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Abstract
In his classic work, The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500–1800, Lawrence Stone argues that the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw the rise of companionate marriage, a form of familial organization in which the choice of a spouse was largely left to the discretion of children rather than their parents, in which wives became responsible for managing the household and organizing leisure activities, as well as supervising the education of their children, and in which couples considered emotional intimacy and affective ties a requisite for a happy marriage. Published one year after Stone's book, Randolph Trumbach's The Rise of the Egalitarian Family similarly claims that patriarchy was slowly replaced by domesticity during the eighteenth century, eventually leading to "a pattern of close and loving association between husband and wife, and of doting care for children." Subsequent historians of gender and the family have challenged these models by finding much of the evidence upon which they are based to be "an expression of the ideal model of gender relations [in the period] rather than a reflection of its reality" and by emphasizing the "complicated and contradictory nature" of that reality as a result of "the diversity of ways in which men constructed and thought about themselves, and deployed those facets of selfidentity in their relations with other men and women." While Stone maintains that "patriarchal attitudes within the home markedly declined, and greater autonomy was granted not only to children but also to wives," other historians contend that, in the words of Anthony Fletcher, while patriarchy was challenged by the deployment of domesticity and sentimentality, "men revised a scheme of gender relations [during the eighteenth century] that served their interests as men so effectively" that patriarchy survived.

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Jeremy W. Webster

In his classic work, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500–1800*, Lawrence Stone argues that the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw the rise of companionate marriage, a form of familial organization in which the choice of a spouse was largely left to the discretion of children rather than their parents, in which wives became responsible for managing the household and organizing leisure activities, as well as supervising the education of their children, and in which couples considered emotional intimacy and affective ties a requisite for a happy marriage.[1] Published one year after Stone's book, Randolph Trumbach's *The Rise of the Egalitarian Family* similarly claims that patriarchy was slowly replaced by domesticity during the eighteenth century, eventually leading to "a pattern of close and loving association between husband and wife, and of doting care for children."[2] Subsequent historians of gender and the family have challenged these models by finding much of the evidence upon which they are based to be "an expression of the ideal model of gender relations [in the period] rather than a reflection of its reality" and by emphasizing the "complicated and contradictory nature" of that

1 Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500–1800* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 392.

2 Randolph Trumbach, *The Rise of the Egalitarian Family* (New York: Academic Press, 1978), 120.

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reality as a result of "the diversity of ways in which men constructed and thought about themselves, and deployed those facets of self-identity in their relations with other men and women."[3] While Stone maintains that "patriarchal attitudes within the home markedly declined, and greater autonomy was granted not only to children but also to wives," other historians contend that, in the words of Anthony Fletcher, while patriarchy was challenged by the deployment of domesticity and sentimentality, "men revised a scheme of gender relations [during the eighteenth century] that served their interests as men so effectively" that patriarchy survived.[4]

Building upon the work of these historians, this article explicates one aspect of this "revised scheme of gender relations," modifications in paternal-filial relationships, to demonstrate how the threat to patriarchal hegemony by discourses of sentimentality and romantic love during the eighteenth century was deflected and filial duty to obey paternal figures (actual fathers, older brothers, and male guardians) was recast as an obligation born out of love rather than compulsion. As Susan Moller Okin maintains, this new schema "provided a new rationale for the subordination of women." While earlier views of patriarchal authority preached obedience to fathers and husbands as part of the belief that the heads of households owned their subordinates, writes Okin, by 1700 the rhetoric of possession, which had been co-opted by liberalism to espouse the individual's self-ownership, was, as Stone and Trumbach claim, replaced with a cultural discourse of loving intimacy between husband and wife and of doting care for children, that is, "the affective or sentimental family." According to Okin, the idealization of the sentimental family had several consequences for women and children:

> First, women's spheres of dependence and domesticity are divided from the outside world more strictly than before. Second, women increasingly come to be characterized as creatures of sentiment and love rather than of the rationality that was perceived as necessary for citizenship. Finally, the legitimacy of male rule both within and outside the family is reinforced—despite the challenges to it that are inherent in individualism—on the grounds that the interests of the family are totally united, that family relations, unlike those outside, are based

3 Elizabeth A. Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England: Honour, Sex, and Marriage* (London and New York: Longman, 1999), 2; *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations, and Responsibilities*, ed. Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (London and New York: Longman, 1997); Tim Hitchcock and Michèle Cohen, introduction to *English Masculinities, 1660–1800* (London and New York: Longman, 1999), 1.

4 Stone, 8; Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination in England, 1500–1800* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1995), 411.

> only on love, and therefore husbands and fathers can be safely entrusted with power within the household and with the right of representing their families' interests in the political realm.[5]

Thus, rather than liberating dependents from fathers, husbands, and guardians, the sentimentalizing of patriarchy actually served to perpetuate paternal subjection of wives, children, and wards.

At the centre of these cultural changes stands the novel, which, because of its appeal to "those embarking on a career, beginning marital relationships, or making other decisions involving their transition into the adult world,"[6] wielded great influence over the evolution towards new definitions of patriarchy, family, and gender. Samuel Richardson's *The History of Sir Charles Grandison* illustrates this discursive shift in patriarchal methods of control in response to contemporary challenges to male privilege. Where contemporaries such as Henry Fielding criticized Richardson's earlier novels for valorizing the assertion of a female agency that disrupts traditional class and gender boundaries, Richardson's third novel responds to this reading of his work by focusing on a male paragon.[7] While Jerry Beasley maintains that "*Grandison* clarified the traditional social and political structure in which its narrative is grounded, surely hoping to fortify that structure against change,"[8] I argue that the novel seeks to fortify patriarchy precisely by incorporating change into paternal authority. *Sir Charles Grandison* deploys the rhetoric of obligation in order to dress patriarchal values in the discourse of sentiment, as seen in the novel's comparison of Sir Thomas Grandison's parenting strategies with those of his son, Sir Charles. Whereas Sir Thomas selfishly insists on his children's compliance with his every wish, Sir Charles manages his sisters, his ward, and indeed just about everyone else in the novel by evoking their love for him: if they truly love him, they will obey him. In contrast to his father, his commands are always requests, and he insists that his influence over their choices is predicated on his hopes for their welfare. Through the discourse of love and the obligation that

5 Susan Moller Okin, "Women and the Making of the Sentimental Family," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 11:1 (1981), 65, 72, 74.

6 J. Paul Hunter, *Before Novels: The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction* (New York: Norton, 1990), 43.

7 For more on contemporary reactions to Richardson's earlier novels, see Jocelyn Harris, *Samuel Richardson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 129–37.

8 Jerry C. Beasley, "Richardson's Girls: The Daughters of Patriarchy in *Pamela, Clarissa,* and *Sir Charles Grandison*," *New Essays on Samuel Richardson*, ed. Albert J. Rivero (New York: St Martin's Press, 1996), 48.

accompanies familial companionship, Sir Charles thus adapts the principles of companionate marriage to reinforce rather than weaken his patriarchal authority and subjection of (especially female) dependents.

Sir Charles Grandison was published the same year Parliament passed the "Act for the better preventing of clandestine Marriages," also known as Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act of 1753. "The law of marriage that applied in England had degenerated into a confused and contradictory mess by the early eighteenth century," as David Lemmings points out:

> Following the law of ancient Rome, since the twelfth century at least the church and canon law had regarded the exchange of simple words of consent between a couple as sufficient to effect a binding union, as long as the contract was in the present tense and was witnessed, and the parties were of sufficient age (twelve for a female and fourteen for a male) and of sound mind. But this simple contract of marriage was unsatisfactory to elite families, who wanted to ensure that parents, guardians and friends, rather than children, controlled decisions which affected the transmission of family property; and it was also increasingly unsatisfactory to the church and state authorities.

In the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, elite families increasingly pressured Parliament to put an end to private marriage contracts in order to augment their control over their children's marital choices. The eventual answer from Parliament was the Clandestine Marriage Act, sponsored by Lord Chancellor Hardwicke. In its final form, the Marriage Act "prescribed a public ceremony according to the book of common prayer in the parties' local church or chapel, preceded by the publication of banns or the purchase of a license, as the only form of marriage in England." The Act also compelled minors to obtain parental permission before they could marry and "provided for evidence of every marriage by proper registration with the signatures of the parties, the minister, and two witnesses." Although some House of Commons members argued against the bill on the grounds that "it threatened the balance of the constitution; offended against the law of God; would weaken the English race in biology and numbers; promote fornication among the poor; and render innocent young women defenceless against treacherous seducers," it nevertheless passed both

houses and prescribed the law of marriage until 1822.[9]

Lemmings and Eve Tavor Bannet have convincingly argued that the Marriage Act represented an "unprecedented enforcement of parental and familial interest."[10] Although Stone suggests that the arguments by bill opponents support his contention that love and freedom of choice had found "wide acceptance,"[11] Lemmings maintains that

> the rhetoric of M.P.s who promoted the measure and its evolution in parliament provide strong evidence of continuing *patriarchal* and materialistic instincts; indeed, the arguments of its proponents, and even those of their opponents, when placed against the background of their own marital and sexual affairs, suggest that children, and especially daughters (although no doubt often the focus of masculine affection), remained essential objects of commerce in the accumulation of property that underwrote the power of the male parliamentary elite.[12]

By 1753, patriarchal control over these "objects of commerce" seemed to be slipping. As Sir Dudley Ryder declared when the bill was introduced in the House of Commons, it "is designed for putting an end to an evil which has been long and grievously complained of, an evil by which many of our best families have often suffered, and which our laws have often endeavoured to prevent."[13] This evil, "the many artful contrivances set on foot to seduce young gentlemen and ladies of fortune, and to draw them into improper, perhaps infamous marriages,"[14] was seen as contributing to "the general lack of stability in conjugal and familial relationships."[15] With the passage of the Marriage Act, Parliament intended to ensure that patriarchal authority was restored by "formaliz[ing] paternal dominance in the elite family."[16]

Historians note several factors that led the men in Parliament to feel anxious about their ability to control their wives and children: a demographic regression among the aristocracy "that left many elite

9 David Lemmings, "Marriage and the Law in the Eighteenth Century: Hardwicke's Marriage Act of 1753," *Historical Journal* 39:2 (1996), 340, 344–46.

10 Lemmings, 342. See also Eve Tavor Bannet, "The Marriage Act of 1753: 'A Most Cruel Law for the Fair Sex,'" *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 30:3 (1997), 233–54.

11 Stone, 242.

12 Lemmings, 343.

13 Sir Dudley Ryder, 14 May 1753, *Sixth Session of the Tenth Parliament of Great Britain*, in *Cobbett's Parliamentary History of England, 1066–12 Aug. 1803*, 36 vols. (New York: Readex Microprint, 1961), 15:1–2.

14 Ryder, 15:11.

15 Bannet, 236.

16 Lemmings, 349.

families without sons to inherit family estates";[17] a rise in clandestine and contract marriages that privileged the couple's affection for one another over the material interests of their families; and the frequency with which lascivious men seduced sentimental women with promises of eventual marriage only to abandon their lovers for economically better prospects, for new conquests, or when their partners conceived children.[18] More importantly, changes in male and female gender roles also threatened to destroy the structures upon which patriarchy rested. On one hand, masculine roles gradually de-emphasized the use of "physical violence in the settling of disputes" in favour of "'civility,' with its concomitant recourse to the law and to verbal disputation of all kinds."[19] On the other hand, feminine roles simultaneously included more "assertiveness and independence [for women] in speech and action."[20] The result, according to some contemporaries, was the blurring of gender roles. As John Brown wrote in his 1757 treatise *An Estimate on the Manners and Principles of the Times*, "The Sexes have now little other apparent Distinction, beyond that of Person and Dress: Their peculiar and characteristic Manners are confounded and lost: The one Sex having advanced into *Boldness*, as the other have sunk into *Effeminacy*."[21] By codifying the father's authority over his children's marital choices, the Marriage Act was one means by which eighteenth-century patriarchs worked to prescribe traditional roles for men and women in marriage, in the family, and in public life. Another method was to inculcate into society a revised form of patriarchy that co-opted the rising rhetoric of sentimentality through emerging genres of discourse, namely conduct books, medical literature, periodicals, and, most importantly, the novel.[22]

By reason of its simultaneity with the Marriage Act, it is not surprising that *Sir Charles Grandison* takes up many of these issues and also participates in the reformulation of patriarchal tactics of control. Indeed, as Jocelyn Harris points out, this novel was very much of its

17 James M. Rosenheim, *The Emergence of a Ruling Order: English Landed Society, 1650–1750* (London and New York: Longman, 1998), 13. Brian McCrea discusses the effect of this demographic crisis on the novel in *Impotent Fathers: Patriarchy and Demographic Crisis in the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1998).

18 See Lemmings, 344–47; Bannet, 238–40.

19 Lemmings, 14. See also Anna Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility: Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

20 Fletcher, 401.

21 Cited in Barker and Chalus, 1.

22 Fletcher, 383.

time, its three most important themes—"the nature of a good man and true Christian, the relationship between parent and child, and of the husband with his wife"—all being "topics of primary importance in the conduct books, as well as in the essays and sermons derived from them."[23] Sir Charles's behaviour throughout the novel is exemplary in these three categories: he is the model Christian, exemplifies filial duty, and promises to be an admirable husband as he marries Harriet Byron at the novel's end. In short, he is "the best of brothers, friends, landlords, masters, and the bravest and best of men" (1:303). The frequency with which Richardson's characters affirm Sir Charles's exemplarity, however, suggests an anxiety over his Christianity, masculinity, and sexuality. Analysing the first of these concerns, Lois Chaber argues that *Sir Charles Grandison* depicts "an obsessive anxiety emerging from the conflict between the conscious desire to submit piously to a cosmic plan and the burgeoning sense of self which cannot help but be concerned with the individual's fate in this life."[24] She concludes that, "for Richardson, society was impotent to resolve these new tensions." In contrast, Richardson's treatment of filial relationships suggests that contemporary tensions between parent and child could be resolved. Rather than advocate juridical control over dependents, Richardson's remedy for the fears that led to the Marriage Act was to tenderize paternal control over dependents by transforming the rhetoric of sentiment into a discourse of filial obligation based on love.[25]

Sir Charles Grandison depicts the contemporary cultural anxieties concerning parent-child and husband-wife relationships. Harriet Byron, an independent, twenty-year-old woman who has left her guardians in the country to visit her cousins in London, dominates the first volume. While in the city, Harriet is plagued by several unwanted suitors, most especially Sir Hargrave Pollexfen, who abducts her to force her into marriage. Sir Charles happens upon Sir Hargrave's chariot just as Harriet cries out for help. A more than capable opponent, Sir Charles

23 Jocelyn Harris, introduction to *Sir Charles Grandison*, by Samuel Richardson, 3 vols., ed. Harris (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), xviii. References are to this edition.

24 Lois A. Chaber, "'Sufficient to the Day': Anxiety in *Sir Charles Grandison*," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 1:4 (1989), 304. Mary V. Yates also studies the "moral ambivalence" of Sir Charles's status as a "Christian rake" in "The Christian Rake in *Sir Charles Grandison*," *SEL* 24:3 (1984), 545–61.

25 In her study of marriage and courtship in *Sir Charles Grandison*, Wendy Jones also explores Richardson's deployment of sentimentalism, asserting that he argues for the superiority of sentimental love over companionate love. "The Dialectic of Love in *Sir Charles Grandison*," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 8:1 (1995), 15–34.

handily casts Sir Hargrave out of his own chariot, rescues Harriet, and declares himself her protector and newfound brother. While this episode is typical of eighteenth-century romance narratives, Richardson's use of it plays off of the anxiety expressed by John Brown that the sexes had become indistinguishable. As an independent woman, Harriet is free of almost all patriarchal constraints: no one controls her marital choices, and her country relatives repeatedly insist that she must "judge for [her]self" in choosing a mate (1:64). Her "boldness" in disputing with Mr Walden over issues of education, language, and religion, combined with her freedom of action and choice, further constructs her as a masculine subject. Her lack of paternal protection actually provides Sir Hargrave with the opportunity to abduct her. Although Sir Charles enters the novel as the ideal man, physically able to unarm Sir Hargrave and protect Harriet, his masculine honour is soon questioned because he refuses Sir Hargrave "the satisfaction of a gentleman" (1:248) when the latter challenges him to a duel. Sir Hargrave, representing traditional patriarchy, responds to Sir Charles's principles that reject duelling by questioning whether he is "a *man*" (1:250), and a substantial portion of the first half of volume 2 is spent justifying Sir Charles's status as a "man of honour" who refuses "to kill or maim any man" (1:208). Tassie Gwilliam explains this feminization of Sir Charles, the ways in which Richardson gives his male protagonist "some conventionally feminine attributes and shows him intermittently cast into feminine positions," as part of his effort to redefine gender roles.[26] This feminization, however, may also be read as part of his effort to redefine patriarchy, the larger system of "institutionalised male dominance over women and children in the family and the subordination of women in society in general."[27]

While the orphaned Harriet is not responsible for her independence from patriarchal control, Sir Charles's refusal to uphold the traditions of masculine honour is cast as an explicit rejection of his father's values and lifestyle and therefore of traditional patriarchy. Sir Thomas Grandison, Sir Charles's father, stands as Richardson's

26 Tassie Gwilliam, *Samuel Richardson's Fictions of Gender* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 134. Sir Charles's refusal to participate in this duel is characteristic of Richardson's larger reconstruction of masculinity in his novels, a masculinity that does not include duelling except in self-defence. For more on Richardson's vision of a new masculinity, see *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, ed. John Carroll (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 71–72, 76; and Harris, "Protean Lovelace," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 2:4 (1990), 327–46.

27 Fletcher, xv.

central representative of this patriarchy. Lady Grandison's explanation to her daughters of their father's parental disposition reflects his patriarchal stance:

> Your papa has the notion riveted in him, which is common to men of antient families, that daughters are but incumbrances, and that the son is to be everything. He loves his girls: He loves you dearly: But he has often declared, that, were he to have entire all the fortune that descended to him from his father, he would not give to his daughters, marry whom you would, more than £5,000 apiece. Your brother loves you: He loves me. It will be in *his* power, should he survive your father, to be a good friend to you.—Love your brother. (1:315)

As Lady Grandison suggests, father-child relationships in the early eighteenth century can be analysed along gender lines: Sir Thomas's relationship with his son contrasts sharply with his relationship with his daughters. Because "a father's hopes and fears are centered on the eldest son who would inherit his house and estate and carry on his line after his death,"[28] the average gentleman in this period did indeed believe that his eldest boy was "everything." As a result, "the father/eldest son relationship was [generally] the strongest and most intense in the family."[29] During the first half of the century, the eldest son's education "began in or near the home" and the "father was supposed to prepare his heir for his responsibilities by gradually taking him into his confidence."[30] However, a patriarch's obligation "to be abroad on public and private business" often left the care and education of his heir to the supervision of his wife, accompanied by tutors, until the boy was sent to a university at the age of thirteen.[31] Thus, even the strongest relationships between fathers and children were fairly distant and were largely based on the father's will rather than on sentimental affection.

When compared with these generalities, Sir Thomas's treatment of his son reflects traditional patriarchal practices. As Harriet records in a letter detailing the Grandison family history,

> his Father, tho' he had given so little attention to his education, was excessively fond of him; And no doubt, but he the more easily satisfied himself on this head, as he knew his remission was so well supplied by his lady's care, which mingled

28 Ralph A. Houlbrooke, *The English Family 1450–1700* (New York and London: Longman, 1984), 179.

29 Miriam Slater, *Family Life in the Seventeenth Century* (Boston: Routledge, 1984), 32.

30 Houlbrooke, 150, 179.

31 Trumbach, 239, 255.

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> with the cares of the master's of the several sciences, who came home to him, at her desire.
>
> A deep melancholy having seized the young gentleman on a loss [his mother's death] so irreparable, his father ... was alarmed for his son; and yielded to the entreaties of General W. brother of Lord L. to permit him to travel. (1:319)

Thus, like most gentlemen of his day, Sir Thomas, though "excessively fond of him," allows his son to remain apart from him most of his life, placing him under Lady Grandison's guidance as a child and sending him to Europe with a governor after her death. Charles's travels abroad set up the central marital dilemma in the novel: Sir Charles's divided heart. While in Italy, he meets Clementina and eventually proposes marriage to her. Her mental breakdown following her family's objections to her marrying a Protestant leave her unable to break off the engagement. As a result, he is not free to pursue Harriet as a potential mate at the beginning of the novel.

This prior engagement also puts him at odds with his father. While many fathers displayed affection for their heirs, in the traditional system of patriarchy the eldest son's "relationship with his father was primarily based on obedience and respect on the son's part and authority and control on the father's."[32] Accordingly, when Sir Thomas suggests a spouse for his son, Sir Charles responds that he will defer to his father's wishes, but his submission is conditional. Sir Charles humbly requests that his father discontinue the wedding negotiations until his return to England:

> I receive with inexpressible joy so near an hope of the long wished-for leave to throw myself at your feet in my native country. When I have this happiness granted me, I will unbosom my whole heart to my father. The credit of your name, and the knowledge every one has of your goodness to me, will be my recommendation whenever you shall wish me to enlarge the family connexions.
>
> Till I have this honour, I beseech you, Sir, to discontinue the treaty already begun. (1:351)

This request is complicated by, as Sir Charles acknowledges in another letter, his father's control over his allowance and his own duty to put Sir Thomas's welfare above his own:

> Let me beg of you, ever-dear and ever-honour'd Sir, that you will not suffer any difficulties, that I can join to remove ... Are you not my *father*? ... Leave me not any-thing! You have given me an education, and I derive from you a spirit, that, by God's blessing on my duty to you, will enable me to make my own fortune.

32 Slater, 33.

> And, in that case, the foundation of it will be yours; and you will be entitled, for that foundation, to my warmest gratitude. (1:330)

The "difficulties" Sir Charles refers to in this letter are the result of his father's financial and moral failings. After the death of Lady Grandison, Sir Thomas indulged his libertine desires without check, eventually placing himself in such financial straits that he must ask his son to sign over the deed to an Irish estate as security for a loan. As Sir Charles's compliance illustrates, under patriarchy children were never excused "from their duty of honor and obedience," even if a father's bad behaviour threatened their own future prosperity.[33] Richardson concurred with this opinion. As he writes in a 1749 letter to Susanna Highmore, "the want of duty on one part [on the part of parents] justifies not the non-performance of it on the other [on the part of children], where there is reciprocal duty."[34] According to Richardson, children owed their parents obedience regardless of those parents' moral failings. While condemning Sir Thomas's libertine excesses, Richardson maintains that the Grandison children must nevertheless obey the patriarch's will.

The problem posed by parental immorality becomes even more complicated in the father-daughter relationships depicted in the novel. Sir Thomas's behaviour towards his daughters reflects the average relationship between fathers and their girls in an age when the birth of a female was mourned as a "disappointment."[35] Because of this devaluing of women, most gentlemen in the early eighteenth century were rather distant with their daughters in spite of their "care to advance them through service and marriage, of [their] pride in their good looks and accomplishments, and of [their] concern for the preservation of their honor and good name."[36] When death, divorce, or illness removed a man's wife from her role in supervising their daughters, he usually sent his girls to live at a boarding school or with a female relative.[37] After the death of their mother, Caroline and Charlotte Grandison are immediately taken to live with their aunt, Lady W., and, not surprisingly, their return to their father's house leads to turmoil.

33 Susan Dwyer Amussen, "Political Households and Domestic Politics: Family and Society in Early Modern Thought," in *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (New York: Blackwell, 1988), 59.

34 Samuel Richardson to Susanna Highmore, 26 November 1749, *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, 131.

35 Trumbach, 243.

36 Houlbrooke, 185.

37 Trumbach, 241.

Whatever a man's concern for his daughters, "of all relationships in the family, this was the one whose harmony depended most heavily on the child's compliance":[38] a father's voice, as Caroline and Charlotte point out, "must be observed" (1:335). In particular, patriarchs assumed that the choice of their daughters' husbands belonged solely to them, as does Sir Thomas in this novel. When he discovers Caroline's unwelcome attachment to Lord L., he explodes:

> So! Now all is out! ... [Lord L.] came to me as my son's friend. I invited him down in that character: He, at that time, knew nothing of you. But no sooner came a single man into a single woman's company, but you both wanted to make a match of it. You were dutiful: And he was prudent. ... He made his application to you, or you to him, I know not which. ... And when he found himself sure of you, then was the fool the father to be consulted: And for what? Only to know what he would do for two people, who had left him no option in the case. And this is the trick of you all: And the poor father is to be passive, or else be accounted a tyrant. (1:339)

This attachment is unwelcome for two reasons. While Sir Thomas is angry because Lord L. did not begin his suit by asking his permission, he is even angrier because of its economic inconvenience. Since he has lived above his means in fulfilling his libertine extravagances, Sir Thomas has decreased the worth of the estate that his son will inherit. As he explains to Lord L., "as matters stand, if my girls will *keep* (and I hope they will) I intend to make as good a bargain for them, and with them, as I can. Nor near 5,000*l.* apiece must they expect from me. I will not rob my son more than I *have* done" (1:329). Accordingly, he threatens "to carry [Caroline] up to town" where a "young man of quality has made overtures" that Sir Thomas believes are economically more feasible (1:339). Sir Thomas's fury that his daughter allowed her heart to be engaged before he was consulted by Lord L. stems from his own "heartless egotism" rather than from any concern for his daughter's welfare.[39]

Sir Thomas's behaviour mirrors a mentality in which fathers were often willing "to make their daughters drudges to lighten the burdens of their old age and incapacity,"[40] a mentality that Richardson overtly criticizes because of its potential effect of transforming children into rebels against their father's authority. Exactly this transformation happens in the novel. First, when Sir Thomas seduces and impregnates his

38 Houlbrooke, 186.

39 Mark Kinkead-Weekes, "'Sir Charles' and 'Harriet Byron,'" *Samuel Richardson: Dramatic Novelist* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973), 316.

40 Houlbrooke, 187.

daughters' governess, Caroline and Charlotte effectively oppose her return to "her charge" (1:320). Later, when Sir Thomas refuses to allow Caroline's marriage to Lord L., she declares, "I will never marry any man living, if it be not Lord L." (1:341). In both cases, Caroline violates the patriarchal mores that Sir Thomas values. Charlotte joins in this violation when she rejects her father's authority by calling out for the return of their dead mother in the middle of an argument. For this reason, Sir Thomas resolves to renounce his daughters and turn them out of his house. Though both girls beg to remain under their father's protection, he refuses to hear their pleas until both swear compliance with his wishes, though their submission is conditional. As Caroline exclaims, "You are my father, Sir ... . All is welcome from you: But you shall have no cause to reproach me. I will not be in haste. And here on my knees I promise, that I will never be Lord L.'s without your consent. I only beg of you, Sir, not to propose to me any other man" (2:346). Charlotte likewise submits, allowing the tension temporarily to subside: Richardson has more than made his point that traditional patriarchy was in danger of producing its own saboteurs.

In order to survive, suggests Richardson, patriarchy would have to use more tenderness in handling its dependents. He insists that parents should use their authority morally, training their children to make adult decisions by gradually allowing them to exercise their own decision-making ability. As he writes to Highmore, "I would be sure they had legs, and morally so, that they could stand upon them before I let the poor things, as you call them, be left to trust them." But he also believes that parents' immoral behaviour or imposition of their will upon the child does not absolve children from their duty to obey, a duty that should always be exercised except in the most extreme circumstances. Indeed, "the performance of [duty] on one side, when it is not performed on the other, gives something so like a merit, that I am almost ready to worship the good mind that can do it." Richardson's use of the word "almost" here suggests that he sees this payment of duty when one's parents are oppressive is an ideal not easily achieved in real life. A more accessible form of family relations is therefore required: parents should not simply exert their wills over their children but should strive to elicit their children's affection. As he suggests, "I would wish to engage ... the gratitude and love of my children; but that at my own option, and in some cases that I thought fit to oblige them in: but should be sorry if I could not make them sole judges of the fit and the unfit, that the duty should be wanting to

entitle me to both their gratitude and their love for what I did indulge them in."[41] In the real world, patriarchal authority must be sentimentalized.

This vision of sentimentalized patriarchal authority is embodied in the person of Sir Charles.[42] As Richardson explains in the preface to *Sir Charles Grandison*, his goal in writing the novel was to present "the Example of a Man acting uniformly well thro' a Variety of trying Scenes, because all his Actions are regulated by one steady Principle: A Man of Religion and Virtue; of Liveliness and Spirit; accomplished and agreeable; happy in himself, and a Blessing to others" (1:4). In other words, as Jerry Beasley writes, Sir Charles is "perfectly qualified to rule the little dominion of his family" and is "the consummate patriarchal presence."[43] Like Sir Thomas, Sir Charles demands his sisters' compliance with their father's wishes. As he writes to Sir Thomas on this matter,

> I am extremely concern'd that you have reason to be displeased with any part of the conduct of my sisters. Can the daughters of such a mother as you have had the happiness to give them, forget themselves? Their want of consideration shall receive no countenance from me. I shall let them know, that my love, my esteem, if it be of consequence with them, is not founded on relation, but merit: And that, where duty to a parent is wanting, all other good qualities are to be suspected. (1:352)

Just as Sir Charles submitted his own future to his father's direction, he concurs with his father's right to choose Caroline's mate and hopes that his sister has not "suffer'd her heart to be engaged against her duty." In keeping with this belief in familial submission, Sir Charles ends his letter by again acknowledging his own dependence: "May I ever want the power to do good to myself, or to those I love, when I forget, or depart from, the duty owing to the most indulgent of fathers" (1:352). This concurrence is in keeping with Richardson's insistence that a child's obedience to his or her father's will remains an important, though not the sole, ingredient in their relationship. This sets the stage for his revision of patriarchy, the introduction of sentimental love as the best strategy for eliciting filial obedience.

While Richardson's last novel endorses the patriarchal demand that

41 Richardson to Susanna Highmore, 26 November 1749, *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, 130, 132, 131.

42 Juliet McMaster has analysed the sexual meaning of the word "person" in relation to Sir Charles. "*Sir Charles Grandison*: Richardson on Body and Character," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 1:2 (1989), 83–102.

43 Beasley, 35–36.

a child obey his or her parent, it also includes the component of sentiment in these relationships.[44] The inclusion of rational affection between family members permeates Sir Charles's generation and is embodied by the title character himself. Although Sir Charles does not become a father until after the novel's close, he nevertheless represents paternal authority in two ways. First, he exercises authority over his sisters, since, as his father's heir, he stands *in loco parentis* for his father. He also possesses paternal authority by virtue of his guardianship over Miss Emily Jervois, "the dear child of [his] tenderest cares" (3:169). In this role, Sir Charles faces all of the responsibilities and duties of a parent but does so with tenderness. Accordingly, he worries about how best to guide Emily as she approaches a marriageable age: "What can I do in relation to my Emily? ... Emily has too large a fortune. I have a high opinion of her discretion. But she is but a girl. Women's eyes are wanderers: And too often bring home guests that are very troublesome to them, and whom, once introduced, they cannot get out of the house" (2:8). While he is concerned that her entrance into society might cause her to surrender her heart to an unworthy suitor, this anxiety is based solely upon his desire for her welfare, a stark contrast to his father's monetary objections to Caroline's marriage to Lord L. As Sir Charles explains to Dr Bartlett,

> I have also cast an eye over the gentry within my knowledge: But have not met with one whom I could wish to be the husband of my Emily. So tender, so gentle, so ductile, as she is, a fierce, a rash, an indelicate, even a careless or indifferent man, would either harden her heart, or shorten her life: And as the latter would be much more easy to be effected than the former, what must she suffer before she could return indifference for disrespect; and reach the quiet end of it! (2:9–10)

Because Sir Charles loves his ward, "though with as much innocence as if she were his sister" (2:9), his direction of her affairs is always couched in sentiment: his commands are always requests. A prime

44 A number of scholars have examined eighteenth-century definitions of "sentiment," a word that combined a sense of judgment and rational thought with feeling. For more on this term, see Ann Jessie Van Sant, *Eighteenth-Century Sensibility and the Novel: The Senses in Social Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Barbara M. Benedict, *Framing Feeling: Sentiment and Style in English Prose Fiction, 1745–1800* (New York: AMS, 1994); B.F. Brissenden, "'Sentiment': Some Uses of the Word in the Writings of David Hume," in *Studies in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Brissenden (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), 89–107; and G.J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). For an analysis of Richardson's use of sentimental love in *Sir Charles Grandison*, see also Jones.

example is his orchestration of the meeting between Emily and her mother. Sir Charles guides his ward's behaviour with a series of questions and deferments to her desires, as the following conversation portrays:

> Do you [asked Sir Charles] *choose* ... to see your mother?—I hope you do. Let not even the faulty have a cause to complain of unkindness from us. ... I hope you are in a safe protection, and have nothing to fear from her: You are *guarded*, therefore. Can my Emily forget the terrors of the last interview, and calmly, in my presence, kneel to her mother?
>
> Whatever you command me to do, [replied Emily] I will do.
>
> I would have you answer [your mother's] Letter. Invite her to the house of your guardian—I think you should not go to her lodgings: Yet, if you incline to see her there, and she insists upon it, I will attend you … .
>
> I will in everything, Sir, do as you would have me.
>
> One thing, my dear, I think I will advise: If [your mother and Mr O'Hara] are really married; if there be any prospect of their living tolerably together; you shall, if you please …, make them an handsome present; and give hope, that it will be an annual one, if the man behave with civility to your mother. (2:74–75)

When Sir Charles has finished giving his advice, his ward, enthused with his goodness, cries out, "Continue to your Emily the blessing of your direction, and I shall be a happy girl indeed. O that my mother *may* be married! that she may be intitled to the best you shall advise me to do for her" (2:75).

By appealing to Emily's ability to make her own decisions, Sir Charles more effectively controls her actions than his father had controlled his daughters. The effect of Sir Charles's sentimentality is to reinforce his patriarchal authority. This becomes even clearer when Emily has accidentally "run herself into debt" and requests her guardian's financial assistance. As she writes to Sir Charles, "Chide me honoured Sir, if you please. Indeed you never *yet* did chide me. But yours will be the chidings of Love; of *paternal* Love, Sir" (2:168). This inclusion of "paternal love" reflects the eighteenth-century blurring of the lines that had separated male from female characteristics, lines that had previously isolated gentlemen from their dependents. Richardson's depiction of a shift from familial interaction based on strict obedience to the rule of the patriarch to interaction based on compliance born out of love exploits this blurring of gender lines. Rather than liberate dependents from patriarchal control, this love and concern obliges children to obey their parents and guardians out of love rather than simply duty. Patriarchal authority remains; only its strategy for eliciting obedience has changed.

While Sir Charles is the primary example of this tenderized patriarchy, he is by no means the only one. By the mid-eighteenth century, many gentlemen began to take an affectionate interest in the day-to-day care of their infants, and both Sir Charles's brothers-in-law reflect this type of fatherly interest, providing other examples in the novel of tenderized patriarchy.[45] In the earlier decades of this century, most gentlemen, as in the case of Sir Thomas, only expressed a distanced interest in their children's overall welfare. Lord L. and Lord G. each take a more intimate concern in their babies' lives. As Charlotte tells Miss Selby, Lord L. "is never out either of [his wife's] chamber, or the nursery" (3:261), a definite departure from the patriarchal system in which "men positively avoided their infant children."[46] Lord G. goes a step further when he inadvertently stumbles upon his wife nursing their newborn daughter. Lady G. describes his reaction:

> Never was man in greater rapture. For Lady Gertrude [his mother] had taught him to wish that a mother would *be* a mother: He threw himself at my feet, clasping me and the little varlet together in his arms. Brute! said I, will you smother my Harriet—I was half ashamed of my tenderness—Dear-est, dear-est, dear-est Lady G.—Shaking his head between every *dear* and *est*, every muscle of his face working; how you transport me!—Never never, never, saw I so delightful a sight! Let me, let me, let me (every emphatic word repeated three times at least) behold again the dear sight. (3:403)

After Lord G.'s request is granted, "He rose, took the little thing from [his wife], kissed its forehead, its cheeks, its lips, its little pudsey hands, first one, then the other; gave it again to [her] arms; took it again; and again resigned it to [Lady G.]" (3:403). Because of Lord G.'s loving interest in his wife and child, an interest that slowly changes her behaviour over the course of the novel, Charlotte's character is transformed. Having married her husband "with indifference" in order to dominate him by making him "foam, fume, fret, and execrate the hour that he first beheld [her] face" (3:402), she begins her "reformation" when she learns that he "could be stout" (2:518). As she admits, however, this initial reformation is still coloured by her own "levity" towards her husband (2:518). Her transformation is completed when her husband's sentiment teaches her that she "has a new lesson to learn" (3:404): submissiveness to his generous will.[47] As Beasley notes, Charlotte had

45 Houlbrooke, 135.

46 Trumbach, 238.

47 Albert J. Rivero analyses this scene from a different perspective, provocatively comparing it to Clementina's bleeding scene (2:190–94) to argue that "Lady G.'s scene of

been "the novel's principal challenge to the authority that its hero represents."[48] This challenge is deflected by her husband's deployment of tenderness, which transforms her duty to be a good wife into her obligation to return his love through submission. As Harriet exclaims, after "such a Setting-out in matrimony; who would have expected Charlotte to make such a wife, mother, nurse!" (3:460).

While John Dussinger interprets Sir Charles's behaviour throughout the novel as "aton[ing] for the evils of the old patriarchal system,"[49] it is more accurate to say that Sir Charles saves the old system from its own abuses. As Mark Kinkead-Weekes argues, Richardson "sought to place beside his heroines a picture of male virtue; [a hero] in positive action, no longer on the defensive as Pamela and Clarissa had been; and given the scope and freedom of 'high life,' high manners, affluence, and the free choice of lifestyle."[50] In contrast to the juridical solution to challenges to patriarchal authority adopted by Parliament, Richardson offers Sir Charles as a paragon of male virtue whose attitudes and actions involving father-child relationships are those that the author suggests are more likely to succeed in clarifying masculine and feminine roles in the mid-eighteenth-century family. As the above analysis shows, Sir Charles believes that a child owes his or her father respect and obedience, but he also insists that these qualities should be exacted through close relationships based on love between the respective parties. *The History of Sir Charles Grandison* stands as an important marker in the eighteenth-century evolution towards a rearrangement of patriarchy, providing a mirror whereby patriarchs can more tenderly exercise their authority by adopting a new masculinity based upon the rule of the heart. Through a rule couched in sentiment, suggests *Sir Charles Grandison*, anxieties concerning men's ability to control their wives and children can be alleviated, as dependents are obliged to obey their fathers, guardians, and husbands out of the powerful bonds of affection.

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breastfeeding, suffused with sexuality, depicts Lord G. both as voyeuristic lecher and as reverent husband, leading a reader to wonder whether Lady G.'s newly discovered love and respect for him stem from her discovery that her seemingly meek husband is a rake at heart."'Representing Clementina: 'Unnatural' Romance and the Ending of *Sir Charles Grandison*," in *New Essays on Samuel Richardson*, 219–21.

48 Beasley, 48.

49 John A. Dussinger, "Love and Consanguinity in Richardson's Novels," *SEL* 24 (1984), 522.

50 Kinkead-Weekes, 282.