and Victorian Sensationalism* (New Brunswick (N.J.): Rutgers University Press, 1992); John Jervis, *Sensational Subjects: The Dramatization of Experience in the Modern World* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015).

[70] Scull, *Madness in Civilization*, 140-4.

[71] Klaus Doerner, *Madmen and the Bourgeoisie: A Social History of Insanity and Psychiatry*, trans. Joachim Neugroschel and Jean Steinberg (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), 70; Scull, *Most Solitary of Afflictions*.

earlier sociological interpretations to show how emotional practices were utilised to inculcate and naturalise associated responses and mindsets, so as to further the interests of the professional classes.[72] Such an approach conforms to Brown's assertion that lunacy reform reflected a revolt by middling critics against the political authority, and distinctive mode of self-representation of the established classes.[73]

However while acknowledging that emotions respond to social change, this study also takes seriously the assumption that emotions and emotional regimes can influence historical change independent of wider structural processes. As Raymond Williams pointed out long ago, while the 'changes of presence' and consciousness characteristic of any structure of feeling reflect intrinsically 'social experience[s]', these are not necessarily reducible to 'institutional' or 'formal' structures and ideologies.[74] Rather, such patterns of feeling can exist below 'formally held and systematic beliefs', and can transform in ways that belie recognisable class interests.[75] More critically, historians like Reddy and Rosenwein have provided explanatory models which show emotions to shape and direct political change, while Scheer, as we have seen, has implicated the habitus in the construction of 'socially produced subjectivities.'[76] A key concern of this thesis will thus be to determine the extent to which emotional styles changed or mutated independently of wider social structures, and to consider the ways that new emotional practices may have influenced the articulation of associated ideas and concepts.

As with any study of emotional regimes, the subsequent analysis draws upon a varied range of sources. Since, in Reddy's formulation, such regimes materialise through the inculcation of emotional practices, any texts or rituals that encourage or habituate the performance of emotives – or, alternately, which inflict emotional suffering on transgressors – become valid objects of analysis. Indeed, as Jan Plamper notes, a study of emotional

---

[72] While I am cautious about making any claims about any hegemonic 'rise of the middle-class', I do loosely follow writers like Pierre Bourdieu and Thomas Pfau in attributing the consolidation of bourgeois authority (be it economic, professional, or intellectual) to the proliferation of particular emotional norms and formal competencies, which largely derived from the Romantic Age. See Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press, 1984); Thomas Pfau, *Wordsworth's Profession: Form, Class, and the Logic of Early Cultural Production* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).
[73] Brown, 'Rethinking', 450.
[74] Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, 131-2.
[75] *Ibid*., 132, 134-5.
[76] Scheer, 'Emotions', 206.

practices takes in '[t]races of all forms of physical feeling in writing, sound, and image'.[77] This analysis thus incorporates any object that exhibits, in Barbara Rosenwein's words, 'affective valence' towards insanity, or the politics of lunacy reform.[78] While conventional printed materials, such as medical treatises, parliamentary papers, institutional records, and novels, have been consulted to survey popular attitudes towards madness, a wider range of texts and printed ephemera – including prints, newspapers, periodical essays, sermons, poems, plays, and theatrical criticism – have been probed to examine the means by which emotional practices were mobilised and habituated. To gauge the influence of these practices over individuals' emotional management, and to identify shifts in the normative expression of emotion, an array of personal papers have also been accessed, including diaries, letters, and manuscripts. As far as definition is concerned, I follow Scheer in using words like 'emotion', 'feeling', 'affect', and 'sentiment' interchangeably, since, as she shows, emotional practices can 'create bodily manifestations seemingly independent from the mind, ego, or subject'.[79] That said, I do play close attention to the historically specific usage of key terms like 'passion' and 'affection' where suitable, so as to avoid anachronism.[80]

III. Chapter Summary

This thesis is arranged into two Parts, each of which address the influence of a different emotional regime over responses to the insane in this period. Part One examines the characteristic responses of genteel observers towards the spectacle of insanity across the so-called Age of Sensibility. The first chapter situates the insane within the wider emotional community, illustrating how the moral philosophy of Adam Smith and his followers fundamentally structured polite spectators' emotional responses to the mad. Reflecting the individualist dictates of this nascent consumer culture, Smith's doctrine of sympathy – the schema from which the culture's emotional practices were elaborated – directed the performance of conventionally 'sentimental' emotions towards mad people that did not threaten the spectators' ease or security, while encouraging the rejection of any lunatics that

---

[77] Jan Plamper, *The History of Emotions: An Introduction*, trans. Keith Tribe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 269. On the use of sources in the elaboration of emotional practices see also Barclay, 'Performance', 15.

[78] Rosenwein, *Generations of Feeling*, 7.

[79] Scheer, 'Emotions', 198.

[80] On the cultural specificity of emotion words see Thomas Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); *idem*, '"Emotion": The History of a Keyword in Crisis', *Emotion Review* 4, no. 4 (2012), 338-44.

provoked abjection. The implications of these practices are evident in artistic and theatrical depictions of insanity across the latter decades of the eighteenth century which, to enable a ready 'sympathetic' movement in the spectator (and thus to allow them to locate their virtuous 'sensibility') were increasingly rendered according to an aesthetic template that would mobilise the correct emotions: a practice which led to the steady marginalisation of mad figures that did not meet this ideal.

The consequences of this emotional culture for the treatment of the mad in the late eighteenth century are further highlighted in Chapter Two, which focuses on the period of emotional excess that characterised sentimentalism's high-watermark in the 1780s. As the necessity to locate and express pleasing sentimental feelings in response to distress was elevated to a cultural imperative, polite observers became increasingly discerning in their contemplation of unfortunates: a point noted by philanthropists who, to enact the correct embodiments in their audiences, heavily sanitised the depiction of charitable objects (like the insane), identifying them solely with the qualities of 'beauty' articulated by Edmund Burke. However, as contemporaries became increasingly aware of the precariousness of such emotional management – and conscious of the need for finely crafted spectacles to excite their sensibilities – they grew steadily disillusioned with the emotional regime, and suspicious of its excesses.

The second Part of the thesis examines the consequences of this malaise: a rapid reaction to the prevailing emotional regime that led to the erasure of sentimental emotions from public life, and the imposition of a set of behavioural codes that were thought more suitable to industrial society. Chapter Three addresses the direct implications of the collapse of the sentimental emotional regime for the treatment of the insane in Britain. It argues that, as critics rose to condemn the perceived excesses of the cult of sensibility, they simultaneously asserted the primacy of a new emotional norm, which stressed strength and self-command. This paradigm shift subsequently prompted a revision of the performance of benevolence, which, it is suggested, encouraged the figuratively 'zealous' exertions of lunacy reformers from the first decade of the nineteenth century. Driven by an ambitious class of artists and intellectuals – who sought to distinguish themselves from the so-called 'fashionable world' – this new movement praised the contemplation of abjection as the pinnacle of taste and moral fortitude, thus encouraging the public-spirited to search out distressing sights behind the madhouse walls, as a means of expressing their virtue.

The final two chapters address the affective politics of reform. Though the lunacy reformers did not by any means constitute a unified movement in the first two decades of the nineteenth century, from around 1800 the outlines of a movement are discernible, with disparate groups consolidating around the constellation of dispositions and expressions that would come to define activist identities through the Victorian-era. Chapter Four provides a re-examination of reformist propaganda, paying close attention to the nuanced cultural work these texts performed. Existing studies of lunacy reform have typically treated this material dismissively, the assumption being that the overt sensationalism of reformist narratives – broken and wretched bodies – was merely intended to excite feelings of disgust and disapprobation in unconcerned observers. Such an interpretation is based on the premise that readers maintained some innate antipathy to disgust, and that its arousal would excite particular moral responses. Yet recent studies into the production of sensational affect have overturned such generalisations, highlighting, instead, the complex construction of such seemingly 'natural' feelings. With this point in mind, this chapter provides a close reading of reformist narratives, and purported responses to them, as a means of underscoring the centrality of this structure of feeling to the reformist persona. It suggests that, as intellectuals and professionals grew increasingly suspicious of the sensuality of the sentimental mode, they steadily embraced sensationalism as a more reliable guide to intuition. This new association between feelings of 'shock' and intellectual inquiry fundamentally shaped the inquisitorial mindset of the lunacy reformers, who showed themselves compelled to scrutinise the wretched spectacles that excited these feelings. Moreover, the perceived naturalness of sensational affect offered a vehicle for the dissemination of bourgeois ideology, and as the second part of the chapter shows, reformers were to utilise sensational representations in their writings and testimonials, so as to embody particular politicised dispositions in their readers.

Chapter Five takes a broader view of the politics of lunacy reform, with an emphasis on the performance and reception of emotions in debates and inquiries into the 'mad-trade' in the early nineteenth century. It argues that, as part of the general rejection of polite mores, middling critics sought to prove their public spirit through increasingly assertive responses to allegations of neglect in lunatic asylums. Drawing upon a potent species of rhetoric, first articulated in early elaborations of charity and patriotism, professional reformers and aggrieved ex-inmates of madhouses developed a distinctive emotional disposition around

displays of aggression and martial vigour: emotional expressions that they contrasted with, and directed at, the polite and sentimental manners of the genteel officers and patrons of early charity hospitals. As the erasure of the sentimental emotional regime fostered a pervasive sense of fragility amongst public figures, this new emotional style acted to embolden and unify the asylum's critics, thus providing a sound basis for 'humanitarian' action. Taken together, the chapters in the second Part of the thesis demonstrate that the emotions that drove lunacy reform were not simply products of the sentimental turn, or a nascent 'principle' in public life, but rather a new set of historically specific norms and practices, which fundamentally shaped the reformers' behaviours and responses.

The decision to divide the thesis into two parts this way reflects the roughly chronological development of these emotional regimes. This is not to suggest at an absolute break in emotional practices. Sentimentalism did not disappear after 1800, with contemporaries retaining a close affinity with its dictates – in many cases for political reasons. Similarly, many of the later criticisms of the sentimental emotional regime can be found, in genesis, in writings from the early eighteenth century, as can the outlines of some of the emotional practices that would buttress the new habitus. Yet I maintain that the 1790s did see a radical change in the dominant emotional regime, and in this sense I depart from the historians who have appealed to disparate early criticisms of sensibility to infer a latent ambivalence towards sentimentalism's excesses throughout the eighteenth century. Just because a handful of writers paid lip-service to Adam Smith's designation of manly 'self-command' as the pinnacle of virtue, we should not lose sight of the fact that many literary figures before 1790 – both men and women – overlooked, or doubted the applicability of this stricture.[81] Emotional regimes *guided* the interpretation of philosophical doctrines, as much as they were produced by them. Patrick McDonagh's analysis of responses to William Wordsworth's 'The Idiot Boy', mentioned in Chapter Three, is particularly illustrative of this point. In justifying the value of his poem in the wake of public censure – the content appearing too revolting for popular consumption – Wordsworth simply dismissed his critics as emotionally vapid: an argument which, McDonagh notes, reflected selective readings, or differing interpretations of Scottish Enlightenment moral philosophy.[82]

---

[81] John Richetti, *The English Novel in History 1700-1780* (London: Routledge, 1999), 237.
[82] Patrick McDonagh, *Idiocy: A Cultural History* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), 24-49.

Due to the constraints on length, the scope of the thesis has been necessarily limited. The analysis primarily focuses on the attitudes and opinions of those people most intimately involved with the lunacy reform debates: the literate middling and upper classes. This has guided the selection of print sources, with an emphasis placed on texts and periodicals that circulated amongst elite audiences. Gender will also not be a central focus of this study, though critical work on the gendering of emotions has indelibly shaped my thinking on the topic. The study argues that emotional regimes serve the ideological purposes of the dominant fraction of any society. In the case of Britain in the long eighteenth century, this incorporated an (albeit disparate) band of educated, white, male landowners and merchants, and as such, all philosophical concepts of rational agency produced by this subset presupposed an association between reason and masculine agency. That this society's emotional practices were thus politicised along gender lines is unquestionable, and this certainly has implications for the study of contemporary philanthropy.[83] As emotions in this period, including expressions of benevolence, were indelibly framed by these strictures, the social affections were ultimately articulated from a paternalistic perspective, and as I demonstrate below this had important implications for the representation of the mad, and their treatment, throughout this period. Moreover, as the subsequent analysis shows, these practices could undercut deeply held philosophies and gender identities, potentially producing aversive, or disconcerting behaviours and responses to the insane other.

---

[83] To take just one example pertinent to this study: much of the work on the history of sentimentalism has emphasised that the rapid erasure of sentimental emotion from public life in the late eighteenth century – a key development, I argue, in the history of humanitarianism – both helped produce and sustain an ideology of 'separate spheres', thus enacting a negative association of sentimentalism with femininity. See, for example, Lenard, *Preaching Pity*; Lamb-Books, 'Angry Abolitionists', 99.

Part 1: Insanity and the Sentimental Emotional Regime

c. 1770-1800

Chapter 1. 'A Sight for Pity to Peruse': The Spectacle of Madness in the Culture of Sensibility

One fictionalised account stands out as providing an exemplary encounter with madness in eighteenth-century Britain. Towards the close of Laurence Sterne's *Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy* (1768), he has his sentimental traveller, Parson Yorick, seek out one Maria of Moulines, a French peasant girl driven to distraction out of grief. Discovering 'poor Maria sitting under a poplar', dwelling on her sorrows with a loyal dog at her side, Yorick was taken over with 'undescribable emotions', and was moved to tears.[1] The remembrance of this plaintive distress engendered overtly virtuous emotions in Yorick, who was driven to melancholic reflections throughout the rest of his otherwise 'joyous … riot' through the Bourbon countryside. Addressing his feelings to the reader, Yorick uttered one of Sterne's most famous soliloquys:

> —Dear Sensibility! source inexhausted of all that's precious in our joys, or costly in our sorrows! … Eternal Fountain of our feelings!—'tis here I trace thee—and this is thy '*divinity which stirs within me*;'—not that, in some sad and sickening moments, '*my soul shrinks back upon herself, and startles at destruction*;'—mere pomp of words!—but that I feel some generous joys and generous cares beyond myself…[2]

This passage was Sterne's rapturous celebration of 'sensibility', the prized moral-physiological trait of late-eighteenth-century British culture. Sensibility was a term that resisted clear definition though, as Janet Todd notes, it broadly 'came to denote the faculty of feeling, the capacity for extremely refined emotion and a quickness to display compassion for suffering.'[3] John Jervis has characterised sensibility as the dominant 'structure of feeling' of the period: a concept that straddled the boundary between thought and affect, incorporating both 'a distinctively "sensational" physiology and a "sentimental" capacity to respond to the predicament of the other'.[4] In practice, sensibility was a quality that manifested itself in interactions between individuals, specifically as a form of emotional performance, shaped, as Jervis's words allude, by the prevailing emotional regime of

---

[1] Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy*, vol. 2 (London, 1768), 171-73.
[2] *Ibid.*, 182.
[3] Todd, *Sensibility*, 7.
[4] Jervis, *Sympathetic Sentiments*, 3.

'sentimentalism'. Sentimentalism was a cultural movement founded on a belief in the innate goodness of humanity, and the pleasures of sociability. Indeed, one of its guiding principles was the assumption of humanity's interconnectedness: a binding web of 'sympathy' that allowed people 'to feel for each accident of body or mind which our friend suffers', as Kingsmill Davan described the process in the 1790s.[5] It was held that the sentiments that derived from such sympathetic exchanges were 'the root of morality and the foundation of all social bonds.'[6] By stimulating or cultivating these feelings, sentimentalists believed they were fortifying the self 'against unruly passions', a process that was considered to be 'a necessary training for virtue.'[7]

Sentimental texts, like Sterne's, aimed at exciting these moral feelings, by offering archetypal 'spectacles of sympathy', in relation to which audiences could discover their sensibility. These spectacles exhibited scenes of distress for interpretation from a beholder, who was subsequently called upon to stage an emotional response to authenticate their sensibility – primarily in a display of tears.[8] For the burgeoning class of secure middling consumers, seeking to cultivate their taste in pursuit of greater intellectual pleasures, such spectacles were embraced 'as object[s] of fascination' or even voyeuristic 'enjoyment.'[9] 'One would readily create unfortunates in order to taste the sweetness of feeling sorry for them' wrote the French sentimentalist Marie-Jeanne Riccoboni in 1769, a sentiment that was shared by prominent Georgian literati, who sought such opportunities to cultivate and convey their exquisite feelings.[10]

This 'culture of theatrical display' was a characteristic feature of late-eighteenth-century society and, indeed, was a pivotal moment in the history of emotions in the modern

---

[5] Kingsmill Davan, *An Essay on the Passions. Being an Attempt to Trace them from their Source, Describe their General Influence, and Explain the Peculiar Effects of Each Upon the Mind* (London, 1799), 97. On the various applications of the doctrine of sympathy in contemporary political discourse see Mary Fairclough, *The Romantic Crowd: Sympathy, Controversy and Print Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 2013.

[6] Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*, 164.

[7] *Ibid.*, 164. See also Fiering, 'Irresistible Compassion', 195.

[8] Jervis, *Sympathetic Sentiments*, 2-4. See also Festa, *Sentimental Figures*, 15.

[9] Jervis, *Sympathetic Sentiments*, 4; Barker-Benfield, *Culture of Sensibility*; Carolyn Williams, ''The Luxury of Doing Good': Benevolence, Sensibility, and the Royal Humane Society', in *Pleasure in the Eighteenth-Century*, ed. Roy Porter and Marie Mulvey Roberts (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press), 1996, 77-107.

[10] Marie-Jeanne Riccoboni to David Garrick, quoted in Festa, *Sentimental Figures*, 32.

West.[11] In recent decades, historians and literary scholars have emphasised the importance of sentimentalism to the development of modern sensibilities, locating within this 'culture of sensibility' the stirrings of later movements to reform the treatment of marginalised groups, including women, children, slaves, prisoners and, the focus of this thesis, the insane.[12]

In this chapter I wish to submit this assumption to a critical reappraisal; specifically, the claim that the proliferation of sentimental ideals in moral and medical discourses in this period encouraged affection for the mad, and thus drove dissatisfaction with the traditional practice of exposing them to public view. [13] The most comprehensive analysis of contemporaries' emotional responses to the insane is Jonathan Andrews's study of the treatment of the insane in London's Bethlem Hospital.[14] Seeking to explain the general sequestration of the mad from public view in the second half of the eighteenth century, Andrews suggests that, as sentimental doctrine drew attention to the 'sensibilities of the afflicted and those less well endowed by nature', polite observers fostered a 'new empathy with the plight of the mad' which created an aversive response to their exposure. [15] Influenced by the literature of sensibility, which mandated the expression of fierce emotions at the sight of distress, these spectators expressed a 'mawkish' or 'exaggerated sensibility' towards the mad spectacle, manifested as outpourings of tears, or shuddering pain.[16]

Andrews is quick to point out that this was not a wholly altruistic response to the suffering other, and in a later revision of this work, published with other contributors in *The History of Bethlem*, it is proposed that such responses were indicative of a broader 'civilizing process', in which the 'new sensibilities of polite culture' made 'the face of madness … too terrible to be shown.'[17]

This notion that attitudes towards madness were indelibly shaped by genteel society's 'growing repugnance' towards distressing sights is compelling, and is a point that will be

---

[11] Jervis, *Sympathetic Sentiments*, 2. On the theatricality of sympathy see also Daniel Gross, *The Secret History of Emotion: From Aristotle's 'Rhetoric' to Modern Brain Science* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 173-4.
[12] Barker-Benfield, *Culture of Sensibility*, Ch. 5. See also Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*, 237-9.
[13] Scull, *Most Solitary of Afflictions*; Porter, *Madmen*, spec. Ch. 2; Byrd, *Visits to Bedlam*.
[14] Andrews, 'Bedlam Revisited'; Andrews et al., *History of Bethlem*.
[15] Andrews et al., *History of Bethlem*, 189.
[16] Andrews, 'Bedlam Revisited', 68.
[17] Andrews et al, *History of Bethlem*, 189, 194; Andrews, 'Bedlam Revisited', 68.

elaborated upon in this, and the next chapter. Here I would like to pay closer attention to the conditions which gave rise to this aversion. Though Andrews's analysis is critical, his assumption that responses to madness were all manifestations of a generalised 'exaggerated sensibility' or 'squeamishness' towards insanity threatens to obscure the potentially complex cultural meanings attributed to different mental states, or the distinctive aesthetic or physical responses prompted by different mad spectacles. Indeed, from Sterne's soliloquy we can see the complexities that characterised responses to madness in the Age of Sensibility. It is clear from Yorick's words that he did not associate squeamishness with the sight of Maria. Indeed, when grasping for words to accurately represent the rapturous 'sensibility' enacted by her visage, he explicitly raised Joseph Addison's famous remark about the sublime fear of death (on the soul shrinking back on itself) as a means of marking out an *opposite to* 'generous' feeling. Though James Chandler dismisses these remarks as Sterne's comments on the inadequacy of language to represent emotion, the author's invocation of this particular aesthetic response (shuddering terror) was analogous to wider philosophical discussions about fellow-feeling in this period: debates which associated feelings of pleasing consolation with virtuous benevolence; and which, simultaneously, identified sensational affect (painful fits and starts) as selfish feelings, that terminated the sympathetic movement.[18]

Such a notion problematises any generalisations about the attitudes and responses towards 'madness' in this period, rather suggesting that assessments of sympathy – indeed, the self's relation to the mad other – were the product of appraisals, which took into account the conditions of spectatorship. This conforms to Jervis' assessment of eighteenth-century sensibility as 'fundamentally "aesthetic," … encompassing [an] embodied, evaluative response to the world': in Monique Scheer's terms, a physical response constituted through emotional practices.[19] That contemporaries acknowledged that 'sympathetic' responses to misfortune were evaluative seems evident from Paul Laffey's finding that Georgian commentators drew an absolute distinction between insanity (conceived of as the complete loss of reason), and other mood disorders, and correspondingly acknowledged that the former was thought to be outside of sympathetic regard altogether.[20] Working from a Freudian model, Vic Gatrell similarly concludes that the 'squeamishness' that many 'elites' expressed towards victims of the gallows in this period was not an extension of 'sympathy or empathy', but rather a '[refusal] to accept the pain which sympathetic engagement

---

[18] James Chandler, 'The Languages of Sentiment', *Textual Practice* 22, no. 1 (2008), 22-25.
[19] Jervis, *Sympathetic Sentiments*, 2-3.
[20] Paul Laffey, 'Insanity', 1-97 (qtd. 21)

threatens'.[21] Moreover, as he notes, the emotions expressed towards the condemned were 'organised along lines of class', with polite observers most likely to feel 'identificatory pity' for 'socially intelligible scaffold victims', rather than the poor.[22]

Such findings raise important questions about the limits of sentimental compassion, and the position of marginalised peoples within the assumed community of sentiment. Though the merits of his Freudian approach are debateable, Gatrell's explanatory model does offer a useful starting point for a reassessment of attitudes and emotions towards insanity in the same period. Rather than considering *all* affective responses towards the insane as indicative of polite society's aversion to the sight of madness, such an approach would examine more critically spectators' appraisals of distinct forms of 'suffering', and the practices used to manage or cultivate different emotions.

This chapter thus situates an analysis of contemporary writings on madness within a framework derived from recent research into the history of emotions. As noted above, Monique Scheer has argued that any emotional culture utilises particular 'artifacts, aesthetic arrangements, and technologies' to mobilise, and potentially habituate, distinctive 'aesthetic experiences and embodied forms of meaning.'[23] This is a fruitful basis from which to consider the sentimentalist project. As William Reddy has shown, while its practitioners were assured that 'sentimentalism opened the door for the true expression of certain (positive) natural feelings', the doctrine was, in effect, 'a system of emotional management', which aimed at heightening such emotions.[24] The fact that these emotions were often aroused in relation to art did not diminish their moral efficacy. Since eighteenth-century commentators believed that 'emotions and expression of them would lead to right action', any source of feeling was thought to have moral utility.[25] Indeed, art was uniquely placed to cultivate the social affections, and writers, painters and playwrights acknowledged an imperative to shape the moral tastes of consumers.[26] Sentimental texts were thus structured around a range of narratives and emblems, chosen for their 'performative efficacy – [their]

---

[21] V.A.C. Gatrell, *The Hanging Tree: Execution and the English People, 1770-1868* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 267.
[22] *Ibid*., 280.
[23] Scheer, 'Emotions', 209, 211-2.
[24] Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*, 209.
[25] *Ibid*., 164. See also Todd, *Sensibility*, 4.
[26] Barker-Benfield, *Culture of Sensibility*; Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*, 163-5; John Brewer, *Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 1997), 87.

ability to affect readers' or audiences.[27] Moreover, Janet Todd has argued that the literature of sensibility offered 'a kind of pedagogy of seeing and of the physical reaction that this seeing should produce, clarifying when uncontrolled sobs or a single tear should be the rule, or when the inexpressible nature of the feeling should be stressed.'[28]

Working from this premise, this chapter critically re-examines the representation of madness in sentimental culture, arguing that this 'pedagogy of seeing' and feeling indelibly shaped people's responses towards the spectacle of insanity, conditioning spectators to cultivate different emotions depending on the distinctive rendering of form. The first section plots the emergence of the period's dominant emotional practice – sympathetic identification – to demonstrate the ways that sentimentalists learnt to embody distinctive responses to different types of madness. It is shown that the process of sympathy was based on a mental abstraction, by which sentimentalists sought to narrate the subject position of the 'suffering' other (a sort of mobilisation of emotives), so as to be moved to the correct emotional performances. It is suggested that it was an inability to identify suitable emotions in the deranged lunatic that caused a spectator's revulsion, moving them to enact a theatrical disavowal of the spectacle. These responses thus encoded a sort of affective hierarchy in the discourse of madness, directing benevolent concern to those lunatics that could elevate appropriate, pleasurable feelings in the beholder. Following from this theoretical discussion, the subsequent sections illustrate the process by which audiences rehearsed and inculcated these emotional practices. The second part of the chapter examines depictions of madness in art from the period, highlighting the specific directions and aesthetic cues that artists used to guide their audiences to appropriate responses to different mad forms. The final section uses the theatre as a case study, to demonstrate how onlookers learnt to rehearse their sensibility (or squeamishness) in relation to depictions of madness on the stage, in accordance to the specific mental states that different actors supposedly projected.

I. Sympathy, Madness, and the Community of Sentiment

Sentimentalism emerged in Britain as a response to the radical social upheaval of the late seventeenth century. Plagued by fears of factionalism following the Civil Wars and

---

[27] Festa, *Sentimental Figures*, 15.
[28] Todd, *Sensibility*, 4. See also Paul Goring, *The Rhetoric of Sensibility in Eighteenth-Century Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Jervis, *Sympathetic Sentiments*, 49-51.

Restoration, as well as the proliferation of radical individualist doctrines, moralists promoted affective sociability as a means of cementing social bonds, and heading off political division. [29] Holding that benevolent emotions signified inner virtue, these novelists, philosophers and theologians encouraged the cultivation of such performances, with the literature of the time '[promoting] a physical language of feeling' that naturalised this sociability.[30] At their most optimistic, sentimentalism's adherents envisaged a 'social order of sensibility', in which individuals would prove their quality through interactions with others; this 'ideal of sensibility' was to be manifested in 'a combination of 'good manners' and benevolent behaviour towards the less fortunate'.[31] However, while sentimentalism was an intrinsic component of eighteenth-century philanthropy, its advocates did not seek to impose any moral obligations on readers, or address difficult questions about the structural inequalities that necessitated charity.[32] As moralists came to appreciate how unpredictable or inconsequential the outcomes of an individual's actions could be in an expansive market society, they radically limited the sphere of responsibility, 'effectively suspend[ing]' concern for others' happiness.[33] What was expected of sentimentalists was less an active exertion on behalf of the marginalised, as a detached, 'affective communion' with their plight.[34]

As the necessity to respond sentimentally towards others was ingrained in the cultural consciousness, critical discourse centred on discussions of the transmission of sentiments between individuals. 'Sympathy', as it was termed, was the quality that was thought to allow

---

[29] John Spurr, 'England 1649-1750: differences contained?', in *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature, 1650-1740*, ed. Steven Zwicker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 27-8; Audrey Jaffe, *Scenes of Sympathy: Identity and Representation in Victorian Fiction* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2000), 15-16; Maurice Goldsmith, 'Regulating Anew the Moral and Political Sentiments of Mankind: Bernard Mandeville and the Scottish Enlightenment', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 49, no. 4 (1988), 587-606; Fiering, 'Irresistible Compassion', 198-9; Lucinda Cole, '(Anti)Feminist Sympathies: The Politics of Relationship in Smith, Wollstonecraft, and More', *ELH* 58, no. 1 (1991), 109; Allan Silver, 'Friendship in Commercial Society: Eighteenth-Century Moral Theory and Modern Sociology', *American Journal of Sociology* 95, no. 6 (1990), 1474-1504; Barker-Benfield, *Culture of Sensibility*, Ch. 2.

[30] Goring, *Rhetoric of Sensibility*, 14.

[31] Jervis, *Sympathetic Sentiments*, 50.

[32] Thomas Keymer, 'Sentimental Fiction: Ethics, Social Critique and Philanthropy', in *The Cambridge History of English literature, 1660-1780*, ed. John Richetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 587-9.

[33] Vivasvan Soni, *Mourning Happiness: Narrative and the Politics of Modernity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), 315-6.

[34] *Ibid.*, 305. On the sentimentalist's ambivalence towards 'practical action' see R.F. Brissenden, *Virtue in Distress: Studies in the Novel of Sentiment from Richardson to Sade* (London & Basingstoke, Macmillan Press, 1974), 77-8, 82-3.

an individual to enter into another's emotions, and was lauded by moral philosophers as the vehicle for affecting this community of sentiment.[35] By its colloquial definition, sympathy was characterised as sorrowful fellow-feeling, aroused by the 'sufferings of others'.[36] In philosophical thought, however, the word retained a more general definition, being used, in Robert Charles Dallas's definition, to describe 'the means by which Nature reverberates an emotion', rather 'than an original emotion' in itself. [37]

Sympathy was elevated to a social imperative by theologians in the early decades of the eighteenth century, and soundly theorised in the writings of the Scot Francis Hutcheson, whose 'moral sense' philosophy proposed that the benevolent instinct was innate in humanity. In the writings of Hutcheson's follower David Hume, sympathy became 'the mechanism by which people can catch the feelings of others.'[38] Hume adduced that all individuals were born with a 'propensity … to sympathize with others, and to receive by communication their inclinations and sentiments'.[39] Though those of a weak intellect were purportedly more susceptible to such impressions, Hume found that even 'men of the greatest judgment and understanding' struggled 'to follow their own reason or inclination, in opposition to that of their friends and daily companions.'[40]

However it was in the writings of Adam Smith that sympathy received its most influential theoretical articulation. Smith, like his predecessors, believed that sociability was the path to virtue and cultural understanding, and in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) he sought to explain the process 'by which moral judgements are formed.'[41] He argued that by interacting with others, and gauging their responses to any given actions or utterances, an individual would internalise received social norms, and thus begin to act as a figuratively 'impartial spectator', sympathetic to the affections of those around them.[42] Though such claims to impartiality masked an ostensibly self-interested motive (Smith believed that

---

[35] See, for example, Thomas Barnes, 'On the Pleasure which the Mind in many Cases receives from Contemplating Scenes of Distress. Read April 3, 1782', in *Memoirs of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester*, vol. 1 (Warrington, 1785), 154.
[36] Erastus, 'Reflections on Sympathy with Sorrow', *The Monthly Miscellany* 2 (1774), 240.
[37] Robert Charles Dallas, *Miscellaneous Writings: Consisting of Poems; Lucretia, A Tragedy; and Moral Essays; with a Vocabulary of the Passions…* (London, 1797), 288, 295.
[38] Adela Pinch, *Strange Fits of Passion: Epistemologies of Emotion, Hume to Austen* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1996), 24.
[39] David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, vol. 2 (London, 1739), 73.
[40] *Ibid.*, 73.
[41] Todd, *Sensibility*, 27.
[42] On Smith's notion of the impartial spectator see David Marshall, 'Adam Smith and the Theatricality of Moral Sentiments', *Critical Inquiry* 10 (1984), 592-613; Todd, *Sensibility*, 27.

individuals instinctively tempered their passions out of a desire for social acclaim)[43], he argued that this perspective was the basis of morality: a temperament that engendered generous affections, and thus virtuous acts.[44]

Sympathy, for Smith, was founded in an 'imaginary change of situation' with another. 'As we have no immediate experience of what other men feel', it was dependent on the spectator to '[conceive] what [they] should feel in the like situation' of the subject under observation. Sympathy was thus a process of mental abstraction:

> By the imagination we place ourselves in [another's] situation … we enter as it were into his body, and become in some measure the same person with him, and thence form some idea of his sensations, and even feel something which, though weaker in degree, is not altogether unlike them.[45]

This emphasis on the specular nature of sympathy represented a break with his predecessors. While Hume had acknowledged that the imagination played a role in the production of sympathy,[46] he had envisaged this as a largely mechanical process: a 'direct and immediate reproduction of' another's passions.[47] Smith, by contrast, resisted this notion of an instinctive emotional contagion, emphasising instead the importance of self-control in the sympathetic exchange.[48] His work, more than any other, articulated the notion of sympathy as a 'work of reflection and imagination.'[49] Ildiko Csengei has argued that Smithian sympathy was a purely cognitive process, an imaginative identification which allowed one to 'make sense of the situation of the other', rather than simply share in their pleasure or distress.[50] This gradual process of taking the other's perspective – the 'sympathy time' as Rae Greiner denotes it – was thought to be a necessary movement in the production

---

[43] Bert Kerkhof, 'A Fatal Attraction? Smith's "Theory of Moral Sentiments" and Mandeville's "Fable"', *History of Political Thought* 16, no. 2 (1995), 219-33.
[44] Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain, 1660-1800* (Harlow: Longman, 2000), 100-3.
[45] Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (London, 1759), 2-3.
[46] Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, 164-6.
[47] John Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 35. See also Fairclough, *Romantic Crowd*, 23-7; Pinch, *Strange Fits of Passion*, 19.
[48] Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability*, 46.
[49] Ildiko Csengei, *Sympathy, Sensibility and the Literature of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 50-2.
[50] *Ibid.*, 52.

of the social affections; indeed, compassionate fellow-feeling was conceived of the endpoint of a (successful) sympathetic engagement with sorrow.[51]

At base, sympathy – this process of imagining the other's situation, and cultivating an emotional response – can be seen as the emotional practice that buttressed the sentimental emotional regime: the conscious (and eventually habitual) mobilisation of emotional utterances in order to cultivate the correct sentimental feelings. In effect, the necessarily slow process of sympathy was essential to the cult of sensibility's rigid emotional management, allowing an observer to control the positions of spectatorship, and thus ensure that their expressions conformed to the requirements of the emotional norm.[52] It also gave objects of distress time to temper their own ravings, so as to meet the spectator's regard.

There was a political element to this doctrine. The sympathy that Smith sought to cultivate was grounded in the aesthetic, an important step in the development of his liberal ethics. As Charles Griswold notes, Smithian sympathy was predicated on the assumptions that a 'mutual concord of the emotions' was 'pleasurable to both actor and spectator', and that individuals would actively seek to maintain the regard of another, so as to achieve this aesthetic gratification.[53] This theory was founded on the supposition that the more 'harmonious' was the relationship between the sentiments of the spectator and the subject of their contemplation – and thus the closer the subject resembled 'perfection' in the spectator's mind – the more pleasurable was the emotion from their visualisation.[54] In effect, Smith's theory enabled moral judgements to be framed as aesthetic propositions. The gratification that was assumed to accompany mutual sympathy was seen as a marker of approbation, an acknowledgement that a spectator regarded the emotions of another as being entirely 'suitable' to their antecedent causes. Conversely, if the erratic passions of the other did not 'coincide' with the spectator's sentiments, 'they necessarily appear to him unjust and improper, and unsuitable to the causes which excite them.'[55] This principle had a powerful

---

[51] Rae Greiner, 'Sympathy Time: Adam Smith, George Eliot, and the Realist Novel', *Narrative* 17, no. 3 (2009), 294-8.
[52] On the temporality of sympathetic identification see *Ibid.*, 295-8.
[53] Charles Griswold, *Adam Smith and the Virtues of the Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 120.
[54] With respect to the polite spectator, aesthetic pleasure could also be viewed as an incentive towards potentially painful sympathetic expenditure. See, *Ibid.*, 120-1; Csengei, *Sympathy*, 57-8.; Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability*, 46-7; Jervis, *Sympathetic Sentiments*, 99-101; Eugene Heath, 'The Commerce of Sympathy: Adam Smith on the Emergence of Morals', *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 33, no. 3 (1995), 454.
[55] Smith, *Moral Sentiments*, 22.

hold over contemporaries, and was readily adopted by writers on aesthetics by the late-eighteenth century. Archibald Alison, the century's foremost proponent of taste, made this link between sympathy and moral approbation the basis of aesthetic theory. He argued that, while all forms of expression could be said to have some intrinsic merit, they could only be said to be truly beautiful 'when they are expressive to us of emotions of which we approve, and in which we sympathize'.[56] Like Smith, Alison concluded that approbation derived from a form's perfection – the 'harmony or accordance' of its 'Composition' – and when figures 'contradict[ed] the expression we are prepared to indulge', the sympathetic bond was broken, terminating in disgust or sensation.[57]

At base, such comments were reflective of the social context in which Smith and his followers were writing: that of an emergent consumer society. As Audrey Jaffe has shown, the 'anxiety of bodily contagion' inherent to this model of sympathy was an 'effect of capitalist politics': the fear that a 'respectable' spectator would feel at taking the perspective of their 'social shadow'.[58] Such encounters – in which the polite consumer was forced to contemplate the pleading, and purportedly envious gaze of the debased object – were typically rendered as terminating in a rejection of an abject or 'monstrous' other: a theatrical looking away.[59] In the Smithian schema, there was no contradiction between this seeming self-interest and the dictates of humanity. Rejecting the notion that fellow-feeling was a natural impulse, imposed on all human agents, Smith and his devotees worked from the assumption that 'Nature' had in fact imparted 'an original selfishness' or 'dull sensibility' in all actors.[60] Individuals, it was held, would always prefer their 'own welfare to that of others', and would naturally seek to 'better [their] own condition,' before extending assistance.[61] In a commercial society, oriented towards the pursuit of pleasure and leisure, polite consumers were 'constantly on the look-out for new and pleasant objects' for

---

[56] Archibald Alison, *Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste*, 4th Edition, vol. 1 (Edinburgh, 1815), 260.

[57] *Ibid*., 263, 343-4.

[58] Jaffe, *Scenes of Sympathy*, 5-6, 12.

[59] By 'abject', here I am drawing loosely on Julia Kristeva's conception of an external threat that 'disturbs identity, system, order' (*Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 4). On the function of the abject in modern aesthetics see Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (London & New York: Routledge, 1993), 29; Dani Cavallaro, *Gothic Vision: Three Centuries of Horror, Terror and Fear* (London & New York: Continuum, 2002), 199.

[60] Csengei, *Sympathy*, 52. See also Soni, *Mourning Happiness*, 314; Erastus, 'Reflections on Sympathy', 240.

[61] Csengei, *Sympathy*, 53. See also Simon Gikandi, *Slavery and the Culture of Taste* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011), 73.

contemplation or consumption, and increasingly eschewed those sights which threatened their ease and sense of security.[62] So it also was with compassionate sorrow. As Smith's follower 'Erastus' contended in a periodical essay in 1774, the benevolent 'concern' that a spectator felt at the sight of suffering was dependent on a general sympathy with the sufferer's condition, and he made clear that 'if we do not entirely enter into, and go along with, the [emotion] of another, we have no sort of regard or fellow-feeling for it.'[63]

In effect, Smith's doctrine of sympathy placed the responsibility for fellow-feeling on to the sufferer, forcing them to appear before a spectator 'at ease' in a form that would enable an aesthetic response – generally speaking, as figure that the spectator would esteem.[64] The issue that eighteenth-century sentimentalists grappled with was the particular forms of suffering thought capable of arousing this pleasing sympathy. Aesthetics dictated that virtuous emotions were those aroused upon reflection and, as we have seen, the doctrine of sympathy reflected this precept, by emphasising the role of the imagination in the process of fellow-feeling. As Csengei has shown, Smith believed that a pleasing sympathetic identification could not be achieved until 'the other's emotion becomes manifest in a told or imagined narrative', a process accomplished 'either [through] language or as a coherent sequence of mental images'.[65] It is perhaps unsurprising to find then that Smith considered *emotional* distress to be the most potent source of fellow-feeling in an observer.[66] Though imagining bodily pain was thought to excite visceral discomfort in the spectator, such sensations were said to be too fleeting, and abject, to inspire affective communion; indeed, it was in situations where a spectator was threatened by the supposedly contagious abjection aroused by broken or wretched bodies that Smith and other theorists sanctioned turning away from suffering. Harmonious sympathy was thought to occur only when the spectator was afforded full scope of the subject's emotions, and no 'conjectures' remained as to the cause of the passion, or the extenuating circumstances that provoked it.[67] As one of Smith's admirers was to succinctly observe, 'our fellow-feeling is never thoroughly roused, till we know something of the *nature* and *cause* of that happiness or misery which is the occasion

---

[62] Sophie von la Roche, *Sophie in London, 1786*, trans. Clare Williams (London: J. Cape, 1933), 84.
[63] Erastus, 'Reflections on Sympathy', 240.
[64] Heath, 'Commerce of Sympathy', 456.
[65] Csengei, *Sympathy*, 58. See also Greiner, 'Sympathy Time', 294.
[66] Smith, *Moral Sentiments*, 55, 36.
[67] *Ibid*., 7-9.

of it; for till this be known, we cannot so easily imagine ourselves in the condition of the happy or unhappy person.'[68]

From this theoretical frame we can begin to interpret the cult of sensibility's responsiveness to the insane, and to appreciate the precariousness of their position in this supposedly benevolent social order. Because it was clear to contemporaries that the mad did not readily conform to this imaginative schema. In popular conceptions, insanity was characterised as vacant incoherence: a 'pantomime of unchecked passion', manifested in erratic ravings, wanderings, and violent agitation.[69] The most celebrated description of this incoherence came from the poet Thomas Gray, whose portrayal of 'Moody madness, laughing wild / Amidst severest woe' was said to most accurately convey the manic visage: bewildering expressions that seemed at odds with the reality of the subject's fallen situation.[70] While such descriptors had long been ingrained in the cultural imagination, for writers after the mid-eighteenth century, the disunity between the lunatic's erratic facade, and their supposed mental state was found to be increasingly troubling. To a generation who assumed that 'fellow-feeling is never thoroughly roused, till we know … [the] cause of that happiness or misery which is the occasion of it', the wild incoherence of the manic visage seemed resistant to sympathetic regard: the unexpected passions – laughter, where a spectator expected severe distress – representing an alienation from humane sentiments that precluded imaginative engagement.

This point is made perhaps most clearly by Adam Smith himself. He regarded the 'loss of reason' as 'the most dreadful' calamity faced by humanity, to be beheld 'with deeper commiseration than any other.'[71] However when contemplating the possibility of attaining the lunatic's perspective his response was far more ambivalent. In his view, the maniac who laughed and sang through their desolation inadequately represented their presumed distress, which effectively disallowed harmonious investment in their experience:

---

[68] James Beattie, *Elements of Moral Science*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh, 1790), 173-4 [emphasis added].
[69] Macdonald, *Mystical Bedlam*, 140-2.
[70] Thomas Gray, *An Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College* (London, 1747), 7. On the utilisation of this couplet in contemporaneous medical writings see, for instance, William Perfect, *Select Cases in the Different Species of Insanity* (Rochester, 1787), 102; William Pargeter, *Observations on Maniacal Disorders* (Reading, 1792), 39.
[71] Smith, *Moral Sentiments*, 9.

The anguish which humanity feels … at the sight of such an object, cannot be the reflection of any sentiment of the sufferer. The compassion of the spectator must arise altogether from the consideration of what he himself would feel if he was reduced to the same unhappy situation, and, what perhaps is impossible, was at the same time able to regard it with his present reason and judgment.[72]

Insanity thus represented for Smith what Csengei has termed the 'limit-cases' of sympathy: disconcerting scenarios where spectators were called upon to contemplate 'insensible' subjects from whom 'no legitimate source' of imaginative engagement was theoretically possible.[73] Being unable to securely attain the perspective of the disordered mind the spectator was forced to contemplate 'what he himself would feel if he was reduced to the same unhappy situation': namely, the painful humiliation that a reasoning spectator would feel at comparing their present state of ease and respectability to the 'incoherent ravings' of the miserable lunatic. While Smith did not rule out the possibility of being moved to 'compassion' at such a sight, it is clear that he and those writers that followed him viewed the 'anguish' created by such exchanges with apprehension. The Kentish mad-doctor William Perfect lamented that by attempting to '[judge] of the feelings of the unfortunate [lunatic], by conceiving what himself, endowed with reason, would feel, if in his situation', the spectator at ease would inevitably conclude that the insanity was 'even more terrible that it really is'.[74] The Scottish philosopher Thomas Brown was more explicit, attributing the 'peculiar horror' associated with the 'idea of insanity' to a 'delusion of imagination':

we combine that state with our present consciousness, in the same manner, as we shrink from the thought of interment, after death, by supposing ourselves sensible of the gloomy circumstances, that attend it; 'the deep damp vault, the darkness, and the worm.'[75]

Just as, in Adam Smith's thinking, any attempt to sympathise with the insensible dead 'displaces the experience of mourning with the horror of … death', so too did the contemplation of madness lead to the 'delusion' of life as a lunatic.[76] Due to the very nature

---

[72] *Ibid.*, 9-10.
[73] Csengei, *Sympathy*, 58.
[74] Perfect, *Select Cases*, 72.
[75] Thomas Brown, *Observations on the Zoonomia of Erasmus Darwin, M.D.* (Edinburgh, 1798), 469.
[76] Soni, *Mourning Happiness*, 308.

of the maniac's suffering – supposedly not founded in any *identifiable* distress – the spectator could not form any sound understanding of *why* they acted as they did, and was thus forced to imagine the 'gloomy circumstances' which attended such 'decay of mind': the humiliating decline suffered by even the great and good.[77] The resulting feeling was not the vicarious *compassion* so desired by sentimentalists, but rather *abjection*: discomfort; disgust; horror.

Taking a wide view, this line of thinking had two significant implications for popular attitudes towards madness in the late eighteenth century. The first relates to the difficulties contemporaries experienced at responding appropriately to raving madness. A good sentimentalist was expected to both *feel*, and *display* the correct sentiment towards the 'less fortunate'; as Keymer notes, part of the 'gratification' accorded to the tears of sensibility in sentimental novels stemmed from the 'thrill of self-approval' that accompanied such benevolent expressions.[78] Any deviation from this emotional norm was thus problematic, threatening the individual's claims to virtue. Sentimentalists were well adapted to discovering this virtuous sensibility in relation to 'spectacles of sympathy', which allowed the gradual contemplation of the other's perspective, and the cultivation of appropriate responses. However, when faced with a bewildering lunatic façade, the potential for such contemplation was effectively disallowed, instead provoking habituated practices which threatened to undermine the spectator's careful emotional management.

Descriptions of encounters with the insensible mad in the later decades of the eighteenth century stress the disconcerting nature of such instinctive responses. Mirth is a good case in point. Long considered a reasonable response to the madman's animalistic tendencies, polite critics had progressively risen to condemn expressions 'mirth' or 'loud laughter' at the sight as signalling weak-minded insensitivity.[79] By the last third of the eighteenth century, polite observers had begun to express shame at such slips, which Roy Porter suggested was indicative of 'attitudes in transition': an implicit acknowledgement that lunatics were fellow-creatures, deserving of humane affection.[80] This is undoubtedly true; however a more critical appraisal of such responses might shift the emphasis away from the notion of a linear shift in sensibilities, to focus more critically on the historically specific

---

[77] Brown, *Observations*, 468-9.
[78] Keymer, 'Sentimental Fiction', 588
[79] Samuel Richardson, quoted in Andrews and Scull, *Undertaker of the Mind*, 23. See also Andrews, 'Bedlam Revisited', Ch. 1; Andrews and Scull, *Undertaker of the Mind*.
[80] Porter, *Madmen*, 98-9.

norms that inculcated this 'emotional suffering'.[81] One thing that becomes clear from such accounts is that the consternation spectators reported in these scenarios related to their inability to maintain a sensitive front in the wake of the madman's histrionics: a discomfort that dated from the 1780s, roughly coinciding with sentimentalism's most restrictive behavioural norms. One telling example comes from William Perfect, a thinker who daily came into contact with the manic visage. Writing in 1787, Perfect followed Smith in asserting that tender sympathy with the mad was nearly 'impossible', owing to the 'strange … assemblage of sense and madness' that they displayed. Unable to cultivate the desired response, the spectator in such situations was said to be adversely affected by the lunatic's form, causing them 'to smile, as well as compassionate': the habitus mobilising an unintended emotional response which Perfect clearly struggled to reconcile with the sentimental ideal.[82] His attempted justification – that 'the tear of pity flows not less sincerely because accompanied with the involuntary laugh'– is indicative of the consternation imposed on agents by the sentimental emotional regime: the concern that lapses in emotional management threatened to undermine their virtuous self-concept.[83]

A more pervasive response to the sight of madness was the sensation of fear, an emotion which, though more justifiable, still undermined the polite spectator's moral status. Eighteenth-century records of the encounter with the insane were littered with references to the uncomfortable sensations excited 'at witnessing such insensibility to the heaviest affliction which it has pleased the Almighty to humble the arrogance of man'.[84] Yet where early-eighteenth-century moralists and theologians may have tacitly endorsed this abjection[85] – it being consonant with a classical conception of the 'tragic experience', in which the individual was expected to contemplate 'the fragility of [their] own happiness' – for sentimentalists, such feelings were simply thought to 'destroy [sympathy's] ethical experience', by undermining the appearance of intrepidity in the sympathetic exchange.[86] Indeed, while fear may have been considered part of an 'indissoluble combination' with pity in classical tragedy, its very presence in sympathetic exchanges was thought to negate virtue,

---

[81] Reddy defines 'emotional suffering' as '[a]n acute form of goal conflict, especially that brought on by emotional thought activations' (*Navigation of Feeling*, 129).

[82] Perfect, *Select Cases*, 72-3.

[83] *Ibid.*, 73.

[84] G.N. [Thomas Green], 'Essay on Dreams', *The European Magazine, and London Review* 26 (1794), 362.

[85] See, for example Andrew Snape, *A Sermon Preach'd …. Easter Week, 1707* (London, 1707), 22; *The Guardian* 79 (11 June, 1713).

[86] Soni, *Mourning Happiness*, 321.

potentially 'making one afraid of affective communion and identificatory suffering'.[87] Thus Francis Hutcheson considered the shuddering 'fear of Danger' to be a 'selfish Affection', which caused otherwise benevolent spectators to consider their own interest ahead of another's.[88] It was such a forcible tremor that, in Sterne's words, caused the soul to shrink back on itself: the point in which sensibility was thought to dissipate, thus signifying the insincerity of the individual's claim to feeling.

The second implication of the doctrine of sympathy for attitudes towards madness in the eighteenth century relates to the recognition of the lunatic *as* fellow-creatures. In the writings of eighteenth-century moralists sympathy was inextricably linked to the social, an affirmation of 'the other's existence as a fellow-subject.'[89] As Ann Jessie van Sant notes, contemporary writers acknowledged that the feelings of pity attending a sympathetic exchange were signs that 'some degree of interiority ha[d] been attributed to the person observed'.[90] This was problematic for the 'limit-cases' of sympathy, which offered 'no legitimate source' of imaginative identification. As Csengei notes, these instances 'called into question the possibility of recognising the other and distinguishing their feelings': a point that vexed writers on madness from this period.[91] While no good sentimentalist would openly acknowledge a disconnect with the 'deserving' indigent – Perfect, after all, claimed that he felt 'intensely *for* the misery of the lunatic' – it was equally clear that the culture's emotional practices effectively debarred a pleasing affective communion. As Thomas Green acknowledged, when speaking of the discomforting 'woe' a general spectator felt at witnessing the 'frantic transports' of the maniacal thrall, such sensations 'seem[ed] altogether confined to the spectator', and no reflection of the feelings of the lunatic themselves.[92]

---

[87] *Ibid.*, 321-2. On the cultural implications of the 'startle reflex' see Ronald Simons, *Boo! Culture, Experience, and the Startle Reflex* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 3.

[88] Francis Hutcheson, *An Enquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (London, 1725), 141. See also Todd, *Sensibility*, 25.

[89] Jervis, *Sympathetic Sentiments*, 85.

[90] Ann Jessie van Sant, *Eighteenth-Century Sensibility and the Novel: The Senses in Social Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 17. As Amy Milka has shown, those sentimentalists that called for the humane treatment of animals sought to anthropomorphise their subjects, utilising a prosopopoeial perspective so as to similarly 'construct a sense of the animal's interiority' ('Political Animals: Dogs and the Discourse of Rights in Late Eighteenth-Century Print Culture', forthcoming with *Romantic Textualities* (2018)).

[91] Csengei, *Sympathy*, 59-61.

[92] Green, 'Essay on Dreams', 362.

Such reasoning had broad implications for the positioning of the mad within the wider community of sentiment. According to sentimental strictures, if a subject was unable to present themselves to an observer as sympathetic, the very principles of the doctrine acted to reinforce cultural distinctions, potentially engendering indifference, misrepresentation, or even cruelty towards even distressed individuals.[93] Since, in Smith's schema, it was assumed that a reasoning agent would instinctively temper their feelings to meet the regard of the spectator at ease, a subject who failed to express their gratitude, or at least convey their capacity for happiness, was thought to be outside humane regard altogether.[94] Given the potential instability of a sympathetic exchange with such figures they were met with apprehension; Thomas Reid mirrored many of his contemporaries when he declared that 'distress, which we are not able to relieve, may give a painful sympathy.'[95] And since, in Reid's words, a life without 'the reciprocal exercise of kind affections … would be undesirable', contemporaries displayed little interest in scrutinising the plight of the insane.[96] Unable to appropriately respond to the irrational spectacle placed before them, they were more inclined to '[shrink] with dismay from the aspect and contagion' of the madman's woes,[97] in a marked 'disidentification' of the undesirable other, so characteristic of the capitalist subject's encounter with its 'social shadow'.[98] In this context it is unsurprising to find that the cult of sensibility expressed such dread at even the mere sight of a madhouse ward: the traditional association 'of horror and dismay, cells and chains – nakedness and hunger', coupling with the 'painful and revolting' sight of the lunatic to excite in a comfortable spectator 'a dreary and desolate blank too shocking to contemplate.'[99] For even the physician William Pargeter – a man well acquainted with scenes of suffering – the sight of a melancholic 'laughing … Amidst severest woe' was 'most horrible indeed', leading him to conclude that 'those who have once experienced such a spectacle … will never wish it a second time.'[100]

---

[93] Csengei, *Sympathy*, 59-61.
[94] Thomas Reid, *Essays on the Active Powers of Man* (Edinburgh, 1788), 146. This, in some way accounts for the sentimental fatalism that Andrews identified in many reflections on lunacy in this period, the commonplace lament that a polite spectator could not alleviate the perceived sufferings of the lunatic being a logical outgrowth of a doctrine that located the cure to mental distress in a *mutual* exchange of sentiments. See 'Bedlam Revisited', 69-70.
[95] Reid, *Essays*, 145.
[96] *Ibid*., 145.
[97] Green, 'Essay on Dreams', 362.
[98] Jaffe, *Scenes of Sympathy*, 12.
[99] A. B., 'Account of the Projected London Asylum for the Insane', *The New Monthly Magazine* 1, no. 4 (1814), 317.
[100] Pargeter, *Observations*, 39.

II. Framing Sentimental Madness

If the conditioned response to madness was unsettling sensation, the question thus arises: what was it about Sterne's Maria that could, theoretically, call forth 'generous' feelings in a man (or woman) of feeling? The issue here was evidently that the form the raving lunatic took – 'laughing … amidst severest woe' – did not allow spectators to cultivate the desired sympathetic pleasures. It stood to reason then that for a mad person to engender 'virtuous' feelings in a middling observer, they would have to submit themselves to said spectator in a form that they were 'prepared to indulge'; that is, in a form that would invite sympathy's imaginative change-of-place.

This was a point elaborated upon in contemporaneous aesthetic doctrine. A general principle of eighteenth-century aesthetics was that the passions of a figure, whether observed in art or life, were deemed more beautiful, or sympathetic, according to their likeness to the sentiments of humanity.[101] So it was then that the social affections in particular were heightened depending on the sensitive qualities of the subject under contemplation – it being assumed that nervous sensibility lowered one's tolerance to pain.[102] As Kingsmill Davan concluded, in his *Essay on the Passions* (1799), while compassion was roused at the 'sufferings of others', it was generally found that '[t]he greater the distress, and the more valuable the character who suffers, the higher is our pity raised.'[103]

This was reflected in popular tastes. Of all the textual strategies used by sentimentalists to arouse these feelings, the most successful was that which dwelt on entrapment and psychological suffering: the archetypal trope of 'virtue in distress', in which a frail figure is mercilessly tormented by an oppressive world.[104] This strategy was readily applicable to sentimentalism's emotional practices, as articulated above. Contemporaries found it easier, or more appealing, to sympathise with those characters who conveyed an evident distress, typically displayed in the emotions of sorrow or fear. In the sentimental mode, such figures were marked as susceptible to fine feeling, their interiority conveyed through their form. So rendered, these subjects could be seen as 'as having a problem' rather than simply 'being

---

[101] Lord Kames (Henry Home), *Elements of Criticism I*, 3rd Edition, Edinburgh, 1765, 49.
[102] On the association between sensibility and physiological sensitivity see Barker-Benfield, *Culture of Sensibility*.
[103] Davan, *Essay on the Passions*, 53.
[104] See Brissendon, *Virtue in Distress*, 84-95; Todd, *Sensibility*, 2-3; Barker-Benfield, *Culture of Sensibility*.

one': as individuals deserving of affection, and who could thus potentially stimulate the virtuous sentiments of a benevolent spectator.[105]

It is this attention to form which distinguished Sterne's Maria from the bewildering madman of popular dread. [106] As one contemporary periodicalist explicitly drew the distinction:

> When we see mad Tom decorated with his crown of straw, issuing his sovereign mandates from his aerial throne – do we pity the misery of a man who himself feels no misery? It is the melancholy lunatic – *it is the sensible, the afflicted Maria only* – that can move the heart, and inspire the *soft and sympathetic affection* which Yorick so strongly felt, and so elegantly described.[107]

Here then, under the classification of mental disorder, we find two distinct classes of mental distress which, according to aesthetic principles, demanded two distinct responses from an audience. In a sense this distinction drew upon the classical dichotomy of madness into raving mania, and brooding melancholy. However the more explicit interest in the sentimental age was the spectator's responsiveness to the lunatic's perceived interiority. For the one type of lunatic, supposedly insensible to their condition, the notion of sympathetic regard was effectively rejected. The other, however, seemingly conscious of their fallen position, was identified as sensible, retaining their moral sentiments – and thus a figure that middling consumers could hold affective communion with. As a correspondent wrote in the *Public Advertiser*, when reflecting on a purported engagement with a 'cultivated and polished' madwoman, 'the more sensible, delicate, and refined the Imagination, the less capable is it of bearing the rude Hand of Affliction': 'Hence the Pity which flows from a generous breast'.[108]

---

[105] Van Sant, *Sensibility and the Novel*, 27.
[106] In outlining his didactic purpose with *Sentimental Journey* – to 'teach us to love the world and our fellow creatures better than we do' – Sterne actually drew attention to his representations of the 'gentler passions and affections' which, he claimed, facilitated such affective communion (Laurence Sterne, *The Letters of Laurence Sterne to his most Intimate Friends*, II, edited by Wilbur L. Cross (New York: J. F. Taylor & Company, 1904), 191-2).
[107] *The Hibernian Magazine, or Compendium of Entertaining Knowledge* (Dublin, 1782), 227 [emphasis added].
[108] *Public Advertiser* (9 April 1779).

Theoretically then, the mad *could* be elevated as piteous subjects within the culture of sensibility, provided that they conformed to the desires of polite society.[109] In effect, a spectator's compassion towards the insane was mediated by aesthetic judgements, and this demanded attention to the detail and composition of the particular mad figures, both in the framing of the 'spectacle of sympathy', and the composition of the subject's form.

Conforming to the principles of the aesthetic, sympathy's pleasures, like all 'pleasures of the imagination', were to be fostered through disinterested contemplation, a perspective that required an appropriate distancing from any potentially painful sight.[110] This emotional practice was honed in relation to 'spectacles of sympathy', which consciously manipulated the spectator's visual field so as to invite an 'imaginative exchange of place that "makes real" and "brings near" experience not one's own', as Ann Jessie van Sant puts it.[111] In her study of eighteenth-century philanthropic rhetoric, she demonstrates how social reformers utilised such practices to confine a spectator's perspective (either 'the actual eye or the mind's eye'[112]), so as to arouse a desired sentimental affect. In a time when pauperism was conspicuous for its 'obnoxious visibility' in the metropolises, public charities took to presenting for public consumption isolated cases of 'reformed' indigence, or passive distress, so as to produce the precise conditions for a sympathetic engagement, and thus stimulate virtuous acts.[113] In a similar vein, Gary Harrison shows how characteristic depictions of charitable objects in poetry in this period, exemplified in the works of William Cowper, placed the reader in a 'privileged' position, securely gazing upon humble, aestheticised figures, that did not threaten their ease, or sense of self.[114]

The primary vehicle for so framing this perspective was the 'tableau', a mechanism that was widely utilised in sentimentalism's 'pedagogy of seeing'.[115] In typical sentimental

---

[109] Barker-Benfield, *Culture of Sensibility*, 228.

[110] Amit Rai, *Rule of Sympathy: Sentiment, Race, and Power 1750-1850* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), 28. See also Barker-Benfield, *Culture of Sensibility*, 63; Barnes, 'Scenes of Distress'.

[111] Van Sant, *Sensibility and the Novel*, 16-7.

[112] *Ibid*., 16.

[113] *Ibid*., 27.

[114] Gary Harrison, *Wordsworth's Vagrant Muse: Poetry, Poverty and Power* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1994), 58. For a wider discussion of the influence of ideology on middle-class conceptualisations of poverty and charity in this period see John Barrell, *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Painting 1730-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 65-88; Keymer, 'Sentimental Fiction', 591.

[115] Romira Worvill, 'From Prose peinture to Dramatic tableau: Diderot, Fénelon and the Emergence of the Pictorial Aesthetic in France', *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 39 (2010), 151-70. See

texts, such tableaux marked distinct theatrical moments, in which 'scenario[s] of emotional display' were isolated, demanding imaginary involvement with the subject under view.[116] Whether through direct sight as in visual media, or through markers of 'verbal pictorialism' that particularised a reader's attention in sentimental novels, tableaux were the means for framing and concentrating 'spectacles of sympathy' as single moments of pathos, allowing authors and artists to intensify the emotional impact of the work, and, importantly, give 'the reader or spectator … time to physically respond.'[117]

Sentimentalism was a language of the body, and the tableau acted primarily to mediate the spectator's relation to the spectacle of suffering bodies, particularising 'specific gestures, expressions and flourishes' to act as 'signs and triggers'.[118] The tableau was thus the primary means of asserting sentimentalism's moral politics. As Karen Halttunen writes: 'Sentimental art offered tableau after tableau of pitiful suffering – scenes of poverty, imprisonment, slavery, the aftermath of war, tormented animals, women in distress – all aimed at arousing readers' spectatorial sympathy and thus enhancing (and demonstrating) their virtue.'[119]

It was in the tableau, then, that the sentimental 'spectacle of sympathy' found its paradigmatic form, and its application heavily influenced artistic depictions of madness in the mid- to late-eighteenth century. In conformity to these principles, writers carefully framed their mad subjects, so as to allow their readers to rehearse and discover their sensibility in relation to the spectacle. Take, for instance, Cowper's portrayal of a distressed melancholic in his seminal poem 'Retirement' (1782). A typical sentimental critique of the hard-heartedness of the world, Cowper chose the melancholic as the quintessential representation of alienation and distress. Halting the broader narrative, the poet particularised the lunatic as tableau, thereby fixing the reader's attention to the theatrical (emotional) display:

---

also Peter de Voogd, 'Sterne and Visual Culture', in *The Cambridge Companion to Laurence Sterne*, ed. Thomas Keymer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 146-7.
[116] Jervis, *Sympathetic Sentiments*, 54-5; Halttunen, 'Pornography of Pain', 307; Jay Caplan, *Framed Narratives: Diderot's Genealogy of the Beholder* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), Ch. 1.
[117] Todd, *Sensibility*, 5. See also Caplan, *Framed Narratives*, 16; Jervis, *Sympathetic Sentiments*, 55; Van Sant, *Sensibility and the Novel*, Ch. 2.
[118] Jervis, *Sympathetic Sentiments*, 55.
[119] Halttunen, 'Pornography of Pain', 307.

> Look where he comes—in this embower'd alcove
>
> Stand close conceal'd, and see a statue move:
>
> Lips busy, and eyes fix'd, foot falling slow,
>
> Arms hanging idly down, hands clasp'd below,
>
> Interpret to the marking eye distress,
>
> Such as its symptoms can alone express.[120]

Cowper thus consciously positioned the reader/spectator in an appropriate perspective: the melancholic subject framed squarely in their 'visual' field, but simultaneously 'conceal'd', and thus adequately secured from the spectacle, inviting a vicarious, imaginative engagement. The sight itself is described in detail, the 'absorption' of the melancholic conveying their inner distress.[121] Taken as a whole the composition created a spectacle which, the author dictated, should arrest the sensibility of the beholder:

> This is a sight for pity to peruse,
>
> Till she resembles faintly what she views,
>
> Till sympathy contract a kindred pain,
>
> Pierced with the woes that she laments in vain.[122]

Here, then, was a literary template for reaching affective communion with the lunatic. Consciously manipulating the scene, and offering his readers clear emotional cues, Cowper structured the quintessential 'spectacle of sympathy' through which an imaginative change-of-place could occur. This same emotional practice is replicated again and again in literary renderings of madness from this period. This 'pictorial' approach to representation was a defining feature of Sterne's visualisations of Maria. William Gerard has drawn attention to the employment of 'verbal pictorialism' in Sterne's sentimental interludes, suggesting that such uses of the 'visual sense (evoked by words) act[ed] as a conduit to the object of pity'.[123] Moreover, the celebrated encounter with Maria in *Sentimental Journey* was rendered

---

[120] William Cowper, 'Retirement', in John Aikin ed, *Select Works of the British Poets*, (London, 1820), 729.

[121] On the importance of theatrical absorption to depictions of madness in this period see Stefano Castelvecchi, 'From *Nina* to *Nina*: Psychodrama, absorption and sentiment in the 1780s', *Cambridge Opera Journal* 8, no. 2 (1996), 97-100.

[122] Aikin, *British Poets*, 730.

[123] William Blake Gerard, '"All that the heart wishes": Changing Views toward Sentimentality Reflected in Visualisations of Sterne's Maria, 1773-1888', *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 34 (2005), 231-2.

according to the principles of the tableau, so as to highlight the melancholic's exquisite interiority. Through Parson Yorick's first person account, the reader's 'visual' perspective is narrowed so as to take in only the subject under contemplation. Maria, together with a small dog 'tied by a string to her girdle' becomes the singular feature of the scene, the tableau in which tearful emotion is poured forth:

> As I looked at her dog, she drew him towards her with the string. – 'Thou shalt not leave me, Sylvio,' said she. I look'd in Maria's eyes and saw she was thinking [of her recently deceased] father… for as she utter'd [the words], the tears trickled down her cheeks.[124]

In this carefully confined perspective, all traces of Maria's madness are removed, leaving only a generalised distress. Importantly, the visual cue (Maria's tears) invited imaginative engagement, calling upon Yorick – and the reader – to take her perspective, and contemplate the cause of her sorrow.

In utilising the tableau, then, the sentimental novelist could turn the incoherent lunatic into a legible 'spectacle of sympathy', through which a spectator's virtuous sensibility could theoretically be cultivated. By implication though, such tableaux also worked to reinforce social distinctions. In particularising passive or helpless figures, sentimental artists did not explicitly challenge existing prejudices, or call upon their audience to attempt to sympathise with undesirable, or 'undeserving', subjects. Indeed, while figures like Maria were afforded a privileged position within this moral hierarchy, others who did not readily conform to the perspective of a polite spectator – like the 'terrifying' madman – were simply denied sympathetic regard, an ambivalence that could be made explicit by the author's directions and textual cues.

No clearer example of this ambiguity is found than in Henry Mackenzie's classic sentimental novel *The Man of Feeling* (1771). In a celebrated passage, set in London's Bethlem Hospital, the sentimental protagonist Harley found himself bombarded with a procession of dismal sights during a tour of the madhouse's wards. First entering Bethlem's 'incurable' ward, Harley came upon the incoherent and oppressive lunatics of popular dread: '[t]he clanking of chains, the wildness of their cries, and the imprecations which some of

---

[124] Sterne, *Sentimental Journey*, 172.

them uttered, [forming] a scene inexpressibly shocking.'[125] With no opportunity to securely contemplate the subjects, and thus direct their sympathies, Harley and his companions were shown to be simply startled and thus hastening from the scene – significantly, without shedding any tears.

In the 'curable' ward, however, Harley discovered sights that engaged his sympathies more readily, and it was here, notably, that he found cause to weep. After a brief interlude, in which he was accosted by several harmless lunatics, Harley emerged upon the central figure of the scene, a 'distressed daughter', who provided the arresting tableau necessary for sympathetic engagement:

> Separate from the rest stood one, whose appearance had something of superior dignity. Her face, though pale and wasted, was less squalid than those of the others, and shewed a dejection of that decent kind, which moves our pity unmixed with horror: upon her, therefore, the eyes of all were immediately turned.[126]

'Separate from the rest', and showing a 'decent' dejection, expressive of sensitivity – this madwoman was a sight which attracted the attention and sympathies of all the onlookers (and presumably the reader). Indeed, throughout the scene, in which Harley was acquainted with her deep emotional suffering, he remained entranced by the vision, being 'fixed' in place even after she had retired from view. Dispensing alms for her care, he subsequently 'burst into tears, and left', his virtuous sensibility discovered in relation to the exquisitely composed spectacle. Here, then, Mackenzie implicitly reinforced the notion that sincere fellow-feeling was most easily directed at those subjects that conformed to the desired visual perspective: the text's characters exhibiting idealised emotional responses *only* towards the exquisitely composed spectacle and narrative of distress, and the reader/spectator prompted to follow suit.

This leads into the second issue with the composition of 'spectacles of sympathy': the importance of a correct rendering of the subject's *form*. As Monique Scheer notes, in her study of emotional practices, the 'sincere communication' of feelings between agents, including the 'discernment [of the emotion] by an observer', is fundamentally dependent on

---

[125] Henry Mackenzie, *The Man of Feeling* (London, 1771), 54.
[126] *Ibid*., 60-1.

the propriety of an agent's countenance and disposition. Only when their 'bodily performances' – that is, expressions, gestures and tones of voice – align with 'culturally transmitted' emotional norms can a subject's emotion be correctly appraised by an observer.[127] When successfully managed, these performances have the potential to '[induce] feelings' in the beholder' – such as the pleasing affective communion sentimentalists sought in visions of distress.[128]

Eighteenth-century critics were acutely aware of the power of visual forms to produce particular aesthetic experiences in the beholder. Archibald Alison, for instance, asserted that 'we every day judge of the existence of … emotions or passions [in another] by such appearances of the form.'[129] As we have seen, his thinking on the principles of taste largely conformed to the principles of Smithian sympathy: that the more closely a figure's passions conformed to a spectator's expectations or desires, the more 'beautiful' or sympathetic they appeared. By contrast, the expression of unexpected or bewildering passions was though to undo the beauty of the form, causing the subject, in Alison's words, to appear like 'a monster, from which even the most vulgar taste would fly, as from something unnatural and disgusting.'[130]

To appear 'beautiful' before a middling connoisseur, a suffering subject needed to exhibit the appropriate visual markers of inner distress, exemplified most clearly in the sentimental mode by sorrow, an emotion long acknowledged to instinctively call upon a spectator's sympathies.[131] Sorrowful distress was diagnosed from a number of culturally transmitted expressions, most notably a 'lassitude of the whole body, with dejection of the face and heaviness of the eyes'.[132] In many ways, this accounts for the broad appeal of the seemingly dejected Maria. Her particular class of insanity, melancholy, had long been conceived of as a state of intense sadness and depressed spirits. Early moderns had a complex formula for the artistic rendering of melancholia, which drew upon heavily stylized gestures and motifs to represent the sitter's frame of mind.[133] However as Jennifer Jones O'Neill has

---

[127] Scheer, 'Emotions', 214-5.
[128] *Ibid*., 211.
[129] Alison, *Taste*, 347-8.
[130] *Ibid*., 255.
[131] See, for example, William Ayloffe, *The Government of the Passions, According to the Rules of Reason and Religion* (London, 1700), 119.
[132] Charles Bell, *Essays on the Anatomy of Expression in Painting* (London, 1806), 114.
[133] On depictions of mad bodies in classical art and culture see Sander Gilman, *Seeing the Insane* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), Ch. 3.

suggested, the commercial and moral imperative to 'engage the sympathetic imagination of their audiences' caused artists in the late eighteenth century to abandon these traditional styles of representation, in favour of forms which expressed the emotional state of the melancholic female.[134] Through an analysis of the sketches of the portrait painter George Romney, she demonstrates how the depression of the artist's melancholic figures (many of whom bear a strong resemblance to Sterne's description of Maria) was thus realised in 'the expressive form of the figure itself', rather than any rigid gestures (fig. 1).[135]

Fig. 1. George Romney, fol. 35 of sketchbook, c.1773-77. National Gallery of Victoria; Felton Bequest 1960.

As Jones-O'Neill suggests more broadly, these 'expressive forms' were thought more capable of eliciting moral emotions in a connoisseur, and it is significant for our purposes here that they specifically drew upon the conventional tropes of exquisite distress; specifically, the aforementioned lassitude of body, indicative of deep sorrow. In such forms, all traces of insensibility were removed altogether, allowing the audience to read the figure's interiority through the body, and be moved to a pleasing sympathy with their plight. Romney's finished production *Il Penseroso, or Melancholy* (1770), brings these cues to the fore: the woman in a languid repose, leaning carelessly on the tomb of her (presumed) lost lover; a quintessential 'spectacle of sympathy' inviting the viewer's contemplation (fig. 2).

---

[134] Jennifer Jones-O'Neill, 'George Romney's Sketchbook in the National Gallery of Victoria: The Development of a New Expressive Vocabulary', *The Art Bulletin of Victoria* 39 (1999), 50.
[135] *Ibid*., 47.

Tellingly, it was also to this 'expressive form' that Cowper turned when depicting his solitary madman in verse. His figure was rendered a 'statue'; 'foot falling slow'; 'Arms hanging idly'; his 'brisker' and more censorious strains of voice fading away.[136] It was this absorption, Cowper advised, that was a 'sight for pity to peruse': a tableau which exhibited the exquisite signs of *distress* that a polite spectator was 'prepared to indulge'.

Fig. 2. Robert Dunkarton, 'Melancholy', after George Romney, 1771, mezzotint, from the British Museum online collection (1902,1011.802).

Facial expressions, too, were a key indicator of emotional distress. As we have seen, the display of sorrow was carefully defined, with the languid frame being united 'with dejection of the face and heaviness of the eyes'. Archibald Alison was more explicit, contending that 'the depressed lip, the contracted eye-brow, the slow and languid motion of the eye, are the circumstances which we expect and require in the countenances of sorrow

---

[136] Aikin, *British Poets*, 729-30.

or of sensibility.'[137] It stood to reason, then, that an appropriate colouring of the countenance was requisite to any sympathetic portrayal of maniacal distress.

Though O'Neill plays down their significance in his work,[138] George Romney certainly acknowledged the importance of facial expression in depicting an exquisite sympathetic tableau. His sketch of the melancholic countenance conveys the suitable absorption (see fig. 3), and his finished production of *Melancholy* neatly combines a dejected face and eyes with a languid body.

Fig. 3. George Romney, fol. 13v of sketchbook, c.1773-77. National Gallery of Victoria; Felton Bequest 1960.

The significance of facial expressions to the communication of sorrow is most pronounced when assessing contemporaneous responses to tears. Weeping was the high marker of exquisite distress for the cult of sensibility, representing the most unaffected or sincere expression of feeling. However, the mere shedding of tears did not instinctively mark out a subject as a sensitive being, and depending on their accompanying expressions, may

---

[137] Alison, *Taste*, 255.
[138] Jones-O'Neill, 'George Romney's Sketchbook', 49.

not be read as a sign of distress at all. This point was made clear in Mary Robinson's poem 'The Maniac' (1793), in which the narrator struggled to interpret the incoherent outbursts of a raving lunatic:

> Ah! What art thou, whose eye-balls roll
> Like Heralds of the wand'ring soul,
> While down thy cheek the scalding torrents flow?
> Why does that agonizing shriek
> The mind's unpitied anguish speak![139]

Though presenting a fashionable tableau, Robinson's authorial spectator explicitly denied sympathetic engagement with the figure: the fierce rolling of the maniac's eyes ensuring that her tears appeared as 'scalding torrents', rather a sign of tender sensitivity. Indeed, so monstrous was the maniac's appearance that the otherwise kind-hearted spectator could not identify them as a fellow-creature ('What art thou?'), dictating that their sufferings went 'unpitied'.

Contrast this with a comparable rendering found in the Thomas Penrose's widely acclaimed poem 'Madness', published in 1775. In successive verses, Penrose navigated the reader through the various manic forms of the popular literary imagination, placing particular emphasis on the disconcerting stimuli produced in the different phases of disorder. The product was a highly stylised rendering of insanity, which emphasised the oppressive force of the spectacle:

> Loud the shouts of Madness rise,
> Various voices, various cries, -
> Mirth unmeaning – causeless moans,
> Bursts of laughter, - heart-felt groans –
> *All* seem to pierce the skies…[140]

Penrose progressed through the most vacant of countenances, detailing the 'awful' cries and visual ravings of those maniacs all 'dark within, all furious black Despair.'[141] Yet

---

[139] Mary Robinson, *Poems by Mrs. M. Robinson*, vol. 2 (London, 1793), 27.
[140] Thomas Penrose, *Flights of Fancy* (London, 1775), 17.
[141] *Ibid.*, 18.

within the horde a singular figure is isolated: 'the love-lorn maid', in whose 'gentle breast no angry passion fires'. Significantly, it was to this particular figure that Penrose attributed the sensitivity of a mind distressed, dwelling on the 'tenderness' and 'desires' said to be literally presented on her face:

> She yet retains her wonted flame,
> All – but in reason, still the same. –
> Streaming eyes,
> Incessant sighs,
> Dim haggard looks, and clouded o'er with care,
> Point out to Pity's tears, the poor distracted fair.[142]

Unlike Robinson, Penrose here explicitly directed the reader to pity the tearful maid. With her 'Dim haggard looks, … clouded o'er with care', the figure called to mind an idealised rendering of sorrow, which in turn mandated that her tears were to be read as a sign of sensitivity and distress. This was a quintessential 'spectacle of sympathy', and was recognised as such by contemporaries, who singled out this tableau as a moment that awakened the sensibility. As a critic in the *Monthly Review* noted approvingly, the sentimental interlude cultivated a pleasing piteous affect in contradistinction to the sensational thrills of the ranting force: 'The mind of the Reader, after the horror excited by the view of the Maniac, is relieved by a tender and pathetic melancholy on beholding the "poor distracted fair."'[143] Through a correct 'visual' rendering, this figure was identified, not as a rambling lunatic – a spectacle of contagious 'horror' – but an individual suffering from acute distress, that could excite the sincere sensibility of a spectator.

III. Staging the Spectacle of Madness

So far I have suggested that the constraints of the sentimental emotional regime severely limited the modes of representation available to the insane in eighteenth-century polite society. Given the cultural imperative to cultivate sentimental emotions towards lunatics, only those displays of 'suffering' that allowed for the mobilisation of sentimentalism's

---

[142] Penrose, *Flights of Fancy*, 18-9.
[143] *The Monthly Review; or, Literary Journal: From July 1775, to January 1776.* 53 (London, 1776), 142.

emotional practices were widely embraced. This was reflected in art, with writers and painters drawing upon those sentimental tropes that facilitated these practices, and in the process privileging a distinct form of madness (reflective of emotional distress) that was thought more suited to the culture's performative demands. In this final section I will turn my attention to the theatre, to illustrate how these emotional practices shaped spectators' emotional responses to 'mad' bodies in real time.

As with other art forms, eighteenth-century theatre was heavily influenced by sentimental principles. Indeed, Jean Marsden has argued that theatregoers in the late-eighteenth century were conditioned to view drama 'through the lens of sympathetic identification'.[144] While playwrights had long acknowledged the power of tragedy in cultivating pathos, from the middle of the eighteenth century they started to understand pity as the product of 'a series of complex psychological steps', culminating in 'the establishment of the sympathetic bond between audience and character.'[145] As dramatists were driven by moral and commercial imperatives to cultivate this exquisite feeling in their audiences, they increasingly sought out narratives that would invite sympathetic contemplation. Melodrama was a particularly fruitful source of this tender pathos, as its typical subject matter – 'domestic misfortune' – called to mind the sorts of distress that a bourgeois observer could be expected to understand.[146] Indeed, such dramas were said to encourage virtue, by providing exemplars of laudable suffering with which the spectator could identify.[147] As such, eighteenth-century dramatists reworked well-known tragic scripts so as to elicit the desired affective response.[148]

Madness had long been a staple of drama, exhibited no more vividly than in the many lunatics of Shakespearean tragedy. These works remained popular throughout the eighteenth century, with several actors, most notably David Garrick, forging successful careers by portraying Shakespeare's melancholic personae. However, given the morally ambiguous

---

[144] Jean Marsden, 'Shakespeare and Sympathy', in *Shakespeare and the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Peter Sabor and Paul Yachnin (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 30.

[145] *Ibid*., 32.

[146] *Ibid*.; Brigitte Peucker, *The Material Image: Art and the Real in Film* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 129; Peter Szondi and Harvey Mendelsohn, 'Tableau and Coup de Théâtre: On the Social Psychology of Diderot's Bourgeois Tragedy', *New Literary History* 11, no. 2: Literature/History/Social Action (1980), 323-43; Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*, 165.

[147] Szondi and Mendelsohn, 'Tableau', 332-4.

[148] As Allan Ingram notes, even for as highly regarded a player as David Garrick, the 'authentic' tragedy of Shakespeare was by necessity sanitised, so as to be 'moral and commercially acceptable' (Ingram and Faubert, *Cultural Constructions of Madness*, 122).

tone of these works, the dramatic representation of these characters required substantial alterations, to adequately meet the critical demand. As Allan Ingram shows, once playwrights had accepted the idea that drama was a primary means of moral instruction, the introduction of raving lunatics into theatrical performances was largely curtailed, with the moral narrative of texts increasingly taking precedence over entertainment. This refashioning was most pronounced in eighteenth-century adaptations of *King Lear*, in which the *madness* of the king played a backseat to the domestic drama that precipitated his anguish.[149] This new moral imperative was also reflected in stagecraft itself, with actors appropriating new acting styles to better express 'the mind and thought patterns of the madman'. In conformity to polite tastes, this meant substituting the traditional 'declamatory mode of acting' with a style that represented the passions through eloquence, rather than mechanical gestures.[150]

Ingram has surveyed critical appraisals of Garrick's performance of Lear, to show how different writers considered the authenticity of his portrayals of the king's madness. I want to build on this work, to consider not merely the influence of new acting *styles* on the portrayal of madness, but how distinct postures and facial expressions invited or denied sympathetic engagement with mad characters on the eighteenth-century stage. Given its explicitly social medium, the theatre was considered a potent inspiration for sympathetic fellow-feeling: as the audience watched the protagonists acting their distress in real time, a more powerful response to their anguish was believed to follow.[151] Indeed, following eighteenth-century aesthetic theory, contemporaries increasingly focussed on the visual representation of dramatic passions, showing a preference for those performers who could convey their inner feelings through 'all parts of the body' and face.[152]

As the most acclaimed depiction of a mad character on the London stage in this period, it is useful to consider how the culture's emotional practices shaped audiences' responses to Garrick's performance of *King Lear*. The most famous such account is that of James Boswell, who recorded his attendance to the play in his diary in 1763:

---

[149] *Ibid*., 117-20.
[150] *Ibid*., 125.
[151] Marsden, 'Shakespeare and Sympathy', 33. Ingram and Faubert, *Cultural Constructions of Madness*, 125-6.
[152] Todd, *Sensibility*, 34; Alison, *Taste*, 348-9.

I went to Drury Lane and saw Mr. Garrick play *King Lear*. So very high is his reputation, even after playing so long, that the pit was full in ten minutes after four, although the play did not begin till half an hour after six. I kept myself at a distance from all acquaintances, and got into a proper frame. Mr. Garrick gave me the most perfect satisfaction. I was fully moved, and I shed abundance of tears.[153]

For Boswell then, the night was a profitable venture, which he attributed to his ability to sympathise with the character, and be moved to tears. Indeed, as Marsden notes, Boswell entered the theatre *expecting* to sympathise with the actor, and '[consciously prepared] for the sympathetic event', concentrating his attention on the stage tableaux so as to cultivate a 'perfect satisfaction'.[154]

However the correct framing of a spectacle was just one requirement of the sincere communication of feeling. Equally important was the subject's correct projection of their emotional state, meaning that a play's success rested on the actor's methods. Indeed, theatrical proficiency was thought to be particularly important for the correct rendering of Lear. Being an 'odd and violent old monarch', the critic Francis Gentleman cautioned, 'a wide and various complication of requisites, are essential to placing [Lear] in a proper and striking point of view'.[155] Given his eccentricities, only a particularly eloquent performer could hope to adequately convey the mad king's emotional states to the audience, without 'flatten[ing]' the dramatic effect with 'mechanical acting'.[156] In Gentleman's view, none but Garrick could eloquently master Lear's madness.

As Ingram notes, this was, in part, put down to his superior acting nous. Garrick often revealed that he learnt to act mad by carefully scrutinising the behaviours of an acquaintance who had lost his wits, claiming that it was this imitation of 'nature' that allowed his sublime recreation of Lear's trauma.[157] Indeed, it was against this supposedly natural style that critics

---

[153] Entry for 12 May 1763. In James Boswell, *Boswell's London Journal 1762-3*, ed. Frederick Pottle (London: William Heinemann, 1950), 256-7.
[154] Marsden, 'Shakespeare and Sympathy', 35.
[155] [Francis Gentleman], *The Dramatic Censor; or, Critical Companion*, vol. 1 (London, 1770), 369.
[156] *Ibid*., 369.
[157] Ingram and Faubert, *Cultural Constructions of Madness*, 122. For contemporary reviews of Garrick's performances see Thomas Davies, *Dramatic Miscellanies: Consisting of Critical Observations on Several Plays of Shakespeare*, vol. 2 (Dublin, 1784), 208; Gentleman, *Dramatic Censor*, 370.

disparaged the attempts of even the most accomplished of Garrick's rivals.[158] However there is still the question of the form that this Lear's madness took. Ingram suggests that Garrick's performance was acclaimed because this 'natural' style accurately conveyed (in sanitised form) 'the mind and thought patterns of the madman'. However, pushing this notion further, it is evident that the success of Garrick's *Lear* was put down to the actor's ability to exhibit the king's insanity in such a way that it invited a secure sympathetic engagement: that is, his capacity to convey the subject's exquisite interiority, rather than exciting abjection.

As I have mentioned, eighteenth-century adaptations of Lear were heavily sanitised to suit the tastes of the cult of sensibility, with the morally ambiguous story of Lear's decline into madness attributed to a single motive: 'the horrid Crime of Filial Ingratitude.'[159] From the outset then, the revised *Lear* presented the familiar and accessible trope of 'virtue in distress': the narrative of a father, driven to despair at the hard-heartedness of his eldest daughters. And it was this cultural type that Garrick sought to recreate through his acting: a sensible and afflicted being, whose inner feelings were projected for the audience's contemplation. Indeed, when contemporaries assessed Garrick's performance, they did not merely comment on the fluidity of his ravings, but also his ability to render Lear a sympathetic figure, which could attract tender affection despite exhibiting otherwise irrational, or revolting passions. For the theatrical critic John Hill, Garrick's depiction of Lear tempered the 'fire' of 'unnatural' rage with a 'tender' 'sensibility'.[160] To James Fordyce, the madness of Lear was indelibly coloured with the pain of domestic affliction, the character conveying 'the strongest, the tenderest … emotions, that ever agitated the breast of a father';[161] while Benjamin Victor, in the simplest terms, recorded feeling 'Transport[ed]' by Garrick's expression of very 'real *Distress*'.[162]

The significance here is not that Garrick performed madness well, but rather that his mode of theatrics marked him out as a 'sensible' sufferer, worthy of a sentimental response.

---

[158] See, for example, the criticism levelled at Garrick's competitor Spranger Barry, who 'could not with propriety, represent the old king out of his senses' (Arthur Murphy, *The Life of David Garrick, Esq.* (Dublin, 1801), 19).

[159] [Charles Ranger], *Gray's Inn Journal* 16 (12 January 1754), 91.

[160] John Hill, *The Actor: or, a Treatise on the Art of Playing* (London, 1755), 128-9.

[161] James Fordyce to David Garrick, 13 May 1763, in *The Private Correspondence of David Garrick*, vol. 1, ed. James Boaden (London, 1831), 158. Fordyce, interestingly, appears to have attended the same performance that so moved Boswell.

[162] Benjamin Victor, *The History of the Theatres of London and Dublin, From the Year 1730 to the present Time*, vol. 2 (London, 1761) [emphasis added].

Certainly, onlookers claimed to sympathise with his expressive form. The critic Thomas Wilkes remarked that Garrick's 'manner of conveying feeling' compelled onlookers to '*share in all his distresses*', the performance, unsurprisingly, 'mak[ing] every other eye overflow'.[163] Edward Taylor was more explicit still, rhapsodising over the 'fascinating colours of gesture and countenance' conveyed by Garrick's Lear.[164] As he was to reflect (and the language here is telling):

> when [Lear] seems racked by the contending passions of sorrow and resentment, we are … no longer calm and indifferent, our passions, like his, are actuated, and it is then that by a sympathy congenial to our natures, we feel for his unhappy situation; and he strikes us as an old and wretched father, more sinned against than sinning.[165]

Here, an appraisal of the lunatic's exquisite interiority – the emotions of a dejected father – was said to engender affective communion: contortions of body and countenance effectively mobilising sentimentalism's emotional practices, so as to produce the correct expressions in observers. But what was it specifically about this performance that caused the audience to envision emotional distress, rather than the abject contagion that would usually attend a raving figure? The actor's contemporary biographer Arthur Murphy gives a hint. Describing Garrick's performance in *Lear*, Murphy noted that

> He had no sudden starts, no violent gesticulation; his movements were slow and feeble; misery was depicted in his countenance; he moved his head in the most deliberate manner; his eyes were fixed, or, if they turned to any one near him he made a pause, and fixed his look on the person after much delay … During the whole time he presented a sight of woe and misery, and a total alienation of mind from every idea but that of his unkind daughters.[166]

The madness that Murphy described seeing thus exemplified the sorrowful langour that contemporaries expected in a depiction of suffering virtue. Just as the lethargic absorption of Cowper's maniac was said to point out 'distress', so too did Garrick's 'slow and feeble'

---

[163] Thomas Wilkes, *A General View of the Stage* (London, 1759), 234 [emphasis added].
[164] Edward Taylor, *Cursory Remarks on Tragedy, on Shakespear, and on Certain French and Italian Poets, Principally Tragedians* (London, 1774), 18.
[165] *Ibid*., 22.
[166] Murphy, *David Garrick*, 19.

movements and 'fixed' gaze indicate to Murphy the madman's singular distress. Through his careful dramatic posturing Garrick submitted his body to the contemplation of the privileged observer, thus eschewing the abjection excited by 'unnatural', or irrational depictions of mental distress.[167]

And the performance was carefully scripted to assist this process, providing an exemplary tableau through which to intensify this feeling. As Thomas Davies was to recall, it was in the fourth Act – the point at which the mad king overcame his more disconcerting ramblings and most clearly expressed his exquisite sentiments – that Garrick moved the audience to tears. After '[pursuing] the progress of agonizing feelings to madness in its several stages', it was in this theatrical moment that Garrick's Lear presented the harmonious rendering indicative of the quintessential tableau: '[exhibiting] himself … in such a superior taste, as to make it more interesting than any thing the audience had already enjoyed.'[168] The scene, which saw Lear resolve his relationship with the estranged Cordelia, involved the softening of his passions, and a paternal embrace: a moment of emotional display through which, in James Fordyce's words, 'the parent, the sovereign, and the friend, shine out in the mildest majesty of fervent virtue, like the sun after a fearful storm, breaking forth delightfully in all the soft splendour of a summer evening.'[169] In response to this virtuous sensibility, observers could do little but to express their own. As Davies noted, 'The audience, which had been sighing at the former part of the scene, could not sustain this affecting climax, but broke out into loud lamentations.'[170]

What we see in the records of contemporaries then is not the acclamation of a distinguished performance of madness, but rather an appreciation of a generalised depiction of virtue in distress, which invited a conventional sentimental response. Just as Sterne fantasised about the 'undescribable emotions' that the sight of a Maria would produce, so too did contemporaries relate the 'indescribable sensations' they felt at contemplating the

---

[167] Contrast these responses to Garrick's rendering of madness to the review of George Sandford's supposedly abject depiction of the distressed Octavio in George Colman the Younger's *The Mountaineers*, Exeter, 1803: 'there was nothing of nature [in the performance] … after falling on the ground, in a state of debilitated frenzy, the convulsed roll of the eyes, *in all the apparent agony of death, which one could scarce glance at without feeling that dreadful association*, ill expressed the vacant, piteous, look of one worn down by care and watching'. See *Trewman's Exeter Flying Post* (10 March 1803) [emphasis added].
[168] Davies, *Dramatic Miscellanies*, 208.
[169] Boaden ed., *Private Correspondence*,158.
[170] Davies, *Dramatic Miscellanies*, 207.

exquisite Lear.[171] So touched was James Fordyce at the sight, that he, like Yorick in Moulins, claimed to be assaulted by virtuous sensations for some time after attending at Drury Lane. When he was finally compelled to address his feelings to Garrick himself it was not, he claimed, to flatter the actor, but rather to relieve himself of 'a load of sensibility with which King Lear has quite overwhelmed me.'[172]

Yet for every Lear that could excite the virtuous sympathies of an audience there was a revolting lunatic who caused the soul to shrink away in pain, a point made most clearly by the reaction to the play *The Captive*, which only survived one fateful performance at the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden on 22 March 1803. *The Captive* was an experimental 'monodrama', or single-actor tragedy, written by the notorious dramatist Matthew Lewis. Lewis was a pioneer of the new 'horror Gothic' genre, renowned for its sensational and gruesome portrayals of affecting scenes.[173] For this new play, Lewis turned to a scene guaranteed to capture the attention of the dilettanti – a madhouse, complete with the archetype of the entrapped wife, played by the young Harriet Litchfield. The tale was standard Gothic fare, with the wife, known only as the 'Captive', unwarrantedly confined in the madhouse by her shadowy husband. Abandoned by the madhouse keeper who refused to accept her declarations of sanity; traumatised by the constant shrieks and moans of her fellow inmates; and driven to despair while contemplating the separation from her son; the Captive fell into real distraction, and was only revived to sanity after being discovered by her family, and reunited with the child. As one later commentator would succinctly describe it, the play thus evoked 'all the horrors of a madhouse; imprisonment, chains, starvation, fear, madness, &c.'.[174]

Lewis had undoubtedly intended *The Captive* to present an unsettling spectacle; however, watching from above, even he was shocked at the power of the representation. As he would write the following day, 'the subject (which was merely a picture of madness) was so uniformly distressing to the feelings, that at last I felt my own a little painful; and as to

---

[171] Gentleman, *Dramatic Censor*, 369.

[172] Boaden ed., *Private Correspondence*,159.

[173] Carol Davison, 'The Victorian Gothic and Gender', in *The Victorian Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*, ed. Andrew Smith and William Hughes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 124.

[174] David Erskine Baker, Isaac Reed, and Stephen Jones, *Biographia Dramatica; or a Companion to the Playhouse*, vol. 2 (London, 1812), 81.

Mrs. Litchfield, she almost fainted away.'[175] For the unsuspecting theatregoers, the spectacle proved too distressing. Already swooning at Litchfield's apoplectic ravings, the intercession of an off-stage madman, clattering at the Captive's door, created an 'effect … too strong for [the audience's] feelings'.[176] Two ladies in the pit actually did faint at the clamour, and another two had followed suit by the time the curtain fell. The theatre was subsequently 'thrown into confusion,' with many in the audience voicing their disapprobation towards the embarrassed Litchfield.[177]

Critics rushed to condemn the play. The following day's *Morning Chronicle* reported that it had been 'stigmatized by the most marked contempt and derision of the audience'.[178] *The European Magazine, and London Review* remarked that '[a]s a literary production it was very poor'.[179] All agreed with the *Monthly Mirror* that the 'subject [was] too nearly allied to *horror* for public exhibition', and on this point Lewis concurred.[180] Citing a respect for the feelings of the audience he withdrew the play after its opening night, and refused to show it again.

The commercial failings of the play should be put down to its genre; *The Captive*'s particular Gothic style, with its gratuitous scenes of violation, was by no means acceptable according to the moral tone of Georgian theatre. However, looking deeper, it is evident that this condemnation stemmed, largely, from the audience's dissatisfaction with the representation of the play's protagonist, and specifically, from their inability to sympathise with her plight. Certainly, the playwright recognised the significance of sentimentality to the production. While Lewis acknowledged that the play would likely be controversial, he simultaneously believed that it had a chance for success, provided that he could arouse enough 'pity' to 'make the audience weep'.[181] For their part, the critics had no issue with the subject matter, which was thought to be suitably affecting. The *Monthly Mirror* remarked that there was nothing 'monstrous or unnatural' in the idea that such a tragedy would drive a woman to distraction; the critics' concern, rather, was that the exhibition of the protagonist's insanity diverged too far from convention and could not elicit the correct moral

[175] Matthew Lewis, *The Life and Correspondence of M. G. Lewis, Vol. 1*, ed. Margaret Baron-Wilson, London, 1839, 234-5.
[176] *Monthly Mirror: Reflecting Men and Manners* 15 (London, 1803), 267.
[177] *Ibid*., 267.
[178] *Morning Chronicle* (23 March, 1803).
[179] *The European Magazine, and London Review* 43 (1803), 205.
[180] *The Monthly Mirror*, 267.
[181] Lewis, *Correspondence*, 235.

feelings from the audience.[182] Commenting on the depiction, a writer in *The Pic Nic* deplored 'that madness, a subject of all others to be handled by the dramatist in the lightest and most delicate manner, was upon this occasion exhibited in its most terrific and degrading stages.'[183] The *Morning Chronicle* similarly censured the play for its unappealing portrayal of mental anguish. Whereas the standard sentimental narrative was '[rendered] interesting' due to the heroine's 'simplicity and pathos', Litchfield's Captive was said to offer too disconcerting a sight for contemplation.[184] The very form that her suffering took blunted the potential for the audience's sympathetic engagement with the protagonist.

This was not a slight on Harriet Litchfield's acting style, but rather, Lewis's stage directions.[185] In contrast to the inoffensive passivity of Cowper's melancholic or Garrick's Lear, Litchfield's Captive offered no opportunity for harmonious sympathetic engagement. It should be noted, Litchfield entered the scene agreeably enough, in a languorous 'stupor'. However, the dramatist's subsequent instructions, rather than settling Litchfield into a fixed countenance of sorrow, directed a spectacle too erratic to invite the sympathies of onlookers, jumping from 'a smile', to 'agony', to 'a look of terror', to 'a sudden burst of passionate grief, approaching to frenzy', before culminating in a 'shriek'.[186] As the drama reached its climax the Captive, approaching distraction, broke out into cries ('I'm mad! – I'm mad!'), before '[dashing] herself in frenzy upon the ground.'[187]

In the face of these histrionics, Litchfield's attempts at affecting alluring distress were not enough to save her performance. As we have seen, Garrick in *King Lear* was apt to fix an affecting tableau to engage the audience's sympathies, and Lewis presented a number of similar moments, including the protagonist's quintessentially sentimental reunification with her father and son. Yet even in these moments of pathos, the scenes were injected with spasmodic theatrical passions bound to confuse the spectator, and assault the senses. When, for example, the Captive dwelt on the memory of her child – an inoffensive 'melancholic

---

[182] *Monthly Mirror,* 267.

[183] *The Pic Nic* 12 (26 March 1803), 167. The same critic caustically remarked that Lewis's perverse taste made him a 'fit candidate for admission' to a madhouse.

[184] *Morning Chronicle* (23 March, 1803). For a neat counterpoint, see *The Monthly Review*'s commentary on the 'happily touched' madness conveyed in a 1787 performance of Benoît-Joseph Marsollier's comedy *Nina; or, the Love Distracted Maid*, performed at Covent Garden (*The Monthly Review; or, Literary Journal* 37 (1787), 78).

[185] As the correspondent to the *Morning Chronicle* derided, 'the greatest powers of acting cannot give interest to absurdity' (23 March, 1803).

[186] Lewis, *Correspondence*, 236-40.

[187] *Ibid*., 240.

reflection' in the author's words – the sentimental effect was counteracted by 'a sudden burst of passionate grief, approaching to frenzy,' conveying disconcerting emotions that dissipated any aura of inner virtue, or sensitivity.[188]

What little potential there may have been for an emotional engagement with the plight of the protagonist was eliminated by the inconstant narration of events. Unable to contemplate her suffering through the tableaux offered, spectators sought to sympathise with the figure through the narrative, though even this attempt proved futile. Only brief mention was made to the Captive's past, and no explanation was given for her incarceration, other than that a 'tyrant husband' had sent her to 'this dreary cell', unbeknownst to her friends.[189] Typical sentimental texts fixated on the preconditions of a victim's oppression, so as to properly render the protagonist as virtuous, and deserving of sympathetic regard; by not providing this emotional back-story, *The Captive's* moral tale was impenetrable to the assembled spectators. It is telling that the *Morning Chronicle* directly attributed the audience's hostility to this failure to attain the figure's perspective: as '[n]o hint is given who the lady's husband was, or what were his motives for this barbarous conduct', the performance represented 'obscurity, perplexity and extravagance', rather than the affective communion that polite spectators desired.[190]

For the sentimentalists in the audience, attuned to a gentle and controlled narration of the others' position, such a performance gave no opportunity to cultivate the desired emotional response. Rather than *inviting* contemplation, Harriet Litchfield's acting was described as 'forcible', *compelling* the onlookers to consider the abject spectacle.[191] Thus, when commentators reflected on her performance, there was no mention of any 'undescribable emotions', but only corporeal revulsion. Rather than calling to mind the virtues of the distressed wife, the monodrama was remembered as 'an accumulation of horrors, caught from the Lazarhouse of Milton'.[192] Litchfield's Captive was thus cast down amongst the disreputable poor, a figure outside of humane regard.

---

[188] *Ibid*., 239.
[189] *Ibid*., 237.
[190] *Morning Chronicle* (23 March 1803).
[191] Baker, Reed, and Jones, *Biographia Dramatica*, 81.
[192] Philip Kemble, *Memoirs of the Life of John Philip Kemble, Esq.* (Philadelphia, 1825), 451.

IV. Conclusion: Madness in the Sentimental Emotional Regime

From these examples it is clear that polite society had a vexed relationship with insanity. On the one hand, individuals actively sought to sympathise with madness, as a means of exciting their supposedly virtuous sensibility, and sentimental art provided numerous exemplars to rehearse and enact the practices necessary for this style of emotional management. However, given the constraints of the emotional regime, the possibility of being moved to the desired feeling towards a mad spectacle was strictly curtailed, dependent on the correct rendering of the subject under contemplation. This severely limited the potential for engagement with the insane. As the doctrine of sympathy sanctioned the conscious disregard of spectacles that did not excite the correct feeling in the beholder, polite observers were encouraged to habituate practices that embodied this ambivalence – the theatrical looking away – meaning that the marginalisation of particular lunatics was reinforced. Such findings problematise any linear accounts of the development of sensibilities towards the insane, while also undermining any generalisations about the perceived uniformity of emotional responsiveness in sentimental culture. Indeed, if, as Jervis suggests, sensibility in this period represents an 'embodied, evaluative response to the world', new responses to insanity were not simply the outgrowth of some generalised sentimental principles, but rather the inculcation at the level of habitus of a complex constellation of emotions, and modes of intuition.[193]

As a medium through which the sentimental emotional regime was inculcated, art had a significant influence on contemporary attitudes and responses to the mad. Nonetheless, it is important to note that, however consciously 'enlightened' artists may have considered themselves, they did not seek to meet the mad on their level. Regardless of their form or rendering, none of depictions of madness discussed here invited a serious contemplation of the subject's plight, with even the sentimentalised figures having all marks of their individuality effaced in favour of generalised tropes and images. If art can be said to have begun to nurture a 'new pathos' towards the insane, it has to be recognised that it indelibly reflected the desires of the consumers who made up the market for these works: a predilection for humble, inoffensive, and appealing figures – subjects who would submit to the gaze of the polite observer, not challenge it.[194]

---

[193] Jervis, *Sympathetic Sentiments*, 2-3.
[194] Porter, *Madmen*, 99.

And this notion, in turn, had significant political implications in the later decades of the eighteenth century. In configuring the social affections as an indulgence, sentimental texts 'offer[ed] a 'controlling evasion or consoling moral gesture', rather than a critique of 'systemic' inequalities.[195] Though the heart of sensibility may have been 'Pierced with the woes' of the mopish lunatic, this discomfort never led to an active attempt to ameliorate their condition, or reform the institutions that housed them. Ultimately, polite observers – like the aloof narrator of Cowper's 'Retirement' – were content to lament 'in vain'.

Moreover, as Csengei suggests, by requiring the distressed and marginalised to submit to the desires of the powerful, 'the ideology of sympathy and benevolence could also function … to maintain the status quo and support existing power relations.'[196] By mapping these power relations onto the habitus, the culture's emotional practices fostered aversive responses to not just theatrical representations of madness, but seemingly abject lunatics in everyday life. Thus when the author Amelia Alderson, late in life, reflected on a visit to a Norwich asylum in the 1780s, she wrote of the disappointment she and some companions had felt at the sight of the lunatics behind the madhouse walls. Having developed a 'romantic' view of lunacy in their youth, Alderson and her companions (two young gentlemen) were emboldened to enter the madhouse, as a means of indulging in 'expression[s] of sentimental woe'.[197] She recalled the imaginings of one of her companions – 'a man of warm feelings and lively fancy' – who 'had pictured to himself the unfortunate beings, whom we were going to visit, as victims of their sensibility, and as likely to express *by their countenances and words* the fatal sorrows of their hearts'.[198] And as the embarrassed Alderson conceded, at that time she too 'share[d] in his anticipations', thus leading to inevitable dissatisfaction.[199] Unable to display any 'interesting' expressions of sensibility – that is, to project signs of their sensitivity – the raving lunatics the group encountered could

---

[195] Richetti, *English Novel*, 234. On sentimentalism's 'profound conservatism' see Robert Markley, 'Sentimentality as Performance: Shaftesbury, Sterne, and the Theatrics of Virtue', in *The New Eighteenth Century: Theory, Politics, English Literature*, ed. Felicity Nussbaum and Laura Brown (New York & London: Methuen, 1987), 216, 230.
[196] Csengei, *Sympathy*, 49.
[197] Cecilia Lucy Brightwell ed., *Memorials of the Life of Amelia Opie*, 2nd edition (Norwich, 1865), 16.
[198] *Ibid*., 16 [emphasis added].
[199] *Ibid*., 16.

not 'raise [themselves] above the lowly walk of life in which they had always moved', exciting aversion in the spectators, rather than involuntary compassion.[200]

As we will see in the next chapter, the forceful imposition of sentimentalism's emotional strictures in the latter decades of the eighteenth century only compounded such tendencies: the demand to cultivate exquisite feelings leading to the privileging of ever more waifish appearances of suffering; and the desire to resist sensational terror prompting increasingly hyperbolic, and seemingly debilitating responses to abjection.

---

[200] *Ibid*., 16.

Chapter 2. Grafting Delight Upon Wretchedness: The Beautiful Madwoman in the Sentimental Age

In late 1781 the English periodical press rang out with 'A Tale of Real Woe'. A correspondent, 'Philalethes', wrote to the *St. James's Chronicle* with the 'literally true' story of Louisa, a madwoman discovered in 'a small Village near Bristol'.[1] As the narrative went, Louisa – a young woman sporting a German accent and crippling fear of society – was found camped out under a haystack, 'alone … and in extreme Distress'. Though displaying 'Marks of superiour Breeding', her evident insanity caused some ladies of the nearby neighbourhood to organise for her confinement at a local infirmary – an apparently terrifying experience which only exacerbated the woman's distrust of the world. Hurrying back to her haystack, Louisa had supposedly spent a further four years without the 'Protection of a Roof'; and having witnessed firsthand the 'Sweetness and Delicacy in her Air and Manner', the sympathetic narrator was compelled to make the lunatic's case public, with the stated hope of 'restoring an amiable and wretched young Creature to the Arms of (perhaps) a broken hearted Parent.'[2]

This compassionate 'Eye-Witness' was the famed Evangelical moralist Hannah More, a woman whose religious predilections interested her in a range of charitable ventures in the latter decades of the eighteenth century. Supported by a dedicated coterie of philanthropists, More aggressively publicised Louisa's case, arousing widespread curiosity amongst the reading public. Following the reproduction of this tale of woe in newspapers across the country, a swathe of copycat pamphlets were published, which further added to the story's mystique. Louisa came to be depicted as an abandoned lover (in accordance with the literary fashion of the day), with a further rumour circulating that she was a lost daughter of the emperor of Austria. Stimulated by these tales, some public-spirited onlookers were actually compelled to enquire into her parentage – to no avail.[3] In the curiosity raised by the publication of Louisa's 'moving story' though, More had achieved her primary purpose: to

---

[1] Philalethes [Hannah More], 'To the Printer of the St. J. CHRONICLE. *A TALE of* REAL WOE', *The St. James's Chronicle* (10-13 November, 1781).

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] See, for example, Horace Walpole to Mary Hamilton, 7 October, 1783, in *Walpole's Correspondence*, Vol. 31, 1961, 207-9.

garner enough support to fund the young woman's confinement in the Methodist schoolmaster Richard Henderson's private madhouse near Bristol.[4]

In many ways, Louisa's case was typical of eighteenth-century philanthropy. Owing to the ongoing concerns about the plight of abandoned and victimised women – and fears of the social problems such women supposedly posed (e.g. prostitution and bastardy) – much philanthropic effort from the middle of the eighteenth century was directed towards their relief and moral reformation.[5] For middle-class Evangelical women like More, seeking to fulfil a pastoral prerogative, such cases had especial appeal, and so organising for their relief became regarded as something of a calling.[6]

Of particular interest is the nature of the discourse used to describe Louisa, and solicit funds for her protection. Hannah More's tale carried the hallmarks of the model of sympathetic spectatorship examined in the previous chapter: a depiction of a respectable lady, in visible 'Distress'. However, to a greater extent than even the artistic and theatrical depictions of madness we have already seen, her delineation of Louisa's exquisite sensibility was rendered according to a distinctively sentimental style, which emphasised the supposedly inherent delicacy and frailty of her form. More's appropriation of this style reflects the assumptions of eighteenth-century aesthetic doctrine, which held that the social affections were provoked and sustained by signs of physical 'beauty'.

This assumption offers a counterpoint to traditional explanations about the role of aesthetics in forging the modern sensibility towards madness. Critical research into this area has largely drawn upon Max Byrd's study of depictions of insanity in eighteenth-century British poetry, in which he argued that the fascination and pity with which many contemporaries regarded the manic thrall resulted from the emergence of the sublime as a guiding paradigm of aesthetic connoisseurship. As critics chased violent transports from

---

[4] Horace Walpole to Lady Ossory, 19 August 1785, in *Walpole's Correspondence*, Vol. 33, 1965, 490.

[5] Dorice Williams Elliot, *The Angel Out of the House: Philanthropy and Gender in Nineteenth-Century England* (Charlottesville & London: University Press of Virginia, 2002), 33-53; Donna Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police: London Charity in the Eighteenth Century* (Princeton (N.J.): Princeton University Press, 1989); Johanna Smith, 'Philanthropic Community in 'Millenium Hall' and the York Ladies Committee', *The Eighteenth Century* 36, no. 3: The Contradictions of 'Community' (1995), 266-82.

[6] On women's contributions to philanthropic causes and humanitarian reforms see Elliot, *The Angel Out of the House*; Lenard, *Preaching Pity*; Barker-Benfield, *Culture of Sensibility*, 224-47.

picturesque prospects, they discovered an affinity with the gross transports of the lunatic's mind, which were now conceived as 'rapturous and ennobling'.[7] Coupled with the literary taste for melancholic introspection, and the wider imperative to pity the brutalised and outcast, this artistic movement is said to have eroded existing prejudices towards the insane, fostering what Roy Porter termed an 'emergent sympathy toward the mad'.[8]

Byrd was certainly correct in noting an interest in madness' 'sublime frisson'. Late-century commentators regularly alluded to the 'fearful pleasure' they derived from the contemplation of a mind deranged.[9] However his assumption that the taste for the sublime encouraged polite observers 'to regard [madness] sympathetically, curiously' overlooks the significance of the sentimental aesthetic to evaluations of community and moral feeling, in the eighteenth century at least.[10] As we have seen in the previous chapter, the type of painful sensations that Byrd associated with 'sympathy' were regarded by most eighteenth-century thinkers as inimical to affection. It was pleasing impulses that were thought necessary to excite moral reflection, and as the century progressed, the necessity for such 'voluptuous' stimulation led to a demand for ever more sensual or 'erotic' stimulation.[11] In this context, Hannah More's efforts to accentuate Louisa's pleasing traits or characteristics appears more like a careful posturing, a means of provoking the sensuous feelings that a polite audience was conditioned to identify as natural compassion. Such an assumption presents a new frame for interpreting the role of emotions in eighteenth-century sentimental philanthropies, which has implications for our understanding of how insanity was represented in the sentimental decades, and how the contemplation of different spectacles could produce distinct responses or embodied meanings in observers.

These are the issues I examine in this chapter. I argue that as British polite society in the 1770s-1780s placed growing emphasis on the association between sympathetic fellow-feeling and sensuality, supposedly benevolent spectators demanded increasingly stylised 'spectacles of sympathy' towards which to direct their beneficence. For charitable subjects like the insane to receive benevolent regard in this context, they were thus required to

---

[7] Byrd, *Visits to Bedlam*, 115.
[8] Porter, *Madmen*, 97-111 (qtd. 100).
[9] Brightwell, *Memorials*, 15.
[10] Byrd, *Visits to Bedlam*, 115.
[11] On contemporary associations between sensibility and erotic sensuality see Van Sant, *Sensibility and the Novel*, 8; Jerome McGann, *Poetics of Sensibility: A Revolution in Literary Style* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 7.

conform to the demands of this aesthetic regime, exhibiting particular physical charms for the gratification of their patrons.

The implications of this emotional style for the treatment of the insane will be explored through a close analysis of contemporaneous writings on aesthetics and insanity. In the first section, I situate contemporary aesthetic theories within the cultural and political context of late-eighteenth-century Britain, to illustrate how sentimentalism's emotional practices reinforced the ideological predispositions of British polite society, by attributing 'sympathy' to submissive, figuratively feminised subjects. This analysis structures the subsequent discussion of artistic renderings of insanity from sentimentalism's high-watermark, illustrating how the aestheticising of madness in this period facilitated the arousal of distinct sensual responses towards particular figures, while also examining the extent to which the emotional practices rehearsed in this contemplation structured polite spectators' emotional responses to lunatics in everyday life. The implications of this cultural movement are assessed in the third section, through a more focussed study of contemporaneous responses to Louisa's case. It shows that, while the madwoman was able to attract benevolent regard, this affection was fundamentally tied to her capacity to project an appealing or sensual visage to potential philanthropists, the absence of which created significant consternation in even the most dedicated observers. The chapter will conclude with an assessment of the influence of this emotional style to elite attitudes towards madness through to the close of the eighteenth century.

I. Beauty Inviolate: Spectacles of Sympathy in the Sentimental Aesthetic

As we have seen, eighteenth-century moralists championed sentimental emotion as the foundation of a civilised community, and a marker of exquisite virtue. Given their elevated cultural status, people sought to produce benevolent affections as a means of discovering their own humanity, as well as proving their innate sensibility to others. Through the consumption of novels, sentimental poetry and stage tragedies, men and women were able to locate and express these feelings, and thus inculcate the practices required to sustain this idealised emotional style.

Given the importance of sentimental texts to the production of emotion, aesthetic theorists debated the perceptual and physiological basis of these supposedly 'natural'

feelings. The pioneering figure here was Edmund Burke, whose seminal treatise *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) provided the basis for most late-century writings on art theory. Burke proposed that taste and aesthetic experience was founded on sensory perceptions of external objects, which were received and mediated by the body and mind into internal affect.[12] The 'passions' excited at the judgement of an artwork, or natural form, he suggested, were responses to the particular visual qualities of the object: qualities that he believed were innately appealing or repulsive to human nature. These feelings were categorised according to a simple dichotomy. The strongest passions were those which related to 'self-preservation', and which turned on 'ideas of *pain*, *sickness*, and *death*': feelings that were painful to bear, and which caused an observer to instinctively recoil, as if perceiving a threat.[13] The other class of passions were those that concerned 'society', which were associated with ideas of '*life* and *health*', and were for the most part accompanied by feelings of delight.[14] Burke believed that these pleasing social affections were implanted to compel humanity to their moral obligations, be it procreation, or the more general duties to '*general society*'.[15] Sympathy was one such 'general passion we have for society'.[16]

In Burke's philosophy, these two categories of feeling were attributed to distinct classes of physical forms. The sublime, he reasoned, was a quality inherent in any object apt 'to excite the ideas of pain, and danger'.[17] Being 'productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling' – terror – the sublime thus always threatened to disarm or dominate the spectator, a feeling that preceded rational judgement.[18] Sublime qualities were those that overpowered the senses: enormity; 'obscurity'; 'excessive loudness'; bitter tastes and 'intolerable stenches'. When pressed close, such sensations became unendurable. In its most acute form, the sublime 'robs the mind of all its power of acting and reasoning… For

[12] Vanessa Ryan, 'The Physiological Sublime: Burke's Critique of Reason', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 62, no. 2 (2001), 268.

[13] Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (London, 1757), 13.

[14] *Ibid*., 13.

[15] *Ibid*., 14.

[16] *Ibid*., 34.

[17] *Ibid*., 13.

[18] *Ibid*., 13. On the instinctive corporeality of Burke's sublime see Ryan, 'Physiological Sublime', 271-3; Richard Shusterman, 'Somaesthetics and Burke's Sublime', *British Journal of Aesthetics* 45, no. 4 (2005), 323-41.

fear being an apprehension of pain and death, it operates in a manner that resembles actual pain.'[19]

Terrible spectacles were not intrinsically unpleasant, as Burke's theory of the sublime made clear. Indeed the sublime would become the prominent aesthetic form for successive generations of connoisseurs, with its contemplation considered a morally fortifying test of strength.[20] Provided that there remained a sufficient distance between them and the object and their contemplation, a sublime prospect that inspired awe – a mountain, a raging waterfall, a shipwreck – was thought to be a source of delight, or even divine inspiration to a refined observer. However, the more immediate the object's presence, and the more horrible or threatening its form, the more painful or vulgar it became for the beholder.[21] Pressing danger, Burke thus concluded, was 'incapable of giving any delight'.[22]

Opposed to the awesome sublime were the forms that Burke designated as beautiful: those 'qualities in bodies by which they cause love, or some passion similar to it.'[23] Whereas the sublime was thought to prompt a spectator's innate self-interest, beauty, for Burke, was the quality that facilitated the sentimental community:

I call beauty a social quality; for where women and men, and not only they, but when other animals give us a sense of joy and pleasure in beholding them … they inspire us with sentiments of tenderness and affection towards their persons; we like to have them near us, and we enter willingly into a kind of relation with them, unless we should have strong reasons to the contrary.[24]

Beautiful forms were those that induced pleasing voluptuousness in the beholder: any qualities reminiscent of softness, delicacy, and grace. It is here that the political implications of Burke's aesthetic project are made evident. Even a century before the publication of the *Philosophical Enquiry*, critics and philosophers had begun to conceive of the sublime – an

---

[19] Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry*, 42.
[20] Tom Furniss, *Edmund Burke's Aesthetic Ideology: Language, Gender, and Political Economy in Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 25-31.
[21] Rai, *Rule of Sympathy*, 32.
[22] Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry*, 13-4.
[23] *Ibid*., 74.
[24] *Ibid*., 18-9.

affect akin to admiration and respect – as analogous to a superior *masculine* authority.[25] Burke further reinforced this gendered demarcation, positioning this authoritarian power in opposition to the 'submissive feminine principle of the beautiful'.[26] As Carolyn Korsmeyer notes, in Burke's definitions '[t]he general, abstract characteristics of any beautiful object are extrapolated from the beauty of the female body.'[27] Tom Furniss describes Burke's sense of beauty as 'primarily … erotic', realised 'most fully in men's sexual perception of women'.[28] Indeed in the *Philosophical Enquiry*, the beautiful was shown to structure a compulsive, sexualised male gaze, which was graphically modelled in the text:

> Observe that part of a beautiful woman where she is perhaps the most beautiful, about the neck and breasts; the smoothness; the softness; the easy and insensible swell; the variety of the surface, which is never for the smallest space the same; the deceitful maze, through which the unsteady eye slides giddily, without knowing where to fix, or whither it is carried.[29]

Here the woman's beautiful body is seen to enthral the perception, to the point that it undermined (masculine) judgement. As a prototypical statement on aesthetic contemplation, Burke's text thus had clear implications for contemporaneous understandings about gender and the social order. In line with the wider reformulation of sexual difference that the cult of sensibility was encoding, the assertion that the object of love 'is the *beauty* of the [female] *sex*' implicitly naturalised women's objectification, and thus marked the grounds for their subjection.[30]

There was a broader political message here too. Though Burke had contended that painful sensations supplied a sound basis for moral action – it being assumed that by removing another's pain, a spectator would remove their own sympathetic suffering – the

---

[25] Christine Battersby, *The Sublime, Terror, and Human Difference* (London & New York: Routledge, 2007), 5. On the gendering of the sublime in early modern aesthetic discourses see John Pipkin, 'The Material Sublime of Women Romantic Poets', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 38, no. 4 (1998), 597-619.

[26] Daniel O'Neill, 'The Sublime, the Beautiful, and the Political in Burke's Work', in *The Science of Sensibility: Reading Burke's Philosophical Enquiry*, ed. Koen Vermeir and Michael Funk Deckard (Dordrecht: Springer, 2012), 197.

[27] Carolyn Korsmeyer, *Gender and Aesthetics: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 43.

[28] Furniss, *Burke's Aesthetic Ideology*, 34.

[29] Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry*, 100.

[30] *Ibid.*, 18.

politics of sympathy as represented throughout the text were far more ambiguous.[31] Indeed, the Burkean dictum that affection flowed to diminutiveness and subordination ('we submit to what we admire, but we love what submits to us') reinforced a fantasy of natural hierarchy that had obvious appeal to the increasingly unstable patrician class.[32] On the one hand, this supposedly innate love of beauty was lauded as the basis of temporal authority, the means by which naked power could be subdued to a noble paternalism.[33] However for this sympathetic regard to be bestowed, the object of charity was required to exhibit meekness and charm for the overseer's gratification (and conspicuously, this regard was conceived as affection, not respect).[34] This outlook was also fully consonant with the model of sympathy discussed in the previous chapter: the privileged perspective of the viewer affording sympathy or love to only those subjects who meekly submitted to the consumer's gaze. The shocking *frisson* that Burke saw as the natural response to a threatening spectacle corresponded neatly with the sense of abjection that Adam Smith's followers saw as indicative of a failed sympathetic engagement. While Burke disputed Smith's contention that sympathy derived from an imaginative engagement with a spectacle, he lauded the guiding principles of Smith's theory: specifically, the idea that sympathetic regard was 'directed by the pleasure we have in the object' under view.[35]

This notion was to shape Burke's physiologism, and subsequently filtered down into the writings of later art and literary critics. The sentimentalist Anna Laetitia Barbauld examined this issue in an authoritative essay entitled 'An Inquiry into Those Kinds of Distress which Excite Agreeable Sensations' (1773).[36] Examining the emotions aroused by tragedy, Barbauld distinguished between the painful sensations that accompanied spectacles of suffering, and more pleasurable 'springs of pity' that were excited by the description of 'a more delicate hand'[37]:

---

[31] *Ibid.*, 25.
[32] *Ibid.*, 97.
[33] William Musgrave, '"That Monstrous Fiction": Radical Agency and Aesthetic Ideology in Burke', *Studies in Romanticism* 36, no. 1 (1997), 12-13.
[34] Barbara Taylor, *Mary Wollstonecraft and the Feminist Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 63. Burke's fantasy of feminine submission to masculine authority has an analogue in contemporary debates on marriage, which placed pressure on women to facilitate loving relationships. See, for example, Katie Barclay, *Love, Intimacy and Power: Marriage and Patriarchy in Scotland, 1650-1850* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2011), Ch. 2.
[35] Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry*, 34.
[36] Anna Laetitia Barbauld, *The Works of Anna Laetitia Barbauld. With a Memoir By Lucy Aikin*, vol. 2 (London, 1825), 214-31.
[37] *Ibid.*, 215.

The view or relation of mere misery can never be pleasing. We have, indeed, a strong sympathy with all kinds of misery; but it is a feeling of pure unmixed pain … and never produces that melting sorrow, that thrill of tenderness, to which we give the name of pity. They are two distinct sensations, marked by very different external expression. One causes the nerves to tingle, the flesh to shudder, and the whole countenance to be thrown into strong contractions; the other relaxes the frame, opens the features, and produces tears.[38]

The inheritance of Burke's philosophy is clear. Any visualisation of distress roused a sensory reaction. Crucially though, there is a clear demarcation between the sympathetic experience of the pain that caused disabling terror, and the pleasing sympathetic affect that a refined beholder would feel upon contemplating a beautiful rendering of suffering.

This association between sensuality and the social affections is important, for its correlation in contemporaneous moral philosophy. Building upon the Aristotelian assumption that virtuous acts were intrinsically pleasing, Anglican divines and deist moralists from the late seventeenth century had propounded the philosophy that good works were attended by a 'self-approving joy', implanted by the Divine (or Nature) to compel individuals to charitable acts.[39] Widely appropriated by sentimentalism's proponents, by the latter decades of the eighteenth century it had become a commonplace assumption that benevolence was accompanied by the 'most exquisite raptures known to mankind'.[40] While contemporaries contended these to be rational delights, Mark Koch notes that, from sentimentalism's inception, the pleasures attending to a charitable gift-exchange were described as having a distinctly sensual, or 'erotic quality' – a connotation that was only strengthened in the second half of the eighteenth century, when disproportionate weight began to be placed on the morality of feeling.[41] As the demand for sentimental intensity encouraged the more persistent exploration of the body and self, observers became increasingly cognisant of the uneasy association between sensibility and sensuality (and even sexual responsiveness).[42] Laurence Sterne's fictions were amongst the first to seriously

---

[38] *Ibid*., 215-6.

[39] R.S. Crane, 'Suggestions Toward a Genealogy of the "Man of Feeling"', *ELH* 1, no. 3 (1934), 227-9.

[40] Williams, 'Luxury', 77.

[41] Mark Koch, '"A Spectacle Pleasing to God and Man": Sympathy and the Show of Charity in the Restoration Spittle Sermons', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 46, no. 4 (2013), 482-3. See also, Crane, 'Genealogy of the "Man of Feeling"', 227-9.

[42] Brissendon, *Virtue in Distress*, 78.

interrogate these fluid boundaries; Parson Yorick himself, in *Sentimental Journey*, was seen to appraise his charitable inclinations by 'the stirrings of sexuality'.[43] While late-century writers chastised Sterne for this perceived lasciviousness, at the height of the vogue for sensibility this style of reflection was tacitly endorsed by many of his contemporaries. In a study of Henry Fielding's mid-century crime reporting, for example, Lance Bertelsen alludes to the latent contemporaneous association between feminine beauty and morality, positing that in a charitable exchange (for instance, in a magistrate's determination of mercy towards a prostitute), 'sexual attraction' may have substituted 'as a corrupt form of the benevolence-induced "pleasure" theorized by advocates of sensibility' – that is, as a sign of *sympathy*.[44]

Whatever contemporaries' thoughts were about the morality of feeling, it seems evident that by the second half of the eighteenth century, sentimental discourse had seemingly naturalised a conception of fellow-feeling as instinctive corporeal pleasure. That this was such an overriding concern for contemporaries has significant implications for our interpretation of philanthropic appeals from this period. Sentimentalism's emotional practices were designed to facilitate a controlled sympathetic response towards charitable objects. The most intensive mobilisation of these practices occurred in the 1770s and 1780s, when the social imperative to display sentimental affect encouraged the cyclical re-enactment of emotions. In his study of the sentimental emotional regime in France, William Reddy has described the process by which this necessity to prove virtue through feeling shaped 'an emotional style which … encouraged the pursuit of excess'.[45] Seeking confirmation that they had 'tapped a well of natural sentiment', the cult of sensibility utilised emotional utterances to produce strong emotions, it being assumed that the intensity of experience marked it as authentic.[46]

But what sort of feelings were thought to validate one's virtue? Reddy suggests that sentimentalists 'would regard any stirrings of feeling that confirmed' such utterances as 'the source of all good and beauty'.[47] By this conception *any* affective response to an emotional utterance could be seen as proof of one's virtue, and we can certainly see actors, authors and

---

[43] Todd, *Sensibility*, 97. On the latent sensuality of *Sentimental Journey* see Arthur H. Cash, *Laurence Sterne: The Later Years* (London & New York: Methuen, 1986), 315-9.
[44] Lance Bertelsen, 'Committed by Justice Fielding: Judicial and Journalistic Representation in the Bow Street Magistrate's Office January 3 - November 24, 1752', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 30, no. 4 (1997), 347.
[45] Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*, 171.
[46] *Ibid*., 164.
[47] *Ibid*., 164.

preachers from this period drawing upon a wide range of performances and tropes to excite visceral emotions in Georgian audiences. However, this overriding concern with the pleasing or sensual quality of pity points to a more explicit association between the Burkean conception of beauty and moral feeling.[48] Owing to their assumption about the universality of aesthetic experience, contemporary moralists invoked descriptors of exquisite tenderness as a means of stimulating or intensifying the gratuitous aesthetic pleasure that polite audiences regarded as affection, in the same way that more explicit emotional utterances could be used to channel strong emotions.

This, of course, is not to argue for a universal aesthetic responsiveness: culture will always influence judgements of taste. Rather, it is to acknowledge that many contemporaries believed that Burkean beauty was the only quality capable of eliciting these erotic feelings. Their remarks on the construction of sympathetic affect show a marked consistency on this point, and can thus give a broad outline of the types of feelings and 'external responses' they believed were cultivated by beauty. Typical writings on aesthetics and moral feeling were explicit in their instructions for rendering a spectacle pleasing, both extolling the power of beauty in exciting a tender and deferential affection, while simultaneously calling for the eradication of all offensive sights. Barbauld, for example, contended that the social affections could never be aroused 'by any thing mean or disgusting'. For those looking to excite the benevolence of a spectator or audience, their tale or spectacle could admit 'nothing … which destroys the grace and dignity of suffering; the imagination must have an amiable figure to dwell upon'.[49] An 'amiable' figure in this sense was one whose delicacy outshone the most 'shocking' depravity.[50]

It was essential though that this was not a figure of strong constitution. While eighteenth-century moral philosophers valued magnanimity as a prized moral trait, it was likewise observed that this quality could not excite compassion, so defined. Mental fortitude was seen as a cause for 'admiration' – a 'shining virtue' by Burke's reckoning, but one 'of the sublime kind', and thus productive of 'terror rather than love.'[51] 'Never was any man

---

[48] Indeed, even in the Jacobin republic of virtue, the sensibility of 'natural' virtue was of a different class to the 'cold and abstract' quality of 'sublime' classical republicanism; 'sincere affection' was always a 'moral guide' for French sentimentalists. See Marisa Linton, *Choosing Terror: Virtue, Friendship, and Authenticity in the French Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 37, 44.

[49] Barbauld, *Works*, 220.

[50] *Ibid*., 222-4.

[51] Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry*, 92-3.

amiable by force of these qualities' he contended, a point on which his contemporaries concurred.[52] Too robust a victim was more likely to elicit respect, rather than pity.[53] Brissendon has suggested that in sentimental literature 'it was the frailty of virtue, rather than its simple distress, which brought the tears of sensibility brimming to the eye of the tender hearted reader.'[54] To awaken a spectator's fellow-feeling the 'miserable object' needed to appear powerless under their agonies: that is, to be figuratively feminised. Distress, Barbauld thus concluded, 'must therefore be mixed with something of helplessness and imperfection, with an excessive sensibility … before it raises, in any degree, either tenderness or familiar love.'[55]

By the 1770s then, polite culture can be seen to have adopted a distinctive aesthetic ideal: a sort of fragile perfection, soft, waifish, and unblemished. Moreover, this ideal was considered to be the basis of social love, the discourse which would enable the intensification of sensual pleasure that contemporaries identified as compassion. This had clear implications for philanthropic pursuits in this period. While it was considered possible, and indeed desirable to render charitable objects sympathetic to a polite audience, this was an implicitly subjugating practice, with the 'miserable object' being forced to submit to the desires of the spectator. More pressingly, given the close association between sentimental affection and Burkean 'beauty', the potential scope for sympathetic affection was severely limited, causing the benevolent to prefer the female sex.

II. Beautiful Madness and The Cult of Maria

To understand the significance of this aesthetic paradigm for the treatment of the mad in late-Georgian Britain we need to first examine contemporary depictions of insanity in art, as it was in relation to such spectacles that sentimentalists honed their refined sensibilities. Art had long been afforded a civilising role in moral philosophy, with aesthetic theorists from the beginning of the eighteenth century lauding its capacity to excite moral reflections in audiences. Burke concurred, crediting the arts with transmitting the moral sentiments 'from one breast to another'. Acknowledging that 'objects which in the reality would shock, are in tragical … representations the source of a very high species of pleasure', he argued that

---

[52] *Ibid*., 92; Smith, *Moral Sentiments*, 42.
[53] See Smith, *Moral Sentiments*, 42-3.
[54] Brissenden, *Virtue in Distress*, 91.
[55] Barbauld, *Works*, 224.

through the correct composition, an artist could '[graft] a *delight* on wretchedness, misery, and death itself.'[56]

A delightful rendering of madness was not straightforward though, given the historical association between sin, unreason, and abjection.[57] Even late in the eighteenth century, purportedly 'enlightened' observers rehashed the latent moral undertones associated with lunacy. Madness, in the words of the mad-doctor Thomas Arnold, was 'popularly distinguished by the epithets *raving*, or *raging*' – characteristics hardly indicative of tenderness or beauty.[58] Early modern nosology similarly rendered insanity as a sublime force, with an emphasis on the supposedly inherent bestiality or animalism of derangement – stereotypes which found ready analogues in the literature of the period.[59]

Sentimentalists sought to override the association between madness and monstrosity by offering up quintessentially beautiful (female) lunatics for sympathetic consideration. Perhaps the clearest example of this exquisite madness in art is found in Henry MacKenzie's rendering of the distressed bedlamite in *Man of Feeling*, discussed in the previous chapter:

> Her face, though pale and wasted, was less squalid than those of the others, and shewed a dejection of that decent kind, which moves our pity unmixed with horror: upon her, therefore, the eyes of all were immediately turned.[60]

It was the faultless beauty of this figure that was said to engage the text's fictional witnesses, and MacKenzie's textual cues clearly highlighted these qualities, so as to guide the reader to an appropriate sentimental intensity.

Laurence Sterne too, in his depictions of the jaded Maria emphasised the innate beauty of her form, and it was his characterisation that emerged as the preeminent emblem of

---

[56] Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry*, 22 [emphasis added].
[57] On the relation between madness and moral and spiritual health in the early modern period see Porter, *Madmen*; Schmidt, *Melancholy*; Laffey, 'Insanity'; Philippe Huneman, 'From a Religious View of Madness to Religious Mania: The Encyclopédie, Pinel, Esquirol', *History of Psychiatry* 28, no. 2 (2017), 147-51.
[58] Thomas Arnold, *Observations on the Nature, Kinds, Causes, and Prevention of Insanity, Lunacy, or Madness*, vol. 1, (London, 1782), 29-30. See also William Cullen, *First Lines of the Practice of Physic*, vol. 4 (Edinburgh, 1788), 145-6.
[59] Scull, *Most Solitary of Afflictions*, 56-64; Byrd, *Visits to Bedlam*.
[60] Mackenzie, *Man of Feeling*, 60-1.

sentimental madness. First introduced in Sterne's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* (1759-67), Maria was shown to have attracted the attention of the eponymous protagonist during his travels in France. Shandy found himself face-to-face with the distressed madwoman, and arrested by the sight of her lovely figure:

> she was in a thin white jacket, with her hair, all but two tresses, drawn up into a silk-net … she was beautiful; and if I ever felt the full force of an honest heart-ache, it was the moment I saw her…[61]

It was this exquisiteness that similarly enraptured Parson Yorick in the climax of *Sentimental Journey*. Following Burke to the letter, Sterne attributed the production of the social affections to Maria's auspicious beauties. '[M]uch was there about her … that the heart wishes, or the eye looks for in woman' the narrator ruminated, the madwoman's 'feminine' form exciting the most exquisite feelings of benevolence: 'she should *not only eat of my bread and drink of my own cup*, but Maria should lie in my bosom, and be unto me as a daughter.'[62]

It is worth examining the wider reception of 'Sterne's Maria' in more depth here, as it can give some clearer insights into popular attitudes towards madness at sentimentalism's high-watermark, as well as demonstrating the role of the prevailing emotional regime in structuring these responses. Given Sterne's deft appropriation of the sentimental aesthetic in the rendering, Maria proved immensely popular to the cult of sensibility, becoming one of the most recognisable figures in late-Georgian culture. The vogue for sentimental beauties coinciding with Britain's consumer revolution, shrewd entrepreneurs were quick to harness the character's appeal, appropriating Maria's name and likeness in a staggering array of mass-produced ephemera. Apart from the reprints of Sterne's originals, literary excerpts pertaining to Maria were reproduced alongside other seminal sentimental tableaux in general anthologies and collections, providing readers with a single avenue to the most powerful feelings.[63] Not content to merely dwell on *Sterne's* words, the *literati* addressed verses to

---

[61] Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* (1759-67), ed. Graham Petrie (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967), 601.

[62] Sterne, *Sentimental Journey*, 180. Sterne here is quoting 2 Samuel 12:3, part of the parable that relates a poor man's devotion to his solitary goat.

[63] Easily the most popular of these anthologies was *The Beauties of Sterne; including all his Pathetic Tales, & most distinguished Observations on Life. Selected for the Heart of Sensibility*, which went through over a dozen reprints across Britain and America in the 1780s.

Maria and other similarly love-sick maidens, in which they exalted in the exquisite tenderness of the characters' figures and countenances. Numerous writers published accounts of their own alleged encounters with the distressed madwoman, while one imitator went as far as printing an epistolary novella purporting to depict the final years of her life: *The Letters of Maria; to which is added, An Account of her Death* (1790).

However it was not just through prose that Maria's beauties were appreciated. Sterne's pictorialism lent itself to visualisation, spawning an entire market of Maria likenesses. Popular sketches of the madwoman were reproduced by printers, both to be incorporated into new editions of Sterne's novels, or sold cheaply as prints for general display. By the 1780s the character's figure was so recognisable that the silhouette of Maria and her dog Sylvio was appropriated by potters, and stamped without explanation alongside more notable classical figures on domestic earthenware. And this appeal spread further. Testifying to the convergence of this aesthetic ideal with high-brow tastes, fifteen different depictions of the character, by various international artists, were displayed at the Royal Academy before 1792, while an array of high status women had their portraits taken 'in the style of Sterne's Maria', complete with loyal lapdogs and doleful countenances.[64]

Regardless of the medium, all of these depictions of the beauteous Maria were carefully sculpted to facilitate sentimental responses from their audiences. Whether found in prose, painting, or oratory, depictions of Sternean madwomen were laden with the sorts of textual and visual cues likely to enrapture a finely attuned sentimental observer, and if onlookers' comments are anything to go by, the consumption of such works consisted of a probing contemplation of the spectacle's auspicious beauties, and celebration of the erotic feelings aroused.

As we have seen, Sterne's original texts were written using vivid pictorial cues, so as to enable imaginative engagement with their protagonists. With their emphasis on Maria's inviolable beauty ('the first of fine forms – affliction had touch'd her looks with something that was scarce earthly – still she was feminine'[65]) these tableaux provided a useful platform for a later generation of artists and writers to stage their own sensual accounts of the madwoman. For the 'Yorick' who penned an 'Ode to Maria of Moulines' in 1775, this

---

[64] Gerard, 'All that the heart wishes', 236.
[65] Sterne, *Sentimental Journey*, 179.

naturally beautiful form – which 'tho' impair'd by grief, 'twas graceful still' – was said to compulsively stir the affections:

> I cou'd not see her tears, unmov'd;
> E'en cruelty had sympathiz'd with her,
> And wisdom her rude eloquence had lov'd.[66]

In *The Letters of Maria*, the 1790 novella scripting the madwoman's gradual deterioration and death, the anonymous author saturated the account with similar aesthetic cues. With her 'pale and wan countenance', Maria was said to project 'that sort of insanity which is so peculiarly interesting', a beauty she retained even through her 'gentle decline'.[67] Lest the audience meet with any unwelcome distress at the madwoman's death, the author included her purported funerary inscription, enabling readers to rediscover their tender sympathies:

<div align="center">

Maria

The New-Blown Rose

Equalled Not In Beauty

Her Person;

The Lilly

Was But A Poor Emblem

Of The Innocence

Of Her Mind.

Wanderer, Stop! – To Her Memory

Pay The Tribute Of A Tear…[68]

</div>

It was not enough to simply provide exquisite tales and spectacles for consumption though. As sentimental virtue was discovered through intensity of feeling, contemporaries desired increasingly novel engagements with sentimental tableaux, so as to heighten the

---

[66] Yorick, 'Ode to Maria of Moulines', *Sentimental Magazine, or, General Assemblage of Science, Taste, and Entertainment* 3 (1775), 134. This potent trope not only adopted by imitators of Sterne, but a range of authors seeking to convey a sentimental madwoman's unceasing beauty. See, for example, George Dyer, 'Sonnet. On seeing a Beautiful Young Female Maniac in Bedlam', *The Edinburgh Magazine, or Literary Miscellany* (Sep, 1799), 218.

[67] Anon, *The Letters of Maria; to which is added, An Account of her Death* (London, 1790), 98, 121.

[68] *Ibid*., 123.

emotional affect. These scenarios thus became more complex, often resulting in the gratuitous provocation of the modest or submissive subject: a common fantasy derived from the notion that exquisite delicacy was discovered through 'external activation'.[69] Certainly, written descriptions of Maria convey the intent to stimulate intense sentiments in the viewer.[70] Sterne himself provided perhaps the most outright gratuitous depiction of the madwoman. His encounter between Yorick and Maria in *Sentimental Journey* showed the man of feeling overcome with tears, enabling the author to indulge in the madwoman's feminine wiles:

> … Maria observing, as I took out my handkerchief, that it was steep'd too much [in tears] to be of use, would needs go wash it in the stream. – And where will you dry it, Maria? said I – I'll dry it in my bosom, said she – 'twill do me good...[71]

While few other writers showed Sterne's daring, imitators sought to engage ever more directly and intimately with the sentiments of the madwoman. Some, like the author of 'To the Willow, In the Character of Sterne's Maria', imagined life from the madwoman's point of view, giving voice to her presumed distress at the hard-heartedness of the world.[72] Others assumed more traditional spectatorial perspectives, rendering exquisite tableaux for consumption. A number of writers depicted direct encounters with the madwoman, describing for their readers in deep detail the conditions of the sympathetic exchange. In her relation of a chance meeting with the waning melancholic, published in *The European Magazine, and London Review*, the correspondent 'Sally' savoured the 'tender thrill' she received upon hearing of the 'Beautiful and gay' madwoman's distress firsthand. Here, the author emphasised Maria's tender frailty, describing how she quietly submitted to her sufferings: 'not stoically, for [she] felt as woman – the fairest part – should feel'.[73] The author of *Letters of Maria* chose to depict Maria in the quintessentially sentimental deathbed scene, also punctuating the plot with signs of her virtuous frailty:

---

[69] Van Sant, *Sensibility*, 51-3.

[70] Ryan Stark suggests that Sterne based the character of Maria on the biblical figure of Tamar, in a veiled allusion to prostitution ('Sterne's Maria in the Biblical Sense', *The Cambridge Quarterly* 45, no. 3 (2016), 224-243).

[71] Sterne, *Sentimental Journey*, 177.

[72] Anon, 'To the Willow, In the Character of Sterne's Maria. By the Same', *The Gentleman's Magazine: and Historical Chronicle* 55, no. 9 (1785), 736.

[73] Sally, 'Sterne's Maria', *The European Magazine, and London Review* 36 (Oct., 1799), 235.

[Maria] smiled, and her countenance evinced that her bosom was peaceful and serene … and at length, in the arms of her [dear friend] Annette, with an angelic smile and a prayer for forgiveness, breathed her last.[74]

So important was the emotional response to the spectacle that some writers, towards century's end, excised evidence of the madwoman's suffering altogether, simply wallowing in the sort of sentimental feeling a sensitive reader ought to feel at the spectacle. The anonymous author of 'On Reading Sterne's Maria', for instance, spoke of the 'keenest wound' that affected 'The delicate of mind' upon reading of such 'fancy'd sorrows'. This '*sweet* grief' was naturally assumed to draw forth a compulsive, 'friendly tear' from 'Pity's eye': a response that the reader should seek to emulate.[75]

While written descriptions of Maria's beautiful distress provided explicit sentimental emotives for rehearsal, visual depictions of the madwoman were similarly structured to intensify the viewers' tender emotions. As we have seen in the previous chapter, visual depictions of insanity in the latter decades of the eighteenth century were decidedly softened, so as to enable an observer to narrate the interiority of the others' distress. By the 1780s, such images – almost solely of women – drew upon figuratively beautiful forms, so as to heighten the viewer's erotic response.[76] Thus while mid-century portraits of insanity, such as James McArdell's 1760 image of 'Madness' (fig. 4) were typical of the artistic sublime, late-century renderings of madness – generally drawing upon Sterne's pictorialism – embraced the aesthetic ideal of plaintive distress.[77]

Artists or printers were often explicit in their intent to prompt the viewer to the correct feeling. In his 1787 print of Maria and her dog, taken from an earlier image by Robert Dighton, Robert Sayer articulated his desire to please the reader with a sentimental scene. Though the accompanying text drew attention to the sublime turns of her mind, it explicitly emphasised that the portrait was 'design'd' to convey 'A Gentle Form [and] a Sentimental mind', thus guiding the viewer to the correct associations (fig. 5).

---

[74] Anon, *Letters of Maria*, 121.
[75] Anon, 'On Reading Sterne's Maria', *The Town and Country Magazine, or, Universal Repository of Knowledge, Instruction. And Entertainment* 19 (Dec. 1787), 571.
[76] David Solkin, *Art in Britain 1660-1815* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2015), 235-7.
[77] Gerard, 'All that the heart wishes'.

Fig. 4. Robert Pine, 'Madness', after James McArdell, 1760, mezzotint, from the British Museum
online collection (2010,7081.2743).

Fig. 5. Robert Sayer, 'Maria at Moulines', after Robert Dighton, 1787, hand-coloured mezzotint,
from the British Museum online collection (2010,7081.1286).

Probably the most recognisable Maria portrait was Angelica Kauffman's 1777 painting, which, subsequent to its stipple reproduction, became the prototypical profile of the girl and her dog (fig. 6). It was also a conventionally beautiful rendering of the madwoman, emphasising the madwoman's feminine graces, while excising any evidence of outward misery. Indeed, when Kauffman first exhibited the portrait at the Royal Academy in 1777, a critic in the *Morning Chronicle* lauded her for the painting's 'ease and elegance' and 'uncommon softness':

> the face breathes an air of distress which irresistibly challenges pity – in a word, the painter has adhered to [Sterne's] original with great exactness, and has given the forlorn maid as much delicacy on her canvass, as she possesses in the page of Yorick.[78]

Fig. 6. William Wynne Ryland, 'Maria', after Angelica Kauffman, 1779, stipple and etching, from the British Museum online collection (1940,0306.11).

---

[78] *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser* (26 April 1777).

Here we get a sense of the way that sentimentalism's emotional practices structured the conditions of sympathetic spectatorship: the critic's ranging eye searching the figure's countenance for particular culturally transmitted cues which, once identified, mobilise the emotional utterances necessary to sustain the desired aesthetic experience. This type of emotional rehearsal thus conditioned observers to the emotions that underpinned the idealised sentimental social order, and in the process fundamentally redefined the observers' conception of their relation to feminine madness.

It is worth noting that male lunatics were not thought to necessarily negate aesthetic delight. In the few instances when mad*men* were the subjects of emotional or philanthropic appeals in the late eighteenth century, writers made certain to render them appealing sentimental tableaux. Thus we find in 1779 the *Public Advertiser* reporting of 'an affecting and melancholy Spectacle to be almost daily seen' at Spa Fields in Islington:

> A Soldier in the Duke of Dorset's Regiment, who is evidently a Lunatic, seats himself on the Grass, and by gestures expressive of the utmost Distraction of Soul, and by soft plaintive Strains from a fine natural Voice, excites the particular Compassion of Spectators. It is said he has Friends at Islington. If so, they should not suffer him to be thus exposed.[79]

Here then the philanthropic appeal depicts a Pastoral idyll, the 'plaintive' spectacle intended to pique the sentiments of the reader in the same way that it supposedly excited the 'Compassion' of the onlookers.

In rare cases, male lunatics could become idealised as exquisite objects for sensuous contemplation. Take the novelist Amelia Alderson's later recollections of her teenage jaunts about a madhouse in Norwich in the 1780s. By her own admission, the youthful Alderson had a morbid curiosity for the spectacle of insanity; her 1801 novel *Father and Daughter* was actually set in a madhouse. Of interest here though are her reflections on one particular inhabitant of the Norwich Bedlam: a young man who had supposedly 'been crossed in love', and whose corresponding aural spectacle captivated the young sentimentalist. She recalled moments sitting in a friend's apartment across from the madhouse, listening by the window

---

[79] *Public Advertiser* (4 October, 1779).

as the young man 'sang song after song in a voice which I thought very charming.'[80] When a few years later Alderson was invited on a tour of the wards, her attention (and sympathies) were, again, focussed on a male lunatic, who, in returning her gaze fuelled the girl's sentimental imaginings:

> He … fixed his eyes on me with a look full of mournful expression … What a world of woe was, as I fancied, in that look! Perhaps I resembled some one dear to him! Perhaps – but it were idle to give all the perhapses of romantic sixteen – resolved to find in bedlam what she thought *ought* to be there of the sentimental, if it were not.[81]

It is significant that this final 'perhaps' is left unsaid, as indeed it is that the older Alderson would subsequently chastise her younger self for her susceptibility to these 'sentimental' – or sensual – ruminations.

Again though, these examples of sentimental madmen were the exception to the rule. Generally speaking, to render madness appealing to a polite audience, a frail, submissive, figuratively feminised vessel had to be accentuated. Maria's delicate form served this purpose, and in consuming her warbling and plaintive tears, late-century sentimentalists naturalised the sort of objectification of female lunatics that would become such a recognisable feature of Victorian-era psychiatry.[82]

Indeed, from an examination of records of direct encounters with madwomen from this period we can see how sentimentalism's contemplative emotional practices had begun to structure this objectifying gaze toward lunatics in everyday life, by the 1780s. Perhaps the most exemplary such account was penned by the German sentimentalist Sophie von la Roche, who punctuated her rhapsodic record of a trip to London in 1786 with an affecting description of the wards of Bethlem Hospital, at that time still one of the metropolis' more popular tourist attractions. While at least one of the Bedlam mad was said to provoke her

---

[80] Brightwell, *Memorials*, 15.
[81] *Ibid*., 17.
[82] In her ground-breaking critique of British psychiatry's gender ideology, *The Female Malady*, Elaine Showalter first noted the objectification of the madwoman as plaintive waif, by male writers from the Romantic Age.

aversion,[83] la Roche's account of the visit was filtered through a sentimental lens, pointing out the 'pathetic sights' that enacted the culture's emotional practices:

> One nice girl was hovering round a woman sitting there, for whom she affected all the poses of a lady's maid ready to adorn her lady. She was wan, and very gentle. Another did nothing but move her hands like a person diligently sewing, and did not look up. From one poor, melancholy creature I bought a little basket of plaited straw. She ran quickly into her cell with the money, a lovely slim figure which filled me with compassion.[84]

Within this cavalcade of tender beauties, one melancholic inmate received special attention from von la Roche for her seemingly innate modesty. The young woman, who was lying on a bench, appeared 'very deeply moved' at the spectator's provocation, 'turn[ing] her head away' when the visitor 'cast tearful glances at her.' As for her countenance: 'She had beautiful eyes and perfectly regular features', an agreeableness which conformed nicely to her fine sentiments.[85]

Though la Roche's appreciation of these women's figuratively 'respectable' traits eschewed the outright objectification of supple madwomen characteristic of most depictions by male writers from the period, we can see the influence of the same range of emotional practices in her account. Underwriting all these accounts was the assumption that feminine beauty instinctively stimulated the social affections – the swishing of a young madwoman's petite waist said to be enough to excite compulsive 'compassion' in the viewer. Through a searching examination – the sort practiced through the contemplation of a sentimental portrait or production – von la Roche was shown to identify grace and bashful submissiveness in these clearly mad subjects, displacing the latent sensationalism of their mental derangement in sentimental affect: emotions that were reconstructed again and again by the enthusiastic observer.

---

[83] In one highly stylised passage, la Roche described an abject encounter with Margaret Nicholson, the lunatic who had attempted the life of George III in August of that year. See La Roche, *Sophie in London,* 169.
[84] *Ibid.*, 169-70.
[85] *Ibid.*, 169.

As tempting as it might be to dismiss such stylised assertions of sympathy as 'maudlin' literary embellishment – or, in Roy Porter's words, as 'smacking with affectation' – to do so would be to undersell the perceived naturalness of the sentimental emotional regime, and to ignore the significance of its rigid ideology of sincerity to contemporaneous notions of morality.[86] Reddy's comments on the hyperbolic sentimentalism of von la Roche's contemporary Germaine de Staël are illustrative in this regard. Though Staël has attracted charges of hypocrisy for her continually shifting emotional attachments (supported by concomitant professions of undying faith and love), Reddy posits that such emotional utterances reflected the pressing concerns of the sentimental emotional regime: '[Staël] viewed emotional expression as merely an attempt to describe something natural, powerful, morally pure, and urgent. For her, natural feeling and truth were the same thing.'[87] The fact that these feelings were a product of her own emotional management was immaterial; according to sentimental doctrine, the discovery of tender feeling – whatever its source – was a marker of authenticity.[88] Considered in this context, la Roche's reflections seem indicative of the sort of 'pursuit of excess' that typified the sentimentalist's striving for virtue. That the emotional practices that she described, and the affective lexicon that she drew upon bear such close resemblance to the wider aesthetic principles we have been discussing suggests that this was a widely practiced, and unselfconscious emotional style, inculcated by the sentimental emotional regime.

Indeed, to return to the aged Amelia Alderson's chastisement of her younger self for 'resolv[ing] to find in bedlam what she thought *ought* to be there of the sentimental, if it were not', we can perhaps comprehend more fully the significance of the prevailing emotional regime to attitudes towards the insane in the 1780s. For sentimentalists like Alderson and her male companions, conditioned to instinctively replicate desired feelings or aesthetic experiences, the failure to achieve this emotional stimulation – particularly when faced with charitable objects like the insane – was a point of some consternation: in their words, *disappointment*.[89] The fact that a generation later, the same observer could look back with embarrassment at her deep personal investment in sentimentalism only reinforces the notion of the artlessness of the doctrine in the 1780s, and its importance to contemporaneous conceptions of virtuous selfhood.

---

[86] Porter, *Madmen*, 100; Andrews, 'Bedlam Revisited', 69-70.
[87] Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*, 170.
[88] *Ibid*., 170.
[89] Brightwell, *Memorials*, 14-7.

III. Beauty and Benevolence: The Case of Louisa, Maid of the Haystack

Returning to the story of Louisa under the Bristol haystack, we can assess the effect that this emotional regime had on the development of philanthropic efforts towards the mad in the late-eighteenth century. As we saw earlier, from its first circulation, Louisa's case was distinctly aestheticised, so as to invite a sympathetic response from the reading public. Rather than emphasising Louisa's madness, Hannah More, like Sophie von la Roche when scrutinising Bedlam's forlorn maidens, stated an interest in the woman's seemingly innate loveliness. Though 'extreme Misery' had 'injured her Health, and impaired her Beauty', the philanthropist stressed that the madwoman remained 'a most interesting Figure':

> There was something so attractive in her whole Appearance as to engage the Attention of all around her. She was extremely young, and strikingly beautiful; her Manners graceful and elegant, and her Countenance interesting to the last Degree.[90]

The image of a 'beautiful' melancholic woman, exposed to the elements had obvious parallels with Sterne's Maria, a comparison that was remarked upon by contemporaries.[91] Certainly, in the sole surviving portrait purporting to be of Louisa, etched by William Palmer, the madwoman was rendered so as to recall the doleful isolation of Yorick's muse. Though windswept, and seemingly lost to nature, Louisa's eloquent posture and tender countenance highlighted her innate sensibility, in pointed contrast to the stereotypical signs of 'stark madness' (fig. 7).

How accurate these depictions were is unclear (it is not known, for instance, whether Palmer ever set eyes on Louisa). Nevertheless, it is evident that her case struck a sympathetic chord with the sentimental public, and, in the early stages of her confinement at least, those visitors who recorded visits with the young madwoman were enraptured by her appearance. As I mentioned earlier, More's supposedly 'artless story' was reprinted across a number of publications, so as to raise the funds for Louisa's confinement at Hannam House, a private madhouse outside Bristol managed by the Methodist Richard Henderson. Perhaps owing to the connection, the tale soon came to the attention of the Methodist patriarch, John Wesley,

---

[90] More, 'To the Printer'.
[91] Hannah More, *The Works of Hannah More*, vol. 1 (London, 1834), 21.

who was enamoured enough with Louisa's tale to call upon her several times to contemplate the spectacle in person. As he related, in his journal from 25 March 1782:

> In the afternoon I called at Mr. Henderson's at Hannam, and spent some time with poor, disconsolate Louisa. Such a sight, in the space of fourteen years, I never saw before! Pale and wan, worn with sorrow, beaten with wind and rain, … and only a blanket wrapped round her, native beauty gleamed through all. Her features were small and finely turned; her eyes had a peculiar sweetness; her arms and fingers were delicately shaped, and her voice soft and agreeable. But her understanding was in ruins. She appeared partly insane, partly silly and childish.[92]

Though the figure's lunacy was clearly a little unsettling, this first encounter reads like a Burkean fantasy: the clergyman's keen eye sliding giddily over the miserable object's soft, unblemished figure. Quentin Bailey, tellingly, posits that Wesley's spectatorship conveys an 'erotic appreciation' and 'somewhat prurient interest' in the younger woman's mostly-naked body.[93] This objectification is mirrored in Palmer's portrait, with the young lunatic being depicted modestly covering her exposed breast. Viewed within the sentimental aesthetic, the broken Louisa was rendered into a figure of tender beauty – a sensuous object, which could elevate agreeable reflections in the beholder.

---

[92] John Wesley, *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley*, Vol. 4 (London, 1903), 210.
[93] Quentin Bailey, *Wordsworth's Vagrants: Police, Prisons, and Poetry in the 1790s* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 174.
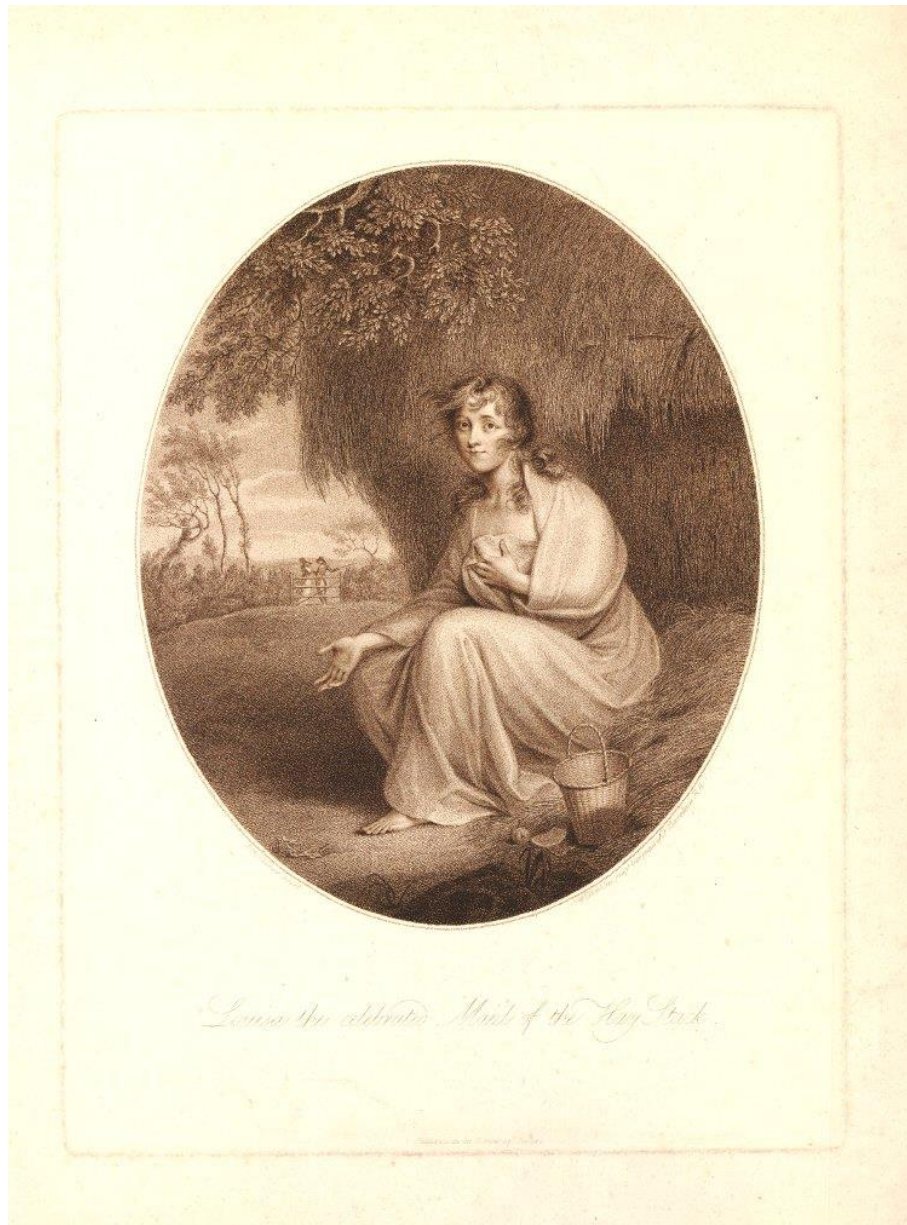
Fig. 7. Peltro Tompkins, 'Louisa. The celebrated Maid of the Haystack', after William Palmer, 1788, stipple, from the British Museum online collection (1868,0808.2990).

Whether compelled by her 'tale of woe' or the pleasing spectacle, Wesley made it his cause to further Louisa's charitable subscription, publicising her case in his journal *The Arminian Magazine* for 'the serious attention of all that have a feeling heart.'[94] This philanthropic appeal is particularly interesting for our purposes here, owing to its continual replication of these aesthetic cues. Beginning with a reproduction of More's original article,

---

[94] *Arminian Magazine* 5, no. 6 (1782), 321.

he followed with a lightly edited copy of the diary entry mentioned above, before progressing to yet another emotive-laden appeal to his readers' affections:

> If *Innocence* and *Beauty* in *distress* – if *Delicacy* and *Virtue* – secluded from human society – where the *Rays* of the *Understanding* have ceased to *illume* – are subjects of *tender Consideration* – this *instance* of *Calamity* has surely an *especial* Claim to the *Tear* of *Compassion* – to the *Smile* of *Benevolence*.[95]

In piling these accentuated sentimental cues on top of the other passages, Wesley was seemingly *compelling* his readers to foster the desired aesthetic response. That we can find such a strategy being utilised for a charitable purpose like this is wholly unsurprising, given the sentimentalist assumption that pleasing feeling corresponded to inner virtue. Flattering prospective philanthropists was sound policy.

It would be understating the case though, to suggest that these allusions to Louisa's feminine graces were solely intended to stimulate charitable giving. However exaggerated the rhetoric may appear, it seems evident that, at least in part, the rhapsodies of these sentimental onlookers were evaluative responses to the madwoman: the product of a sentimental gaze that sought out those visual markers that would sustain a pleasing sentimental response to the lunatic. Indeed, later remarks about Louisa and her plight demonstrate the importance of her appearance to the production of moral sentiments. While in the early stages of their advocacy, onlookers like Wesley and More expressed an optimistic affection for Louisa, in the years following her confinement these same observers noted a decline in her behaviours and mental acuity, which seemingly tarnished her 'natural' appeal. Wesley, for instance, was notably reticent when reflecting on some moments spent 'with the lost Louisa' in March 1784: 'She is now in a far more deplorable case than ever. She used to be mild though silly: but now she is quite furious. I doubt the poor machine cannot be repaired in this life.'[96] While not an overt rejection of the madwoman, the strong implication was that his tolerance or affection for Louisa was dependent on her 'mild', or submissive disposition.

---

[95] *Ibid*., 324.
[96] Wesley, *Journal*, 255.

A more frank admission came from Hannah More, whose ongoing stewardship of the young lunatic allowed her to see first-hand the shocking nature of her decline. Despite receiving financial support from a number of influential backers, which allowed the group to maintain Louisa in Henderson's establishment rather than the more reviled Bethlem Hospital, within two years More, like Wesley, had begun to despair her prospects. [97] Describing a visit with Louisa, More expressed her doubt and misgivings at what she saw as the patient's mental and physical decline. Louisa was 'much altered', More reported: 'and has almost lost all that beauty and elegance which I am afraid had too great a share in *seducing my affections*.'[98] On the one hand, this reference to the loss of Louisa's 'beauty and elegance' was a terse assessment of the lunatic's more erratic behaviour and manners. However there was also a quite literal dimension to the lament, as an anecdote about watching Louisa model some ribbons made clear:

> [Louisa] begged I wou'd bind [the ribbons] round her fine dark hair, and then looked at herself in a little glass I had carried her, but was shocked at her own figure, tore off the ribbons and wrapped herself up in her bed clothes full of grief and disgust remembering, I fear, with what a different Spectacle that glass used to present her.[99]

So horrifying was the sight that More wished that '[Louisa's] mother, if she has one, never know the misery of seeing that emaciated form and ruined intellect.'[100]

To return to John Jervis's assertion that eighteenth-century sensibility was 'fundamentally "aesthetic"', we can see how an 'embodied, evaluative response to the world' functioned to structure an individual's moral relation to others, or even define the self.[101] Hannah More's horror at Louisa's miserable state – mirrored in the madwoman's own 'shocked' response towards the 'emaciated form' she saw in the looking glass – was interpreted as the termination of sympathy itself. This was a troubling proposition, as it brought to consciousness her reliance on sentimentalism's emotional practices to achieve a desired state of moral feeling (the necessity of 'beauty and elegance' to 'seduce' her affections). In thus conceding that sensual fellow-feeling was not a natural virtue but a

---

[97] Anne Stott, *Hannah More: The First Victorian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 56.
[98] Quoted in Stott, *Hannah More*, 56.
[99] *Ibid.*, 56.
[100] *Ibid.*, 56.
[101] Jervis, *Sympathetic Sentiments*, 2-3.

product of the conditions of spectatorship, More was subsequently forced to question the sincerity of her own benevolence: 'I dare not ask myself whether it was [Louisa's] calamity or her attractions which engaged my heart to serve her.'[102] It is not difficult to see why this philanthropist in particular would want to avoid such ruminations. Just a few years earlier, in a poem praising the virtues of 'Sweet SENSIBILITY', More had lamented the potential corruption of sentimental fellow-feeling by the doctrines of excess peddled by Sterne.[103] The same poem had also sought to justify social distinction through feeling, on the basis that superior sensibilities beget humane generosity, and offered up disinterested pleasures that the vulgar or selfish could have no conception.[104] With all of this occurring at a formative period of More's Evangelicalism, when the writer was beginning to forcefully advocate greater social engagement, the acknowledgement that seemingly 'natural' sympathy could simply be a transient affect was an implicit challenge to the moralist's worldview, and, more pressingly, a threat to her genteel self-concept.

Of course, the religious More never lost sight of her charitable duties, continuing to support Louisa's confinement until her death in 1801. However it is clear that the young woman's physical decline irrevocably altered the philanthropist's expectations of the sympathetic exchange. It also appears that this waning interest led to a decline in beneficence, and a deep pessimism about the madwoman's prospects. By the time of her death in 1801, Louisa had been removed from her more comfortable private confinement, and shuffled between London's less reputable public asylums. When commenting on the lunatic's decline in an obituary printed shortly after her death, the reported response of More's coterie was blunt, and lacking the fulsome sentiment of previous years: '[Louisa's passing] was merciful: her life was misery, and its continuation not to be desired.'[105]

IV. Conclusion: Madness and the Limits of Sentimental Compassion

Though this was a somewhat remarkable episode in the early history of lunacy advocacy, Louisa's case brings to light the tensions and contradictions inherent to the sentimental

---

[102] Quoted in Stott, *Hannah More*, 56.
[103] Hannah More, *Sacred Dramas: Chiefly Intended for Young Persons* (London, 1782), 285.
[104] *Ibid*., 278.
[105] Anon, "Louisa, the Lady of the Haystack", *The Lady's Monthly Museum, or Polite Repository of Amusement and Instruction: Being an Assemblage of Whatever can Tend to Please the Fancy, Interest the Mind, or Exalt the Character of the British Fair* 3 – 6 (Jun., 1801), 423.

endeavour. While polite observers maintained a fantasy that sensibility was a 'natural' sign of disinterested humanity, this increasing dependence on formalised emotional practices exposed the precariousness of a sentimental social order, while also raising significant questions about the efficacy of sentimental emotion as a basis for philanthropic action. Though the presence of intense, pleasurable feeling could certainly stimulate a profound optimism or generosity, following sentimentalism's logic, the absence of such feelings was cause for self-doubt, and it seems plausible to assume that as the doctrine encouraged the stimulation of ever more intense feelings, a greater measure of suspicion and consternation would follow. Indeed, it is unsurprising that the first serious critiques of the cult of sensibility began to appear at the height of this vogue for sensuality, or, as we will see in the next chapter, that the most stinging of these criticisms came from the pen of Hannah More herself.

The examples discussed in this chapter also further explicate sentimentalism's ideological underpinnings. In the previous chapter we saw how sentimental doctrine inscribed particular notions of selfhood and social difference pursuant to a capitalist politics of identity. The doctrines proposed by Edmund Burke and his followers only reaffirmed this social project, reinforcing through aesthetics the primacy of a hegemonic, objectifying gaze, and thus naturalising the objectification of certain charitable objects. That Burke's gendered hierarchy had severe consequences for the treatment of women is clear. However it also needs to be recognised that it had important implications for society's relation to the mad in the 1770s and 1780s in particular, narrowing the potential scope of 'sympathetic' regard to a distinctly aestheticised subject, and thus displacing the uncomfortable recognition of mental disturbance with a thrilling contemplation of figuratively 'beautiful' forms.

The 1780s was undoubtedly the apogee of this aesthetic regime, and as the second Part of this thesis will demonstrate, the growing disenchantment with the cult of sensibility from this decade had significant implications for the representation and treatment of the mad, as well as the progress of middle-class humanitarianism more generally. Yet just as sentimentalism has remained one of Western modernity's primary 'structures of feeling', so too have its effects continued to shape the popular aesthetic to this day. Certainly, with regard to attitudes towards madness, the associations forged by this culture of feeling continued to resonate with audiences. Well into the nineteenth century, polite observers continued to attribute sensual feelings towards the mad as prompts of sympathy, and though some stylistic changes are apparent, the image of the plaintive or submissive madwoman remained the

guiding paradigm through which to render insanity in art.[106] Perhaps the clearest indication of the continuing influence of sentimentalism on the treatment of the mad though is its persistence in writings of the cult of sensibility's critics, and it is worth closing our study of the eighteenth century with an examination of one such detractor, Mary Wollstonecraft, to illustrate the long-term effects of the culture's emotional practices.

Wollstonecraft was, arguably, sentimental culture's most perceptive critic, perhaps best remembered for her scathing dismissal of Burke's aesthetic hierarchy. Recognising that his conception of the beautiful helped inscribe sexual difference and a conservative social order, Wollstonecraft feared the detrimental influence that the corresponding emotional style could have on the nation's women, both in encouraging sexual immorality, and inculcating debilitating dispositions and affections.[107] On these points, Wollstonecraft was in agreement with many of her contemporaries, as we will see in the next chapter. This critique, however, was in marked contradiction to her own emotional style. Wollstonecraft had a vexed relationship with sensibility. Though a trenchant critic of its excesses, Barker-Benfield notes that her writings evince a deep 'ambivalence' towards the cult of feeling: 'torn between' the idea of a robust sentiment guided by reason, and an appreciation of sentimentalism's attractions.[108] Indeed, surveying her early life and adult relationships, Janet Todd describes Wollstonecraft as being 'caught in the sentimental myth that it was good to express every emotion, to let everything hang out.'[109] We should, of course, be cautious about drawing too many conclusions from descriptions of her purported emotional state; the very fact that Wollstonecraft was able to so powerfully articulate sensibility's perils may have 'dramatized' her own susceptibility to flighty passions.[110] Nevertheless, there does seem to be good evidence that the norms propounded within the culture of sensibility had a profound influence over her private and public personae. Todd, significantly, adds that 'Wollstonecraft embraced the individualist and self-gratifying values of sensibility, its preference for moral fineness over social rank and birth, its compensatory élitism of mind and exquisite physical feeling': the sort of emotional style we would expect from someone who matured to

---

[106] Showalter, *Female Malady*; Gerard, 'All that the heart wishes'.

[107] Ana de Freitas Boe, '"I Call Beauty a Social Quality": Mary Wollstonecraft and Hannah More's Rejoinder to Edmund Burke's Body Politic of the Beautiful', *Women's Writing* 18, no. 3 (2011), 352-5; Taylor, *Mary Wollstonecraft*, 63-71.

[108] Barker-Benfield, *Culture of Sensibility*, 362-3.

[109] Janet Todd, *Mary Wollstonecraft: A Revolutionary Life* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2000), 19.

[110] Barker-Benfield, *Culture of Sensibility*, 364.

adulthood during the sentimental 1770s and 1780s.[111] This was also the temperament attributed to the eponymous protagonist in her foundational feminist tract *Maria: or, the Wrongs of Woman*, published posthumously in 1798.

The novel followed the trials of Maria, a mistreated and oppressed young woman, who scholars have identified as an autobiographical reflection of the author herself. Seeking to explicate the experience of women's oppression, Wollstonecraft used the setting of a madhouse to allegorise their social and political isolation. In what was by this time a common trope, Maria was shown wrongfully imprisoned there at the whim of her cruel husband, and in the process separated from her much-adored child. In a sense, the madhouse here was merely a plot device, used to accentuate sentimentalism's 'antiworldview' (that is, the respectable, sensitive woman shown powerless before the naked power of the masculine 'World').[112] Nevertheless, Wollstonecraft evidently took some interest in her setting. Like many other artists who addressed the topic of insanity she took a tour of London's Bethlem Hospital in preparation for her writing.[113] Whether or not this experience provided her with any keen insights into the experience of the spectacle, the novel demonstrates a sophisticated knowledge of artistic and literary depictions of madness, and it can be reasonably assumed that Wollstonecraft's more offhand descriptions of Maria's interactions with her fellow inmates demonstrate the sort of unselfconscious responses towards madness that the most perceptive observers would have inculcated in this period.

In some ways, *Maria* marked a departure from typical middle-class reflections on the spectacle if insanity. Undoubtedly owing to her humanitarian convictions, Wollstonecraft evinced a deep commiseration for the plight of her mad fellow-creatures, modelled in Maria's stated response to her surrounds. Though nominally terrified of the 'shrieks of demonic rage' issuing from her neighbours' cells, the woman was still said to find something so 'inconceivably picturesque in the varying gestures of unrestrained passion, … or so heart-piercingly pathetic in their little airs they would sing, … as to fascinate the attention'.[114] Indeed, the protagonist was described as being riveted by the stories of the dejected patients;

[111] Todd, *Mary Wollstonecraft*, 103.
[112] Barker-Benfield, *Culture of Sensibility*, Ch. 5.
[113] Gary Kelly, *Revolutionary Feminism: The Mind and Career of Mary Wollstonecraft* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Academic, 1992), 211.
[114] Mary Wollstonecraft, *Maria: or, the Wrongs of Woman. A Posthumous Fragment*. (Philadelphia, 1799), 44-5.

and, many of them being, like her, victims of an unforgiving world, fantasies of their 'figures or voices' were said to awaken a 'sympathetic sorrow in Maria's bosom'.[115]

In a sense then, Wollstonecraft evinced a decidedly modern attitude towards the mad, offering some support for Byrd's thesis. Not only did the protagonist express a passing interest in sublime insanity – her description of the manic thrall as 'picturesque' linking her spectatorship with the modish contemplation of the sublime or deformed in nature – she also claimed an affinity with the fallen subjects.[116] This alone distinguished her from most of the authors and literary critics who had come before her. However even in these conscious statements of intent there was a clear sentimental inheritance, which undercuts Wollstonecraft's more radical positions. This 'sympathetic sorrow' that Maria fostered towards her fellow inmates was fundamentally conceptualised according to the standard Smithian model – that is, as compassion excited by an imaginative narration of the distressed other's presumed 'figures and voices'. As such, her 'sympathetic' relation to the mad was still shown to be dependent on sentimental emotives, a notion that was made explicit in her consideration of direct spectacles of insanity. For instance, at one point during her incarceration, the madhouse keeper Jemima presented a 'new subject for [Maria's] contemplation': a 'lovely maniac', whose 'heart-melting' singing captivated the young woman's attention. Suitably enamoured with reflections excited by the aural spectacle, Maria soon found herself 'with sympathy to pourtray to herself another victim'. The moment, however, was soon lost. Just as she felt capable of conceptualising, and rehearsing the imagined emotions of the distressed beauty, 'a torrent of unconnected exclamations and questions burst from her, interrupted by fits of laughter, so horrid, that Maria shut the door, and, turning her eyes up to heaven, exclaimed – 'Gracious God!''[117]

When considering the affective import of the *visual* spectacle of madness, Wollstonecraft's text is even more ambivalent. Whatever sympathy Maria may have aroused by imagining her fellow-patients' 'tales of mysterious wrongs' from the security of her cell, in crossing the 'threshold of her prison', and encountering the sensational face of madness, the young heroine was found to be prone to her nerves: so much so that 'when by chance

---

[115] *Ibid.*, 45.
[116] On the emergence of the picturesque as the premier model for connoisseurship in the late eighteenth-century see Pfau, *Wordsworth's Profession*.
[117] Wollstonecraft, *Maria*, 37.

she met the eye of rage glaring on her, yet unfaithful to its office, she shrunk back with more horror and affright, than if she had stumbled over a mangled corpse.'[118]

Thus the narrative was filtered through a fairly conventional aesthetic paradigm, with signs of beauty and sensibility shown to invite a pleasing imaginative engagement with the suffering object, while sublime or sensational interjections threatened to dispel this fellow-feeling, and prompt a disavowal of the scene. Even when the virtuous spectator consciously rationalised the lunatic's frantic behaviour they were struck with the same dread of abjection that polite authors rejected. Indeed, it is significant that the figures whom Maria expressed the strongest sympathetic identification for were not *insane* at all, like the middle-class visitor to the asylum, solemnly watching over a distracted friend, or her fellow (sane) captive Darnford, with his pleasing appearance and exquisite taste.

In its treatment of the insane then, *Maria* appears to exemplify the sentimental displacement of the eighteenth century, with 'sympathetic' engagement with the mad occurring through narration, and stock tropes reinforcing conventional emotional responses to the spectacle of insanity. In all respects, it appears to be the product of a writer unwilling to submit to the potentially painful emotional contagion attendant to a confronting spectacle. Indeed, Wollstonecraft's offhand remarks about her own feelings towards mental distress make this point explicit (while also providing perhaps the clearest caution to Byrd's assumption that the taste for the sublime encouraged *eighteenth*-century commentators 'to regard [madness] sympathetically'). In a revealing letter to her husband in 1797, Wollstonecraft related her emotional response to a collection of papers penned by a friend suffering under mental distraction:

> I find the melancholy [letters] the most interesting – There is a grossness in the raptures from which I turn – *They excite no sympathy – Have no voluptuousness for me*.[119]

The message is clear: while the sublime affect conveyed by the melancholic thrall aroused some titillation, it was not conducive to fellow-feeling; indeed, it was found to terminate 'voluptuous' compassion altogether. Whatever misgivings Wollstonecraft may have had

---

[118] *Ibid*., 31.
[119] Mary Wollstonecraft to William Godwin, 19 August 1797. In *The Collected Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft*, ed. Janet Todd (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 435 [emphasis added].

about polite sensibility by the late 1790s, sentimentalism's doctrines and practices thus continued to structure her relation to the insane – a testament to the emotional regime's enduring influence. Once the middle class subject had been conditioned with sentimentalism's emotional practices, the corresponding performative style fundamentally mediated the subject's response to the other, shaping the potential emotional responses to distinct spectacles, while also framing the meanings derived from these affective exchanges. Given the 'individualist and self-gratifying values of sensibility', these practices could only be detrimental to the 'rapturous' insane. Neither beautiful nor submissive, the raving mad could 'excite no sympathy'.

Part 2: Lunacy Reform and the 'Romantic' Emotional Regime, *c*.1790–1820

Chapter 3. A 'Forcible Appeal to Humanity': Sympathising with the Insane in the Romantic Age

The first decade of the nineteenth century was a watershed in the history of psychiatry in Britain. After a century of abortive calls for government intervention into the management of the insane, a sea change in popular opinion sparked a series of inquiries, leading to the passage of two bills to regulate the confinement and treatment of the mad.[1] Imbued with an unflagging optimism, an ever-growing number of politicians, physicians, and philanthropists rushed to investigate the plight of the insane, and few doubted that such zealous efforts could fail to ameliorate their condition. Indeed, the biggest question for this self-assured band of reformers was why 'for so many past ages, the situation of the Maniac should have engaged so little the attention of enlightened politicians, or of wise and disinterested men'.[2] When, for instance, a committee of such 'wise and disinterested men' appealed for contributions to the royal chartered Edinburgh Lunatic Asylum in 1807, they considered it a 'remarkable fact' that the city had failed to establish a 'suitable public provision for the reception and relief of the Insane'. This neglect was, in their view, a vulgar oversight, the recognition of which should compel the humane to intervene on the sufferers' behalf: 'If the case of the insane has been left the last which humanity has had courage to investigate, and benevolence has formed plans to relieve, let us hasten the more eagerly to fill up the culpable blank in the system of our charities.'[3]

Such assertions of principle and moral fervour have provided grist for historians seeking to explain the motives of this first wave of British lunacy reformers. As mentioned in the Introduction, post-Foucauldian revisionism has undermined such Whiggish claims, rather drawing attention to the manifold cultural and social forces that have conspired to silence and restrain the mad in the modern West. Institutional reform, too, has similarly been revisited, now partly considered to be the product of conflicts between competing local or

---

[1] The *Act for the Safe Custody of Insane Persons Charged with Offences.* (39 & 40 Geo III, c.94); The *Act for the better Care and Maintenance of Lunatics, being Paupers or Criminals in England.* (48 Geo III, c.96).

[2] Thomas Hancock, 'On Lunatic Asylums', *Belfast Monthly* 18, no. 4 (31 January 1810), 2.

[3] 'Address to the Public, respecting the Establishment of a LUNATIC ASYLUM at EDINBURGH.', *The Scots Magazine, and Edinburgh Literary Miscellany* 69 (Nov., 1807), 817.

national interests.[4] Yet historians have remained alert to the cultural antecedents of lunacy reform, and most writers are in general agreement that changing sensibilities played a pivotal role in shaping modern responses to madness. The received opinion here is that of Andrew Scull, who argued that the 'necessary condition for the emergence of the moral outrage which animated the lunacy reformers was a transformation of the cultural meaning of madness.'[5] Scull suggested that while eighteenth-century observers generally regarded the insane as debased and animalistic – and thus suited to sequestration and heavy coercion – from around 1800, 'the more "enlightened"' and increasingly self-conscious adherents to an elite culture' began to conceive of the lunatic as retaining their essential humanity, a sensitivity which, in the context of an intellectual milieu that held 'faith in the capacity for human improvement', transformed into a powerful stimulus for interventionist action.[6]

Scull's account is nuanced, giving due appreciation to the role of culture in shaping activism, while remaining critical of the narrative of moral and material 'progress' so central to the Whig tradition. However, as I have suggested in the previous chapters, the assumption of a linear progression towards a modern sensibility is problematised by the consideration that emotional responses to the mad were shaped as much by the constraints of the prevailing emotional regime as by intellectual ideas. Though Scull is attuned to the complex processes involved in the construal of morals, his assessment of the development of 'modern' attitudes towards insanity follows a conventional narrative: that as progressive medical theories marked out the insane as inherently sensitive, 'educated' observers felt increasingly repulsed by traditional methods of treating them, and thus subsequently attributed this seeming mistreatment to deviant traits like 'cruelty' or 'superstition'.[7]

However, the explanation for the neglect of the insane put forward by the Edinburgh Asylum committee in the early nineteenth century complicates this narrative. This consciously 'enlightened' cohort did not explain society's abandonment of the insane as a manifestation of unenlightened barbarity, but rather as a product of the discomfort that many polite observers felt towards the spectacle of insanity:

---

[4] See, for example, Akihito Suzuki, 'The Politics and Ideology of Non-Restraint: the Case of the Hanwell Asylum', *Medical History* 39, no.1 (1995), 1-17; Brown, 'Rethinking'.
[5] Scull, *Most Solitary of Afflictions*, 92.
[6] *Ibid*., 93, 107-10. See also Andrews et al, *History of Bethlem*, 416-7.
[7] Scull, *Most Solitary of Afflictions*, 91-3.

there is associated with the idea of Insanity a gloomy terror, and a painful sense of inability to relieve … Hence, from these recesses, even the benevolent and humane willingly retire, and attempt to banish the recollection of a victim who appears devoted to a destiny as helpless as it is horrible.[8]

According to this conception, polite society's sympathetic responsiveness to the spectacle of madness is the primary impediment to enlightened progress, conditioning even concerned onlookers to observe the insane with a sentimental fatalism. It appears then that for these reformers, the lamentable situation of the mad could in fact be attributed to the much lauded 'humanity' of the so-called 'fashionable world', the sentimental emotional regime inculcating responses which seemingly disabled a spectator from positive intervention.

Such remarks suggest the close link between the progress of lunacy reform and more fundamental conceptions of emotional life – an association that is particularly interesting, given the nature of debates about emotions and virtue in this period. As historians of sentimentalism have shown, the closing years of the eighteenth century saw a radical shift in beliefs about the nature of moral feeling. Particularly in the wake of the social and political upheavals of the last third of the eighteenth century – conflicts which were intimately associated with emotion and sentimentality – the cult of sensibility was severely censured by critics from across the political spectrum, who charged the prevailing doctrines of feeling as diluting British morals.[9] In line with a wider bourgeois reformulation of national manners,[10] the period 1790-1815 thus saw the previously idealised Sternean sensibility substituted in literary works with a type of emotional virtue that stressed 'qualities considered peculiarly British, such as restraint, self-control and stoical, wry acceptance.'[11] These new norms, Monique Scheer notes, represented the imposition of a characteristically

---

[8] 'Address to the Public', *Scots Magazine,* 817.

[9] On contemporary criticisms of excessive sensibility see Barker-Benfield, *Culture of Sensibility*, 70, 360; Brissenden, *Virtue in Distress*, 56-64; Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels & Reactionaries: English Literature and its Background 1760-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 36-7; Todd, *Sensibility*, 131-7; Keymer, 'Sentimental Fiction', 574; Barbara Taylor, 'Misogyny and Feminism: The Case of Mary Wollstonecraft', *Constellations* 6, no. 4 (1999), 502-3.

[10] Gerald Newman has argued that the emergence of bourgeois nationalism in the early nineteenth century was heralded by a wide-ranging middle-class critique of the 'tendencies of impurity, dishonesty, artificiality, worldliness, and moral irresponsibility' that had supposedly infested the higher circles of polite society, and subsequent 'imposition of a counter-system' of manners and morals that better reflected bourgeois norms (*The Rise of English Nationalism: A Cultural History, 1740-1830*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987, 235).

[11] Todd, *Sensibility*, 131. See also Thomas Dixon, 'Enthusiasm Delineated: Weeping as a Religious Activity in Eighteenth-Century Britain', *Litt Prag*. 22, no. 43 (2013), 81.

bourgeois emotional habitus: one that conferred social and cultural authority on the capacity to suppress 'natural' (or figuratively feminine) feelings.[12]

It was just this sense of self-command that the Edinburgh Asylum committee recognised to be the source of moral action, an association that points to the centrality of these new emotional norms to the emergence of lunacy reform efforts in this period. This chapter thus re-situates contemporary discussions of insanity within this wider critique of sentimentalism's excesses, to illustrate how the adoption of a new, figuratively 'Romantic' style of emotional management shaped the mindset and actions of this emergent band of reformers. It argues that as strength, self-command and vigorous exertion were elevated as premier moral attributes, the parameters for the 'sincere' communication of benevolence were heavily revised, mandating new forms of expressing sympathy and fellow-feeling, while simultaneously calling for the suppression of characteristically 'sentimental' responses towards suffering. This, I suggest, radically altered the ways that individuals responded to the mad, and subsequently modelled the normative emotional expressions that would characterise the 'zealous' advocacy of early-nineteenth-century lunacy reformers.

The first section will give an overview of the controversy surrounding the sentimental emotional regime that developed in the closing years of the eighteenth century, as well as outlining the defining features of the stoical emotional norm that supplanted it around the turn of the century. I will then examine how the dictates of this new emotional regime fundamentally altered the ways that people responded to the spectacle of insanity. I argue that artistic works from the period (and from Romantic artists in particular) evince a growing tolerance for the sensationalism aroused by visceral depictions of madness, indicative of a revised pedagogy of sympathy and benevolence, but also symbolic of a new conceptualisation of cultural authority, manifested in the capacity to overcome the vagaries of 'nature'. The final section will bring together these ideas to illustrate how this new emotional habitus stimulated nineteenth-century lunacy reform. Drawing upon the writings of the first wave of prison and asylum reformers, I will show how these various agitators invoked this distinctive emotional habitus to explain the foundation of their supposedly disinterested zeal, and to subsequently legitimise their entry into arenas of public life that they may have previously been denied.

---

[12] Scheer, 'Emotions', 217.

111

I. Debating the 'True Meaning of Feeling'

A typical attitude towards sentimental emotion at the close of the eighteenth century can be found in the poem 'To Sensibility', published anonymously in *The Edinburgh Magazine* in 1794. While the anonymous poet conceded that sensibility was a 'sacred source of joy', and the blessed 'nurse of woe', they progressed to condemn what they regarded as specious and frivolous displays of sentimental emotion infecting elite culture:

> Shall then conspicuous Sorrow pour
> From willing eyes her ready show'r,
> At mimic woes by fashion dress'd,
> Because distress becomes her best,
> And the soft heroine appears
> 'Most amiable, when dress'd in tears?'[13]

The target of this critique was the fashionable clique that made up the late-century cult of sensibility: that generation of sentimentalists who had been raised to weep over the fictions of Richardson and Sterne. Indeed, a number of Sterne's more famous tableaux came under scrutiny from the poet, including Maria, whose tale was charged with corrupting the emotions of the young. Though a previous generation of readers had consumed Maria's tears for the purpose of enacting their humanity, this writer had grown sceptical of sentimentalism's pursuit of excess, suggesting that 'poor Maria's woes' were merely being 'rehearse[d]' in 'every rhyming school-girl's verse'. However genuine these polite readers' claims to sorrowful fellow-feeling may have been, for this particular poet, their declarations were to be cast aside as 'hackney'd phrases conn'd by rote, / Or whining sentimental chat'.[14]

Such criticisms were the mainstay of a broader attack on the perceived indulgences of the so-called 'Polite World'. Though ambivalent onlookers had tolerated sentimentalism's theatricals for much of the eighteenth century, faced with the explosive expressions of sensibility infiltrating all arenas of polite culture by the 1780s, critics became increasingly suspicious of the potential incongruity between outward expressions of fellow-feeling, and their corresponding inner states. Many began to entertain the assumption that such emotional

---

[13] Anon, 'To Sensibility', *The Edinburgh Magazine, or Literary Miscellany* (Oct., 1794), 303.
[14] *Ibid*., 303.

display was merely providing a mask for artifice, selfishness, or cruelty.[15] Moreover, late-century critics had come to conceive of sentimentalism's excesses as dangerous and debilitating, an idea firmly established by the novels of sensibility which, to appeal to the popular taste, became inclined towards a progressively more jaded and mopish introspection.[16] Fearful of the dubious messages these books presented, critics moved to condemn the whole literary movement as inspiring immorality.[17] Whereas the previous generation of moralists had tacitly endorsed the cyclical application of sentimental emotives, as a means of cultivating the social affections, by century's end this practice was charged with engendering mental weakness, or debilitating despair.[18] Perhaps the most famous example of this critique was Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*, in which the author satirised the emotional style of two prototypical sentimentalists: the frivolous Mrs. Dashwood, and her daughter Marianne. Opening the text with the narrative of Mr. Dashwood's untimely death, Austen showed the wife and daughter working themselves into fits over their personal and material losses. As Austen informed the reader, the two women

> encouraged each other … in the violence of their affliction. The agony of grief which overpowered them at first, was *voluntarily renewed,* was *sought for,* was *created* again and again. They gave themselves up wholly to their sorrow…[19]

A key point to note here is that in Austen's view, the emotional practices inculcated by the sentimental emotional regime effectively disabled individuals before the common accidents of life, and when drafting her novel in the mid-1790s, she was merely echoing the anxieties of an increasing number of her contemporaries. The Scottish divine Hugh Blair, for instance, lamented that refined sentimentalists were too apt to 'relent at the view of misery when it is strongly set before them', a point of particular concern, as it was often 'at feigned and pictured distress, more than at real misery, that they relent.'[20] An essayist in the

---

[15] These criticism, admittedly, had a much earlier genesis, in at least the 1770s. See, for example, Robert Miles' remarks on primitivism and the Gothic in the writings of the Scottish moralist John Gregory, 1774 ('The Gothic Aesthetic: The Gothic as Discourse', *The Eighteenth Century* 32, no. 1 (1991), 48-51).

[16] Keymer, 'Sentimental Fiction', 574.

[17] Barker-Benfield, *Culture of Sensibility*, 360; Eric Parisot, 'Suicide Notes and Popular Sensibility in the Eighteenth-Century British Press', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 47, no. 3 (2014), 277-91; Richard Bell, *We Shall Be No More: Suicide and Self-Government in the Newly United States* (Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press, 2012), Ch. 2.

[18] R.D., 'On Sensibility', *Lady's Magazine* 31, no. 10 (1800), 556.

[19] Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility* (London: Harper Collins, 2010), 7 [emphasis added].

[20] Hugh Blair, *Sermons*, 3rd edition, vol. (London, 1790), 41.

Monthly Magazine in 1796 asserted that a nervous 'habit' deprived the bearer 'of that self-command which a moment of danger requires'.[21] This sort of false sensibility was thus 'a culpable weakness.'[22] By the nineteenth century, the natural philosopher Erasmus Darwin was casting excessive sensibility as a 'disease of volition'. While acknowledging that sympathy was 'probably the foundation of … our moral sense', Darwin lamented that an excessive sensibility caused individuals to shrink from 'those miseries of mankind, which we cannot alleviate'. In his view, this propensity to take the suffering other's position caused the mind to become 'its own tormenter', thus 'add[ing] to the aggregate sum of human misery, which we ought to labour to reduce.'[23]

This was a significant about-face. As I have shown in previous chapters, while eighteenth-century thinkers had endorsed self-command as a desirable moral trait, they had simultaneously sanctioned the disavowal of spectacles that threatened the spectator's ease, in line with sentimentalism's dictates. For Darwin and his contemporaries, such shirking was incomprehensible – a new perspective on emotional life that points to the influence of social change on British culture. Darwin's late-century conception of culture was heavily influenced by a typically bourgeois assessment of 'progress'. He regarded the human mind as being 'in a state of perpetual improvement', with social evolution predicated on the ongoing association of ideas.[24] Though Darwin's was a liberal vision – he placed a high priority on harmony and social affection – it was, Roy Porter noted, a vision with 'potent ideological implications.' Like a growing number of his contemporaries, he sought to vindicate 'industrial society … through a social biology' that naturalised 'struggle, sexual selection and competition'.[25] Such a worldview could only come into conflict with the late-century cult of feeling. Sentimentalism prioritised a subject 'who could draw on feelings of sympathy … [and] make moral judgments grounded in a private realm which oppose[d] the developments of urban industrial society': values at odds with the dictates of the competitive marketplace.[26] In the wake of the tumultuous attempts at social reform across the Atlantic world in this period, the subsequent consensus that the social order was 'changeable only by collective political will' undermined any appeals to the transformative potential of individual

---

[21] *Monthly Magazine* 2 (October 1796), 709.
[22] *Ibid.*, 709.
[23] Erasmus Darwin, *Zoonomia*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia, 1818), 328.
[24] On Darwin's conceptualisation of evolutionary progress see Porter, *Enlightenment*, 440-5.
[25] *Ibid.*, 444.
[26] Suzanne Clark, *Sentimental Modernism: Women Writers and the Revolution of the Word* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), 20.

feeling.[27] In this intellectual climate, critics could condemn as 'foolish and ridiculous excesses' any assertions of unbounded sympathy. The moralist Clara Reeve, for example, lamented that the cult of feeling was creating a generation of mawkish dreamers, who were more likely to elicit tears at the sight of the 'broken leg of an unfortunate wheelbarrow' than meaningful distress.[28] In a similar vein, Darwin saw the doctrine of sympathy as wielding an almost tyrannical control, inviting guilt for something as seemingly mundane as exterminating vermin. Sentimentalism, in this view, was perceived to counteract the 'first law of nature … "Eat or be eaten"', a doctrine inimical to enlightened progress, and thus to the public good.[29]

Of course, not all observers were as enthusiastic about natural law as Darwin and the other *philosophes*. The Romantics reacted strongly against naked utilitarianism, and, following Edmund Burke, conservatives in general expressed a marked distrust towards industrialising 'improvement'. Nevertheless, the central premise of Darwin's critique was vigorously embraced by conservatives and Evangelicals, whose national and imperial interests encouraged the same concerns about impotence and debility.[30] Given their unwavering belief in the fundamental superiority of British culture and commerce, coupled with their desire to reinforce social hierarchy at home and throughout the empire, these and other groups expressed considerable alarm at the perceived corrupting influence of emotional indulgence and enthusiasm: an anxiety which, during the war years, was amplified into a proto-nationalist panic about moral and physical degeneracy.[31] Coupled with the associated criticisms of the supposed apathy of the leisure classes – a critique that Evangelicals shared with both Romantics and radicals – the campaign against sentimental emotion thus shaped widespread criticisms of the prevailing emotional style.[32]

---

[27] Michael Bell, *Sentimentalism, Ethics and the Culture of Feeling* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), 120.

[28] Clara Reeve, *The School for Widows*, vol. 1 (London, 1791), vii.

[29] Darwin, *Zoonomia*, 329.

[30] For an excellent discussion of this theme, see William Barnhart, 'Evangelicalism, Masculinity, and the Making of Imperial Missionaries in Late Georgian Britain, 1795-1820', *The Historian* 67, no. 4 (2005), 712-32.

[31] Alison Twells, 'The Heathen at Home and Overseas: The Middle Class and the Civilising Mission, Sheffield 1790-1843' (PhD thesis: University of York, 1997), particularly Ch. 1; Beatty, *Nervous Disease*, 169-70; Clark, *Sentimental Modernism*, 21.

[32] For a broader discussion of the middle-class criticisms of the manners and morals of the British aristocracy see Newman, *English Nationalism*, spec. 227-44.

The critiques put forward by these agitators provoked a thoroughgoing redefinition of emotional norms amongst the British middle classes, a notion that complicates prevailing explanations for the emergence of the 'humanitarian sensibility' in Britain. When accounting for the emergence of reformist zeal in Europe in the long-eighteenth century, modern scholars have typically pointed to the influence of Enlightenment critical thought, and specifically to what Peter Gay termed the 'recovery of nerve', a rediscovered faith in 'inquiry and criticism' amongst the educated elite, which encouraged scepticism and innovation.[33] It has been suggested that this optimistic perspective on humanity's mastery of the natural world was a primary mover of social reform, imbuing men and women with a belief in their capacity to ameliorate structural suffering; both Scull and Peter McCandless identified the 'recovery of nerve' as the stimulus for lunacy reform efforts in Britain from around 1800, arguing that the optimism of the consciously progressive elite fuelled their belief in the efficacy of remedial intervention in cases of insanity.[34]

While this is a compelling explanation, when taking into account the coterminous development of emotional norms mentioned above, some discrepancies appear. Gay unproblematically enveloped the late-century culture of feeling within his wider narrative, suggesting that the proliferation of sentimental texts and discourses was the fount 'of a rational, humane social policy': the moral stimulus to the 'infectious' recovery of nerve.[35] However, such a perspective fails to take into account the ambivalences registered in contemporaneous discussions of sentimental emotion. Eighteenth-century sentimental culture presented precious little of this stoic 'nerve', but rather gratuitous nervousness, and contemporaneous writings that dealt with the issue of moral feeling deplored the supposedly debilitating effect of refined sensibility on the practice of benevolence. In her *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) Ann Radcliffe had the noble patriarch St. Aubert incessantly counsel his overly sensitive daughter Emily about the dangers of a sentimental apathy – a message so important that, while on his deathbed, he spent his last moments exhorting her to 'Always remember how much more valuable is the strength of fortitude, than the grace of sensibility':

You may have observed persons, who delight so much in this sort of sensibility … which excludes that to the calls of any practical virtue, that they turn from the

[33] Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation. Vol. II: The Science of Freedom* (New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1977), 3
[34] Scull, *Most Solitary of Afflictions*, 104-10. McCandless, 'Insanity', 57-9.
[35] Gay, *Enlightenment*, 44-5.

distressed, and, because their sufferings are painful to be contemplated, do not endeavour to relieve them. How despicable is that humanity, which can be contented to pity, where it might assuage![36]

Such attitudes were not confined to literary speculations either. Charles Fox, in his famed parliamentary speech in favour of the abolition of the slave trade in 1791, directly attributed the widespread apathy towards the issue to this supposed false humanity. After sensationally exposing some of the 'tortures' committed on African slaves in far-off lands, he turned to castigate the MPs before him, who, while visibly shaken by his revelations, were still willing to 'sanctify [these actions] by law.' 'Humanity', he declared, 'does not consist in a *squeamish ear*', but rather 'belongs to the mind as well as to the nerves, and leads a man to take measures for the prevention of cruelty, which the hypocritical cant of humanity contents itself with deploring.'[37]

Broadly speaking, what these critics were calling for was a revolution in feeling – a shift away from an emotional style that they saw as incompatible with the rational modernity. I want to suggest that it was this reorientation of emotional norms that provided the necessary precondition for the emergence of nineteenth-century lunacy advocacy. Thomas Keymer has posited that what distinguished the 'uncompromising activism' of nineteenth-century social reformers from the sentimental philanthropy of the Georgian era was that their discontent with existing conditions stemmed from 'principle, not feeling'.[38] Leaving aside for now the issue of whether nineteenth-century reformers *were* actuated by some nascent 'principle', there is certainly evidence of a shift in conceptions of benevolent emotions from the 1790s. Of course, given the widespread proliferation of sentimental tropes, the prevailing emotional style could not be eroded in such a short period. Benevolent weeping could still be a valued moral and religious expression, and sentimental narratives still played a role in stimulating public opinion for social reform movements in the early decades of the nineteenth century.[39] However, it is clear that appeals to sentimental feeling were stripped of much of their political import. Being regarded as feeble and frivolous, promptings of excessive sensibility

---

[36] Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, ed. Bonamy Dobrée (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 80-1.

[37] R. Fell, *Memoirs of the Public Life of the Late Right Honourable Charles James Fox*, vol. 2 (London, 1808), 162 [emphasis added].

[38] Keymer, 'Sentimental Fiction', 593.

[39] On the manifold meanings attached to the shedding of tears in nineteenth-century England see Dixon, *Weeping Britannia*, spec. 125-82; *idem*, 'The Tears of Mr Justice Willes', *Journal of Victorian Culture* 17, no. 1 (2012), 1-23.

were increasingly cast as inimical to the 'firmness of mind' indicative of public spiritedness, or a disinterested (masculine) agency.[40] Consequently, those writers who strove to uphold the heady ideals of enlightened 'progress' sought to bolster their readers' nerve: to wean the young on the dictum 'that misfortunes are not invincible; that virtue will enable [the individual] to overcome all difficulties; and that such victories are subjects of honourable triumph'.[41]

This perspective was necessarily dependant on a revision of sentimentalist principles: specifically, a renunciation of the view that compulsive sentimental responses carried 'some special and general authority'.[42] Late-century critics, by contrast, put forward a theory of emotions which assumed that disinterestedness could only be realised through reason's guiding influence.[43] It was this reconceptualisation of emotional life that underpinned Fox's assumption of a humanity driven as much by the 'mind' as the 'nerves', and was a view endorsed by many of his contemporaries. The typical evangelical view was that true 'Christian Tenderness' could only be channelled by a 'serious' mind, one in which 'grace and experience [had] a great influence' over the 'tender feelings' of 'sensibility, sympathy, or compassion'.[44] Popular essayists, too, cautioned their readers against being 'guided by temporary feelings', arguing, rather, that true virtue was found in those who 'consider[ed] goodness as a duty always incumbent', and thus performed an active benevolence without gross affectation.[45] Even Henry Mackenzie, whose *Man of Feeling* had been so pivotal in articulating sentimental norms, grew to deplore that such texts had supposedly effected a 'separation of conscience from feeling' in polite readers, with the novelist subsequently concluding that 'only less modish virtues – duty, principle – [had] the power to impel' an actor to any 'practical action'.[46]

How exactly did this cultural reimagining influence the progress of humanitarian action from the close of the eighteenth century? It is not that these commentators had actually

---

[40] As Mary Lenard has shown, sentimentalism was increasingly relegated to the 'feminine' sphere of private charity, and by the mid-Victorian era was widely conceived in oppositional terms to the dominant ethos of political economy (*Preaching Pity*). On parallel developments in Napoleonic France see Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*, 203-5, 236-7.

[41] Reeve, *School for Widows*, ix.

[42] Brissenden, *Virtue in Distress*, 54.

[43] Andrew Hemingway, 'The "Sociology" of Taste in the Scottish Enlightenment', *The Oxford Art Journal* 12, no. 2 (1989), 27-9; Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*, 220-2; Bell, *Sentimentalism*, 74-86.

[44] *The Evangelical Magazine* 18 (1810), 95.

[45] *The Lady's Magazine* 21 (July, 1790), 341-2.

[46] Quoted in Keymer, 'Sentimental Fiction', 572.

located some natural capacity for disinterestedness. All emotions are learnt, and thus in some way shaped by culture. Nevertheless, the assumption that virtue was signified by earnest activity had a profound influence over contemporaneous modes of emotional management, helping to naturalise the attitudes and behaviours of the supposedly 'principled' social reformers of the period.[47] For one, a corresponding shift in emotional norms changed the ways that benevolent emotions were to be performed. As we have seen in earlier chapters, sentimentalism's emotional culture imbued individuals with a kind of apathy regarding institutionalised suffering: a belief that, as structural and moral impediments ensured that marginalised groups were beyond the reach of human intervention, the mere expression of benevolent emotion towards their plight was all that a well-meaning spectator could aspire to. However in this new emotional culture, with its emphasis on intervention and action, such lamentations were cast as mere fatalism, and moralists castigated the fashionable spectators who 'brought themselves to believe that their sympathy with … suffering was an atonement for their not relieving it.'[48] Rather than demanding the performance of formalised sentimental responses towards the spectacle of suffering, the new emotional norms called upon reasoning individuals to communicate their virtue through unprompted intervention – that is, to literally *display* the influence of 'principle' over their conduct. As Hugh Blair put it, 'We must inquire not merely how [men] feel, but how their feelings prompt them to act, in order to ascertain their real character.'[49]

A key figure in this articulation of norms was Hannah More, a writer who, while openly embracing sentimentalism's core tenets in the 1780s, became a trenchant critic of the fashionable sensibility by century's end. Her own ambiguous experiences with sentimentalism's rigid feeling rules – as highlighted in her changing attitudes towards Louisa – caused her to revolt against the culture's emotional practices, which she came to view as engendering moral and spiritual apathy among the cultural elite. Though acknowledging the divine virtues of 'tender sentiment', More came to lament that 'where not strengthened by superior motives', this sensitivity was merely 'a causal and precarious instrument of good':

---

[47] Vic Gatrell, for one, notes that this particular 'language of sensibility' which likened the 'rational' and 'sympathetic' faculties was ubiquitous amongst turn-of-the-century social reformers. (*Hanging Tree*, 333.)

[48] Hannah More, *Coelebs in Search of a Wife*, 11th edition, vol. 1 (London, 1809), 69.

[49] Blair, *Sermons*, 41-2. See also *Monthly Magazine* 2, 709.

This sort of feeling forgets that any calamity exists, which is out of its own sight … This is a mechanical charity, which requires springs and wheels to set it going; whereas, real, Christian charity does not wait to be acted upon by impulses.[50]

Addressing a female audience elsewhere, More explicitly condemned the cult of sensibility's fetishization of sentimental tableaux. In remarks that read like a chastisement of her youthful self, she complained that the sentimentalist was too 'apt … to desire, that the object of her compassion shall have something interesting and amiable in it, such as furnish pleasing images and lively pictures to her imagination', creating an aversion to real distress, and thus impeding moral duty.[51]

Taken as a whole then, More's later writings reinforced the view that polite society's emotional practices reinforced moral indifference, a view shared by her contemporaries, many of whom were more explicit in denouncing the popular sensibility as affected, and fundamentally enfeebling. Thus a contemporary essayist would conclude that the sensibility that could 'only be drawn forth into exercise by complicated distress' was in fact reflective of an 'uncultivated' mind, and thus did not 'come within the true meaning of feeling'.[52]

This line of thinking had important implications for contemporaneous understandings of the social affections. In rejecting the notion that the secure contemplation of isolated spectacles of sympathy provided the basis of a moral disposition, More and her followers were effectively redefining the normative experience of the social affections. Building upon a modish associationist paradigm, which stressed the role of sensory experience in structuring an individual's moral disposition, the advocates of the new sensibility emphasised the 'physical or physiological nature of the sympathetic connection between selves', rather than the aesthetic pleasures associated with the imaginative sympathy of the Smithian mould.[53] Consequently, the development of correct judgement and the social sympathies was increasingly attributed to the corporeal experiences derived from exposure

---

[50] More, *Works*, vol. 2, 269.
[51] More, *Works*, vol. 3, 247-8.
[52] R.D., 'On Sensibility', 556.
[53] Rowland Weston, 'Politics, Passion and the "Puritan Temper": Godwin's Critique of Enlightened Modernity', *Studies in Romanticism* 41, no. 3 (2002), 457-8. On the wider influence of associationism on Romantic aesthetics see Fiona Price, *Revolutions in Taste, 1773-1818: Women Writers and the Aesthetics of Romanticism* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), Ch. 4; Emily Brady, *The Sublime in Modern Philosophy: Aesthetics, Ethics, and Nature* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 102.

to challenging or discomforting situations.[54] Thus More would argue that disinterested charity was best realised through the continual exposure to 'the sight and sound of … misery', and engagement with 'the more uninviting and repulsive' objects of charity.[55]

Such remarks represented a definitive break with the past. Whereas most sentimentalists had sanctioned the disavowal of such abjection, for the advocates of the new emotional norm, it was the capacity to withstand this aversion that strengthened the resolve, and thus marked virtue. Indeed, as Lucinda Cole has suggested, this new distinction between genuine Christian charity and the 'false delicacy' of fashion amounted to a redefinition of benevolent emotion itself: '*True compassion*', in Hannah More's later writings, 'involves a sense of sacrifice and *even pain*'.[56] This was, certainly, a revolution in feeling: the forging of an association 'between corporeality and morality' which could only promote a new tolerance for sensationalism.[57] Unsurprisingly, More warmly advocated a stoic, interventionist social type for emulation, which she fleshed out in her didactic novel *Coelebs in Search of a Wife* (1809). Rather than safely indulging their feelings by contemplating idealised distress in novels, the heroes of More's text went out to 'visit the abodes of poverty and sickness', so as to figuratively '*take them out of themselves*', and learn 'to compare their fictitious distresses with real substantial misery'.[58] This message was replicated by Jane Austen, whose character Emma Woodhouse was cast as a paragon of the new humanity: entering into 'the distresses of the poor' with 'ready sympathy', and always willing to assist them. Like More, Austen had her protagonist visit a family suffering through 'sickness and poverty', and suitably profiting from the experience. With 'intelligence' reigning in her sentiment, Emma was not struck down by tears or terror at the spectacle.[59] On the contrary, the sensational 'impression of the scene' was remarked to be wholly invigorating: 'These are the sights … to do one good. … I feel now as if I could think of nothing but these poor creatures all the rest of the day'. Indeed, so important was this sensory experience to her moral education that, upon leaving the family's ramshackle cottage, she '[stopped] to look once more at the outward wretchedness of the place, and recall the still greater within', the

---

[54] On the importance of corporeal pain and materiality to moral education in nineteenth-century aesthetics see Elizabeth McClure, 'The Ethics of Materiality: Sensation, Pain, and Sympathy in Victorian Literature' (PhD Thesis: University of Maryland, 2007), 18.

[55] More, *Works*, vol. 3, 248.

[56] Cole, '(Anti)Feminist Sympathies', 119 [emphasis added].

[57] McClure, 'Ethics of Materiality', 18.

[58] More, *Coelebs*, 225 [emphasis added].

[59] On Austen's depiction of regulated compassion in this scene see Theresa Kenney, 'Benevolence and Sympathy in *Emma*', *Persuasions: The Jane Austen Journal* 38 (2016), 66-80.

sensationalism aroused by the awful experience reinforcing her benevolent instincts.[60] The contrast with Yorick's contemplation of the beautiful Maria could not have been more marked.

II. 'Harsh and Unpleasant' Scenes: Contemplating the 'Romantic' Madman

For the cult of sensibility, seeking a pleasing affective communion with the distressed, depictions of madness were necessarily sanitised, conforming to contemporary notions of physical beauty, as well as neoclassical strictures of harmony and regularity. By the close of the eighteenth century, however, insanity was seemingly reviving the 'monstrous' face that sentimentalists had banished from view. In the surgeon Charles Bell's description of madness, penned in 1806, the archetypal madman was debased, and implicitly threatening: 'You see him lying in his cell regardless of every thing, with a death-like fixed gloom upon his countenance. … If you watch him in his paroxysm you may see the blood working to his head… his inflamed eye is fixed upon you, and his features lighten up into an inexpressible wildness and ferocity.'[61] In case the reader was under any allusions about the nature of this spectacle, Bell's accompanying sketch brought these qualities to the fore (fig. 8).

---

[60] Jane Austen, *Jane Austen Collection* (Amersham: Transatlantic Press, 2012), 826.
[61] Bell, *Essays*, 154-5.

Fig. 8. Charles Bell, 'Madness', in *Essays on the Anatomy of Expression in Painting* (London, 1806), 153.

Significant, here, was Bell's open disavowal of sentimental principles. Originally unacquainted with the progress of insanity, Bell's first sketches of madness had followed sentimental exemplars in depicting an appealing interiority. It was only after a visit to Bethlem Hospital that he had begun to appreciate the lunatic's confusing 'mixed expression' of fierce terror, and subsequently conceded it to be an 'error' to 'convey the idea of [the lunatic's] passion' (i.e. humane emotion).[62] To adequately convey the 'wreck of intellect', he argued, 'the *expression of mental energy should be avoided*, and consequently all exertion of those muscles which are peculiarly indicative of sentiment.' [63] This, he assured, was 'consistent with nature', having 'observed (contrary to my expectation) that there was not that energy, … that indignant brooding and thoughtfulness in the face of madmen … *which we almost uniformly find given to them in painting*.'[64]

---

[62] Charles Bell, *Letters of Sir Charles Bell* (London, 1870), 48; *idem*, *Essays*, 155.

[63] Bell, *Essays*, 155 [emphasis added].

[64] *Ibid*., 155 [emphasis added]. See also *idem*, *Letters*, 52. On Bell's ideas about humanity's expression of sentiment see Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions*, Ch. 5.

Bell thus explicitly called upon artists to restore to madness the vacancy of expression that sentimentalists had sought to efface: a shift in aesthetic that was explored in other artistic forms, most prominently poetry.[65] Though many of of their works conformed to sentimental prototypes, Romantic poets evinced a marked distrust of the voluptuous literary sensibility.[66] In contradistinction, the general tenor of their writings – particularly during the years following the French Revolution – conveyed a marked interest in the sensational, a point nowhere more evident than in *Lyrical Ballads*, the seminal anthology penned by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge at the close of the eighteenth century. Though Wordsworth in particular denounced the excesses of the Gothic aesthetic,[67] his poetry from this period '[reveals a hankering] to exploit the more spectacularly gruesome side of "low and rustic life"', as James Averill puts it.[68] Heather Glen has suggested this renunciation of popular sentimentalism was a means of challenging the sensibilities of polite readers, a point picked up by Gary Harrison, who argues that Wordsworth's experiments with form and style in these early works expressly undermined the sentimental spectator's privileged perspective.[69] Like Bell's madman, with the 'inflamed eye … fixed upon [the observer]', Wordsworth's marginal figures were presented in a 'close up' frame, thereby fixing the reader in a potentially disciplining gaze, and thus opening them up to the shocking '"destabilization" of the subject' that refined audiences abhorred.[70] Certainly, in his Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth asserted that polite readers would 'struggle with feelings of strangeness and aukwardness', terms which aptly describe the popular response to the two poems about mental distraction present in the anthology: 'The Idiot Boy', a tragi-comedy that detailed a mothers frantic concern for her intellectually disabled son; and 'The Mad Mother', the deranged monologue of a madwoman nursing her child. 'The Idiot Boy' was met with frustration and revulsion by many readers, who were appalled that, first, such a vacant and supposedly unappealing individual could be the subject of high art; and secondly, that an idiot's mother could show them such tender affection, given their physical and mental

---

[65] Indeed, as Michael Bell notes, from the early Romantic period poetry, not literature, 'became the crucial arena for devising aesthetic paradigms.' (*Sentimentalism*, 79).

[66] On the Romantic poets' ambiguous sentimental inheritance see James Averill, *Wordsworth and the Poetry of Human Suffering* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1980); Todd, *Sensibility*, 143; McGann, *Poetics of Sensibility*.

[67] G. Kim Blank, 'The "Degrading Thirst After Outrageous Stimulation": Wordsworth as Cultural Critic', *The Journal of Popular Culture* 39, no. 3 (2006), 365-82.

[68] Averill, *Wordsworth*, 183.

[69] Heather Glen, *Vision & Disenchantment: Blake's Songs & Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 38-45; Gary Harrison, 'Spec(tac)ular Reversals: The Politics of the Sublime and Wordsworth's Transfiguration of the Rustic Poor', *Criticism* 34, no. 4 (1992), 563-90.

[70] Harrison, 'Spec(tac)ular Reversals', 564-6.

impairments (more on this poem's reception below). Similarly sensational sentiments were at the heart of 'The Mad Mother'. Though ostensibly a sentimental tale – a woman goes mad after being abandoned by her lover, and is forced to raise their child alone in the wilderness – Wordsworth's verses explicitly subverted the principles of the popular aesthetic, drawing rather on the monstrous and supernatural.[71] Indeed, opening with a typically sensational depiction of the madwoman's appearance ('Her eyes are wild, her head is bare, / The sun has burnt her coal-black hair'), the poet depicted a shocking insanity far removed from Maria's quiescent melancholy:

> A fire was once within my brain;
> And in my head a dull, dull pain;
> And fiendish faces one, two, three,
> Hung at my breasts, and pulled at me.

Perhaps the clearest example of the new imperative for abjection in depictions of madness is found in the writings of the poet George Crabbe, a direct contemporary of Wordsworth and Coleridge. Owing to an association with Edmund Burke, his first published work, *The Village* (1783), was received with critical acclaim. Though he entered an artistic hiatus after taking holy orders in the 1780s, Crabbe's return to publishing in the first decade of the nineteenth century was lauded by both critics and competitors.

From his occupation, it should be apparent that Crabbe was decidedly more conservative than many stereotypically 'Romantic' artists. Departing from the sentimentalism of his predecessors, and the imaginative fancies of his peers, Crabbe evoked an early form of realism in his work which destabilised the traditional, pastoral representation of humble life. One early reviewer described Crabbe as discovering 'a new point of view' from which to depict 'rural scenes' – one which '[magnified] the wretchedness and vice' of common life.[72] Given his experience as a parish rector, Crabbe was acutely aware of the latent causes of social dislocation, and, more than any of his Romantic peers, sought to bring these issues to light through his verse.[73] Insofar as he dwelt

---

[71] See, for example, Irina Strout, '"She Who Dwells Alone…": Mad Mothers, Old Spinsters, and Hysterical Women in William Wordsworth's Poetry of 1798', in *Disjointed Perspectives on Motherhood*, ed. Catalina Florina Florescu (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013), 162.

[72] *British Magazine and Review; or, Universal Miscellany* (August, 1783), 132.

[73] Jerome McGann, 'The Anachronism of George Crabbe', *ELH* 48, no. 3 (1981), 562-3.

on the sins of the poor, the poet sought to implicitly draw attention to the failings of the moral economy: a 'humanitarianism' rooted firmly within the paternalist tradition.[74]

While contemporary artists officially deplored his seemingly dreary poetic style, in examining themes of isolation and wretchedness, Crabbe shared an affinity with the canonical Romantics, and like them, this quest for sensation pushed him to the study of unreason.[75] The first such representation – albeit just a fleeting moment in *The Village* – would prove to be one of his enduring verses. A poem about the spectacles of common life, Crabbe's readers were immediately attracted to his affecting description of a typical parish workhouse, which concluded with a disconcerting depiction of its indigent inmates: 'The lame, the blind, and, far the happiest they! / The moping idiot, and the madman gay'. Perhaps encouraged by the favourable reception of this couplet, Crabbe dedicated several subsequent poems to the issue of insanity, most of which varied considerably from the 'literary prototypes' of madness so prominent in eighteenth-century writings.[76] For instance, in 'Letter XXII' of *The Borough* (1810), Crabbe related the decidedly unsympathetic story of the fisherman Peter Grimes, a petty tyrant guilty of wantonly persecuting and eventually murdering three successive apprentices, and whose subsequent expulsion from his local community precipitated a decline into madness. Between detailing his crimes, and directing the reader to take in the horrid spectacle of Grimes's mad body ('How glare his angry eyes'!), Crabbe's sensational intent was clear.

Crabbe's most celebrated rendering of insanity, 'Sir Eustace Grey' (1808), was actually set in a madhouse. A verse dialogue between a visitor, physician, and a patient, this poem, more than any other of its time, interrogated the polite spectator's response to the spectacle of a raving lunatic. The tone was set in the opening stanza, when the visitor expressed his general revulsion at the sight of the insane:

> I'll know no more; - the Heart is torn
>
> By Views of Woe, we cannot heal;
>
> Long shall I see these Things forlorn,

---

[74] For readings of ideology in Crabbe's works see Frank Whitehead, *George Crabbe: A Reappraisal* (London: Associated University Presses, 1995), 188-206; Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 87-95.

[75] Elizabeth Brewster, 'George Crabbe and William Wordsworth', *University of Toronto Quarterly* 42, no. 2 (1973), 142-4.

[76] Whitehead, *Crabbe*, 140-5 (qtd. 140).

And oft again their Griefs shall feel;

As each upon the Mind, shall steal;

That wan Projector's mystic Style,

That lumpish Idiot leering by,

That peevish Idler's ceaseless Wile,

And that poor Maiden's half-form'd Smile,

While struggling for the full-drawn Sigh! ---

I'll know no more.[77]

This was a decidedly *un*sentimental scene, and Crabbe deftly articulated the resistance a typical spectator would express at such spectacles. Significantly though, he did not allow the narrator/reader this rejection, in the manner of the sentimental mode. Rather, through the medium of the madhouse's physician, Crabbe directed the readers' frame of attention firmly back on the horrid 'sight', effectively challenging their sensibilities:

--- Yes, turn again;

Then speed to happier Scenes thy Way,

When thou hast view'd, what yet remain,

The Ruins of Sir Eustace Grey,

The Sport of Madness, Misery's Prey…[78]

The poem continued to detail the mental decline of the eponymous Sir Eustace, and this tale was carefully crafted to arouse unsettling feelings in the readers. The subject himself was introduced as a fairly ambiguous figure; while Sir Eustace is first shown to present fleeting visages of sentimental civility ('Appear[ing] attentive and polite') it is made clear that these were transient appearances.[79] Moreover, his story was one that any respectable reader would have been conditioned to rebuke, with the mad narrator revealing that his insanity was a product of his own moral downfall: pride and unbelief having corrupted the young squire's heart, he murdered his purportedly unfaithful wife in a jealous rage, thus hastening his decline into distraction ('thrust into that horrid Place, / Where reign Dismay, Despair, Disgrace').[80]

---

[77] George Crabbe, *Poems* (London, 1808), 219.
[78] *Ibid*., 220.
[79] *Ibid*., 220.
[80] *Ibid*., 232-3.

I have gone into some depth to describe the varied renderings of madness in the poetry of this period, not to make any comment on the poets' attitudes towards insanity, but rather to reiterate the momentous shift in aesthetic evident in these works. These poems outwardly subverted the sentimental mode, eschewing the lush narratives favoured by the poets of sensibility, while even surpassing in affective potential the stylised sublime found in some of the more creative renderings of madness from the earlier period. Read alongside Bell's comments on the treatment of madness in portraiture, these renderings illustrate the influence of a new aesthetic regime, and one that I will suggest was shaped by the wider rejection of polite sensibility at the turn of the century.

A brief analysis of the reception of Crabbe's poetry will demonstrate this point. Travis Feldman points out that Crabbe's writing was 'central in the most important debates shaping British literature': specifically, debates about taste and the standards of poetry.[81] Dividing the most prominent critics of the day, Crabbe's poetic style was controversial, Feldman argues, owing to its seeming rejection of standard poetic conventions, which made the moral import of the poetry indecipherable to some outsiders.[82] The most vituperative of Crabbe's detractors was the literary critic William Hazlitt, a writer whose radical predilections alone grated at some of the poet's more disparaging representations of rustic life. Indeed, his famous sneer that Crabbe was 'a sophist, a misanthrope in verse; a *namby-pamby* Mandeville, a Malthus turned metrical romancer' makes clear his disdain.[83] In Hazlitt's view, by scrutinising the vices of the labouring poor – and by substituting imaginative representations of suffering with factual, mimetic representations – the poet, like Mandeville and Malthus, 'emphasize[d] negative, displeasing, and frequently overlooked "truths" concerning human society', without offering an overt moral lesson.[84]

In taking this position, Hazlitt was demonstrating his indebtedness to eighteenth-century aesthetics.[85] While as a critic Hazlitt was scathing of sentimentalism's perceived

---

[81] Travis Feldman, 'Controversial Crabbe: A "Namby-Pamby Mandeville"', *Studies in Romanticism* 51, no. 2 (2012), 207.
[82] *Ibid.*, 223-8.
[83] William Hazlitt, 'Living Authors. No. V. Crabbe', *The London Magazine* 3 (January to June, 1821), 486. See also *idem, Lectures on the English Poets*, 1818, quoted in Arthur Pollard ed., *Crabbe: The Critical Heritage* (London & Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), 214.
[84] Feldman, 'Controversial Crabbe', 217.
[85] John Mahoney, *The Logic of Passion: The Literary Criticism of William Hazlitt* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1981), 8.

indulgences, he still judged the moral potential of Crabbe's poetry by its capacity to generate pleasing feelings, believing that this voluptuous feeling was the fount of generosity. Hazlitt's primary criticism of Crabbe's works was that his subjects did not project any readily accessible emotional state, and thus could not excite that tender 'involuntary sympathy' so idealised by eighteenth-century moral theorists.[86] Indeed, his commentary on this point hearkened back to Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*: '[Crabbe] does not indulge his fancy or sympathise with us, or tell us how the poor feel; but how he should feel in their situation, which we do not want to know.'[87] Rather than giving an account of how the 'poor feel' then – or rather, an account of an idealised emotional distress that the polite reader would want to feel – Crabbe dwelt solely on the humiliation a spectator assumed by taking the perspective of a disordered or undesirable mind: a movement which, in Hazlitt's view, impeded the current of sympathetic identification.[88] 'Repulsive objects (or those which are painted so) do not conciliate affection, or soften the heart', he insisted, and singled out Crabbe's depictions of madness as exemplifying this poetic failing.[89] Though conceding 'Eustace Grey' was 'a production of great power and genius', Hazlitt argued that the feelings aroused upon contemplating it were mere transitory whims: 'of a sort that *chill*, rather than *melt* the mind; *they repel instead of haunting it*.'[90]

Hazlitt's was thus a traditionalist reading of Crabbe's corpus, and he was certainly not alone in holding these views.[91] Yet while these detractors flatly rejected his style, it is clear that a growing number of contemporaries embraced Crabbe's 'deformation' of poetic convention, and were receptive to the poetry's moral import.[92] The critic Francis Jeffrey regularly lauded Crabbe for depicting common folk true to life, rather than as 'moralizing swains or sentimental tradesmen'.[93] Contrasting his poems with those of the sentimentalist Oliver Goldsmith (whose *The Deserted Village* (1770) was widely regarded as inspiration of Crabbe's *The Village*), Jeffrey argued that Crabbe's work exhibited more spirit and

---

[86] Hazlitt, 'Crabbe', 489.

[87] *Ibid*., 486.

[88] This is not to say that Hazlitt's idea of a moral lesson was necessarily radical in its implications; indeed, as Jerome McGann suggests, this desire for pastoral representations of pauperism can in itself be read as a manifestation of middle-class ideology ('Anachronism').

[89] Hazlitt, 'Crabbe', 486.

[90] *Ibid*., 489. See also, the critical reflections on Crabbe's *The Borough* printed in the *Monthly Review, or, Literary Journa*l 61 (April, 1810), 404.

[91] See, for example *Eclectic Review* 8 (December 1812), 1240-53,

[92] Feldman, 'Controversial Crabbe', 224; McGann, 'Anachronism', 566.

[93] Francis Jeffrey, *The Edinburgh Review* 31, no. 4 (1810), 131.

genius, owing to the 'variety and the truth of his pictures.'[94] A reviewer in the *Annual Review* concurred, positively contrasting the 'unrivalled vividness, and … certain painful truth' of Crabbe's rendering of *The Village* to the 'pleasing' sorrow aroused by Goldsmith's pastoral.[95]

The critical debate over Crabbe's work, then, was fought over competing conceptualisations of moral feeling, a debate that mirrored a wider conflict over the Romantic aesthetic. As Todd notes, the earliest wave of Romantic critics condemned sentimental poets for their interiority and self-absorption, classing them as 'prisoners of their private selves and consequently divorced from the nature they intended to describe'.[96] The stereotypically 'Romantic' poet, by contrast, was thought to be 'instictively in harmony with the world', and thus open to all its experiences.[97] This model disposition was encapsulated in John Keats's notion of 'negative capability': the capacity to remain content 'in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts without any irritable reaching after fact & reason'.[98] As Li Ou explains: '[t]o be negatively capable' for Keats, was 'to be open to the actual vastness and complexity of experience', a disposition which could not be achieved 'unless one can abandon the comfortable enclosure of doctrinaire knowledge, safely guarding the self's identity, for a more truthful world which is necessarily more disturbing or even agonizing for the self.'[99]

An aesthetic disposition forged on these grounds could only extend tolerance for sensational experiences, and indeed, the canonical Romantics are remembered for 'cultivat[ing] feelings of guilt, loss, and wretchedness'.[100] In his study of pain and the 'Romantic Sensibility', Steven Bruhm points to the gradual substitution, in this period, of the sentimental pedagogy of sympathy, and its 'preoccupation with suffering in another', with the more corporeal Romantic aesthetic, 'preoccupied with the experience of pain in the self'.[101] To be sure, the core principle of the Burkean sentimental aesthetic were retained.

---

[94] *Ibid.*, 132.
[95] *Annual Review,* 6 (Jan, 1808), 514.
[96] Todd, *Sensibility*, 143.
[97] *Ibid.*, 143.
[98] Quoted in Li Ou, *Keats and Negative Capability* (London & New York: Continuum, 2009), 1.
[99] Ou, *Keats*, 2.
[100] Boyd Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People? England, 1783-1846* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 487. See also, Jervis, *Sensational Subjects*, 33.
[101] Steven Bruhm, *Gothic Bodies: The Politics of Pain in Romantic Fiction* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 3.

Few of even the most ardent critics would contradict the notion that sympathy or affection was founded in aesthetic pleasure.[102] What changed substantially in this period was the *evaluation of* such pleasures, a shift that was expressed in contemporaneous developments in art theory and connoisseurship. For instance, the Romantic era saw the emegence of a principle of artistic merit in which 'genius' was signalled by the novelty or distinctiveness of an artwork's aesthetic effect. This new demand, Winfried Menninghaus notes, caused artists and critics to dispense with the neoclassical (and sentimental) stricture of 'disgust-avoidance' in the arts.[103] While monstrosity was still regarded as monstrous, painful sensation was increasingly seen to be palatable, even suitable to the experience of art.[104] It is within this context that we need to consider the sort of laudatory reflections on Crabbe found in Thomas Talfourd's 1815 essay on 'the History of Poetry':

> Crabbe does not often affect us through the medium of delight. The sensations he produces are painful and often oppressive ... But it should be remembered that men seek not only after what is commonly denominated pleasure, but after powerful sensation, or to speak more accurately, they search for pleasure not only in the sources of peace and tranquillity, but in the stormy vehemence of passion. Life … is carried to a higher degree of vividness, in proportion as all the faculties of the spirit are called into fervid exercise.[105]

The implication then was that, while not 'delightful', oppressive pain could be a source of pleasure, indeed an experience through which the Romantic self could be discovered.[106] This, subsequently, prompted a revision in the Romantic hermeneutics of sympathy, with disinterestedness becoming exemplified in one's ability to find pleasure in *any* emotional contagion.[107]

---

[102] De Freitas Boe, 'I Call Beauty a Social Quality', 352.

[103] Winfried Menninghaus, *Disgust: The Theory and History of a Strong Sensation*, trans. Howard Eiland and Joel Golb (New York: State University of New York Press, 2003), 122.

[104] In speaking of Wordsworth's interest in abjection, Averill notes: 'What attracted Wordsworth to such materials was what appealed to his times, the powerful emotional energies that the bizarre and terrible make available to poetry and fiction.' (*Wordsworth*, 183)

[105] Quoted in Pollard, *Critical Heritage*, 208.

[106] Thus Bruhm's assertion that 'pain is necessary to the Romantic construction of identity' (*Gothic Bodies*, 4).

[107] See, for example, Wordsworth's dismissal of Charles Lamb's criticism of Lyrical Ballads, as conveying a limited 'range of Sensibility' (Quoted in Averill, *Wordsworth*, 185).

This new emotional imperative subsequently influenced artistic style. Insofar as classically inspired works aimed at an 'imitation of nature', it was assumed that this 'nature' would be rendered in an idealised form a polite audience could admire.[108] In contrast, as the modern aesthetic required forms that excited strong sensations in the beholder, artists sought a sharper rendering of humble life, if not in mimetic imitation, at least a sensational and dramatic rendering of forms.[109] Perhaps the clearest indication of the influence of this new imperative on the depiction of madness in this period comes not from Britain but Spain, and the palette of the acclaimed court painter Francisco de Goya, another 'Romantic' artist seeking to break the constraints of fashionable patronage. Several scholars have noted the departure from Goya's picturesque scenes of the mid-1780s, which generally adhere to classical and sentimentalist precepts, to the 'more naturalistic mode of imitation' evident in his depiction of the madhouse in *Yard with Madmen*, painted sometime in 1793-4.[110] With close-ups of deranged faces and contorted bodies, the painting posed 'a realism twisted by manic passions' rarely contemplated in polite company (fig. 9).[111]

---

[108] Martha Woodmansee, 'The Interests in Disinterestedness: Karl Philipp Moritz and the Emergence of the Theory of Aesthetic Autonomy in Eighteenth-Century Germany', *Modern Language Quarterly* 45, no. 1 (1984), 26.

[109] As Gillen D'Arcy Wood makes clear, the artistic pretensions of Romantic artists caused them to rebel against mimetic representation, and thus many iterations of blunt realism (*The Shock of the Real: Romanticism and Visual Culture, 1760-1860* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2001)).

[110] Andrew Schulz, 'The Expressive Body in Goya's *Saint Francis Borgia at the Deathbed of an Impenitent*', *The Art Bulletin* 80, no. 4 (1998), 678. See also Peter Klein, 'Insanity and the Sublime: Aesthetics and Theories of Mental Illness in Goya's Yard with Lunatics and Related Works', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 61 (1998), 198-252.

[111] Gwyn Williams, *Goya and the Impossible Revolution* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976), 82.

Fig. 9. Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes, *Yard with Madmen*, 1794, oil on tin-plated iron, 16 7/8 x 12 3/8 in. (42.9 x 31.4 cm), Meadows Museum, SMU, Dallas. Algur H. Meadows Collection, MM.67.01. Photograph by Michael Bodycomb.

The historians who have examined this stylistic change have posited a number of contributing factors, including an array of political and psychological stresses affecting the artist during this period, as well as the dissemination of new aesthetic theories amongst Goya's intellectual milieu.[112] Importantly, in his study of Goya's late-century realism, Andrew Schulz has linked his rejection of the classically beautiful to the emergence in the 1790s of sensationalism as the guiding paradigm of the Madrid art academy: a shift in aesthetic which, he notes, 'had significant implications not just for the means by which the artist creates a work of art but also for the character of the viewer's response to it.'[113] Following the new imperative, critics held that moral education was guided not by the imaginative engagement with the art object but by the 'indelible impact of sensory data on

---

[112] Klein, 'Insanity and the Sublime', 239; Williams, *Goya*, Ch. 4.
[113] Schulz, 'Expressive Body', 682.

human perception', and that the artist's best means of activating this 'expressive potential' was through an 'accurate [i.e. sensational] transcription of nature'.[114]

The critical commentary on George Crabbe's writings from this period suggests that many British connoisseurs had begun to draw the same associations. Talfourd perhaps stated the case best when he commended Crabbe for 'tear[ing] away all the obstructions to our grief – all the ornaments by which its course was diverted, and mingled with milder and less overpowering sensations.'[115] While other commentators were less fulsome in their praise – and many continued to question the poet's taste – by the early nineteenth century most readers were in general agreement that Crabbe's painful 'realism' was more profitable than the idealised sentimentalism of the previous age. Jeffrey lauded Crabbe's representations for forcing the reader 'to attend to objects that are usually neglected, and enter into feelings from which we are in general but too eager to escape'.[116] He singled out the description of the workhouse lunatics in *The Village* as particularly deserving of praise, noting that its sensational spectacles were 'calculated to sink deep into the memory', thus providing moral prompts 'when the *ideal pictures* of more fanciful authors have lost all their interest.'[117] Readers were more tepid towards the colourful flights of sublime madness given in 'Sir Eustace Grey', though many still lauded the poem for the very reason that Hazlitt condemned it: the lunatic's quick transformation from a calm façade to raving madness proving more 'true to nature' than imaginative verses, and thus producing a praiseworthy, 'striking effect'.[118]

And despite their manifold ideological and stylistic differences, the same emotional inheritance shaped the attitudes of some of the canonical Romantics. In his study of contemporaneous responses to Wordsworth's 'The Idiot Boy', Patrick McDonagh has suggested that the poet's unconventional choice of subject matter reflected 'an exercise in enlightenment'.[119] Focusing on Wordsworth's correspondence with the critic John Wilson (over the latter's pointed distaste for the poem), McDonagh points out that this censure stemmed from Wilson's inability to forge a pleasing sympathetic engagement with its

---

[114] *Ibid.*, 682.
[115] Pollard, *Critical Heritage*, 209.
[116] Jeffrey, *Edinburgh Review*, 131.
[117] *Ibid.*, 131. See also Wordsworth's comments on this couplet in Duncan Wu, *Wordsworth's Reading 1770-1799* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 40-1.
[118] *Annual Register* (Jan, 1808), 520
[119] McDonagh, *Idiocy*, 42.

subjects: a criticism based on his conventional reading of Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*.[120] While acknowledging the primacy of Smith's moral framework, Wordsworth provided a barefaced dismissal of this distinctly sentimental interpretation of *Moral Sentiments*. Unapologetic, he defended his approach on the grounds that the poet's purpose was not merely 'to delineate such feelings as all men *do* sympathise with', but rather to represent 'such as all men *may* sympathise with, and such as there is reason to believe they would be better and more moral beings if they did sympathise with.'[121] Here the shocking poet is cast as moral censor, strengthening the social affections of his audience through a subversion of the sentimental aesthetic.

However revolutionary such remarks may appear though, caution is required when assessing the political implications of this new artistic imperative. These comments convey a marked condescension towards the audience, reflective of the disdain many Romantic artists expressed towards the so-called 'philistine' public, content with ease and security.[122] For instance, in defending his poetic stylings to Wilson, Wordsworth did not merely seek to counter critical commentary, but also took the opportunity to condemn the squeamishness of polite readers as a moral failure:

> the loathing and disgust which many people have at the sight of an idiot, is a feeling which, though having some foundation in human nature, is not necessarily attached to it in any virtuous degree, but is owing in a great measure to a false delicacy, and, if I may say it without rudeness, a certain want of comprehensiveness of thinking and feeling.[123]

Similar condescension is evident in Talfourd's defence of George Crabbe, in which he dismissed the poet's critics as 'giddy and … worldling', and thus unable to 'endure the shock of those homely and awful sensations which are the favorite food of prouder and more lofty spirits.'[124] For Talfourd, Crabbe's delineations of rustic life provided 'stores of richness and

---

[120] *Ibid.*, 25.
[121] Quoted in McDonagh, *Idiocy*, 42.
[122] Blanning, *Romantic Revolution*, 41-50.
[123] William Wordsworth to John Wilson, 7 June, 1802, in *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, Vol. 1: The Early Years: 1787-1805*, 2nd edition, eds. Ernest de Selincourt and Chester Shaver (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 1967, 356.
[124] Pollard, *Critical Heritage*, 209.

beauty as they appear to the undazzled eye of a gifted and accurate observer', the implication being that may readers failed to achieve such a perspective.[125]

These comments read like a conscious attempt at cultural distinction on the part of these writers, a particularly significant point, considering the historical context. In his famous study of the modern aesthetic disposition, Pierre Bourdieu identified artistic and moral tastes as fields of conflict, in which the avant-garde and intellectual bourgeoisie vie for cultural authority with the dominant economic bourgeoisie, on whom they are ostensibly dependant.[126] Given that it is amongst this earliest wave of Romantics (along with the rationalist critics we encountered earlier) that the first stirrings of a professional intelligentsia has been identified,[127] it should come as little surprise that their comments on taste and emotions could form the basis of a political program.[128] Indeed, returning to Scheer's assertion that the erasure of the sentimental emotional style is reflective of a bourgeois assertion of authority, we can begin to appreciate how this 'Romantic' emotional style embodied the new ideology of the professional classes, the artist's 'undazzled eye' being asserted as the truest sign of disinterested judgement.[129]

While delicacy of feeling was still regarded as a fount of literary genius, it was increasingly held that such 'sensibility' had to be reined in, lest it devolve into 'that depraved temper of mind that shrinks at every touch'.[130] Dugald Stewart, the foremost writer on taste in the opening decades of the nineteenth century, denied the possibility that those of a nervous habit could maintain a disinterested perspective, assuming that their affected delicacy was too easily overwhelmed by '[t]he more prominent beauties' of an object, and so were unable to form a critical judgement of its virtues.[131] He thus strictly delineated

---

[125] *Ibid*., 210.
[126] Bourdieu, *Distinction*.
[127] Roy Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Penguin, 1990), 83-4.
[128] I do not have the space to discuss the development, and implications of the new ideology of professionalism here, though a few key studies are worth noting. Raymond Williams's study of early Romanticism in *Culture and Society 1780-1950* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963) still stands as a perceptive critique of the emergent professional ethos of 'the artist as a special kind of person' (53), and the social conditions that gave rise to this myth. More recently, Thomas Pfau's *Wordsworth's Profession* outlines the significance of aesthetic proficiency to the consolidation of a middle-class professional subjectivity by the closing decade of the eighteenth-century.
[129] On the trained detachment typical of 'professional culture', see Rita Felski, 'Suspicious Minds', *Poetics Today* 32, no. 2 (2011), 220.
[130] W.H., 'Of the Principles of Historical Composition.' *The Scots Magazine*, 64 (1802), 726.
[131] Dugald Stewart, *Philosophical Essays* (Edinburgh, 1810), 476.

between the 'transient and useless' taste habituated by 'fashion' and the disposition to genius and disinterestedness that he referred to as the 'Philosophical Taste'.[132]

For Stewart, the key to this discriminating taste was retirement from the slavish fashionable world, a point on which many of his contemporaries concurred.[133] Wordsworth, for one, figured the pure gaze of the artist as dependent on a distance from the culture of refinement. He regularly invoked a kind of primitivism in his writings, valorising the 'lower classes of society' as uniquely disinterested, and thus implying that a wide exposure to the vagaries of common life stimulated virtuous sympathies. Indeed, in his letter to Wilson, Wordsworth asserted that by subjecting himself to the supposedly revolting spectacle of idiocy in humble settings, he had learned to discern the virtues of the afflicted, and thus attained a disinterested perspective which smothered 'every feeble sensation of disgust and aversion.'[134] It was this zeal that his polite audience supposedly lacked, and he singled out for particular opprobrium those readers who were 'disgusted with the naked language of some of the most interesting passions of men, because either it is indelicate, or gross': readers like the '*fine ladies* [who] could not bear certain expressions of The [Mad] Mother'.[135] Charles Bell, too, in the paragraphs accompanying his image of insanity, made some incisive remarks about the distinction between polite refinement and philosophical self-command. He acknowledged the importance of 'a scrutinizing observation of nature' to the cultivation and expression of 'genius'. Since raving madness was such an 'unpleasant and distressing subject of contemplation', this capacity for discernment and self-control was a crucial quality for its prospective portraitist:

it is only when the enthusiasm of an artist is strong enough to counteract his repugnance to scenes in themselves harsh and unpleasant, when he is careful to seek

---

[132] *Ibid.*, 470.

[133] Stewart, tellingly, locates the sphere of vulgar taste in 'such a capital as London or Paris': the dens of opinion and emulation, where the mind is dulled from 'all connection with Reason and the Moral Principles, and alive only to such impressions as fashion recognizes and sanctions' (*Ibid.*, 469-70).

[134] Wordsworth to Wilson, in Selincourt and Shaver eds., *Letters*, 357. See also Thomas Moore's reflections on Lord Byron's schooling in 'the roughness and privations of life' (Thomas Moore, *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron: With Notices of his Life* (London, 1873), 120).

[135] Wordsworth to Wilson, in Selincourt and Shaver eds., *Letters*, 354 [emphasis added]. Similar criticisms were aired by Crabbe in his poem 'The Widow's Tale', which relates the story of a genteel woman whose refinements distance her from the rustic community she moves into. As Thomas Williams notes, Crabbe's 'visceral' depictions of the woman's overbearing disgust towards humble life were used to deride such sensitivities ('George Crabbe and John Clare: Refinement and Reading', *Romanticism* 20, no. 2 (2014), 177-8.

all occasions of storing his mind with images of human passion and suffering … that he can truly deserve the name of a painter.[136]

The wider the field of an individual's empirical inquiry, then, the more likely they would foster the 'enthusiasm' necessary to overcome wretched sights, like the raving madman. No doubt Bell was thinking of his own visit to Bedlam here: his 'unpleasant' medical experience enabling him to contemplate, and sketch a true-to-life portrait of the maniac – and in the process, expose the failings of other artists. However Bell's explication of this emotional habitus is doubly interesting for our purposes here, as he further associated this intellectual enthusiasm with *scientific* proficiency, explicitly distinguishing this discerning philosopher from the fashionable physician, who would 'turn aside to grasp emoluments by gaudy accomplishments, rather than by the *severe and unpleasant prosecution of science*.'[137] The message was clear: the pleasures of fashionable society were an obstruction to enlightened progress. The true 'Friend of Mankind' proved their disinterest through sacrifice and self-command.

Some qualification is required here. Bell, after all, was writing at roughly the same time that the Georgian dilettantes were fainting in shock at the representation of maniacs in Matthew Lewis's *The Captive*, mentioned in Chapter One. This was still a marginal critical position in the opening decade of the nineteenth century. However, it was gaining in influence, and the range of responses to Crabbe's work in particular from about 1810 demonstrates the crystallisation of these new attitudes. That by the 1820s commentators would unashamedly distinguish between the 'persevering' aesthete who willingly endured the realism of a Crabbe, and the polite reader who acknowledged little 'interest' in such art, testifies to the deep rupture in contemporaneous emotional styles.[138]

From such remarks we can begin to comprehend the ways that the emergence of this new emotional style influenced social responses to insanity. Whereas eighteenth-century polite theorists may have marked such a disposition as eccentric, by the middle of the nineteenth century such hardy self-control was believed to manifest one's disinterestedness,

---

[136] Bell, *Essays*, vii-viii, 156.
[137] *Ibid*., 157 [emphasis added]. Bell was undoubtedly influenced here by Stewart, who he studied under at the University of Edinburgh. He also came under the influence of Francis Jeffrey and his Whig circle (L. Stephen Jacyna, 'Bell, Sir Charles (1774-1842)', in *ODNB)*.
[138] Caroline Lamb, *The Whole Disgraceful Truth: Selected Letters of Lady Caroline Lamb*, ed. Paul Douglass (Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 117-8.

virtue, and discernment – an important stage in the development of a 'humanitarian' ethic. Rather than sentimentalising the plight of the lunatic, or shying away from mania's abhorrent face, the artist/philosopher charged into the abodes of sickness and poverty, gazed with curiosity at the sensational spectacle, and in the process undermined the idealised rendering of insanity that the eighteenth century had sought to naturalise.

Returning, one last time, to George Crabbe's critical reception, we can see how, by the middle of the nineteenth century, the cultural prestige of the poet had become intimately tied to this new style of activism. In an 1834 biography, printed shortly after his death, a eulogist praised the 'unaffected beauty and generous feeling' abounding in Crabbe's sketches 'of life and nature', a skill that was put down to his capacity to 'resolutely [gaze] upon [life] in its rudest aspect, and … [transfer] its lights and shadows to his canvass.'[139] By the mid-Victorian period this characterisation of the disinterested intellectual as intrepid stoic was complete. When the critic George Gilfillan penned a flattering account of Crabbe's works in 1850, the poet's ability to accurately render the sensational 'Bedlam' of popular dread was regarded as a testament to the his skill and humanity.[140] Crabbe's apparent fascination with the revolting represented, for Gilfillan, 'a feeling of pity for … unloved spots', and he praised the poet for his willingness to scrutinise the unsightly:

> Few poets have reached that calm of his which reminds us of Nature's own great quiet eye, looking down upon her monstrous births, her strange anomalies, and her more ungainly forms. Crabbe sees the loathsome, and does not loathe – handles the horrible, and shudders not … We admire as well as wonder at that almost *asbestos* quality of his mind, through which he retains his composure and critical circumspection so cool amid the conflagrations of passionate subjects, which might have burned others to ashes.[141]

By the Victorian era, then, the critic could unproblematically describe poetic self-command as a God-like quality, signalling both wide sympathies and 'critical circumspection'. When contrasted with the commentary about emotional responsiveness to abject spectacles of insanity in the eighteenth century, such remarks clearly demonstrate the

---

[139] Anon, 'Sketches of the Later English Poets. No. 1. – Crabbe', *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* (April 1834), 162.
[140] George Gilfillan, *A Second Gallery of Literary Portraits* (Edinburgh & London, 1850), 65-6.
[141] *Ibid*., 61, 70.

sea change in opinion that occurred in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Indeed, Gilfillan's comments invite the comparison:

> But Crabbe – what an admirable physician had he made to a lunatic asylum! How severely would he have sifted every grain of poetry from those tumultuous exposures of the human mind! … What tales had he wrung from them, to which [Matthew] Lewis' tales of terror were feeble and trite! … And yet how calm would his brain have remained, when others, even of a more prosaic mould, were reeling in sympathy with the surrounding delirium![142]

III. Humanitarian Reform and the 'Romantic' Emotional Style

So far we have seen how late-century writers constructed a new pedagogy of sympathy, so as to encourage a more active response to the accidents of the world. In this final section I will consider the implications of this new emotional imperative for the lunacy reform movement. Historians have situated nineteenth-century lunacy activism within a broader current of social and institutional reform dating from the 1770s.[143] Stimulated by the twin pillars of contemporaneous social policy – utilitarianism and Evangelicalism – a cabal of dedicated agitators united in this period to challenge previously inviolable *ancien régime* laws and institutions.[144] Inspired by figures like the Bedfordshire High Sheriff John Howard – whose exposé of the conditions of Britain's places of confinement in *State of the Prisons in England and Wales* (1777) provoked a wave of revulsion – individuals from across the political spectrum increasingly sacrificed their comforts to take up a philanthropic mission, be it investigating the conditions of slums, prisons, or asylums.

Studies into this philanthropic endeavour have emphasised the ideological basis of the reformist impulse, reflected in its imperative to both undermine traditional patterns of authority and deference (the campaign against the so-called 'Old Corruption'), and to institute new disciplinary apparatuses, as a means of regulating the morals of the lower

---

[142] *Ibid.*, 70.

[143] Scull, *Most Solitary of Afflictions*, 83-114; Andrews et al., *History of Bethlem*, 418-9; Roy Porter, *Madmen*, 153-64.

[144] On the influence of these doctrines on contemporaneous political thought see Hilton, *Mad, Bad and Dangerous*, 328-42.

orders.[145] Here though, I want to examine the emotional basis of this reformist zeal, to illustrate how the wider revolt against polite sentimentalism helped to consolidate this new social movement. The first figure worth considering is John Howard, the most acclaimed philanthropist of the age, and the symbol of 'humanitarian' reform. Howard numbered amongst those whom Paul Langford described as eighteenth-century Britain's 'entrepreneurs of charity', an increasingly visible cohort of social reformers notable for their zeal, and skill as self-publicists.[146] Distinguishing themselves from the tradition of genteel philanthropic patronage, these men (and they were primarily male) positioned themselves as 'opinion-makers', actively seeking out 'injustice', and campaigning for its eradication.[147] Howard's greatest acclaim was achieved through his tireless visitation and investigation of the conditions of Europe's prisons, unprecedented journeys that he chronicled across a number of highly sought publications.[148] Indeed, a reviewer of Howard's voluminous works in the 1770s suggested that his calling represented 'something of a phenomenon', and that he had seemingly '*invented*' a new 'method of serving mankind'.[149]

For all his public acclaim, Howard was an enigmatic figure. Even during his lifetime he was noted for his eccentric asceticism, and following his death, rumours of his supposed emotional indifference were publicly circulated, the most damaging pertaining to his lunatic son (the boy's madness believed to be caused by the father's severity). Though historians have downplayed the more evidently malicious gossip, reports of his seeming peculiarities have continued to receive critical attention. A number of historians have examined these

---

[145] On the ideological origins of the disciplinary penitentiary see Michael Ignatieff, *A Just Measure of Pain: The Penitentiary in the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978); Gatrell, *Hanging Tree*; John Bender, *Imagining the Penitentiary: Fiction and the Architecture of Mind in Eighteenth-Century England* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Lemmings, *Law and Government*, 100-6.

[146] Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 485.

[147] Langford, *Polite and Commercial People*, 483.

[148] Amanda Bowie Moniz, '"Labours in the Cause of Humanity in Every Part of the Globe": Transatlantic Philanthropic Collaboration and the Cosmopolitan Ideal, 1760-1815' (PhD Thesis: University of Michigan, 2008), 125. On the cultural influence of Howard's philanthropy see Gabriel Cervantes and Dahlia Porter, 'Extreme Empiricism: John Howard, Poetry, and the Thermometrics of Reform', *The Eighteenth Century* 57, no. 1 (2016), 95-119.

[149] *The Weekly Magazine, or, Edinburgh Amusement* 38 (Oct., 1777), 117-8. See also *The Critical Review, or, Annals of Literature* 68 (Dec., 1789), 487.

supposed idiosyncrasies in light of his fervent pietism, pointing to the importance of Calvinist belief in stimulating his activism, and shaping his ideal penitentiary.[150]

Given his evangelicalism, and identification with a nascent humanitarian movement, it is worth reconsidering remarks about his disposition and temperament within the context of late-century debates about moral feeling. One thing that becomes immediately clear when examining commentary on his activities from the mid-1780s is the insistence with which contemporaries noted Howard's divergence from the sentimental emotional style. Writers were quick to concede that the scenes he visited were far too 'offensive to the … heart of humanity', and that the philanthropist was thus blessed with a uniquely courageous emotional disposition.[151] In his 1786 panegyric poem *The Triumph of Benevolence*, Samuel Pratt praised Howard's 'undaunted' visitation of 'scenes where all th' Antipathies assail, / Which Instinct, Reason, Nature, most would shun'.[152] The dilettante Philip Thicknesse sheepishly distinguished his own Grand Tour to the Continent – conducted merely 'to gratify an idle curiosity' – with Howard's apparently more noble exertions, which 'penetrated into the interior parts of even the Spanish inquisition'.[153] Significantly, Thicknesse concluded that the distinction between the two men was one of emotional habitus. 'I trembled at the sight only of the [prisons'] exteriors', he conceded, whereas Howard,

> hesitated not to visit the most miserable mortals, whether breathing the impure air of dungeons, or languishing under putrid fevers, or pestilential disorders, the sad consequences of such dreadful abodes![154]

This was, of course, an idealised depiction of Howard's vocation. As Amanda Moniz notes, Howard, like many of this growing cohort of militant activists, crafted his public persona to reflect a 'Christian ideal of self-sacrifice'.[155] Whether or not Howard recognised himself as a trailblazer of a dissenting emotional style is difficult to determine; however,

---

[150] On Howard's contribution to the debate over penal reform see Janet Semple, *Bentham's Prison: A Study of the Panopticon Penitentiary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), Ch. 4; Ignatieff, *Just Measure of Pain*.

[151] Anon, 'Some Account of the Late John Howard, F.R.S.', *The General Magazine and Impartial Review* (April, 1790), 147. See also *The Weekly Magazine* (Oct., 1777),118.

[152] Samuel Jackson Pratt, *The Triumph of Benevolence; A Poem…* (London, 1786), 11.

[153] Philip Thicknesse, *A Year's Journey through the Pais Bas; or, Austrian Netherlands*, 2nd edition (London, 1786), 211-2.

[154] *Ibid.*, 212.

[155] Moniz, 'Labours in the Cause of Humanity', 2008, 129. For a discussion of the contemporaneous debates over manliness, religious feeling and militarism see Carter, *Polite Society*, 104-11.

when considered alongside the wider rejection of sentimentality, some intriguing continuities can be discerned. Thicknesse's valorisation of the philanthropist's steely self-command appears evocative of Fox's assertion of a humanity of the 'mind'. Indeed, Howard's own writings seem to invite a comparison. As early as 1777, he had begun to attribute county Magistrates' neglect of their duties towards prisoners to their weak sensibilities.[156] Maxims recorded in his private journals later in his life appear to reiterate this position, with statements like '[the] firmness of mind, to bear suffering and meet dangers undaunted ... [is] necessary for the active scenes of life and maintenance of the rights of others' hinting at his ambivalence towards sentimentalism's emotional practices.[157]

Howard's courageous humanity proved fatal in the end: a fever contracted during a tour of Russian prisons took his life in 1790. However, the memory of his idealised temperament survived him, and proved influential amongst the social reformers that followed in his wake. His death coinciding with the breakdown of the sentimental emotional regime, Howard's persona of heroic asceticism offered a potent exemplar to any moralist who sought to critique sentimental norms: a point most evident in the Nonconformist minister Samuel Palmer's eulogy to the philanthropist, *The True Patriot* (1790), which was positioned as something of a rallying cry for the new emotional standard. Though anticipating the protestations of those whose 'delicate feelings ... could [not] bear the sight of so much misery', Palmer used the funeral sermon to reiterate the emergent truism that fellow-feeling was signalled by active exertion and painful sacrifice: 'the greater the misery, the greater the charity to see and to relieve it. This surely is no other than what reason dictates, and true love to mankind requires.' [158] Palmer's intention was to discredit 'fashionable' culture, and to popularise the new hermeneutics of sympathy: a natural subtext to a eulogy of the so-called 'Consummate Philanthropist'.[159] While characterising Howard as a man of good manners, Palmer made clear to distinguish him from the culture of refinement, emphasising his inimitable 'sense of duty'.[160] Naturally then, the philanthropist

---

[156] John Howard, *The State of the Prisons in England and Wales* (Warrington, 1777), 66-8.

[157] John Howard, 'Memorandums and Remarks', 1788-89, The Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, MS. Eng. misc. e. 401, f.3r.

[158] Samuel Palmer, *The True Patriot. A Sermon, on the Much Lamented Death of John Howard, L.L.D. F.R.S.* (London, 1790), 39.

[159] Indeed, in a passage that foreshadowed Hannah More's later writings on the topic, Palmer directly counselled his audience to cease 'fashionable visits', and, rather, inspect 'the houses of the poor, and other scenes of woe', so as to have 'their compassion excited to a degree beyond what they ever felt' (*Ibid.*, 38).

[160] *Ibid.*, 11, 13.

was shown to realise his sympathy in response to the sensational scenes of the dungeon: 'The farther he proceeded, the more shocking were the scenes presented to his view; which induced him to resolve upon exerting himself to the utmost, in order to a general reform in these horrid places of confinement'.[161]

Significantly, the minister attributed Howard's benevolent exertion to the strength of his reason, and emotional self-command. Palmer contended that it was the philanthropist's 'uncommon resolution' that supported him through his 'arduous labours'. [162] This characterisation was reinforced by Howard's subsequent biographers, who similarly ascribed his reformist zeal to a decidedly *un*sentimental emotional style. John Aikin, in the first substantial retelling of the philanthropist's life, recorded that '[Howard's] *nerves were firm*; and his conviction of marching in the path of duty made him fearless of consequences.'[163] James Baldwin Brown, writing his authoritative biography in 1823, was more prosaic, yet the message, if anything, was more incisive:

> Howard possessed the keenest sensibility. The scenes of wretchedness and misery which he witnessed invariably gave him pain; and nothing but an overwhelming sense of duty could have prompted him to pursue a course which so repeatedly brought them before him. Tears of pity would start into his eyes at the mere relation of victims of inhumanity he had visited … but with all this he had the most perfect self-command.[164]

Thus while these writers purported that sensibility was an invaluable trait to the philanthropic venture, true sympathy – active public spiritedness – was marked not by the expression of this sentimental emotion, but the action that followed from it. Coming from the pens of Protestant Dissenters, such characterisations need to be viewed politically, as much as morally. By associating patriotic virtues to this particular emotional style – and, importantly, by contrasting this disposition to the stereotypical frippery of the *beau monde* – these writers were effectively seeking to widen the parameters of social authority, and thus

---

[161] *Ibid.*, 16-7.
[162] *Ibid.*, 12.
[163] John Aikin, *A View of the Character and Public Services of the Late John Howard*, Esq. (London, 1792), 215 [emphasis added].
[164] James Baldwin Brown, *Memoirs of the Public and Private Life of John Howard, the Philanthropist* (London, 1823), 424.

democratise the sort of political capital theoretically denied to people with their religious convictions.[165]

Just as Howard's idealised self-image 'became a standard against which to measure other philanthropists', so did his purported style of emotional management, eulogised in the years following his death, become the habitus to be modelled by subsequent generations of dissenting British activists.[166] Lunacy reformers from this period were a particularly enigmatic group, and historians have noted the moral fervour which animated their mission.[167] Michael Brown has come closest to linking this reformist zeal to a new emotional type. As an aside to his broader study of the ideological foundations of early asylum reform, Brown has noted the tendency of agitators to associate competency with emotional detachment. As these critics sought to impose a system of inspection and surveillance on secretive medical institutions, they proposed that local invigilators should be men of action: possessing 'a hardy constitution', and, importantly, '[u]ninhibited by [the] refined manners' typical of charity overseers (which they blamed for the governors' general apathy towards standards on the asylum wards).[168] Such men, it was assumed, would be better equipped to negotiate the appalling conditions of the asylum wards, as well as the obstructionism of recalcitrant staff.

Brown has considered this new style of self-representation as a product of the reformers' utilitarian thought, which firmed as a guiding philosophy from around 1810.[169] This was undoubtedly a powerful motivator for change, the imperative for efficiency, rationalisation, and democratisation providing the philosophical basis for the reformist project.[170] However from the language used to elaborate the reformers' ideal moral constitution, it is evident that such considerations were predicated on the much longer shift in emotional practices. Take the reformer Samuel Nicoll's 1828 description of an ideal asylum inspector, as quoted by Brown: 'He must not be a man of *refined niceness*; but firmly

---

[165] It is telling that the published postscript of Palmer's funeral sermon invoked Howard's reputation to justify the repeal of the Test Acts – the laws that barred many Catholics and Nonconformists from public office. On the ideological underpinnings of the reformist cabal see Bender, *Imagining the Penitentiary*, 30-1. For middle-class political activism more broadly see Hilton, *Mad, Bad, and Dangerous*, 151.

[166] Moniz, 'Labours in the Cause of Humanity', 131.

[167] See, for example, Scull, *Most Solitary of Afflictions*, 83-96; Andrews et al., *History of Bethlem*, Ch. 23.

[168] Brown, 'Rethinking', 443.

[169] *Ibid.*, 451-2.

[170] Scull, *Most Solitary of Afflictions*, 85-7, 115-74.

endure, both in eye, ear and nostril, what an ordinary man would shrink from with horror.'[171] Nicoll's assumption – that occupational competency was dependent on a stoic firmness – is not merely a statement of a newly dominant ethic of public service, but calls to mind the broad cultural consensus surrounding the normative expression of disinterested judgement.

Nor was this recommendation merely directed at the bureaucratic apparatus; rather, this emotional style was regarded as a necessary pre-condition for pubic-spirited activism. The following anonymous narrative describing the encounter with a lunatic in an Inverness jail, published by the English prison reformer Joseph Gurney in 1819, demonstrates the extent to which the emotional standard shaped the sensibilities of the activist:

> All the cells were unoccupied but one. On advancing to open the door … our conductor observed we had better stand back a little, as the gallery was very offensive … and that it was almost too much for him, though he was used to it… In a minute or two my friend stepped into the cell; but almost immediately retreated, overcome by the closeness and intolerable stench: I myself stood at the door for some time. The prisoner … had been tried for an attempt to assassinate some person, and had been sentenced to confinement on *the ground of his derangement*. He appeared not to have shaved for some time, and his countenance was very ghastly … The general appearance of this prison in the interior is dirty and disgusting, but the cell of the poor convict was *horribly loathsome*.[172]

Though marking it offhandedly, Gurney's correspondent made a clear distinction between his own emotional style, and that of his party who, when faced with the 'ghastly' spectacle of a murderous madman, and the 'intolerable stench' of the cell, found themselves unwilling to persist. The philanthropist, by contrast, 'stood at the door for some time' – emotional self-mastery allowing him to contemplate the true condition of the miserable madman.

Indeed, activists made a point of distinguishing this model of disinterestedness from the typical polite observer. For the lawyer John Carr, recording his private travels around Ireland, zealous inquiry into the plight of the lunatic was a point of honour. Recording the

---

[171] Quoted in Brown, 'Rethinking', 443.
[172] Joseph Gurney, *Notes on a Visit made to some of the Prisons in Scotland and the North of England, in Company with Elizabeth Fry; with some General Observations on the Subject of Prison Discipline*, (London, 1819), 108-9.

'loathsome' glares of idiots and maniacs in the Limerick workhouse, he felt compelled to add that while his travels were for leisure, he 'never flinched from the perilous duty of investigating the public abodes of vice and misery.'[173] The prison reformer James Neild was more explicitly political in his remarks on such inquiries, considering the complacency with which the British public viewed places of confinement as a lamentable outgrowth of respectable society's emotional indifference. Due to their inability (or unwillingness) to sympathise with even genteel prisoners, Neild suggested, polite onlookers remained detached from the 'abuses' perpetuated in places of confinement, and thus 'suffer[ed] them to be continued.'[174] Implicit here is the assumption that fashionable ease stunted charitable enthusiasm. Indeed, Neild contrasted the stereotypically 'cautious *Man*' with the 'generous *Youth*', who, owing (presumably) to his unfamiliarity with the luxuries of the Polite World, 'hazards his existence to rescue a fellow creature from destruction'.[175]

For Neild then, other-directed action was a question of taste or emotional style, a point made clear in his description of a philanthropic encounter with a confined lunatic, penned almost a decade prior. In an account of an inspection of a Cornwall workhouse, reprinted in the Quaker philanthropist John Coakley Lettsom's regular column on prison reform in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1804, Neild expressed his dismay at discovering a 'poor lunatic' horribly beaten, and confined to a cell swimming with effluvia:

> He lay stretched on a little short and dirty straw at the further end, with a few rags, but no shirt upon him. … His shaggy hair, long beard, dirty and *livid* face, gave him the appearance of a monster rather than a man. He took no notice … till I came close up to him; he then took his eyes off his book, and looked at me with a more forcible appeal to humanity than I had ever felt.[176]

The story concluded in the manner of most reformist narratives, with Neild applying to the local worthies to intervene in the lunatic's case, and the conditions subsequently being ameliorated. I will examine the development of the conventional humanitarian narrative in the next chapter. Here though I would like to draw attention to two important elements of

---

[173] John Carr, *The Stranger in Ireland: or, a Tour in the Southern and Western Parts of that Country, in the Year 1805* (Philadelphia, 1806), 202.
[174] James Neild, *State of the Prisons in England, Scotland, and Wales* (London, 1812), liii-liv.
[175] *Ibid.*, liii.
[176] James Neild, 'To Dr. Lettsom', *The Gentleman's Magazine* 74 (July, 1804), 609.

this account. The first is that Neild did not shy away from the sensationalism of such a scene, rather purportedly fixing the dirty, broken 'monster' firmly within his frame of reference. More importantly, when the lunatic trapped him in the sensational gaze, he withstood the temptation to turn away, embracing abjection as a 'forcible appeal to humanity' – as sympathy. The second, and related point is that Neild's depiction of his disinterest was aestheticised, drawing upon the critical discourse discussed above. Pre-empting the conjecture of why a man of fortune 'should delight in nothing so much as visiting scenes of filth and misery', Neild argued that he could 'feel a greater gratification in the pursuit, than in any other disposal of my time, or that fortune can furnish.'[177] Rather than alluding to the sensual or 'erotic' joy that eighteenth-century sentimentalists attributed to philanthropic impulses, Neild's 'gratification' here is grounded in the principles of the 'Romantic' aesthetic: a seemingly ascetic 'delight', deriving from an exposure *to* the sensational spectacle.

Perhaps the most illustrative example of the new emotional style in practice can be found in the early writings of Samuel Tuke, the Yorkshire tea merchant whose advocacy for lunacy reform can be justly said to have stimulated the movement across the Atlantic. A devout Quaker, Tuke shared many of Howard's cultural and religious predilections, and it is clear that he identified with the same 'humanitarian' tradition. Indeed, implying an affinity with Howard's earlier mission, Tuke's first publication on the lunacy question, an 1811 article published in *The Philanthropist*, purported to explore the 'State of the Insane Poor' in Britain. Tuke's intention was to highlight what he considered to be the inexcusable neglect of the mad, by recalling some inquiries that he made about the management of insane paupers at a workhouse 'in the south of England'. This investigation, he claimed, led to the discovery of the privation suffered by these inmates: exposure to the elements, lack of many essentials and, in one case, heavy coercion.[178] The conclusions that Tuke drew from these findings (that a cycle of neglect was being perpetuated in places of confinement due to an ineffectual system of surveillance and inspection, and that the custodial practices of these institutions were detrimental to the cure of mad patients) were a commonplace of the reformist narrative. Again though, the significance of this sort of account was its presumption that the philanthropist's sympathy compelled him to seek out the abject bodies of the insane poor, while his steely self-command enabled him to overcome aversion

---

[177] *Ibid*., 610.
[178] S[amuel] T[uke], 'On the State of the Insane Poor', in *Philanthropist* 1 (1811), 358-9.

(including feelings of sublime 'astonishment'), thus allowing a rational critique of the conditions of confinement. That Tuke would have attributed his activism to a superior judgement would be unsurprising: with a comprehensive liberal education at a dissenting academy he was well schooled in contemporaneous theories of aesthetics and discrimination, with a later biographer describing him as possessing 'rigidly correct *taste*.'[179] Certainly, it was against such a figuratively 'Romantic' emotional style that he judged the actions of the workhouse governors. Although conceding that intervention in closed institutions was difficult, given the level of control wielded by superintendents, Tuke advised that while

> we may palliate the conduct of the guardians of this institution, yet we cannot consider them as free from blame. It was their bounded duty to visit, to examine ... We cannot sufficiently regret that apathy or timidity of mind which represses vigorous exertion on such an occasion. Surely a mind actuated by the virtuous sympathies of our nature, would not have joined with comfort the warm social circle, or reposed his head on a soft pillow, whilst he knew that any one was enduring so many privations, and so much misery, which it was not only in his power, but was his duty to relieve.[180]

Like Howard before him, Tuke linked humanity to a stoical firmness, out of a belief that this emotional style enabled active exertion. When viewed in this light, the workhouse governors – inclined to a life of ease, and sentimental pleasures – could not be thought to possess 'virtuous sympathy' to any significant degree. Emotion, after all, was worthless without action.

IV. Conclusion: Painful Sympathy and the Makings of Reform

This chapter has argued that the emergence of a dedicated lunacy reform movement was dependent on a widespread shift in emotional norms at the turn of the nineteenth century. As moralists enacted the dissolution of the sentimental emotional regime, the subsequent redefinition of valued expressions provided the impetus for the famed 'zeal' of nineteenth-century social reformers; indeed, this shift can be seen as the necessary precondition for this characteristic style of activism.

---

[179] Anon 'The Late Samuel Tuke, Esq., of York', *The Journal of Psychological Medicine and Mental Pathology* 11 (London, 1858), 174.
[180] Tuke, 'Insane Poor', 359.

Andrew Scull is certainly correct in assuming that new ideas about the inherent sensitivity of the insane drove reformers to censure those traditionally involved in their treatment. However, it must also be recognised that, in the minds of contemporaries at least, the issue of whether mad people were *deserving of* pity was distinct from the question of whether spectators were *capable* of expressing sympathy towards them – and this was a determination drawn from a wider cultural debate about the nature of emotions. As the authenticity of sentimental emotion became increasingly suspect, new forms of expression were mandated, which implicitly redefined the terms on which honour and virtue were gauged. Marking a distinction between a 'sensibility which is bounded to our *own* interests and concerns', and one which 'embraces *all* that appertains to man', this new emotional standard thus naturalised a conception of disinterestedness that would define the Whig interpretation of the humanitarian sensibility.[181]

What occurs in this period then, is not so much the mobilisation of some latent capacity for fellow-feeling to the insane, as the endorsement of a new pedagogy of sympathy, which encouraged a set of martial values for emulation and embodiment. Taken within this context, the Edinburgh Asylum committee's allusion to a 'humanity' with 'courage to investigate' the plight of the mad should not be taken as empty rhetoric, but rather the assertion of a new emotional style that equated 'active exertion' with political disinterest. Drawing upon the exemplars of moral steadfastness flooding the literature on philanthropy at the turn of the century, such 'wise and disinterested men' were in the process of inculcating norms and expressions which both prompted intervention, and legitimated political action within civil society. Certainly, such displays of firmness and vigour characterised the rhetoric of Britain's emergent network of lunacy reformers, during the first wave of nationwide agitation on the issue. Thus when Lord Robert Seymour, a champion of lunacy reform in the House of Commons, gave an influential speech in favour of reform in 1814, he reiterated parliament's 'duty … to attend to and watch' the insane: an imperative, he declared, that superseded those 'feelings [that] prompt us to turn our backs on these unhappy persons'. This critique also, naturally, led him to condemn the 'apathy' of those traditionally charged with the stewardship of the mad.[182] In a similar vein, a critic in *The Times*, commenting on the seeming ineffectiveness of traditional modes of confinement for the insane in 1816,

---

[181] William Roberts, *The Looker-On* 60 (23 June 1793), 474 [emphasis added].
[182] T.C. Hansard, *The Parliamentary Debates from the Year 1803 to the Present Time*, Vol. 28 (London, 1814), columns 662-3.

lamented that sentimentalism's emotional practices were instilling fashionable onlookers with complacency, and thus encouraging them to '[shun] acquaintance with true misery in its untempting garb'. Though this writer acknowledged that tears shed over novels were regularly attributed 'to a good heart', he condemned such sentiments as 'self-flattery', a sheen for 'barren and *ill-wasted* pity'.[183]

In many ways this shift in norms was the product of social forces, both addressing the anxieties of a bourgeoisie compelled to facilitate industrial and imperial expansion, as well as reflecting the political aspirations of the more marginalised elements of the gentry. However, we should not discount the possibility that this change was a product of the prevailing emotional culture: an offshoot of sensibility's imperative for public display. If sentimentalism's emotional practices were conditioning individuals to faint before a theatrical rendition of mania, or fall into a fit merely by reading a letter from a depressed correspondent, then it stands to reason that concerned onlookers would begin to question the sincerity of the cult of sensibility's humanitarian ethos. Moreover, if we assume that much of the discontent that many sentimentalists felt towards the sight of insanity was owing to sentimentalism's performative demands, the broadening of emotional norms evident in this period can in fact be read as an attempt to limit emotional suffering, by *destigmatising* a wide range of affective responses.

It is important to note that this new emotional style did not necessarily seek to transform popular responses to madness. While it did undoubtedly shape the nature of intellectual inquiry into the subject (encouraging individuals to scrutinise the mad body), sentimentalism's core associations were not eroded. Madness, as spectacle, was still perceived as abjection, and distinct forms were met with the same feelings of sentiment or alarm. Morality was now simply assessed by the capacity to *overcome* instinctive feelings, a norm which necessitated a new set of competencies and emotional practices. The imposition of a complementary theory of connoisseurship, which aestheticized these formerly proscribed feelings, demonstrates the extent to which moral theorists sought to naturalise these behaviours.

---

[183] Anon, 'Observations upon the Mad-House Reports, with a Proposal of at least One Remedy', *The Times* (17 May 1816).

With this in mind, we can perhaps offer a revision to Max Byrd's claim that Romantic culture fostered the 'disposition to regard [madness] sympathetically, curiously'.[184] As we have seen, Byrd suggested that the Romantics' taste for the sublime in poetry made engagement with the insane more palatable, because it reconstituted the 'bestial or chaotic' ravings of the lunatic as 'rapturous and ennobling'. However, with abjection being embraced less for its sublime interest, as for its capacity to excite a new species of experience – sensational 'harmony' with the world – we can perhaps say that insanity's appeal owed less to the creative powers it was said to reflect and unleash, than to the emotional standard which attributed virtue to the capacity to scrutinise nature's most horrific sights. Indeed, as we will see in the next chapter, it was this new interpretation of sensational affect that gave lunacy reformers' humanitarian narratives their moral and intellectual authority.

---

[184] Byrd, *Visits to Bedlam*, 115.

Chapter 4. Spectacles 'Too Shocking for Description': Sensationalism and the Emergence of Lunacy Reform in Early-Nineteenth-Century Britain

In November 1807, *The Times* ran the story of 'a most melancholy spectacle' seen in St. James's Park: 'A Lunatic. – A female, of wretched appearance, almost naked, and shivering with cold', who had been residing around some seats in the gardens for several days. Though her 'incoherent' mutterings and tale of ruin left the assembled onlookers with 'no room to doubt her mental derangement', the woman's story did impress on the spectators the cause of her exposure: a lack of 'proper attendance' in London's poorhouses enabling the pauper to escape confinement. Duly concerned by the woman's presence, some 'persons of respectability undertook to see her properly disposed of' – presumably in the care of one of London's more officious workhouse masters or madhouse keepers.[1]

As we have already seen, this sort of curious tale of the wandering vagrant was a mainstay of the British popular press, and the resolution given here was typical of turn-of-the-century social commentary, with genteel observers shown to exhibit both their charitable inclinations, as well as their public spirit (in removing a public nuisance). Yet the scenario presented was something new to the nineteenth century. Reform narratives in the eighteenth-century press typically presented polite spectators passively contemplating plaintive lunatics in faux pastoral scenes. By contrast, it was the abjection of this spectacle, the lunatic's *wretchedness*, which was said to draw in concerned spectators. Significant too was the stated outcome of the episode involving the wretched madwoman. Spurred by the painful spectacle, the apparently sympathetic observers did not simply dispense alms for her care: they were shown to be compelled to investigate the causes of her exposure, thus highlighting the failings of London's already suspect mad-trade. This association between spectacle and moral inquiry situates the scenario within what Thomas Laqueur has termed the 'humanitarian narrative', a style of representation characteristic of Victorian-era social reform literature which focus on broken and wretched bodies. Drawing upon the work of Thomas Haskell, who had previously explained the 'humanitarian sensibility' as a product of greater public awareness of the interconnectedness of distant strangers, Laqueur identifies

---

[1] *The Times* (9 November 1807).

suffering bodies as the loci of such causal attributions.[2] These 'humanitarian narratives', with their emphasis on bodily pain, aimed at 'creat[ing] a sense of property in the objects of compassion', so as to '[bridge] the gulf between facts, compassion, and action'.[3] This emphasis on the corporal connection between bodies fits well with the new emotional culture that I have been documenting, and it is perhaps unsurprising to find that Laqueur explicitly distinguished such narratives from sentimental depictions of suffering, which were simply designed to excite *affection* for the marginal other through expression of their interior distress.[4] This is not to say that sentimentalism did not play a role in humanitarian rhetoric from the late eighteenth century; Gothic novels revelled in the same moral dilemmas that sentimentalists addressed, albeit in a 'monstrously exaggerated' form.[5] What it does suggest, though, is that by the early nineteenth century, at the time when sentimental emotion was being delegitimised in public life, the spectacle of the body in pain came to be associated with moral enquiry: a sign that provoked an inquisitorial mindset in an otherwise unconcerned onlooker.

This chapter considers the distinctive rhetoric and media campaigns of turn-of-the-century lunacy reformers in light of these findings. Historians have long acknowledged that these political activists utilised the press to achieve their ends, orchestrating highly emotive media campaigns, as a means of swaying popular opinion.[6] Yet while this literature has treated the reformers' altruistic claims with some scepticism (Andrew Scull, for instance, regularly characterises this rhetoric as 'propaganda'), as a whole it rests on commonplace assumptions about emotional life, specifically, the notion that human agents possess some

---

[2] Thomas Laqueur, 'Bodies, Details, and the Humanitarian Narrative', in *The New Cultural History*, ed. Lynn Hunt (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), 176-7. Haskell identified the genesis of this sensibility in the proliferation of calculating habits inherent to capitalism's 'market-oriented form of life' (Haskell, 'Humanitarian Sensibility, Part 2', 548

[3] Laqueur, 'Bodies', 179. On the utilisation of humanitarian narratives in British political discourse in the nineteenth century see Tony Ballantyne, 'Humanitarian Narratives: Knowledge and the Politics of Mission and Empire', *Social Sciences and Missions* 24 (2011), 233-264; *idem*, 'Moving Texts and 'Humane Sentiment': Materiality, Mobility, and the Emotions of Imperial Humanitarianism', *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 17 – 1 (2016); Mike Sanders, 'Manufacturing Accident: Industrialism and the Worker's Body in Early Victorian Fiction', *Victorian Literature and Culture* (2000), 313-329.

[4] *Ibid*., 180. See also Teresa Goddu, '"To Thrill the Land with Horror": Antislavery Discourse and the Gothic Imagination', in *Gothic Topographies: Language, Nation Building and 'Race'*, ed. P.M. Mehtonen and Matti Savolainen (London & New York: Routledge, 2013), 74-5.

[5] Coral Ann Howells, *Love, Mystery, and Misery: Feeling in Gothic Fiction* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 7-8 (qtd. 8).

[6] See, for example, Jones, *Lunacy*, 79, 86-92; Porter, *Madmen*; Scull, *Most Solitary of Afflictions*, 134.

universal intolerance to pain, which is triggered by visceral depictions of suffering. For example, the *History of Bethlem* (1997) details the sensational depictions of abuse presented before the 1815 House of Commons Select Committee on Madhouses, concluding that such narratives were merely utilised to 'provoke outrage', and 'create the maximum impression of horror' in audiences.[7]

While reformers undoubtedly saw some benefit in exciting discomforting feelings in their audience – media sensationalism and moral opprobrium being firmly linked since the emergence of print – the assumption of a uniform responsiveness to sensational forms threatens to obscure the cultural work performed by these representations.[8] However prevalent the association between disgust and moral outrage in eighteenth-century moral philosophy, we should not assume that even the most consciously 'enlightened' observers were conditioned to affect a conventionally 'modern' response to sensationalised depictions of suffering.[9] In her study of nineteenth-century sensationalism, Ann Cvetkovich has suggested that 'the apparent naturalness of bodily sensation or affect is itself a construction', and thus subject to the vicissitudes of culture.[10] Indeed, Mario Klarer's contention that the incorporation of detailed and eroticised descriptions of corporeal suffering into humanitarian writings was owing to the 'particular significance' such narratives seemed to carry from the late eighteenth century implies that such sensational responses have a history of their own.[11]

This chapter, therefore, will reconsider the rhetoric surrounding early-nineteenth-century lunacy activism to better understand the processes by which images of corporeal suffering were mobilised in support of the reformist agenda, and, in doing so, outline the more complex cultural work these narratives performed. Here, I draw inspiration from recent work into the politics of affect, such as Martha Stoddard Holmes's study of disability in Victorian literary culture, which has drawn attention to the affective discourses that 'formalize and institutionalize disability's connection to a particular set of emotional

---

[7] Andrews et al., *History of Bethlem*, 417-24 (qtd. 422).
[8] See, for example, Joy Wiltenburg, 'True Crime: The Origins of Modern Sensationalism', *American Historical Review* 109, no. 5 (2004), 1377-1404 (spec. 1384-1404).
[9] Adam Smith, for instance, famously derided 'the representation of the agonies of bodily pain' as both transient and indecorous (*Moral Sentiments*, 51-60 (qtd. 58)).
[10] Cvetkovich, *Mixed Feelings*, 24.
[11] Mario Klarer, 'Humanitarian Pornography: John Gabriel Stedman's *Narrative of a Five Years Expedition Against the Revolting Negroes of Surinam* (1796)', *New Literary History* 36, no. 4 (2005), 560.

codes'.[12] She has called for the deconstruction of such discourses, to better assess 'what purposes are served or other forms of social organization masked by describing bodies on the basis of [these] feelings.'[13] It is this more nuanced analysis that I will conduct here. Rather than simply outlining the ways that abject representations of madness were utilised by lunacy reformers to elicit moral outrage at the alleged cruelties of madhouse keepers, I want to 'explore how meanings are given to the energy attached to particular events and representations' as Cvetkovich puts it, so as to illustrate how material and political forces came to shape the characteristic responses of the habitus.[14] Such an analysis will also, inevitably, supplement the critical literature on the 'humanitarian narrative', underscoring the importance of emotion to the inquisitorial mindset such representations engendered.

The first section situates early-nineteenth-century lunacy reform within the period's dominant structure of feeling, to illustrate the ways that contemporary literary culture shaped the characteristically inquisitorial mindset of the reformers. It shows how, following the decline of sentimentalism, reformers embraced the discourse of sensationalism as a means of intuition, and a prompt to moral enquiry. Following from this, I will examine the utilisation of 'humanitarian narratives' to early lunacy reform campaigns, to assess the role of emotions in the reformist agenda. Far from being a means of exciting horror and outrage, it is shown that these sensational spectacles were incorporated to induce a 'reality effect' in audiences, which legitimised the reformers' claims. In the final section I will consider the affective politics of the reform movement, examining the ways that these sensational representations were used to naturalise bourgeois ideology.

I. Feelings of Duty: Sensation and Investigation in the 'Age of Reform'

In investigating the structural causes of the wretched lunatic's exposure, the seemingly public spirited citizens mentioned in the *Times* article were displaying what was becoming a characteristic attitude towards the treatment and management of society's outcasts. As part of a much wider movement for administrative and legislative reorganisation – Britain's so-called 'Age of Reform' – 'humanitarian' reformers coalesced to agitate for the restructure

---

[12] Martha Stoddard Holmes, *Fictions of Affliction: Physical Disability in Victorian Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010, 4).
[13] *Ibid*., 4.
[14] Cvetkovich, *Mixed Feelings*, 24.

of traditional systems of social welfare and policing.[15] As we have seen in the previous chapter, lunacy reform was one such movement that gained prominence in the first two decades of the nineteenth century, with a range of vocal critics issuing calls for legislative inquiry into the efficiency and security of existing methods of treating the mad. At the time that the condition of this individual madwoman was being investigated, parliament was well on its way to negotiating the so-called County Asylums Act of 1808, which enabled local magistrates to levy parish rates to provide secure public institutions for the confinement of criminal or pauper lunatics. This legislation was followed by a flurry of exposés and inquiries into both public and private asylums from 1813, culminating in the House of Commons Select Committee into Madhouses of 1815-16.[16]

Much of this agitation was spurred by the publication of Samuel Tuke's *The Description of the Retreat* (1813), a book that purported to establish the primacy of a new, 'humane' system of asylum therapeutics. Contesting the medical orthodoxy that the madman was best restored to reason through physical depletion, Tuke provided a wealth of evidence in support of the system practiced at the famed Quaker-established asylum, the York Retreat. 'Moral treatment', as it was called, substituted medicine's heroic measures for socialisation and work therapy, out of a belief that this would more effectively excite the disordered patient's innate 'desire for esteem': a regimen that had an obvious appeal to middle-class social reformers, who already doubted the rehabilitative efficacy of crowded, carceral institutions.[17] With its emphasis on labour, and affirmation of the disordered individual's self-control, Tuke's system seemingly held out hope that lunatics could be restored to middle-class respectability.[18] From the time of its publication, the *Description of the Retreat* was recognised as a landmark in the treatment of the insane: a body of 'facts' against which traditional institutions were contrasted. Indeed, within months of its appearance, Tuke's book had drawn the ire of Charles Best, the head physician at the rival York Lunatic Asylum, who perceived in the *Description* some veiled insinuations about the inefficacy of his own practice, and thus an attack on his medical authority. He turned to the press to denounce the

---

[15] This phrase was popularised by Llewellyn Woodward in *The Age of Reform 1815-1870* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962).

[16] See, for example, Smith, *Lunatic Hospitals*, 181-85.

[17] On the history of the Retreat, and its influence see Digby, *Madness*; Porter, *Madmen*, 224-7; Scull, *Most Solitary of Afflictions*, 96-103; Louis Charland, 'Benevolent Theory: Moral Treatment at the York Retreat', *History of Psychiatry* 18, no. 1 (2007), 61-80. For a less optimistic appraisal see Foucault, *History of Madness*, 463-512.

[18] Scull, *Most Solitary of Afflictions*, 99.

work, and in the process sparked a letter war that brought unprecedented public attention to the management of the Asylum, thus beginning the nationwide inquiry into the 'mad-trade'.

It is the broader impetus for this reformist inquisition that interests me here. While the material preconditions of the lunacy reform movement are now well established – the economic demand for secure and efficient reformatories for the mad prompting legislative interposition – its cultural basis has attracted little interest in the recent historiography.[19] In evaluating the intermittent bursts of public anxiety about the mad-trade and the plight of the insane, historians have typically fallen on the same, generalised suppositions about the nature and causes of the discontent: that lunacy reformers, having adopted a 'modern' sensibility towards the insane, were driven to disgust by the treatments typically meted out to them; that these critics, subsequently, published salacious and often hyperbolic descriptions of madhouses, so as to stimulate the disgust of the public and law-makers.

Such narratives are valuable, but in generalising the effects of humanitarian rhetoric some important nuance is lost. These accounts all rest on the assumption that the arousal of disgust is intrinsically linked to the arousal of moral outrage. As I have shown, such assumptions have been undermined by recent research into the history of emotions. Moreover, in passing over the construction of these media campaigns – and the nature of their reception by audiences over time – important issues have been overlooked: namely, the question of *why* these narratives radically affected the forms of moral inquiry in the early nineteenth century; and whether or not different tropes or narrative forms may have affected distinctive responses in observers.

These are the sorts of issues Thomas Laqueur addresses in his delineation of the so-called 'humanitarian narrative', which, he argues, formed the foundation of reformist agitation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In his rendering, the conventional 'humanitarian narrative' is 'characterized … by its reliance on detail as the sign of truth', an amalgam of fact and spectacle that was designed to highlight to the audience the obscure causes of human suffering.[20] Such details, Laqueur suggests, were constitutive of a 'reality effect', which, in turn, produced the requisite feelings ('sympathetic passions') in an

---

[19] A notable exception is Michael Brown's exemplary study of the cultural foundation of British lunacy reform. See Brown, 'Rethinking'.
[20] Laqueur, 'Bodies', 176.

observer, and thus prompted moral intervention.[21] Whereas sentimentalised narratives of distress from the late eighteenth century were intended to excite mere fellow-feeling in the spectator, 'humanitarian narrative', with its detailed description of broken and abject bodies, 'exposes the lineaments of causality and human agency: ameliorative action is represented as possible, effective, and therefore morally imperative.'[22]

Before considering how the 'humanitarian narrative' drove lunacy reform I want to examine the concept's emotional basis, because this offers a key to understanding why such narratives carried an imperative to *investigate* the mistreatment of others. For all its emphasis on inquiry, Laqueur's account fails to outline the foundation of this inquisitorial mindset, noting simply that eighteenth-century writers placed an unprecedented emphasis on the wretched body as the locus of social inquiry, and loosely attributing this to interest in the 'sympathetic passions'. This invocation of 'sympathy' as a basis for long-term social movements is problematic, given the findings of the previous chapter. But more pressing is the question of *why* the sight of wretchedness instinctively signalled to onlookers the necessity of investigation and intervention. As we have seen, eighteenth-century sentimentalists had little interest in examining the plight of abject lunatics, like the one rendered in the *Times* article above. Typically they were shown averting their eyes from such a sight, or at best, just contemplating their personal distresses. Yet when reporting on the woman in St. James's Park, the correspondent to the *The Times* made sure to stress that observers were compelled to investigate the *structural* causes of the woman's exposure.

Given the emotive nature of 'humanitarian narratives' – depicting broken bodies as a means of physically affecting the reader/viewer – it is perhaps more useful to consider their political import in the context of the period's dominant structure of feeling. Nineteenth-century popular culture was characterised by an interest in *sensationalism*, a genre and discourse that was articulated in novels, plays, and news reports from the early modern period. Sensationalism is the structure of feeling which feeds on instinctive corporeal sensations, with sensational spectacles often characterised by the embodiments they are said to produce: 'shock', disgust, pain, titillation. Moreover, such feelings are often said to be overpowering, and for this reason sensationalism can be usefully linked to the monstrous or sublime – John Jervis describes it as 'a popular culture version of the sublime'.[23]

---

[21] *Ibid.*, 177.
[22] *Ibid.*, 178. See also Goddu, 'To Thrill the Land with Horror', 78-80.
[23] Jervis, *Sensational Subjects*, 33.

Historians have been quick to link this discourse to the humanitarian sensibility. It is these conventionally sensational tropes and emblems that gave humanitarian rhetoric its affective force, and, as I mentioned above, historians of Western humanitarianism have presumed that such feelings provoked some inherent outrage which prepared the ground for political advocacy.[24] However, as the scholarly literature on this genre has shown, the significance of this structure of feeling was not confined to its capacity to excite particular associations (though, as we will see, it was certainly utilised for consciously instrumental purposes). Rather, literary scholars have emphasised the influence of sensationalism to contemporaneous understandings of cognition and intuition, a notion that can help explain the development of the inquisitorial mindset identified by Laqueur.

The genesis of sensationalism's most prominent emblems – fear, obscurity, violation, eroticised violence – can be located in the Gothic novels produced in England in the late-eighteenth century. In these texts, virtuous maidens were pitted against shadowy oppressors (often continental Catholics), and the protagonists presented with some sort of mystery or concealment that required unravelling: all the while struggling against crippling fear and superstition. The overriding experience – for both protagonist and reader – was thus one of suspense; as Eugenia DeLamotte has suggested, 'the primary source of Gothic terror' was the sense of 'not knowing', productive of a fearful apprehension, but also complementary curiosity.[25] As such, Gothic novelists consistently modelled the intrepid pursuit of knowledge, with their protagonists shown to 'draw aside veils, … rip up floorboards and wainscotting, venture through any door they happen to find ajar, and force their way through many that are not' in search of some elusive truth.[26] What is perhaps more significant though was these texts' cultural function, tacitly undermining conventional notions of reasoned inquiry. In her study of Ann Radcliffe's Gothic novels, DeLamotte notes that though the

---

[24] Sensationalism's widest mobilisation was probably in American abolitionist rhetoric of the early Victorian era, in which 'graphic portrayals of slaves' subjective experience of physical pain emerged as common antislavery fare' (Clark, 'The Sacred Rights of the Weak', 463). On the utilisation of sensationalism in abolitionist publications see also Goddu, 'To Thrill the Land with Horror'. For its use in other humanitarian or social reform movements see Kevin Rozario, '"Delicious Horrors": Mass Culture, The Red Cross, and the Appeal of Modern American Humanitarianism', *American Quarterly* 55, no. 3 (2003), 417-55; Bertrand Taithe, 'Horror, Abjection and Compassion: from Dunant to Compassion Fatigue', *New Formations* 62 (2007), 128; Cvetkovich, *Mixed Feelings*, 165-97.
[25] Eugenia DeLamotte, *Perils of the Night: A Feminist Study of Nineteenth-Century Gothic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 48.
[26] *Ibid.*, 49.

author impelled the virtues of reason and order, she held out a place for the imagination in the perception of reality. Since her protagonists were faced with mystery at every turn, they were thus forced to scrutinise and interpret any sound or sight that crossed their sensory threshold.[27]

The significance of this ambiguous approach to intuition was to reinforce a new conception of rational induction, with bodily sensations – shock, terror, chills, eroticism – providing cues to curiosity. Karen Halttunen has pointed to the close links between the discourse of sensationalism and the 'semi-sociological literature of exposé', noting the appropriation of titillating tropes of mystery and suffering by fledgling advocacy movements, notably, by asylum reformers.[28] Examining the 'quasi-legal procedure of uncovering secrets' central to the mid-century sensation novel, Ann Cvetkovich points to the deep implication of sensationalism with this process of systematic or compulsive investigation. In these texts, '[c]haracters are alerted to the presence of a mystery by their own bodily sensations of fear, excitement, and suspense', which initiated a 'hermeneutics of suspicion in which every fact that excites a sensation merits investigation.'[29] This conception can be found in texts from as early as the 1790s, when novelists like Radcliffe began to experiment with new aesthetic discourses. A key scene of her *Mysteries of Udolpho* is the discovery by the nervous protagonist Emily of a secretive 'veil of black silk', covering a painting in the mysterious castle where she was sequestered. As the narrator attested:

> The singularity of the circumstance struck her, and she stopped before it, wishing to remove the veil, and examine what could thus carefully be concealed, but somewhat wanting courage.[30]

So being 'struck' by a mysterious concealment was enough to pique the spectator's curiosity; and though the timid Emily was originally too afraid to peek behind the veil, she was fixated on the sight, which, the narrator explained, was the natural response to such a mystery: 'terror of this nature, as it occupies and expands the mind, and elevates it to high expectation,

---

[27] *Ibid.*, 47-8.

[28] Halttunen, 'Pornography of Pain', 313; *idem*, 'Gothic Mystery and the Birth of the Asylum: The Cultural Construction of Deviance in Early-Nineteenth-Century America', in *Moral Problems in American Life: New Perspectives on Cultural History*, ed. Karen Halttunen and Lewis Perry eds (Ithaca (NY): Cornell University Press, 1998), 41-57.

[29] Cvetkovich, *Mixed Feelings*, 72. See also Jervis, *Sensational Subjects*, 29.

[30] Radcliffe, *Mysteries*, 233

is purely sublime, and leads us, by a kind of fascination, to seek even the object, from which we appear to shrink.'[31] Thus, DeLamotte concludes, 'Emily's curiosity is a positive virtue': displaying 'her capacity for sublime awe', and prompting her eventual discovery of the truth behind the veil.[32]

That this mode of induction would come to shape thinking about social reform in this period is unsurprising, given its political import. Though scholars have typically emphasised the reactionary or conservative nature of Gothic novels, the texts did, at times, tread a staunchly Whiggish line. With its fixation on the supposed iniquity of 'feudal politics and popish deception', the genre as a whole 'drew upon and reinforced the cultural identity of the middle-class Protestant readership, which could thrill to the scenes of political and religious persecution safe in the knowledge that they themselves had awoken from such historical nightmares.'[33] Moreover, this valorisation of curiosity could easily be read as subverting traditional mores. As Barbara Benedict has shown, the Gothic-inspired fictions of Radcliffe and William Godwin 'construe curiosity as the noble collection of impressions and information about others', with such texts tacitly endorsing the acquisition of such intelligence as a means of 'either self-improvement or benevolence.'[34] That the impertinently curious subjects of these texts were marginal figures only added to the texts' revolutionary import. By probing the shadowy forces that precipitated their oppression, these figures were implicitly 'deconstructing conventional roles', and an optimistic reading of such texts can claim curiosity 'alternately as a threat to established institutions and ... a promise of progress.'[35] At the very least, Gothic literature showed curiosity to have 'the power to reveal and redress past injuries', a supposition which firmly linked it to the cause of social reform.[36] Early texts interrogated issues of secrecy and 'private' corruption,

---

[31] *Ibid.*, 248.

[32] DeLamotte, *Perils*, 50.

[33] Chris Baldrick and Robert Mighall, 'Gothic Criticism', in *A New Companion to the Gothic*, ed. David Punter (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 278. See also Fred Botting, *Gothic* (London: Routledge, 1996) 49, 63-4.

[34] Barbara Benedict, *Curiosity: A Cultural History of Early Modern Inquiry* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 203. Looking forward to the sensation fictions of the mid-Victorian era, Laurence Talairach-Vielmas has effectively linked such novels' interest in inquiry and exhumation to the proliferation and legitimation of the natural sciences in this period: all of which conceived progress, ambiguously, as the 'prying' or 'digging' up of truth ('Sensation Fiction: A Peep Behind the Veil', in *The Victorian Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*, ed. Andrew Smith and William Hughes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 36-40).

[35] Benedict, *Curiosity*, 229.

[36] *Ibid.*, 244.

evolving, as Anne Humphreys has shown, into the 'mysteries novel', in which the 'over-riding mysteries … concern the abuses of [public] institutions.'[37]

Given the didactic intent of such texts, it is possible to see how the proliferation of sensationalism could encourage the sort of zealous inquisitiveness we find reflected in contemporaneous reformist texts.[38] It was to this structure of feeling that Godfrey Higgins, vocal critic of the York Lunatic Asylum, attributed his activism. Following a publicised quarrel with the Asylum's head physician, Charles Best, in 1813-14, Higgins eventually gained access to the medical space, the conditions of which heightened his suspicions about the wider medical regime. In Higgins' rendering, it was not mere *reason* that prompted these misgivings. Rather, it was the sensations of 'astonishment' that he felt at discovering that the Asylum's beleaguered authorities had installed what he viewed as specious improvements to the House – new privies – instead of 'doing any thing which might contribute to … the comfort and convenience of the patients'. This led Higgins to 'entertain great suspicions that very gross abuses still prevailed.'[39] Provoked by these sensations, he took it upon himself to scrutinise the wards, and, not finding any overt signs of neglect, turned again to his feelings for inspiration:

> After having seen, as I was told by [the Apothecary Charles] Atkinson, all the rooms for the reception of patients, I went with him to the kitchen apartments. I there caused several doors to be opened; and *being at last struck with the retired appearance of one door*, which was almost *concealed from observation* by another opening upon it, I ordered one of the keepers to unlock it. … I went in and discovered a row of cells… On entering the first cell, I found it in a state dreadful beyond description: some miserable bedding was lying on straw, which was daubed and wet with excrement and urine…[40]

---

[37] Anne Humphreys, 'Generic Strands and Urban Twists: The Victorian Mysteries Novel', *Victorian Studies* 34, no. 4 (1991), 455.
[38] As Benedict argues, the 'authorial personae' of these texts 'increasingly insist that the reader make moral choices. Readers become more than witnesses of culture; their reading implicates them in its formation' (*Curiosity*, 204).
[39] Godfrey Higgins, *A Letter to the Right Honourable Earl Fitzwilliam… Respecting the Investigation which has lately taken Place, into the Abuses at the York Lunatic Asylum* (Doncaster, 1814), 13.
[40] *Ibid.*, 13-4.

Here, the Gothic-sensationalist paradigm underwrote Higgins' subjectivity. Being, like Radcliffe's protagonist, 'struck' by a mysterious sight and vague inference of concealment, the inquisitor was compelled to investigate, thus exposing the Asylum officers' neglect. Sensation was thus represented as the basis of the reformer's inquisitiveness.

It would be wrong though to reduce sensation's moral import solely to a nascent 'hermeneutics of suspicion'. Despite their general mistrust of intense sentimental emotions, writers operating within the new emotional regime came to regard sensational feelings as consonant with a critical mindset more generally – a stimulus to rational thought. For all his stress on reason and moral imperatives, Immanuel Kant had utilised sensationalist imagery to describe the formation of the critical mindset. As Marc Djaballah notes, he characterised the imposition of 'skeptical method' as a '*shock*' or '*force*', which aroused reason from 'the comforts of its dogmatic state.'[41] Similar recourse to sensationalist tropes can be found in the writings of contemporaneous English rationalist William Godwin. Though he too sought to assert the primacy of the intellect and will over the body's appetites, Godwin's wider corpus conveys a belief that 'the distinction between reason and instinct is not absolute.'[42] Significant is his distinction between the corrupting 'pleasures of sense' and the striking corporeality associated with sensationalism, articulated most clearly in his famed *Political Justice* (1793). In a telling analogy Godwin described the hypothetical case of a man whose sensual indulgence had grown to inhibit 'moral views and dissuasives' from 'obtrud[ing] themselves into his mind'. While Godwin conceded the difficulty of influencing the judgement of an individual caught up in such passionate excess, he simultaneously held that a sharply directed appeal to their intellect could break the train of sensuality:

> Tell him at this moment that his father is dead, that he has lost or gained a considerable sum of money, or even perhaps that his favourite horse is stolen from the meadow, and his whole passion shall be instantly annihilated: So vast is the power which a mere proposition possesses over the mind of man.[43]

---

[41] Marc Djaballah, *Kant, Foucault, and Forms of Experience* (New York & London: Routledge, 2008), 56-7.

[42] For more probing analyses of Godwin's ambiguous treatment of reason, instinct, and emotions see Fairclough, *Romantic Crowd*, 93-107 (qtd. 95); Jon Mee, *Romanticism, Enthusiasm and Regulation: Poetics and the Policing of Culture in the Romantic Period* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 109-17.

[43] William Godwin, *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice, and its Influence on Morals and Happiness*, 3rd Ed., vol. 1 (London, 1798), 73.

Here, sublime annihilation extends from, and complements reason, in the dissolution of sensuality. Elsewhere he was more explicit in associating sensationalism with correct judgement. Addressing, for example, the issue of self-censorship, Godwin contended that sanitised speech, however laudable one's intentions, was 'unworthy artifice', and damaging to the cause of truth. Indeed, he countered that a rude '*shock*' was in fact 'favourable to the health and robust constitution of mind', and thus should be excited as a moral duty.[44]

While none of this is an outright endorsement of excessive feeling, such remarks do imply that, in the minds of certain rationalist critics, sensationalism was believed to be consonant with reason, or at least that violent sensations were not inimical to intellectual or moral inquiry. Certainly, the assertion that such striking affects eradicated more unfavourable affections fits with contemporary associationist psychology, which assumed that a disordered judgement should be counteracted by exciting 'opposite mental feelings'.[45] Moreover, it is evident that some contemporaries regarded such striking affects as intellectually stimulating, exciting a sort of Kantian sense of duty – a supposition that shaped the development of the lunacy reform movement.

The first indication that sensationalism, rather than sentimentalism, had the potential to motivate reformers derives from the 1770s, and the debate over the regulation of private asylums that culminated in the first Madhouse Act of 1774. Following a failed attempt at regulating London's shadowy private madhouse system in 1763, Thomas Townshend Jr., the son of the first Bill's mover, called for its reintroduction into parliament in 1773. From its introduction, the Bill's sponsors signalled their intention to stimulate sensational feelings in their hearers. Townshend teased in his introduction that he had information 'which would awaken the compassion of the most callous heart', which was followed by Sir Herbert Mackworth's more substantiated assertion:

> I have evidence in writing sufficient to shock the most hardened heart. … The scenes of distress lie hid in obscure corners; but if gentlemen were once to see them, I am convinced they would not rest a day until a Bill for their relief was passed…[46]

---

[44] William Godwin, *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice, and its Influence on General Virtue and Happiness*, vol. 1 (London, 1793), 274 [emphasis added].

[45] Bakewell, *Letter,* 38. On the use of 'shock' therapy in mental therapeutics see Porter, *Madmen*, 223; Leonard Smith, *Cure, Comfort, and Safe Custody: Public Lunatic Asylums in Early Nineteenth-Century England* (London & New York: Leicester University Press, 1999), 203-6.

[46] *Parliamentary History*, vol. 17 (1813), columns 696-7.

Already here, two decades before the Gothic craze piqued, we can see, in embryo, the same structure of feeling implicitly shaping the reformist case. The distress of the madhouse here is obscured – mysterious – and the 'shock' caused by Mackworth's evidence was assumed to compel the otherwise disinterested parliamentarians to rush to the patients' defence.

Interestingly though, despite the overt sensationalism of this opening salvo, Townshend's subsequent agitation was notably meek. Whether the difficulties he faced negotiating the Bill's content tempered his zeal, or if he feared that his audience would respond too aversively to shocking spectacles (a reasonable concern in this period, as we have seen), is not clear. What *is* evident is that his later agitation on behalf of the document was notably watered down, drawing largely from the sentimental, rather than sensational. The great concern presented by the madhouse, as represented in this later rhetoric, was not the corporeal pain the patients were subjected to, but the emotional anguish that a reasoning agent might feel if improperly confined in such 'miserable receptacles of wretchedness.' Such thoughts were 'certainly affecting', Townshend advised, 'and should be guarded against with the most careful attention'.[47]

The Bill failed to pass, not directly owing to his latent sentimentalism, but the intransigence of the House of Lords. However, Townshend's rhetorical strategies are still significant: particularly when considered in light of his second, successful insertion of the Madhouse Bill, in February 1774. When introducing the legislation in this instance, Townshend, along with the other movers, reiterated their desire to expose shocking instances to the public view, however this time the sensational tableaux were articulated for the parliamentarians. Though the specifics of Townshend's opening speech were not widely remarked upon, the press did pick up on his primary example, the case 'of a man whipped to the bone in one of these houses, and whose arm was broke by violence'.[48] The following week he reiterated his intention to stay the course, and called upon Mackworth to 'plead … powerfully' for the Bill. The case that he presented was the same that Townshend had previously referenced, and was likely the foreboding evidence that had gone unmentioned the previous year:

---

[47] *Parliamentary History*, vol. 17, column 837.
[48] *Middlesex Journal*, (17-19 February 1774).

In one of the most public streets of Manchester … a lunatic happened to kill his keeper; a fresh keeper was sent down from London by a mad doctor, with directions that if the unhappy persons out of their senses, did not do in every particular as they were ordered, to whip them till they did… he whipped one lunatic to death … He next whipped another patient to the bone. So violently was the cruel punishment given, that the man's arm was broke … no assistance was called in, least a discovery should be made...[49]

Putting delicacy aside, Mackworth exposed the whips and cracking bones to the most public forum in the land. While this relation may not have been the cause of the party's legislative successes, his exposure of corporeal pain is illustrative, when contrasted with the recourse to sentimentalised appeals in the first instance, which largely eschewed any uncomfortable reflections. It seems evident that, though writers and orators generally avoided such usages out of respect for polite sensibilities, by the closing decades of the eighteenth century the political import of sensationalism was acknowledged, and tacitly endorsed, in the pursuit of social reform. Moreover, the painful sensations deriving from such representations operated in the manner of the 'humanitarian narrative', '[exposing] to public view an unparalleled piece of *savage cruelty*' that would have otherwise failed to attract attention.[50]

The appropriation of sensational 'humanitarian narratives' by lunacy reformers was only hastened by the erasure of sentimentalism from public discourse in the 1790s. From this period, parliamentarians almost uniformly acknowledged that corporeal suffering, rather than emotional anguish, was the frame by which debates about lunacy reform measures were to be introduced.[51] More importantly, writers from this period were apt to associate sensationalism with rational induction. Illustrative here is the language employed by the Scottish theologian Stevenson Macgill, in a pulpit appeal for the Glasgow Lunatic Asylum in 1810. He lamented that polite observers did not 'come near, and contemplate with seriousness the miseries of their fellow-creatures', believing that an aesthetic engagement with such objects would affect a sort of personal enlightenment:

---

[49] *Ibid*.

[50] A Friend to the Injured, 'Letter to Thomas Townshend. On Private Madhouses', *Middlesex Journal* (March 1-3, 1774). See also the parliamentarian and prison reformer Gilbert Elliot's response to Mackworth's speech reported in *Middlesex Journal* (24-26 February 1774).

[51] See, for example, *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 30 (28 April 1815); *Ibid.*, vol. 18 (19 February 1828), 578.

how would the dark and flimsy cobwebs with which they enwrap their minds, break asunder; vanish before the powerful operations of feeling and convictions of duty; and leave them astonished and ashamed, that they could have remained so long indifferent to the woes which are around them![52]

Thus the sensational feeling attending the direct contemplation of a wretched lunatic was assumed to excite 'convictions of duty', and, more significantly, make plain to the supposedly disconnected observer their complicity in their neglect.

In such a context we can begin to understand how visceral 'humanitarian narratives' could act as a spur to moral and political inquiry from the turn of the nineteenth century, and encourage observers to act on the similarly sensational sight of a bruised, broken or wretched lunatic in the madhouse wards, or wandering the city streets.[53] It was not simply that the sensational representations were utilised to excite some innate disgust and moral opprobrium in polite observers. Rather, the structure of feeling elaborated in sensation fiction naturalised a new set of competencies and responses, which enacted an inquisitorial mindset at the promptings of sensational feeling. Returning to the example cited in *The Times*, we can see how these emotional practices stimulated lunacy reform measures. Rather than causing onlookers to turn away in disgust, the 'wretched appearance' of the madwoman was said to attract the attention of a 'numerous crowd', who were subsequently compelled to inquire of her the causes of 'her unfortunate state'. As the next section will show, the perceived 'naturalness' of sensational affect made the 'humanitarian narrative' a powerful vehicle for the mass mobilisation of reformist zeal.

II. A 'Semblance of Truth in all its Attitudes': Sensationalism's 'Reality Effect'

Though still a disparate grouping scattered across Britain, by the time of their investigations into the mad-trade in the first decades of the nineteenth century, lunacy reformers had begun

---

[52] Stevenson Macgill, *On Lunatic Asylums: A Discourse Delivered on 2d August, 1810, Previous to the Foundation Stone of the Glasgow Lunatic Asylum* (Glasgow, 1810), 21.
[53] Nineteenth-century lunacy reformers regularly attributed their life-long dedication to inquiry and reform to the enduring 'impressions' made by 'the scenes of horror and neglect' that supposedly inhered in the unreformed asylum. See Halliday, *A Letter to the Right Honourable Lord Binning, M.P. &c. &c. &c. containing Some Remarks on the State of Lunatic Asylums, and on The Number and Condition of the Insane Poor in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1816), 3; *idem*, *A General View of the Present State of Lunatics, and Lunatic Asylums, in Great Britain and Ireland, and in some Other Kingdoms* (London, 1828), 74; Susanna Corder ed., *Life of Elizabeth Fry* (London, 1853), 279.

to articulate some general principles, which would shape subsequent activism. Convinced that the existing treatments meted out to the insane were inhumane and ineffectual, they desired the implementation of moral treatment in all institutions for the insane. Moreover, they sought the imposition of a system of public visitation to stem the worst abuses in these places of confinement. To achieve these ends, the 'humanitarian narrative' offered a potent tool, providing spectacles that would interest the public in the interior of the madhouse, as well as providing tableaux of neglected and mistreated bodies, from which causality could be explicated.

Reformers were thus on the lookout for salacious cases like Mackworth's. For the increasingly vocal group of activists based in the metropolis, the figure who held the strongest appeal – and who would become the *cause célèbre* of the 1815-16 Select Committee on Madhouses – was James Norris, an American seaman confined for over a decade in London's Bethlem Hospital. Norris's case was first brought to the reformers' attention by James Tilly Matthews, one of Bethlem's disgruntled ex-patients, who had come into contact with the figurehead of the reformist party, Edward Wakefield. On Matthews' prompting, Wakefield and a group of co-conspirators gained entry to the hospital, and published details of his mode of confinement: a series of manacles, irons and chains which had effectively restricted his movement for nine years.[54]

As Roy Porter has pointed out, for these zealous inquisitors, the 'grotesque' treatment meted out to Norris represented the 'epitome of Bedlam's evils', and was a ready source of indignation. Following the publication of sketches depicting his mode of restraint, Norris 'became news', provoking outrage against the hospital and its chief medical officers, and providing grist for later inquiries and parliamentary committees (fig. 10).[55]

---

[54] See, for example, Edward Wakefield's notes of meetings with Matthews, Wakefield MS.
[55] Porter, *Madmen*, 131. On the reform party's campaigning see Scull, Mackenzie, and Hervey, *Masters of Bedlam*, 31-5.

Fig. 10. George Arnold, 'Portrait of William Norris', reprinted on a broadsheet of the same name (London, c. 1815), Wellcome Collection. The publisher, like the witnesses who gave testimony at the House of Commons Select Committee incorrectly names James Norris as 'William'.

Porter, like most writers who have examined Norris' case, presupposed a simple moral association to be aroused by his treatment: disgust, at the apparent sight of cruelty and neglect, exciting moral outrage, which led to ameliorative action. Yet such simplistic associations do not adequately explain the complex processes enacted by humanitarian rhetoric. Indeed, descriptions of James Norris's confinement can be more usefully situated within the progress of the 'humanitarian narrative', as articulated by Laqueur: the lunatic's broken and abused body being publicised to highlight the irrevocable harm caused by improper attendance in asylums.

Furthermore, as with my earlier explication of the Gothic's latent 'hermeneutics of suspicion', sensational affect played a more nuanced role in substantiating the reformers'

claims. In examining their reception, Laqueur suggested that the effectiveness of 'humanitarian narratives' stemmed from the 'empiricist revolution of the seventeenth century': the '[u]nprecedented quantities of fact' that constituted this body of literature – autopsies, published case notes, medical journals, parliamentary inquiries – establishing a 'reality effect' which bound otherwise impartial observers to the fates of the deceased.[56] The written word is thus seen as the source of these narratives' realism, with physical responses to the subjects' bodies viewed as either subsidiary, or complementary to this process. However, returning to Cvetkovich's assertion that the perceived 'naturalness or reality of the [sensational] event' owes much to its '[e]motionally charged representations', it is perhaps more useful to view this 'reality effect' as a product of aesthetic experience.[57] Indeed, in his study of sensationalism, John Jervis asserts that the '[v]iolation of the body, its integrity and boundaries' inherent to this literary mode blurs the line between the 'realistic' and 'sensational', with shocking scenes and images potentially affecting an 'intensification or transformation of reality.'[58] By this reasoning, the tendency to sensationalise representations – characteristic of most media reportage of the period, including Norris' case – is not simply intended to shock or outrage an audience, but to convince them, by intensifying the receivers' embodied responses.

A survey of 'humanitarian' writings from the turn of the nineteenth century would appear to substantiate such claims. These texts seemingly revelled in the pain inflicted on docile or submissive bodies, an interest that was prompted by what Karen Halttunen famously dubbed the 'pornography of pain': the assumption that the infliction of pain was unacceptable, and increasingly taboo, but subsequently 'obscenely titillating' to the observer.[59] Tracts purporting to expose cruel practices and institutions traded in images of flagellation and 'unusual cruelty', often with sexual overtones: representations chosen for their capacity to affect the reader/viewer.[60] Unsurprisingly, a large proportion of these published cases included submissive, or overly sensitive subjects, particularly women. Sentimentalism had naturalised a conception of the female sex as vulnerable to shame, and physical pain, an inheritance that was felt throughout the Victorian era. Thus the naked and

---

[56] Laqueur, 'Bodies', 177, 194-5.
[57] Cvetkovich, *Mixed Feelings*, 23.
[58] Jervis, *Sensational Subjects*, 23.
[59] Halttunen, 'Pornography of Pain', 304.
[60] *Ibid*., 318-25; Klarer, 'Humanitarian Pornography'.

brutalised woman figured large in reform narratives,[61] none more so than lunacy reform, in which 'accounts of the abuse of "delicate" women' effected 'a change of consciousness that led to … legislative reforms', as Elaine Showalter put it.[62] It was not just mad*women* that were depicted as overly delicate either: as a matter of course, any lunatic – however seemingly brutish or insensible – was rendered as articulate and submissive, as a means of making their treatment appear more obscene.[63]

The discourse of sensation offered reformers an array of rhetorical devices to mobilise strong feelings in their audiences. Bypassing the 'inner psychological movements' that underpinned sentimental expressions of pain of distress, the Gothic mode instead emphasised emotions' 'violent physical effects'.[64] Coral Ann Howells, for instance, notes that characters and narrators in Gothic texts regularly conveyed 'a shocked withholding of sympathy or a perplexed incomprehension' toward displays of visceral emotion.[65] The isolation of such 'physiological metaphors' was assumed to produce corresponding responses in the audience.[66] In a similar vein, the conventional self-censorship of humanitarian writers – their conscious sanitisation of the most appalling details of sensational spectacles – would have intensified the readers' responses, by implicitly highlighting the 'prurient nature' of the suffering represented.[67]

It is this attempt to intensify the pain of an observer – to overwhelm them in feeling – that guided nineteenth-century lunacy advocates in their appeals for inquiry and intervention in the mad-trade. Trophimus Fulljames is a representative example here. Writing to Home Secretary Robert Peel in 1822, seeking to prompt an inquiry into the treatment of 'alleged lunatics' like himself (that is, people certified as insane but who claimed to be in their senses), he provided a torrent of memorials pertaining to the supposed mistreatment of

---

[61] On the sensationalised portrayals of women in contemporaneous humanitarian literature see Barker-Benfield, 'Origins', 79-80; Clark, 'Sacred Rights of the Weak', 483-4; Halttunen, 'Pornography of Pain'.

[62] Showalter, *Female Malady*, 10. See, for example, Ann Mary Crowe, *A Letter to Robert Darling Willis* (London, 1811), 19-20.

[63] See, for example, the reformers description of the 'quiet and manageable' nature of William Vickers (or Vicars), a patient admitted to the York Asylum for assaulting an old woman. See 'Granada Hutchinson & Sarah Vicars Statement N', RET 8/1/1/1; Godfrey Higgins' testimony, RET 8/1/1/1; Godfrey Higgins, *York Herald*, 27 November 1813.

[64] Howells*, Love, Mystery, and Misery*, 15.

[65] *Ibid*., 15.

[66] Jenny Bourne Taylor, *In the Secret Theatre of Home: Wilkie Collins, Sensation Narrative, and Nineteenth-Century Psychology* (London & New York: Routledge, 1988), 4.

[67] Halttunen, 'Pornography of Pain', 329.

madhouse inmates. Fulljames drew consciously on sensational tropes as a means of compelling Peel to action, speaking, for example, of 'the barbarities and tortures' practiced upon a Mr. Lester – 'too horrid for words almost to express' – and the 'shocking and cruel' mistreatment of Mr. Maddocks, who was left to die, 'clotted all over with blood'.[68] In such testimonials, the mistreatment of the body is paramount, with the spectator's sensational response emphasised – a pain that bordered on the ineffable. Other accounts typified the 'pornography of pain', conveying obscenities that would terrify (but also titillate) the reader. That most potent of humanitarian scourges, whipping, materialised repeatedly. The notorious keeper Mary Basterble was said to beat the patients at Fisher House, Islington, with a rolling towel, leading to allegations that the washerwoman regularly found 'pieces of skin the size of half a Crown' sticking to the fabric.[69] Other passages were more explicit still in their eroticisation of this violence. When describing Maddocks' mistreatment, Fulljames made sure to include rumours that the madhouse keepers 'beat and kicked him in the groin, private parts and small of the back until the poor fellow could hardly get up'.[70] More opprobrious though was the 'shocking and shameful cruelty' allegedly committed against a Mrs Pincent, 'for merely begging of the keepers to desist from their horrid treatment to a young girl'. As he related:

> As soon as she interfered by requesting of them to cease from their maltreatment, they all fell upon her, after calling a male keeper, used her shamefully and exposed her nakedness.[71]

The fact that Fulljames presented evidence from thirty-one like cases, back-to-back, testifies to the importance that overwhelming sensation played to the reformist cause.

That critics of the asylum expected such representations to provoke an 'intensification or transformation of [a reader's] reality' seems evident when examining their utilisation in reformist literature. Take, for instance, the comments of the Scottish physician, and tireless lunacy reformer Andrew Halliday. In his *Remarks on the Present State of Lunatic Asylums in Ireland* (1808), published in the wake of the 1807 inquiry into the confinement of criminal lunatics, Halliday purported to provide a detailed survey of the institutions for the treatment

---

[68] HO 44/12/139 ff. 434, 437
[69] HO 44/12/139 f. 438.
[70] HO 44/12/139 ff. 437.
[71] HO 44/12/139 f. 441.

of the insane – albeit without actually travelling across the whole region. To make up for this shortcoming he quoted, at one point, from the notorious description of the Limerick House of Industry published in John Carr's travel guide *Stranger in Ireland* (1806). Reflecting on the co-mingling of society's outcasts in the workhouse, Carr had designated it 'a scene which will strike [the spectator's] mind with horror.' The House's lunatics were singled out for particular attention:

> Under the roof of this house, I saw madmen *stark naked* girded only by their irons, standing in the rain, in an open court, attended by *women*, their cells upon the ground-floor, scantily supplied with straw, damp, and ill-secured. … [S]everal idiots squatted in corners, half naked, half famished, pale and hollow-eyed, with a ghastly grin, bent a vacant stare upon the loathsome scene, and consummated its horror… [A] raving maniac, instead of being strapped to his bed, was handcuffed to a stone of 300 lbs. weight, which, with the most horrible yells, by a convulsive effort of strength, he dragged from one end of the room to the other, constantly exposed to the exasperating view and conversation of those who were in the yard.[72]

Despite the obvious stylisation of the scene – the eroticism and obscenity; the modish monstrosity of the figures; the 'disciplining gaze' of the madman as perfected in artistic renderings of madness – Halliday at no point questions the reliability of the representation.[73] Indeed, despite his claim that such an important study should be predicated on 'minuteness' and 'accuracy', Halliday did not seek out any clarification, or even any other authoritative comment on the conditions.[74] Rather, he simply quoted Carr's passage verbatim, assuming that the extracts:

> speak for themselves, and proclaim aloud the great impropriety of confining Maniacs in Houses of Industry. A picture of greater wretchedness than that just described cannot be found in any country; I therefore trust, that it is needless to harass the feelings of the humane by dwelling upon it.[75]

---

[72] Carr, *Stranger in Ireland*, 200.
[73] Halliday was not alone on this point. When Sydney Smith reviewed the work he overlooked Carr's colourful rhetoric as the product of a mind 'inspired with eloquence by virtuous indignation at the sight of the horrible state of the House' (*The Edinburgh Review* 10 (1807), 52).
[74] Andrew Halliday, *Remarks on the Present State of Lunatic Asylums in Ireland, and on the Number and Condition of the Insane Paupers in that Kingdom* (London, 1808), 9.
[75] *Ibid*., 21.

Here then, 'horrible' representations 'proclaim[ed] aloud' the truth of the case, in effect, substituting for empirical fact. Of course, such an assertion was not unproblematic, as Halliday's hasty change of subject implies. Nevertheless, such remarks do point to the seeming naturalisation of sensationalism's reality effect in this period. Halliday's assertion that abject bodies 'speak for themselves' provides an interesting link with nineteenth-century legal doctrine: this term (or rather its Latinate, *res ipsa loquitur*) coming to denote a ruling of presumptive negligence – that is, negligence without any direct evidence of a defendant's involvement. In successful *res ipsa loquitur* rulings, the mere fact that an accident occurred, and a body was injured, 'constitute[d] a prima facie case of negligence by the defendant'.[76] Significantly, in practice, such 'presumptions of fact' derived not from the body of law, but, in the words of one contemporary, '*by means of the common experience of mankind, from the course of nature, and the ordinary habits of society.*'[77] Taken alongside Halliday's remarks, such comments imply that, by the turn of the nineteenth century at least, it was widely accepted that the fact of criminal negligence could be inferred through general intuition, and that sensation – as the most seemingly 'natural' mode of experience – could authorise such claims.

Perhaps the clearest examples of the workings of sensationalism's 'reality effect' can be found in onlookers' responses to the sensational testimonials given by witnesses at lunacy inquests. I will confine my attention to one key episode in the early history of reform: the inquiry into alleged corruption and neglect perpetrated by the medical officers at the York Lunatic Asylum. As we have already seen, a band of reformers – led by the Quaker Samuel Tuke and Doncaster magistrate Godfrey Higgins – sought to undermine the authority of the Asylum's head physician Charles Best, by exposing the conditions of the ward to public view. This debate turned largely on the physician's capacity to oversee the madhouse ward, and 'humanitarian narrative' was the means by which his efficiency was debated and gauged.

Though the reformers' earliest attempts to excite the attention of the Asylum's intransigent board of governors met with little success the sheer number of cases they had unearthed inevitably led them to strike some nerves, and thus garner enough support to assemble an investigative committee. One particularly concerning case was that of the Rev.

---

[76] G. Gregg Webb, 'The Law of Falling Objects: *Byrne* v. *Boadle* and the Birth of Res Ipsa Loquitur', *Stanford Law Review* 59, no. 4 (2007), 1084.
[77] *Ibid*., 1084.

175

Jonathan Schorey, a curate who was admitted to the Asylum three times between 1807 and his death there in 1812. Schorey's case was made known to Higgins by the local clergyman James Richardson: a reform-minded governor of the Asylum who was himself apprised of the case by Schorey's wife Mary, who had appealed to him for assistance during her husband's confinement. In her testimony before the Asylum's Quarterly Court in December 1813, Mary Schorey reported the seemingly 'brutal treatment' of her husband at the hands of the Asylum's understaff, and, perhaps more disturbingly for the governors, suggested that she had been on the receiving end of abuse and sexual ribaldry by the House's Steward and keepers.[78] With his gentlemanly stock, Schorey was apt to excite the sort of strong reflections that the reformers sought. The 'abusive language' allegedly rained down on Schorey by the keeper Benjamin Batty – who, Mrs. Schorey claimed, had described her husband as being '*no more now than a dog*' – was said to have given the sensitive clergyman 'great pain'.[79] Thus Higgins was later to describe his stay in the Asylum as a sort of sensational melodrama:

> I scarce remember a case more truly pitiable than that of this respectable clergyman – a man … whose liberal education may be supposed to have rendered him more susceptible of mental feeling than the mere labourer … all his domestic comforts and future prospects gone and ruined – his person covered with vermin, and smarting with blows[.][80]

One other significant case was the treatment of Martha Kidd, a pauper lunatic from Pontefract, whose condition upon her return from the Asylum had attracted the concern of the overseers of the workhouse where she was confined. Kidd was released 'in a lamentable state of rags and filth', and suffering from an improperly healed hip.[81] The first evidence Higgins had received pertaining to Kidd's treatment was provided by her husband, who had been appalled by the state in which she was maintained at the Asylum. His charge – that he had regularly found her body exposed to view – would have been enough to arouse the committee's suspicion.[82] The sensational testimony of her acquaintances only lent further

---

[78] 'Mrs Schorrey's case & A Bridgewaters' confirmation – Z', RET 8/1/1/1.
[79] Jonathan Gray, *History of the York Lunatic Asylum* (York, 1815), Appendix, 22-3.
[80] Higgins, *Letter*, 1.
[81] Accounts of Arundel and Kidd, RET 8/1/1/1.
[82] In Joseph Kidd's first letter to Higgins, he complained about the theft of his wife's clothes by the keepers, who left her in a bare shift; as stated, he 'ha[d] often observed her bare thighs thro' the rags, when she left the asylum she was about naked'. See Godfrey Higgins to Samuel Tuke, 10 December 1813, RET 8/1/2/1 f.7.

credence to these claims. Testifying before the assembled governors, her husband and two daughters reported witnessing Martha Kidd suffering her time in the Asylum injured, filthy, and in various states of undress.[83] None were apprised of her discharge from the Asylum, causing her to be transported back to Pontefract in a fish-cart. As a result, she was said to be returned to the workhouse in a state of filth, with the guardian Thomas Barker commenting that '*he never saw a worse object in the street or in any other place*.'[84]

The reformers were ecstatic at the 'great impression' that the Pontefract witnesses made on the governors, and they singled out the testimony of Margaret Beckwith, the mistress of the workhouse, as particularly engrossing.[85] Beckwith was charged with the care of Kidd upon her re-admission to the poorhouse, and her deposition before the investigators depicted a broken woman, in a physical state that would have been considered deplorable by any standard of the day. Apart from her representation of Kidd's apparent wretchedness, Beckwith's testimony dipped into outright obscenity. Her most arresting complaint was about the supposedly ingrained filth of Kidd's person: 'lice … rank within her side stockings'; 'under her breast, and all over her, she was so dirty, it appeared as if she had not been washed for years'; indeed, 'that there was dirt about *******' – a nether region too scandalous for print.[86]

Kidd's case thus epitomised humanitarianism's 'pornography of pain', the gratuitous obscenity being harnessed by the reformers to excite suitable sensations in the assembled onlookers. Beckwith herself played a key role here, her performance providing the reformers with the necessary tableau to advance their affective politics. Take, for example, the supposedly verbatim extract of her testimony published in a pro-reform pamphlet in 1814 which, the author claimed, suitably conveyed the woman's noble sentiments:

> [Kidd had not] been washed for weeks … when I came to pull off her stockings they were scaly with dirt – her toe nails hung over one another, and when I took a knife she screamed sore – she were not like a christian – I shed tears over her to see such a ragged creature...[87]

---

[83] Gray, *History*, Appendix, 8-13.
[84] *Ibid*., Appendix, 15.
[85] Tuke to Higgins, 20 December 1813, RET 8/1/7/1.
[86] Gray, *History*, 14-5.
[87] A New Governor, *A Vindication of Mr. Higgins, from the Charges of Corrector* (York, 1814), 14.

This sensational testimony was a revelation; reflecting on the day's proceedings, the Yorkshire barrister Samuel Nicoll – a firm supporter of reform – claimed that 'a better evidence was never given'.[88] The author of the aforementioned pamphlet concurred, contending that Beckwith's testimony was remarkable, not merely for its content, but for the woman's capacity to affect the assembled onlookers:

> the emphatic words of Margaret Beckwith, who described with the same energy she had felt the state of this wretched object, can alone do justice to [Kidd's] case – and feelings more honourable, more truly excellent, than those of Margaret Beckwith, the humble mistress of a parish workhouse, it is the lot of few to witness.[89]

In many ways such remarks hint at a sentimental inheritance – the respectable mistress exciting gentlemen to attention. But this was not simply the tear-drenched pathos that the cult of sensibility gloried in. In describing Martha Kidd's 'wretched' appearance, Beckwith was enacting a distinctly *sensational* melodrama – and if surviving records are to be believed, her performance affected the intensification of 'reality' that the reformers desired. Certainly, they attributed the subsequent outcome of the inquiry to her capacity to elevate feelings of abjection in their opponents. As Jonathan Gray was to recall, when writing his history of the Asylum's reform:

> [t]he manner in which this witness gave her evidence, was such, that Dr. Best and his friends acknowledged their conviction of the veracity of the statement; - a more complete picture of a human being, lost in filth and wretchedness, could scarcely be delineated.[90]

Notably, it was against the 'truly excellent' feelings of Margaret Beckwith that the testimonials of the Asylum's keepers were judged. Called in the following day to give their recollection of events to the investigative committee, their testimony followed what was becoming a consensus in such defences: that Martha Kidd was treated with kindness; that special attention was paid to her cleanliness, though as a quarrelsome and incontinent patient she could appear unkempt at times; and that any injuries that she sustained during her time

---

[88] See Tuke to Higgins, 20 December 1813, RET 8/1/7/1.
[89] A New Governor, *Vindication of Mr. Higgins*, 13-4.
[90] Gray, *History*, Appendix, 14.

in the Asylum were from accidents out of the attendants' control.[91] Though the testimonials were uniform, the governors ruled against them unequivocally: 'A gross neglect of cleanliness and of attention to the person is in full proof.' So mistrustful did the attendants appear against Beckwith's painful display that the Archbishop of York, one of the Asylum's staunchest supporters, refused to be party to their deposition, asserting that 'he was convinced both from the *manner* of these witnesses, and the improbability of their statements, that they were asserting what was untrue.'[92]

Though many of the Asylum's established governors resented the interposition of the reformers, the sensational spectacle presented by the friends of Martha Kidd proved too authentic for the gentlemen to dismiss. Here then, more than two decades after sentimentalism's 'pursuit of excess' was delegitimised in public discourse, adherents to the new emotional style were appraising the validity of a spectacle by the intensity of its representation. That this was seen as a radical, and dangerous structure of feeling is evident from the later remarks of Charles Atkinson, the medical officer from the Asylum who was ultimately held to account for the reformers' propagandising. Whatever the governors' actual feelings towards Atkinson (and there were some sympathetic parties on either side[93]), his comments in his *Retaliation* (1814) express a belief that many viewed him with abhorrence, a fact that he directly attributed to the sensational melodrama propagated by the reform party. Indeed, their rendering of the Schoreys' case was singled out as the key to his downfall: that 'common dirge, so often repeated' perceived to be 'the Key-note and crack sound' which turned popular opinion against him.[94] This 'affecting' narrative, he recognised, was constructed so as to convey a '*semblance of truth* in all its attitudes', which subsequently blinded the public (and many of the governors) to the blatant hypocrisy of the case: that a supposedly 'feeling and lamenting wife' could return the 'amiable Clergyman' for three successive stays in the Asylum, despite all the apparent 'mis-usage' he faced there.[95] For the besieged medical man then, sensationalism's 'reality effect' was little more than an politicised stunt, and as he was to conclude, anyone who surveyed the case with 'common sense', rather than sentiment, would see that the 'blame' fixed on Mrs. Schorey, and it was

---

[91] *Ibid*., Appendix, 17-20.
[92] *Ibid*., Appendix, 20.
[93] Brown, 'Rethinking', 447.
[94] Charles Atkinson, *Retaliation; or, Hints to Some of the Governors of the York Lunatic Asylum* (York, 1814), 13.
[95] *Ibid*., 13-4.

to her the charges of cruelty should be laid.[96] This was a rear-guard action though. As Atkinson well recognised, his claims of humanity and good nature were impotent in the context of a structure of feeling that validated visceral passions.[97] Sensation was a political tool that could best serve the interests of the reform party.

III. 'An Object of the Strongest Pity'? Lunacy Reform and the Politics of Sensation

As we have seen so far, sensationalism was inextricably tied to the reformist politics of the early nineteenth century, mobilised both as a stimulus to social enquiry, and as a means of reinforcing the perceived naturalness of media representations. Taken together, such findings illustrate how this affective register could provide the basis of the 'humanitarian narrative' that Laqueur articulated. In this last section I want to further scrutinise the rhetorical purposes to which sensationalism was used, to better assess the ways that this register was employed to further the material and ideological interests of the reformers. In her study of the affective politics of disability in nineteenth-century writings, Martha Stoddard Holmes notes that depictions of the disabled in scientific, economic, and political discourses, were all saturated in a distinctive emotional discourse: a style of representation that 'thematized Victorians' concerns with identifying what kinds of bodies should marry and what kinds of bodies could work.'[98] In effect, this ensured that all 'possible registers' for representing disability were 'informed and overshadowed by affect': emotive representations that performed – indeed still perform – latent ideological work.[99]

As a similarly hegemonic representation of mad bodies as wretched occurs across medical, literary and political writings on insanity in the 'Age of Reform', it is pertinent to scrutinise such apparently natural associations, to determine the extent to which these representations communicated the ideological predilections of their framers, and perhaps 'overshadowed' other meanings or motifs. Sensationalism, as a mode of experience and representation, is not intrinsically ideological, and 'can as well stimulate ideas as foreclose

---

[96] *Ibid.*, 15.
[97] It should be noted that Atkinson actively sought to portray himself as a delicate victim of oppression – the David to the reformers' Goliath (Higgins). This strategy is reminiscent of the 'sentimental diversion' that Brycchan Carey has identified in the writings of slavery's advocates in this period (*British Abolitionism*, 141).
[98] Stoddard Holmes, *Fictions*, 3-4 (qtd. 4).
[99] *Ibid.*, 3.

them'. [100] However, as Cvetkovich suggests, with its 'capacity … to make both representations and their meanings seem as natural as bodily responses', sensationalism can be employed as a vehicle for 'naturalizing ideology.'[101] Certainly, in assessing the role of 'humanitarian narratives' in nineteenth-century social reform, Mike Sanders makes the assumption that such sensational representations played an important role in 'legitimizing the bourgeois social order.'[102] As, in Laqueur's articulation, the 'humanitarian narrative' 'encodes a belief in society's capacity to control and thus mitigate … the causes of human distress', this strategy can 'be identified as one of a cluster of ideologies affirming the universality of the interests of the various capitalist class fractions.' [103] Sanders thus concludes:

> In a more concrete way than either political economy or utilitarianism, the humanitarian narrative reassured the merchants, manufacturers, and professionals that they were indeed the agents of progress, that their individual interests and actions ineluctably contributed to the greater happiness of all. In particular the humanitarian narrative, like the felicific calculus, provided an 'objective' measure (absence of pain) against which the progress of the new order (relative to the *ancien regime*) could be charted.[104]

The links with the contemporaneous lunacy reform movement are clear. As Andrew Scull and others have shown, the push to reform mental institutions was driven not simply by a desire to suppress some gross evils, but also by the belief that new therapeutic strategies offered a more efficient and humane remedy to mental disorder, and thus should be implemented to better mould these troubled members of the population into the bourgeois norm.[105] 'Humanitarian narrative' provided the ideal means by which to chart the progress of this 'benevolent' system against the ineffective responses to madness inherited from the past age, sentiments that could be further reinforced through the use of sensational tropes.[106]

---

[100] Jervis, *Sensational Subjects*, 48-9.
[101] Cvetkovich, *Mixed Feelings*, 24-5.
[102] Sanders, 'Manufacturing Accident', 313.
[103] *Ibid*., 314.
[104] *Ibid*., 314.
[105] Scull, *Most Solitary of Afflictions*; Foucault, *History of Madness*.
[106] Scull, *Most Solitary of Afflictions*, 134-5.

Pioneering examples of this species of rhetoric can be found in the early writings of Samuel Tuke – unsurprising, given his association with the York Retreat, the physical manifestation of 'reformed' attitudes towards insanity. As Scull notes, the system of 'judicious kindness' articulated in his *Description of the Retreat* – with its promise of a regime of comfort and pleasure[107] – provided lunacy reformers a useful foil to 'the traditional madhouse – the shit, straw, and stench, the beatings, intimidation, and rapes'.[108] However, 'humanitarian narrative' also suffused Tuke's 1811 article addressing the treatment of pauper lunatics, discussed in the previous chapter. In this first essay – something of a call to arms that preceded his more regimented explication of the Retreat's therapeutics in 1813 – Tuke condemned the customary treatment of the mad poor by highlighting the needless pain inflicted on their bodies. One case singled out for censure was the purported mistreatment of 'a poor boy' afflicted with a mild 'mixture of idiotcy and mania': a subject who, while 'occasionally mischievous and troublesome', posed no material threat to local inhabitants.[109] The great evil of this case was the undue restraint the boy was placed under ('generally tied in bed during the day as well as night') which Tuke attributed to a desire to lessen the exertion of his gaolers. Such restraint, he contended, was misguided, tending towards horrific disfigurement, which he spelt in terms designed to produce a corresponding feeling in his audience:

> The confinement to one posture, and the grossest inattention to common cleanliness, induced diseases too shocking for description. Death kindly came to the poor prisoner's relief, but the situation of his body at that time I will not further attempt to describe than by saying, that already,
>
> 'The living worm gnawed within him.'[110]

In terms of the politics of affect, Tuke's subsequent appeal made explicit a binary, between the insane poor and 'every other class of society', which lolled in the 'comforts' extended by Magna Carta, 'the advancement of science', 'christian benevolence', and a general 'increase of civilization'.[111] The sensational representations of the lunatic's broken

---

[107] Samuel Tuke, *Description of the Retreat, an Institution near York, for Insane Persons of the Society of Friends* (York, 1813), 136.
[108] Scull, *Most Solitary of Afflictions*, 146-7.
[109] Tuke, 'Insane Poor', 360.
[110] *Ibid.*, 360.
[111] *Ibid.*, 360.

body worked to naturalise this binary, the description of ineffable 'shock' carefully inserted to guide the reader into embodying these assumptions.[112]

This binary had its genesis in a potent strand of social theory, which asserted an association (both rhetorical and literal) between corporeal health and civilisation. As Alan Bewell has argued, over the long eighteenth century in Britain, 'medical geography played a primary role in the construction of "foreignness"', with 'pathogenic qualities' being ascribed 'to a range of environmental, economic, and social factors'.[113] By his conception, the 'biomedical identity' of the British was 'formulated within a global context', which enabled them to structure '"healthiness" … in opposition to colonial disease environments', particularly the tropics.[114] Working from this general premise, Gabriel Cervantes and Dahlia Porter have examined the influences of this anxiety on writings pertaining to the life and works of the prison reformer John Howard, with a particular emphasis on the literary and scientific tropes that pervaded his works. Building upon earlier developments in medical epistemology, which positioned healthy temperateness as diametrically opposed to 'climatic extremes', Howard and his disciples envisaged a new scale by which 'inhumane treatment' in institutions could be gauged: 'the physical and moral health of any jail can be registered and documented by its deviation from temperateness.'[115]

Lunacy reformers certainly assumed, with Howard, that 'the link between temperature and suffering was a literal one'[116], and so kept diligent thermometric records of investigations, taking note of the presence of any stenches or miasmas oppressing the patients. There were pragmatic reasons for this attention: contemporary therapeutics, drawing upon this biomedical model, attributed bodily health to clean air, and so a desire for open spaces drove thinking on asylum construction from the seventeenth century, as a means of both promoting cure, and preventing idleness.[117] This sort of thinking heavily influenced

---

[112] See also *Philanthropist*, Vol. 6, 1816, 40.
[113] Alan Bewell, *Romanticism and Colonial Disease* (Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 18.
[114] *Ibid.*, 19.
[115] Cervantes and Porter, 'Extreme Empiricism', 101.
[116] *Ibid.*, 102.
[117] Andrews et al., *History of Bethlem*, 248-9, 401; Scull, *Most Solitary of Afflictions*, 149-50; Bridget Franklin, 'Hospital – Heritage – Home: Reconstructing the Nineteenth Century Lunatic Asylum, *Housing, Theory and Society* 19 (2002), 172-3; Barry Edginton, 'Moral Architecture: the Influence of the York Retreat', *Health & Place* 3, no. 2 (1997), 91-99.

the first wave of lunacy reformers, who obsessed over the size and spaciousness of asylums and madhouses, out of a concern for adequate airflow.[118]

However their rhetoric on these issues performed a deeper cultural work, implicitly situating this medical geography within the wider structure of feeling I have been discussing. In their descriptions of the effects of the environment on mental therapeutics, reformers rigorously detailed the sensational effects of climatic extremes on lunatics' bodies, as a means of implicitly reasserting the association between the unreformed asylum and uncivilised barbarism. Take Tuke's comments regarding the wretched effects of climatic extremes on pauper lunatics in an English workhouse:

> I cannot describe my feelings and astonishment, when I perceived that the poor women were absolutely without any clothes. The weather was intensely cold, and the evening previous to our visit the thermometer had, I believe, been sixteen degrees below the freezing point. One of these forlorn objects lay buried under a miserable covering of straw, without a blanket or even a horse-cloth to defend her from the cold.[119]

Linking the thermometric record with both the ineffable sensations of 'astonishment' provoked by the conditions of the women's confinement, and the physical discomfort thought to be caused by their nakedness, Tuke thus produced an affectively charged representation that served to embody his political message in his audience. Similar strategies are evident in the writings of his Quaker friend, and fellow lunacy reformer, Edward Wakefield. In his investigations into the treatment of patients at Bethlem Hospital he noted that incontinent patients were 'taken into the Pump room & mopped with cold water', in even 'the very coldest weather in winter', when the 'water freezes'.[120] Also opprobrious was the practice of mopping this frigid water off patients after bathing using their bedding, which was then 'thrown on the bed … without drying'.[121] Just as concerning for Wakefield though was the other climatic extreme – 'humidity' – which at Bethlem's Moorfields site was said to be 'excessive' and 'intolerable'.[122] The ex-patient James Tilly Matthews complained particularly of the 'cells adjoining the laundry', which were 'rendered humid by the fumes

---

[118] Edward Wakefield, for instance, wanted to mandate the size of airing grounds in asylums, relative to the number of patients. See Wakefield MS, papers dated 22 April 1814.
[119] Tuke, 'Insane Poor', 358.
[120] Wakefield MS, papers dated 22 April 1814.
[121] Wakefield MS, papers dated 8 April 1814.
[122] Wakefield MS, interview with J.T. Matthews, 8 April 1814.

from it & the air <u>very bad</u>'.[123] Thus even when Bethlem's patients avoided the worst excesses of cold they remained subject to the worst ravages of a figuratively tropical climate.

Moreover, Wakefield's notes address more than the mere discomfort imposed by climatic extremes; they emphasize the very real consequences of life in these climes – 'Mortification in the lower part of the back very common & deaths frequent'.[124] This was the crux of these early 'humanitarian narratives': ill treatment threatened to disable the lunatic's body. This was a concern that has only been mentioned by historians in passing – primarily with reference to the reformist argument that such ravages inhibited a cure – however such representations were a crucial pillar of reformers' affective politics.[125] We have already seen that Tuke's primary complaint with the use of mechanical restraint in madhouses was that in unnaturally coercing the lunatic's body 'to one posture', and leaving them open to the ravages of the nature, the proprietor left them hopelessly crippled: a spectacle that, on reflection, was 'too shocking for description'. Such remarks were mirrored in the writings of contemporaries. An anonymous critic, penning some 'Observations upon the Mad-House Reports' in *The Times*, lamented that James Norris, and lunatics like him, were strapped in strait-waistcoats with 'Herculean force', with their misery compounded by being subsequently fixed 'in one painful position without change, summer and winter':

> [The patient is not] released for days, months, years – no, not for a single moment … till nature with abhorrence deserts the pallid limbs; and the fingers – admirable inlets of knowledge, man's chiefest aids in all the wants of life – lose their sensation … Miserable man![126]

Such remarks convey a markedly humanitarian concern; however the insistent ruminations on the restriction of mobility – 'pallid limbs' and fingers – carry more ambiguous undertones. The notion that such individuals would be unable to independently secure the 'wants of life' simultaneously invoked middle-class anxieties over labour power,

---

[123] *Ibid*.
[124] Wakefield MS, papers dated 22 April 1814.
[125] Scull has noted the symbolism in passing, acknowledging that lunacy reformers negatively contrasted the cases of bodily mortification reported in unreformed asylums too the York Retreat's supposedly faultless history of patient care (*Most Solitary of Afflictions*, 113).
[126] Anon, 'Observations', *The Times* (17 May 1816).

and the burden of the long-term indigent on the poor rates.[127] Other writers were more explicit in associating the physical mistreatment of lunatics with the bourgeois interest. The Staffordshire mad-doctor Thomas Bakewell described lengthy, frequently crippling coercion as 'The great moral and physical evil of Insanity'.[128] For Bakewell, confinement under perpetual restraint was 'incontestably wrong', as it meant that many potentially 'useful, safe, and happy members of society' were consigned to this 'physical' decline.[129] This was a particular outrage, as the cost of maintaining 'incurable Lunatics' ('about six hundred pounds each upon an average') paled in comparison of the material benefits of effecting a cure: a cost of 'forty pounds only, besides the advantage of a subject restored'.[130] Here, concern for the patient's wellbeing is tinged with pain over the potential loss of labour power – reflections that undoubtedly influenced the parliamentarians that he addressed his work to. Similar sentiments can also be found in more popular reflections on insanity, for instance, in recollections of the life of the famed Louisa, Maid of the Haystack, in the years after her death in 1801. As we saw in Chapter Two, chroniclers in the 1780s had sentimentalised Louisa's plight, praising the beauty and delicacy, but also disavowing the sight of her as she began her decline into raving madness. Upon her death, a spate of publications revived the tale, drawing liberally on the idealised narratives from the previous decades. However, to close these biographies, her eulogists added one new reflection, a notice of the severe pain that neglect had imprinted on the body of 'this poor departed child of misery':

> In her general conduct [Louisa] exhibited the various common evidences of the most confirmed insanity; which, *in addition to the contraction of her limbs, from her exposure to cold in the open-field, and from her future propensity to remain inactive, rendered her an object of the strongest pity*.[131]

Two points are worth noting here. First, this evidence of a 'contraction of limbs' was not mentioned in earlier accounts of her life and character, even those that reflected openly on

---

[127] On the contemporary debates about indigence and poor relief see Geoffrey Gilbert, 'Toward the Welfare State: Some British Views on the "Right to Subsistence," 1768-1834', *Review of Social Economy* 46, no. 2 (1988), 144-63; Michael Quinn, 'Jeremy Bentham on the Relief of Indigence: An Exercise in Applied Philosophy', *Utilitas* 6, no. 1 (1994), 81-96.
[128] Bakewell, *Letter*, 7. On Bakewell's vocal criticism of public asylum's in particular see Wynter, 'Horrible Dens of Deception'.
[129] Bakewell, *Letter*, 7.
[130] *Ibid.*, 8.
[131] 'Chronicle [for 1801]', *Annual Register* (London, 1802), 6 [emphasis added]. See also Anon, *The Affecting History of Louisa, the Wandering Maniac… A Real Tale of Woe* (London, 1803), 36.

her decline to raving madness. Whether or not earlier accounts were simply censored, it is clear that this overtly sensationalised account of her broken body conformed to the conventions of the time, a 'humanitarian narrative' intended to stimulate a 'reality effect' in the reader, as well as provoke a painful sympathy in the beholder.

More significant though are the ruminations on the nature of this sensational affect. This moral feeling was assumed to be a product of particular reflections: the concession that she was undeserving of this mistreatment, but also the acknowledgement her broken body left her with a 'propensity to remain inactive'. Here, perhaps most explicitly, sensationalism is represented as at the whims of bourgeois ideology: sensational pain – the antithesis to enlightened progress – being directly linked to the inability to work.

Such remarks point to the latent self-interest encoded in the reformers' affective project. However humanitarian their concerns, the 'enlightened' views of reformers like Tuke – most of whom were drawn from the manufacturing and professional classes – were generally inflected by their material interests.[132] In the same way that these critics sought to highlight their cultural authority by affecting a stoical emotional style, their mobilisation of representations of corporeal suffering was designed to naturalise a distrust of *ancien régime* responses to insanity, and thus to validate new moral and political ideals. Stevenson Macgill perhaps put it most succinctly when he promoted the construction of a reformed asylum at Glasgow as a plan to give 'relief from many painful occurrences', making clear that this 'relief' was to be shared by otherwise detached observers, upon considering 'the general advantages which must arise from the restoration of talents and labours, which were more than lost to society'.[133] In saving the lunatic from the barbaric past, lunacy reform was thus safeguarding a comfortable and prosperous future for all.

IV. Conclusion: Sensational Intuition and the Asylum Debate

This chapter has re-examined the role of emotions in the first wave of lunacy reform in Britain, to illustrate the influence of sensational representation on the wider social reorientation towards interventionism. From the latter decades of the eighteenth century, as reformers sought to legitimate their demands for wholesale reform of the madhouse system

---

[132] Tuke, tellingly, expressed interest in other disciplinary projects, including what he called the 'enlightened' project of 'precautionary police' in manufacturing districts and urban slums. See Samuel Tuke to Godfrey Higgins, 23 December 1815, RET 8/1/7/1.
[133] Macgill, *On Lunatic Asylums*, 10.

in Britain, they turned to this distinct cluster of narratives and tropes as a means of exciting popular support for their movement. Yet whereas historians have assumed that such representations merely stimulated some innate antipathy to pain, this chapter has sought to underline the nuanced cultural work performed through these depictions of corporeal suffering. Rather than simply arousing moral opprobrium, this sensationalism was employed by reformers to both invoke particular cultural forms and subjectivities (the Gothic impulse to curiosity, and the embodied 'reality effect') and to inscribe new associations, so as to naturalise bourgeois ideology. In highlighting this emotional work this chapter has also contributed to the wider literature on Western social reform, by articulating the emotional practices that underwrote the 'humanitarian narrative' identified by Thomas Laqueur.

That this interest in striking corporeality largely coincided with the cultural turn from sentimentalism is not coincidental; just as the shift in emotional styles fostered the contemporaneous reappraisal of abjection as 'sympathy', the elevation of embodied sensations as a complement to reason reflects the overt antipathy to 'sensual' (often sentimental) emotion expressed in writings by turn of the century rationalists. Moreover, this validation of sensational affect as a marker of truth endured in reformist literature at least, with writers regularly appealing to sensation's 'reality effect' to legitimate intuition. This much is evident from the writings of Samuel Tuke, a figure who championed empirical researches into the mind sciences.[134] When reflecting on the relative efficacy of reformed therapeutics in 1846, for example, Tuke made little attempt to distinguish between sensational and figuratively 'rational' appeals to common sense:

> It may … be asked, whether we can *prove* that the proportion of recoveries has really been greater under the new, than it was under the old system of treatment. We acknowledge that we cannot bring absolute data on which to base a just comparison. We *feel* however *no more doubt respecting it*, than we should do if we had before us the most complete statistical documents. We want no numerical evidence to assure us, that a system which was so injurious to physical health, as to send large numbers to an untimely grave, and to distress and degrade those who, we might almost say, unhappily

---

[134] Tuke was amongst the first writers to include detailed statistical tables to support his therapeutic claims. See *Description of the Retreat*, 189-220.

survived, could be otherwise than dreadfully obstructive to the restoration of the diseased mind.[135]

Here then, nearly four decades after Halliday's assertion that sensational representations spoke for themselves, Tuke could still fall on the same commonplace assumption, that the *feeling* produced by a torrent of broken and neglected bodies was enough to substitute for 'numerical evidence'. Whether this was an unselfconscious reflection, or a concerted attempt to produce favourable reflections in his readers is unclear; what such remarks illustrate is the continued ambivalence toward sensational affect in reformist literature, more than fifty years after writers first moved to excise emotion from political deliberation. Such an assumption attaches a note of caution to traditional accounts of the emergence of social reform which emphasise the centrality of reason, 'principle', or scientific induction.[136] It also offers some implicit support for Monique Scheer's assertion that the habitus (and related emotional norms and codes) 'is the precondition for subjectification', thus producing and shaping 'the behaviors and thought patterns of intentionality' characteristic of the 'liberal self' (concepts such as 'reason, 'principle', 'justice'). [137] The influence of emotional norms over assumptions of selfhood and political agency will be developed further in the next chapter, when discussing the development of organised political advocacy on behalf of the insane.

---

[135] [Samuel Tuke], *Review of the Early History of The Retreat, near York* (York, 1846), 36 [emphasis added].

[136] On nineteenth-century humanitarianism as a 'principled' response to suffering see Haskell, 'Humanitarian Sensibility, Part 2'; Keymer, 'Sentimental Fiction', 593. On the significance of statistics and social scientific methods to the professionalisation of medicine, and administration of psychiatric therapeutics see, for instance, Dorothy Porter, *Health, Civilization and the State: A History of Public Health from Ancient to Modern Times* (London & New York: Routledge, 1999), 65-78; Akihito Suzuki, 'Framing Psychiatric Subjectivity: Doctor, Patient and Record-Keeping at Bethlem in the Nineteenth Century', in Melling and Forsythe eds., *Insanity*, 115-36; *idem*, 'Politics', 6-14.

[137] Scheer, 'Emotions', 206.

Chapter 5. 'Noble Feelings and Manly Spirit': Emotions, Public Spirit and the Makings of an Asylum Revolution

The culmination of the first surge of lunacy reform in Britain was the 1815 Select Committee on Madhouses, an unprecedented inquiry into the management of the kingdom's system of lunatic hospitals and private madhouses. Spurred on by the examples of neglect and corruption uncovered during the investigation of the York Lunatic Asylum in 1813-14, the national network of reformers united to expose a system of seeming brutality and neglect that one agitator described as 'unrecorded in the annals of human suffering.'[1] Over the course of several months, the reformers went to great pains to promote their own investigations as examples of intrepid public spiritedness. One of the most influential of such testimonials was the Yorkshire magistrate Godfrey Higgins's sensational account of his exposure of the so-called 'secret cells' he discovered at the York Asylum, mentioned in the previous chapter. In a passage that would be remarked upon by successive generations of lunacy reformers, Higgins described the rage that he felt at the alleged obfuscation of the Asylum's keepers, who he claimed were unwilling to reveal the appalling conditions facing the patients in a locked side-chamber:

> I ordered this door to be opened; the keepers hesitated, and said, the apartment belonged to the women, and they had not the key. I ordered them to get the key; but it was said to be mislaid, and not to be found at the moment. Upon this I grew angry, and told them I insisted upon its being found; and that, if they would not find it, I could find a key at the kitchen fire-side, namely, the poker; upon that the key was immediately brought.[2]

Here, Higgins projected a style of advocacy that was fundamentally aggressive, a strain of belligerence that was characteristic of the wider reformist program. A similarly uncompromising stance was taken by Higgins' collaborator Edward Wakefield, whose publication of the conditions at London's Bethlem Hospital provided the spur for the Select Committee. He claimed that it was a 'painful' task exposing to 'public attention' the names of the seemingly neglectful individuals at the asylum (many of whom would be considered

---

[1] Edward Wakefield, 'To the Governors of Bethlem Hospital', *The Examiner* (31 March 1816), 207.
[2] House of Commons, *Report of the Select Committee on Madhouses*, 1815, 12.

his social superiors). Yet, he justified this offensiveness with an appeal to the feelings of 'the perhaps thousand miserable wretches' who faced 'neglect' at the hands of Bethlem's medical staff, and pledged to 'never abandon the cause of these poor people but with my life.'[3]

For this new brand of social reformers, unflinching zeal was the defining feature of their moral enterprise: a duty owed to the insane, and the supposed basis of ameliorative action. Such characterisations have generally gone unquestioned, with scholars tending to pass over this zealous activism as a logical outgrowth of rigid principles or ideology. However such remarks reflect a vast redefinition of the expression of 'public spirit'. As part of their wider program to foster political stability, eighteenth-century polite theorists had sought to '[transform] an older vision of civic virtue as independence … and martial vigor into sociability, urbanity, and politeness', thus proscribing irascible emotions from legitimate political discourse.[4] This assumed union between 'humanity and public spirit' endured throughout most of the eighteenth century, buttressed by the dictates of sentimental doctrine.[5] It was only following the dissolution of the sentimental emotional regime, and the wider social restructuring that occurred in the wake of the French Revolution that these strictures on political engagement were revised, leading to a renewed emphasis on reason, 'courage', and stoic resolve. William Reddy's comments on the fortunes of political reform in turn-of-the-century France are broadly applicable to the British situation:

> In the late eighteenth century, political reform was deemed best guided by natural feelings of benevolence and generosity. In the early nineteenth century, while some would have continued to grant benevolence and generosity a role in politics, much more importance was attached to personal qualities such as commitment to principle, soldierly courage, a willingness, if necessary, to resort to violence, and, above all, a proper understanding of justice and right.[6]

In contrast to the late eighteenth century, when people had valued the expression of stylised sentimental emotions, nineteenth-century observers deemed forthrightness a suitable, *virtuous* response during political deliberations, a revision of norms that provided the

---

[3] Wakefield, 'To the Governors', 207.
[4] John Spurr, 'England', 27-8. See also Barker-Benfield, *Culture of Sensibility*, 135; Lawrence Klein, 'Liberty, Manners, and Politeness in Early Eighteenth-Century England', *The Historical Journal* 32, no. 3 (1989), 586-7.
[5] Barker-Benfield, *Culture of Sensibility*, 134-5; Mee, *Romanticism*, 110.
[6] Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*, 217-8.

impetus for the uncompromising social reform movements of the early nineteenth century. The new standards prompted a reconceptualisation of public spiritedness as essentially aggressive or assertive, thus encouraging the denunciation of authorities that had previously been afforded polite deference.

In seeking to illustrate the ways that the passage of lunacy reform was shaped by this new emotional norm, this chapter will both outline the early articulations of a conception of zealous public spiritedness, and demonstrate how it was elevated as a premier moral value in the latter decades of the eighteenth century. In doing so it will re-examine the history of humanitarian activism in light of research into the history of anger in nineteenth-century Britain. That contemporaries exhibited a new-found resolve in this period has not gone unnoticed by historians of the emotions, with a number of scholars offering explanations for the naturalisation of aggression in public life.[7] For William Reddy, this change was brought about by political conditions. Following the fall of the Jacobins, and their social order of sensibility, '[t]he prevailing conception of politics shifted quickly towards classical republicanism, with its emphasis on honor; male competition based on merit became the new cornerstone of liberty.'[8] Importantly, in Reddy's articulation this renewed interest in honour was stimulated by concomitant shifts in emotional practices. As sentimentalism's erasure heightened a sense that emotions were 'beyond willful manipulation', the fervent 'clarity' of late sentimentalism was replaced with a sense of fragility, which Reddy claims exacerbated fears of humiliation, and thus 'increased concerns about honor.'[9]

That concerns of honour and justice were driving forces in British politics by the close of the eighteenth century is evident in the spike in duels amongst high-profile figures, such as Prime Minister William Pitt, who took to arms in defence of honour in 1798.[10] It is also evident that such concerns undermined prevailing assumptions about gentlemanly conduct, thus heightening the likelihood of conflict in this period. When, for example, a committee

---

[7] As George Rudé famously wrote, '[t]he years of the Regency were among the most disturbed and riotous in England's recent history' (*The Crowd in History: A Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England, 1730-1848* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1964), 79).

[8] Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*, 259.

[9] *Ibid.*, 228.

[10] Historians of the duel have noted an apparent spike in the practice in the decades following the French Revolution (or at least a renewed anxiety about the practice). See, for example, Victor G. Kiernan, *The Duel in European History: Honour and the Reign of Aristocracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 185-97; Donna T. Andrew, 'The Code of Honour and its Critics: the Opposition to Duelling in England, 1700-1850', *Social History* 5, no. 3 (1980), 410.

charged with investigating the finances of London's Bethlem Hospital in 1805 dressed down the asylum's Steward, Peter Alavoine, for obstructing their investigation into the institution's finances, the latter's sense of humiliation prompted a passionate defence of honour. Responding to complaints of his 'inattentive, disrespectful, and undutiful' attitude,[11] Alavoine imposed his feelings on the committee, relating that he had been 'seriously affected' by their charges, and to 'express the very deep concern and uneasiness which I have suffered since I was so unhappy as to incur your displeasure, and to subject myself to the dishonour of a reprimand for a very blameable neglect'.[12] In his subsequent remarks he asserted his innocence, and emphasised his desire to clear his name amongst the institution's governors.

Peter Alavoine's case thus offers some credence to Reddy's assertion: his 'dishonour' at the censure experienced as a deep humiliation, and prompting an assertive response. As I will suggest later, this intensified anxiety about reputation and insult fundamentally destabilised gentlemanly protocols, thus provoking institutional conflict. Yet it would be wrong to suggest that this agitation was simply the response to these shifting conceptions of emotions. When lunacy reformers stressed the virtue of their abrasive approach to politics, their claims simultaneously reflected a wider naturalisation of aggression in public life. As Peter Stearns notes, in a discussion on the place of anger in Victorian era emotional codes in the United States, following industrialisation, most moralists agreed that 'aggressive, competitive behavior' was suitable to the modern workplace, and could be considered righteous when expressed in the (increasingly masculine) public sphere.[13] Examining the British context, Peter Gay outlined the ambivalence with which many critics viewed such fervour. Though this was professed to be an age of reason and self-command, public life seethed with discontent, and as Gay shows, the Victorians drew upon a range of scientific, economic, religious and nationalist discourses to concoct rationales, or 'alibis', for this aggression.[14] Moreover, with the onset of industrialisation, an 'oppositional' political culture developed, which legitimated 'public aggression' as meaningful political engagement (rather than as a manifestation of intrigue or insurrection).[15]

---

[11] BGC, 31 July, 1805.

[12] BGC, 11 Nov., 1805.

[13] Peter Stearns, *American Cool: Constructing a Twentieth-Century Emotional Style* (New York & London: New York University Press, 1994), 29-31 (qtd. 30).

[14] Peter Gay, *The Cultivation of Hatred: The Bourgeois Experience, Victoria to Freud* (New York & London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1993), Ch. 1.

[15] *Ibid*., 213-5.

A range of cultural pressures, then, coalesced to stimulate political activism in the early nineteenth century, and it is within this turbulence that I will examine the emergence of lunacy reform as a political force. In the first section of this chapter, I locate the genesis of this emotional style in the eighteenth-century discourses on charity and patriotism, arguing that these forerunners of bourgeois nationalism provided the emotional resource from which the reformist program would be built. Building upon this discussion, the next two sections examine one key quality of the reformers' emotional style – the nebulous characteristic of 'sincerity', which bourgeois critics conceived to be the basis of virtue and 'public spirit'. Defined in opposition to aristocratic manners (and sentimental emotion more generally), 'sincerity' was typified by the frank assertion of 'justice', a norm which, I suggest, encouraged the characteristic zeal of early-nineteenth-century lunacy advocates. In the final section I examine the influence of this new emotional regime on the development of the lunacy reform movement, through a focused analysis of the emotions that drove the controversy at the York Lunatic Asylum in 1813-15. Taking advantage of the instability caused by a public spat between the Asylum's authorities and the magistrate Godfrey Higgins, key reformers mobilised an array of emotional practices to channel the humiliation and resentment of the interested parties into a concerted and sustained resolve, thus ensuring the passage of reform measures.

I. The Cause of 'Humanity and Justice': Patriotism, 'Public Spirit', and the Emotions of Reform

From its inception in the eighteenth century, the British lunacy reform movement was consciously forward thinking, projecting the amelioration of the condition of the mad as a necessary step on the path to progress. Reform, activists claimed, was a product of 'civilisation', and for English writers in particular, this was seen as a patriotic duty. Wakefield, for instance, when condemning England's madhouse system, described it as 'the disgrace of our age and country'.[16] Yet despite the prominence of such proto-nationalist rhetoric in the lunacy reform agenda, historians have largely overlooked the influence of the national question on this political program, generally confining their attention to the invocation of constitutionalist dogma in the reformist discourse. This is perhaps surprising,

---

[16] Wakefield, 'To the Governors', 207.

given the relentless ruminations on the English national character in all political arenas during the Napoleonic wars.[17] Indeed, as historians have shown, this was the period in which the principles of bourgeois nationalism came to be ingrained in the English political consciousness, so an appraisal of the implications of this new cultural awareness on the coterminous social reform movements is beneficial.

Gerald Newman, in his study of the cultural genesis of English nationalism, has defined the concept as 'the inseparable *ideological counterpart of modernization*', imagined 'as a manifold force assisting the attack upon traditional society through a leveling and simultaneously reintegrative *transformation of the emotional and intellectual bonds of group identification*.'[18] In essence, this ideology is manifested in a desire for the ambitious 'goal of collective consciousness': a transformation that requires both social disciplining (so as to instil the requisite sense of sacrifice), and the production of an idealised national identity (almost always cast in opposition to an alien 'other'). Newman locates the development of this ideology in England in the period 1740-1830, particularly in the growing self-awareness of the 'artist-intellectual', whose increasing frustration and humiliation caused them to revolt against their aristocratic patrons, who were perceived to be neglecting British creativity and taste in favour of French fashions. [19] This discontent ballooned into widespread Francophobia during the recurrent wars and rivalries with Catholic France in the late-Georgian period: a generalised anxiety that provided the 'other' from which to contrast an idealised national identity, and which also prompted a raft of patriotic enterprises as a means of strengthening the state against potential aggression.[20] Aided by the steady advance of print-capitalism, which enabled the imagining of a unified 'national and political consciousness' by readers across the British provinces by the early decades of the eighteenth century, these inchoate influences had more-or-less crystallised into a national myth by the time of the French Revolution.[21]

Of course, the assertion that a nebulous concept like 'patriotism' represented a unifying principle in English public life in the eighteenth century is not to assume anything approaching ideological uniformity. The 'constitutional patriotism' of a country Tory like

---

[17] See Hilton, *Mad, Bad, and Dangerous*, 102-4, 239-41.
[18] Newman, *English Nationalism*, 54-5 [italics in original].
[19] *Ibid*., 56-95.
[20] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (London: Pimlico, 2003).
[21] Kathleen Wilson, 'Citizenship, Empire, and Modernity in the English Provinces, c.1720-1790', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 29, no. 1 (1995), 72.

William Blackstone (a classical republican, supportive of the monarchy and established church)[22] varied markedly from the 'public spiritedness' of the low-churchmen and other political and religious dissenters, who eschewed any sort of 'partial affections' in favour of a generalised 'universal benevolence', and a conception of a 'patriot' as a 'citizen of the world'.[23] Rather, for Newman, the significance of the early history of the English national identity is not that it reflects the emergence of any strict philosophical doctrine, but rather a particular *social type*, which would consolidate into a generalised national ethic in the Victorian era.[24] It is in the late eighteenth century we can begin to see the development of this cultural identity, through the widespread articulation of an affective discourse which displayed a marked uniformity. Regardless of political preference, all self-styled patriots conceived of an idealised Englishness that drew upon the same Whiggish narrative and tropes. This national identity (encapsulated in the moniker the 'Free-born Englishman') was conceived in opposition to a supposedly enfeebling Continental effeminacy; recalled the mythical virtues of the Tudor Reformations, while asserting the providential nature of English Protestantism; celebrated the purportedly ancient history of English libertarianism and constitutionalism; and associated the strength of the nation with mercantile and commercial expansion, thus valorising the labours of the middling sorts.[25]

In England, the genesis of this affective resource can be found in the discourse of charity, as expounded by Anglican divines from the Restoration period.[26] As Brent Sirota has shown, the Church in this period underwent a thoroughgoing revival, encouraging

---

[22] David Lemmings, 'Introduction', to William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England. Book I: Of the Rights of Persons*, General Editor, Wilfred Prest (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), xxiv-xxvii.

[23] An early exposition of this argument was the reputed Jacobite Jonathon Swift's famed 1724 charity sermon, in which he sought to distinguish a virtuous 'love of the public' from mere 'loyalty to our King' ('Doing Good: A Sermon, On the Occasion of Wood's Project', in *Dr Swift's Works, Complete in Eighteen Volumes* 11 (London, 1784), 202-4). See also Rémy Duthille, 'Richard Price on Patriotism and Universal Benevolence', *Enlightenment and Dissent*, 28 (2012), pp. 24-41; Evan Radcliffe, 'Revolutionary Writing, Moral Philosophy, and Universal Benevolence in the Eighteenth Century', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 52, no. 2 (1993), 221-40.

[24] See below.

[25] On the development of a British (and particularly English) national consciousness, see Colley, *Britons*; Newman, *English Nationalism*; Wilson, 'Citizenship'; Hugh Cunningham, 'The Language of Patriotism, 1750-1914', *History Workshop Journal* 12 (1981), 9-13; Christopher Hill, *Puritanism and Revolution: Studies in Interpretation of the English Revolution of the 17th Century* (London: Panther Books, 1968), 58-125.

[26] Though, of course, emotional attachment to country had long been recognised as a vital component of social order, and as Elsa Reuter has shown, the production and maintenance of such bonds was of paramount importance during the fractious Restoration. See 'Treason, Passion and Power in England, 1660-1685' (PhD thesis: University of Adelaide, 2013), spec. Ch. 3.

moderation, and sponsoring the foundation of charitable institutions as a means of sustaining its national communion.[27] Reflecting their desire to maintain unity and stability in a time of sectarian crisis, churchmen of all stripes promoted charity – conceived as an assertive benevolence – as the basis of communal solidarity.[28] Though the theological undercurrents should not be discounted, the prevalence of political, material, and economic concerns in such pronouncements point to charity's significance as one facet of nationalism's transformation of group bonds. A number of writers have argued that eighteenth-century divines, and low-churchmen in particular, espoused a 'form of religiously based utilitarianism', conceiving Christianity, in the words of one contemporary, 'as very plain and practical … calculated for the common good of mankind, in every station and condition, both here and hereafter.'[29] As Donna Andrew has noted, writings on charity and almsgiving in the early eighteenth century illustrate a shift in emphasis, from purely religious motives to the 'public-interest aspects' of beneficence.[30] Indeed, in the hands of English divines at the turn of the eighteenth century, charity came to be defined as the embodiment of a civic ideal that encouraged industrious intervention on behalf of humanity, Church and state: the sort of solidarity and future-oriented sacrifice characteristic of bourgeois nationalism.[31] The Anglican bishop White Kennet, for instance, asserted that charitableness would encourage the individual to act as 'a Citizen, a Patriot; serviceable to the Publick, and some way or another beneficial to all Mankind.'[32] As he explained:

> [The charitable] would submit to any Trouble or Fatigue to serve a Friend, to serve the Publick, to serve Posterity; when any such Occasion calls, we would not invent Excuses, nor frame Delays: We would be content to deny our own Pleasure, to put off

---

[27] Brent Sirota, *The Christian Monitors: The Church of England and the Age of Benevolence, 1680-1730* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).

[28] The Williamite propagandist Gilbert Burnet, for example, preached that charity would 'knit us into one Body', and 'unite all men … to prevent ruin.' (*A Sermon Preach'd … 1706* (London, 1706), 23.)

[29] Martin Fitzpatrick, 'Latitudinarianism at the Parting of the Ways: A Suggestion', in *The Church of England c.1689-c.1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism*, ed. John Walsh, Colin Haydon and Stephen Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 222. See also Martin Griffin, *Latitudinarianism in the Seventeenth-Century Church of England*, ed. Lila Freedman (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 137; Anne Kelley, '"Her Zeal for the Publick Good": The Political Agenda in Elizabeth Burnet's *A Method of Devotion* (1708)', *Women's Writing*, 13, no. 3 (2006), 448-74.

[30] Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police*, 20.

[31] On the centrality of the idea of sacrifice to nationalist ideology, see Newman, *English Nationalism*, 53-4; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London & New York: Verso, 1991), 141-5.

[32] White Kennet, *The Properties of Christian Charity* (London, 1714), 12.

our own Business, nay to break our own Rest, rather than lose an Opportunity of doing Good….[33]

Gilbert Burnet, too, saw charity as a bulwark against civil disorder. In a 1714 charity sermon he advised his congregation that 'If … the black Appearances of many things that seem to hang over our Heads, give us frightful Thoughts, let us betake ourselves to these Duties of *Justice* and *Charity*, as the probablest Preservatives against them, and the surest Lenitives under them.'[34] He was also forward-looking:

> we may … hope that there is yet a farther Blessing reserved for us, which we, by applying our selves to *do Justice, and to love Mercy, walking humbly with our God*, may hope to secure both to our selves, to the Queen, and to the Church and Nation about us, and to our Posterity after us.[35]

Of course, given one's relative position in the social hierarchy, the options for *public* engagement could be limited. However, as exertions of benevolence were 'infinitely varied in kind and degree', each individual was afforded a broad scope of works for the application of their communitarian virtues. The importance was not the material influence of their benevolent acts, but the virtue of the action – and this was to be determined by the 'warm and active diligence' by which charitable duties were prosecuted.[36]

As all these remarks make clear, eighteenth-century writings on charity were suffused with emotion. This is wholly unsurprising: beneficence, as a moral imperative, was predicated on other-directed feeling, and a number of writers have demonstrated that charity was a driving force behind the sentimental revolution.[37] However, considered in a different light, the bold communitarian ties invoked by the discourse on charity simultaneously provided the discernible outline of what would become bourgeois nationalism. Charity sermons underscored the importance of 'pure and fervent Love' to the national interest,[38] an obvious precursor to the fraternal attachment that features so strongly in nationalist

---

[33] *Ibid*., 7. See also Andrew Snape, *A Sermon Preach'd … 1731* (London, 1731), 8-9.
[34] Gilbert Burnet, *Sermon Preach'd … 1714* (London, 1714), 31 [emphasis added].
[35] *Ibid*., 31.
[36] Joseph Addison, *Interesting Anecdotes, Memories, Allegories, Essays, and Poetical Fragments, Tending to Amuse the Fancy, and Inculcate Morality*, vol. 5 (London, 1797), 270.
[37] See, for example, Crane, 'Genealogy of the "Man of Feeling"'; Koch, 'Spectacle'; Barker-Benfield, *Culture of Sensibility*, Ch. 2.
[38] Burnet, *A Sermon Preach'd … 1706*, 45.

rhetoric.[39] They also propagated the same foundation myths of English patriotism, casting a strong and figuratively purified Protestantism against an enfeebling Continental contagion.[40] Indeed, in the hands of many Restoration divines, writing in the context of a simmering Jacobite threat, Protestant charity was imagined as the literal bulwark against corruption or popish aggression, a grand national tradition that was linked back to the Tudor church reforms.[41] As the century progressed, the links between charity, 'public spirit' and the national interest remained at the forefront of the political imagination, culminating in the proliferation of charitable institutions and 'patriotic societies' during the war years, which claimed to provide material benefits to the state (maintaining the physical health of the nation, in the wake of military failures), while also consolidating fraternal ties between their 'public-spirited' sponsors.[42]

More pragmatically, the eighteenth-century writings on charity modelled a set of emotional norms characteristic of nationalism's self-sacrificing fervour. We have already seen how Restoration divines like Kennet and Burnet called upon their audiences to 'submit to … Trouble or Fatigue', and to 'deny … Pleasure' in pursuit of the public good. Jeremy Gregory has noted that religious writers in this period put forward an ideal of the godly man that stressed 'active participation within society'.[43] Certainly, by mid-century it was a commonplace of Anglican writings on charity to encourage readers to channel their affections 'for the Service and Benefit of Mankind.'[44] The archetype for this ardent zeal was Christ, whose exemplary life and affections provided both lay and religious moralists with 'an all-encompassing Christian ideal of [masculine] personhood.'[45] Writers and preachers

---

[39] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 7, 145.

[40] See, for example, Colley, *Britons*; Stephen Gregg, '"A Truly Christian Hero": Religion, Effeminacy, and Nation in the Writings of the Societies for the Reformation of Manners', *Eighteenth-Century Life* 25, no. 1 (2001), 17-28; Jack Lynch, *The Age of Elizabeth in the Age of Johnson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 78-96.

[41] See, for example, Edward Stillingfleet, *A Sermon Preach'd … MDCLXXXI* (London, 1681), Epistle Dedicatory, 27-9; Simon Patrick, *A Sermon Preach'd … On Easter-Monday, 1696* (London, 1696), 28-30. Burnet, *A Sermon Preach'd … 1706*; Francis Atterbury, *The Power of Charity to Cover Sin* (London, 1708), 14-15; White Kennet, *Doing Good the Way to Eternal Life* (London, 1712), 10-11; *idem, Charity and Restitution* (London, 1719), 25-32.

[42] Colley, *Britons*, 85-100.

[43] Jeremy Gregory, '*Homo Religiosis*: Masculinity and Religion in the Long Eighteenth Century', in *English Masculinities, 1660-1800*, ed. Tim Hitchcock and Michele Cohen (London: Longman, 1999), 96.

[44] Matthias Mawson, *A Sermon Preach'd … 1741* (London, 1741), 3.

[45] William Van Reyk, 'Christian Ideals of Manliness in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries', *The Historical Journal* 52, no. 4 (2009), 1053. See also Gregory, '*Homo Religiosis*', 100-1.

across the long eighteenth century regularly stressed the supposed fortitude and sacrifice of Christ's mission, and appealed to their audiences to cultivate such public-spirited traits – to figuratively 'walk' with the Divine Being, as Burnet and others put it.[46] By late in the century, such martial resolve – as projected by headstrong reformers like John Howard – was firmly entrenched as the characteristic of humanitarian or missionary zeal.[47] Quite literally: when praising the uncompromising activism of the Quaker Edward Wakefield, mentioned above, the wife of the alleged lunatic James Tilly Matthews extolled, 'my heart assures me, while Wakefield lives, <u>Howard</u> can never die.'[48]

Burnet's remarks above also anticipate another mantra that would characterise humanitarian efforts of the Victorian age – the assumption that good works were a manifestation of the duties of 'justice and humanity'. This idiom, or derivatives of it, was repeated with increasing regularity throughout the eighteenth century, and by the early decades of the nineteenth had become adopted as something of a rallying cry for reform. What the cause of 'justice and humanity' meant differed slightly depending on the writer. In literal terms, the mantra reflected the core virtues of civil society: justice, indicative of reason, impartiality and duty; and humanity, covering the moral dictates of sympathy and generosity. Many Georgian commentators applied the idiom in these literal terms, as an appeal to the core liberal values. Significantly though, the cause of 'humanity and justice' was typically diametrically opposed to the institutions of the *ancien régime*, or at least its perceived excesses in the eyes of Protestant polemicists: superstition, tyranny, oppression, and cruelty. The mantra was regularly employed in abolitionist writings, for instance, as the commonplace assumption that 'Justice and Humanity cannot countenance [the] murder' inflicted by the slave trade.[49] Legal reformers, seeking to overthrow the Bloody Code, also had recourse to these principles. Thus the Quaker penal reformer Elizabeth Fry demanded that 'the provisions of our criminal code be made *mild enough* to coincide with those

---

[46] See, for example, Anon, *Christianity, the Great Ornament of Humane Life: or, Man considered in his Spiritual, Civil, and Moral Capacities. Being an Humble Essay towards the Furtherance of Universal Piety and Charity, and removing all unreasonable Prejudice and Animosities respecting both the Church and State* (London, 1701), 12.

[47] Moniz, 'Labours in the Cause of Humanity', 129. As Peter Gay notes, even well into the Victorian era, didactic exemplars appropriating Christ's vocation would still stress 'military virtues' (*Cultivation of Hatred*, 107).

[48] E.S. Matthews to Edward Wakefield, 29 January 1816, Wakefield MS.

[49] Anon, *An Abstract of the Evidence Delivered Before a Select Committee of the House of Commons, in the Years 1790 and 1791; on the Part of the Petitioners for the Abolition of the Slave Trade*, 2nd Edition (Bury, 1792), 255.

unalterable principles of justice and humanity which God has implanted in the breast of man, and which will ever be supported by the feelings of a free and enlightened community.'[50]

Few writings on lunacy reform neglected to invoke some derivative of the phrase. For instance, the liberal lunacy reformer John Conolly asserted that 'justice and humanity to individuals' forbade 'the imposition of any restraint which is not in any case absolutely necessary', a tenet that framed much agitation for the abolition of mechanical restraint in mental hospitals.[51] It was in this spirit that Godfrey Higgins too justified his brash activism, contending that it was a 'sense of *duty and feeling* for the unfortunate sufferers' that prompted him to investigate alleged abuses at the York Asylum.[52]

Of course, the pronouncement that decisions be guided by 'humane' principles does not mean that they were divorced of ideology. Just as Andrew Scull warned against conceiving the reformation of medical practices in asylums as 'kindness for kindness' sake', so too we should be wary about deducing altruistic intent from such boastful rhetoric.[53] In the context of patient care at least, the cause of justice and humanity was firmly on the side of the bourgeois interest by the Victorian era. By the close of the eighteenth century, the theologian Samuel Stennett was already invoking this phrase to distinguish the rights of 'children, idiots, and lunatics' from the broader mass of society. While conceding that all men 'are born free', and thus able to dispose of themselves as they pleased, since the mad were 'not *sui juris*', it was to be considered 'an act of humanity and justice to exercise compulsory authority over them.'[54] For all his idealism, Conolly's liberal sentiments were tempered by a due regard for the 'security of … property',[55] a point which was expounded upon by one of his reviewers who, while endorsing the assumption that 'justice and humanity are the two principles which should ever direct our treatment of lunatics', identified within these principles the moral impetus for the incarceration of the mad:

---

[50] William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, 11th edition, vol. 4 (London, 1791), 3; Elizabeth Fry, *Observations on the Visiting, Superintendence, and Government of Female Prisoners* (London, 1827), 71.

[51] John Conolly, *An Inquiry Concerning the Indications of Insanity* (London, 1830), 478-9.

[52] Higgins, *Letter*, 30 [emphasis added].

[53] Scull, *Most Solitary of Afflictions*, 99.

[54] Samuel Stennett, *The Works of Samuel Stennett, D.D.*, vol. 2 (London, 1824), 167. Of course, the protection of life and property had long been a primary concern of those responsible for the diagnosis and confinement of the mad. See, for instance, MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam*, 140-2; Andrews et al., *History of Bethlem*, 331-6; Porter, *Madmen*, 117-28.

[55] Conolly, *Inquiry*, 479. On Conolly's ideological predispositions see Suzuki, 'Politics', 9-14.

> Justice will prevent us from carrying our humanity to an extent, which might endanger the safety either of property, or life; and humanity should induce us to do every thing for the comfort, as well as for the cure of the deranged, which is not incompatible with either of these objects.[56]

So as far as the patient was concerned, at least, the cause of 'justice and humanity' always carried a conservative note of caution.

While this chapter is not concerned with attitudes towards insanity *per se*, I think this reviewer's dissection of the mantra is useful, as it illustrates the complex affective meanings *topoi* can have within particular emotional communities. As Barbara Rosenwein has suggested, while '[a]rtificial sentiments' like this may not have the same practical utility to the historian as explicit emotional utterances, they do point to the 'conventions and habits' that a particular community holds dear; they, in her words, 'have everything to do with emotion'.[57] In our case, the phrase 'justice and humanity' marked, for this writer, a distinctive *emotional style*: one in which a dutiful sentimental response to the unfortunate (humanity) was tempered by reason (justice). That this idealised temperament is directly analogous to the emotional style that I have been documenting over the previous two chapters is no coincidence. Rather, the constant repetition of this mantra by bourgeois reformers speaks more of the infiltration of the new emotional norm into the process of political deliberation by the early nineteenth century.

As I have said, my interest in the manifestation of this 'justice and humanity' is less its importance to the treatment of the insane, but rather to the progress of political advocacy on their behalf. Used, as it often was, as shorthand for the active benevolence delineated in eighteenth-century charity sermons, I suggest that this mantra – and indeed the range of associated 'patriotic' tropes and utterances – constituted an emotional regime that underpinned reformist politics of the early nineteenth century, mandating self-sacrifice ('justice') in place of sentimental attachment. The following sections will illustrate the ways that this regime was utilised by lunacy activists to shape their responses to institutional conflict, and thus to promote the reformist agenda.

---

[56] *The Medico-Chirurgical Review* 26 (July-October 1830), 306.
[57] Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities*, 28-9.

II. 'Sincerity' and Lunacy Reform

From their earliest politicisation, lunacy advocates recognised the influence of this patriotic discourse. As mentioned previously, historians have noted the importance of constitutionalist rhetoric to the earliest mobilisation of lunacy advocacy efforts in Britain, generally linking popular disapproval of the mad-trade with more general discontent at the perceived vestiges of the *ancien régime*, or 'Old Corruption' more broadly. As E.P. Thompson put it, speaking of popular politics in general in this period: 'The stance of the common Englishman was not so much democratic, in any positive sense, as anti-absolutist. He felt himself to be an individualist, with few affirmative rights, but protected by the laws against the intrusion of arbitrary power'.[58] It was this widely held conception of the freeborn English-man or -woman resisting a Continental tyranny – the pillar of the English national identity – that was such a defining feature of early lunacy activism.[59] Given their secrecy, and the relative laxity of the legal restraints placed on their proprietors, private madhouses aroused concerns about illegal incarceration throughout the long eighteenth century.[60] Interested parties played upon these fears, casting these places of confinement as dens of iniquity. Indeed, the first purported exposé of corruption in private madhouses by an ex-patient, penned by the religious radical Alexander Cruden in 1739, was actually titled *The London-Citizen Exceedingly Injured: or a British Inquisition Display'd*, and was littered with references to the constant infringement of his legal rights. Writers throughout the century likened private madhouses to the Bastille, and institutions of the Catholic inquisition, forging a pointed contrast with enlightened Protestantism and Magna Carta.[61] Even into the nineteenth century, reformers and aggrieved ex-patients drew upon these patriotic tropes to characterise the mad-trade. Thus the 'alleged lunatic' Trophimus Fulljames, writing in 1822, affected disgust that 'cruelties and barbarities too shocking' for words still existed 'in a Christian Country and more particularly in Old England'.[62] In a series of sketches he sent to then-Home Secretary Robert Peel, Fulljames drew upon the gamut of Gothic tropes to depict

---

[58] E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1982), 87. See also Rudé, *The Crowd in History*, 229-31.

[59] Scull, *Madness in Civilization*, 139; Porter, *Madmen*, 260-8; Sarah Wise, *Inconvenient People: Lunacy, Liberty and the Mad-Doctors in Victorian England* (London: Vintage Books, 2013), xxi. As Karen Halttunen has shown, such characterisations were also reflected in contemporaneous asylum exposés in the Protestant United States ('Gothic Mystery', 52-3).

[60] See Porter, *Madmen*; Wise, *Inconvenient People*.

[61] See, for example, Tobias Smollett, *The Adventures of Sir Launcelot Greaves* (London, 1832), 219-20.

[62] Trophimus Fulljames to Robert Peel, 15 December, 1822, HO 44/12/139 f. 431.

the figuratively popish iniquity he claimed to have faced at Brislington House asylum near Bristol (fig. 11)
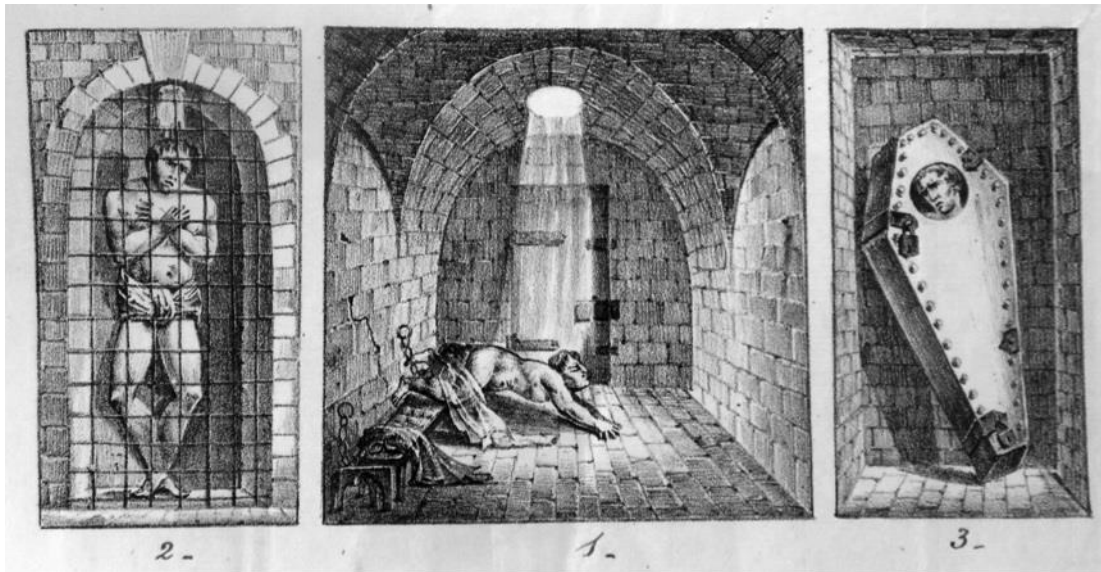
Fig. 11. Trophimus Fulljames, 'Sketch of Brislington House Asylum', c. 1822, HO 44/12/139/432. Reproduced with permission from The National Archives, Kew.

This patriotic anxiety certainly played a part in stimulating political action. Given that the identity was conceived in opposition to 'tyranny', the idea of the 'free-born Englishman' had historically conveyed an aggressive undertone. As Thompson noted, while subjects may not have claimed many 'affirmative rights', one of the rights they did assert was the right to take up arms in defence of British liberties, in collective displays of will.[63] As Sarah Wise has shown, popular support for illegally confined asylum inmates was strong, and on some occasions spilled over into this sort of raucous mob justice.[64]

However, what we see in the late-century lunacy reform movement is more than merely an outgrowth of this constitutionalist tradition. At a time when industrial capitalism was eroding customary obligation, and radical critics sought to undermine the political supremacy of the established order, aggression – outside the bounds inscribed in the traditional moral economy – came to be seen as a legitimate form of political action.[65] This was an ideological move, but also one reflected in – and shaped by – changes to the prevailing emotional norms. In accounting for the proliferation of bourgeois nationalism in

---

[63] Thompson, *English Working Class*, 87.
[64] Wise, *Inconvenient People*, Ch. 1.
[65] See, for example, Porter, *English Society*, 350-1; E.P. Thompson, 'The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century', *Past and Present* 50 (1971), 128-31.

the early nineteenth century, Gerald Newman has argued that the corresponding changes in the dominant *mentalité* should be attributed to the widespread cultivation of an 'abstract National Character', loosely defined as 'a moral, intellectual and aesthetic personality with supposedly national traits.' At the basis of this ideal – in effect, an emotional style – was the quality known as 'sincerity', a term used by intellectuals from the mid-eighteenth century to describe a nexus of values and dispositions that were believed to characterise a distinctly English style of virtue. Defined in opposition to the supposedly Frenchified manners and mores of the aristocracy – and used as a means of undermining the nobility's cultural hegemony – this identity valorised honesty, 'moral independence', and, perhaps most importantly, a distinctive frankness of comportment.[66] In Newman's view, the 'strenuous call to the independence of the individual' imposed by this moral framework inspired the profound 'revolution against the status quo' of the period 1790-1820, a revolution that, as we have seen in previous chapters, was driven by artists, professionals and evangelicals alike.[67]

As Monique Scheer has noted, the 'emotional norm of sincerity', characteristic of the European bourgeoisie, typically elevated the '"[s]pontaneous" and "natural" expression' of feeling as a mark of distinction above figuratively corrupting affectation.[68] This had a distinct sentimental inheritance. As we have seen, one of the cult of sensibility's core beliefs was that instinctive displays of sentimental emotion conveyed inner benevolence – a principle which drove the deep emotionality of the later decades of the eighteenth century.[69] However the 'sincerity' that Newman has outlined – that is, as defined by representative figures of the British intelligentsia and professional classes – owed more to this abrasive forthrightness than sentimental affection. In a sense, this new (and to sentimentalists seemingly aggressive) emotional norm was thought more suited to the classical conception of virtue imposed by the new emotional regime, and was broadly analogous to the style of hardy public-spiritedness idealised by the earlier writers on charity. William Godwin, who provided the most comprehensive delineation of this new emotional type in *Political Justice*,

---

[66] Newman, *English Nationalism*, 129-31.

[67] *Ibid*., 155, 233-44.

[68] Monique Scheer, 'Topographies of Emotion', in *Emotional Lexicons: Continuity and Change in the Vocabulary of Feeling, 1700-2000* ed. Ute Frevert (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 60. For an authoritative discussion of contemporary appraisals of sincerity and masculine character through oratory see Katie Barclay, *Men on Trial: Emotion, Embodiment and Identity in Ireland, 1800-1845* (forthcoming), Ch. 4.

[69] Brewer, *Pleasures of the Imagination*, 99-107; Carter, *Polite Society*, 76-96; Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*, Ch. 5; Todd, *Sensibility*.

defined 'sincerity' as 'a generous and intrepid frankness', which ranked 'perhaps the first place on the catalogue of human virtues.'[70] In his view, forthrightness in conversation was *the* bastion of truth and honour. He associated 'bold … speech' with 'ardent and unprejudiced … enquiry',[71] and assumed that if carried on daily, frankness would inevitably engender martial vigour, and lead the sincere individual to 'labour for the extirpation of prejudice.'[72]

In many ways, this emotional norm was a reflection of the middle-class radicalism of Godwin and many in reformist circles: it was the embodiment of a doctrine that encouraged actors to resist customs that suppressed individual energies and acquisitiveness.[73] As with most radical thinkers, Godwin's bugbear was the supposed tendency of traditional authorities to suppress or silence more marginal political voices. In *Political Justice* he railed against 'false systems of political institution', which, he suggested, sought 'to render the mind lethargic and torpid', and thus suppress 'active virtue'.[74] These 'false systems' were said to be buttressed by the laws for the suppression of libels, or as Godwin conceived of them, 'laws to restrain men from the practice of sincerity'.[75] By 'menacing [the individual] with the scourge of punishment', these laws were said to stamp out 'the divine enthusiasm of benevolence and justice', engendering, rather, cowardice and ill-principle.[76] His aim, then, was to counter this enfeebling tendency, and thus stimulate the 'good effects' that were said to 'spring from every man's being accustomed to encounter falsehood with … truth'. Indeed, in Godwin's rendering, 'courage' itself was defined as 'the daring to speak every thing … which may conduce to good'.[77]

Of course, frankness and roughness had long been accepted as honest manly traits. Certain observers from at least mid-century had tacitly endorsed rough manners as a suitably masculine bulwark against rising effeminacy.[78] However as Philip Carter notes, the appropriation of the 'blackguard' label by populist political causes – as a means of distancing

---

[70] William Godwin, *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice, and its Influence on Morals and Happiness*, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (London, 1796), 358.
[71] Godwin, *Political Justice,* 1793, vol. 1, 276, 239-41.
[72] *Ibid.*, 241.
[73] A typical Godwinian mantra was: 'It is by the efforts of a daring temper that improvements and discoveries are made' (*Ibid*., 275).
[74] William Godwin, *Political Justice,* 1793, vol. 2, 650, 648.
[75] *Ibid.*, 647.
[76] *Ibid.*, 648.
[77] *Ibid.*, 648-9.
[78] Carter, *Polite Society*, 135-6. See also Barker-Benfield, *Culture of Sensibility*, 117.

agitators from aristocratic frippery – caused many genteel commentators to denounce such assertions of 'manly patriotism', in favour of sentimental politeness.[79] By the 1790s such behaviours had generally been proscribed, forcing Godwin to labour to convince his readers that frankness of expression equated to 'conviction', rather than 'ruggedness and brutality'.[80] Asserting that shock and affront were actually morally fortifying,[81] he maintained that the force of sincere conversation – incorporating an appropriate modulation of voice and countenance – would instantaneously '[awaken] … moral feelings' in the target of censure, thus vindicating the impolite speakers.[82] And lest the genteel reader still had some misgivings about speaking out of turn, Godwin assured them that it would only take 'a few experiments' in straight-talking for their 'manner [to] become unembarrassed.'[83]

Though this was an idealised emotional temperament, this system of emotional management was undoubtedly a formative element of the British middle-class' self-image. For men in particular, the virtues of independence, and a 'frank straightforwardness' were taken for granted by the Victorian era.[84] This should not be taken as empty rhetoric either; as Godwin's 'unembarrassed' remark implies, this emotional style was intended to be learnt and inculcated. I suggest that this emotional habitus was the crux of the activist identity by the turn of the nineteenth century, the norm that underwrote the distinctive abrasiveness affected by contemporary political agitators. It is telling that the earliest successes of social and political reform can be located in the closing decades of the eighteenth century – at the point when the sentimental emotional regime was being eroded, and this new style of 'sincerity' was taking hold as the dominant emotional style of the intelligentsia and other champions of 'progress'.[85] A survey of responses towards lunacy reform demonstrates that such changes in tone and rhetoric also characterised advocacy from the closing years of the eighteenth century.[86]

---

[79] Carter, *Polite Society*, 137.
[80] Godwin, *Political Justice*, 1793, vol. 1, 242.
[81] *Ibid*., 274. This point is discussed in more depth in Chapter 4.
[82] *Ibid*., 242.
[83] *Ibid*., 242.
[84] John Tosh, 'Gentlemanly Politeness and Manly Simplicity in Victorian England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 12 (2002), 460; Michéle Cohen, '"Manners" Make the Man: Politeness, Chivalry, and the Construction of Masculinity, 1750-1830', *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 2 (2005), 312-29.
[85] On the imposition of 'sincerity' as the dominant emotional style amongst the eighteenth-century English intelligentsia see Newman, *English Nationalism*, 87-156
[86] Edward Wakefield, for instance, praised *Political Justice* as a book that contained 'many sentiments, which I highly approve' (Edward Wakefield to Francis Place, 28 December 1813, Place Papers, British Library Add. MS. 35152, f. 22).

While most Enlightenment-era writers acknowledged a desire to protect vulnerable mad people (with even some interested doctors acknowledging the need to regulate rogue madhouse keepers), early reformist agitation was typified by an unwillingness to speak out of turn. It had long been the practice of private madhouses to preserve 'discreet silences' about the family connections of patients, and early inquiries into the potential mistreatment of confined lunatics maintained a similar, polite ambivalence.[87] Take, for instance, the response of the parliamentary committee that sat in 1763 to investigate alleged misconduct in London's private madhouses, following a salacious press exposé.[88] While public opinion was soundly behind an inquiry, the subsequent investigation was confined to a few noteworthy cases, and, despite the ease with which seeming impropriety was uncovered, the committee's preference was to limit the scope of investigation, 'restraining themselves out of a Regard to the Peace and Satisfaction of private Families'.[89] This uneasiness at speaking out of turn still predominated in the 1780s, and was regularly invoked by critics of reform, who sought to temper more zealous advocacy measures. Calls for inspectors from the College of Physicians to publicise the names of transgressing madhouse superintendents were opposed on the grounds that such censure could be construed as 'a Verdict of Condemnation ex parte', at great cost to the public 'character' of the individual involved. More 'exceptionable' though were calls for the creation of a public register of lunatics under confinement. Given the stigma attached to madness, it was assumed that such a register would bring too much attention to 'every Family, in which Insanity has once showed itself', and thus potentially lead to them being 'shun'd by the rest of the community'.[90]

The polite consensus, then, was that while lunacy regulations were a serious public concern, reforms that had the potential to embarrass the genteel were not to be sanctioned.[91] Yet while this remained the dominant position throughout the eighteenth century, by the

---

[87] Porter, *Madmen*, 143-4.

[88] *Ibid.*, 156-7; *The London Chronicle: or, Universal Evening Post* (20-22 Jan, 1763); *The Gentleman's Magazine, and Historical Chronicle* 33, no. 1 (Jan., 1763), 25-6.

[89] House of Commons, *A Report From The Committee, Appointed (Upon the 27th Day of January, 1763) To Enquire into The State Of The Private Madhouses In This Kingdom. With The Proceedings of the House thereupon* (London, 1763); *Journal of the House of Commons, Twelfth Parliament of Great Britain: second session* (25 November 1762 – 19 April 1763), 489.

[90] 'Some observations on the Statute of 14 Geo: 3. "For regulating Madhouses"', [1784], ff. 5-6, Box 12, Series II: Correspondence and Documents, Thomas Townshend, 1st Viscount Sydney Papers, William L. Clements Library, The University of Michigan.

[91] Indeed, Sarah Wise has directly attributed the House of Lords' perpetual intransigence on the issue to this concern (*Inconvenient People*, xx).

latter decades some consciously public-spirited observers had begun to criticise such attitudes, with the most forward directly linking partiality and personal attachment with moral failure. A case in point is the Whig MP and dilettante Horace Walpole, a man who was uniquely placed to comment on the treatment of insanity in Britain, having dealt with the lapse into madness of his nephew, Lord Orford.[92] Reflecting on the earliest failure of the reform movement – the abortive 1763 investigation mentioned above – he lamented the inability of one of the inquiry's prime movers, Charles Townshend, to overcome legislative obstructionism, and pass a meaningful bill. Townshend's 'content[ment]', Walpole suggested, led him to drop the case too early, and, writing towards century's end, he saw this apathy as all too common amongst the *beau monde*: 'We fire at the relation of calamities, denounce vengeance on the perpetrators, cry out for, set about, reformation, … then grow cool, and never think of the woe afterwards.'[93]

For Walpole then, lunacy activism in England was floundering due to polite apathy, which he saw as inimical to the fervour necessary for institutional 'reformation'. Furthermore, this attitude appears to have shaped his wider thinking on the lunacy question, evident from his response to the case of Louisa of the haystack. Walpole was friendly with Hannah More's circle that played such a crucial role in securing Louisa's protection, and so readily offered financial assistance when contacted by More's friend Mary Hamilton in 1783. Interestingly though, given his own distress and embarrassment at Orford's disorder, Walpole conveyed a deep interest in identifying and challenging the girl's parents. In a telling passage in his response to Hamilton, Walpole asserted that justice to the distressed Louisa dictated that all efforts should be made to locate her family, regardless of the perceived indelicacy of the exposure:

> For her parents, if still living, they, if they can be discovered, may but have an affliction, probably skinned over by time, opened again, not comforted, by finding their child in so wretched a state – *that* however is not a reason for relaxing inquiry. We are not to act on hypotheses of our own imagination, and shun investigation, when positive good may be done, and activity, not speculation and refinement, is demanded of us.[94]

---

[92] For a detailed history of the Orford case see Andrews and Scull, *Undertaker of the Mind*, Ch. 4.
[93] Horace Walpole, *Memoirs of the Reign of King George the Third*, vol. 1 (London, 1845), 244.
[94] Horace Walpole to Mary Hamilton, 7 October 1783, in *Walpole's Correspondence*, 31, 208.

Gone is any concern for the peace of private families. In place of listlessness and 'refinement', Walpole charged the disinterested observer with active interventionism, for as long as some 'positive good' may be done for the sufferer. This appeal had all the hallmarks of a more abrasive emotional style, perhaps unsurprising, given Walpole's interest in the virtues of frankness and hardy action, evident in his pioneering Gothic literature.[95] Indeed, despite his social conservatism, it is clear from his subsequent comments on Louisa's case that his ideal emotional temperament was more akin to that of the rising intelligentsia. Lamenting the frequency with which the 'specious arguments, which we call common sense' were utilised to 'numb … activity, and indulge our own laziness and want of feeling', he countered with the claim that 'good sense' should rather prompt observers to 'act romantically', and become 'the knights errant of the distressed.'[96]

What we see in Walpole's remarks on the lunacy question then, is the pervasive influence of 'sincerity'. In much the same vein as those critics who, from the 1780s, began to question the moral basis of sentimental emotion, Walpole, it appears, had come to acknowledge a latent virtue in a more aggressive interventionism, which had come to colour his wider views on lunacy reform, and humanitarianism more broadly.

In fact, the influence of this more abrasive emotional style on the lunacy reform movement can be seen in genesis a decade earlier, emanating from the MP Thomas Townshend Jr., who as we saw in the previous chapter was a keen supporter of lunacy reform in the House of Commons. Townshend's father, Thomas Sr., had in fact introduced the issue to parliament in 1763, and, as mentioned above, his cousin Charles had pushed it through the committee stage (albeit unsuccessfully). Continuing this family tradition, Townshend led the charge with apparent zeal, orchestrating the successful passage of the 1774 of The Act for Regulating Private Madhouses, the first piece of legislation to deal primarily with the issue of insanity.[97]

---

[95] Butler, *Romantics*, 23.
[96] Walpole to Hamilton, *Walpole's Correspondence*, 31, 208-9.
[97] The Madhouse Act introduced three key measures to the Statute Book. It mandated that all private madhouses that held more than one patient required a licence; it made it a requirement that every patient confined to a house be certified by a medical practitioner; and also imposed annual inspections on every licenced house, to be conducted by members of the Royal College of Physicians in London, or by a committee appointed by local magistrates in the counties.

As we saw in the previous chapter, Townshend was adept at manipulating emotions in support of his cause, and an inspection of his rhetoric on the madhouse issue demonstrates his indebtedness to this new strand of Whiggish patriotism. Indeed, when first addressing parliament on the madhouse issue in 1773 he announced that,

> Some facts have reached my knowledge, which would awaken the compassion of the most callous heart; and I am assured such cruelty and injustice is shewn to individuals, who are often confined from interested motives, that cannot be equalled in any other European state.[98]

Flying in the face of England's much vaunted humanity and justice, the shadowy madhouse system was said to debase British liberties to a level unknown even on the continent. Indeed, reinforcing these inchoate fears of an iniquitous *ancien régime* presence, Townshend attributed the failures of the 1763 madhouse investigation to the interference of 'the gentlemen of the long robe' (that is, the ancient profession of the law), whose meddling and intransigence, he claimed, had quelled any meaningful reform measures.[99] Making clear his intent to distance himself from this supposed cabal, Townshend made a show of his zeal, bluntly asserting that while many may have considered it 'an unpardonable instance of presumption' to challenge the status quo, 'I shall ever think it my duty to contribute, as much as in my power, towards alleviating the distresses of my fellow creatures'.[100] Thus like his contemporary Walpole, Townshend had begun to conceive of his political identity as opposed to polite mores, asserting that a prickly brashness was a sign of 'public spirit', and a necessary step towards the amelioration of distress.

Moreover, there is evidence that this rhetoric was embodied in a suitably rugged emotional style. Shortly after the passage of the legislation, a letter penned by the correspondent 'Clio' in the *Middlesex Journal and Evening Advertiser* applauded Townshend for his ready advocacy of 'enlarged and generous measures', singling out the madhouse bill as a 'striking instance'. What is perhaps most interesting about this recollection is the emphasis placed on Townshend's 'striking' character, a respectability that, the correspondent assured, was found in his characteristically frank comportment.[101]

---

[98] *Parliamentary History*, 17, 696.
[99] *Ibid.*, 696.
[100] *Ibid.*, 696.
[101] *Middlesex Journal* (28-30 July 1774).

Far from affecting a fashionable politeness, Townshend was 'wanting in fluency of expression'; however, due to 'the soundness of his sense, the spirited conduct, the integrity of his character, and the vehemence of his manner', Townshend was said to be 'one of the most formidable members in opposition'. Indeed, it was this seeming vehemence that caught the observer's eye:

> His eloquence, when he happens to be fluent, which he sometimes is, has a greater effect than that of any man in the House, for the *spirit*, the *fire*, with which he *attacks* a minister, or a measure, is *commanding*. He throws his objections in the strongest light possible, and is *unmerciful* in the conclusions he draws from evil-doings.[102]

A less enthusiastic contemporary could still concede that Townshend 'always spoke with facility sometimes with energy and was never embarrassed by any degree of timidity'.[103]

What onlookers saw in Townshend, then, was a carefully managed emotional disposition, which substituted sentimental eloquence for an, at times, clumsy, fervour. More importantly, this uncompromising 'fire' was not read as rugged or uncouth, but principled. Taken alongside his more explicit remarks, it seems evident that as early as the 1770s, Townshend, and some like-minded observers, had begun to develop a distinctive emotional community, which associated frankness with political virtue and disinterested humanitarianism.

III. 'Sincerity' and Patient Advocacy

The influence of this emotional style is nowhere more evident than in the advocacy of aggrieved ex-inmates of the mad-trade.[104] Though the expansion of the print trade had afforded 'alleged lunatics' a powerful medium through which to articulate their assumed rights, publications up to the last decade of the eighteenth century were rigidly self-censored,

---

[102] *Ibid*. [emphasis added].
[103] Nathaniel Wraxall, quoted in Andrew Tink, *Lord Sydney: The Life and Times of Tommy Townshend* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2011), 107. See also his political opponent Lord North's characterisation of him as a 'passionate and prejudiced man' (Quoted in Ian K. R. Archer, 'Townshend, Thomas, first Viscount Sydney (1733-1800)', in *ODNB)*.
[104] On the activism of aggrieved ex-patients of the English mad-trade see, for example, Wise, *Inconvenient People*; Nick Hervey, 'Advocacy or Folly: The Alleged Lunatics' Friend Society, 1845-63', *Medical History* 30 (1986), 245-75; Elaine Bailey, '"The Most Noble of Disorders": Matilda Betham on the Reformation of the Madhouse', in Knowles and Trowbridge, *Insanity*, 29-39.

adhering to polite strictures, and reaffirming legal precedents. It was not until the proliferation of 'sincerity' as a guiding principle of radical politics that writers offered a concerted and uncompromising attack on the customs that shielded the mad-trade's abettors.

The noteworthy example of the former type of advocacy was Alexander Cruden's aforementioned *The London-Citizen Exceedingly Injured*, the 1739 pamphlet in which the radical preacher laid bare the details of his nine-week incarceration in Matthew Wright's Bethnal Green madhouse. The text discussed the circumstances of Cruden's confinement, explaining in detail his apparently brutal treatment at the hands of the madhouse's staff. In his view, the confinement was a clear affront to Magna Carta, and he closed the pamphlet with an appeal to 'every free-born Subject' to 'take care of any Combinations against their Lives and Liberties … or else Farewel good old *British* Liberty.'[105]

Even in this early period, Cruden had begun to construct a persona based around the emotional style of universal benevolence. As Roy Porter notes, in later writings on this issue Cruden depicted himself as a sort of Christ-like 'public hero', seeking to expose iniquity.[106] Yet it would be wrong to attribute this activism to 'sincerity' as conceived by Godwin and his contemporaries. However much Cruden may have wished to convey an uncompromising visage, his rhetoric was fixed firmly within prevailing codes of politeness, exhibiting a pointed condescension to his genteel readers. As a means of distancing himself from claims of private animosity he emphasised his integrity and good nature, hoping that 'no considering person will disapprove of Mr. C's prosecuting of *Wightman* [one of his alleged persecutors] in the *King's-Bench*, and his trying to recover damages for his loss of Reputation and Credit, his long cruel Sufferings'.[107] Moreover, his appeal was pointedly passive, pleading with the reader to consider his 'Case to have been their own': that is, to *sympathise with* him, in the submissive manner that Adam Smith and his contemporaries desired.[108] As with other similar appeals by ex-patients from this period, his writing evinced a constant fear of reproach, and litigation.[109] The book was written in the third person, with identifying names redacted: a nod, no doubt, to contemporary libel laws. While Cruden may

---

[105] Alexander Cruden, *The London-Citizen Exceedingly Injured: or a British Inquisition Display'd*, 2nd Edition (London, 1739), 1, 59.
[106] Porter, *Madmen*, 261.
[107] Cruden, *London-Citizen*, 52.
[108] *Ibid*., 59.
[109] Indeed, Porter described Cruden's book as a 'legal document' (*Madmen*, 260).

have pointedly resisted the label 'meek', the work was notably devoid of aggression, being, rather, deferential and self-pitying.

Compare this with the case of William Belcher, an ex-inmate of an English madhouse whose *Address to Humanity* (1796) – written in the midst of the radical revolt against polite sentimentality – conveyed a distinctly Godwinian zeal. Belcher was confined for seventeen years as a certified lunatic (improperly he claimed), and upon release he penned his *Address* as a means of proving his sanity, and thus restoring his credit. His pamphlet squarely targeted the physicians and asylum proprietors that facilitated England's mad-trade, and, like Cruden, cast this system as an affront to British liberties: 'more dreadful than the Bastille and Inquisition.'[110] In his rendering, the trade was reimagined as a sort of iniquitous leviathan, with families colluding with corrupt lawyers and doctors to have their sane family members committed, while magistrates remained unaware of the extent of the corruption, or were simply unwilling to intervene.[111]

Yet while Belcher, like Cruden, couched his critique in the language of impartiality, his emotional styling reflected the forthrightness that was becoming the hallmark of sincere public spiritedness. While acknowledging a duty to 'forgive where forgiveness is due,' he dispensed with the niceties of Cruden's activism, declaring it 'the object of my life to expose [the mad-trade] to detestation and abhorrence.'[112] Not only was this an off-hand acceptance of the notion that candour was virtuous (trumping even the Christian dictate of forgiveness), this uncompromising emotional disposition effectively shaped Belcher's assumed moral identity. He embraced this zeal, maintaining it would be his life's work to expose down those that seemingly oppressed him, and these threats were further punctuated by an abrasive, patriotic justification:

> Yes, on this subject I have an especial right to speak – I owe it to God, my country, and humanity to speak, and I will speak, and, if possible, make my hearers *ears*.[113]

Here we have the desire to speak aggressively out of turn, and a rationalisation of this frankness as noble, disinterested. This train was continued in a later passage, where he

---

[110] William Belcher, *Belcher's Address to Humanity* (London, 1796), 13.
[111] '[A] trade known to all, and disregarded by all' is how Belcher described it (*Address*, 8).
[112] *Ibid*., 8.
[113] *Ibid*., 8-9.

likened society's collective acquiescence to the mad-trade as slavery, and declared that apathy towards it threatened the nation's liberties ('no man is safe from living and dying in a strait waistcoat' was his alarmist cry). [114] In Godwin's spirit of 'courage', Belcher challenged his supposed tormentors, meeting head-on those 'miscreants to whom I bid defiance':

> If the publication of my case is dangerous, so is likewise silence. Should I at last perish, let it be in the face of day. [115]

So despite the customary strictures placed in his way – the laws of libel, which would protect an aggressor, and the traditional assumptions about the mental incapacity of a certified lunatic – Belcher claimed a duty to make his voice heard, whatever the consequences. A meek 'silence' was now considered a threat to selfhood. [116]

Most ex-patients made certain to distance their discontent from any appearance of self-interest. Jamison Kantor has noted that the very category of 'honour' faced a heavy redefinition from political radicals in the 1790s, the meaning revolving from the defence of private interests and reputation, to an impassioned appeal to the '"general good"[,] over and above personal offence.' [117] While it was not righteous to rage at a private affront, it *was* acceptable, even suitable, to express anger at a perceived injustice. Thus the 'alleged lunatic' Trophimus Fulljames, seeking desperately to prove his sanity to the Home Secretary, pleaded for attention not 'upon my own individual account, but [because] the sufferings welfare and safety of so many of my cruelly persecuted Countrymen so imperiously demand it'. [118] Perhaps more telling were the remarks of Sarah Newell, another 'alleged lunatic' who was shuffled between madhouses in the opening decades of the nineteenth century. Frustrated in her private attempts to seek redress for what she claimed was her illegal incarceration, Newell turned to print to challenge her perceived aggressors, justifying her zeal, like Fulljames, with an appeal to disinterestedness. She believed it to be 'the duty of every individual to sacrifice personal feelings for general good', and in a letter to *The Times* she claimed that her advocacy on behalf of her imprisoned fellow-creatures stemmed from

---

[114] *Ibid.*, 9.
[115] *Ibid.*, 9.
[116] On comparable changes in patient advocacy in the United States in this period see Halttunen, 'Gothic Mystery', 49.
[117] Jamison Kantor, 'Burke, Godwin, and the Politics of Honor', *SEL* 54, no. 3 (2014), 686.
[118] Trophimus Fulljames to Robert Peel, 6 January 1823, HO 44/13/2.

'an innate antipathy to every kind of arbitrary restraint', such as that imposed by the madhouse system.[119]

And, as with Belcher, Newell's comments link her firmly with the idealised emotional temperament I have been outlining. Assessing the obstacles she faced in her activism, Newell attributed her early failures to the temperateness of her appeals; she claimed that her 'advisers', through a 'false delicacy', had counselled her to take an ineffectual, conciliatory course of action.[120] In her later attempts to seek justice, though, Newell rejected this seeming prudence, rather casting her actions as courageous: the actions of 'a mind … free from the trammels which arbitrary custom imposes, and free also from the fetters that those who profess to cure insanity have hitherto had the power of riveting.'[121] And these attacks needed some justification – her target was the Committee of St. Luke's Hospital, one of Britain's premier charitable institutions, and which boasted an array of genteel patrons. Dispensing with the niceties of her earlier appeals, Newell published a letter to the hospital's governors, which maintained her right to air her grievances frankly:

> Though benevolence is an excellent quality, justice should act in harmony with it; therefore, I will not withhold giving my opinion of the incapacity, consequently criminality of those holding important situations in the Hospital.[122]

Here then, in the writings of Sarah Newell, we find perhaps the clearest evidence of the new emotional regime shaping the expressions of lunacy activists, encouraging civil sacrifice in pursuit of the 'public good', and, more importantly, substituting a 'just' frankness for sentimental harmony. That such expressions came from a woman only attests to the malleability – and thus radical potential – of this emotional norm. Though this new emotional style did undoubtedly sustain a more rigid demarcation of gender roles in public life – implicitly reasserting an ideal of a rough and independent masculinity – the norms that it instated did, at the same time, lend to marginalised groups a cultural resource from which rights claims could be legitimised.[123]

---

[119] Sarah Newell, *Facts Connected with the Treatment of Insanity in St. Luke's Hospital; with Letters on the Subject* (London, 1841), *Ibid.*, 19, 35.
[120] *Ibid.*, 4.
[121] *Ibid.*, 4.
[122] *Ibid.*, 21.
[123] This style of intrepid frankness underpinned the appeals of the most successful female lunacy reformer of the Victorian era, Louisa Lowe, who similarly brushed off the great 'personal risk' she faced at exposing the supposed 'abuses and mal-administration' of the mad-trade. Lowe asserted that

Moreover, the recognition that this emotional culture evaluated virtue with reference to displays of martial vigour offers a corrective to traditional interpretations of nineteenth-century patient advocacy. Though studies into the emergence of lunacy advocacy have offered charitable interpretations of the venture, the emotions and motivations of those involved have been treated fairly dismissively. For example, Nick Hervey, in his otherwise sympathetic account of Britain's first lunacy advocacy organisation, the Alleged Lunatics' Friend Society, notes the passionate zeal of these reformers, describing theirs as a 'fearless', 'hard-line approach'. Hervey's interest, though, is the efficacy of this approach – the fact that the advocates affected this disposition is noteworthy only insofar as it exemplified what he calls the Society's 'strategical errors', and reduced its 'credibility as a rational force'.[124] I think this underplays the significance of these displays. By making these emotions the object of analysis we can see that these displays were not simply instrumental – means to an end – but facets of a particular emotional repertoire, which simultaneously structured these individuals' moral identities. When, for instance, the Society pledged to impose their views and demands upon even sympathetic legislators, they were not simply acting out a carefully considered negotiating platform, but rather invoking a long cultural inheritance which attributed disinterestedness to uncompromising activism. Indeed, the justification for such advocacy – that it was their 'duty not to relax in any exertion to endeavour to press the matter upon the attention of Parliament' – directly recalls Horace Walpole's demand to not relax inquiry 'when positive good may be done'.[125] For these men and women, zeal was evidence of virtue.

IV. 'Strong Measures' and 'Violent Men': 'Sincerity' and the Asylum Revolution

So far I have argued that the precondition for the emergence of nineteenth-century lunacy advocacy was the elaboration of a new emotional norm, which undercut the polite imperative to deference. To close, I want to re-examine the development of the first national lunacy reform movement in light of these findings, to illustrate the influence of this new emotional culture on the actions of the reformist party. Following earlier calls for investigations into

---

this risk was 'readily incurred in the sacred cause of humanity' (*The Bastilles of England; or, the Lunacy Laws at Work*, vol. 1 (London, 1883), 3).

[124] Hervey, 'Advocacy or Folly', 253. See also, McCandless, 'Insanity', 215.

[125] [John Perceval], *Report of the Alleged Lunatics' Friend Society, Founded 1845* (London, 1851), 24.

the nation's private madhouses, a much publicised scandal at the York Lunatic Asylum in 1813 brought to light the potential neglect facing lunatics in *public* institutions. Following a protracted campaign against the hospital's administration, reformers from across England and Scotland were emboldened to inquire into charitable institutions which had previously been considered beyond reproach. This concerted agitation culminated in the much publicised parliamentary inquiry into madhouses in 1815-16, a salacious exposé by the reformist cabal, which launched scathing criticism against the proprietors and medical officers of both private and public asylums.

Here, I want to focus on the events that led to the reform of the York Lunatic Asylum, as this was probably the most publicised of such affairs. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the controversy surrounding the administration of this hospital was stimulated by the publication of Samuel Tuke's *Description of the Retreat* in 1813, which promoted the system of 'moral treatment' in favour of traditional therapeutics meted out to the insane. Aggrieved by what he considered to be personal attacks made against himself and his institution in Tuke's book, the head physician at the York Asylum, Charles Best, sparked a letter war with the supporters of the Quaker run Retreat in the local press, drawing unprecedented public attention to the government of the public hospital. This tension was further exacerbated when the Doncaster magistrate Godfrey Higgins publicly aired claims of neglect and mistreatment made by a criminal lunatic he had committed to the Asylum – an action that the physician and his supporters considered to be ungentlemanly and libellous. Unwilling to cease his investigation into the Asylum's management, Higgins united with Tuke and his friends in pressing for the imposition of a system of public surveillance over the hospital's staff and medical officers. By arousing public opinion through incendiary letters in the local papers, and, more importantly, by stacking the board of governors with pro-reform candidates, the reform party, orchestrated largely by Samuel Tuke, managed to sweep the institution of its lesser servants and medical officers, and in the process place Best under more rigorous control.[126]

Recent historians of the York asylum have been reluctant to engage with the emotions of this political debate. Perhaps as a means of distancing themselves from the optimism of

---

[126] On the history of reform see Anne Digby, 'Changes in the Asylum: The Case of York, 1777-1815', *The Economic History Review*, New Series 36, no. 2 (1983), 218-39; *idem*, *From York Lunatic Asylum to Bootham Park Hospital*, No. 69 (Borthwick Publications, York: University of York, 1986); Brown, 'Rethinking'.

earlier historians of lunacy reform – who praised the reformers for their supposed disinterestedness and enlightened humanity[127] – writers like Anne Digby have considered the reform movement as a response to administrative failures and financial mismanagement.[128] The most nuanced account of the controversy – and the one that comes closest to addressing its emotional basis – is Michael Brown's analysis of the public debate over the Asylum's administration, which positions it as a conflict over competing conceptions of 'public authority'. Whereas the medical officers and established governors of the Asylum favoured a conception steeped in a traditional (and hierarchical) notion of gentility, which attributed public spiritedness to conventional markers of gentlemanliness, the reformers – spurred by utilitarian notions of accountability and surveillance – appealed to 'public opinion' as a means of opening up the Asylum's 'medical space' to bureaucratic controls.[129]

While agreeing with Brown's central premise, I want to further examine the influence of emotional norms over the course of this debate. Though Brown notes that the reform party affected an uncompromising frankness, he assumes that it was a natural outgrowth of a dedication to politicised principles. Yet a closer examination of the private correspondence of these interested parties illustrates the difficulties that these men had in suppressing sentimental emotions, or overcoming their personal attachments. Indeed, in many cases their seemingly dutiful aggression was the product of a sustained program of emotional management, imposed by key members of the reform movement. As I illustrate below, the reformers' conception of 'public spirit' was in fact shaped by their emotional community, which sanctified such candour.

That 'sincerity' remained a primary concern for the reformers is evident from their own remarks on the affair. Writers from the reform party consistently drew upon the affective discourse outlined above, depicting a Manichean conflict between an inert and corrupt – figuratively popish – genteel culture, and a forthright reformist cabal. In one of the earliest letters of the Asylum affair, printed in the *York Courant*, the supporter of reform 'Trophimus' (the Scottish dissenter Thomas Wemyss) lamented the 'hopeless' task of anyone seeking to effect a 'Reformation' of the 'powerful and affluent', who remained

---

[127] See for example Jones, *Lunacy*, 79-92.
[128] Digby, 'Changes in the Asylum'.
[129] Brown, 'Rethinking'.

'strongly entrenched behind prescriptive usages and official forms.'[130] These pointed political and religious overtones were reinforced in his attacks on the secrecy and seeming corruption of the York Asylum, drawing historical analogies between his vocation and that of the famed Protestant reformers Martin Luther (in attacking the 'Popedom of Insanity') and the philanthropist John Howard (in exposing neglectful institutions). The solicitor Jonathan Gray, whose *History of the York Lunatic Asylum* (1815) was viewed by the champions of reform as the authority on the controversy, was more blunt in his condemnation of the Asylum's officers and supporters, deriding their actions in distinctly Godwinian terms: 'every attempt to tear off the mask, and exhibit the Asylum in its true character, is *stigmatized as a libel, or an indelicate disclosure!*'[131]

This appreciation of the merits of forthrightness carried over into their idealised persona. Wemyss noted that such intrepidity was essential to institute wholesale reform: 'A man of a public and generous spirit, however, will not be deterred … from attempting to improve Institutional arrangements, and meliorate the condition of certain classes of men.'[132] Godfrey Higgins, the public face of the reform party, also attributed their political actions to their zeal. Reflecting on the successes of the reform party in later years he described himself and his fellow agitators as '*violent* men', in the sense that they were 'not half-measure men, but men who saw clearly that, to cleanse the [*Augean*] *stable*, strong measures were necessary.'[133] Certainly, if their public denunciations of the reform party's 'strong measures' are anything to go by, the Asylum's supporters – largely drawn from the top of the established hierarchy – saw them as the embodiment of an adverse, and threatening, emotional disposition. Thus when Best's supporter 'Corrector' took to print to denounce Higgins' frankness (namely, his very public identification of figures involved in the affair, and exposure of '*private*' conversations), he condemned the magistrate's '*indelicate disclosures*' as 'a flagrant breach of good manners', and 'repugnant to the ordinary forms of civilized society.'[134]

---

[130] 'Trophimus' [Thomas Wemyss], *York Courant* (18 October 1813).
[131] Gray, *History*, 91.
[132] Wemyss, *York Courant* (18 October 1813).
[133] Godfrey Higgins, *The Evidence taken before a Committee of the House of Commons Respecting the Asylum at York* (Doncaster, 1816), 52.
[134] Corrector, *A Few Free Remarks on Mr. Godfrey Higgins's Publications Respecting the York Lunatic Asylum* (York, 1814),12-13.

As the latter comments imply, the asylum controversy had a clear class dimension. As with most eighteenth-century medical charities, the established governors of the York Asylum were drawn largely from the landed classes, numbering the Archbishop of York, several peers and clergymen, and other minor gentry. These were men from the top of the conservative hierarchy, for whom the patronage of a voluntary association was an emblem of their genteel social status.[135] As polite protocols dictated that criticisms of such local worthies should occur behind closed doors, any public criticism of the Asylum and its management was considered by these men to be a slur on the gentility, and as Brown has pointed out, these perceived affronts were only exacerbated by the perceived social inferiority of their critics.[136]

But Corrector's comments also lend some support to William Reddy's claim that questions of honour and insult were revived in the early nineteenth century due to changes in the prevailing emotional regime. Indeed, the persistence with which the Asylum's established authorities decried the publication of key details of the affair – a vehemence of the sort that had petered out somewhat in the latter decades of the eighteenth century – hints at a more general sense of fragility driving this discontent. The Asylum's 'Old Governors' found Higgins' airing of grievances '*insulting*'[137], none more so than the head physician Charles Best whose 'prickly sensibility' has rightly been said to have precipitated the whole affair.[138] The reform party complained incessantly of his 'personal abuse',[139] his rage at slights to his reputation, and the general threats he directed at them, manifested most tellingly in his alleged warning to Higgins 'that blood would be shed' over his campaigning.[140]

It would be wrong to solely attribute this sensitiveness to the defensive party though. Indeed, a close inspection of their private correspondence shows the reform party to have been just as concerned with honour and humiliation. One standard rebuff received by the reformers from prospective allies was 'the fear of giving offence', a timidity experienced by

---

[135] Brown, 'Rethinking', 430; Paul Langford, *Public Life and the Propertied Englishman, 1689-1798: The Ford Lectures Delivered in the University of Oxford, 1990* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 561-9.
[136] Brown, 'Rethinking', 444.
[137] Corrector, *A Few Free Remarks*, 6-7.
[138] Digby, *York Lunatic Asylum*, 23. Richard Hunter and Ida Macalpine similarly noted that Dr. Best found 'attack to be his best method of defence' ('Introduction', in Hunter and Macalpine eds., *Samuel Tuke's Description of The Retreat* (London: Dawsons, 1964), 9).
[139] Samuel Tuke, *York Chronicle* (10 October 1813).
[140] Tuke to Higgins, 26 October 1815, RET 8/1/7/1.

many of the most dedicated activists.[141] Higgins himself is a case in point here. Generations of writers looked back on Higgins as an exemplar of the uncompromising emotional style – a 'faithful, fearless, and resolute magistrate'.[142] More recently, Brown has acknowledged Higgins' seemingly 'vociferous and implacable' criticism of the Asylum's physician, suggesting that 'as a relative outsider, he was not so sensitive to Best's public reputation and familial connections.'[143] Yet Higgins' own correspondence from the early stages of the campaign in particular denote an acute anxiety towards this supposed vocation. As he became the target of persistent attacks from the Asylum's supporters, he privately expressed doubt and anxiety over his involvement in the affair, conceding that he felt in 'no ways able to carry on a war of letters with their set I have to deal with.'[144] He claimed indisposition, suffered numerous sleepless nights, and privately conceded to his confidant Samuel Tuke that he 'flinch[ed]' at the thought of facing his critics.[145] At one point he even contemplated abandoning an address to the Asylum's governors, with the excuse of illness – a claim that Tuke cautioned would be 'construed as the plea of timidity or defeat'.[146]

Given the seeming omnipresence of such anxieties, it is perhaps unsurprising that this local political spat would burgeon into a major controversy. Less clear is how the reformers' nervousness came to be supplanted by the zealous self-assurance identified by Brown. This can partly be explained by the reform party's pragmatism: having stacked the Asylum's board of governors with friendly faces, they ensured the passage of their measures, which undoubtedly emboldened the group. However, it is significant that they conceptualised the dispute as one deeply invested with emotions, and directly attributed their successes to their emotional style. A key figure here is Samuel Tuke, the individual whose 'unpublicised activity' orchestrated the successful campaign against the Asylum's officers.[147] Coming from a Quaker household, Tuke was firmly wedded to the dissenting tradition that had produced such a powerful critique of the established order, and if contemporary writings are anything to go by, he was the archetype of 'sincerity'. Like others raised in the 1790s, Tuke

---

[141] Tuke to Higgins, 7 December 1813, RET 8/1/7/1.
[142] Daniel Hack Tuke, 'Retrospective Glance at the Early History of the Retreat, York; its Object and Influence', *The Journal of Mental Science* 162, no. 38 (1892), 351.
[143] Brown, 'Rethinking', 441. Leonard Smith has simply described him as 'The intemperate Godfrey Higgins' (*Lunatic Hospitals*, 183).
[144] Higgins to Tuke, c. 6 December 1813, RET 8/1/2/1 f.2.
[145] Higgins to Tuke, 7 December 1813, RET 8/1/2/1, f.3.
[146] Tuke to Higgins, 8 December 1813, RET 8/1/7/1. In the end, to avoid this label of insincerity, Higgins had his statement published in the York newspapers in the days leading up to the meeting.
[147] Digby, 'Changes in the Asylum', 235.

was a stated critic of literature's 'sickly sensibility',[148] and his later biographer made certain to associate him with a more robust manliness:

> His eloquence, though somewhat unequal, was of a striking and often lofty character. There was a masterly comprehension of an idea – forcible, clear, and well-enunciated expression. On certain occasions the clear summing-up of conflicting arguments, and the delivery of a lucid judgment with calm precision, yet always with a warmth of feeling, elicited a display of mental power not easily forgotten.[149]

Here then was the sincere man in outline, eschewing sentimental eloquence for a more inelegant forthrightness. Significantly, these virtues were thought reflective of an uncompromising disinterestedness. As the same writer related:

> Tuke was never a party man. His mind was simply incapable of being so moulded. Every line of action which he adopted, however much it might provoke hostility in those who honestly took a different view, was simply the result of some great principle, firmly grasped and rigidly carried out.[150]

Of course, this was an idealised rendering of integrity and principle, which by the Victorian age had become a commonplace in obituaries. Nevertheless, it does illustrate the increasing importance of this emotional norm, which was already colouring Tuke's political thinking during the Asylum debate. There were pragmatic reasons for appealing to such a persona. Owing to his family's material interest in the controversy (the York Asylum being a direct competitor of the Tukes' own Retreat) widespread rumours associated Samuel Tuke with a campaign to undermine Best's credibility. Though obviously discontented, he recognised the necessity of affecting an uncompromising front, asserting to Higgins that he would 'not shrink from any proper act' that would aid the cause.[151]

However, it is also evident that this invocation of 'sincerity' served a pragmatic purpose. Private correspondence relating to the affair shows Tuke also utilising the tropes and emblems of this fervent and patriotic discourse as a means of coaxing his more anxious

---

[148] Charles Tylor, *Samuel Tuke; His Life, Work, and Thoughts* (London, 1900), 43.
[149] Anon 'The Late Samuel Tuke', 174.
[150] *Ibid*., 173.
[151] Tuke to Higgins, 7 December, 1813b, RET 8/1/7/1.

co-conspirators to a suitably steely façade. In the early stages of the controversy, at the time when Higgins's resolve was wavering the most, Tuke used this discourse to reassert the providential nature of their mission. For example, when responding to Higgins's figurative 'flinch', Tuke sought to allay his fears by attributing the rapid successes of the reform party to their 'noble feelings and manly spirit', which he argued had 'shaken the pillars of that horrid system[,] … destined speedily to fall'.[152] A few days later, shortly after the reform party's first material successes, he further allayed Higgins' concerns that the Asylum's supporters would overcome the reformers' numerical advantage in the committee room with the triumphant expectation that:

> the *spirit of humanity and justice* which is now aroused will always be equal to the efforts of private interest and party spirit. Who that has but half a soul would not put out his hand to crush this monstrous system of iniquity, and convert a public nuisance into a public blessing[?][153]

Here then we can see the mobilisation of a distinct set of tropes and emotives, associated with 'sincerity' – the providential belief that the temperament imbued by the 'spirit of justice and humanity' would foster the martial action necessary to 'crush' iniquity and corruption. Coupled with his own example of stoic resolve (not shirking from responsibility), as well as the more pointed censure in his remark on Higgins's apparent 'plea of timidity', Tuke's comments were clearly intended to police the other man's emotions, enacting an emotional regime of sorts, but one more attuned to the needs of a 'face-to-face' community.[154] Given the hallmark of the wider emotional culture (prevalent and unsettling shame) it is likely that such prompts and tacit penalties would have channelled particular responses, encouraging the fragile Higgins to publicly assert his sincerity. Certainly, his subsequent remarks displayed no note of anxiety: he reiterated a desire to hold a strong course, and confirmed that he had 'no regrets' about his conduct.[155] He later justified broadcasting his allegations to strangers with more explicit appeals to his disinterest, believing that 'the cause of

---

[152] Tuke to Higgins, 9 December 1813, RET 8/1/7/1.

[153] Tuke to Higgins, c. 12 December 1813, RET 8/1/7/1 [emphasis added].

[154] As William Reddy notes, communal 'penalties such as gossip, exclusion, or demotion' are effective means of policing 'emotional regimes' in such 'face-to-face communities' (Jan Plamper, 'The History of Emotions: an Interview with William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein and Peter Stearns', *History & Theory* 49 (2010), 243).

[155] Higgins to Tuke, 10 December 1813, RET 8/1/2/1 f.7. Once his actions had achieved nationwide attention, the mere threat of appearing intransigent was enough to prompt Higgins to more zealous exertions. See Higgins to Tuke, c. August 1814, RET 8/1/2/1 f.37.

humanity and justice will plead [an] excuse' for such forthrightness.[156] Indeed, while publicly claiming that he 'felt for the very respectable connexions of more than one of the officers of the house', he gave the qualification that no 'considerations of this kind, nor vulgar personalities' deterred him 'from the pursuit of the radical reform … which it was my duty, both as a man and magistrate, to effect if possible.'[157]

Tuke also played a part in coaxing his fellow reformer Samuel Nicoll to supporting the party's 'strong measures'. While Nicoll was a vocal supporter of the reform of the York Asylum, he was notably reticent about undermining the public reputation of the head physician, owing, he claimed, to his respect and affection for Dr. Best, and his 'family, and connexions.'[158] His fellow reformers were generally embarrassed at his condescension and timidity, and frustrated that his partiality led to the seeming watering-down their proposals.[159] They enacted a clear program to induce a change in behaviour, making numerous public statements expressing their embarrassment, while also privately addressing his partial attachments. Thus when Nicoll expressed a further unwillingness to sanction the dismissal of the Asylum's supposedly neglectful apothecary, Charles Atkinson, Tuke penned a letter to convince him that this was a false delicacy, which would undermine his 'arduous and benevolent exertions':

> much practical evil will probably result for the sake of benefiting one individual whose probable suffering in consequence will be incalculably less than that of arising to the unhappy objects of this institution from a defective system…[160]

Here, Tuke carefully targeted his appeal to the utilitarian Nicoll, pitting sentimental affection against the universal pleasure principle. Indeed, it is easy to see why Benthamism proved such an effective motivator in the hands of social reformers in this period, the felicific calculus providing a potent rationale for aggression.

This is not to say that the reform party, or their opponents, accepted any aggression as legitimate. As with any partisan political affair, its proponents accepted that events were

---

[156] Godfrey Higgins to George Rose, 10 April 1814, RET 8/1/2/1/ f.27.
[157] Higgins, *Evidence*, 38-9.
[158] *Ibid*., 49-50; Digby, *York Lunatic Asylum*, 22.
[159] See, for example, Higgins, *Evidence*, 50; Tuke to Higgins, 21 June 1814, RET 8/1/7/1.
[160] Samuel Tuke to Samuel Nicoll [Draft], 12 July 1814, RET 8/1/2/2, f.31.

bound to turn riotous. Tuke, for instance, at one point sardonically described a committee meeting as a display 'of British spirit and firmness', more suited to the local 'Cockpit'.[161] There was, however, a question of the appropriate expression of 'British spirit and firmness.' Popular opinion still maintained a firm association between temperateness and gentility.[162] Moreover, in the aftermath of the French Revolution, and particularly following the emergence of working class radicalism in Britain, outward displays of collective discontent were widely censured by the ruling classes. This had obvious implications for champions of political reform. Several decades of conservative propaganda had sought to de-legitimise political reformism, by linking its advocates to the worst excesses of revolutionary devastation.[163] The 'strong measures' of Higgins in particular made him an easy target for the Asylum's old guard, who attempted to smear them with the rabble-rousing labels levelled at the more disreputable political radicals.[164]

Too irritable a façade could thus be detrimental to the less established reform party, and so they were careful to sculpt a meticulous public image of disinterested restraint and self-command. One of the reasons that Tuke constantly labelled theirs a party of 'Justice and Humanity'[165] was to avoid the worst censures, and to appropriate a civic humanist conception of public spiritedness: the appearance of 'free independant [sic] men stimulated alone by the desire of doing good.'[166] Their private correspondence illustrates the extent to which the reformers gauged and moderated their own rhetoric. For example, following the backlash he received from upon publishing his first letter to the *York Herald*, Higgins's drafted response was carefully worded, he told Tuke, so as to be 'very clear & firm but not violent.'[167] Similarly, when 'correcting the press' with a letter in April 1814, Higgins placated his supporters with an assurance that 'it [would] be very temperate'.[168] Charles

---

[161] Tuke to Higgins, 4 January 1814, (RET 8/1/7/1).

[162] Referring to the American context, Peter Stearns notes that 'Victorian men and women alike frowned on spontaneity; uncontrolled impulse was a mark of poor breeding and a real social and personal threat.' (*American Cool*, 17).

[163] Michael Davis, 'The Mob Club? The London Corresponding Society and the Politics of Civility in the 1790s', in *Unrespectable Radicals?: Popular Politics in the Age of Reform*, ed. Michael Davis and Paul Pickering (Abingdon: Ashgate, 2008), 22.

[164] See Higgins to Tuke, 20 December 1813, RET 8/1/2/1, f.10; Atkinson, *Retaliation*; Corrector, *A Few Free Remarks*.

[165] Tuke to Higgins, 20 December, 1813, RET 8/1/7/1.

[166] Tuke to Higgins, c. December, 1813, RET 8/1/7/1. On the civic humanist conception of 'independence' and public spirit see J.G.A. Pocock, 'Between Machiavelli and Hume: Gibbon as Civic Humanist and Philosophical Historian', *Daedalus* 105, no. 3 (1976), 153-5.

[167] Higgins to Tuke, *c*.7 December 1813, RET 8/1/2/1 f.4a.

[168] Higgins to Tuke, April 1814, RET 8/1/2/1, f.29.

Best, the reformers recognised, sought to provoke him into further recriminations, and potentially to goad him into a libel. Tuke thus took pains to placate Higgins, and in response to a particularly incendiary letter warned him not to 'forget in private feeling the interests of the great cause which he has so nobly espoused.'[169] Higgins, in reply, claimed to have received several other letters from supporters imploring that he 'would not fight Best', and expressed surprise that they would 'suppose I shall act so like a fool'. He considered that the surest course of action was to treat Best's attacks 'with silence and contempt'. All the better, as

> I think that may induce him to write something still more violent which I much wish he would do. The more violent the better. I should not care … if he were to pull my nose.[170]

And this was not just a matter of fashioning identities in print. From the reform party's publications and surviving correspondence, it is clear that they, at least, committed themselves to a concerted program of emotional management, seeking to convey such a 'sentimental body image' under duress.[171] While constantly lambasting Best and his supporters for their 'furious', 'acrimonious', and 'violent' opposition to any reform measures passed in the committee room, the reformers took great pains to stress their own resolve: their 'calmness', 'coolness', and 'accuracy' under provocation.[172]

Yet even here this attempt at emotional management appears as posturing, a means by which middling reformers could placate an ambivalent public. It is telling that more genteel (and thus self-assured) critics of the Old Governors were willing to flaunt their 'British spirit and firmness.' Jonathan Gray reflected with admiration on the 'violent indignation' displayed at a committee meeting by one of the Asylum's more established governors, Viscount Milton, in response to a watered down reform proposal. A Whig grandee, Milton was firmly on the side of reform and, owing to his position, was willing to impose himself on the August 1814 committee meeting, at which the accusations against the Asylum's

[169] Tuke to Higgins, c. 3 April 1814, RET 8/1/7/1.
[170] Higgins to Tuke, c. 4 April 1814, RET 8/1/2/1, f.22.
[171] On the articulation of a 'sentimental body image' in the literature and rhetoric of the eighteenth century, see Goring, *Rhetoric of Sensibility*.
[172] Tuke to Higgins, 11 December, 1813, RET 8/1/7/1; Tuke to Higgins, 20 April 1814, RET 8/1/7/1; [Almyra], Mrs Edwin Gray ed., *Papers and Diaries of a York Family, 1764-1839* (London: The Sheldon Press, 1929), 155-9.

medical officers were deliberated and voted upon. When one of the reform party, John Graham, moved a motion to retain Dr. Best as physician of the institution, while dismissing the rest of the staff for negligence, Milton scolded him for not having the 'courage' to 'pounce … upon the chief offender' – a man of his own class. Addressing the room 'in a voice like thunder', Milton moved '*that the Physician* be added to the number' – a motion that prompted a further round of recriminations amongst the assembled governors.[173] Though Milton was later required to vindicate himself in a more 'dignified manner', this violent frankness was clearly read as a mark of public spiritedness by the reform party, leaving an embarrassed Graham clamouring to 'clear himself from the imputation of fear of Dr. Best'.[174]

V. Conclusion: Emotions and Institutional Reform

The widespread acceptance of this new emotional norm can explain why Higgins' brash outbursts were received so readily by the parliamentary Select Committee on Madhouses as signs of disinterested 'public spirit'. Conveying toughness, and a willingness to commit violence in the defence of the weak and marginalised, Higgins embodied the 'generous and intrepid frankness' that Godwin saw as the basis of virtue. It is perhaps a sign of the penetration of this new mentality that when the parliamentarian and noted lunacy reformer Lord Robert Seymour heard Higgins' revelations about Charles Best's seeming obfuscation he 'hid his face with both his hands and shaking his head said fiat justitia ruat cælum' – *let justice be done though the heavens may fall*.[175] 'Strong measures' were the order of the day.

This is not to claim that emotions directly led to the reform of the Asylum – to do so would be to overlook the pragmatism of Tuke and Higgins, who worked tirelessly to obtain a numerical advantage in all important committee meetings. Nor is it to make any moral claims for this emotional style, or the humanitarian movement in general – as I hope to have made clear, these expressions were (and indeed still are) a fundamental reflection of ideology. What I do suggest though is that the Asylum controversy provides a unique insight into the mobilisation of this new emotional style, and its importance to the wider political

---

[173] *Ibid*., 159.
[174] *Ibid*., 159.
[175] Higgins to Tuke, 4 May 1815, RET 8/1/2/1 f. 48.

campaign against established authorities, and the existing social order. In the wake of the collapse of sentimentalism in other cultural spheres, and resultant emotional malaise, the emotional regime evoked by reformers like Tuke and Lord Milton had the potential to channel the emotional expressions of sensitive onlookers, and thus potentially provoke aggression towards their social betters.

Such a finding has implications for our understanding of the philosophical basis of lunacy reform. It challenges traditional explanations for the so-called 'Humanitarian Revolution' – which stress the influence of new sensibilities over human action, or the importance of philosophical 'principles' to the 'uncompromising activism' of turn-of-the-century social reformers[176] – while also offering further evidence for Brown's claim that the Asylum debate represented a clash of political ideologies. Moreover, a focus on emotional regimes suggests that these emotional practices may have actually underpinned the philosophical tenets that drove the reform party. Because it was not simply the case that reformers in the nineteenth century had started to appeal to a nebulous 'public authority', though they certainly did justify their agitation with recourse to this principle. Rather, a primary concern of these critics was the prevailing emotional regime actually negated the disciplining potential of the press and other organs of the public authority. Thus when a champion of reform advised the readers of *The Philanthropist*, 1816, on the most suitable responses to the findings of the Select Committee on Madhouses, he warned of the negative influence of politeness on the reform agenda. While newspapers and periodicals channelled public opinion 'to the ears of legislators', this critic's concern was that the 'squeamishness' of otherwise dutiful subjects would ultimately weaken their resolve, and prompt them to fawn over, rather than denounce, or dictate terms to, their social superiors (this was a fault he attributed to the framers of the earlier, seemingly ineffective Madhouse Act of 1774).[177] Moreover, while acknowledging that publicity provided the surest protection against corruption and neglect in the treatment of the mad, he also dressed down those critics who would conceal the circumstances of an individual's madness out of respect to the 'feelings of families'. Given that such sensibility had the potential to exacerbate 'painful feeling' in other spheres, it could not be considered 'a very respectable feeling'.[178] Here, perhaps most

---

[176] Keymer, 'Sentimental Fiction', 593; Haskell, 'Humanitarian Sensibility, Part 1', 343. On the recent historiography of Western humanitarianism and the 'civilizing process' see Pinker, *Better Angels*, 129-88.
[177] *Philanthropist*, 6, 1816, 38.
[178] *Ibid.*, 51.

explicitly, was an admission that principled action was not a straightforward proposition, and that political zeal needed to be learned.

On a related point, while such remarks point to the centrality of utilitarianism to the reformist project, we should not simply attribute such attitudes to the inculcation of Benthamite rationalism. What was being encouraged here was less the proscription of emotion as the prescription of a new emotional norm, which encouraged aggression over politeness, and which thus redefined the performance of public spiritedness. This revision of norms was not the product of recent philosophical speculation, but a wide-ranging cultural reorientation, beginning with modernisation (and its concomitant prioritisation of national solidarity), and ultimately hastening after the collapse of sentimentalism, and the code of politeness that it buttressed.

Perhaps most importantly, the Asylum affair demonstrates that this new emotional norm had been elevated as a *dominant* code of conduct by the early decades of the nineteenth century. By the time that Godfrey Higgins gave his abrasive testimony to the Select Committee on Madhouses, his supporters were of a mind that controlled aggression was conformable to disinterested justice, and thus suitable to political deliberations. Within a decade, this mindset no longer required justification.

In 1826, following rumours of negligence and corruption at the East Riding Refuge for Pauper Lunatics at Sculcoates, an investigative committee headed by the social reformer Robert Mackenzie Beverley submitted a damning report to the local justices, advising both that the institution's servants be dismissed, and that the county cease committing parish paupers there for care and treatment.[179] Little would have been made of this minor skirmish if not for Beverley using it as a noteworthy example of public spiritedness in his scurrilous political satire *The Elector's Guide* (1826). The article was penned largely to promote the cause of reform (most likely in preparation of the local Whigs' campaign for that year's elections), but in doing so praised the actions of one particular investigator, the Tory Richard Bethell, in bringing about the disclosures. What is interesting for our purposes here is the way in which Beverley dealt with the tumult of political reform, and the emotional style of this leading inquisitor. Citing the 1813-4 controversy at the York Asylum as an exemplary

---

[179] J.A.R. Bickford and M.E. Bickford, *The Private Lunatic Asylums of the East Riding* (Beverley: East Yorkshire Local History Society, 1976), 17; [Robert Beverley], *The Elector's Guide*, vol. 3 (York, 1826), 23-4.

instance of institutional reform, he progressed to decry the typical response to those who called for such investigations: the cycle of rumours and epithets ('you are called a radical, Jacobin, atheist, scoundrel, villain' etc.), but also the public's seemingly sentimental lamentations for the individuals named. Like Higgins and the earlier reformers, Beverley attributed the perpetuation of supposedly institutionalised corruption to this emotional culture, which ensured that the champions of reform were 'brow-beaten, insulted, and silenced', and the suspects reinstated.[180]

Beverley reported that the investigators at Sculcoates met with similarly 'stout opposition', tellingly attributing the committee's success in the matter to the 'moral character' of Bethell: his 'unshaken honesty …, his high sense of honor and justice, and the unbending rectitude of his mind.' This character, Beverley made clear, was displayed in the man's general temperament:

> We have known him, as a public character long, and seen, with pleasure, that no consideration can ever deter him from doing his duty, that in all cases where humanity and justice call for speedy and prompt decision he is ready at his post, and true to his principles; and would act according to his conscience that he should offend the best and most powerful friend he had in the world.[181]

Whether this was actually the case is perhaps irrelevant. By this time it was *assumed* that 'strong measures' and 'public spirit' were of a piece. The cause of 'humanity and justice' was now a rationale for aggression.

---

[180] Beverley, *Elector's Guide*, 23.
[181] *Ibid.*, 24. On the importance of emotional display to manly 'character' in the nineteenth century see Barclay, *Men on Trial*, Ch. 4.

Conclusion: 'An Active Spirit of Humanity'? Emotions and the History of Asylum Reform

When looking back over the copious publications produced by, and in response to, the 1815-16 House of Commons Select Committee into Madhouses, an essayist in the *Edinburgh Review* could do little but equate the conditions that characterised Britain's asylums with the worst excesses of the *ancien régime*: their therapeutic regimes having 'no parallel but in the atrocities of a slave ship, or the dungeons of the Inquisition.'[1] The only shining light that this critic could find in the assorted pamphlets and reports was the 'zeal and perseverance of the many noble and distinguished persons who have devoted themselves to the inquiries'.[2] These men, it was said, were 'determined to do the business they had undertaken', a resolve that was proved through their disposition: 'As they advanced, the dreadful facts disclosed increased their diligence; they spared no pains to go to the bottom of their subject'.[3] Lunacy reform, for this critic, was thus predicated on an emotional style that marked displays of fortitude, forthrightness, and inquisitiveness as virtuous: a temperament that this writer, himself, claimed as part of his authorial persona. Deriding the editors of 'popular Journal[s]', who did not 'risk' their 'popularity' by reporting on such unwelcome or uncomfortable subjects, the correspondent considered it a 'duty' to publish 'unattractive, … repulsive and distressing' accounts whenever the 'cause of humanity required it'.[4]

What this correspondent was describing as the basis of lunacy reform agitation – this 'active spirit of humanity' – was the culmination of a longer shift in normative styles of emotional management documented in this thesis.[5] As the first two chapters demonstrated, the emotional practices that sustained the sentimental emotional regime fundamentally shaped the nature of spectators' responses towards the insane. Lunatics that could facilitate a conventionally 'sentimental' emotion were elevated as objects of contemplation and affection; those that aroused feelings of abjection, by contrast, were dismissed as beyond humane regard, with the regime's norms encouraging a theatrical disavowal of the sight. It was the imposition of new emotional standards that transformed responses, and Part Two of the thesis illustrated the norms and practices that enabled these changes. Chapter Three

---

[1] Anon, 'Lunatic Asylums', *The Edinburgh Review, or Critical Journal* 28 (1817), 432
[2] *Ibid.*, 471.
[3] *Ibid.*, 434.
[4] *Ibid.*, 471.
[5] *Ibid.*, 471

outlined the broad shift in emotional practices occurring from the close of the eighteenth century, which precipitated this change. As ambitious members of the professional classes grew increasingly suspicious of sentimentalism's ideals, they moved to assert a new set of emotional norms, which underpinned the 'zealous' advocacy of nineteenth-century lunacy reformers. Chapter Four showed how the ascendant emotional regime encouraged a new form of intuition, which legitimised sensationalism as a guide to rational induction. This chapter also sketched out the affective politics of lunacy reform, demonstrating how reformers utilised shocking representations in their writings and testimonials, not simply to excite some base disgust in viewers, but rather to naturalise particular political dispositions in their audiences. Chapter Five took a broad view of the emotions scripted and performed in the public sphere, to demonstrate how the imposition of a new emotional norm – 'sincerity' – provoked the lunacy reformers into taking an increasingly assertive stance.

Considering the progress of lunacy reform through an emotions lens thus problematises revisionist interpretations of the movement, which place undue emphasis on the intellectual developments that accompanied this change. That new ideas about the innate sensitivity of lunatics played some role in driving moral outrage against the people charged with their care is likely. As Scull notes, the idea that the mad were essentially animalistic was a strong justification for their severe coercion in even the most respectable madhouses in the eighteenth century.[6] Though the thought of manacles and whips chilled them to the bone, observers before the nineteenth century never assumed that such treatments were cruel, or that the people who applied them were barbaric – they just felt compelled to banish the madhouse from sight. Yet while this new thinking undoubtedly shaped the direction of lunacy reform agitation, this thesis has illustrated the arguably more powerful influence of emotional regimes over reformist advocacy. Speaking of the politics of the movement, Michael Brown has suggested that lunacy reform was not solely '*about* madness', and this is also an important consideration when documenting the impact of new sensibilities towards insanity.[7] Early-nineteenth-century reformers were not animated by some newly discovered sympathy for the mad, but rather adopted a new conception of moral feeling, which redefined the way that 'humanity' was to be appraised and expressed. This is evident even from the criticisms of ex-inmates of asylums, whose appeals, as shown in Chapter Five, were shaped

---

[6] Scull, *Most Solitary of Afflictions*, Ch. 2.
[7] Brown, 'Rethinking', 449.

as much by the prevailing emotional regime as any wider intellectual, political, or philosophical mandates.

More broadly, this rereading of reformist emotions also calls into question the significance of sentimentalism's emotional practices to the development of the 'humanitarian' sensibility in the modern West. Historians and literary scholars are certainly correct in acknowledging humanitarianism's indebtedness to sentimental doctrine. Victorian-era philanthropists laced their appeals with the tropes and emblems perfected by eighteenth-century novelists and preachers, and few contemporaries doubted the morality of tears, appropriately directed. However, as I have endeavoured to illustrate, this sentimental legacy was 'set in a new intellectual framework and put to new uses', to use Reddy's words.[8] While reformers from John Howard onwards appealed to their 'love of humanity', they similarly assumed that sentimental affection threatened to undermine disinterested action. And while no man or woman of taste would fail to recoil with disgust at the sight and stench of the madhouse, from the turn of the nineteenth century they considered it a point of virtue to withstand this pain. The 'benevolence' of the nineteenth century was thus a world away from the 'affective communion' idealised by most novelists of sentiment: a reinterpretation of social affection that reflected emergent ideas about class, community, and individualism. In many ways this rumination on the suitability of feeling and action can be seen as a precursor to the Victorian debates over the definitions of altruism and egotism.[9] It also heralded the beginning of an intellectual tradition, exemplified in early evolutionary science and vivisection, which praised scientific endeavours as fundamentally humane, while simultaneously decrying sentimentalised conceptions of 'sympathy' as inimical to the common good.[10]

Apart from these explicit historiographical concerns, this study supports some of the wider claims made for the application of emotions frameworks to the study of historical change. While writers like Thomas Haskell might still assume that broad historical movements like humanitarianism could be founded in some deeply-held 'principle', a re-evaluation of the progress of humanitarian sensibilities in light of recent work into emotional

---

[8] Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*, 217.
[9] See Thomas Dixon, *The Invention of Altruism: Making Moral Meanings in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).
[10] See Rob Boddice, *The Science of Sympathy: Morality, Evolution, and Victorian Civilizaton* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016).

practices muddies any preconceived notions about the 'liberal self' and intentionality. What counted as 'principled', or 'disinterested' intuition to these individuals was defined as such according to dictates of the prevailing emotional regime. Brown has suggested that what distinguished lunacy reformers from their political targets was a differing conception of public spirit.[11] I would extend this assertion to argue that, in Scheer's words, the 'behaviors and thought patterns' of the reformers were fundamentally shaped by a differing regime, which prompted and naturalised new styles of perception and action.[12]

Emotional regimes do not arise organically, and this study offers support to the notion that changes in emotional practices reflected wider changes in the social structure. The emotions mobilised by lunacy reformers often suited their political interests. Moreover, emotional styles often grounded groups' claims to moral and political authority, and in this sense I loosely follow Pierre Bourdieu in identifying emotions as an embodied form of 'symbolic capital'.[13] Yet, this does not mean that emotions were merely epiphenomenal, or completely instrumental. As was made clear by Hannah More's agonised responses to Louisa's wretched visage, the very failure to appropriately manage emotions could, inadvertently, drive dissatisfaction or disillusionment towards an emotional style, as well as force subsequent changes in practices. The broadening of the normative expression of the social affections to incorporate and sanction expressions of fear or disgust certainly hints at a community seeking to limit 'emotional suffering'. In a similar vein, it seems evident that the widespread sense of fragility that Reddy identifies as the natural consequence of sentimentalism's erasure, fundamentally destabilised politics in this era, thus opening a fertile ground for the mobilisation of reformist emotives.

Further work needs to be conducted to determine the influence of this emotional regime over medical practices. As Wayne Wild and others have demonstrated, orthodox physicians in the eighteenth century shaped their practice around the dictates of the sentimental emotional norm, and as I suggest in Chapter One, this imperative fundamentally shaped mad-doctors' responses to the mad in the late eighteenth century.[14] However, as Heather Beatty and Michelle Faubert have shown, nerve doctors played a pivotal role in

---

[11] Brown, 'Rethinking'.
[12] Scheer, 'Emotions', 206.
[13] Pierre Bourdieu, 'The Forms of Capital', in *Cultural Theory: An Anthology*, ed. Imre Szeman and Timothy Kaposy (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 83-4.
[14] Wild, *Medicine-by-Post*, spec. Ch. 4; McCulloch, *John Gregory*. On the squeamishness of sentimental mad-doctors see also Andrews, 'Bedlam Revisited', 68-9.

articulating the concerns about sentimentalism's inherent hypochondria, mentioned in Chapter Three.[15] Given this pervasive anxiety it is unsurprising that proto-psychiatrists in the Romantic period gravitated towards a more classical conception of their role, asserting that the study of madness united the 'sympathy of the Philanthropist' with the skill, attention and reason of the 'Philosopher' and 'Physician'.[16] Moreover, it was from this period that these figures began to conceive of their profession as a courageous and rational counterpoint to the unenlightened superstition of past ages: a rhetorical strategy that fed into the Whiggish grand narrative that 'established a direct link between the accumulation of knowledge and "overcoming fear"'.[17] Such a narrative appears untenable in light of recent research into the history of emotions. The concession from contemporaries that a 'useful' (or stoic) disposition could only be attained in a madhouse by medical attendants who 'constantly' reflected on the organic nature of the disease suggests a rather taxing style of emotional management, dependent on the mobilisation of a particular set of emotives or practices.[18]

It is also pertinent to examine the long-term influence of emotions over the politics of lunacy reform. Psychiatric reform has traditionally been interpreted as a conflict on institutional and ideological lines, with lay reformers seeking to erode the medical faculty's grip over the treatment of the mad, and the doctors, in turn, mobilising conservative fears about political centralisation, so as to wrest a monopoly back from these philanthropists.[19] Though such an account overlooks the numerous physicians who supported reform in its early stages, it is certainly true that medical men, from around the time of the first Select Committee on Madhouses, were increasingly resistant to reform. Interestingly, this dissatisfaction centred, primarily, on the emotional style of the reformers, and their utilisation of 'humanitarian narratives' in their advocacy. We have already seen, in Chapter Four, how Charles Atkinson lashed out at the melodramatic 'crack sound' that he saw as undermining his 'common sense' authority at the York Asylum. Similar attitudes are evident in the writings of the Irish proto-psychiatrist William Saunders Hallaran who, in defending the treatment of Ireland's lunatics against the sensational claims perpetuated by the reformist physician Andrew Halliday (also mentioned in Chapter Four), roundly condemned the use

---

[15] Beatty, *Nervous Disease*, Ch. 5; Faubert, *Rhyming Reason*, Ch. 3.

[16] John Warburton, 'A Dissertation on Insanity', 1815, RCP MS 624; Henry Halford, 'On the Treatment of Insanity [Draft]', c. 1833, RCP MS 2905.

[17] Otniel E. Dror, Bettina Hitzer, Anja Laukötter, and Pilar León-Sanz, 'Introduction to *History of Science and the Emotions*', *Osiris* 31 (2016), 6.

[18] *Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal* 10 (1814), 65-66.

[19] Scull, *Most Solitary of Afflictions*, 122-5; 202-12; William F. Bynum, 'Rationales for Therapy in British Psychiatry: 1780-1835', *Medical History* 18, no. 4 (1974), 317-34.

of such 'MONSTROUS IMAGERY' as flagrant misrepresentation: 'too gross to be admitted by the friends to decorum, and common charity'.[20]

Though polemical in tone, these critics' remarks point to the limits of the Romantic emotional regime – a critical juncture that deserves further attention. While social reformers banked on the seemingly natural thrills that grotesque or mysterious spectacles excited in audiences, some voices, representing opposing interests, did dispute the legitimacy of these productions, progressively asserting that sensationalism was a disorienting affect, inconsonant with reason, and destructive of traditional values. Thus by 1819, Lord Eldon, leading the opposition to lunacy reform in the House of Lords, could strike down reformist agitation as 'false humanity', rather than 'cool and dispassionate' debate; and in 1820, when the physician George Man Burrows penned his *Inquiry into Certain Errors Relative to Insanity*, he rejected outright the 'impartiality' of the reformers, or indeed anyone that was 'impressed [or] irritated' by the 'shocking scenes' revealed before the 1815-16 Select Committee.[21] Burrows, rather, affirmed the supremacy of those men 'whose sensibility was more under the controul of reason', and who could thus sympathise with the mistreated lunatics, while also considering the proposed regulations with this 'dispassionate view'.[22] In effect, the established authorities turned the reformers' rhetoric against them, arguing that the 'zeal and perseverance' that they claimed as disinterested public spirit was in fact a threat to the moral order – an assault on 'common sense'. Thus, just as a shift in emotional norms sat at the basis of nineteenth-century lunacy reform, so did it drive late-Georgian political polarisation. It is only by remaining sensitive to emotions and emotional change, then, that we can fully comprehend the cultural transformations that gave rise to modern mental health advocacy.

---

[20] William Saunders Hallaran, *An Enquiry into the Causes Producing the Extraordinary Addition to the Number of the Insane* (Cork, London & Dublin, 1810), Appendix.

[21] *Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 40 (1819), column 1345; George Man Burrows, *An Inquiry into Certain Errors Relative to Insanity; and their Consequences; Physical, Moral, and Civil* (London, 1820), 233.

[22] Burrows, *Inquiry*, 233, 235.

Bibliography

Manuscript Sources

Bethlem Royal Hospital. General Committee Minutes, Bethlem Hospital Archives, GEN-07.

British Library. Place Papers, Vol. XI, Private Correspondence: 1810-1816, British Library, London, Add. MS. 35152.

Home Office. Correspondence of Robert Peel, The National Archives, Kew, HO 44/12/139.

Howard, John. Papers of John Howard, The Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, MS. Eng. misc. c. 332, e. 399-401.

Royal College of Physicians. Manuscripts and Personal Papers, Library, Archive and Museum, Royal College of Physicians, London, MS 2905D, MSS 61.

Townshend, Thomas (1st Viscount Sydney). Correspondence and Documents, William L. Clements Library, The University of Michigan, Box 12, Series 2.

Wakefield Papers, National Library of New Zealand, MS-Papers-9512-31/32

York Retreat. Papers Relating to York Lunatic Asylum, Borthwick Institute for Archives, The University of York, RET 8/1.

Parliamentary Reports

Cobbett, William. *The Parliamentary History of England, from the Earliest Period to the Year 1803,* Vol. 17. London, 1813.

Hansard's *Parliamentary Debates*.

House of Commons. *A Report From The Committee, Appointed (Upon the 27th Day of January, 1763) To Enquire into The State Of The Private Madhouses In This Kingdom. With The Proceedings of the House thereupon*, 1763.

House of Commons, *Report of the Select Committee on the State of Criminal and Pauper Lunatics*, 1807.

House of Commons. *Reports of the Select Committee on Madhouses*. 1815-16.

Journal of the House of Commons, Twelfth Parliament of Great Britain: second session (25 November 1762 – 19 April 1763).

Newspapers and Periodicals

Annual Register

Arminian Magazine

Belfast Monthly

British Magazine and Review; or, Universal Miscellany

Critical Review, or, Annals of Literature

Eclectic Review

Edinburgh Review

Edinburgh Magazine, or Literary Miscellany

Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal

European Magazine, and London Review

Evangelical Magazine

Examiner

General Magazine and Impartial Review

Gentleman's Magazine: and Historical Chronicle

Gray's Inn Journal

Guardian

Hibernian Magazine, or Compendium of Entertaining Knowledge

Lady's Magazine

Lady's Monthly Museum

London Chronicle: or, Universal Evening Post

London Magazine

Looker-On

Medico-Chirurgical Review

Middlesex Journal, and Evening Advertiser

Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser

Monthly Magazine

Monthly Miscellany

Monthly Mirror: Reflecting Men and Manners

Monthly Review; or, Literary Journal

New Monthly Magazine

Philanthropist: or Repository for Hints and Suggestions Calculated to Promote the Comfort and Happiness of Man

Pic Nic

Public Advertiser

Sentimental Magazine, or, General Assemblage of Science, Taste, and Entertainment

Scots Magazine, and Edinburgh Literary Miscellany

Times

Town and Country Magazine, or, Universal Repository of Knowledge, Instruction, and Entertainment

St. James's Chronicle

Trewman's Exeter Flying Post

Tait's Edinburgh Magazine

Weekly Magazine, or, Edinburgh Amusement

York Chronicle

York Courant

York Herald

Printed Primary Sources

A New Governor. *A Vindication of Mr. Higgins, from the Charges of Corrector*. York, 1814.

Addison, Joseph. *Interesting Anecdotes, Memories, Allegories, Essays, and Poetical Fragments, Tending to Amuse the Fancy, and Inculcate Morality*, Vol. 5. London, 1797.

Anon. *Christianity, the Great Ornament of Humane Life: or, Man considered in his Spiritual, Civil, and Moral Capacities. Being an Humble Essay towards the Furtherance of Universal Piety and Charity, and removing all unreasonable Prejudice and Animosities respecting both the Church and State*. London, 1701.

Anon. *The Letters of Maria; to which is added, An Account of her Death*. London, 1790.

Anon. *An Abstract of the Evidence Delivered Before a Select Committee of the House of Commons, in the Years 1790 and 1791; on the Part of the Petitioners for the Abolition of the Slave Trad*e, 2nd Edition. Bury, 1792.

Anon. *The Affecting History of Louisa, the Wandering Maniac… A Real Tale of Woe*. London, 1803.

Anon. 'The Late Samuel Tuke, Esq., of York'. *The Journal of Psychological Medicine and Mental Pathology* 11 (London, 1858), 173-4.

Aikin, John. *A View of the Character and Public Services of the Late John Howard*, Esq. London, 1792.

Aikin, John, ed. *Select Works of the British Poets.* London, 1820.

Alison, Archibald. *Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste*, Vol. 1, 4th Edition. Edinburgh, 1815.

Arnold, Thomas. *Observations on the Nature, Kinds, Causes, and Prevention of Insanity, Lunacy, or Madness*, Vol. 1. London, 1782.

Atkinson, Charles. *Retaliation; or, Hints to Some of the Governors of the York Lunatic Asylum*. York, 1814.

Atterbury, Francis. *The Power of Charity to Cover Sin*. London, 1708.

Austen, Jane. *Sense and Sensibility*, London: Harper Collins, 2010.

———*Jane Austen Collection*. Amersham: Transatlantic Press, 2012.

Ayloffe, William. *The Government of the Passions, According to the Rules of Reason and Religion*. London, 1700.

Baker, David Erskine, Isaac Reed, and Stephen Jones. *Biographia Dramatica; or a Companion to the Playhouse*, Vol. 2. London, 1812.

Bakewell, Thomas. *A Letter, Addressed to the Chairman of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, Appointed to Enquire into the State of Mad-Houses: to which is Subjoined, Remarks on the Nature, Causes, and Cure of Mental Derangement*. Stafford, 1815.

Barbauld, Anna Laetitia. *The Works of Anna Laetitia Barbauld. With a Memoir By Lucy Aikin*, Vol. 2. London, 1825.

Barnes, Thomas. 'On the Pleasure which the Mind in many Cases receives from Contemplating Scenes of Distress. Read April 3, 1782'. In *Memoirs of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester*, Vol. 1, 144-58. Warrington, 1785.

Beattie, James. *Elements of Moral Science*, Vol. 1. Edinburgh, 1790.

Belcher, William. *Belcher's Address to Humanity*. London, 1796.

Bell, Charles. *Essays on the Anatomy of Expression in Painting*. London, 1806.

———*Letters of Sir Charles Bell*. London, 1870.

Beverley, Robert. *The Elector's Guide*, Vol. 3. York, 1826.

Blackstone, William. *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, Vol. 4, 11th edition. London, 1791.

Blair, Hugh. *Sermons*, III, 3rd edition. London, 1790.

Boaden, James, ed. *The Private Correspondence of David Garrick*, Vol. 1. London, 1831.

Boswell, James. *Boswell's London Journal 1762-3*, edited by Frederick Pottle. London: William Heinemann, 1950.

Brightwell, Cecilia Lucy. *Memorials of the Life of Amelia Opie*, 2nd edition. Norwich, 1865.

Brown, James Baldwin. *Memoirs of the Public and Private Life of John Howard, the Philanthropist*. London, 1823.

Brown, Thomas. *Observations on the Zoonomia of Erasmus Darwin, M.D.* Edinburgh, 1798.

Burnet, Gilbert. *A Sermon Preach'd before the Right Honourable the Lord-Mayor, the Aldermen, and Governors of the Several Hospitals of the City of London, at S. Sepulchres Church, On Easter-Monday, 1706*. London, 1706.

———*A Sermon Preach'd at St. Bridget's-Church, Monday in Easter-Week, March 29. 1714*. London, 1714.

Burke, Edmund. *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. London, 1757.

Burrows, George Man. *An Inquiry into Certain Errors Relative to Insanity; and their Consequences; Physical, Moral, and Civil*. London, 1820.

Carr, John. *The Stranger in Ireland: or, a Tour in the Southern and Western Parts of that Country, in the Year 1805*. Philadelphia, 1806.

Conolly, John. *An Inquiry Concerning the Indications of Insanity*. London, 1830.

Corrector. *A Few Free Remarks on Mr. Godfrey Higgins's Publications Respecting the York Lunatic Asylum*. York, 1814.

Corder, Susanna, ed. *Life of Elizabeth Fry*. London, 1853.

Crabbe, George. *The Borough: A Poem in Twenty-Four Letters*, 2nd edition. London, 1810.
———*Poems*. London, 1808.

Crowe, Ann Mary. *A Letter to Robert Darling Willis; to which are added, Copies of Three Other Letters; Published in the Hope of Rousing A Humane Nation to the Consideration of the Miseries Arising from Private Madhouses: With a Preliminary Address to the Right Hon. Lord Erskine*. London, 1811.

Cruden, Alexander. *The London-Citizen Exceedingly Injured: or a British Inquisition Display'd*, 2nd Edition. London, 1739.

Cullen, William. *First Lines of the Practice of Physic*, Vol. 4. Edinburgh, 1788.

Dallas, Robert Charles. *Miscellaneous Writings: Consisting of Poems; Lucretia, A Tragedy; and Moral Essays; with a Vocabulary of the Passions*. London, 1797.

Darwin, Erasmus. *Zoonomia*, II. Philadelphia, 1818.

Davan, Kingsmill. *An Essay on the Passions. Being an Attempt to Trace them from their Source, Describe their General Influence, and Explain the Peculiar Effects of Each Upon the Mind*. London, 1799.

Davies, Thomas. *Dramatic Miscellanies: Consisting of Critical Observations on Several Plays of Shakespeare*, Vol. 2. Dublin, 1784.

De Goya, Francisco. *Goya: A Life in Letters*, edited by Sarah Symmons, translated by Philip Troutman. London: Pimlico, 2004.

De Selincourt, Ernest, and Chester Shaver eds. *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, Vol. 1: The Early Years: 1787-1805*, 2nd edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967.

Fell, R. *Memoirs of the Public Life of the Late Right Honourable Charles James Fox*, Vol. 2. London, 1808.

Fry, Elizabeth. *Observations on the Visiting, Superintendence, and Government of Female Prisoners*. London, 1827.

Gentleman, Francis. *The Dramatic Censor; or, Critical Companion*, Vol. 1. London, 1770.

Gilfillan, George. *A Second Gallery of Literary Portraits*. Edinburgh & London, 1850.

Godwin, William. *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice, and its Influence on General Virtue and Happiness*, Two Volumes. London, 1793.

———*Enquiry Concerning Political Justice, and its Influence on Morals and Happiness*, 2nd Edition, Vol. 1. London, 1796.

———*Enquiry Concerning Political Justice, and its Influence on Morals and Happiness*, 3rd Edition, Vol. 1. London, 1798.

Gray, [Almyra] Mrs Edwin, ed. *Papers and Diaries of a York Family, 1764-1839*. London: The Sheldon Press, 1929.

Gray, Jonathan. *History of the York Lunatic Asylum*. York, 1815.

Gray, Thomas. *An Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College*. London, 1747.

Gurney, Joseph. *Notes on a Visit made to some of the Prisons in Scotland and the North of England, in Company with Elizabeth Fry; with some General Observations on the Subject of Prison Discipline*. London, 1819.

Halliday, Andrew. *A Letter to the Right Honourable Lord Binning, M.P. &c. &c. &c. containing Some Remarks on the State of Lunatic Asylums, and on The Number and Condition of the Insane Poor in Scotland*. Edinburgh, 1816.

———*A General View of the Present State of Lunatics, and Lunatic Asylums, in Great Britain and Ireland, and in some Other Kingdoms*. London, 1828.

———*Remarks on the Present State of Lunatic Asylums in Ireland, and on the Number and Condition of the Insane Paupers in that Kingdom*. London, 1808.

Higgins, Godfrey. *A Letter to the Right Honourable Earl Fitzwilliam… Respecting the Investigation which has lately taken Place, into the Abuses at the York Lunatic Asylum*. Doncaster, 1814.

———*The Evidence taken before a Committee of the House of Commons Respecting the Asylum at York.* Doncaster, 1816.

Hill, John. *The Actor: or, a Treatise on the Art of Playing*. London, 1755.

Home, Henry. *Elements of* Criticism, Vol. 1, 3rd Edition. Edinburgh, 1765.

Howard, John. *The State of the Prisons in England and Wales*. Warrington, 1777.

Hume, David. *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Vol. 2. London, 1739.

Hutcheson, Francis. *An Enquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*. London, 1725.

Kemble, Philip. *Memoirs of the Life of John Philip Kemble, Esq*., Philadelphia, 1825.

Kennet, White. *Doing Good the Way to Eternal Life*. London, 1712.

———*The Properties of Christian Charity*. London, 1714.

———*Charity and Restitution*. London, 1719.

La Roche, Sophie von. *Sophie in London, 1786*, trans. Clare Williams. London: J. Cape, 1933.

Lamb, Caroline. *The Whole Disgraceful Truth: Selected Letters of Lady Caroline Lamb*, edited by Paul Douglass. Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

Lewis, Matthew. *The Life and Correspondence of M. G. Lewis,* Vol. 1, edited by by Margaret Baron-Wilson. London, 1839.

Lewis, W. S., ed. *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, 48 Volumes. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937-1983.

Lowe, Louisa. *The Bastilles of England; or, the Lunacy Laws at Work*, Vol. 1. London, 1883.

Macgill, Stevenson. *On Lunatic Asylums: A Discourse Delivered on 2d August, 1810, Previous to the Foundation Stone of the Glasgow Lunatic Asylum*. Glasgow, 1810.

Mackenzie, Henry. *The Man of Feeling*. London, 1771.

Mawson, Matthias. *A Sermon Preach'd before the Right Honourable the Lord-Mayor, the Aldermen, and Sheriffs, and the Governors of the several Hospitals within the City of

London: In the Parish-Church of St. Bridget, on Monday in Easter-Week, 1741. London, 1741.

More, Hannah. *The Works of Hannah More*, 4 volumes. London, 1834.

———*Sacred Dramas: Chiefly Intended for Young Persons*, London, 1782.

———*Coelebs in Search of a Wife*, 11th edition. London, 1809.

Moore, Thomas, ed. *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron: With Notices of his Life*. London, 1873.

Murphy, Arthur. *The Life of David Garrick, Esq*. Dublin, 1801.

Neild, James. *State of the Prisons in England, Scotland, and Wales*. London, 1812.

Newell, Sarah. *Facts Connected with the Treatment of Insanity in St. Luke's Hospital; with Letters on the Subject*. London, 1841.

Palmer, Samuel. *The True Patriot. A Sermon, on the Much Lamented Death of John Howard, L.L.D. F.R.S*. London, 1790.

Pargeter, William. *Observations on Maniacal Disorders*. Reading, 1792.

Patrick, Simon. *A Sermon Preach'd before the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, and Court of Aldermen, at St. Bridget's Church, On Easter-Monday, 1696*. London, 1696.

Penrose, Thomas. *Flights of Fancy*. London, 1775.

Perceval, John. *Report of the Alleged Lunatics' Friend Society, Founded 1845*. London, 1851.

Perfect, William. *Select Cases in the Different Species of Insanity*. Rochester, 1787.

Pollard, Arthur, ed. *Crabbe: The Critical Heritage*. London & Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972.

Pratt, Samuel Jackson. *The Triumph of Benevolence; A Poem*. London, 1786.

Radcliffe, Ann. *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, edited by Bonamy Dobrée. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980.

Reeve, Clara. *The School for Widows*. London, 1791.

Reid, Thomas. *Essays on the Active Powers of Man*. Edinburgh, 1788.

Robinson, Mary. *Poems by Mrs. M. Robinson*, Vol. 2, London, 1793.

Smith, Adam. *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. London, 1759.

Smollett, Tobias. *The Adventures of Sir Launcelot Greaves*. London, 1832.

Snape, Andrew. *A Sermon Preach'd before The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor of London, The Court of Alderman, and the Governors of the several Hospitals of the City; At the Parish Church of St Bride, alias Bridget, On Wednesday in Easter Week, 1707*. London, 1707.

————*A Sermon Preach'd before The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor of London, The Court of Alderman, and the Governors of the several Hospitals of the City; At the Parish Church of St Bride, alias Bridget, On Tuesday in Easter Week, 1731. To which is added, a second edition of two former sermons preach'd by the doctor at the same place, and on the same occasion*. London, 1731.

Stennett, Samuel. *The Works of Samuel Stennett, D.D.*, Vol. 2. London, 1824.

Sterne, Laurence. *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* (1759-67), edited by Graham Petrie. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967.

————*A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy*. London, 1768.

————*The Beauties of Sterne; including all his Pathetic Tales, & most distinguished Observations on Life. Selected for the Heart of Sensibility*, 7th Edition. London, 1783.

————*The Letters of Laurence Sterne to his most Intimate Friends*, II, edited by Wilbur L. Cross. New York: J. F. Taylor & Company, 1904.

Stewart, Dugald. *Philosophical Essays*. Edinburgh, 1810.

Stillingfleet, Edward. *A Sermon Preached at St. Sepulchres Church On Tuesday In Easter Week, A.D. MDCLXXXI*. London, 1681.

Swift, Jonathan. *Dr Swift's Works, Complete in Eighteen Volumes*, Vol. 11. London, 1784.

Taylor, Edward. *Cursory Remarks on Tragedy, on Shakespear, and on Certain French and Italian Poets, Principally Tragedians*. London, 1774.

Thicknesse, Philip. *A Year's Journey through the Pais Bas; or, Austrian Netherlands*, 2nd edition. London, 1786.

Tuke, Daniel Hack. 'Retrospective Glance at the Early History of the Retreat, York; its Object and Influence'. *The Journal of Mental Science* 162, no. 38 (1892), 333-59.

Tuke, Samuel. *Description of the Retreat, an Institution near York, for Insane Persons of the Society of Friends*. York, 1813.

————*Review of the Early History of The Retreat, near York*. York, 1846.

Tylor, Charles. *Samuel Tuke; His Life, Work, and Thoughts*. London, 1900.

Victor, Benjamin. *The History of the Theatres of London and Dublin, From the Year 1730 to the present Time*, II. London, 1761.

Walpole, Horace. *Memoirs of the Reign of King George the Third*, Vol. 1. London, 1845.

Wesley, John. *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley*, Vol. 4. London, 1903.

Wilkes, Thomas. *A General View of the Stage*. London, 1759.

Wollstonecraft, Mary. *Maria: or, the Wrongs of Woman. A Posthumous Fragment*. Philadelphia, 1799.

———*The Collected Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft*, edited by Janet Todd. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.

Secondary Sources

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London & New York: Verso, 1991.

Andrew, Donna T. *Philanthropy and Police: London Charity in the Eighteenth Century*. Princeton (N.J.): Princeton University Press, 1989.

———'The Code of Honour and its Critics: the Opposition to Duelling in England, 1700-1850'. *Social History* 5, no. 3 (1980), 409-34.

———'The Suicide of Sir Samuel Romilly: Apotheosis or Outrage?' In *From Sin to Insanity: Suicide in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Jeffrey R. Watt, 175-88. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004.

Andrews, Jonathan. 'History of Medicine: Health, Medicine and Disease in the Eighteenth Century'. *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 34, no. 4 (2011), 503-15.

Andrews, Jonathan, Asa Briggs, Roy Porter, Penny Tucker and Keir Waddington. *The History of Bethlem*. London & New York: Routledge, 1997.

Andrews, Jonathan, and Andrew Scull. *Undertaker of the Mind: John Monro and Mad-Doctoring in Eighteenth-Century England*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.

———*Customers and Patrons of the Mad-Trade: The Management of Lunacy in Eighteenth-Century London; With the Complete Text of John Monro's 1766 Case Book*. London & Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

Averill, James. *Wordsworth and the Poetry of Human Suffering*. Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1980.

Archer, Ian K. R. 'Townshend, Thomas, first Viscount Sydney (1733-1800). In *ODNB*.

Bailey, Elaine. '"The Most Noble of Disorders": Matilda Betham on the Reformation of the Madhouse'. In *Insanity and the Lunatic Asylum in the Nineteenth Century*, edited by Thomas Knowles and Serena Trowbridge, 29-39. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2015.

Bailey, Quentin. *Wordsworth's Vagrants: Police, Prisons, and Poetry in the 1790s*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2011.

Baker, Robert, Dorothy Porter, and Roy Porter eds. *The Codification of Medical Morality*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1993.

Baldrick, Chris, and Robert Mighall. 'Gothic Criticism'. In *A New Companion to the Gothic*, ed. David Punter, 267-87. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

Ballantyne, Tony. 'Humanitarian Narratives: Knowledge and the Politics of Mission and Empire'. *Social Sciences and Missions* 24 (2011), 233-264.

———'Moving Texts and 'Humane Sentiment': Materiality, Mobility, and the Emotions of Imperial Humanitarianism', *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 17 – 1 (2016).

Barclay, Katie. *Love, Intimacy and Power: Marriage and Patriarchy in Scotland, 1650-1850*. Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 2011.

———'Performance and Performativity'. In *Early Modern Emotions: An Introduction*, edited by Susan Broomhall, 14-17. Abingdon: Routledge, 2017.

———*Men on Trial: Emotion, Embodiment and Identity in Ireland, 1800-1845*. Forthcoming.

Barker-Benfield, G.J. *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992.

Barnhart, William. 'Evangelicalism, Masculinity, and the Making of Imperial Missionaries in Late Georgian Britain, 1795-1820'. *The Historian* 67, no. 4 (2005), 712-32.

Barrell, John. *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Painting 1730-1840*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.

Bartel, Roland. 'Suicide in Eighteenth-Century England: The Myth of a Reputation'. *Huntington Library Quarterly* 23, no. 2 (1960), 145-58.

Battersby, Christine. *The Sublime, Terror, and Human Difference*. London & New York: Routledge, 2007.

Beatty, Heather R. *Nervous Disease in Late Eighteenth-Century Britain*. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012.

Bebbington, David. *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: History from the 1730s to 1980s*. London & New York: Routledge, 2003.

Bell, Michael. *Sentimentalism, Ethics and the Culture of Feeling*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000.

Bell, Richard. *We Shall Be No More: Suicide and Self-Government in the Newly United States*, Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press, 2012.

Bender, John. *Imagining the Penitentiary: Fiction and the Architecture of Mind in Eighteenth-Century England*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1987.

Benedict, Barbara. *Curiosity: A Cultural History of Early Modern Inquiry*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2001.

Berrios, German. 'Historiography of Mental Systems and Diseases'. *History of Psychiatry* 5 (1994), 175-90.

Bertelsen, Lance. 'Committed by Justice Fielding: Judicial and Journalistic Representation in the Bow Street Magistrate's Office January 3 - November 24, 1752'. *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 30, no. 4 (1997), 337-63.

Bewell, Alan. *Romanticism and Colonial Disease*. Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999.

Bickford, J.A.R. and M.E. Bickford. *The Private Lunatic Asylums of the East Riding*. Beverley: East Yorkshire Local History Society, 1976.

Blank, G. Kim. 'The "Degrading Thirst After Outrageous Stimulation": Wordsworth as Cultural Critic'. *The Journal of Popular Culture* 39, no. 3 (2006), 365-82.

Blanning, Tim. *The Romantic Revolution: A History*. New York: Modern Library, 2010.

Boddice, Rob. *The Science of Sympathy: Morality, Evolution, and Victorian Civilizaton*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016.

Botting, Fred. *Gothic*. London: Routledge, 1996.

Boulton, Jeremy, and John Black. '"Those, that die by reason of their madness": Dying Insane in London, 1629-1830'. *History of Psychiatry* 23, no. 1 (2012), 27-39.

Bound Alberti, Fay, ed. *Medicine, Emotion and Disease, 1700-1950*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

———'Bodies, Hearts, and Minds: Why Emotions Matter to Historians of Science and Medicine'. *Isis* 100, no. 4 (2009), 798-810.

Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice. Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press, 1984.

———'The Forms of Capital'. In *Cultural Theory: An Anthology*, edited by Imre Szeman and Timothy Kaposy, 81-93. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

Bourke, Joanna. 'Fear and Anxiety: Writing about Emotion in Modern History'. *History Workshop Journal* 55 (2003), 111-33.

Brady, Emily. *The Sublime in Modern Philosophy: Aesthetics, Ethics, and Nature*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Brewer, John. *Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century*. London: Harper Collins Publishers, 1997.

———*Sentimental Murder: Love and Madness in the Eighteenth Century*. London: Harper Collins, 2004.

Brewster, Elizabeth. 'George Crabbe and William Wordsworth'. *University of Toronto Quarterly* 42, no. 2 (1973), 142-56.

Brissenden, R.F. *Virtue in Distress: Studies in the Novel of Sentiment from Richardson to Sade*. London & Basingstoke, Macmillan Press, 1974.

Brown, Michael. *Performing Medicine: Medical Culture and Identity in Provincial England, c.1760-1850*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011.

———'Rethinking Early Nineteenth-Century Asylum Reform'. *The Historical Journal* 49, no. 2 (2006), 425-52.

Bruhm, Steven. *Gothic Bodies: The Politics of Pain in Romantic Fiction*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994.

Buchanan, Thomas C. 'Class Sentiments: Putting the Emotion back in Working-Class History'. *Journal of Social History* 48 – 1 (2014), 72-87.

Bursetin, Andrew. 'The Political Character of Sympathy'. *Journal of the Early Republic* 21, no. 4 (2001), 601-32.

Busfield, Joan. 'The Female Malady? Men, Women, and Madness in Nineteenth Century Britain'. *Sociology* 28, no. 1 (1994), 259-77.

Butler, Marilyn. *Romantics, Rebels & Reactionaries: English Literature and its Background 1760-1830*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981.

Bynum, William F. 'Rationales for Therapy in British Psychiatry: 1780-1835'. *Medical History* 18, no. 4 (1974), 317-34.

Bynum, William F., and Roy Porter, eds. *William Hunter and the Eighteenth-Century Medical World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Byrd, Max. *Visits to Bedlam: Madness and Literature in the Eighteenth Century*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1974.

Caplan, Jay. *Framed Narratives: Diderot's Genealogy of the Beholder*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.

Carey, Brycchan. *British Abolitionism and the Rhetoric of Sensibility: Writing, Sentiment, and Slavery, 1760-1807*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

Carpenter, Peter. 'The Georgian Idiot Hospital at Bath'. *History of Psychiatry* 9 (1998), 471-89.

Carter, Philip. *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain, 1660-1800*. Harlow: Longman, 2000.

Cash, Arthur H. *Laurence Sterne: The Later Years*. London & New York: Methuen, 1986.

Castelvecchi, Stefano. 'From *Nina* to *Nina*: Psychodrama, absorption and sentiment in the 1780s', *Cambridge Opera Journal* 8, no. 2 (1996), 91-112.

Cavallaro, Dani. *Gothic Vision: Three Centuries of Horror, Terror and Fear*. London & New York: Continuum, 2002.

Cayleff, Susan E. '"Prisoners of their own Feebleness": Women, Nerves and Western Medicine – a Historical Overview'. *Social Science & Medicine*, 26, no. 12 (1988), 1199-1208.

Cervantes, Gabriel, and Dahlia Porter. 'Extreme Empiricism: John Howard, Poetry, and the Thermometrics of Reform'. *The Eighteenth Century* 57, no. 1 (2016), 95-119.

Chandler, James. 'The Languages of Sentiment'. *Textual Practice* 22, no. 1 (2008), 21-39.

Chaney, Michael A. *Fugitive Vision: Slave Image and Black Identity in Antebellum Narrative*. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2008.

Chapman, Mary, and Glenn Hendler eds. *Sentimental Men: Masculinity and the Politics of Affect in American Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.

Charland, Louis C. 'Benevolent Theory: Moral Treatment at the York Retreat'. *History of Psychiatry* 18, no. 1 (2007), 61-80.

Clark, Elizabeth B. '"The Sacred Rights of the Weak": Pain, Sympathy, and the Culture of Individual Rights in Antebellum America'. *Journal of American History* 82 (1995), 463-93.

Clark, Suzanne. *Sentimental Modernism: Women Writers and the Revolution of the Word*. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991.

Cohen, Michéle. '"Manners" Make the Man: Politeness, Chivalry, and the Construction of Masculinity, 1750-1830'. *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 2 (2005), 312-29.

Cole, Lucinda. '(Anti)Feminist Sympathies: The Politics of Relationship in Smith, Wollstonecraft, and More'. *ELH* 58, no. 1 (1991), 107-40.

Coleborne, Catharine. 'Families, Patients and Emotions: Asylums for the Insane in Colonial Australia and New Zealand, c. 1880-1910'. *Social History of Medicine* 19, no. 3 (2006), 425-42.

Colley, Linda. *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*. London: Pimlico, 2003.

Colwell, Tania M. 'Emotives and Emotional Regimes'. In *Early Modern Emotions: An Introduction*, edited by Susan Broomhall, 7-10. Abingdon: Routledge, 2017.

Crammer, J. L. 'English Asylums and English Doctors: Where Scull is Wrong'. *History of Psychiatry* 5 (1994), 103-15.

Crane, R.S. 'Suggestions Toward a Genealogy of the "Man of Feeling"'. *ELH* 1, no. 3 (1934), 205-30..

Creed, Barbara. *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*. London & New York: Routledge, 1993.

Csengei, Ildiko. *Sympathy, Sensibility and the Literature of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Cunningham, Hugh. 'The Language of Patriotism, 1750-1914'. *History Workshop Journal* 12 (1981), 8-33.

Cvetkovich, Ann. *Mixed Feelings: Feminism, Mass Culture, and Victorian Sensationalism*. New Brunswick (N.J.): Rutgers University Press, 1992.

D'Arcy Wood, Gillen. *The Shock of the Real: Romanticism and Visual Culture, 1760-1860*. Houndmills: Palgrave, 2001.

Davis, Michael. 'The Mob Club? The London Corresponding Society and the Politics of Civility in the 1790s'. In *Unrespectable Radicals?: Popular Politics in the Age of Reform*, edited by Michael Davis and Paul Pickering, 21-40. Abingdon: Ashgate, 2008.

Davison, Carol. 'The Victorian Gothic and Gender'. In *The Victorian Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*, ed. Andrew Smith and William Hughes, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012.

De Freitas Boe, Ana. '"I Call Beauty a Social Quality": Mary Wollstonecraft and Hannah More's Rejoinder to Edmund Burke's Body Politic of the Beautiful'. *Women's Writing* 18, no. 3 (2011), 348-66.

De Voogd, Peter. 'Sterne and Visual Culture'. In *The Cambridge Companion to Laurence Sterne*, ed. Thomas Keymer, 142-59. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

DeLamotte, Eugenia. *Perils of the Night: A Feminist Study of Nineteenth-Century Gothic*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Deutsch, Helen. 'Symptomatic Correspondences: The Author's Case in Eighteenth-Century Britain'. *Cultural Critique* 42 (1999), 35-80.

Digby, Anne. *Madness, Morality and Medicine: A Study of the York Retreat 1796-1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

———'Moral Treatment at the Retreat, 1796-1846'. In *The Anatomy of Madness: Essays in the History of Psychiatry, Vol. II: Institutions and Society*, edited by W. F. Bynum, Roy Porter, and Michael Shepherd, 52-72. London & New York: Tavistock, 1985.

———'Changes in the Asylum: The Case of York, 1777-1815'. *The Economic History Review*, New Series 36, no. 2 (1983), 218-39.

———*From York Lunatic Asylum to Bootham Park Hospital*, No. 69. Borthwick Publications, York: University of York, 1986.

Dillon, Brian. *Tormented Hope: Nine Hypochondriac Lives*. Dublin: Penguin Ireland, 2009.

Dixon, Thomas. *Weeping Britannia: Portrait of a Nation in Tears.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

———*From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

———'"Emotion": The History of a Keyword in Crisis', *Emotion Review* 4, no. 4 (2012), 338-44.

———'Enthusiasm Delineated: Weeping as a Religious Activity in Eighteenth-Century Britain'. *Litt Prag*. 22, no. 43 (2013), 59-81.

———'The Tears of Mr Justice Willes', *Journal of Victorian Culture* 17, no. 1 (2012), 1-23.

———*The Invention of Altruism: Making Moral Meanings in Victorian Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Djaballah, Marc. *Kant, Foucault, and Forms of Experience*. New York & London: Routledge, 2008.

Dror, Otniel E., Bettina Hitzer, Anja Laukötter, and Pilar León-Sanz. 'Introduction to *History of Science and the Emotions*'. *Osiris* 31, no. 1 (2016), 1-18.

Doerner, Klaus. *Madmen and the Bourgeoisie: A Social History of Insanity and Psychiatry*, trans. Joachim Neugroschel and Jean Steinberg. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981.

Duthille, Rémy. 'Richard Price on Patriotism and Universal Benevolence'. *Enlightenment and Dissent*, 28 (2012), 24-41.

Eccles, Audrey. '"Furiously Mad": Vagrancy Law and a Sub-Group of the Disorderly Poor'. *Rural History* 24, Special Issue 1 (2013), 25-40.

Edginton, Barry. 'Moral Architecture: the Influence of the York Retreat'. *Health & Place* 3, no. 2 (1997), 91-99.

Elias, Norbert. *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, trans. Edmund Jephcott. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1994.

Elliot, Dorice Williams. *The Angel Out of the House: Philanthropy and Gender in Nineteenth-Century England*. Charlottesville & London: University Press of Virginia, 2002.

Eigen, Joel. 'Intentionality and Insanity: What the Eighteenth-Century Juror Heard'. In *The Anatomy of Madness: Essays in the History of Psychiatry, Vol. II: Institutions and Society*, edited by W. F. Bynum, Roy Porter, and Michael Shepherd, 34-51. London & New York: Tavistock, 1985.

Eustace, Nicole. *Passion is the Gale: Emotion, Power, and the Coming of the American Revolution*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008.

Fairclough, Mary. *The Romantic Crowd: Sympathy, Controversy and Print Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Faubert, Michelle. *Rhyming Reason: The Poetry of Romantic-era Psychologists.* London: Pickering & Chatto, 2009.

Feldman, Travis. 'Controversial Crabbe: A "Namby-Pamby Mandeville"'. *Studies in Romanticism* 51, no. 2 (2012), 207-31.

Felski, Rita. 'Suspicious Minds'. *Poetics Today* 32, no. 2 (2011), 215-34.

Festa, Lynn. *Sentimental Figures of Empire in Eighteenth-Century Britain and France*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006.

Fiering, Norman. 'Irresistible Compassion: An Aspect of Eighteenth-Century Sympathy and Humanitarianism'. *Journal of the History of Ideas* 37, no. 2 (1976), 195-218.

Fisher, Philip. *Hard Facts: Setting and Form in the American Novel*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Fitzpatrick, Martin. 'Latitudinarianism at the Parting of the Ways: A Suggestion'. In *The Church of England c.1689-c.1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism*, edited by John Walsh, Colin Haydon and Stephen Taylor, 209-27. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Foucault, Michel. *History of Madness*, ed. Jean Khalfa, trans. Jonathan Murphy and Khalfa. London & New York: Routledge, 2009.

———*Psychiatric Power: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1973-1974*, ed. Jacques Lagrange, trans. Graham Burchell. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

———*Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books, 1977.

———*The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith. New York: Vintage Books, 1994.

———*The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality, Volume 1*, trans. Robert Hurley. London: Penguin Books, 1998.

Foyster, Elizabeth. 'At the Limits of Liberty': Married Women and Confinement in Eighteenth-Century England'. *Continuity and Change* 17, no. 1 (2002), 39-62.

Franklin, Bridget. 'Hospital – Heritage – Home: Reconstructing the Nineteenth Century Lunatic Asylum'. *Housing, Theory and Society* 19 (2002), 170-84.

Friedman, Lawrence, and Mark McGarvie eds. *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Furniss, Tom. *Edmund Burke's Aesthetic Ideology: Language, Gender, and Political Economy in Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Gatrell, V.A.C. *The Hanging Tree: Execution and the English People, 1770-1868*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Gay, Peter. *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation. Vol. II: The Science of Freedom*. New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1977.

———*The Cultivation of Hatred: The Bourgeois Experience, Victoria to Freud*. New York & London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1993.

Gerard, William Blake. '"All that the heart wishes": Changing Views toward Sentimentality Reflected in Visualisations of Sterne's Maria, 1773-1888'. *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 34 (2005), 231-69.

Gikandi, Simon. *Slavery and the Culture of Taste*. Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011.

Gilbert, Geoffrey. 'Toward the Welfare State: Some British Views on the "Right to Subsistence," 1768-1834'. *Review of Social Economy* 46, no. 2 (1988), 144-63.

Gilman, Sander. *Seeing the Insane*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996.

Glen, Heather. *Vision & Disenchantment: Blake's Songs & Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Goddu, Teresa. '"To Thrill the Land with Horror": Antislavery Discourse and the Gothic Imagination'. In *Gothic Topographies: Language, Nation Building and 'Race'*, edited by P.M. Mehtonen and Matti Savolainen, 73-85. London & New York: Routledge, 2013.

Goldsmith, Maurice. 'Regulating Anew the Moral and Political Sentiments of Mankind: Bernard Mandeville and the Scottish Enlightenment'. *Journal of the History of Ideas* 49, no. 4 (1988), 587-606.

Goodman, Helen. '"Madness and Masculinity': Male Patients in London Asylums and Victorian Culture'. In *Insanity and the Lunatic Asylum in the Nineteenth Century*,

edited by Thomas Knowles and Serena Trowbridge, 149-65. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2015.

Goring, Paul. *The Rhetoric of Sensibility in Eighteenth-Century Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Gowland, Angus. 'The Problem of Early Modern Melancholy'. *Past and Present* 191 (2006), 77-120.

Gregg, Stephen. '"A Truly Christian Hero": Religion, Effeminacy, and Nation in the Writings of the Societies for the Reformation of Manners'. *Eighteenth-Century Life* 25, no. 1 (2001), 17-28.

Gregory, Jeremy. '*Homo Religiosis*: Masculinity and Religion in the Long Eighteenth Century'. In *English Masculinities, 1660-1800*, edited by Tim Hitchcock and Michele Cohen, 85-110. London: Longman, 1999.

Greiner, Rae. 'Sympathy Time: Adam Smith, George Eliot, and the Realist Novel'. *Narrative* 17, no. 3 (2009), 291-311.

Griffin, Martin. *Latitudinarianism in the Seventeenth-Century Church of England*, ed. Lila Freedman. Leiden: Brill, 1992.

Griswold, Charles. *Adam Smith and the Virtues of the Enlightenment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Grob, Gerald. 'Marxian Analysis and Mental Illness'. *History of Psychiatry* 1 (1990), 223-32.

Gross, Daniel. *The Secret History of Emotion: From Aristotle's 'Rhetoric' to Modern Brain Science*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006.

Haberman, Jürgen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence. London: Polity Press, 1989.

Halttunen, Karen. 'Humanitarianism and the Pornography of Pain in Anglo-American Culture'. *American Historical Review* 100 (1995), 303-34.

———'Gothic Mystery and the Birth of the Asylum: The Cultural Construction of Deviance in Early-Nineteenth-Century America'. In *Moral Problems in American Life: New Perspectives on Cultural History*, edited by Karen Halttunen and Lewis Perry, 41- 57. Ithaca (NY): Cornell University Press, 1998.

Harley, David. 'Rhetoric and the Social Construction of Sickness and Healing'. *Social History of Medicine* 12, no. 3 (1999), 407-35.

Harrison, Gary. *Wordsworth's Vagrant Muse: Poetry, Poverty and Power*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1994.

———'Spec(tac)ular Reversals: The Politics of the Sublime and Wordsworth's Transfiguration of the Rustic Poor', *Criticism* 34, no. 4 (1992), 563-90.

Haskell, Thomas. 'Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility, Part 1'. *The American Historical Review* 90, no. 2 (1985), 339-61.

———'Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility, Part 2'. *The American Historical Review* 90, no. 3 (1985), 547-66.

Haskell, Yasmin, ed. *Diseases of the Imagination and Imaginary Disease in the Early Modern Period*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2011.

Healy, David. *Mania: A Short History of Bipolar Disorder*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008.

Heath, Eugene. 'The Commerce of Sympathy: Adam Smith on the Emergence of Morals'. *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 33, no. 3 (1995), 447-66.

Healy, Róisín. 'Suicide in Early Modern and Modern Europe'. *The Historical Journal* 49, no. 3 (2006), 903-19.

Hemingway, Andrew. 'The 'Sociology' of Taste in the Scottish Enlightenment'. *The Oxford Art Journal* 12, no. 2 (1989), 3-35..

Hervey, Nick. 'Advocacy or Folly: The Alleged Lunatics' Friend Society, 1845-63'. *Medical History* 30 (1986), 245-75.

Hill, Christopher. *Puritanism and Revolution: Studies in Interpretation of the English Revolution of the 17th Century*. London: Panther Books, 1968.

Hilton, Boyd. *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People? England, 1783-1846*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Hochschild, Arlie Russell. 'Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure'. *American Journal of Sociology* 85, no. 3 (1979), 551-75.

Houston, Rab. 'Poor Relief and the Dangerous and Criminal Insane in Scotland, c. 1740-1840'. *Journal of Social History* 40, no. 2 (2006), 453-76.

———'A Latent Historiography? The Case of Psychiatry in Britain, 1500-1820'. *The Historical Journal* 57, no. 1 (2014), 289-310.

Howells, Coral Ann. *Love, Mystery, and Misery: Feeling in Gothic Fiction*. London: Bloomsbury, 2013.

Humphreys, Anne. 'Generic Strands and Urban Twists: The Victorian Mysteries Novel'. *Victorian Studies* 34, no. 4 (1991), 455-72.

Humphreys, A.R. '"The Friend of Mankind" (1700-60). An Aspect of Eighteenth-Century Sensibility'. *The Review of English Studies* 24, no. 95 (1948), 203-18.

Huneman, Philippe. 'From a Religious View of Madness to Religious Mania: The Encyclopédie, Pinel, Esquirol'. *History of Psychiatry* 28, no. 2 (2017), 147-65.

Hunt, Lynn. *Inventing Human Rights: A History*. New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007.

Hunter, Richard, and Ida Macalpine. *Three Hundred Years of Psychiatry, 1535-1860: A History Presented in Selected English Texts*. London: Oxford University Press, 1963.

———'Introduction'. In *Samuel Tuke's Description of The Retreat*, edited by Hunter and Macalpine. London: Dawsons, 1964.

Ignatieff, Michael. *A Just Measure of Pain: The Penitentiary in the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.

Ingram, Allan. *The Madhouse of Language: Writing and Reading Madness in the Eighteenth Century*. London & New York: Routledge, 1991.

———'Death in Life and Life in Death: Melancholy and the Enlightenment'. *Gesnerus* 63, no. 1/2 (2006), 90-102.

Ingram, Allan, Stuart Sim, Clark Lawlor, Richard Terry, John Baker and Leigh Wetherall-Dickson, *Melancholy Experience in Literature of the Long Eighteenth Century: Before Depression, 1660-1800*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Ingram, Allan, and Michelle Faubert. *Cultural Constructions of Madness in Eighteenth Century Writing: Representing the Insane*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

Jacyna, L. Stephen. 'Bell, Sir Charles (1774-1842)'. In *ODNB*.

Jaffe, Audrey. *Scenes of Sympathy: Identity and Representation in Victorian Fiction*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2000.

Jervis, John. *Sympathetic Sentiments: Affect, Emotion and Spectacle in the Modern World*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015.

———*Sensational Subjects: The Dramatization of Experience in the Modern World*, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015.

Jones, Kathleen. *Lunacy, Law, and Conscience 1744-1845: The Social History of the Care of the Insane*. Abingdon: Routledge, 1998.

Jones-O'Neill, Jennifer. 'George Romney's Sketchbook in the National Gallery of Victoria: The Development of a New Expressive Vocabulary'. *The Art Bulletin of Victoria* 39 (1999).

Kantor, Jamison. 'Burke, Godwin, and the Politics of Honor'. *SEL* 54, no. 3 (2014), 675-96.

Keen, Suzanne. 'A Theory of Narrative Empathy'. *Narrative* 14, no. 3 (2006), 207-36.

Kelley, Anne. '"Her Zeal for the Publick Good": The Political Agenda in Elizabeth Burnet's *A Method of Devotion* (1708)'. *Women's Writing*, 13, no. 3 (2006), 448-74.

Kelly, Gary. *Revolutionary Feminism: The Mind and Career of Mary Wollstonecraft*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Academic, 1992.

Kenney, Theresa. 'Benevolence and Sympathy in *Emma*'. *Persuasions: The Jane Austen Journal* 38 (2016), 66-80.

Kerkhof, Bert. 'A Fatal Attraction? Smith's "Theory of Moral Sentiments" and Mandeville's "Fable"'. *History of Political Thought* 16, no. 2 (1995), 219-33.

Keymer, Thomas. 'Sentimental Fiction: Ethics, Social Critique and Philanthropy'. In *The Cambridge History of English literature, 1660-1780*, edited by John Richetti, 572-601. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Kiernan, Victor G. *The Duel in European History: Honour and the Reign of Aristocracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Klarer, Mario. 'Humanitarian Pornography: John Gabriel Stedman's *Narrative of a Five Years Expedition Against the Revolting Negroes of Surinam* (1796)', *New Literary History* 36, no. 4 (2005), 559-87.

Klein, Lawrence. 'Liberty, Manners, and Politeness in Early Eighteenth-Century England'. *The Historical Journal* 32, no. 3 (1989), 583-605.

Klein, Peter. 'Insanity and the Sublime: Aesthetics and Theories of Mental Illness in Goya's Yard with Lunatics and Related Works'. *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 61 (1998), 198-252.

Knott, Sarah. *Sensibility and the American Revolution*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009.

Koch, Mark. '"A Spectacle Pleasing to God and Man": Sympathy and the Show of Charity in the Restoration Spittle Sermons'. *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 46, no. 4 (2013), 479-97.

Korsmeyer, Carolyn. *Gender and Aesthetics: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.

Langford, Paul. *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

———*Public Life and the Propertied Englishman, 1689-1798: The Ford Lectures Delivered in the University of Oxford, 1990*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991.

Laqueur, Thomas. 'Bodies, Details, and the Humanitarian Narrative'. In *The New Cultural History*, edited by Lynn Hunt, 176-204. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989.

Lawlor, Clark. *From Melancholia to Prozac: A History of Depression*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

———'"Long *Grief*, dark *Melancholy*, *hopeless natural* Love": *Clarissa*, Cheyne, and Narratives of Body and Soul'. *Gesnerus* 63, no. 1-2 (2006), 103-112.

Lawrence, Susan C. *Charitable Knowledge: Hospital Pupils and Practitioners in Eighteenth-Century London*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Lederer, David. *Madness, Religion and the State in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Lemmings, David. *Law and Government in England during the Long Eighteenth Century: From Consent to Command*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

———'Introduction'. In William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England. Book I: Of the Rights of Persons*, General Editor, Wilfred Prest. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Lemmings, David, and Claire Walker eds. *Moral Panics, the Media and the Law in Early Modern England*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

Lenard, Mary. *Preaching Pity: Dickens, Gaskell, and Sentimentalism in Victorian Culture*. New York: Peter Lang, 1999.

Lindemann, Mary. *Medicine and Society in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Linklater, Andrew. 'Norbert Elias, The "Civilizing Process" and the Sociology of International Relations'. *International Politics* 41 (2004), 3-35.

Linton, Marisa. *Choosing Terror: Virtue, Friendship, and Authenticity in the French Revolution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Lucas, Philip. 'John Howard and Asperger's Syndrome: psychopathology and philanthropy'. *History of Psychiatry* 12 (2001), 73-101.

Lynch, Jack. *The Age of Elizabeth in the Age of Johnson*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Macdonald, Michael. *Mystical Bedlam: Madness, Anxiety and Healing in Seventeenth-Century England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

Macdonald, Michael ed. *Witchcraft and Hysteria in Elizabethan London: Edward Jorden and the Mary Glover Case*. London: Tavistock, 1991.

Macdonald, Michael and Terence Murphy. *Sleepless Souls: Suicide in Early Modern England*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.

MacKenzie, Charlotte. *Psychiatry for the Rich: A History of Ticehurst Private Asylum*. Abingdon: Routledge, 1992.

Mahoney, John. *The Logic of Passion: The Literary Criticism of William Hazlitt*. New York: Fordham Univeristy Press, 1981.

Markley, Robert. 'Sentimentality as Performance: Shaftesbury, Sterne, and the Theatrics of Virtue'. In *The New Eighteenth Century: Theory, Politics, English Literature*, edited by Felicity Nussbaum and Laura Brown. New York & London: Methuen, 1987.

Marsden, Jean. 'Shakespeare and Sympathy'. In *Shakespeare and the Eighteenth Century*, edited by Peter Sabor and Paul Yachnin, 29-42. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008.

Marshall, David. 'Adam Smith and the Theatricality of Moral Sentiments'. *Critical Inquiry* 10 (1984), 592-613.

Matt, Susan J. 'Current Emotion Research in History: Or, Doing History from the Inside Out'. *Emotion Review* 3, no. 1 (2011), 117-24.

McCullough, Laurence. *John Gregory and the Invention of Professional Medical Ethics and the Profession of Medicine*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1998.

McDonagh, Patrick. *Idiocy: A Cultural History*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008.

McGann, Jerome. *Poetics of Sensibility: A Revolution in Literary Style*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.

———'The Anachronism of George Crabbe'. *ELH* 48, no. 3 (1981), 555-72.

Mee, Jon. *Romanticism, Enthusiasm and Regulation: Poetics and the Policing of Culture in the Romantic Period*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Melling, Bernard. 'Building a Lunatic Asylum: "A Question of Beer, Milk, and the Irish"'. In *Insanity and the Lunatic Asylum in the Nineteenth Century*, edited by Thomas Knowles and Serena Trowbridge, 57-69. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2015.

Melling, Joseph, and Bill Forsythe. *The Politics of Madness: The State, Insanity and Society in England, 1845-1914*. London & New York: Routledge, 2006.

Melling, Joseph, and Bill Forsythe, eds. *Insanity, Institutions and Society, 1800-1914: A Social History of Madness in Comparative Perspective*. London & New York: Routledge, 1999.

Menninghaus, Winfried. *Disgust: The Theory and History of a Strong Sensation*, trans. Howard Eiland and Joel Golb. New York: State University of New York Press, 2003.

Menon, Elizabeth. 'The Science of Deformity: Mayeux le Bossu and the Romantic Grotesque'. *European Romantic Review* 7, no. 1 (1996), 26-39.

Micale, Mark. *Hysterical Men: The Hidden Story of Male Nervous Disease*. Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press, 2008.

Miles, Robert. 'The Gothic Aesthetic: The Gothic as Discourse'. *The Eighteenth Century* 32, no. 1 (1991), 39-57.

Milka, Amy. 'Political Animals: Dogs and the Discourse of Rights in Late Eighteenth-Century Print Culture'. *Romantic Textualities* (2018). Forthcoming.

Minois, Georges. *History of Suicide: Voluntary Death in Western Culture*, trans. Lydia Cochrane. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999.

Mullan, John. *Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988.

Murphy, Elaine. 'Mad Farming in the Metropolis. Part 1: A Significant Service Industry in East London'. *History of Psychiatry* 12 (2001), 245-82.

———'Mad Farming in the Metropolis. Part 2: The Administration of the Old Poor Law of Insanity in the City and East London 1800-1834'. *History of Psychiatry* 12 (2001), 405-30.

Musgrave, William. '"That Monstrous Fiction": Radical Agency and Aesthetic Ideology in Burke'. *Studies in Romanticism* 36, no. 1 (1997), 3-26.

Newman, Gerald. *The Rise of English Nationalism: A Cultural History, 1740-1830*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987.

Norman, Hubert. 'Some Factors in the Reform in the Treatment of the Insane'. *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine* 24, no. 8 (1931), 1068-74.

Norman, Judith, and Alistair Welchman. 'The Question of Romanticism'. In *Edinburgh Critical History of Philosophy Volume 5: The Nineteenth Century*, edited by Alison Stone, 47-68. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011.

O'Gorman, Frank. *The Long Eighteenth Century: British Political and Social History 1688-1832*. London & New York: Arnold, 1997.

Novak, Maximillian. 'The Politics of Shakespeare Criticism in the Restoration and Early Eighteenth Century'. *ELH* 81, no. 1 (2014), 115-42.

O'Neill, Daniel. 'The Sublime, the Beautiful, and the Political in Burke's Work'. In *The Science of Sensibility: Reading Burke's Philosophical Enquiry*, edited by Koen Vermeir and Michael Funk Deckard, 193-221. Dordrecht: Springer, 2012.

Ou, Li. *Keats and Negative Capability*. London & New York: Continuum, 2009.

Parisot, Eric. 'Suicide Notes and Popular Sensibility in the Eighteenth-Century British Press'. *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 47, no. 3 (2014), 277-91.

Parry-Jones, William Llewellyn. *The Trade in Lunacy: A study of Private Madhouses in England in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972.

———'English Private Madhouses in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries'. *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine* 66, no. 7 (1973), 659-64.

Payne, Linda. *With Words and Knives: Learning Medical Dispassion in Early Modern England*. London & New York: Routledge, 2016.

Peucker, Brigitte. *The Material Image: Art and the Real in Film*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007.

Pfau, Thomas. *Wordsworth's Profession: Form, Class, and the Logic of Early Cultural Production*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997.

Pinch, Adela. *Strange Fits of Passion: Epistemologies of Emotion, Hume to Austen*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1996.

Pinker, Steven. *The Better Angels of our Nature: The Decline of Violence in History and its Causes*. London: Penguin, 2011.

Pipkin, John. 'The Material Sublime of Women Romantic Poets'. *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 38, no. 4 (1998), 597-619.

Plamper, Jan. *The History of Emotions: An Introduction*, trans. Keith Tribe. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Plamper, Jan, William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein, and Peter Stearns. 'The History of Emotions: an Interview with William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein and Peter Stearns'. *History & Theory* 49 (2010), 237-65.

Pocock, J.G.A. 'Between Machiavelli and Hume: Gibbon as Civic Humanist and Philosophical Historian'. *Daedalus* 105, no. 3 (1976), 153-69.

Pollock, Linda A. 'Anger and the Negotiation of Relationships in Early Modern England'. *The Historical Journal* 47, no. 3 (2004), 567-90.

Poovey, Mary. *A History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1998.

Porter, Dorothy. *Health, Civilization and the State: A History of Public Health from Ancient to Modern Times*. London & New York: Routledge, 1999.

Porter, Dorothy, and Roy Porter. *Patient's Progress: Doctor's and Doctoring in Eighteenth-Century England*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989.

Porter, Roy. *Madmen: A Social History of Madhouses, Mad-Doctors & Lunatics*. Stroud: Tempus, 2004.

———*A Social History of Madness: The World Through the Eyes of the Insane*. New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1987.

———'The Rage of Party: A Glorious Revolution in English Psychiatry?' *Medical History* 27 (1983), 35-50.

———'Foucault's Great Confinement'. In *Rewriting the History of Madness: Studies in Foucault's Histoire de la Folie*, edited by Arthur Still and Irving Velody, 119-25. London & New York: Routledge, 1992.

———'Madness and the Family Before Freud: the View of the Mad-Doctors'. *Journal of Family History* 23, no. 2 (1998), 159-72.

———'The Patient's View: Doing Medical History from Below'. *Theory and Society* 14, no. 2 (1985), 175-98.

———'Medical Lecturing in Georgian London'. *British Journal for the History of Science* 28 (1995), 91-99.

———*Bodies Politic: Disease, Death and Doctors in Britain, 1650-1900*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001.

———'Rethinking Institutions in Late Georgian England'. *Utilitas* 6, no. 1 (1994), 65-80.

———'Was there a Medical Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century England?' *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 5, no. 1 (1982), 49-63.

———*English Society in the Eighteenth Century*. London: Penguin, 1990.

———*Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World.* London: Penguin Books, 2000.

———'Science, Provincial Culture and Public Opinion in Enlightenment England'. *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 3, no. 1 (1980), 20-46.

Porter, Roy, and David Wright eds. *The Confinement of the Insane: International Perspectives, 1800-1965*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Price, Fiona. *Revolutions in Taste, 1773-1818: Women Writers and the Aesthetics of Romanticism*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2009.

Quinn, Michael. 'Jeremy Bentham on the Relief of Indigence: An Exercise in Applied Philosophy'. *Utilitas* 6, no. 1 (1994), 81-96.

Rabin, Dana Y. *Identity, Crime, and Legal Responsibility in Eighteenth-Century England*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

Radcliffe, Evan. 'Revolutionary Writing, Moral Philosophy, and Universal Benevolence in the Eighteenth Century'. *Journal of the History of Ideas* 52, no. 2 (1993), 221-40.

Rai, Amit. *Rule of Sympathy: Sentiment, Race, and Power 1750-1850*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002.

Reddy, William. *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

———'Historical Research on the Self and Emotions'. *Emotion Review* 1, no. 4 (2009), 302-15.

Richetti, John. *The English Novel in History 1700-1780*. London: Routledge, 1999.

Rosenwein, Barbara. *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*. Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 2006.

———'Worrying about Emotions in History'. *The American Historical Review* 107 – 3 (2002), 821-45.

———*Generations of Feeling: A History of Emotions, 600-1700*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

Rozario, Kevin. '"Delicious Horrors": Mass Culture, The Red Cross, and the Appeal of Modern American Humanitarianism'. *American Quarterly* 55, no. 3 (2003), 417-55.

Rousseau, George. *Nervous Acts: Essays on Literature, Culture and Sensibility*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

———Rudé, George. *The Crowd in History: A Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England, 1730-1848*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1964.

Hanoverian London 1714-1808, London: Secker & Warburg, 1971.

Rovang, Dana. 'When Reason Reigns: Madness, Passion and Sovereignty in Late 18th-Century England'. *History of Psychiatry* 17, no. 1 (2006), 23-44.

Rushton, Peter. 'Lunatics and idiots: Mental disability, the community, and the poor law in North-East England, 1600-1800. *Medical History* 32, no. 1 (1988), 34-50.

Ryan, Vanessa. 'The Physiological Sublime: Burke's Critique of Reason'. *Journal of the History of Ideas* 62, no. 2 (2001), 265-79.

Sanders, Mike. 'Manufacturing Accident: Industrialism and the Worker's Body in Early Victorian Fiction'. *Victorian Literature and Culture* (2000), 313-329.

Schmidt, Jeremy. *Melancholy and the Care of the Soul: Religion, Moral Philosophy and Madness in Early Modern England*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007.

Scull, Andrew. *The Most Solitary of Afflictions: Madness and Society in Britain, 1700-1900*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1993.

———*Social Order/Mental Disorder: Anglo-American Psychiatry in Historical Perspective*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989

———'The Insanity of Place'. *History of Psychiatry* 15, no. 4 (2004), 417-36.

———*Madness in Civilization: A Cultural History of Insanity from the Bible to Freud, from the Madhouse to Modern Medicine*, Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2015.

———*Hysteria: The Disturbing History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

———*Madhouse: A Tragic Tale of Megalomania and Modern Medicine*. Yale: Yale University Press, 2005.

Scull, Andrew, Charlotte MacKenzie and Nicholas Hervey. *Masters of Bedlam: The Transformation of the Mad-Doctoring Trade*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996.

Scheer, Monique. 'Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (and is That What Makes Them Have a History)? A Bourdieuian Approach to Understanding Emotion'. *History and Theory* 51 (2012), 193-220.

———'Topographies of Emotion'. In *Emotional Lexicons: Continuity and Change in the Vocabulary of Feeling, 1700-2000*, edited by Ute Frevert, 32-61. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Schulz, Andrew. 'The Expressive Body in Goya's *Saint Francis Borgia at the Deathbed of an Impenitent*'. *The Art Bulletin* 80, no. 4 (1998), 666-86.

Semple, Janet. *Bentham's Prison: A Study of the Panopticon Penitentiary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.

Seymour, Mark. 'Emotional Arenas: from Provincial Circus to National Courtroom in Late Nineteenth-Century Italy'. *Rethinking History* 16, no. 2 (2012), 177-97.

Shepherd, Jade V. '"I am not very well I feel nearly mad when I think of you": Male Jealousy, Murder, and Broadmoor in Late-Victorian Britain'. *Social History of Medicine* 30, no. 2 (2017), 277-98.

Showalter, Elaine. *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830-1980*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1985.

Shusterman, Richard. 'Somaesthetics and Burke's Sublime'. *British Journal of Aesthetics* 45, no. 4 (2005), 323-41.

Silver, Allan. 'Friendship in Commercial Society: Eighteenth-Century Moral Theory and Modern Sociology'. *American Journal of Sociology* 95, no. 6 (1990), 1474-1504.

Simons, Ronald. *Boo! Culture, Experience, and the Startle Reflex*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Sirota, Brent. *The Christian Monitors: The Church of England and the Age of Benevolence, 1680-1730*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014.

Smith, Johanna. 'Philanthropic Community in 'Millenium Hall' and the York Ladies Committee'. *The Eighteenth Century* 36, no. 3: The Contradictions of 'Community' (1995), 266-82.

Smith, Leonard. *Cure, Comfort, and Safe Custody: Public Lunatic Asylums in Early Nineteenth-Century England*. London & New York: Leicester University Press, 1999.

———*Lunatic Hospitals in Georgian England, 1750-1830*. New York & London: Routledge, 2007.

———'A Gentleman's Mad-Doctor in Georgian England: Edward Long Fox and Brislington House'. *History of Psychiatry* 19, no. 2 (2008), 163-84.

Solkin, David. *Art in Britain 1660-1815*. Yale: Yale University Press, 2015.

Soni, Vivasvan. *Mourning Happiness: Narrative and the Politics of Modernity*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010.

Spurr, John. 'England 1649-1750: differences contained?' In *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature 1650-1740*, edited by Steven Zwicker, 3-32. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Stark, Ryan. 'Sterne's Maria in the Biblical Sense'. *The Cambridge Quarterly* 45, no. 3 (2016), 224-243.

Stearns, Peter. *American Cool: Constructing a Twentieth-Century Emotional Style*. New York & London: New York University Press, 1994.

Stearns, Peter, and Carol Z. Stearns. 'Emotionology: Clarifying the History of the Emotions and Emotional Standards'. *American Historical Review* 90, no. 4 (1985), 813-36.

Stoddard Holmes, Martha. *Fictions of Affliction: Physical Disability in Victorian Culture*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010.

Stone, Lawrence. *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1977.

Stott, Anne. *Hannah More: The First Victorian*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Strout, Irina. '"She Who Dwells Alone…": Mad Mothers, Old Spinsters, and Hysterical Women in William Wordsworth's Poetry of 1798'. In *Disjointed Perspectives on Motherhood*, edited by Catalina Florina Florescu, 155-71. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013.

Suzuki, Akihito. *Madness at Home: The Psychiatrist, the Patient, and the Family in England*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.

———'Lunacy in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century England: Analysis of Quarter Sessions Records Part I'. *History of Psychiatry* 2 (1991), 437-456.

———'Lunacy in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century England: Analysis of Quarter Sessions Records Part II'. *History of Psychiatry* 3 (1992), 29-44.

———'Dualism and the Transformation of Psychiatric Language'. *History of Science* 33 – 4 (1995), 417-44.

———'The Politics and Ideology of Non-Restraint: the Case of the Hanwell Asylum'. *Medical History* 39, no.1 (1995), 1-17.

———'Framing Psychiatric Subjectivity: Doctor, Patient and Record-Keeping at Bethlem in the Nineteenth Century'. In *Insanity, Institutions and Society, 1800-1914: A Social History of Madness in Comparative Perspective*, edited by Joseph Melling and Bill Forsythe, 115-36. London & New York: Routledge, 1999.

———'Psychiatric Therapeutics and "the Public" in England in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries'. *Harvard Review of Psychiatry* 10, no. 2 (2002), 123-6.

Szondi, Peter, and Harvey Mendelsohn. 'Tableau and Coup de Théâtre: On the Social Psychology of Diderot's Bourgeois Tragedy'. *New Literary History* 11, no. 2: Literature/History/Social Action (1980), 323-43.

Taithe, Bertrand. 'Horror, Abjection and Compassion: from Dunant to Compassion Fatigue'. *New Formations* 62 (2007), 123-36.

Talairach-Vielmas, Laurence. 'Sensation Fiction: A Peep Behind the Veil'. In *The Victorian Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*, edited by Andrew Smith and William Hughes. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012.

Taylor, Barbara. *Mary Wollstonecraft and the Feminist Imagination*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

———'Misogyny and Feminism: The Case of Mary Wollstonecraft'. *Constellations* 6, no. 4 (1999), 499-512.

Taylor, Jenny Bourne. *In the Secret Theatre of Home: Wilkie Collins, Sensation Narrative, and Nineteenth-Century Psychology*. London & New York: Routledge, 1988.

Thompson, Edward P. *The Making of the English Working Class*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1982.

———'The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century'. *Past and Present* 50 (1971), 76-136.

Tink, Andrew. *Lord Sydney: The Life and Times of Tommy Townshend*. Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2011.

Todd, Janet. *Sensibility: An Introduction*. London: Methuen, 1986.

———*Mary Wollstonecraft: A Revolutionary Life*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2000.

Tosh, John. 'Gentlemanly Politeness and Manly Simplicity in Victorian England'. *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 12 (2002), 455-72.

Van Reyk, William. 'Christian Ideals of Manliness in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries'. *The Historical Journal* 52, no. 4 (2009), 1053-73.

Van Sant, Ann Jessie. *Eighteenth-Century Sensibility and the Novel: The Senses in Social Context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Watt-Smith, Tiffany. 'Darwin's Flinch: Sensation Theatre and Scientific Looking in 1872'. *Journal of Victorian Culture* 15, no. 1 (2010), 101-118.

Weaver, John, and David Wright eds. *Histories of Suicide: International Perspectives on Self-Destruction in the Modern World*. Toronto, Buffalo & London: Toronto University Press, 2009.

Webb, G. Gregg. 'The Law of Falling Objects: *Byrne* v. *Boadle* and the Birth of Res Ipsa Loquitur'. *Stanford Law Review* 59, no. 4 (2007), 1065-1109.

Weiner, Dora. 'The Madman in the Light of Reason. Enlightenment Psychiatry: Part I. Custody, Therapy, Theory, and the Need for Reform'. In *History of Psychiatry and Medical Psychology. With an Epilogue on Psychiatry and the Mind-Body Relation*, edited by Edwin Wallace and John Gach, 255-77. New York: Springer, 2008.

Weston, Rowland. 'Politics, Passion and the "Puritan Temper": Godwin's Critique of Enlightened Modernity'. *Studies in Romanticism* 41, no. 3 (2002), 445-70.

Wetherall Dickson, Leigh, and Allan Ingram eds. *Depression and Melancholy, 1660-1800*, 4 vols. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012.

Whitehead, Frank. *George Crabbe: A Reappraisal*. London: Associated University Presses, 1995.

Wild, Wayne. *Medicine-by-Post: The Changing Voice of Illness in Eighteenth-Century British Consultation Letters and Literature*. Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi B.V., 2006.

———'Doctor-Patient Correspondence in Eighteenth-Century Britain: A Change in Rhetoric and Relationship'. *Studies in Eighteenth Century Culture* 29 (2000), 47-64.

Williams, Carolyn. '"The Luxury of Doing Good": Benevolence, Sensibility, and the Royal Humane Society'. In *Pleasure in the Eighteenth-Century*, edited by Roy Porter and Marie Mulvey Roberts, 77-107. Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1996.

Williams, Gwyn. *Goya and the Impossible Revolution*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976.

Williams, Katherine E. 'Hysteria in Seventeenth-Century Case Records and Unpublished Manuscripts'. *History of Psychiatry* 1 (1990), 383-401.

Williams, Raymond. *The Country and the City*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.

———*Marxism and Literature*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.

———*Culture and Society 1780-1950*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963.

Williams, Thomas. 'George Crabbe and John Clare: Refinement and Reading'. *Romanticism* 20, no. 2 (2014), 174-84.

Wilson, Kathleen. 'Citizenship, Empire, and Modernity in the English Provinces, c.1720-1790'. *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 29, no. 1 (1995), 69-96.

Wiltenburg, Joy. 'True Crime: The Origins of Modern Sensationalism'. *American Historical Review* 109, no. 5 (2004), 1377-1404.

Wise, Sarah. *Inconvenient People: Lunacy, Liberty and the Mad-Doctors in Victorian England*. London: Vintage Books, 2013.

Wood, Gordon. *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*. New York: Vintage Books, 2002.

Woodmansee, Martha. 'The Interests in Disinterestedness: Karl Philipp Moritz and the Emergence of the Theory of Aesthetic Autonomy in Eighteenth-Century Germany'. *Modern Language Quarterly* 45, no. 1 (1984), 22-47.

Woodward, Llewellyn. *The Age of Reform 1815-1870*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962.

Worvill, Romira. 'From Prose peinture to Dramatic tableau: Diderot, Fénelon and the Emergence of the Pictorial Aesthetic in France'. *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 39 (2010), 151-70.

Wu, Duncan. *Wordsworth's Reading 1770-1799*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Wynter, Rebecca. '"Horrible Dens of Deception": Thomas Bakewell, Thomas Mulock and Anti-Asylum Sentiments, *c*. 1815-60'. In *Insanity and the Lunatic Asylum in the Nineteenth Century*, edited by Thomas Knowles and Serena Trowbridge, 11-27. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2015.

Theses

Andrews, Jonathan. 'Bedlam Revisited: A History of Bethlem Hospital c1634-c1770'. PhD thesis: QMUL, 1991.

Bartlett, Peter. 'The Poor Law of Lunacy: The Administration of Pauper Lunatics in Mid-Nineteenth Century England, with special Emphasis on Leicestershire and Rutland'. PhD thesis: University of London, 1993.

Booth, Emily. 'Passion's Slave: Madness, Metaphor, Self and Responsibility in England, 1650-1700'. Honours thesis: University of Adelaide, 1993.

Ellis, Robert James. 'A Field of Practise or a Mere House of Detention? The Asylum and its Integration, with Special Reference to the County Asylums of Yorkshire, c.1844-1888'. PhD thesis: University of Huddersfield, 2001.

Gliserman Kopans, Dana. '*The English Malady*: Engendering Insanity in the Eighteenth Century'. PhD thesis: Carnegie Mellon University, 2006.

Laffey, Paul. 'Insanity in Enlightenment England'. PhD thesis: University of Western Australia, 2001.

Lamb-Books, Benjamin. 'Angry Abolitionists & the Rhetoric of Slavery: Minding the Moral Emotions in Social Movements'. PhD thesis: University of Colorado, 2015.

McCandless, Peter. 'Insanity and Society: A Study of the English Lunacy Reform Movement 1815-1870.' PhD thesis: University of Wisconsin, 1974.

McClure, Elizabeth. 'The Ethics of Materiality: Sensation, Pain, and Sympathy in Victorian Literature'. PhD thesis: University of Maryland, 2007.

Moniz, Amanda Bowie. '"Labours in the Cause of Humanity in Every Part of the Globe": Transatlantic Philanthropic Collaboration and the Cosmopolitan Ideal, 1760-1815'. PhD thesis: University of Michigan, 2008.

Reuter, Elsa. 'Treason, Passion and Power in England, 1660-1685'. PhD thesis: University of Adelaide, 2013.

Sagal, Anna. 'Imagined Illnesses: Hypochondria, Sensibility, and the Limits of English Masculinity and the Male Body'. MA thesis: Georgetown University, 2009.

Shepherd, Jade V. 'Victorian Madmen: Broadmoor, Masculinity and the Experiences of the Criminally Insane, 1863-1900'. PhD thesis: Queen Mary University of London, 2013.

Suzuki, Akihito. 'Mind and Its Disease in Enlightenment British Medicine'. PhD thesis: University of London, 1992.

Twells, Alison. 'The Heathen at Home and Overseas: The Middle Class and the Civilising Mission, Sheffield 1790-1843'. PhD thesis: University of York, 1997.