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Experiences of Illegitimacy in England, 1660-1834

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Thesis Summary

This thesis examines attitudes towards individuals who were born illegitimate in England between the Restoration in 1660 and the New Poor Law of 1834. It explores the impact of illegitimacy on individuals' experiences of family and social life, marriage and occupational opportunities, and sense of identity. This thesis demonstrates that illegitimacy did have a negative impact, but that this was not absolute. The stigma of illegitimacy operated along a spectrum, varying according to the type of parental relationship, the child's gender and, most importantly, the family's socio-economic status. Socio-economic status became more significant as an arbiter of attitudes towards the end of the period.

This project uses a range of qualitative evidence - correspondence, life-writing, poor law records, novels, legal and religious tracts, and newspapers - to examine the impact of illegitimacy across the entire life-cycle, moving away from previous historiographical emphasis on unmarried parenthood, birth and infancy. This approach adds nuance to a field dominated by poor law and Foundling Hospital evidence, and prioritises material written by illegitimate individuals themselves. This thesis also has resonance for historical understanding of wider aspects of long-eighteenth-century society, such as the nature of parenthood, family, gender, or emotion, and the operation of systems of classification and 'othering'. This thesis demonstrates that definitions of parenthood and family were flexible enough to include illegitimate relationships. The effect of illegitimacy on marital and occupational opportunities indicates how systems of patronage and familial alliance operated in this period, as well as the importance of inheritance, birth or familial connection as measures of social status. Finally, it questions the assumption that condemnation of illicit sex led to community exclusion of the illegitimate child, and calls for more nuanced understandings of how historians measure and define shame and stigma.

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Note on the Text

The original spelling and punctuation in primary sources has been kept. Contractions have been expanded using square brackets only when the meaning of the sentence is unclear. Source material written in French has been quoted in English, with the original text preserved in the footnotes. All translations are the work of the author.

Dates occurring prior to the adoption of the Gregorian calendar in 1752 have been changed to reflect the start of the year on 1 January, rather than 25 March.

Throughout I use the word 'illegitimate' as both an adjective and noun, for the ease of the reader. No pejorative meaning is intended. Any other synonyms such as 'bastard' or 'natural' appear according to contemporary usage, reflecting the specific meanings that these terms had in long-eighteenth-century England. Many of the individuals here had multiple given names and surnames, and family members often shared the same name. Individuals are therefore referred to by first name or surname as appropriate to the context to ensure that the meaning remains intelligible to the reader.

List of Abbreviations

Frequently cited archive collections are identified using the following abbreviations. All other sources are cited in full in the first instance of each chapter.

BALS	Barnsley Archives and Local Studies
BIA	Borthwick Institute for Archives, York
BL	British Library
CWAC	City of Westminster Archives Centre
ESRO	East Sussex Record Office
ERO	Essex Record Office
HALS	Hampshire Archives and Local Studies
HHL	Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California
KU	Keele University Special Collections and Archives
KHLC	Kent History and Library Centre
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
LSU	Louisiana State University
NAW	Northumberland Archives, Woodhorn
NRO	Norfolk Record Office
SA	Shropshire Archives
SALS	Somerset Archives and Local Studies
TLS	The Linnean Society
TNA	The National Archives
TWA	Tyne and Wear Archives
USSC	The University of Sheffield Special Collections
WSRO	West Sussex Record Office
WSHC	Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre

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Introduction

Why do you make such frequent reflections upon your Birth, you are not responsible for the circumstances under which you were born, nor will any liberal person reflect upon you on account thereof; it has been the Lot of many a good man... to have been born the Son of one woman not married to his Father.¹

[A] really illuminating consideration of illegitimacy and its place in the past history of various societies and cultures ought perhaps to take as its theme the attitude to bastards, literary and otherwise, their treatment and their place in society and especially in the family - if the evidence could only be recovered.²

A letter written by baronet Sir John Delaval to his illegitimate nephew Frank in 1780 led me to the subject of this thesis. Frank was lucky: he was financially comfortable and supported by his paternal family. Despite this, his illegitimacy mattered to him. This letter raised many questions that reference to the existing historiography could not answer. What did illegitimacy mean in eighteenth-century England? How did it feel to be illegitimate, and what effect did it have on identity and self-esteem across the life-cycle? Were illegitimate individuals stigmatised, and how was stigma manifest? Were such attitudes hegemonic, or was Sir John right to dismiss intolerance as the purview of an illiberal few? This thesis demonstrates that it is possible to answer these questions, and that evidence of illegitimate experience can be recovered, contrary to dominant historiographical opinion.³ This evidence can

¹ NAW: 2DE/42/5, Sir John Delaval to Frank Delaval, 23 February 1780.

² Peter Laslett, 'Introduction: Comparing Illegitimacy Over Time and Between Cultures', in Peter Laslett, Karla Oosterveen and Richard M. Smith (eds), *Bastardy and its Comparative History* (London, 1980), pp. 3-4.

³ Laslett's view is shared by most works on the subject: Richard Adair, *Courtship, Illegitimacy and Marriage in Early Modern England* (Manchester, 1996), pp. 89-90; David Levine and Keith Wrightson, 'The Social Context of Illegitimacy in Early Modern England', in Peter Laslett, Karla Oosterveen and Richard M. Smith (eds), *Bastardy and its Comparative History* (London, 1980), p. 167; Alan Macfarlane, 'Illegitimacy and Illegitimates in English History', in Peter Laslett, Karla Oosterveen and Richard M. Smith (eds), *Bastardy and its Comparative History* (London, 1980), p. 85; Barry Reay, 'Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century England: the Social

also answer wider questions about the boundaries of familial belonging, the shame associated with extra-marital sex, and structures of social and cultural exclusion in long-eighteenth-century England.

Definitions and Argument

Illegitimacy, or the state of being born to parents who were not legally married, was a legal, social and cultural category in eighteenth-century England. An illegitimate individual was 'nullius filius', the child of nobody. They had no legal family except their mother, and no right to inherit paternal property, name or settlement.⁴ Illegitimates suffered no other legal punishment, but their parents could be subject to church court sanctions for extra-marital sex or imprisoned for refusing to pay child maintenance.⁵ Illegitimates were a distinct and growing presence in eighteenth-century society. The illegitimacy ratio, the proportion of births marked illegitimate in parish registers, increased threefold over the century.⁶ By 1800, 6.3 percent of all registered births were illegitimate, or 25 percent of first births, a figure that is almost certainly an underestimate.⁷ This thesis moves away from historiographical emphasis on unmarried parents or the causes of demographic change to analyse the

Context of Illegitimacy in Rural Kent', *Rural History* 1.2 (1990), p. 225; David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford, 1999), p. 74.

⁴ William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England. In four books. By William Blackstone, Esq. Solicitor General to Her Majesty* (4th edn, Oxford, 1770), vol. 1, p. 459; vol. 2, pp. 247-9. These laws remained constant until the twentieth century, see amendments under the 1926 English Legitimacy Act and 1987 Family Reform Act discussed in Ginger Frost, *Illegitimacy in English Law and Society, 1860-1930* (Manchester, 2016), pp. 146-78.

⁵ Martin Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage in England, 1570-1640* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 152, 238-81; Richard Burn, *Ecclesiastical Law. By Richard Burn, L.L.D. Chancellor of the Diocese of Carlisle, and Vicar of Orton, in Westmorland* (2nd edn, London, 1767), vol. 1, pp. 118-9; Blackstone, *Commentaries*, vol. 4, p. 65.

⁶ Peter Laslett and Karla Oosterveen, 'Long-Term Trends in Bastardy in England: A Study of the Illegitimacy Figures in the Parish Registers and in the Reports of the Registrar General, 1591-1960', *Population Studies* 27.2 (1973), p. 267. For problems with the calculation of the illegitimacy ratio see Adair, *Courtship*, pp. 25-8, 32-47.

⁷ E.A. Wrigley, 'Marriage, Fertility and Population Growth in Eighteenth-Century England', in R.B. Outhwaite (ed.), *Marriage and Society: Studies in the Social History of Marriage* (New York, 1982), p. 162. This equates to over 1.5 million individuals born between 1700 and 1824 (6 percent of total births of 25,266,348). Totals are calculated from E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield, *The Population History of England, 1541-1871: A Reconstruction*, (London, 1989 (originally 1981)), p. 167. For an analysis of the extent of under-recording see Steven King, 'The Bastardy Prone Sub-society Again: Bastards and Their Fathers and Mothers in Lancashire, Wiltshire, and Somerset, 1800-1840', in Alys Levene, Thomas Nutt and Samantha Williams (eds), *Illegitimacy in Britain, 1700-1920* (Basingstoke, 2005), pp. 68, 72-5.

experience of these illegitimate individuals, their interaction with families and communities, and contemporary perceptions of illegitimacy as an abstract concept. This thesis makes three main arguments. Firstly, illegitimates could be incorporated into normative family relationships of reciprocity, proximity and instrumentality. Unmarried parenthood could be included within ideals of masculine or feminine identity, and its association with shame and secrecy was more complex than historians have hitherto suggested. Secondly, illegitimacy did have a negative social and economic effect. Illegitimates experienced reduced marriage and occupational opportunities, some stigma, and social exclusion across the life-cycle. However, there was a spectrum of exclusion that was heavily dependent on socio-economic status, the type of parental relationship and the gender of the child. Most families and communities reacted with pragmatism. Illegitimacy was not ideal, but there was a widespread belief that illegitimates had some entitlement to financial support and familial contact. Finally, attitudes towards middling and elite illegitimates became more tolerant over the century. Parents and families became less preoccupied with illegitimacy as a sin, and developing concepts of sensibility and human potential facilitated perception of illegitimates as innocent and non-threatening. However, long-standing associations of illegitimacy with social disorder remained in their association with poverty and chargeability on the state. Illegitimates were tolerated as long as they did not seek equality, limiting their agency and ultimately facilitating their continued legal exclusion.

The central definition of illegitimacy within this thesis is all those who were identified as illegitimate in the sources, as what mattered most was not legal truth but the perception of family and community.⁸ Illegitimacy was both a social and legal category, imposed according to definitions of marriage. Early research argued that there was a widespread culture of informal marriage, the children of which were considered legitimate by communities but illegitimate under the law.⁹ Marriage was

⁸ This method is suggested in: Laslett, 'Introduction', p. 10; Alysa Levene, Thomas Nutt and Samantha Williams, 'Introduction', in Alysa Levene, Thomas Nutt and Samantha Williams (eds), *Illegitimacy in Britain, 1700-1920* (Basingstoke, 2005), p. 5.

⁹ John R. Gillis, *For Better, For Worse: British Marriages, 1600 to the Present* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 84, 99, 206-8; R.B. Outhwaite, *Clandestine Marriage in England, 1500-1850* (London, 1995); Anthea Newman, 'An Evaluation of Bastardy Recordings in an East Kent Parish', in Peter Laslett, Karla Oosterveen and Richard M. Smith (eds), *Bastardy and its Comparative History* (London, 1980), pp. 141-57; Belinda Meteyard, 'Illegitimacy and Marriage in Eighteenth-

also considered to be a process, with promises to marry solemnised at a later date by a church ceremony. This suggested that the acceptable timing of a sexual relationship was flexible.¹⁰ However, Probert demonstrated that most couples complied with Anglican marriage stipulations both before and after the 1753 Clandestine Marriages Act, and that informal marriages were not considered legitimate by couples or communities. There was considerable public demand for legal proof of marriage, and suspicion of those who did not comply.¹¹ Several parish studies found no noticeable jump in illegitimacy ratios after 1753, suggesting no significant difference between popular and legal definitions of marriage.¹² Open cohabitation was similarly rare, with estimates of less than one percent now suggested from bastardy depositions and parish registers. Children of cohabiting couples were not necessarily considered legitimate, nor experienced more stable home lives than other illegitimates.¹³ Bigamy was more common, in itself suggesting popular preference for a legal marriage ceremony over cohabitation.¹⁴ However, if undetected, such

Century England,' *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 10.3 (1980), pp. 479-89. For a useful overview of the historiography see Samantha Williams, "'They lived together as man and wife': Plebeian Cohabitation, Illegitimacy, and Broken Relationships in London, 1700-1840', in Rebecca Probert (ed.), *Cohabitation and Non-Marital Births in England and Wales, 1600-2012* (Basingstoke, 2004), pp. 65-79.

¹⁰ R.M. Smith, 'Marriage Processes in the English Past: Some Continuities', in Lloyd Bonfield, Richard M. Smith and Keith Wrightson (eds), *The World We Have Gained: Histories of Population and Social Structure* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 43-99.

¹¹ Rebecca Probert, *Marriage Law and Practice in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 118-22. Martin Ingram similarly found that church solemnisation was considered the key determinant of marriage, and that other traditions such as spousals occurred in addition to, not instead of, a church ceremony, Ingram, *Church Courts*, pp. 132-3.

¹² John Black, 'Illegitimacy and the Urban Poor in London, 1740-1830', Ph.D. thesis (Royal Holloway, University of London, 2000), p. 268; Adair, *Courtship*, pp. 46, 142. See also the debate between Belinda Meteyard and Lawrence Stone: Meteyard, 'Illegitimacy and Marriage'; Lawrence Stone, 'Illegitimacy in Eighteenth-Century England', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 10 (1980), pp. 507-9, and Meteyard's reply in the same volume, pp. 511-14.

¹³ Early estimates of cohabitation rates were closer to 20 percent. See: Anna Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class* (Berkeley, 1995), pp. 48-50; Tanya Evans, 'Unfortunate Objects': Lone Mothers in Eighteenth-Century London (Basingstoke, 2005), p. 37. For the revised much lower figures see: Probert, *Marriage Law*, pp. 100-1, 250-4; Nicholas Rogers, 'Carnal Knowledge: Illegitimacy in Eighteenth-Century Westminster', *Journal of Social History* 23 (1989), pp. 355, 368; Randolph Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution. Volume One: Heterosexuality and the Third Gender in Enlightenment London* (Chicago, 1998), pp. 245, 261; King, 'The Bastardy Prone Sub-society Again', p. 82; Black, 'Illegitimacy and the Urban Poor', pp. 259-61. For problems in defining cohabitation and its generally temporary nature see Rebecca Probert, 'Introduction', in Rebecca Probert (ed.), *Cohabitation and Non-Marital Births in England and Wales, 1600-2012* (Basingstoke, 2004), pp. 4-5.

¹⁴ Bernard Capp, 'Bigamous Marriage in Early Modern England', *Historical Journal* 52.3 (2009), pp. 537-56; Pamela Sharpe, 'Bigamy among the Labouring Poor in Essex, 1754-1857', *Local*

children would appear legally and socially legitimate and outside the bounds of this study.

Most of the illegitimates discussed in this study were the children of relationships between two single people (fornication), or adulterous males and their unmarried partners. This is proportionate with most of the relationships reported in parish registers, poor law and church court records. Incest and female adultery were uncommon, or at least more difficult to prove. Any child born during a marriage was presumed to be the husband's legitimate offspring unless non-access could be demonstrated.¹⁵ The children of adulterous women have been included here only if they were not accepted by the husband or if suspected illegitimacy affected attitudes towards them.¹⁶ Pre-nuptial pregnancies, although common, are similarly not included as these children were legally legitimate if born after their parents' marriage.¹⁷ The simple legal categorisations of fornication and adultery obscure a variety of human relationships. Casual, master-servant, pre-marital, cohabitational and kept mistress relationships all feature here, as each produced a slightly different dynamic for the child's upbringing, relationship with parents and family, and reception in the community. Cases of prostitution and sexual assault are not identified as separate categories due to the difficulty of defining them.¹⁸ These circumstances were likely important in how both parents and children were treated, but there is insufficient evidence to make this claim. Prostitution and assault are rarely mentioned in poor law documents, and the subjective and one-sided nature of

Historian 24.3 (1994), pp. 139-44. I have only been able to find one example of bigamy with sufficient qualitative evidence, the More family of Shropshire.

¹⁵ For the proportions of fornication, adultery and incest in bastardy depositions and church court prosecutions, see: Rogers, 'Carnal Knowledge', p. 357; Black, 'Illegitimacy and the Urban Poor', pp. 90-101, 222-8; Ingram, *Church Courts*, pp. 245-60. Non-access was defined as either the husband's physical incapacity or absence from the country, Burn, *Ecclesiastical Law*, vol. 1, pp. 108-9. For the ambiguity of non-access see R.H. Helmholz, *Canon Law and the Law of England* (London, 1987), pp. 196-7.

¹⁶ I have also included George, 3rd Earl of Orford, as his suspected adulterine paternity affected the Walpole family's treatment of him, see chapter 2, pp. 136-7.

¹⁷ P.E.H. Hair, 'Bridal Pregnancy in Rural England in Earlier Centuries', *Population Studies* 20.2 (1966), pp. 233-43.

¹⁸ This is in contrast to early works which emphasised prostitution and exploitation as the main causes of illegitimacy, see in particular: Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (London, 1977), pp. 532, 572, 617; Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution*, pp. 69-72, 428. For the difficulties in defining prostitution as an occupation versus other types of sexual labour or as a temporary means of making shift see Judith R. Walkowitz, 'The Politics of Prostitution and Sexual Labour', *History Workshop Journal* 82 (2016), pp. 188-98.

sources such as life-writing make it difficult to judge whether an assault took place. Many relationships were exploitative in some way, reflecting financial and social gender inequalities. The relationship between housekeeper Sally Bradford and Syllas Neville, her employer and father of her children, was in some ways exploitative. She was financially dependent on him and he attempted to control her movements and social contacts. But, the individuals involved did not consider this relationship exploitative. Sally had considerable emotional leverage, threatening to leave Syllas or commit suicide if he did not agree to her demands, including maintenance for her child from an earlier relationship.¹⁹ Each relationship dynamic has been assessed individually, rather than categorised according to modern standards.

There are also sometimes difficulties in identifying illegitimates' parentage, particularly paternity. I rely on contemporaries' own perception of paternity, to the extent that it was known. Parental, familial and community attitudes depended on perceptions of a child's biological relatedness. I use the term 'acknowledgement' to mean acceptance of a biological connection or responsibility for a child, in short any relationship above complete repudiation or abandonment. Acknowledgement was not necessarily public, but could range from the bestowal of a surname, inclusion within the legitimate household, or financial maintenance. Contemporaries used 'acknowledgement' to mean acceptance of paternity. Diarist Joseph Farington distinguished between the Duke of Clarence's relationship with his unrelated illegitimate stepchildren and his illegitimate children as 'The Duke is equally kind to the Children [that his mistress Mrs Jordan] had before she lived with him as to those which He acknowledges'.²⁰ An illegitimate's 'parent' or 'sibling' refers to a biological relationship that was believed to exist by at least one party: the illegitimate individual, their family, or the state. Disagreements over the provability of these relationships will be explored as one explanation for the treatment of illegitimates.

¹⁹ *The Diary of Syllas Neville, 1767-1788*, ed. Bazil Cozens-Hardy (London, 1950), pp. 85, 87-8, 113, 166.

²⁰ *The Diary of Joseph Farington*, ed. Kenneth Garlick, Angus D. Macintyre, Kathryn Cave and Evelyn Newby, (New Haven, 1978-1998), vol. 4, p. 1281, 22 September 1799. Similar usage appears in other manuscript sources. Gentleman Charles Percy wrote of 'the propriety of [putative father Henry de Ros] acknowledging his relationship to the child' of Harriet Spencer, KU: SC 12/2, Charles Percy to Ralph Sneyd, [1818]. A Mrs Barnard wrote to politician John Wilkes seeking his charity for the illegitimate daughter of the Duke of St Albans, 'the Duke acknowledged her for his child and promised to do something for Her', BL: Add Mss. 30873/166, Mrs Barnard to John Wilkes, 18 February 1789.

This study examines illegitimate experience in England. Although the illegitimacy ratio increased across Europe, actual incidence varied regionally.²¹ Marriage and inheritance laws, poor law provision and religious discipline differed in each country. Scotland, for example, had different systems of poor law and kirk discipline, separate marriage laws and inheritance practices.²² England was also unique in Europe in that civil law differed from canon law; a child born illegitimate in England could not become legitimate if their parents later married.²³ Illegitimacy was lifelong and immutable, overturned only if parents could prove a prior marriage. Some of the case studies in this thesis, namely James Boswell, James Burn, Syllas Neville and the Bentham family, lived periodically in Scotland, Ireland, England and continental Europe. Each, however, spent the majority of their adulthood in England or were living there when their children were born. They socialised with and echoed the mores of English individuals, and were acutely aware of the English laws, to the extent that they modified their behaviour to suit them.²⁴ I will indicate cases where local circumstances were significant, but the primary aim is to delineate broader patterns of illegitimate experience in eighteenth-century English society.

The chronological boundaries of this study are also significant. 1660 marked the onset of the longest continual increase in illegitimate births in the parish register era lasting until 1810, raising questions about whether greater incidence led to toleration (figure 1). There were also legislative changes. The 1836 Births and Deaths Registration Act marked a watershed in historians' ability to study illegitimacy, and

²¹ Laslett, 'Introduction', p. 12; Edward Shorter, John Knodel and Etienne Van De Walle, 'The Decline of Non-Marital Fertility in Europe, 1880-1940', *Population Studies* 25.3 (1971), pp. 376-7, 387. Scotland is one exception, Adair, *Courtship*, pp. 21-2.

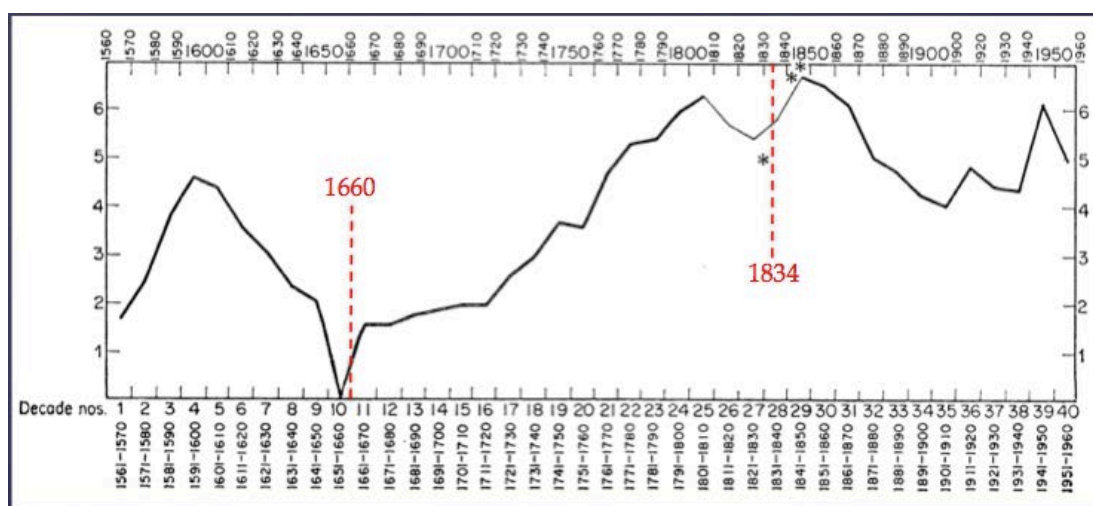
²² Probert, *Marriage Law*, pp. 19, 75-81, 235-6. The range of literature on Scottish sexual practices and illegitimacy in this period includes: Rosalind Mitchison and Leah Leneman, *Sexuality and Social Control: Scotland 1660-1780* (Oxford, 1989); Andrew Blaikie, *Illegitimacy, Sex and Society: Northeast Scotland, 1750-1900* (Oxford, 1993); Deborah Symonds, 'Reconstructing Rural Infanticide in Eighteenth-Century Scotland', *Journal of Women's History* 10 (1998), pp. 63-84; Christopher Smout, 'Aspects of Sexual Behaviour in Nineteenth-Century Scotland', in Peter Laslett, Karla Oosterveen and Richard M. Smith (eds), *Bastardy and its Comparative History* (London, 1980), pp. 192-216.

²³ Burn, *Ecclesiastical Law*, vol. 1, p. 110; Blackstone, *Commentaries*, vol. 1, p. 455; Macfarlane, 'Illegitimacy and Illegitimates', p. 73. In France illegitimate children could be legitimated by royal pardon or legally adopted, see Matthew Gerber, *Bastards: Politics, Family and Law in Early Modern France* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 4, 63, 108-11.

²⁴ Syllas Neville, for instance had his children baptised in England at considerable expense and effort, and James Boswell remarked on the relative sexual freedom he enjoyed in England. *The Diary of Syllas Neville, 1767-1788*, ed. Basil Cozens-Hardy (London, 1950), pp. 213-4; *Boswell's London Journal, 1762-63*, ed. F.A. Pottle (London, 1950), p. 120.

in contemporary desire to identify and quantify illegitimate births.²⁵ The 1660 Restoration resumed church court proceedings and parish registration, and ended the harsher penalties for extra-marital sex during the Interregnum. In 1834, the endpoint of this study, the New Poor Law drastically changed the rights of illegitimates and their mothers to paternal maintenance and parish relief. Although Cody and Nutt in particular argued that the 1834 reforms reflected changing contemporary notions of parental responsibility and gendered sexual authority, it is unclear whether it reflected changing perceptions of illegitimates themselves.²⁶ This thesis aims to integrate illegitimate experience into wider cultural, economic and demographic changes over the long eighteenth century. Later chapters will suggest reasons for the drastic changes of the 1834 New Poor Law, and to determine the extent to which this echoed shifting perceptions of illegitimates in society as a whole.

Figure 1: The illegitimacy ratio (illegitimate births as percentage of registered baptisms)²⁷



²⁵ For the complexities of enforcing the act see R.W. Ambler, 'Civil Registration and Baptism: Popular Perceptions of the 1836 Act for Registering Births, Deaths and Marriages', *Local Population Studies* 39 (1987), pp. 24-31.

²⁶ Lisa Forman Cody, 'The Politics of Illegitimacy in an Age of Reform: Women, Reproduction and Political Economy in England's New Poor Law of 1834', *Journal of Women's History* 11.4 (2000) pp. 131-50; Thomas Nutt, 'Illegitimacy, Paternal Financial Responsibility, and the 1834 Poor Law Commission Report: the Myth of the Old Poor Law and the Making of the New', *Economic History Review* 63.2 (2010), pp. 335-61. See also U.R.Q. Henriques, 'Bastardy and the New Poor Law', *Past & Present* 37 (1967), pp. 103-29.

²⁷ Adapted from Laslett and Oosterveen, 'Long-Term Trends', p. 260. Annotations are my own.

This chronology also reflects shifting mentalities and ideals of family life, class and gender identity. Sensibility and domesticity resulted in a society that supposedly valued emotional expression and idealised family life and childhood innocence. This shift has previously been seen as making illegitimacy less acceptable; libertinism declined as ideals of companionate marriage and emotionally involved fathers and husbands became mainstream.²⁸ Private virtue became key to public status, with adultery and unmarried parenthood increasingly condemned.²⁹ This trend does not, however, correlate with the rising illegitimacy ratio, and it is unclear whether illegitimate relationships could be included within these ideals. This thesis investigates whether these changing mentalities led to greater sympathy towards illegitimates, and the extent to which unmarried parenthood and illegitimate familial relationships were expressed within these wider discourses. The debate over the extent to which these ideals percolated across the socio-economic spectrum has particular implications for the extent to which illegitimacy was judged differently according to socio-economic background.³⁰

There are some distinct aspects of eighteenth-century illegitimacy which are beyond the scope of this study. The first is race and the meaning of illegitimacy within an imperial context, primarily concerning the children of white colonial workers and women of colour. A handful of known mixed-race individuals were excluded from the primary source group as identified through archival searches.³¹ Legal and social definitions of illegitimacy differed in imperial contexts. For example, mixed-race children legitimate under Indian law were considered illegitimate by charities such as the Bengal Military Orphan Society, and Parliamentary debates on whether to allow mixed-race children citizenship combined issues of illegitimacy and race,

²⁸ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1790-1850* (London, 1987), pp. 321, 401-3; John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (2nd edn, New Haven, 2007), pp. 44-6, 57-8.

²⁹ Kate Retford, *The Art of Domestic Life: Family Portraiture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven, 2006), pp. 214, 230, 233; Margaret Hunt, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender and the Family in England, 1680-1780* (Berkeley, 1996), pp. 196-9, 205-7.

³⁰ Retford and Bailey consider that ideals of sentimental parenthood were adopted by the labouring poor: Retford, *Art of Domestic Life*, pp. 232-3; Joanne Bailey, *Parenting in England, 1760-1830: Emotion, Identity, and Generation* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 6, 12, 45-7, 148, 150, 247. This is contested by Patricia Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children in England, 1580-1800* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 195-7.

³¹ For the methodology of the archival source selection, see below, p. 32. I found at least four individuals who were definitely mixed race. All the individuals in this study were of white, largely British origin as far as it was possible for me to determine.

noting, '[t]hey are Europeans in the eyes of society; natives in the eye of the law... If born in wedlock, they are British subjects; but Europeans are very seldom married to Hindoos'.³² As Ghosh, Filor and others have demonstrated, the differing structures of imperial power and geographical distance had distinct impacts on children's experience of family life, sense of identity and future social status.³³ The extent to which race, rather than illegitimacy, influenced stigma requires separate analysis elsewhere.

Illegitimacy due to religious difference will also not be subject to detailed analysis. Theoretically, the children of couples who had not undergone an Anglican marriage ceremony were legally illegitimate, but there is very little evidence of this being enforced in practice. Probert found that most non-Anglicans conformed to the Anglican ceremony to ensure their marriages were legal.³⁴ Those who refused Anglican marriage would be unlikely to baptise their children as Anglican, so their resulting absence from parish registers makes quantification difficult. It is also unclear whether nonconformists had stricter attitudes towards sexual morality.³⁵ Day's study of Wiltshire parishes indicated that Catholics and dissenters were much less likely to have illegitimate children, which she attributes to their 'greater commitment to their religion, and its doctrine of sexual purity'.³⁶ Although there is

³² Durba Ghosh, *Sex and the Family in Colonial India: The Making of Empire* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 228; *Report from the Select Committee on the Affairs of The East India Company; with Minutes of Evidence in Six Parts, and an appendix and index to Each* (House of Commons Papers, 1832), pp. 300-1.

³³ Ghosh, *Sex and the Family*; Sarah Pearsall, *Atlantic Families: Lives and Letters in the Later Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 2008), pp. 215-30; Deborah Cohen, *Family Secrets: Living with Shame from the Victorians to the Present Day* (London, 2013), pp. 3-37; Margot Finn, 'The Barlow Bastards: Romance Comes Home from the Empire', in Margot Finn, Michael Lobban and Jenny Bourne Taylor (eds), *Legitimacy and Illegitimacy in Nineteenth-Century Law, Literature and History* (Basingstoke, 2010), pp. 25-47; Ellen Filor, "'He is hardened to the climate & a little bleached by it's [sic] influence": Imperial Childhoods in Scotland and Madras, c. 1800-1830', in Simon Sleight and Shirleene Robinson (eds), *Children, Childhood and Youth in the British World* (Basingstoke, 2016), pp. 77-91. For the very different Australian colonial context see Tanya Evans, 'Secrets and Lies: The Radical Potential of Family History', *History Workshop Journal* 71 (2011), pp. 49-73.

³⁴ Although Quaker and Jewish couples tended to marry according to their own rites, the numbers doing so were very small: Probert, *Marriage Law*, pp. 163-5; Adair, *Courtship*, pp. 117-9.

³⁵ Clark, *Struggle for the Breeches*, pp. 92-105, 118.

³⁶ Cathy Day, *Wiltshire Marriage Patterns 1754-1914: Geographical Mobility, Cousin Marriage and Illegitimacy* (Cambridge, 2013); pp. 197-9. Illegitimacy was rare among Protestant nonconformists in colonial America, see Robert V. Wells, 'Illegitimacy and Bridal Pregnancy in Colonial America', in Peter Laslett, Karla Oosterveen and Richard M. Smith (eds), *Bastardy*

some evidence of adultery among Quakers, lack of evidence of illegitimacy among these groups makes it impossible to make an informed judgement about their attitudes.³⁷

This thesis also does not focus on infanticide or child abandonment, partly because excellent research on these topics already exists. We know much about the incidence of infanticide and abandonment, and parental circumstances and motivations.³⁸ The operation of the London Foundling Hospital as a charity, the rhetoric of petitions for abandonment, and foundling care have all been studied.³⁹ In recent years, much work has also been done on the cultural contexts of abandonment and infanticide.⁴⁰ This scholarship does not, however, address the experience of the majority of illegitimate children who were brought up in families or communities, and risks overemphasising abandonment and infanticide as the majority experience due to the richness of the sources. Demographic evidence suggests that abandonment or infanticide were uncommon. The Foundling Hospital admitted over 18,000 children between 1741 and 1800, but this comprised only 0.2 percent of total baptisms in

and its Comparative History (London, 1980), pp. 349-61. In contrast, Clark argues that English Protestant nonconformists had similarly high levels of illegitimacy to Anglicans, Clark, *Struggle for the Breeches*, p. 107.

³⁷ See Sally Holloway, *Romantic Love in Words and Objects during Courtship and Adultery, c. 1730 to 1830*, Ph.D. thesis (Royal Holloway, University of London, 2013), pp. 123-141, 166-8. Holloway suggests that the shame of adultery was more acute in small, endogamous religious communities. I found only one non-Anglican example, Anthony Errington, who was Catholic. His attitude towards his illegitimate daughter echoed those of non-Anglicans and he actually rarely discusses his religion, Anthony Errington, *Coals on Rails, or, The Reason of My Wrioughting* ed. P.E.H. Hair (Liverpool, 1988).

³⁸ Mark Jackson, *New-born Child Murder: Women, Illegitimacy and the Courts in Eighteenth-Century England* (Manchester, 1996); Keith Wrightson, 'Infanticide in Early Seventeenth-Century England', *Local Population Studies* 15 (1975), pp. 10-22; Valerie Fildes, 'Maternal Feelings Re-assessed: Child Abandonment and Neglect in London and Westminster, 1550-1800', in Valerie Fildes (ed.), *Women as Mothers in Pre-Industrial England: Essays in Memory of Dorothy McLaren* (London, 1990), pp. 139-79; Adrian Wilson, 'Illegitimacy and its Implications in Mid-Eighteenth-Century London; the Evidence of the Foundling Hospital', *Continuity and Change* 4 (1989), pp. 103-64.

³⁹ Ruth McClure, *Coram's Children: The London Foundling Hospital in the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven, 1981); Tanya Evans, 'Unfortunate Objects'; Alys Levene, *Childcare, Health and Mortality at the London Foundling Hospital, 1741-1800* (Manchester, 2007).

⁴⁰ Deborah A. Symonds, *Weep Not for Me: Women, Ballads, and Infanticide in Early Modern Scotland* (University Park, PA., 1997); Marilyn Francus, *Monstrous Motherhood: Eighteenth-Century Culture and the Ideology of Domesticity* (Baltimore, 2012); Lisa Zunshine, *Bastards and Foundlings: Illegitimacy in Eighteenth-Century England* (Columbus, 2005).

England in this period, and only 3.8 percent of illegitimate baptisms.⁴¹ Even smaller numbers were abandoned in the community.⁴² Infanticide was similarly rare, with fewer than three cases per year tried in regional assize courts.⁴³ Under-reporting is unlikely; Gowing has argued persuasively that community surveillance of unmarried women made pregnancy hard to conceal.⁴⁴ It is also debatable whether all cases of abandonment and infanticide concerned illegitimate children. As the infanticide statute applied only to illegitimates and required concealment of the birth, there may have been many unrecognised instances of legitimate infant homicide.⁴⁵ Alys Levene has argued that as many as a third of foundlings admitted to the Foundling Hospital were legitimate.⁴⁶ Illegitimacy was not a requirement for admission until 1801, and poverty, rather than legitimacy, seems to have been the decisive factor.⁴⁷ My focus on illegitimates who were not abandoned or killed indicates the full range of illegitimate experience, and analysis of the alternatives available to parents provides crucial context for parental actions.

⁴¹ The total number of baptisms in England between 1750-99 was 10,258,562. The average illegitimacy ratio for that period was 4.78 percent, giving a rough estimate of 490,359 illegitimate baptisms. The figure of 18,500 foundlings comprises 0.2 percent of total baptisms and 3.8 percent of total illegitimate baptisms. This calculation is based on figures from Evans, *'Unfortunate Objects'*, p. 67; Levene, *Childcare, Health and Mortality*, p. 1; Wilson, *'Illegitimacy and its Implications'*, p. 110; Wrigley and Schofield, *Population History*, p. 167; Laslett and Oosterveen, *'Long-Term Trends'*, p. 267. This is of course dependent on the accuracy of parish registers and excludes an unknown number of children never baptised or whose illegitimacy was not recorded accurately.

⁴² Adair found only 27 foundlings in the parish registers of 25 parishes between 1700 and 1750, Adair, *Courtship*, pp. 34-5. Other studies have estimated the number of foundlings at fewer than 10 percent of all London baptisms, see: Wilson, *'Illegitimacy and its implications'*, pp. 104, 136; Levene, *Childcare, Health and Mortality*, p. 41.

⁴³ Jackson found three cases per year in the Northern Assize Circuit between 1720 and 1799 and Malcolmson found two per year at the Old Bailey, 1730-74. Jackson, *New-Born Child Murder*, p. 29; R.W. Malcolmson, *'Infanticide in the Eighteenth Century'*, in J.S. Cockburn (ed.), *Crime in England, 1550-1800* (London, 1977), p. 191.

⁴⁴ Laura Gowing, *'Secret Births and Infanticide in Seventeenth-Century England'*, *Past & Present* 156 (1997), p. 92.

⁴⁵ 21 James I, cap. 27, *Act to prevent the destroying and murdering of bastard children*, 1624, cited in Macfarlane, *'Illegitimacy'*, p. 77. The act was in force until 1803. For the background to the act see Wrightson, *'Infanticide'*, p. 11. For the particular vulnerability of legitimate children to 'secret homicide' see Thomas R. Forbes, *'Deadly Parents: Child Homicide in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century England'*, *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 41.2 (1986), pp. 175-99.

⁴⁶ Alys Levene, *'The Origins of the Children of the London Foundling Hospital, 1741-1760: a Reconsideration'*, *Continuity and Change* 18.2 (2003), pp. 201-36. Levene's findings are supported by: Evans, *'Unfortunate Objects'*, pp. 12, 130-32; Fildes, *'Maternal Feelings'*, pp. 152-7; Adair, *Courtship*, pp. 212-3. Cf. Wilson, *'Illegitimacy and its Implications'*.

⁴⁷ Evans, *'Unfortunate Objects'*, pp. 12-13, 68-70. Economic motivations have also been emphasised for infanticide, Wrightson, *'Infanticide'*.

This thesis argues that contemporaries clearly distinguished between legitimate and illegitimate individuals. There was considerable community knowledge of the circumstances of conception and the legal status of the parents' relationship. Definitions of marriage were important, but variations in definition did not collapse the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate. Awareness of the flexibility of marriage opens up questions as to the consistency of illegitimacy identification, and whether or not there were gradations of illegitimacy. This thesis demonstrates that illegitimacy operated on a spectrum. Some extra-marital relationships were perceived as relatively more legitimate than others and their children relatively less problematic. Monogamy, professions of deep emotional connection or the inability to marry were all mitigating circumstances. Attitudes were not static, but shifted in response to demographic, economic and cultural change. It must also be noted that there was a 'dark figure' of illegitimates who left no historical trace. We cannot really know how many children were abandoned, kept secret and raised legitimate, died in infancy, or were aborted. Secrecy and the falsifying of identities were rampant, and it may be that I have only found those secrets that were badly kept. The existence of an unknown number of unacknowledged illegitimates does not, however, devalue this study. The study of individuals who left a historical trace provides contextual evidence of what it was like to be considered illegitimate in this period; their experience illuminates the boundaries of what could have been for the others.

Historiography

Early investigations into eighteenth-century illegitimacy were primarily demographic, seeking earlier precedents for a late-twentieth-century explosion of illegitimate births.⁴⁸ The first major work, published in 1980, analysed incidence across cultures, the socio-economic background of unmarried parents, and the causes of increasing rates.⁴⁹ Subsequent parish studies have provided considerable demographic data, but predominantly still focused on these three main research goals.⁵⁰ Varying explanations exist for the eighteenth-century increase. Shorter first

⁴⁸ Laslett and Oosterveen, 'Long-Term Trends'; Peter Laslett, *Family Life and Illicit Love in Earlier Generations* (Cambridge, 1979).

⁴⁹ Peter Laslett, Karla Oosterveen and Richard M. Smith (eds), *Bastardy and its Comparative History* (London, 1980).

⁵⁰ Adair, *Courtship*; J. Robin, 'Illegitimacy in Colyton, 1851-1881', *Continuity and Change* 2.2 (1987), pp. 307-42; Rogers, 'Carnal Knowledge'; Reay, 'Sexuality'; Grace Wyatt, 'Bastardy and

suggested a sexual revolution, in which individual pleasure was prioritised within a context of declining social control, urbanisation and mobility, resulting in more pre-marital sex amongst the lower classes.⁵¹ Stone argued that growing secularisation after 1660 removed the association of sex with sin and heralded a 'phase of permissiveness, even licence'.⁵² Trumbach connected a sexual revolution to a gender revolution, arguing that the rising illegitimacy ratio derived from a more aggressive male heterosexuality resulting in higher levels of prostitution and sexual exploitation.⁵³ Most recently, Dabhoiwala has argued that Enlightenment ideals of toleration resulted in acceptance of sexual freedom and privacy.⁵⁴ These works use the illegitimacy ratio as evidence of higher levels of extra-marital sex, but do not relate sexual freedom to the potential stigmatisation of illegitimacy.

Another explanation for the increasing ratio was that pre-marital sex had always been common, but that economic instability resulted in 'frustrated courtships'. Poverty or migration prevented couples from marrying and reduced the efficacy of communal pressure to do so.⁵⁵ Illegitimacy ratios varied regionally, suggesting that local economic factors were influential.⁵⁶ Recent analyses by Griffin and Goose have suggested somewhere between the sexual revolution and frustrated courtship arguments: that more permissive standards of sexual morality grew out of the changing gendered employment patterns of industrialising local economies. The

Pre-Nuptial Pregnancy in a Cheshire Town during the Eighteenth Century', *Local Population Studies* 49 (1994), pp. 38-50; Patricia Broomfield, 'Incidence and Attitudes: a View of Bastardy from Eighteenth-Century Rural North Staffordshire, c. 1750-1820', *Midland History* 28 (2002), pp. 80-98; Day, *Wiltshire Marriage Patterns*; Anna Christina Brueton, 'Illegitimacy in South Wales, 1660-1870', Ph.D. thesis (University of Leicester, 2015); Angela Muir, 'Illegitimacy in Eighteenth-Century Wales', *The Welsh History Review* 26.3 (2013), pp. 351-88.

⁵¹ Edward Shorter, 'Illegitimacy, Sexual Revolution, and Social Change in Modern Europe', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 2.2 (1971), pp. 237-72.

⁵² Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*, pp. 545, 621-3, 627-8.

⁵³ Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution*, pp. 3, 9, 15-16, 69, 72. For an alternative account of rising illegitimacy rates due to changes in the type, rather than amount, of sex individuals were having, see Tim Hitchcock, 'Redefining Sex in Eighteenth-Century England', *History Workshop Journal* 41 (1996), pp. 72-90.

⁵⁴ Faramerz Dabhoiwala, *The Origins of Sex: A History of the First Sexual Revolution* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 2, 80.

⁵⁵ Wrigley, 'Marriage, Fertility and Population Growth'; Louise A. Tilly, Joan W. Scott and Miriam Cohen, 'Women's Work and European Fertility Patterns', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 6.3 (1976), pp. 447-76; Cissie Fairchilds, 'Female Sexual Attitudes and the Rise of Illegitimacy: A Case Study', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 8.4 (1978), pp. 627-67; Rogers, 'Carnal Knowledge', pp. 365-9.

⁵⁶ Adair, *Courtship*, pp. 25, 52-64; Laslett, 'Introduction', pp. 31-41.

evidence for this is, however, mostly confined to early-nineteenth-century manufacturing areas.⁵⁷ Although it is still unclear why the demographic increase occurred, it is accepted that unmarried parents closely resembled their married counterparts in occupation and the age at which they became parents.⁵⁸ High levels of bridal pregnancy suggest that pre-marital sex was common.⁵⁹ Illegitimacy did sometimes run in families, but there is little consensus over whether this reflects an alternative morality or just greater economic vulnerability within these 'bastardy-prone' groups.⁶⁰ It is now generally accepted that most illegitimacy resulted not from the adoption of an alternative moral culture, but from socially accepted sexual behaviour that only accidentally resulted in an illegitimate birth.⁶¹

It is, however, unclear how apparent social acceptance of pre-marital sex reconciled with the continued legal discrimination of illegitimates and the policing of unmarried parenthood through the poor law. The perception of illegitimates provides key evidence for our still limited understanding of the causes and implications of the demographic increase. For example, did greater incidence lead to greater tolerance, and was this replicated across the social scale? A lack of sustained cross-class analysis has, until now, made it difficult to test the extent to which changing attitudes towards sex and illegitimacy resulted from specific employment structures, or cultural shifts that may have applied to a much wider section of

⁵⁷ Emma Griffin, 'Sex, Illegitimacy and Social Change in Industrialising Britain,' *Social History* 38.2 (2013), pp. 139-61; Nigel Goose, 'How Saucy did it Make the Poor? The Straw Plait and Hat Trades, Illegitimate Fertility and the Family in Nineteenth-Century Hertfordshire', *History* 91 (2006), pp. 530-56.

⁵⁸ Rogers, 'Carnal Knowledge', pp. 358-9; Black, 'Illegitimacy and the Urban Poor', pp. 86-9, 107, 113; Broomfield, 'Incidence and Attitudes', p. 87; Wyatt, 'Bastardy', p. 43. Cf. Robin, 'Illegitimacy in Colyton', p. 311.

⁵⁹ Multiple studies indicate that at least one third of births resulted from prenuptial pregnancies by 1800: Hair, 'Bridal Pregnancy'; Wyatt, 'Bastardy', pp. 39-48; Rogers, 'Carnal Knowledge', pp. 358-9, 362, 367; Adair, *Courtship*, pp. 16, 84, 92-109; Reay, 'Sexuality'; Wrigley, 'Marriage, Fertility and Population Growth', p. 163. Similar rates occurred in France and Wales, see: Fairchilds, 'Female Sexual Attitudes', pp. 634, 642; Brueton, 'Illegitimacy in South Wales', pp. 67, 94.

⁶⁰ The most famous proponent of this idea is Peter Laslett, 'The Bastardy Prone Sub-Society', in Peter Laslett, Karla Oosterveen and Richard M. Smith (eds), *Bastardy and its Comparative History* (London, 1980), pp. 217-46. Several historians agree it may have existed, but that there are considerable problems in proving it: Adair, *Courtship*, pp. 69-70, 77; Steven King, 'The Bastardy Prone Sub-society Again'; Robin, 'Illegitimacy in Colyton', pp. 335, 339; Broomfield, 'Incidence and Attitudes', pp. 87-8; Wyatt, 'Bastardy', pp. 45-6.

⁶¹ Evans, '*Unfortunate Objects*', pp. 109-12, 126; Levene, Nutt and Williams, 'Introduction', pp. 12-13; Black, 'Illegitimacy and the Urban Poor', pp. 126-32; Reay, 'Sexuality', pp. 219, 233; Dabhoiwala, *Origins of Sex*, p. 19.

society. The use of illegitimate births as an index to levels of sexual freedom and the extent to which fear of pregnancy acted as a deterrent is also limited unless we know how damaging illegitimacy was to children, parents and families.

A second related approach to the study of illegitimacy has been as a facet of poverty, moving away from demography and towards lived experience.⁶² This partly reflects the wealth of evidence collected through the poor law's function as the primary regulator of illegitimacy. The mechanisms of filiation, maintenance, and parochial infant care are known.⁶³ More recent scholarship has investigated how parents felt about their unmarried status, their perceived responsibilities, and levels of family and community support.⁶⁴ Crawford and Evans notably suggested that legal illegitimacy made little difference to poor families, as death, desertion and poverty affected all.⁶⁵ However, the dominant sources give only a partial representation of illegitimate experience, focusing primarily on the policing of illegitimacy through the poor law. Illegitimate individuals themselves appear only as infants, because poor law records disproportionately highlight their early childhood. Demographic evidence such as census returns suggests that illegitimates had contact with wider family, but says little about the quality or durability of these relationships.⁶⁶ Illegitimacy was, moreover, not only experienced by the poor; a cross-class

⁶² Alysa Levene, Thomas Nutt and Samantha Williams (eds), *Illegitimacy in Britain, 1700-1920* (Basingstoke, 2005); Black, 'Illegitimacy and the Urban Poor'; Evans, 'Unfortunate Objects'; Patricia Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children in England, 1580-1800* (Oxford, 2010).

⁶³ Black, 'Illegitimacy and the Urban Poor'; Thomas Nutt, 'The Paradox and Problems of Illegitimate Paternity in Old Poor Law Essex', in Alysa Levene, Thomas Nutt and Samantha Williams (eds), *Illegitimacy in Britain, 1700-1920* (Basingstoke, 2005), pp. 102-21; Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*; Samantha Williams, 'The Maintenance of Bastard Children in London, 1790-1834', *Economic History Review* 69.3 (2016), pp. 945-71; Tim Hitchcock, 'Unlawfully begotten on her body': Illegitimacy and the Parish Poor in St Luke's Chelsea', in Tim Hitchcock, Peter King and Pamela Sharpe (eds), *Chronicling Poverty: The Voices and Strategies of the English Poor, 1640-1840*, (Basingstoke, 1997), pp. 70-86.

⁶⁴ Nutt, 'Paradox and Problems'; Ben Harvey, 'The Putative Fathers of Swinton, England: Illegitimate Behavior under the Old Poor Laws, 1797-1835', *Journal of Family History* 40.3 (2015), pp. 373-98; Alexandra Shepard, 'Brokering Fatherhood: Illegitimacy and Paternal Rights and Responsibilities in Early Modern England', in Steve Hindle, Alexandra Shepard and John Walter (eds), *Remaking English Society: Social Relations and Social Change in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge, 2013), pp. 41-64; Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*.

⁶⁵ Evans, 'Unfortunate Objects', pp. 96, 121, 129; Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*. p. 4.

⁶⁶ For example: Andrew Blaikie, Eilidh Garrett and Ros Davies, 'Migration, Living Strategies and Illegitimate Childbearing: A Comparison of Two Scottish Settings, 1871-1881', in Alysa Levene, Thomas Nutt and Samantha Williams (eds), *Illegitimacy in Britain, 1700-1920* (Basingstoke, 2005), pp. 141-167; Muir, 'Illegitimacy in Eighteenth-Century Wales', pp. 371-2, 374, 377.

comparison is needed to delineate the relationship between illegitimacy and poverty, and the impact of the poor law in restricting or shaping parental responses. In both historiographies illegitimacy has been used to access the histories of extra-marital sex, poverty and deviancy, rather than as a focus of enquiry in its own right.

Illegitimacy has also been investigated as an abstract cultural concept. Cody argued that illegitimate birth symbolised contemporary concerns with political or royal legitimacy, and female sexual power.⁶⁷ More recently, Finn, Lobban and Taylor have argued that illegitimacy was used as a metaphor for the instability of legal and social identities, in its association with falsehood and imposture.⁶⁸ These works are particularly useful in their focus on the legislative policing of illegitimacy, emphasising that illegitimacy was not only a matter of everyday, interpersonal relationships but was perceived to have considerable impact on civic order. Literary scholars have also suggested that illegitimates were used alongside orphan and foundling characters in novels, plays and poetry to explore social mobility, property inheritance and familial bonds of blood and affection.⁶⁹ However, arguments by Zunshine in particular have considered illegitimate and foundling characters as interchangeable, which I suggest neglects the distinct character of illegitimacy as a legal and cultural category.⁷⁰ Existing literary scholarship has not integrated changing genres and cultural trends such as sensibility and domesticity with the changing demographic and legislative context of an increasing illegitimacy ratio, the decline of the church courts and rising poor relief costs.

⁶⁷ Lisa Forman Cody, *Birth of the Nation: Sex, Science, and the Conception of Eighteenth-Century Britons* (Oxford, 2005). For similar arguments for an earlier period, but with greater emphasis on anxiety over female sexual control see Mary E. Fissell, *Vernacular Bodies: the Politics of Reproduction in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2006).

⁶⁸ Margot Finn, Michael Lobban and Jenny Bourne Taylor, 'Introduction: Spurious Issues' in Margot Finn, Michael Lobban and Jenny Bourne Taylor (eds), *Legitimacy and Illegitimacy in Nineteenth-Century Law, Literature and History* (Basingstoke, 2010), pp. 1-24.

⁶⁹ Zunshine, *Bastards and Foundlings*; Wolfram Schmidgen, 'Illegitimacy and Social Observation: The Bastard in the Eighteenth-Century Novel', *English Literary History* 69.1 (2002), pp. 133-66; Cheryl L. Nixon, *The Orphan in Eighteenth-Century Law and Literature: Estate, Blood, and Body* (Farnham, 2011); Eva König, *The Orphan in Eighteenth-Century Fiction: The Vicissitudes of the Eighteenth-Century Subject* (Basingstoke, 2014); Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600-1740* (Baltimore, 1987).

⁷⁰ Zunshine, *Bastards and Foundlings*, p. 165. Other scholars who similarly conflate illegitimates and foundlings include: König, *The Orphan*; Gerd Stratmann, 'Nobody's Child, Everybody's Child: Discourses of Illegitimacy in Eighteenth-Century England', *Journal for the Study of British Cultures* 18.2 (2011), pp. 109-19.

Other analyses of the discourses surrounding illegitimacy have largely focused on the perception of extra-marital sex, courtship and unmarried motherhood, primarily within the discourses of infanticide and abandonment in which illegitimate children are explicitly absent.⁷¹ The extent to which unmarried mothers used tropes such as seduction strategically to obtain charitable or parish assistance is debated, and likely had little influence on how women saw themselves or parented their children, particularly those who remained in contact with their children.⁷² This thesis builds on this work by linking cultural context to ordinary experience, judging the impact of illegitimacy's association with moral degradation, subversive female sexuality and the dishonest appropriation of property, on illegimates' everyday treatment.

The question of whether illegimates experienced shame, social exclusion and stigma, has been unevenly covered in the existing historiography. Existing conclusions are typically uncertain and contradictory. Adair's seminal investigation into the incidence and registration of illegitimacy concluded that '[a] certain degree of tolerance seems to have been present everywhere... Yet without any doubt some level of stigma existed in this country everywhere at all times'.⁷³ This uncertainty partly results from a perceived lack of evidence and limited means of measuring exclusion. Exclusion has been measured through levels of community support for unmarried mothers and rates of maternal marriage, infant mortality or abandonment.⁷⁴ Stigma is seen as a top-down process through the poor law, rather

⁷¹ David M. Turner, *Fashioning Adultery: Gender, Sex, and Civility in England, 1660-1740* (Cambridge, 2002); Donna T. Andrew, *Aristocratic Vice: The Attack on Duelling, Suicide, Adultery and Gambling in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven, 2013); Joy Wiltenburg, *Disorderly Women and Female Power in the Street Literature of Early Modern England and Germany* (Charlottesville, VA., 1992); Tanya Evans, "'Blooming Virgins All Beware": Love, Courtship and Illegitimacy in Eighteenth-Century British Popular Literature', in Alys Levene, Thomas Nutt and Samantha Williams (eds), *Illegitimacy in Britain, 1700-1920* (Basingstoke, 2005), pp. 18-33; Symonds, *Weep Not for Me*; Francus, *Monstrous Mothers*.

⁷² Evans, 'Unfortunate Objects', pp. 100-1.

⁷³ Adair, *Courtship*, pp. 89-90. For similar conclusions see: Reay, 'Sexuality', p. 239; MacFarlane, 'Illegitimacy and Illegimates', pp. 75-6; Leonore Davidoff, *Thicker than Water: Siblings and their Relations, 1780-1920* (Oxford, 2012), p. 84; Broomfield, 'Incidence and Attitudes', p. 95.

⁷⁴ Samantha Williams, "'I was Forced to Leave my Place to Hide my Shame": The Living Arrangements of Unmarried Mothers in London in the Early Nineteenth Century', in J. McEwan and P. Sharpe (eds), *Accommodating Poverty: The Housing and Living Arrangements of the English Poor, c. 1600-1850* (Basingstoke, 2011), pp. 191-220; Adair, *Courtship*, pp. 79-81; Hitchcock, "'Unlawfully begotten"; Alys Levene, 'The Mortality Penalty of Illegitimate Children: Foundlings and Poor Children in Eighteenth-Century England' in Alys Levene,

than as a social practice between illegitimates and their legitimate peers.⁷⁵ Considerations of sexual shame have concentrated on the defamation and punishment of unmarried parents, viewing shame as a function of social discipline or as an external expression utilised strategically to gain state support.⁷⁶ It is assumed that shame was felt, without much understanding of its relationship to exclusion or concepts of self-identity.⁷⁷

Sociological and psychological scholarship suggests that stigma, shame and exclusion operate in complex and distinct ways, particularly emphasising their effect on individual self-esteem and psychological wellbeing. Exclusion refers primarily to the everyday treatment of illegitimates, their legal inequality or exclusion from family or community. Stigma refers more specifically to the justificatory framework for exclusion, and the perception of both difference and inferiority. According to sociologist Erving Goffman, '[w]e believe the person with a stigma is not quite human... On this assumption we exercise varieties of discrimination.'⁷⁸ Stigma is externally applied by society, and becomes shame when it is internalised and negatively affects individual self-worth and identity.⁷⁹ The full impact of stigma can therefore not be adequately discerned from a 'top-down' approach emphasising social discipline. This thesis measures stigma using qualitative evidence from the viewpoint of illegitimates. It integrates illegitimacy into discussion of other facets of identity, such as gender or class, to ask what impact birth status had on individual experience. If illegitimacy was stigmatised, then what effect did it have on occupational and marriage chances? Were labels such as 'bastard' used as insults,

Thomas Nutt and Samantha Williams (eds), *Illegitimacy in Britain, 1700-1920* (Basingstoke, 2005), pp. 34-49.

⁷⁵ For example, Levene, Nutt and Williams, 'Introduction', pp. 13-14, 16.

⁷⁶ David Nash and Anne-Marie Kilday, *Cultures of Shame: Exploring Crime and Morality in Britain, 1600-1900* (Basingstoke, 2010); Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words, and Sex in Early Modern London* (Oxford, 1996); Peter N. Stearns, *Shame: A Brief History* (Urbana, 2017). Stearns characterises 'pre-modern' shame (by which he means pre nineteenth century) as a means of social discipline, pp. 10-56.

⁷⁷ The exception for this period is in the history of poverty, see Robert Jütte, *Poverty and Deviance in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1994).

⁷⁸ Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (London, 1963), p. 15; Bruce Link and Jo Phelan, 'Conceptualizing Stigma', *Annual Review of Sociology* 27 (2001) pp. 363-85.

⁷⁹ Goffman, *Stigma*, pp. 18-19. This conception of shame is shared in other sociological and philosophical analyses, see T.J. Scheff, 'Shame and the Social Bond: A Sociological Theory', *Sociological Theory* 18.1 (2000), pp. 84-99; Julien Deonna, Raffaele Rodogno and Fabrice Teroni (eds), *In Defense of Shame: The Faces of an Emotion* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 7, 11, 14.

with observable impacts on individual reputation and social inclusion? These questions can only be answered if the experience of the illegitimate individual is made the central unit of analysis, rather than parental experiences or state attitudes.

Evidence from other geographical and chronological contexts indicates that illegitimacy was stigmatising. French, Russian and German examples from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries indicate that illegitimates faced reduced marital and occupational prospects, as well as carrying 'an acute sense of injustice' at their status.⁸⁰ This suggests that eighteenth-century English illegitimates likely did experience stigma and shame, but that historians have simply been unable to find evidence of it. Furthermore, it is as yet unclear whether the distinct legal position of English illegitimates altered the operation of stigma in comparison with other countries. Evidence of stigma from other time periods also leads to questions of continuity and change. The rapid increase in the illegitimacy ratio after 1660 has led to arguments that the eighteenth century was a period of sexual liberation and tolerance.⁸¹ Most research into illegitimate experience has focused on the mid-twentieth century, using oral histories and autobiographies to argue that illegitimacy resulted in lifelong shame and familial estrangement.⁸² The evidence examined here indicates the extent to which nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century attitudes were unusually punitive, or whether stigma had much older roots in English society.

Illegitimacy has also not been fully integrated into existing scholarship on the family. Research on illegitimacy among the poor, in particular, has considered family attitudes, but largely towards extra-marital sex rather than the children that

⁸⁰ Olga E. Glagoleva, 'The Illegitimate Children of the Russian Nobility in Law and Practice, 1700-1860', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 6.3 (2005), pp. 461-99, quote p. 465; Mary Jo Maynes, 'Adolescent Sexuality and Social Identity in French and German Lower Class Autobiography', *Journal of Family History* 18.4 (1992), pp. 397-418; Maria R. Boes, '"Dishonourable" Youth, Guilds, and the Changed World View of Sex, Illegitimacy, and Women in Late-Sixteenth-Century Germany', *Continuity and Change* 18.3 (2003), pp. 345-72; Gerber, *Bastards*.

⁸¹ Dabhoiwala, *Origins of Sex*; Frost, *Illegitimacy*, pp. 7-9; Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*, pp. 545, 621-3.

⁸² Jane Robinson, *In the Family Way: Illegitimacy between the Great War and the Swinging Sixties* (London, 2015); Frost, *Illegitimacy*; Cohen, *Family Secrets*; Pat Thane and Tanya Evans, *Sinners? Scroungers? Saints? Unmarried Motherhood in Twentieth-Century England* (Oxford, 2012). See also the special issue of *Women's History Review* on 'Lone Mothers' 20.1 (2011).

resulted.⁸³ Historians disagree on levels of kin for unmarried mothers and their children, which varied considerably according to urban or rural contexts and local employment patterns. Evans' study of lone motherhood in London emphasised the importance of neighbours and employers over kin, whereas studies of rural Scotland in later periods have demonstrated considerable assistance.⁸⁴ We as yet do not know whether assistance was given willingly, or how responsibility towards illegitimate kin was articulated within other norms of kinship and obligation. Moreover, emphasis on the experience of the poor raises questions for the inclusion of illegitimates in other notions of family, such as lineage, and the extent to which poverty was the defining variable in familial ability to support illegitimates.

Illegitimates have been included as the history of the family has expanded to acknowledge the complex and expansive nature of family, such as single parent households or stepfamilies. Chaytor and more recently Tadmor argued that notions of familial responsibility were flexible enough to include step, foster and illegitimate children in households.⁸⁵ However, illegitimates still primarily appear as children, with little comparison between legitimate and illegitimate counterparts or analysis of the impact of illegitimacy on kin relationships over the life-cycle. Studies of family inheritance practices and sibling relationships acknowledge the existence of illegitimate relatives, but see them generally only as the child objects of their parents' relationships.⁸⁶ Carlton and Thornton's 2011 study is one notable exception, arguing that illegitimates were well-integrated and useful members of gentry families, albeit

⁸³ For example, they appear in Stone's seminal but controversial *Family, Sex and Marriage* in the section on sex, not on family or parent-child relations, pp. 473-647.

⁸⁴ Levene, Nutt and Williams, 'Introduction', p. 7; Evans, 'Unfortunate Objects', pp. 173-93. Crawford is also fairly negative about levels of help received from families, due to a high reliance on foundling evidence, Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, pp. 41-2, 55, 69. Cf. Blaikie, Garrett and Davies, 'Migration', p. 154.

⁸⁵ Miranda Chaytor, 'Household and Kinship: Ryton in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries', *History Workshop Journal* 10.1 (1980), pp. 25-60; Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship, Patronage* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 186-7. Tadmor notes familial responses in taking responsibility for an illegitimate nephew, but as the child died at the age of fifteen there is no opportunity to examine adult relationships.

⁸⁶ Amy Harris, *Siblinghood and Social Relations in Georgian England: Share and Share Alike* (Manchester, 2012), pp. 55-7, 91; R.J. Morris, *Men, Women and Property in England, 1780-1870: A Social and Economic History of Family Strategies amongst the Leeds Middle Classes* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 105, 244-5, 330-1; Davidoff, *Thicker than Water*, p. 84. The absence of scholarship on illegitimates is noted by Collins but not addressed, Stephen Collins, 'British Stepfamily Relationships, 1500-1800', *Journal of Family History* 16.4 (1991), pp. 331-44.

using only a small sample based primarily on wills and office-holding patterns.⁸⁷ There has been no qualitative study of illegitimate kin dynamics, so it is yet unclear how common inclusion was, or what conditions governed it. Illegitimates were not brought up in isolation, but must have engaged in some way with the ideals and difficulties of eighteenth-century family life as siblings, children, parents and cousins in their own right. If illegitimates were included in notions of family, then there must be a reassessment of how families operated in this period, particularly in the balance of power and its relationship with property inheritance. The extent of illegitimate inclusion asks wider questions of how contemporaries defined 'family', through blood, emotional bonds, physical proximity, property rights, or legal status.

Assessments of illegitimates' relationships with parents have been largely pessimistic. Unmarried mothers again appear most in the contexts of abandonment or infanticide.⁸⁸ Shepard, Nutt, Crawford and Harvey have argued that biological fathers often sought to evade social responsibilities, with illegitimate paternity primarily characterised by resentment and avoidance.⁸⁹ Although these works rightly problematise the relationship between biological and social concepts of parenthood, an emphasis on poor law documents largely only demonstrates the artificially antagonistic system of filiation and state attitudes. No study has examined parent-illegitimate relationships from the perspective of the illegitimate, or contrasted a parent's relationship to their own child with their attitudes towards other illegitimate relatives. A comparison of parenthood among different socio-economic groups, as conducted here, indicates the extent to which parental evasion reflected the external constraints of poverty and the poor law, or whether there were any circumstances in which parenthood could be considered a positive identity.

This thesis is influenced by the developing history of emotions, particularly its consideration of unconventional family types and ways of measuring emotion.

⁸⁷ Katherine Carlton and Tim Thornton, 'Illegitimacy and Authority in the North of England, c. 1450-1640', *Northern History* 48.1 (2011), pp. 23-40.

⁸⁸ Evans, 'Unfortunate Objects'; Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*.

⁸⁹ Shepard, 'Brokering Fatherhood'; Thomas Nutt, "'There may be supposed something of natural affection": Fatherhood, Affiliation and the Maintenance of Illegitimate Children in Eighteenth and Early-Nineteenth-Century England', paper delivered at the *Network for Early European Research Conference*, University of Western Australia (3-8 July 2007); Harvey, 'Putative Fathers'; Patricia Crawford, *Blood, Bodies and Families in Early Modern England* (Harlow, 2004), pp. 1-18; 113-39.

Barclay investigated the relationship between financial and emotional provision, and suggested that domestic ideals could be appropriated as models for emotional expression in kept mistress relationships.⁹⁰ Essays by Hansen, Adams and Jablonka in Broomhall's 2008 collection *Emotions in the Household* investigated the experience of foster children in various cultures, concluding that affective bonds could develop between foster parents and children in relationships outwardly characterised by transience and financial compensation.⁹¹ This thesis is not primarily employing an emotions history methodology, as it has a holistic aim to investigate not only illegitimates' relationships with family but also their legal and social position. However, the important emotional component of parental and familial bonds is explored with an awareness of the socially constructed nature of emotions, the importance of emotional norms in governing expression and the ways in which individuals could manipulate emotional expressions in order to achieve certain goals.⁹²

The influence of behavioural models such as sensibility and domesticity is also significant in the inclusion of illegitimacy in the histories of family and parenthood. These models have previously been seen as making unmarried motherhood in particular more damaging to female reputation. As Perry demonstrated, the growing

⁹⁰ Katie Barclay, 'Marginal Households and their Emotions: The 'kept mistress' in Enlightenment Edinburgh', in Susan Broomhall (ed.), *Spaces for Feeling: Emotions and Sociabilities in Britain, 1650-1850* (Oxford, 2015), pp. 95-111; Katie Barclay, 'Illicit Intimacies: The Imagined "Homes" of Gilbert Innes of Stow and his Mistresses (1751-1832)', *Gender & History* 27.3 (2015), pp. 576-90; Katie Barclay, 'Natural Affection, the Patriarchal Family and the "Strict Settlement" Debate: A Response from the History of Emotions', *The Eighteenth Century* 58.3 (2017), pp. 309-20.

⁹¹ Anna Hansen, 'Bonds of Affection between Children and Their Foster-Parents in Early Icelandic Society'; Tracy Adams, 'Fostering Girls in Early Modern France'; Ivan Jablonka, 'Fictive Kinship: Wards and Foster-Parents in Nineteenth-Century France', in Susan Broomhall (ed.), *Emotions in the Household, 1200-1900* (Basingstoke, 2008), pp. 38-52, 103-118, 269-284. Similar conclusions appear in Philip Grace, *Affectionate Authorities: Fathers and Fatherly Roles in Late Medieval Basel* (Farnham, 2015), particularly chapters 3 and 4.

⁹² For these aspects of methodology in the history of emotions see: Carol Stearns and Peter Stearns, 'Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards', *The American Historical Review* 90.4 (1985), pp. 813-36; William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge, 2001); Barbara Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY, 2006). For an overview of the historiography see Jan Plamper, *The History of Emotions: An Introduction*, trans. Keith Tribe (Oxford, 2015), pp. 262-70. On the strategic manipulation of emotions in family life see: Susan Broomhall and Jacqueline Van Gent, 'Corresponding Affections: Emotional Exchange Among Siblings in the Nassau Family', *Journal of Family History* 34.2 (2009), pp. 143-65; Linda Pollock, 'Anger and the Negotiation of Relationships in Early Modern England', *The Historical Journal* 47.3 (2004), pp. 567-90.

ideal of female sexual passivity alongside the cult of motherhood meant that 'in the eighteenth century, maternity came to be imagined as a counter to sexual feeling'.⁹³ By the turn of the nineteenth century, unmarried mothers could be included in these norms only if they adhered to a rhetoric of seduction and gave their children up to institutions such as the Foundling Hospital.⁹⁴ Among fathers, Bailey's argument that a model of emotionally expressive fatherhood became mainstream in this period is at odds with historiographical perceptions of neglectful unmarried paternity.⁹⁵ There has yet been no consideration of the flexibility of these models to include illegitimates who remained with their parents, and on the interplay between sensibility as a demonstration of virtue and illegitimacy as a demonstration of vice.

Several questions arise from the existing historiography. What was the impact of illegitimacy on illegitimate individuals, rather than their parents? To what extent did socio-economic background matter, and how significant were poverty and the poor law in determining the experience of illegitimates and their parents? What did it really mean to *be* illegitimate, and how variable was illegitimate experience according to socio-economic status, gender, or the individual circumstances of parental and familial relationships? These larger questions run throughout the thesis, and, as will be explored below, directly influence its methodological emphasis on qualitative documents written from the perspective of illegitimates themselves, and in the wide socio-economic range of case studies. Existing work on primarily the shifting demographic characteristics of illegitimacy and the policing of illegitimacy through successive poor laws have neglected the wider meaning and experience of illegitimacy in eighteenth-century culture and society, and how this may have changed over time. My approach, to integrate the history of illegitimates as individuals within wider changes in eighteenth-century society, disrupts historiographical assumptions of the neatness of family and community structures, and problematises how historians measure a range of issues including sexual

⁹³ Ruth Perry, 'Colonizing the Breast: Sexuality and Maternity in Eighteenth-Century England', *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 2.2 (1991), p. 209.

⁹⁴ Sarah Lloyd, "'Pleasure's Golden Bait': Prostitution, Poverty and the Magdalen Hospital in Eighteenth-Century London', *History Workshop Journal* 41 (1996), pp. 50-70; Jessica A. Sheetz-Nguyen, *Victorian Women, Unwed Mothers and the London Foundling Hospital* (London, 2012), pp. 188-9.

⁹⁵ Bailey, *Parenting in England*, pp. 30, 150, 247.

reputation, identity, the nature of family and parenthood, and anxieties about property and civic disorder.

Methodology

This thesis examines a wide range of source types, primarily life-writing, correspondence, poor law documents, accounts, wills, published treatises, novels, ballads, legislative debates, newspapers, poems and images. Illegitimacy was not simply a biological fact. It depended on subjective social and cultural categorisation to function as a means of exclusion. Attitudes towards illegitimates drew on centuries of recurring motifs and characters recycled in a shared culture. A cross-genre approach more robustly indicates these recurring patterns, suggesting which characteristics of illegitimacy were common across eighteenth-century culture, and in what contexts illegitimacy mattered.⁹⁶ Comparison of different source types indicates the points at which social and legal definitions of illegitimacy diverged. We know from the diaries of unmarried father Syllas Neville that his children's baptism records were falsified, for example.⁹⁷ Material from different genres also indicates the relationship between ideals and lived experience, the extent to which individuals utilised and responded to wider cultural tropes in their own self-presentation, or how individuals 'may have imagined and understood their own lives, and represented them to others'.⁹⁸ The authors of autobiographies and diaries, for example, drew on novels and other cultural forms to construct a public persona.⁹⁹ The appearance of illegitimates in conventions usually applied to legitimate relationships, such as the participant in idealised sibling behaviour or the character of a romantic hero, is a means of measuring their inclusion.

⁹⁶ Dror Wahrman, 'Change and the Corporeal in Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century Gender History: Or, Can Cultural History Be Rigorous', *Gender & History* 20.3 (2008), pp. 592-5; Peter Mandler, 'The Problem with Cultural History', *Cultural and Social History* 1.1 (2004), p. 97. A similar approach is taken in other studies of family and sexuality: Bailey, *Parenting in England*, pp. 6-13; Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 13; Turner, *Fashioning Adultery*, pp. 18-23; Fissell, *Vernacular Bodies*, pp. 160-1.

⁹⁷ See chapter 4, pp. 217-8.

⁹⁸ Carolyn Steedman, *Master and Servant: Love and Labour in the English Industrial Age* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 59; Bailey, *Parenting in England*, p. 8; Wiltenburg, *Disorderly Women*, p. 4.

⁹⁹ See the examples of James Boswell, James St Aubyn and James Burn in particular, discussed in chapters 1 and 5. This phenomenon has also been widely observed in court narratives, see: Natalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 2-4; Gowing, *Domestic Dangers*, pp. 54-8.

A wide range of illegitimate individuals, named and unnamed, appear in this thesis. Forty-two case studies are analysed in detail, including the life histories of 21 individuals, group studies of 17 families, and four parish or diocesan studies. Sources were identified by word searching the National Archives catalogue of 2,500 local record offices and archives, alongside published bibliographies, for common synonyms such as 'illegitimate', 'bastard' and 'natural'.¹⁰⁰ This produced results of a wide geographical, chronological and socio-economic range, as far as possible. Keyword searching is dependent on accurate digitisation and the comprehensive recording of birth status in catalogues.¹⁰¹ However, this was mitigated by searching several different keywords across a range of sources and catalogue types, and subsequently tracking individuals by name across sources.¹⁰² Most catalogues identified authors specifically as illegitimate, as the birth status of an author, recipient or subject was made clear in the source content. Edited correspondence and life-writing collections were, wherever possible, compared with the original manuscript, to reduce the possibility of censorship.¹⁰³ Multiple sources were used for each case study to build a life history of each illegitimate individual, their family, and community.¹⁰⁴ I could, for instance, compare the treatment of multiple illegitimates within the same family. This microhistory approach accounted as

¹⁰⁰ TNA, <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk> [accessed 19 February 2018], searched for all catalogue entries including the words 'bastard', 'illegitimate' or 'natural', between 1660 and 1834. The bibliographies and databases searched include: *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004-2011), <http://www.oxforddnb.com.sheffield.idm.oclc.org/> [accessed 19 February 2018]; David Vincent, David Mayall and John Burnett (eds), *The Autobiography of the Working Class: An Annotated Critical Bibliography, vol. 1, 1790-1900* (Brighton, 1984).

¹⁰¹ For the limits of accurate OCR digitisation, see Simon Tanner, Trevor Muñoz and Pich Hemy Ros, 'Measuring Mass Text Digitization Quality and Usefulness: Lessons Learned from Assessing the OCR Accuracy of the British Library's Nineteenth Century Online Newspaper Archive', *D-Lib Magazine* 15.7/8 (2009). For more specific literature on keyword searching, see chapter 4, pp. 219-20, n. 52.

¹⁰² I also used features such as the *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* 'fuzzy search' which accounts for spelling variants.

¹⁰³ For example, John Money's edition of John Cannon's memoirs was heavily edited. I therefore compared it with a microfiche copy of the original manuscript. My thanks go to Tim Hitchcock for providing this. *The Chronicles of John Cannon, Excise Officer and Writing Master* ed. John Money (Oxford, 2010); SRO: DD/SAS C/1193/4, 'Memoirs of the Birth, Education Life and Death of: Mr. John Cannon. Sometime Officer of the Excise & Writing Master at Mere Glastenbury & West Lydford in the County of Somerset'. Other published editions which I compared with their originals included: *Mrs Jordan and her Family, being The Unpublished Correspondence of Mrs Jordan and the Duke of Clarence, later William IV*, ed. A. Aspinall (London, 1951); *The Pembroke Papers (1734-1780)*; *Letters and Diaries of Henry, Tenth Earl of Pembroke and his Circle*, ed. Lord Herbert (London, 1942); *Pembroke Papers (1780-1794): Letters and Diaries of Henry, Tenth Earl of Pembroke and his Circle*, ed. Lord Herbert (London, 1950).

¹⁰⁴ For a full list of databases used see chapter 3, pp. 167-8, and the bibliography.

robustly as possible for variables of gender, socio-economic background and parental relationship type. I also built a prosopographical database of 225 individuals from peerage families to analyse the impact of illegitimacy on education, occupation and marriage through comparison of legitimate and illegitimate family members.¹⁰⁵

A principal component of the selected sources is life-writing, including diaries, memoirs, biographies and autobiographies written by the parents of illegitimates, illegitimates themselves, and observers.¹⁰⁶ Unlike poor law and census records which only give a snapshot of one moment, life-writing can indicate the impact of illegitimacy across the life-cycle, including the durability of family relationships and the impact of stigma at different points. The retrospective nature of some life-writing can be an asset rather than a limitation in this context, as it can indicate an author's regret or reconsideration of their actions from the vantage point of later life. Contemporaneous diaries indicate how their authors presented their feelings about illegitimates, and contain a wealth of incidental detail, from childcare to the reasons for keeping a child secret. Life-writing has been used successfully to study the family and sexuality, including some of the cases used here. However, illegitimacy is generally analysed only as a consequence of sex in wider discussions of courtship.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ For more on the selection of these families and the categorisation of data see chapter 3, and appendices 3, 4 and 5.

¹⁰⁶ For more on the definition and form of different types of life-writing, see: Felicity Nussbaum, *The Autobiographical Subject: Gender and Ideology in Eighteenth-Century England* (Baltimore, 1989), p. 23; Patricia Meyer Spacks, *Imagining a Self: Autobiography and Novel in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, MA., 1976), p. 72; Michael Mascuch, *Origins of the Individualist Self: Autobiography and Self-Identity in England, 1591-1791* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 7-8.

¹⁰⁷ John Cannon's masculinity and paternity in relation to his sexual behaviour have been examined, but not in relation to his family life, or his contact with his illegitimate half-sister: Griffin, 'Sex, Illegitimacy and Social Change', pp. 144-7; Tim Hitchcock, 'Sociability and Misogyny in the Life of John Cannon 1684-1743', in Tim Hitchcock and Michèle Cohen (eds), *English Masculinities, 1660-1800* (London, 1999), pp. 25-43; Tim Hitchcock, *English Sexualities, 1700-1800* (Basingstoke, 1997), pp. 28-38. For Benjamin Shaw's masculine identity and the courtship activities of his children, but not his position as a grandfather, see: Griffin, 'Sex, Illegitimacy and Social Change', pp. 154-7; Karen Harvey, *The Little Republic: Masculinity and Domestic Authority in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 71, 86, 104-5, 151-2; Shani D'Cruze, 'Care, Diligence and "Usfull Pride": Gender, Industrialisation and the Domestic Economy, c. 1770 to c. 1840', *Women's History Review* 3.3 (1994), pp. 315-45. Samuel Pepys, Sylas Neville, James Boswell and Henry Herbert, Earl of Pembroke appear in discussions of male libertinism, see: Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*, pp. 552-603; Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain, 1660-1800* (Harlow, 2001), pp. 184-99; Bruce Redford, *The*

The main problem with life-writing is atypicality; most individuals lacked the literacy or inclination to document their own lives.¹⁰⁸ Authors came from a range of socio-economic backgrounds, but lower-status authors were more likely to originate in industrial areas and from the latter end of the period.¹⁰⁹ Female authors are also significantly less common, although this is mitigated partly by a higher proportion of female authors in the correspondence source group. However, studies of larger samples by Griffin and Vincent indicate that most lower-status authors were occupationally and geographically representative, providing vital qualitative evidence for poorer social groups without large caches of family correspondence.¹¹⁰ One common criticism of life-writing is that they are constructed, as an exercise in 'self-fashioning'.¹¹¹ Published and unpublished works were written for specific audiences and purposes: James Boswell wrote his *London Journal* for his friends to demonstrate his inclusion in metropolitan polite masculinity, and Samuel Bamford wrote his autobiography to demonstrate his rights to political enfranchisement.¹¹² This is highly useful for the study of illegitimacy. The ways in which illegitimate authors portrayed themselves indicates their perception of their position in society, and the utilisation of illegitimacy as a component of their public identity. The omission or selective reporting of illegitimacy in life-writing can reveal interesting gaps in the presentation of illegitimacy according to genre and audience.

Correspondence collections are another significant source, forming all or part of 17 family case studies and supplemented by wills, accounts and diaries.¹¹³ These were

Converse of the Pen: Acts of Intimacy in the Eighteenth-Century Familial Letter (Chicago, 1986), pp. 179-191; Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution*, pp. 172-5.

¹⁰⁸ John Burnett, 'Preface: Autobiographies as History', in John Burnett (ed.), *Useful Toil: Autobiographies of Working People from the 1820s to the 1920s* (London, 1994), p. xi; Emma Griffin, 'The Making of the Chartists: Popular Politics and Working-class Autobiography in Early Victorian Britain', *English Historical Review* 129 (2014), p. 582; Maynes, 'Adolescent Sexuality', p. 400.

¹⁰⁹ This is common throughout the genre, Griffin, 'Sex, Illegitimacy and Social Change', p. 158.

¹¹⁰ Emma Griffin, 'A Conundrum Resolved? Rethinking Courtship, Marriage and Population Growth in Eighteenth-Century England', *Past & Present* 215.1 (2012), p. 132; David Vincent, *Bread, Knowledge and Freedom: A Study of Nineteenth-Century Working Class Autobiography* (London, 1981), p. 8.

¹¹¹ Nussbaum, *Autobiographical Subject*, pp. 6, 103, 133; Spacks, *Imagining a Self*, pp. 230, 239; Mascuch, *Origins of the Individualist Self*, pp. 2-29.

¹¹² For the political motivations of autobiography, see Vincent, *Bread*, pp. 22-9.

¹¹³ Bentham, Fitzclarence, Walpole, Darwin, Leveson-Gower, Wyndham, Pye-Bennett, Neville, Wilkes, Delaval, Barrett-Lennard, Herbert, Spencer-Stanhope, Boswell, Wortley Montagu, More, and Sackville.

all drawn from middling or elite families, from physician Erasmus Darwin to the Fitzclarence children of William IV, and include letters written by and about illegitimates. Correspondence is particularly useful for analysing illegitimates' kinship links, as letters were an importance space for the performance and maintenance of familial relationships.¹¹⁴ The long chronological span of many collections indicate how relationships and power dynamics changed according to age or position in the family, and the range of correspondents highlights differences in sibling, parental or wider kin relationships.¹¹⁵ Correspondence collections have been used successfully in histories of family, gender and class identity.¹¹⁶ Illegitimacy is sometimes noted, but is rarely the focus.¹¹⁷ As with life-writing, correspondence also involves a certain element of self-fashioning. Redford has demonstrated that authors shift identity according to a letter's audience and purpose.¹¹⁸ Letter-writers also followed normative conventions and styles of address. Illegitimate inclusion within these conventions again indicates their perceived status.

Specific case studies were chosen primarily for their richness, their inclusion of the point of view of an illegitimate individual and to ensure a geographical, chronological and socio-economic range.¹¹⁹ Cases appear from rural and urban environments from across the country, from Northumberland to Cornwall, echoing high mobility among rich and poor. Of the 38 individual and family case studies, 24 were written after 1760, reflecting improved literacy and record keeping. Surviving material authored by illegitimates is relatively rare, so it was not possible to produce a more even chronological selection. Significant amounts of material written by an

¹¹⁴ Broomhall and Van Gent, 'Corresponding Affections'.

¹¹⁵ For example, the Spencer-Stanhope collection stretches over a fifty-year period, documenting the family's interaction with illegitimate relative John Smith from the age of nine until his death aged 60 in 1826.

¹¹⁶ Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (London, 1998); Pearsall, *Atlantic Families*.

¹¹⁷ Susan Whyman, *Sociability and Power in Late-Stuart England: the Cultural World of the Verneys, 1660-1720* (Oxford, 1999); Harris, *Siblinghood*, pp. 35, 55, 115, 118, 123-4, 152. The only discussion with illegitimacy as its focus is Catherine Pease-Watkin, 'Jeremy and Samuel Bentham – The Private and the Public', *Journal of Bentham Studies* 5 (2002), pp. 1-27. Pease-Watkin examines the relationship of the illegitimate Benthams with their father and uncle, whereas my focus is on their sibling relationships.

¹¹⁸ Redford, *Converse of the Pen*, pp. 2-7, 14; Rebecca Earle, 'Introduction: Letters, Writers and the Historian', in Rebecca Earle (ed.), *Epistolary Selves: Letters and Letter-Writer, 1600-1945* (Aldershot, 1999), pp. 2-3.

¹¹⁹ For a full list see appendix 1.

illegitimate individual appear in 15 out of 38 cases. Although more authors were male, male and female illegitimates appear in equal proportions. The majority of individual and family cases belonged to the peerage or gentry (22), followed by the labouring poor (7), upper middling sort or professional (6), and provincial or lower middling sort (3). Again this reflects higher literacy and better record survival among wealthier groups.

Further evidence of social groups below the elite came from two parish case studies, St Margaret Westminster (1711-21) and East Hoathly, Sussex (1750s-60s), a collection of pauper letters from the Essex parishes of St Mary's Chelmsford, Upminster, and St Botolph and St Peter in Colchester (1800-37), and one diocesan study of the cause papers of the York church courts (1660-1834). These cases provided evidence of illegitimate interaction with the state through parish registration and the poor law. This thesis's focus on the illegitimate individual, rather than their parents, required surviving documentation of their childhood and living situations, particularly nursing lists and pauper letters. A range of sources from the same period and parish were necessary for record linkage and comparing the treatment of individuals in different contexts. St Margaret Westminster was chosen because of the survival of multiple sources, including churchwarden and overseers' accounts, rate books, bastardy and settlement depositions, nursing lists, parish registers and vestry minutes, uninterrupted over a ten-year period. Such a complete collection of different source types exists in only a minority of parishes, so it was not possible to achieve a more representative chronological and geographical selection.¹²⁰ I also had to restrict analysis to short time periods in order to produce detailed studies of individual movements across multiple sources within the time available.

In the parish of St Margaret Westminster I identified a cohort of 181 illegitimate children and built up a profile of their early lives, cross-referencing between St Margaret Westminster sources, the International Genealogical Index, the *London Lives* database and the settlement and removal registers of neighbouring Westminster

¹²⁰ The survival of pauper letters, for example, is geographically patchy and rare prior to 1800, see *Essex Pauper Letters, 1731-1837*, ed. Thomas Sokoll (Oxford, 2006), pp. 19-25.

parishes to account for migration.¹²¹ I could therefore trace discrepancies in the official recording of illegitimacy and the child's interaction with the parish. St Margaret Westminster was also chosen for its location. London had a distinct illegitimacy regime, with a much lower illegitimacy ratio.¹²² Encompassing St James' Park and Whitehall, the parish was home to both rich and poor: political elites, their attendant servants, and other service industries.¹²³ Previous quantitative analysis of the parish's bastardy depositions provided useful context on the courtship practices and demographic backgrounds of couples, but these studies did not attempt record linkage, and did not connect the depositions to other source types.¹²⁴

The four parishes of St Mary's Chelmsford, Upminster, St Botolph Colchester and St Peter Colchester were chosen because of their high survival of pauper letters, and their varying demographic and economic profiles. St Botolph and St Peter were two of the most populous parishes in the market town of Colchester, the centre of a silk weaving industry and coastal trade. Chelmsford lacked manufacturing industry, but had a larger than average proportion of handicraft workers and domestic servants, primarily because of its role as a centre of gentry sociability surrounding the Assizes. Upminster was a small village of only eight hundred people, mostly employed in mixed agriculture. Chelmsford had the highest proportion of non-resident paupers, and a larger proportion of paupers in its overall population, affecting not only the parish's ability to levy rates, but also the visibility of pauperism in the community.¹²⁵

¹²¹ For example: apprenticeship lists, workhouse registers, bastardy depositions and settlement examinations for St Anne, Soho, St Clement Danes and St Martin in the Fields; the International Genealogical Index, <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/igi> [accessed 20 December 2017]; Tim Hitchcock, Robert Shoemaker, Sharon Howard and Jamie McLaughlin, et al., *London Lives, 1690-1800*, www.londonlives.org, version 1.1, 24 April 2012 [accessed 19 February 2018].

¹²² Adair, *Courtship*, pp. 202-23.

¹²³ Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution*, p. 248; John Strype, *A Mapp of the Parish of St Margarets Westminster taken from the last Survey with Corrections*, 2nd edn, 1755, engraving, British Library Online Gallery, <http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/crace/a/007zzz00000011u000070b0.html> [accessed 23 January 2018].

¹²⁴ Rogers, 'Carnal Knowledge'; Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution*, pp. 96-166, 232-72.

¹²⁵ A.P. Baggs, Beryl Board, Philip Crummy, Claude Dove, Shirley Durgan, N.R. Goose, R.B. Pugh, Pamela Studd and C.C. Thornton, 'Modern Colchester' and 'Georgian Colchester', in Janet Cooper and C.R. Elrington (eds), *A History of the County of Essex: Volume 9, the Borough of Colchester* (London, 1994), pp. 135-47, 176-9, *British History Online*, <http://www.britishhistory.ac.uk/vch/essex/vol9> [accessed 16 April 2016]; W.R. Powell, 'Upminster: Introduction and manors', in W.R. Powell (ed.), *A History of the County of Essex: Volume 7*, (London, 1978), pp. 143-153, *British History Online*, <http://www.britishhistory.ac.uk/vch/essex/vol7/pp143-153> [accessed 6 May 2016]; Thomas

Just over half of the pauper authors from these four parishes were settled in Chelmsford, one third had moved to London, one third elsewhere in Essex and one third predominantly to Suffolk.

This source group consists of 105 letters produced by 28 identifiable authors, including unmarried mothers, fathers, family, overseers, lawyers, employers and clergy. This range provides a rare indication of how individuals of different classes perceived illegitimacy and its relation to the poor law.¹²⁶ I built up a case history of each child and their interaction with the authorities. In some cases, a run of letters allowed comparison of the child's support networks and living arrangements as they aged. Other historians have successfully used pauper letters to indicate living arrangements, family dynamics and parental identities, emphasising the rhetorical strategies paupers used to present themselves as deserving of relief.¹²⁷ However, they have rarely been used to study illegitimacy.¹²⁸ Indicating pauper agency and the flexibility of parish officials, they provide useful contrast to historiographical emphasis on the punitive nature of a top-down centralised poor law. Although letters were written strategically to obtain relief, parents, step-parents or grandparents' inclusion of illegitimates within rhetorical norms indicates who was considered responsible for the child, and their position in the household.¹²⁹ The pauper letters were supplemented by 38 disputed illegitimacy cases described in

Sokoll, 'Introduction' in *Essex Pauper Letters, 1731-1837*, ed. Thomas Sokoll (Oxford, 2006), pp. 25, 29-31, 38; Neil Raven, 'Chelmsford During the Industrial Revolution, c. 1790-1840', *Urban History* 30.1 (2003), pp. 44-62.

¹²⁶ 54 are reproduced in Sokoll, *Essex Pauper Letters*, the rest are preserved in ERO. For the authorship of pauper letters, see Sokoll, 'Introduction', pp. 61-6.

¹²⁷ Joanne Bailey, '"Think Wot a Mother Must Feel": Parenting in English Pauper Letters, c. 1760-1834', *Family and Community History* 13.1 (2010), pp. 5-19; K.D. Snell, 'Belonging and Community: Understandings of 'home' and 'friends' Among the English Poor, 1750-1850', *Economic History Review* 65.1 (2012), pp. 1-25; James Stephen Taylor, 'Voices in the Crowd: The Kirkby Lonsdale Township Letters, 1809-36', in Tim Hitchcock, Peter King and Pamela Sharpe (eds), *Chronicling Poverty: The Voices and Strategies of the English Poor, 1640-1840* (Basingstoke, 1997), pp. 109-26; Thomas Sokoll, 'Old Age in Poverty: The Record of the Essex Pauper Letters, 1780-1834', in Tim Hitchcock, Peter King and Pamela Sharpe (eds), *Chronicling Poverty: The Voices and Strategies of the English Poor, 1640-1840* (Basingstoke, 1997), pp. 127-54.

¹²⁸ The exception is Harvey, 'Putative Fathers'. Harvey looks at unmarried fathers, rather than illegitimates themselves.

¹²⁹ For the use of rhetoric in pauper letters see: Bailey, '"Think Wot a Mother Must Feel"'; Thomas Sokoll, 'Writing for Relief: Rhetoric in English Pauper Letters, 1800-1834', in Andreas Gestrich, Steven King and Lutz Raphael (eds), *Being Poor in Modern Europe: Historical Perspectives, 1800-1940* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 91-113.

correspondence, minutes and depositions from Chelmsford petty sessions court.¹³⁰ Although selectively chosen based on the most richly documented cases, these sources provide important qualitative evidence of contested cases, namely paternal non-payment, disputed paternity and settlement disputes. This thesis is not primarily concerned with the mechanisms of relief, discussed successfully elsewhere, but rather in authors' presentation of the illegitimates in their care.

These larger community studies are supplemented by two smaller investigations, into the parish of East Hoathly, and the York church courts. The parish of East Hoathly, a small Sussex village, was chosen because of the surviving diary of overseer and shopkeeper Thomas Turner.¹³¹ I compared Turner's recording of illegitimate births in his diary to those noted in the parish register, overseers' account books and the settlement and removal records of East Hoathly and neighbouring parishes. This indicates the extent to which official recordings tallied with overseer perception, and variations in attitudes towards illegitimacy within Turner's own family and social circle, versus those dependent on poor relief. 1249 cases of defamation heard in the York church courts between 1660 and 1834 were also surveyed for evidence of the impact of illegitimacy on individual reputation.¹³² Within the Cause Papers Database, defamation cases were tagged according to categories, of which 'parentage' was one. This referred to cases in which an individual was specifically accused of *being* illegitimate, in contrast to sexual slanders

¹³⁰ Published in *Narratives of the Poor in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, ed. Steven King, Thomas Nutt and Alannah Tomkins, vol. 1 (London, 2006), pp. 135-203. For the rationale of their source selection see pp. 129-30. The 38 cases were chosen because they involved multiple documents.

¹³¹ *The Diary of Thomas Turner, 1754-1765*, ed. David Vaisey (Oxford, 1984). Naomi Tadmor has meticulously studied Turner's own family life, but her discussion of his role as overseer does not mention attitudes towards illegitimacy, see: Tadmor, *Family and Friends*; Naomi Tadmor, 'Where was Mrs Turner? Governance and Gender in an Eighteenth-Century Village', in Steve Hindle, Alexandra Shepard and John Walter (eds), *Remaking English Society: Social Relations and Social Change in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge, 2013), pp. 89-112.

¹³² *Cause Papers in the Diocesan Courts of the Archbishopric of York, 1300-1858*, The Borthwick Institute for Archives, University of York, <https://www.hrionline.ac.uk/causepapers/> [accessed 28 January 2018]. For a full list of categories and the robust methods of data checking used by the Cause Papers Project see:

<https://www.dhi.ac.uk/causepapers/userguide.jsp#search> [accessed 19 February 2018];

<https://www.york.ac.uk/borthwick/projects/church-court-records/project-details/>

[accessed 19 February 2018]. For the breakdown of different types of defamation, see appendix 2.

towards unmarried parents.¹³³ It would not have been possible for me to access this data within the time available without the database.

The cultural representation of illegitimates was examined using novels, ballads, plays, periodicals and tracts. Whole-text keyword searches of databases including *Literature Online* and *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* enabled me to cover a large range of material and to get a sense of 'the entire field of representation'.¹³⁴ I then examined individual texts in detail, including 33 novels, plays and poetry collections, identified through keyword searching and secondary literature.¹³⁵ I endeavoured to select sources from a broad chronological range, although more novels, plays and poetry collections (63 percent) were produced after 1750.¹³⁶ Ballads were selected through a complete survey of around 700 ballads contained in the University of Sheffield's Hewins and Firth collections. These were supplemented by relevant ballads in the online databases *English Broadside Ballad Archive* and Bodleian Libraries *Broadside Ballads Online*, identified through keyword searching and thematic tags such as 'cuckoldry'.¹³⁷ Together these collections cover the majority of surviving ballads from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries.¹³⁸ It is, however, difficult to clearly indicate the chronological spread of this group as many editions cannot be precisely dated. Popular ballads often existed in oral tradition prior to publication

¹³³ These sources have been previously used for the study of defamation and slander, but not in relation to illegitimacy, see: J.A. Sharpe, *Defamation and Sexual Slander in Early Modern England: The Church Courts at York* (York, 1980); Fay Bound Alberti, "'An Angry and Malicious Mind'? Narratives of Slander at the Church Courts of York, c. 1660-c. 1760', *History Workshop Journal* 56 (2003), pp. 59-77.

¹³⁴ Mandler, 'Problem with Cultural History', p. 97. On the use of text databases see Frances E. Dolan, *True Relations: Reading, Literature, and Evidence in Seventeenth-Century England* (Pennsylvania, 2013), p. 16; Patricia Fumerton, 'Remembering by Dismembering: Databases, Archiving and the Recollection of Seventeenth-Century Broadside Ballads', in Patricia Fumerton and Anita Guerrini (eds), *Ballads and Broadside in Britain, 1500-1800* (Farnham, 2010), pp. 13-34. For a full list see bibliography.

¹³⁵ Secondary literature consulted included: Zunshine, *Bastards and Foundlings*; McKeon, *Origins of the English Novel*.

¹³⁶ For the holdings of *Literature Online* see <https://literature-proquest.com.sheffield.idm.oclc.org/infoCentre/editpolicy2.jsp> [accessed 10 February 2018].

¹³⁷ Keywords included: legitimate, illegitimate, child, bastard, natural, baseborn, and spurious, alongside Monmouth, Fitzclarence, Jordan and Clarence for specific illegitimate individuals. Patricia Fumerton (ed.), *English Broadside Ballad Archive*, <http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu> [accessed 20 December 2017]; *Broadside Ballads Online*, <http://ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/> [accessed 20 December 2017]. Together they include 16 major ballad collections.

¹³⁸ For further details of these databases' holdings, see: <https://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/page/collections> [accessed 10 February 2018]; <http://ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/about> [accessed 10 February 2018].

and were reprinted over decades.¹³⁹ The inclusion of ballads mitigates the dominance of middle-class opinion expressed in the authorship and readership of novels. Ballads had a considerable audience reach as they were cheap and accessible to both oral and literate cultures.¹⁴⁰

Newspapers, parliamentary debates, and parliamentary committee reports in Hansard and databases such as *Parliamentary Papers Online* or *British Periodicals* were identified through keyword searching.¹⁴¹ Newspapers created and perpetuated images of illegitimacy which populated the public imagination. As Barker argues, 'the formation of public opinion... was heavily dependent on newspapers'.¹⁴² Along with parliamentary sources they indicate differences of opinion between editors, readers and MPs, and the rationale behind the legitimacy laws.¹⁴³ Although the basic legal status of illegitimates remained unchanged over this period, their rights to be classed as family members were discussed. Debates on the Tax on Collateral Succession (1796), the New Poor Law (1837) and Parochial Registration (1833) indicate differences in the perception of illegitimates as a group, rather than as private individuals within families. Analysis of legal debate alongside periodicals and tracts discussing population, the poor law, or the state of national morals reflects the changing central preoccupations and anxieties of elites, and the shifting place of illegitimates in these discourses.

The methodology of this thesis differs most from previous studies in its focus on cases from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. Comparative study is crucial, as

¹³⁹ Robin Ganev, *Songs of Protest, Songs of Love: Popular Ballads in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Manchester, 2009), p. 4; Wiltenburg, *Disorderly Women*, p. 44.

¹⁴⁰ For difficulties in dating ballads and ascertaining their authorship and audience see Patricia Fumerton and Anita Guerrini, 'Introduction: Straws in the Wind', in Patricia Fumerton and Anita Guerrini (eds), *Ballads and Broadides in Britain, 1500-1800* (Farnham, 2010), pp. 1-2; Wiltenburg, *Disorderly Women*, pp. 29-34, 42-3; Ganev, *Songs of Protest*, pp. 13-15.

¹⁴¹ Online databases included: *17th-18th Century Burney Collection Newspapers*, http://find.galegroup.com.sheffield.idm.oclc.org/bncn/start.do?prodId=BBCN&userGroupName=su_uk [accessed 19 February 2018]; *British Library Newspapers*, http://find.galegroup.com.sheffield.idm.oclc.org/bncn/start.do?prodId=BNCN&userGroupName=su_uk [accessed 19 February 2018]; *British Periodicals*, <https://search-proquest-com.sheffield.idm.oclc.org/britishperiodicals/index?accountid=13828> [accessed 19 February 2018].

¹⁴² Hannah Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society, 1695-1855* (Harlow, 2000), p. 1.

¹⁴³ For the political leanings and readership of newspapers see Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society*, pp. 9-10, 46-64.

illegitimate exclusion was expressed partly in economic terms, and sexual behaviour held as a significant marker of class identity. Wrightson and Levine's view that 'bastardy was very much an offence of the poor and obscure' is echoed throughout the historiography, encouraging historians to view illegitimacy as a facet of social marginalisation, and regulation as a top-down manifestation of class antagonism.¹⁴⁴ Elite illegitimates are discussed predominantly only as symptomatic of male libertinism, and multiple scholars have argued that wealth made illegitimacy negligible.¹⁴⁵ In contrast, chastity, marital fidelity and domestic morality have been considered key markers of middle-class identity, to the extent that a perceived hardening of attitudes in the early nineteenth century has been blamed on aristocratic and working-class absorption of 'respectable' middle-class values.¹⁴⁶ Frost argues that 'illegitimacy was a severe social bar' only among 'the middle class, imbued... with the ideals of domesticity, evangelicalism, and liberalism'.¹⁴⁷ There is, however, much evidence that unmarried parents were drawn from all sections of society, and that those who made and implemented the laws often had illegitimate children of their own.¹⁴⁸ Poor families were not more promiscuous, just more visible. Elite and middling parents had the resources to hide or falsify their children's illegitimacy. This thesis suggests that illegitimates could be absorbed within class-

¹⁴⁴ Keith Wrightson and David Levine, *Poverty and Piety in an English Village: Terling, 1525-1700* (2nd edn, Oxford, 1995), p. 128; Karla Oosterveen, Richard M. Smith and Susan Stewart, 'Family Reconstitution and the Study of Bastardy: Evidence from Certain English Parishes', pp. 113, 118. For illegitimacy legislation as class warfare see Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*.

¹⁴⁵ Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*, pp. 528-34, 568-99; McClure, *Coram's Children*, p. 10; H.J. Habakkuk, *Marriage, Debt and the Estates System: English Landownership, 1650-1950* (Oxford, 1994), p. 214; Zunshine, *Bastards and Foundlings*, pp. 3-4, 18-19, 166. This is primarily based on evidence from a few exceptional cases. The only systematic study is Carlton and Thornton, 'Illegitimacy and Authority'.

¹⁴⁶ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, pp. 18-27; Gillis, *For Better, For Worse*, pp. 130, 135, 171; Clark, *Struggle for the Breeches*, pp. 41, 61-2, 118; Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*, pp. 502-4; Donna T. Andrew, *Aristocratic Vice: The Attack on Duelling, Suicide, Adultery and Gambling in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven, 2013), pp. 1-2, 244; Carter, *Polite Society*, pp. 23, 28-30, 44, 58-9; Margaret Hunt, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender and the Family in England, 1680-1780* (Berkeley, 1996), pp. 67-9, 162, 198-9, 212-3; Turner, *Fashioning Adultery*, p. 196.

¹⁴⁷ Frost, *Illegitimacy*, pp. 7-8.

¹⁴⁸ Bigamy occurred at all social levels, for example, Capp, 'Bigamous Marriage', pp. 544, 547. Analyses of parish registers and bastardy depositions indicate higher-status parents appear in proportion to their presence in the general population: Levine and Wrightson, 'The Social Context of Illegitimacy', pp. 163-4; Rogers, 'Carnal Knowledge', pp. 358-62; Black, 'Illegitimacy and the Urban Poor', pp. 144-50. Hunt also acknowledges that 'there is absolutely no evidence that middling families were any less prone to... sexual peccadilloes than any other group', but does not provide evidence of how these peccadilloes were perceived, Hunt, *Middling Sort*, p. 164.

specific ideals of respectability, and that exclusion and stigma occurred, albeit in different ways, across the social spectrum.

Throughout this thesis I refer to tripartite descriptors of class: 'elite', 'middling' or 'poor'. This categorisation has been employed successfully in the history of family and sexuality, and is a useful model for thinking about differences in experience and attitudes according to socio-economic background.¹⁴⁹ These descriptors must, however, be used with awareness of the range of incomes and cultural backgrounds incorporated within them. 'Elite' refers primarily to noble or gentry families who owned land. Landholding, which was often accompanied by political office, had a distinct cultural and economic impact on family life, marriage and inheritance, all of which have implications for the experience of illegitimacy.¹⁵⁰ There was a considerable range of incomes within this group, and, as Vickery has shown, provincial gentry often socialised with professional or mercantile upper middling sorts under an umbrella of 'genteel' or 'polite' society.¹⁵¹ As subsequent chapters suggest, elites and some sections of the upper middling sort were most likely to provide for their illegitimate children privately and completely avoid the filiation system. The upper middling sort, comprising primarily of provincial and metropolitan professionals, merchants and smallholders, and the lower middling sort of shopkeepers and skilled artisans could diverge considerably on income, but were united by their dependence on their own labour and their economic vulnerability.¹⁵² As Hunt argues, the middling sort were set apart from their landed superiors through mores emphasising restraint and discipline in family and working life.¹⁵³ In the context of this thesis, lower middling individuals were those who paid rates and policed sexual immorality as poor law overseers and churchwardens. They

¹⁴⁹ For the growth of the tripartite model in the eighteenth century see: Penelope J. Corfield, 'Class by Name and Number in Eighteenth-Century Britain', in Penelope J. Corfield (ed.), *Language, History and Class* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 101-30.

¹⁵⁰ For the emphasis on landholding as a marker of elite identity see: Henry French and Mark Rothery, *Man's Estate: Landed Gentry Masculinities, 1660-1900* (Oxford, 2012); John Cannon, *Aristocratic Century: The Peerage of Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 128; Lawrence Stone and Jeanne C. Fawtier Stone, *An Open Elite? England 1540-1880* (Oxford, 1984), pp. 11-13

¹⁵¹ Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, pp. 13-14, 17, 23. There was also considerable social mixing as younger sons of gentry entered the professions in increasing numbers, see Rosemary O'Day, *The Professions in Early Modern England, 1450-1800* (Harlow, 2000), pp. 103, 141-3, 241-3.

¹⁵² Hunt, *Middling Sort*, p. 15.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-5, 14, 16, 21-3, 36-41, 216.

could also be subject to filiation, and, although usually upwardly mobile, were more vulnerable to the economic and reputational consequences of illegitimacy. 'Lower-class' or 'poor' is used to describe those employed in manual work such as weaving, service or agricultural labour. Again, there was a blurred line between the lower middle class and the poor, as individuals often changed occupations and temporarily received poor relief across the life-cycle.¹⁵⁴ The labouring poor were most likely to be subject to filiation, reflecting the application of the 1733 filiation law to those 'likely to become chargeable'.¹⁵⁵ I use 'pauper' to refer specifically in poor law contexts to those receiving relief, but it must be noted that becoming the parent of an illegitimate child often brought individuals into contact with the poor law for the first time.¹⁵⁶ There was also a difference between deserving and undeserving paupers, and as chapter five indicates, the classification of illegitimate children and their parents as deserving changed over the century.

Structure

This thesis is divided into five chapters, starting with the child's relationship with their parents and moving through the life-cycle and outwards in scope to end with the cultural representation of illegitimates as a group. Chapter one examines parental attitudes towards illegitimate children, including the factors governing acknowledgement, and unmarried parenthood as a positive identity. Chapter two tests the inclusion of illegitimates in contemporary notions of household, lineage and kinship families. Chapter three examines whether middling and elite illegitimates

¹⁵⁴ Periodic vulnerability is emphasised in several studies of the poor, see: Steve Hindle, *On the Parish? The Micro-Politics of Poor Relief in Rural England c. 1550-1750* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 4, 19-21, 297, 377; Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, p. 6; Pamela Sharpe and Joanne McEwan, 'Introduction', in Joanne McEwan and Pamela Sharpe (eds.), *Accommodating Poverty: The Housing and Living Arrangements of the English Poor, c. 1600-1850* (Basingstoke, 2011), pp. 1-21; Alannah Tomkins and Steven King, 'Introduction' in Alannah Tomkins and Steven King (eds), *The Poor in England, 1700-1850, An Economy of Makeshifts* (Manchester, 2003), pp. 1-38; Tim Wales, 'Poverty, Poor Relief and the Life-Cycle: Some Evidence from Seventeenth-Century Norfolk', in Richard M. Smith (ed.), *Land, Kinship and Life-Cycle* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 351-404.

¹⁵⁵ 6 Geo. 2. c. 31, *An Act for the Relief of Parishes and other places from such Charges as may arise from Bastard Children born within the same*, 1733, in John Tidd Pratt (ed.), *A Collection of all the Statutes in Force respecting the Relief and Regulation of the Poor* (2nd edn, London, 1843), pp. 83-5.

¹⁵⁶ On the specific usage of 'pauper' see: Hindle, *On the Parish*, p. 13; Tim Hitchcock and Robert Shoemaker, *London Lives: Poverty, Crime and the Making of a Modern City, 1690-1800* (Cambridge, 2015), pp. 4-5; A.W. Coats, 'The Relief of Poverty: Attitudes to Labour and Economic Change in England, 1660-1782', *International Review of Social History* 21 (1976), p. 101.

experienced reduced education, occupation and marriage opportunities, and includes quantitative analysis of a peerage group. Chapter four investigates the extent of official identification and social discrimination towards illegitimates, including their effect on illegitimates' sense of shame and identity. Chapter five analyses the changing meaning of illegitimacy in eighteenth-century culture. Finally, I conclude that attitudes towards illegitimates were highly dependent on class, changed over the course of the century, and that the impact of illegitimacy in this period was significant and much more variable than hitherto supposed.

Chapter One: Parenthood

Introduction

In 1756, lawyer William Blackstone clearly differentiated the duties of married and unmarried parents:

The duties of parents to legitimate children are, 1. Maintenance. 2. Protection. 3. Education... The duty of parents to bastards is only that of maintenance.¹

An illegitimate child had a fundamental right to parental maintenance. But, in clearly excluding illegitimate children from 'protection' and 'education', Blackstone implied that normative standards of longer-term care, guidance, and authority, were not expected from unmarried parents. This chapter questions this distinction, focusing on the extent to which unmarried parents saw their parenthood as involving wider responsibilities than maintenance, and the extent to which unmarried parenthood could be seen as a positive identity. It suggests that unmarried parents justified and perceived their identities using similar ideals to their married counterparts.

Fatherhood formed a positive component of masculine identity through its association with marriage, householding and authority over dependents of wife and child. These ideals had remarkable longevity from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, documented in numerous studies emphasising the importance of householding and its accompanying display of discipline, authority and credit, both moral and financial, to masculine reputation.² Marriage and male engagement with the domestic space have also been seen as key to the later eighteenth-century idealisation of the tender, domestic father, in which familial sentiment provided

¹ William Blackstone, *An Analysis of the Laws of England* (1st edn, Oxford, 1756), p. 26. Blackstone was describing a principle of illegitimate entitlement to paternal support that had long been emphasised in both canon law and Roman law, see R.H. Helmholz, *Canon Law and the Law of England* (London, 1987), pp. 170-2.

² Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 70, 73-5; Karen Harvey, *The Little Republic: Masculinity and Domestic Authority in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2012); pp. 1-5, 7, 46-7; Trev L. Broughton and Helen Rogers, 'Introduction', in Trev L. Broughton and Helen Rogers (eds), *Gender and Fatherhood in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke, 2007), pp. 7-8; John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (2nd edn, New Haven, 2007), p. 108.

personal fulfilment and improved public reputation.³ Both of these concepts of ideal masculinity rested on the association of fatherhood with moral virtue, linked in the seventeenth century by the connection between household and civic order, and by the early nineteenth by the association of domesticity with evangelical religion and companionate marriage.⁴

Historians have suggested in contrast that unmarried fatherhood was an overwhelmingly negative experience, associated with loss of control, animalistic lust and financial debt.⁵ Men's attempts to avoid paternity, through infanticide, abandonment or misaffiliation, and the frequent use of 'bastard-begetter' or 'whoremonger' as slander terms, certainly suggest that unmarried fatherhood was not a valued identity, and could cause considerable reputational and financial damage.⁶ It is, however, not yet clear how concern for reputation altered men's relationship with their illegitimate children. Unmarried fathers were apparently not expected to fulfil many of the normative obligations of fatherhood, described by Shepard as 'a delicate balance of authority, nurture, instruction and maintenance'.⁷ Whereas married fathers were expected to be involved in actively guiding, disciplining and, to a certain extent, spending time with and nurturing their children, the most expected of unmarried fathers seems to have been maintenance.⁸ The historiographical consensus has been that even this expectation was frequently avoided; unmarried fathers exhibited a 'lack of interest in supporting their child

³ Joanne Bailey, *Parenting in England, 1760-1830: Emotion, Identity, and Generation* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 30, 134.

⁴ Tosh, *A Man's Place*, pp. 5-6, 29, 35-7, 139; Joanne Bailey, '"A Very Sensible Man": Imagining Fatherhood in England, c 1760-1830', *History* 95 (2010), p. 271. Considerable continuity in the association between masculinity and religious virtue is noted in Hannah Barker, 'Soul, Purse and Family: Middling and Lower-Class Masculinity in Eighteenth-Century Manchester', *Social History* 33 (2008), p. 13.

⁵ Ben Harvey, 'The Putative Fathers of Swinton, England: Illegitimate Behavior under the Old Poor Laws, 1797-1835', *Journal of Family History* 40.3 (2015), pp. 384, 387-8; Bernard Capp, 'The Double Standard Revisited: Plebeian Women and Male Sexual Reputation in Early Modern England', *Past & Present* 162 (1999), pp. 70-100; Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, pp. 154-6, 168.

⁶ Patricia Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children in England, 1580-1800* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 80-5; Alexandra Shepard, 'Brokering Fatherhood: Illegitimacy and Paternal Rights and Responsibilities in Early Modern England', in Steve Hindle, Alexandra Shepard and John Walter (eds), *Remaking English Society: Social Relations and Social Change in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge, 2013), pp. 50-1.

⁷ Shepard, 'Brokering Fatherhood', p. 48.

⁸ For these normative responsibilities see: Tosh, *A Man's Place*, pp. 85-6, 89; Bailey, '"Sensible Man"', p. 279; Anthony Fletcher, *Growing up in England: The Experience of Childhood, 1600-1914* (New Haven, 2008), pp. 38, 56.

financially and for its general welfare' and a 'general unwillingness to undertake even the basic duty of maintenance'.⁹ Although Shepard and Nutt have suggested that the poor law may have obstructed greater paternal involvement, or at least obscured willing fathers from historians' view, there is as yet limited understanding of the complexities that could have characterised men's relationship with their illegitimate children beyond maintenance.¹⁰

Unmarried mothers were also excluded from ideals of motherhood and feminine identity. Most historiography has emphasised mothering as a physical experience, suggesting that seventeenth- and eighteenth-century women gained authority and fulfilment from the experience of pregnancy, childbirth and physically caring for children.¹¹ Gowing found that unmarried mothers were, in contrast, excluded from female rituals of solidarity during childbirth. Maternity exposed single women to community suspicion, and led more often to a denial of maternity than a celebration.¹² This partly reflected the importance of chastity to female reputation, which seems to have applied at all social levels.¹³ This exclusion may only have increased over the century as, according to Perry, motherhood was increasingly separated from female sexual feeling and it became less acceptable to delegate aspects of maternity, such as breastfeeding, to other women.¹⁴ As will be discussed, unmarried mothers often had to be physically absent from their children, but this did not necessarily negate their claims to maternal status or identity.

⁹ Harvey, 'Putative Fathers', p. 379; Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, p. 29.

¹⁰ Shepard, 'Brokering Fatherhood', pp. 61-2; Thomas Nutt, "'There may be supposed something of natural affection": Fatherhood, Affiliation and the Maintenance of Illegitimate Children in Eighteenth and Early-Nineteenth-Century England', paper delivered at the *Network for Early European Research Conference*, University of Western Australia (3-8 July 2007), p. 21.

¹¹ Patricia Crawford, 'The Construction and Experience of Maternity in Seventeenth-Century England', in Valerie Fildes (ed.), *Women as Mothers in Pre-Industrial England: Essays in Memory of Dorothy McLaren* (London, 1990), pp. 3-39; Bailey, *Parenting in England*, pp. 31, 51, 53-4.

¹² Laura Gowing, *Common Bodies: Women, Touch and Power in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven, 2003), pp. 73, 138-41, 156-65.

¹³ Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words, and Sex in Early Modern London* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 1-4. This is not, of course, to say that chastity did not matter to male reputation, but perhaps in different ways, see: David Turner, "'Nothing is so secret but shall be revealed": The Scandalous Life of Robert Foulkes', in Tim Hitchcock and Michèle Cohen (eds), *English Masculinities, 1660-1800* (London, 1999), pp. 169-92; Capp, 'The Double Standard Revisited'.

¹⁴ Ruth Perry, 'Colonizing the Breast: Sexuality and Maternity in Eighteenth-Century England', *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 2.2 (1991), pp. 209, 220.

Analysis of unmarried women's ability to mother their children has achieved little consensus. Trumbach emphasised mothers' shame, desperation and isolation, echoed in much of the literature on infanticide and abandonment.¹⁵ Hitchcock and Postles emphasised the variability of community responses; some women were ostracised, whereas others received compassion and support at odds with an outwardly punitive poor law and church court system.¹⁶ Others, particularly Crawford and Evans, argued that many women asserted their maternal identity and responsibility, but were prevented from performing the normative duties of nurture due to poverty. In this, their circumstances differed little from married poor mothers.¹⁷ This conclusion is unsurprising given that poor mothers are those most often studied, and it remains unclear whether unmarried maternity operated similarly among wealthier social groups.

Unmarried parenthood has largely been studied through the prism of parental interaction with the authorities, via the poor law, church courts or Foundling Hospital.¹⁸ This chapter uses similar material - poor law documents and pauper letters from early-eighteenth-century Westminster and early-nineteenth-century Essex - but compares it with correspondence and life-writing from parents themselves. This combination tests the extent to which the dominant narrative of paternal reluctance, in particular, was a product of sources generated specifically in

¹⁵ Randolph Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution. Volume One: Heterosexuality and the Third Gender in Enlightenment London* (Chicago, 1998), pp. 233, 275-6, 295-301; Anne-Marie Kilday, 'Monsters of the Vilest Kind': Infanticidal Women and Attitudes to their Criminality in Eighteenth-Century Scotland', *Family and Community History* 11.2 (2008), pp. 100-16; R.W. Malcolmson, 'Infanticide in the Eighteenth Century', in J.S. Cockburn (ed.), *Crime in England, 1550-1800* (London, 1977), pp. 192-4, 203.

¹⁶ Tim Hitchcock, 'Unlawfully begotten on her body': Illegitimacy and the Parish Poor in St Luke's Chelsea', in Tim Hitchcock, Peter King and Pamela Sharpe (eds), *Chronicling Poverty: The Voices and Strategies of the English Poor, 1640-1840*, (Basingstoke, 1997), pp. 70-86; Dave Postles, 'Surviving Lone Motherhood in Early-Modern England', *Seventeenth Century* 21.1 (2006), pp. 160-83.

¹⁷ Tanya Evans, 'Unfortunate Objects': Lone Mothers in Eighteenth-Century London (Basingstoke, 2005), pp. 3-5, 45, 133; Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, p. 4.

¹⁸ Studies of unmarried parenthood which rely on sources generated by the state include: Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*; Evans, 'Unfortunate Objects'; Nutt, 'Natural Affection'; Shepard, 'Brokering Fatherhood'; John Black, 'Illegitimacy and the Urban Poor in London, 1740-1830', Ph.D. thesis (Royal Holloway, University of London, 2000). Harvey uses pauper letters, but not any evidence not generated in a poor law context, see Harvey, 'Putative Fathers'. Barclay uses correspondence written by an elite father, but these are still primarily of a financial nature, see Katie Barclay, 'Illicit Intimacies: The Imagined "Homes" of Gilbert Innes of Stow and his Mistresses (1751-1832)', *Gender & History* 27.3 (2015), pp. 576-90.

the context of poor relief. Poor law sources tend to emphasise maintenance as the primary parental responsibility because they were most concerned with minimising parish costs, and both poor law and court records disproportionately concern parents who contested or avoided their responsibilities.¹⁹ It is unclear whether the existence of a filiation record means that a father was unwilling. The 1733 filiation act ordered that a pregnant single women in danger of giving birth to 'a bastard child which shall be chargeable or likely to become chargeable' was to be examined and her child filiated by a magistrate, who could then compel the putative father to pay maintenance.²⁰ Clearly, as this chapter will show, the illegitimate children of wealthy fathers often never came to parish attention, but filiation may also have been enforced by the parish on men otherwise willing to fulfil paternal responsibility, simply as a means of formalising an existing arrangement.²¹ The inclusion of non-parochial sources can indicate these informal arrangements, as well as the reasons behind the denial or avoidance of parenthood. This method is not perfect; there are relatively few surviving examples of life-writing from lower-status individuals, and often relationships appear only from one party's point of view. Evidence of unmarried parenthood among the wealthy often appears from the point of view of fathers, who may have overemphasised the positive aspects of their paternal responsibilities. However, this method does indicate how parents saw themselves and the ideals they used to describe their parental identities, rather than indicating only how they were perceived by the state.

This chapter also assesses the importance of socio-economic status in determining experiences of unmarried parenthood. Many of the ideals of domestic fatherhood and a nurturing, desexualised motherhood have primarily been observed among middling sorts.²² Crawford argues that poverty prevented many parents, regardless of marital status, from exercising normative responsibilities, and that the ideals of

¹⁹ This problem is noted by Thomas Nutt and Alexandra Shepard, but they do not suggest any ways to remedy the issue, see: Nutt, 'Natural Affection', p. 20; Shepard, 'Brokering Fatherhood', p. 61.

²⁰ 6 Geo. 2. c. 31, *An Act for the Relief of Parishes and other places from such Charges as may arise from Bastard Children born within the same*, 1733, in John Tidd Pratt (ed.), *A Collection of all the Statutes in Force respecting the Relief and Regulation of the Poor* (2nd edn, London, 1843), pp. 83-5.

²¹ Early-nineteenth-century examples of these informal arrangements are noted in Samantha Williams, 'The Maintenance of Bastard Children in London, 1790-1834', *Economic History Review* 69.3 (2016), p. 957.

²² Tosh, *A Man's Place*; Perry, 'Colonizing the Breast', p. 222.

paternal authority and maternal nurture meant little when parents could not afford to maintain an independent household with a male breadwinner.²³ Similarly, studies of masculinity have emphasised the class-specific nature of many masculine ideals of household authority and sexual honour, necessitating young or poor men to seek alternative means of asserting masculinity.²⁴ Bailey argues, in contrast, that poor married parents regularly adopted and manipulated middling ideals, even if these ideals did not match reality.²⁵ An awareness of class difference has generally not been applied to the history of unmarried parenthood. In seeing unmarried parenthood largely as affecting only the poor, and accessible only through poor law sources, historians have been unable to discern which restrictions of unmarried parenthood resulted from poverty, rather than illegitimacy. Socio-economic status was significant beyond economic subsistence, as it influenced individuals' understanding of parental responsibility, shame and reputation, and their intersection with class-based gender identities. This chapter is accordingly divided into two sections: the experiences of fathers and mothers within the poor law, and outside the poor law. This is not a simple distinction between the poor and the propertied, as many children had parents of unequal status. It does, however, reflect the importance of the poor law in shaping parent-child relationships.

This chapter examines the extent to which unmarried parents fulfilled parental obligations, including maintenance, but also Blackstone's notions of protection and education: physical care, concern for the child's welfare, and authority and responsibility over the child. It indicates how unmarried parents perceived their identities as parents, and whether or not they experienced parenthood in the same way as their married counterparts. Within these objectives, this chapter reconsiders the importance of sexual reputation to the experience of unmarried parenthood. Reputation was undoubtedly important; individuals acted according to established

²³ Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, pp. 148-9, 165; Evans, 'Unfortunate Objects', p. 129.

²⁴ Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, pp. 16-17, 36-8, 188; Faramerz Dabhoiwala, 'The Construction of Honour, Reputation and Status in Late-Seventeenth- and Early-Eighteenth-Century England,' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6 (1996), pp. 201-13. For a contrary view that concern for sexual reputation 'cut across traditional class differences' see Elizabeth Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England: Honour, Sex and Marriage* (London, 1999), pp. 9-10, 39.

²⁵ Joanne Bailey, '"Think Wot a Mother Must Feel": Parenting in English Pauper Letters, c. 1760-1834', *Family and Community History* 13.1 (2010), pp. 5-19; Bailey, *Parenting in England*, pp. 6, 43-5, 247.

cultural codes and with concern for how others saw them. However, reputation was not only based on sexual behaviour. The abandonment or acknowledgement of children was also governed by complex attitudes towards responsibility, blood connection and financial probity. Illicit sexuality did not necessarily result in resentment towards children, and there was a difference between a public denial of parenthood out of concern for reputation and the private, positive acknowledgement of children within certain contexts. This chapter also reassesses the perceived separation between biological and social parenthood. An emphasis on the poor law injunction that fathers were only 'reputed' has led to the suggestion that only marriage conveyed the responsibilities of social fatherhood, and that a genetic link was insufficient claim to a normative parent-child relationship.²⁶ As we shall see, however, many of the men discussed here related biological paternity to the responsibilities of fatherhood and based their avoidance of paternal duties on the absence of this blood link. This echoed the continued cultural significance of blood in discussions of legitimate familial affection and responsibility.²⁷

Filiated Fathers

The poor law characterised the primary duty of unmarried paternity as financial. This principle appeared first under the 1576 poor law, which held both parents liable for maintenance and physical care and codified within secular law a much older principle of parental responsibility that had been enforced under the church courts.²⁸ As Nutt argues, the 1733 amendment to the poor law made financial responsibility more explicitly gendered. Mothers were compelled to name a putative father and fathers were compelled to pay the parish for lying-in costs and the child's future maintenance, either through disbursement of a lump sum, or a promise to pay weekly instalments. Paternal payment would allow for maternal nurture.²⁹ Although

²⁶ Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, p. 71; Shepard, 'Brokering Fatherhood', pp. 41-4.

²⁷ Patricia Crawford, *Blood, Bodies and Families in Early Modern England* (Harlow, 2004), pp. 2, 114-5.

²⁸ 18 Eliz. c.3, *Justices of Peace shall order the Punishment of the Mother, and reputed Father of a Bastard, &c*, 1576, in John Tidd Pratt (ed.), *A Collection of all the Statutes in Force respecting the Relief and Regulation of the Poor* (2nd edn, London, 1843), p. 28; Thomas Nutt, 'The Paradox and Problems of Illegitimate Paternity in Old Poor Law Essex', in Alysa Levene, Thomas Nutt and Samantha Williams (eds), *Illegitimacy in Britain, 1700-1920* (Basingstoke, 2005), p. 103; Helmholz, *Canon Law*, p. 184.

²⁹ Nutt, 'Paradox and Problems', pp. 103-4. For a legal overview see: Williams, 'Maintenance of Bastard Children', pp. 949-50; Michael Dalton and William Nelson, *The Country Justice*:

the parish considered it a father's duty to provide, quantitative evidence suggests that many men did not pay. Black found that 40 percent of filiated fathers in St Clement Danes, London, absconded or were committed to gaol for non-payment.³⁰ Nutt similarly found that, on average, parishes recouped from fathers only half of what they disbursed in the early nineteenth century.³¹ This section investigates why fathers did not pay. Non-payment may have reflected paternal inability rather than unwillingness, or masculine anxiety over belief in biological paternity.³² It suggests that the filiation system discouraged fathers from having a positive relationship with their child, and that shame and resentment related more to attitudes towards debt and loss of control, rather than simply the reputational damage of extra-marital sex.

Poverty was a significant barrier to the fulfilment of the paternal duty of maintenance. The late-eighteenth-century average lump sum was 20 pounds and the average weekly payment around two shillings and sixpence, a quarter of an Essex agricultural labourer's weekly wage.³³ This was beyond the reach of many men, particularly those with little or no savings and within an economy subject to recurrent depressions.³⁴ Unmarried father Henry Blomfield, a 'gardiner', wrote 18 letters to the overseers of St Peter, Colchester between 1819 and 1824. His payments of one pound per quarter were repeatedly late, as he found it '[e]xtremely hard to pay 4 Pounds out of the Small Wages of 10£ per year.'³⁵ Blomfield was apparently

containing the practice, duty and power of the Justices of the Peace, As well in as out of their sessions (London, 1727), pp. 44-7.

³⁰ This figure is based on 251 men filiated in St Clement Danes between 1786 and 1798, Black, 'Illegitimacy and the Urban Poor', p. 236. It did, however, vary hugely from parish to parish. Williams found in London parishes between 1797 and 1835, 8-9 percent of men were never found and 10 percent in one parish (13 out of 135) were gaoled, Williams, 'Maintenance of Bastard Children', pp. 957, 959.

³¹ This is based on a survey of 163 parishes with quantifiable results, Thomas Nutt, 'Illegitimacy, Paternal Financial Responsibility, and the 1834 Poor Law Commission Report: The Myth of the Old Poor Law and the Making of the New', *Economic History Review* 63.2 (2010), p. 346. Similar conclusions are in Williams, 'Maintenance of Bastard Children', p. 953.

³² Harvey just says that fathers didn't see illegitimate children as their responsibility, Harvey, 'Putative Fathers', p. 386.

³³ Nutt, 'Paradox and Problems', p. 104.

³⁴ K.D.M. Snell, *Annals of the Labouring Poor: Social Change in Agrarian England, 1660-1900* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 37-8.

³⁵ *Essex Pauper Letters, 1731-1837*, ed. Thomas Sokoll (Oxford, 2006), p. 446, Mary Martin to the overseers of St Peter, Colchester, 21 January 1825; ERO: D/P178/18/23, Henry Blomfield to Mr Swinborne, overseer of St Peter, Colchester, 11 February 1820. £10 a year fits with the wages of an agricultural labourer or weaver estimated in Steve Hindle, *On the Parish? The Micro-Politics of Poor Relief in Rural England c. 1550-1750* (Oxford, 2004), p. 23.

living hand-to-mouth; he was unable to pay until he received his quarterly wages, and at one point defaulted having been 'out of Situation for upwards of two Months & being so unwell that I was unable to worke.'³⁶ Blomfield directly related the heavy financial burden and the reputational damage of defaulting on debts to resentment of his child. In 1821 he feared he must 'come to Prison for I am... looked at with a Severe Face from those who have Trusted me... I cannot pay them at the appointed time because of sending the money for this Cursed Bastard'.³⁷ Rates of paternal payment varied regionally, with the highest levels associated with high rates of employment, suggesting that when men could pay, they did.³⁸ It is, however, unsurprising that many men defaulted on payments and that financial pressure damaged the father-child relationship as, in Blomfield's words 'money is a cramping thing to get hold of at al times.'³⁹

The antagonistic filiation and maintenance process did not facilitate a relationship between father and child. Non-payment was punishable by three months imprisonment, so fear of punishment caused some men to abscond.⁴⁰ Apprentice Thomas Johnson had the choice of paying maintenance or enlisting in the army but, '[a]s I had but little money, and less relish to be shot at', he decided to leave London, 'pleased with the prospect of seeing the country, and being released from my trouble'.⁴¹ The parish may have encouraged the practice of paying a one-off lump sum allowing fathers to complete the filiation process quickly without any future need for contact with the child.⁴² Considerable popular confusion about liability further muddied the waters of financial responsibility and increased antagonism between father and parish. The amount and duration of payments and the payment

³⁶ ERO: D/P178/18/23, Henry Blomfield to Mr Swinborne, overseer of St Peter, Colchester, 22 January [n.d.]; 2 August 1822

³⁷ ERO: D/P178/18/23, Henry Blomfield to Mr Swinborne, overseer of St Peter, Colchester, 30 July 1821. Resentment is also noted as a common response in Harvey, 'Putative Fathers', p. 380.

³⁸ Nutt, 'Natural Affection', p. 11.

³⁹ ERO: D/P178/18/23, Henry Blomfield to the overseers of St Peter, Colchester, 22 January 1824.

⁴⁰ Nutt, 'Natural Affection', p. 12; Shepard, 'Brokering Fatherhood', p. 49.

⁴¹ Thomas Johnson, 'The Life of the Author', ed. Jacob Simon, *Furniture History* 39 (2003), p. 21.

⁴² It is debateable whether fathers could choose to pay a lump sum or whether this was the parish's decision, see Williams, 'Maintenance of Bastard Children', pp. 960-1.

process varied wildly, a particular problem if parents lived in different parishes.⁴³ In 1756 overseer Thomas Turner refused to continue paying maintenance to Ann Caine and her four-year-old illegitimate daughter unless the child's father, Peter Adams, reimbursed the parish. Adams refused, telling Turner 'it was [the parish's] business to pay it'; as he had paid a lump sum on the child's birth he was indemnified for future costs. Turner appealed to the magistrate but Adams' opinion was upheld.⁴⁴ Similarly, Lucy Nevill had received the standard two shillings and sixpence weekly maintenance for her illegitimate child, Abraham, from birth. In 1828, when Abraham turned seven, his father abruptly stopped payments because he thought that the law only required maintenance up to seven years old. The parish responsible, Chelmsford, responded that the father was 'laboring under a very erroneous impression... he is by Law liable to maintain it till it can get its own living, and therefore he must be called upon to do so'.⁴⁵ It is difficult here to separate out the causes of non-payment. Clearly, these fathers attempted to discharge their minimum obligations as soon as possible. However, the confrontational and often confusing filiation process reduced paternal choices; if a father could not pay, or if their payment was disputed, then they would be unlikely to remain in contact with the child and risk imprisonment.

Some men also tried to hide their paternity due to reputational concern. Other scholars have suggested that unmarried fatherhood could considerably damage male reputation as it was associated with a bestial lack of control or poor household authority, particularly in adulterous or master-servant relationships. Public financial liability could also damage masculine independence and credit.⁴⁶ Fathers could avoid publicity and reputational damage by encouraging mothers to misaffiliate - to falsely accuse another man. Shepard's study of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century

⁴³ Margaret A. Lyle, 'Regionality in the Late Old Poor Law: The Treatment of Chargeable Bastards from Rural Queries', *Agricultural History Review* 53 (2005), pp. 144-5; Hindle, *On the Parish*, pp. 366-71, 379-80; Harvey, 'Putative Fathers', p. 385.

⁴⁴ By the terms of the 1733 law (6 Geo. 2. c. 31), as they had accepted the bond they couldn't then demand more. *The Diary of Thomas Turner, 1754-1765*, ed. David Vaisey (Oxford, 1984), pp. 56-8.

⁴⁵ *Essex Pauper Letters*, p. 199, Messrs Church & sons, solicitors, to James Read, vestry clerk of Chelmsford, 3 February 1828.

⁴⁶ Shepard, 'Brokering Fatherhood', pp. 50-1; Capp, 'The Double Standard Revisited'; Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, pp. 157-73; Joanne Bailey, *Unquiet Lives: Marriage and Marriage Breakdown in England, 1660-1800* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 147-9; Foyster, *Manhood*, pp. 1, 5, 9-10, 39.

court cases suggests that fathers often bribed women to misaffiliate, suggesting the primary motive was to avoid shame, not expense.⁴⁷ A survey of 12 disputed filiation cases from Essex between 1814 and 1834 suggests similar motivations were at work in a later period but also that this phenomenon was specific to socio-economic status. In 11 of the 12 cases fathers persuaded mothers to misaffiliate, and in all these cases the father was of higher social status than both the mother or the man falsely accused, and often the mother's employer.⁴⁸ In 1829 pregnant Jane Blank stated she had been 'intimidated' by the 'violent conduct' of George Herbert, a customs house officer, into filiating on Joshua Beckett, a cooper.⁴⁹ In another case in 1822, Ann Gowers stated that her child's father Leonard Goodeve, a yeoman, had encouraged her 'to admit one of the workmen Denny to her favors in order if there was a Child produced to impose it on him'.⁵⁰ In both cases the court believed the mother's accusations. In all 11 cases fathers belonged to a loosely defined 'middling sort'.⁵¹ These men had some community standing, and therefore something to lose, but were also not wealthy or powerful enough for the expense or reputational risk to be negligible. Misaffiliation appears less common among lower social groups, perhaps because young poor men lacked the resources to intimidate their lovers, or due to greater public knowledge of relationships that often began as courtships. Similarly, elite men were rarely named in paternity disputes. The authorities may have refused to believe maternal accusations against elites but wealthier men may also have been less concerned with cost and paid voluntarily, even if they doubted their paternity, to avoid public litigation. Middling men were most concerned with hiding paternity, suggesting that it was perceived to have some negative impact on social or material credit.

⁴⁷ Shepard, 'Brokering Fatherhood', pp. 52-3. Crawford has also found evidence of bribes from wealthier men from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, pp. 86-7.

⁴⁸ These cases are taken from *Narratives of the Poor in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, ed. Steven King, Thomas Nutt and Alannah Tomkins (London, 2006), vol. 1, pp. 135-203. For more on this source see introduction, p. 39. The only case of parity was atypical as it involved rape and procurement of abortifacients, not the standard collusion and misaffiliation. Similar master-servant dynamics have been observed elsewhere, Black, 'Illegitimacy and the Urban Poor', p. 222; Ginger Frost, *Illegitimacy in English Law and Society, 1860-1930* (Manchester, 2016), pp. 85-88.

⁴⁹ ERO: P/CM1/12, minutes, 11-28 August 1829, in *Narratives*, pp. 144-6.

⁵⁰ ERO: P/CM1/7, minutes, 16 August 1822, in *Narratives*, p. 173.

⁵¹ Occupations included a grocer, a miller, a cooper, a yeoman, and a butcher.

The relationship between paternity and reputation was complex, however. Although unmarried paternity could damage a man's credit, failure to pay could be even more damaging. The belief that fathers should pay was widespread. Nutt, Clark and Cody all argue that the majority of respondents to Rural and Town Queries in preparation for the 1834 New Poor Law considered fathers to be more financially responsible than mothers, viewing payment as moral justice.⁵² Evans found similarly that ballads conceptualised paternal responsibility as 'justice and recompense'.⁵³ This was not only closely related to normative masculine standards of honesty and dependability but also echoed a primary duty of legitimate fatherhood.⁵⁴ Coachman John Jelly wrote to the mother of his one-month-old illegitimate daughter in 1819. He 'was rather Surprised... with you aCusen me with Neglect as my Child it has not been in my power to send you any thing at present but I have Rote to you twice with in this month... as for the dear Child I must pay wat ever is Settled by the parish'.⁵⁵ Jelly was affronted by the accusation of evading payment, and accepted his duty towards 'my Child'.

For other fathers, the equation of non-payment with loss of credit did not necessarily bolster the parent-child relationship. Maintenance was often conceptualised as a debt owed to the parish, not as a paternal responsibility. In 18 letters Henry Blomfield only once referred directly to a child and then only in an administrative reference to 'the Payment... Due to the Parish of St Peters concerning a male Bastard Child.' He never mentioned paternity.⁵⁶ This focus on financial debt was not only a product of sources produced by the poor law. The political enemies of radical weaver Samuel Bamford attempted to discredit him in 1817 by having him arrested for non-payment of maintenance, to show that his actions were not 'compatible with the strictest

⁵² Anna Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class* (Berkeley, 1995), pp. 48, 189-90; Nutt, 'Paternal Financial Responsibility', pp. 340, 342, 348-51.

⁵³ Tanya Evans, "'Blooming Virgins all Beware": Love, Courtship, and Illegitimacy in Eighteenth-Century British Popular Literature', in Alysa Levene, Thomas Nutt and Samantha Williams (eds), *Illegitimacy in Britain, 1700-1920* (Basingstoke, 2005), p. 28. This diminished in the nineteenth century, see Evans, 'Unfortunate Objects', p. 58.

⁵⁴ Bailey, *Parenting in England*, pp. 65-7, 70, 147-8, 158; Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, pp. 186-91.

⁵⁵ ERO: P/C P8, John Jelly to Ann Purkis, 3 June 1819, in *Narratives*, pp. 157-8.

⁵⁶ ERO: D/P178/18/23, Henry Blomfield to the overseers of St Peter, Colchester, 16 May 1820. Similar language is used by unmarried fathers John Cannon and Thomas Johnson. A similar point in relation to the seventeenth century is made in Shepard, 'Brokering Fatherhood', p. 61.

morality'.⁵⁷ In an autobiographical pamphlet, printed as part of his enfranchisement campaign, Bamford described his imprisonment as a great injustice, asserting that he had always paid his maintenance and therefore discharged his responsibility. He defended himself on his financial probity, not on the charge of fathering a child.⁵⁸ Payment was enough to satisfy his honour, and he freely admitted that after 'ma[king] all things right with the overseers' he had no other contact with the child, suggesting that he did not consider this revelation damaging to his masculinity.⁵⁹ Financial probity was key to his demands for working-class political enfranchisement, calling on its much older associations with masculine honour and independence within the early modern 'culture of credit'.⁶⁰ Even if men did not link the payment of paternal maintenance to the performance of other normative paternal duties, they nonetheless took the payment seriously as a debt and did not always try to evade it. An honour system was at work here but in this case it related more to paternal financial responsibility rather than the shame of illicit sexuality.

Paternal reluctance may also indicate deeper issues about the nature of illegitimate paternity, rather than a simple desire to evade responsibility. Some men refused to pay, or paid unwillingly, because they disputed their paternity. They were therefore able to separate the child from their perceptions of paternal duty; as the child was not theirs, they had no claim. As Crawford argues, men 'traded on the uncertainty of paternity in disclaiming responsibility'.⁶¹ Thomas Johnson disputed his paternity of the child of his master's maid, Mary, on the grounds that it could belong to any man in the house. Johnson 'told her, if it was mine, I undoubtedly had a right do all in my

⁵⁷ Samuel Bamford, 'An Account of the Arrest and Imprisonment of Samuel Bamford, Middleton, on Suspicion of High Treason. Written by Himself' (Manchester, 1817), in *The Autobiography of Samuel Bamford, Volume One, Early Days*, ed. W.H. Chaloner (London, 1967), p. 325. For an account of Bamford's sexual relationships in relation to courtship practices see Emma Griffin, 'Sex, Illegitimacy and Social Change in Industrialising Britain', *Social History* 38 (2013), pp. 151-3. On Bamford's political activities see: Paul A. Custer, 'Refiguring Jemima: Gender, Work and Politics in Lancashire, 1770-1820', *Past & Present* 195 (2007), pp. 127-58; Martin Hewitt, 'Radicalism and the Victorian Working Class: The Case of Samuel Bamford', *Historical Journal* 34 (1991), pp. 873-92.

⁵⁸ Bamford, 'Arrest', pp. 318, 322.

⁵⁹ Samuel Bamford, *Early Days*, ed. Henry Dunckley (London, 1893), p. 194.

⁶⁰ Clark, *Struggle for the Breeches*, pp. 6-7, 48; Matthew McCormack, "'Married Men and the Fathers of Families": Fatherhood and Franchise Reform in Britain', in Trev. L. Broughton and Helen Rogers (eds), *Gender and Fatherhood in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke, 2007), pp. 45-6, 48; Shepard *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 37; Barker, 'Soul, Purse, and Family', pp. 33-4.

⁶¹ Crawford, *Blood*, p. 130.

power to maintain it'.⁶² Men accepted that fathers should maintain their illegitimate children but the sticking point was the woman's ability to prove the child's paternity. Unmarried fatherhood was not only about the shame of public discovery of illicit sex but also reflected the complexities of reproductive power between the genders and the injury of feeling falsely accused. Men feared being duped into taking financial and social responsibility for a child that was not theirs, in effect being cuckolded by a deceitful woman and the child's true father.⁶³ This feeling was reinforced by the poor law which continually labelled men as only reputed or putative fathers, even after filiation, and placed considerable importance on the mother's oath.⁶⁴ As Gowing suggests, cuckoldry was not only about male failure to control the sexuality of women within their household but crystallised deeper anxieties about female reproductive deception and the fear of being financially or socially responsible for another man's child.⁶⁵ Masculine anxiety did not only apply to married men with adulterous wives.⁶⁶

For exciseman John Cannon, doubtful paternity was the key variable in determining his attitude to unmarried fatherhood.⁶⁷ In 1710, aged 26 and unmarried, Cannon had a brief affair with a maidservant, Ann Heister, who then filiated the child on Cannon. Writing his memoir with hindsight 30 years later, he presented himself as the innocent victim of his own uncontrollable male, 'unlawful & inordinate lust', 'drawn in & ensnared' by the sexually experienced Heister, whom, he considered, 'would use all ways & means with me till she was with child in hopes to force me to marry

⁶² Johnson, 'Life', p. 18.

⁶³ Crawford, *Blood*, p. 128.

⁶⁴ Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, pp. 75, 96. In one example the father remained 'reputed' even though he freely admitted paternity and witnesses testified that he had cohabited with the children's mother for the past two years, ERO: P/C P9, examination of Elizabeth Dowsett, and affidavits by Mary Smith and Thomas Mattham, 7 April 1820, in *Narratives*, pp. 198-9.

⁶⁵ Gowing, *Common Bodies*, pp. 177-9.

⁶⁶ For the cultural ubiquity of cuckoldry see: Foyster, *Manhood*, pp. 66-72, 104-115, 121-25; David M. Turner, *Fashioning Adultery: Gender, Sex, and Civility in England, 1660-1740* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 83-115; Mary E. Fissell, *Vernacular Bodies: The Politics of Reproduction in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 212-20.

⁶⁷ Cannon's extra-marital sexual activities and masculinity have been documented, but not in relation to his attitude towards his illegitimate child. See: Griffin, 'Sex, Illegitimacy and Social Change', pp. 144-7; Tim Hitchcock, 'Sociability and Misogyny in the Life of John Cannon, 1684-1743', in Tim Hitchcock and Michèle Cohen (eds), *English Masculinities, 1660-1800* (London, 1999), pp. 25-43. For his middling social status see Craig Muldrew, 'Class and Credit: Social Identity, Wealth and the Life Course in Early Modern England', in Henry French and Jonathan Barry (eds), *Identity and Agency in England, 1500-1800* (Basingstoke, 2004), pp. 157-72.

her which I never had any thought of'. Cannon fully admitted having sex with Heister so presumably was aware that his paternity was possible. He nonetheless shifted blame and agency onto Heister, presenting her as calculating, rational and in control of her own fertility.⁶⁸ This reflected widespread beliefs that women could choose when to conceive and did so to trap innocent men into marrying them.⁶⁹ Whether he chose to remember this version of events in order to present himself as the victim of deception, it nonetheless indicates a conviction that women were in control of their fertility, a power that men found suspicious and unsettling to say the least.

Cannon also hypocritically presented himself as a victim of misaffiliation, and therefore cuckoldry, alleging that Heister had deliberately wrongly accused him in conspiracy with the child's real father. Cannon asserted that his landlord's son 'had most right to the brat', and that Heister had falsely accused him as a man of higher status and deeper pockets.⁷⁰ Cannon was proud, educated and socially ambitious, and so rationalised his belief in misaffiliation by suggesting that Heister was trying to compel a marriage as a means of social mobility. When his landlady, the mother of the supposed father, suggested that 'he could not do better than marry [Heister]', Cannon replied 'what? Marry a strumpet & father her son's bastard?'⁷¹ Despite the fact that most misaffiliations seem to have been instigated by the father, popular belief was that they were a common female initiative motivated by financial greed, dishonesty or revenge. One anonymous writer tipped off the Chelmsford magistrates in 1821, accusing Mary Lincoln of misaffiliating her child on William Mead, a miller. The writer stated '[s]he has been with other married men and Single likewise', and that Lincoln had a grudge against Mead who 'Discharged her from her work - it

⁶⁸ Unfortunately, the poor law documents for the parish of Watlington have not survived for the early eighteenth century, so we only have Cannon's version of events to go on. *The Chronicles of John Cannon, Excise Officer and Writing Master*, ed. John Money (Oxford, 2010), pp. 82, 84, 94; SALS: MS. DD/SAS C/1193/4, John Cannon, 'Memoirs of the Birth, Education Life and Death of: Mr. John Cannon. Sometime Officer of the Excise & Writing Master at Mere Glastenbury & West Lydford in the County of Somerset', 1684-1742, ff. 82, 89. Griffin thinks that Ann deliberately allowed herself to become pregnant in order to induce marriage, Griffin, 'Sex, Illegitimacy and Social Change', pp. 146-7.

⁶⁹ Lisa Forman Cody, *Birthing the Nation: Sex, Science, and the Conception of Eighteenth-Century Britons* (Oxford, 2005), p. 31; Fissell, *Vernacular Bodies*, pp. 72-3, 201-3, 211-4.

⁷⁰ *Chronicles of John Cannon*, p. 103.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

plainly seems to be Common for any body that... she would take mony of any one'.⁷² Female ability to shame or mock a man through reproduction was feared, evident in the presence of the cuckold in numerous ballads and plays, as well as in shaming rituals such as rough music, throughout this period.⁷³ Spurious issue had also been a matter of national politics. Cody and Fissell have both suggested that the 1688 Warming Pan Scandal over the paternity of the infant Prince of Wales was symptomatic of a whole culture of fear over female reproductive power and its implications for social order.⁷⁴

John Cannon's resentment of his illegitimate child was based on his belief that he was wrongly accused and focused on both sexual and financial damage. At one point he stated that 'I waited the... news of the brat's death' and referred dispassionately to 'the death of the child, which was in the Smallpox in the year 1716'. His friend Mr Horne 'expressed joy for my sake that I was got free from that encumbrance', a feeling that Cannon echoed by stating that '[t]his job of journey work, for so it might justly be called, being as before so basely imposed on cost me first & last about 40 pounds'. Cannon conflated moral and economic credit using language suffused with sin, describing the child as a unjust burden, a reminder of his 'past follies & filthy sin of fornication' with Heister, and the cause of both 'hurt to my soul & charge of my pocket'.⁷⁵

However, Cannon's employment of the language of sin was not simply related to his perception that extra-marital sex was immoral. Cannon was otherwise quite tolerant of illegitimacy.⁷⁶ He had a positive relationship with his illegitimate half-sister, two of his paternal cousins had illegitimate children and within the community unmarried parents included his family's wet-nurse and the local curate.⁷⁷ Although

⁷² ERO: P/C P10, minutes, 5 April 1821, in *Narratives*, pp. 172-3.

⁷³ Turner, *Fashioning Adultery*, pp. 84-115; Foyster, *Manhood*, pp. 66-72, 104-115.

⁷⁴ Cody, *Birthing the Nation*, pp. 31-3, 46, 72-4, 80-4; Fissell, *Vernacular Bodies*, pp. 72-3, 196-203, 211-20, 230-242.

⁷⁵ *Chronicles of John Cannon*, pp. 98, 104, 112, 142. Crawford has found similar sentiments in the autobiography James Lackington, *Memoirs of the first forty-five years of James Lackington* (1792), pp. 77-8, cited in Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, p. 99. There is also very similar wording in Thomas Johnson's autobiography. Johnson was similarly unconvinced of his child's paternity, Johnson, 'Life', p. 30.

⁷⁶ Hitchcock, 'Sociability', p. 32.

⁷⁷ *Chronicles of John Cannon* pp. 20, 484, 590-595. For more on Cannon's relationship with his sister, see chapter 2, pp. 157-9.

Cannon was the butt of local gossip and, as his landlady said, his 'credit [was] cracked in our country', most of his friends, including Joanna the object of his courtship, believed he was innocent.⁷⁸ He had also engaged openly in pre-marital sexual activity on many previous occasions without describing it as shameful.⁷⁹ His most bitter and antagonistic language was reserved for the only relationship that resulted in an illegitimate child, and which therefore had financial and long-term consequences which were largely out of his control. Cannon's evasion of paternity was not primarily about the exposure of extra-marital sex but its combination with a loss of authority and what he perceived as the injustice of being deceived by a social inferior. Paternity did not fit with the identity he aspired to as an upwardly mobile professional. Outside of publicly recognised marriage it was impossible for him to police Ann's chastity and to guarantee that the child was his. The intense fear of cuckoldry could operate regardless of marital status and was based not only on sexual shame but was related to wider markers of masculinity, such as financial independence and control of women.

In summary, analysis of maintenance and filiation as a means to discover how filiated men felt about unmarried fatherhood is complicated. Most fathers and communities accepted the basic principle of financial responsibility. But many could not pay and the harsh penalties for defaulting payment may have encouraged men to abscond and lose contact with their child. Autobiographical evidence suggests that financial responsibility was often perceived as a debt and not necessarily associated with affective or physically present fatherhood. Within a cultural context where maternal veracity was routinely doubted and misaffiliations perceived to be common, fathers may have found it easy to convince themselves and others of their innocence. Cannon could call on a cultural corpus teeming with deceitful women to justify disputing paternity and excusing himself from normative paternal duties. He could not fail as a father, because he considered himself not biologically related to the child. The link between unmarried paternity and reputation was not straightforward. Payment of maintenance as a debt could keep male honour intact. Sexual shame and sin featured generally only if men felt that they had been

⁷⁸ *Chronicles of John Cannon* p. 104. Griffin in contrast suggests that Cannon was heavily stigmatised by the community, Griffin, 'Sex, Illegitimacy and Social Change', p. 147.

⁷⁹ Multiple examples appear in Hitchcock's analysis of Cannon's sexual activities, Tim Hitchcock, *English Sexualities, 1700-1800* (Basingstoke, 1997), pp. 28-38.

cuckolded and was primarily associated with loss of control over female reproduction.

Working Mothers

Within the poor law ideal, paternal maintenance enabled maternal nurture, compensating for the absence of a male wage and allowing mothers to care for children themselves. Parishes were supposed to keep children with their mothers until they were at least seven, before putting them up for apprenticeship.⁸⁰ This section suggests that unmarried motherhood more closely reflected the legitimate norm than unmarried fatherhood did; unlike paternity, biological maternity was certain, and the many difficulties of poverty or lone motherhood applied regardless of marital status. However, there were some distinct differences. The ability of mothers to act as primary carers was limited by realities of employment, but again shame was not the primary influence and parishes and mothers themselves defended maternal rights to care and provide.

Commentators recognised that 'the most part' of illegitimate children were 'separated from the mother' to enable women to earn a living.⁸¹ The average weekly maintenance of two shillings and sixpence was insufficient to allow mothers to give up work, even optimistically assuming payment in full and on time.⁸² The combination of provision and nurture was common in poor women's articulation of maternal duty, regardless of marital status, and women's work formed an important part of household income.⁸³ However, the type of work that married and unmarried women tended to undertake differed and in turn impacted unmarried mothers' ability to nurture their children.⁸⁴ Several surveys of female occupation indicate that wives were not employed as live-in servants but tended to perform piecework or

⁸⁰ Dalton and Nelson, *Country Justice*, p. 227; Lyle, 'Regionality', pp. 144-5; Williams, 'Maintenance of Bastard Children', pp. 964-5.

⁸¹ Jonas Hanway, *Letters to the guardians of the infant poor to be appointed by the act of last session of Parliament* (London, 1767), p. 63.

⁸² The average Lancashire pension was two shillings per week, which was not enough to live on, Steven King, 'The Bastardy Prone Sub-Society Again: Bastards and Their Fathers and Mothers in Lancashire, Wiltshire, and Somerset, 1800-1840', in Alys Levene, Thomas Nutt and Samantha Williams (eds), *Illegitimacy in Britain, 1700-1920* (Basingstoke, 2005), p. 83.

⁸³ Bailey, "'Think Wot a Mother Must Feel'".

⁸⁴ Amy Louise Erickson, 'Married Women's Occupations in Eighteenth-Century London', *Continuity and Change* 23.2 (2008), pp. 273-5.

household and shop-based work such as charring or victualling, which could be combined with childcare.⁸⁵ In contrast, the vast majority of unmarried women who became pregnant were servants and continued working as such after their child's birth, as service was one of the few well-paid female occupations.⁸⁶

Although female servants could earn enough money to supplement paternal maintenance and pay a foster parent or nurse, service required the long-term physical separation of mother and child. Mothers petitioning the Foundling Hospital to take their child often cited their need to return to service and their inability to combine it with childcare.⁸⁷ Employers rarely allowed servants to bring children with them. Even if, as recent research suggests, they had no moral objection to employing a 'fallen woman', housing a child had practical difficulties.⁸⁸ Sally Bradford at first hid the existence of her illegitimate daughter Polly from her gentleman employer Sylas Neville and only persuaded him to accept her into his household after embarking on a sexual relationship with him. As Sylas noted, 'sending for & keeping the child was what not one in twenty [men, or employers] would have done'.⁸⁹ Most servants lacked this persuasive power; service was characterised by short-term contracts and high mobility, a trend that increased over the century.⁹⁰ Even when women could rely on familial help physical distance made

⁸⁵ D. A. Kent, 'Ubiquitous but Invisible: Female Domestic Servants in Mid-Eighteenth-Century London', *History Workshop Journal* 28 (1989), pp. 115, 117; Erickson, 'Married Women's Occupations', pp. 271, 281, 285, 293; Peter Earle, 'The Female Labour Market in London in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries', *Economic History Review* 42.3 (1989), p. 339; Bailey, *Unquiet Lives*, p. 92.

⁸⁶ John Gillis, 'Servants, Sexual Relations and the Risks of Illegitimacy in London, 1801-1900', *Feminist Studies* 5.1 (1979), pp. 142-73; Evans, 'Unfortunate Objects', pp. 15, 18-19, 29, 31-2. Black put the proportion of unmarried mothers in service at 90.7 percent, Black, 'Illegitimacy and the Urban Poor', p. 107. Other agricultural and manufacturing work usually required supplementing by a male wage to create a dual household income, Kent, 'Ubiquitous but Invisible', pp. 114-18, 123-4.

⁸⁷ Evans, 'Unfortunate Objects', p. 119; Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, p. 57.

⁸⁸ Evans, 'Unfortunate Objects', pp. 15, 119, 161, 179; R.B. Outhwaite, "'Objects of Charity': Petitions to the London Foundling Hospital, 1768-72', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 32.4 (1999), pp. 501, 504. For the alternative perception of employers as unsupportive, see Gillis, 'Servants, Sexual Relations', pp. 163, 166; Hitchcock, "'Unlawfully begotten'", pp. 78-9; Samantha Williams, "'I was Forced to Leave my Place to Hide my Shame": The Living Arrangements of Unmarried Mothers in London in the Early Nineteenth Century', in J. McEwan and P. Sharpe (eds), *Accommodating Poverty: The Housing and Living Arrangements of the English Poor, c. 1600-1850* (Basingstoke, 2011), pp. 198-203, 213.

⁸⁹ *The Diary of Sylas Neville, 1767-1788*, ed. Basil Cozens-Hardy (London, 1950), pp. 85-8, 113.

⁹⁰ Kent, 'Ubiquitous but Invisible', pp. 120-1.

it more difficult to negotiate parish relief and maintain precarious solvency.⁹¹ Lucy Nevill's four-year-old child was in 1825 'living with its grandmother' in Chelmsford, financed by a combination of filiation payments, maternal wages and parish relief.⁹² Lucy remained responsible for her child's welfare, writing to the parish, 'I would have come over [to get paternal maintenance]... but being in service I can not leave my place'.⁹³

The impact of maternal employment varied regionally and over time. Increased gender specialisation in agriculture after 1750 led to a decline in the availability and wage of female jobs which may have pushed more women into service.⁹⁴ By the early nineteenth century, the development of factories in certain areas provided a viable alternative to service as it was better paid and enabled women to live at home. Griffin has attributed the sexual freedom of the Shaw girls, all four of whom had illegitimate children in the 1820s, to their employment in Preston's factories.⁹⁵ Only one out of the four girls was sacked for illegitimate pregnancy and in that case it may have been due to Agnes' continual ill health.⁹⁶ Industrial employers were less concerned with sexual respectability or practical childcare issues when employees were not live-in. The Shaw children lived with their mothers in their grandparental home; day-to-day care was provided by their grandmother, and maintenance from maternal wages. The family were not reliant on parish or institutional care and close physical contact between mother and child was maintained.⁹⁷ These employment opportunities had not been available earlier in the century and in rural areas and in London domestic service continued to dominate.⁹⁸ Williams also suggests that

⁹¹ For familial help see chapter 2.

⁹² *Essex Pauper Letters*, p. 199, Messrs Church & sons, solicitors, to James Read, vestry clerk of Chelmsford, 3 February 1828.

⁹³ *Essex Pauper Letters*, p.198, Lucy Nevill to the overseers of Chelmsford, 15 January 1825.

⁹⁴ Snell, *Annals*, pp. 37-8, 45, 53-63.

⁹⁵ Griffin, 'Sex, Illegitimacy and Social Change', pp. 155-7. Clark has observed similar effects among the handloom weavers of early-nineteenth-century Lanarkshire and Lancashire, Clark, *Struggle for the Breeches*, pp. 23, 46-7. For a recent refutation of this using evidence from eighteenth-century Wales, see Angela Muir, 'Courtship, Sex and Poverty: Illegitimacy in Eighteenth-Century Wales', *Social History* 43.1 (2018), pp. 56-80.

⁹⁶ *The Family Records of Benjamin Shaw, Mechanic of Dent, Dolphinholme and Preston, 1772-1841*, ed. Alan G. Crosby. (Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 1991), p. 115; Shani D'Cruze, 'Care, Diligence and "Usfull Pride": Gender, Industrialization and the Domestic Economy, c. 1770 to c. 1840', *Women's History Review* 3 (1994), p. 338.

⁹⁷ Griffin, 'Sex, Illegitimacy and Social Change', pp. 155-7.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 159; Gillis, 'Servants, Sexual Relations', p. 147.

respectability became more stringently policed amongst servants after 1800.⁹⁹ Mothers' ability to combine work and childcare may have reduced the negative impact of illegitimacy on a child, partly by reducing its association with economic disadvantage, and allowing children to be more easily raised within a parental home. In general, however, the type of work available to unmarried women and the absence of a dual wage were the primary restraints on the formation of a mother-child relationship.

The mechanisms of relief also indicate how mothers and communities perceived maternal responsibilities. Some parishes were largely sympathetic and flexible, providing outrelief and allowing mothers to use parish institutions or nurses as temporary childcare without losing their maternal rights.¹⁰⁰ The early-eighteenth-century nursing lists of St Margaret Westminster indicate that the parish paid some mothers to nurse their own children, efficiently providing both childcare and maternal employment.¹⁰¹ This was particularly the case if mothers had more than one child, perhaps reflecting the difficulties these women may have had in finding alternative employment. Jane Jones, who was possibly a prostitute, had two children, Ann and Mary, by two different fathers by 1717. She was paid by the parish to nurse them both until Ann's death in 1718 when she continued to nurse Mary alone until 1721.¹⁰² Johanna Glyn was born in 1714, the illegitimate daughter of Johanna Pereyra and gentleman Francis Glyn. She was immediately nursed out but returned to her mother when her illegitimate half-sibling was born in 1715. In 1722 she was nursed out again but in 1724 the parish apprenticed her to her own mother.¹⁰³ This reflects the precarious nature of female employment but also suggests that the parish reacted

⁹⁹ Williams "A good character", p. 99; Jessica A. Sheetz-Nguyen, *Victorian Women, Unwed Mothers and the London Foundling Hospital* (London, 2012), pp. 102-3.

¹⁰⁰ Hitchcock, "Unlawfully begotten", pp. 73-6; Evans, 'Unfortunate Objects', pp. 25-27, 207-8. Cf. Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, pp. 35-7, 63-5, 69.

¹⁰¹ This mirrored the practice of employing pauper women, not just unmarried mothers, as nurses within parochial medical provision, Richard Connors, 'Poor Women, the Parish and the Politics of Poverty', in Elaine Chalus and Hannah Barker (eds), *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations and Responsibilities* (London, 1997), p. 141.

¹⁰² CWAC: E234-E241 (MF979-MF980), St Margaret Westminster, overseers' accounts, 1717-24; St Margaret Westminster, register of burials, vol. 9 (microfilm), entry for Anne Newdigate, 20 October 1718. Jane was not anomalous; the mothers of William Grey and Anne Simmonds were paid in similar ways. For the characterisation of Jane as a prostitute see Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution*, p. 151.

¹⁰³ CWAC: E230-E232 (MF978-MF979), St Margaret Westminster, overseers' accounts, 1714-15; E239-E241 (MF979-MF980), St Margaret Westminster, overseers' accounts, 1722-24.

pragmatically and flexibly to economic realities, often by trying to keep mother and child together. Evidence from early-nineteenth-century Essex pauper letters suggests that this flexibility continued; many parishes paid mothers outrelief, allowing them to care for their children within families rather than institutions.¹⁰⁴

In some ways poverty, rather than illegitimacy, was the main influence on parental provision and care.¹⁰⁵ Economically, illegitimates were no worse off than orphans or the children of absent, married parents.¹⁰⁶ Households were regularly broken up by death, and deserted wives were a common sight on parish relief lists.¹⁰⁷ Studies of child abandonment indicate that both legitimate and illegitimate children were abandoned. Most babies were at least a few months old, suggesting that parents struggled to keep their children for as long as possible.¹⁰⁸ Abandonment was therefore likely not an immediate reaction to the shame of illegitimate pregnancy but an economic decision made out of necessity, which could apply to any poor parent.

However, close examination of the St Margaret Westminster nursing lists from 1713 to 1715 suggests that illegitimacy did have some, specific impact on parent-child contact. In general, illegitimate children were treated similarly to orphans or other poor children, appearing together in lists entitled 'Distributions Ordinary for Keeping Orphans at the charge of the Parish'.¹⁰⁹ Nominal cross-referencing of

¹⁰⁴ This varied regionally, see Hindle, *On the Parish*, pp. 265, 282; Lyle, 'Regionality'; Williams, 'Maintenance of Bastard Children', pp. 947-8, 951, 962.

¹⁰⁵ Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, p. 4.

¹⁰⁶ Evans, 'Unfortunate Objects', pp. 119, 121, 169, 203-6; Hindle, *On the Parish*, p. 55.

¹⁰⁷ D.A. Kent, "'Gone for a soldier': Family Breakdown and the Demography of Desertion in a London Parish, 1750-91', *Local Population Studies* 45 (1990), pp. 27-42; Bailey, *Unquiet Lives*, pp. 36-7, 172-80.

¹⁰⁸ Valerie Fildes, 'Maternal Feelings Re-assessed: Child Abandonment and Neglect in London and Westminster, 1550-1800', in Valerie Fildes (ed.), *Women as Mothers in Pre-Industrial England: Essays in Memory of Dorothy McLaren* (London, 1990), pp. 152-8; Alys Levene, 'The Origins of the Children of the London Foundling Hospital, 1741-1760: a Reconsideration', *Continuity and Change* 18.2 (2003), pp. 201-36; Evans, 'Unfortunate Objects', pp. 69-70, 107, 132. Cf. Adrian Wilson, 'Illegitimacy and its Implications in Mid-Eighteenth-Century London; the Evidence of the Foundling Hospital', *Continuity and Change* 4 (1989), pp. 103-64.

¹⁰⁹ For example, CWAC: E228 (MF978), St Margaret Westminster, overseers' accounts, 1713. This linguistic conflation is also observed in other London parishes, see Jeremy Boulton, "It Is Extreme Necessity That Makes Me Do This": Some "Survival Strategies" of Pauper Households in London's West End During the Early Eighteenth Century", *International Review of Social History* 45 (2000), p. 54. It also occurs in the Sussex parish of East Hoathly: ESRO: PAR 378/31/1/1, East Hoathly overseers' account book, June 1761-April 1779. Illegitimates

nursing lists with bastardy bonds, depositions and parish registers indicates that between four and eleven percent of the children on the nursing lists were illegitimate.¹¹⁰ This is significantly higher than the contemporary parish illegitimacy ratio (0.63 percent), suggesting that illegitimates were more likely to be nursed out. However, they were still not the majority, suggesting that being nursed out was a common experience for poor children, regardless of legitimacy. The primary difference was that illegitimates were more likely to be nursed out for longer periods. Eighty percent of illegitimate children on the 1715 list had been on the list for two or more years, compared to only 25 percent of all children listed. Married mothers may have used the parish nursing system for temporary crisis relief, during illness or financial setbacks. Unmarried mothers may have been more likely to nurse their children out as a longer-term method of child-rearing, to enable them to find employment in service or because maintenance payments were insufficient. Unmarried mothers may also have found it more difficult to access temporary familial assistance or found it more difficult to integrate children into new stepfamilies, necessitating long-term reliance on parish childcare.¹¹¹ This is of course only a small sample but it does suggest that illegitimate children were subject to longer-term parish care and maternal absence in a way that legitimate poor children were not.

Maternal absence or the decision to temporarily abandon a child should not be read as a denial of maternal responsibility. Abandonment was more often a calculated decision to ensure a child's survival, indicating limited maternal choice rather than absence of maternal affection.¹¹² In the 1760s servant Sally Bradford left her three-year-old daughter Polly with her family in order to work; she may have thought that the opportunity of employment with a gentleman and potential economic security was in both their best interests. Although Sally repeatedly sent for Polly, her ability

were identified using PAR 378/1/1/2, East Hoathly general register, 1735-72, and *Diary of Thomas Turner*.

¹¹⁰ CWAC: E228, E230, E232 (MF978-MF979), St Margaret Westminster, overseers' accounts, 1713-15. The ratio of illegitimates to legitimates were 9 out of 130 in 1713, 6 out of 51 in 1714 and 5 out of 113 in 1715. These were children who appeared in at least one other source as illegitimate. For more on St Margaret Westminster and the methodology of the study, see introduction, pp. 36-7.

¹¹¹ See chapter 2.

¹¹² Black, 'Illegitimacy and the Urban Poor', p. 315; Evans, '*Unfortunate Objects*', pp. 133-5, 144. This is challenged by Boulton, '"Extreme Necessity"', p. 66.

to keep her was limited by her financial dependence on her employer and lover, Sylas Neville.¹¹³ Separation had an emotional cost to both mother and child. Sylas' 1769 diary recorded that Sally cried after receiving letters from home and, when Polly was again separated from her mother in 1778, a letter detailed that she became 'very poorly in health... the child has pined ever since she has been there... and takes on so about her Mama'.¹¹⁴

Similarly, I have found no evidence that maternal relationships were restricted by reputational concern or resentment, as many paternal relationships were.¹¹⁵ Mothers writing pauper letters were forthright in claiming relief. They did not present themselves as remorseful or conform to seduction narratives. This echoes Evans' similar findings in eighteenth-century Foundling Hospital petitions, and suggests that institutional or parochial expectation of shame was a nineteenth-century development.¹¹⁶ Even when physically absent, they presented themselves as both nurturer and provider and asserted their superior entitlement as mothers to know what was best for their child, similar to rhetoric used by married mothers.¹¹⁷ In 1824 the Chelmsford overseers boarded out Phebea Joice's ten-year-old illegitimate son, allowing Phebea to work in service. Despite her physical absence Phebea continued to assert her maternal rights: she complained that she did not personally know her son's foster-mother and had heard that she was 'a Woman of Drunking Habits'. She asserted, '[m]y Intention is to Do all in My Power... for My Child... I Do not What [sic, want] the Parish to find him any Cloths I will furnish him With What he Wants'.¹¹⁸ The emphasis on maternal financial responsibility indicates that the reality was very different to the image painted by the Commissioners of the 1834 New Poor Law who suggested that women deliberately had multiple illegitimate children as a

¹¹³ Sylas and Sally frequently quarreled about allowing Polly to remain in Sylas' household see: *The Diary of Sylas Neville, 1767-1788*, ed. Bazil Cozens-Hardy (London, 1950), pp. 81, 85, 105.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 79, 9 September 1769; NRO: MC7/740/13, John Read to Sylas Neville, 29 July 1778.

¹¹⁵ Similar results are in King, 'Bastardy Prone Sub-Society Again', pp. 78, 82-3; Evans, 'Unfortunate Objects', p. 205.

¹¹⁶ Evans, 'Unfortunate Objects', pp. 101, 124-6, 133. Similar evidence appears in Williams "'A good character'", pp. 87, 95, 97. Shame and seduction narratives do appear in Foundling Hospital petitions in the Victorian period, see Sheetz-Nguyen, *Victorian Women*.

¹¹⁷ Bailey, *Parenting in England*, pp. 158-9; Bailey, "'Think Wot a Mother Must Feel'", pp. 9-10.

¹¹⁸ *Essex Pauper Letters*, p. 192, Phebea Joice to James Read, vestry clerk of Chelmsford, 11 October 1824. Sally Bradford similarly at first resisted Sylas' demands to foster her daughter Polly out, stating that 'she should not ask anybody else to take care of her', *Diary of Sylas Neville*, p. 85, 17 November 1770.

form of income.¹¹⁹ The women who applied for relief in Essex were perhaps aware of this stereotype and so persistently asserted that they were doing their best to provide for their children.¹²⁰ In many ways, though, their characterisation of provision as an extension of care, and of motherhood as conveying ultimate authority over a child's welfare, was very similar to the normative articulation of lower-status motherhood in this period.¹²¹

Although the parish was apparently largely sympathetic of the maternal bond and poor mothers themselves asserted it, there is evidence that middling-sort employers and other professionals, such as clergymen, did not include poor women within ideals of sentimental motherhood. This was not only the case for unmarried mothers; Crawford and Evans have suggested that all poor parents were considered similarly suspect.¹²² Unmarried mothers may have been excluded from these ideals more easily, as for them material provision for their children was more likely to lead to physical separation, incompatible with the ideal of the physically nurturing mother within the domestic space. In 1825, Sarah Carden left her illegitimate child in Chelmsford workhouse to enter service with a Mrs Stapleton of Soho. The correspondence between Mrs Stapleton and the workhouse master indicates a striking lack of understanding of maternal distress. According to Mrs Stapleton, Sarah found separation from her child difficult; she was 'in a very desponding state about her child... she neither eats nor drinks'.¹²³ Sarah feared her child had become ill but had received no communication from the workhouse. Mrs Stapleton was unsympathetic:

For my own part, I think if the child is ill, it will be better not to inform her of it, as it tends to make her unfit for any thing... she also would then want to

¹¹⁹ Nutt, 'Paradox and Problems', p. 105; Margaret Sheila Oliver, 'The Incidence and Nature of Illegitimacy in East Yorkshire in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', Ph.D. thesis (University of Hull, 2014), p. 162. See also chapter 5, p. 286.

¹²⁰ See for example the correspondence between the pauper Mercy Poole and James Read, vestry clerk of Chelmsford, *Essex Pauper Letters*, pp. 245-9, 12 February 1827; 30 April 1827; 18 May 1827.

¹²¹ Bailey, "'Think Wot a Mother Must Feel'".

¹²² Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, pp. 193-4, 205, 208; Evans, '*Unfortunate Objects*', p. 1. Cf. Bailey, *Parenting in England*, pp. 43, 247.

¹²³ ERO: D/P 94/18/42, St Mary the Virgin, Chelmsford, correspondence, 1800-1830, Mrs Stapleton to Mr Langstaff, 5 February 1825.

come down to see [the child], for which purpose she does not possess any means at present.¹²⁴

When Sarah left to return to Chelmsford Mrs Stapleton accused her of 'scandalous & ingrateful' deception and felt that it was 'a great pity that an otherwise clever servant should have paid so little regard to her welfare'.¹²⁵ Mrs Stapleton could not understand Sarah's maternal distress, suggesting that she considered poor unmarried mothers should prioritise economic rationality and forfeit their right to nurturing motherhood. Middling perceptions of unfit maternity clashed with unmarried mothers' own identity as responsible, affectionate and nurturing mothers.

Unmarried motherhood also differed distinctly from married motherhood in terms of the balance of authority between mother and father. Nutt and others have argued that the bastardy laws enforced gendered parental roles, with mothers as nurturers and fathers as providers.¹²⁶ But, although the parish and unmarried mothers saw maternal responsibility as both provision and nurture, paternal duties were limited to maintenance only. This was in direct contrast to the growing ideal of the tender, physically present father which Bailey sees as ubiquitous in this period.¹²⁷ Furthermore, it was a distinct change from earlier practice: King and Shepard found that up to the late seventeenth century children were sometimes placed with fathers.¹²⁸ Williams' study of early-nineteenth-century London found that only 1.8 percent of affiliated fathers took the child to live with them.¹²⁹ Even when fathers sought greater contact, parishes prioritised maternal rights. Sarah Hall had cared for her illegitimate son since his birth in 1816. She had left service and lived in St Botolph, Colchester with her parents, supported by parish relief and maintenance

¹²⁴ ERO: D/P 94/18/42, St Mary the Virgin, Chelmsford, correspondence, 1800-1830, Mrs Stapleton to Mr Langstaff, 2 January 1825.

¹²⁵ ERO: D/P 94/18/42, St Mary the Virgin, Chelmsford, correspondence, 1800-1830, Mrs Stapleton to Mr Langstaff, 5 February 1825.

¹²⁶ Nutt, 'Paternal Financial Responsibility', pp. 336-7; Harvey, 'Putative Fathers', p. 378; Shepard, 'Brokering Fatherhood', p. 62. Cf. Williams, 'Maintenance of Bastard Children', pp. 963-4, 968.

¹²⁷ Bailey, *Parenting in England*, p. 6.

¹²⁸ Walter King, 'Punishment for Bastardy in Early-Seventeenth-Century England', *Albion* 10 (1978), p. 131; Shepard, 'Brokering Fatherhood', pp. 56-7, 60.

¹²⁹ This occurred in 10 of 569 cases, Williams, 'Maintenance of Bastard Children', p. 956. Similar proportions are found in Black, 'Illegitimacy and the Urban Poor', pp. 330-1.

from Charles Ellis, the boy's father. In 1819, Charles abruptly stopped payments and asked for physical custody of his three-year-old son.¹³⁰ Sarah informed the parish:

[I]t is not my intention to part wit my child as Chas Ellis request - for as I have been able to bear through With him in I should wish to have the care of him in futir I have been to a Magistrate to day & he says that If the Pay for my child is taken of[f] he will have it put on again for he cannot demand him from me.¹³¹

Sarah felt she had superior rights to physical custody as the child's mother, reinforced by the magistrate. Nutt, citing the judgement of jurist Richard Burn, suggests that parishes commonly ruled that children remain with their mothers until at least the age of seven.¹³² In this respect illegitimate children were treated very differently to their legitimate counterparts; had Sarah been married, her husband would have been able to demand custody of his children as his property. As far as the poor law was concerned, reputed paternity bestowed a responsibility to pay maintenance but came with none of the other responsibilities of authority over, and ownership of, a child. This was not strictly gendered, in contrast to Crawford and Nutt's arguments, because single mothers were expected to be both nurturer and provider.¹³³ This case is a reminder that some fathers may have tried to exercise normative biological and social paternal duties but were hindered from doing so by poor law mechanisms.¹³⁴ This negation of illegitimate paternity finally became complete under the 1834 New Poor Law.

In summary, unmarried motherhood among the poor did in some ways resemble married motherhood: many families lacked dual income and relied on a combination

¹³⁰ *Essex Pauper Letters*, p. 313, Sarah Hall to the overseers of St Botolph, Colchester, 21 June 1819. For the relationship between her father John Hall and the parish of St Botolph, Colchester, see Pamela Sharpe, "'The bowels of compation': A Labouring Family and the Law, c. 1790-1834", in Tim Hitchcock, Peter King and Pamela Sharpe (eds), *Chronicling Poverty: The Voices and Strategies of the English Poor, 1640-1840* (Basingstoke, 1997), pp. 87-108.

¹³¹ *Essex Pauper Letters*, p. 314, Sarah Hall to the overseers of St Botolph, Colchester, 2 July 1819. A similar case is found in Black, 'Illegitimacy and the Urban Poor', p. 129.

¹³² Richard Burn, *The Justice of the Peace* (14th edn, 1780), p. 195, cited in Nutt, 'Natural Affection', p. 17.

¹³³ Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, p. 98; Nutt 'Natural Affection', pp. 7, 17.

¹³⁴ Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, p. 108.

of parish relief, nursing and family support. Married and unmarried women alike asserted their maternal duty to provide and care for their children. However, unmarried mothers were more likely to be physically separated from their children for longer periods of time, primarily due to limited employment opportunities outside of service. This made it more difficult for women to physically mother their own children, in contrast to a middling ideal of maternal nurture. Unmarried mothers still consistently asserted their maternal identity and authority over the care, maintenance and protection of their children, even if everyday care was performed by someone else. In this, crucially, they were backed by the parish. Unlike unmarried fathers, mothers rarely articulated feelings of shame or resentment.

Paternity Outside the Poor Law

An unknown number of parents entered into informal maintenance arrangements. Filiation only applied to those 'likely to become chargeable', so elite or upper-middling-sort parents could escape parish notice entirely.¹³⁵ Historians have noted that the number of elite fathers in filiation records declined over the eighteenth century. This could reflect growing sexual morality, more voluntary payments, parish reluctance to identify higher-status fathers, or male desire to hide paternity due to reputational concerns.¹³⁶ Evidence from autobiographies and correspondence indicates persistent under-recording of elite parents; only one of the unmarried fathers with landed property in these case studies was found in parish records.¹³⁷ I will argue that there was a well-developed system that facilitated secrecy and physical absence within a widespread gentlemanly code of moral obligation. The amount of maintenance varied considerably according to the circumstances of the parents' relationship and the mother's status, as did the extent to which men fulfilled

¹³⁵ 6 Geo. 2. c. 31.

¹³⁶ For the sexual morality argument see John Black, 'Who were the Putative Fathers of Illegitimate Children in London, 1740-1810', in Alys Levene, Thomas Nutt and Samantha Williams (eds), *Illegitimacy in Britain, 1700-1920* (Basingstoke, 2005), pp. 62-3. A combination of voluntary payments and sexual morality is suggested in Nicholas Rogers, 'Carnal Knowledge: Illegitimacy in Eighteenth-Century Westminster', *Journal of Social History* 23 (1989), pp. 360-62. For the declining punishment argument see Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution*, pp. 250-1.

¹³⁷ The exception is James Boswell, who was prosecuted for fornication for his first illegitimate child, Charles. This is because of the more punitive kirk system used in Scotland and is therefore not representative of the wider English sample, *The Correspondence of James Boswell and John Johnston of Grange*, ed. Ralph S. Walker (London, 1966), pp. 30-1, James Boswell to John Johnston, 14 December 1762.

other duties of social fatherhood, such as physical presence or concern for the welfare, protection and education of children. Secrecy was often desirable but this does not simply reflect shame. In some contexts elite men adopted the ideal rhetoric of sentimental fatherhood as a positive facet of masculine identity.

Filiation cases from early-nineteenth-century Essex suggest that some elite fathers maintained their children inconsistently but that they were routinely protected from the process of filiation, even when their children became chargeable.¹³⁸ In 1820 magistrate Thomas Brooksby, a Cambridge-educated clergyman, exerted occupational and class solidarity to release vicar's son John Allison from prison for non-payment of maintenance. Brooksby told the bench clerk 'there must have been some great mistake' and promised Allison's father that 'every thing should be settled without further inconvenience to his son'.¹³⁹ In another case from Chelmsford in 1824, William Thornhill, the son of an MP, expected to be protected from the unsavoury aspects of poor law administration. When the overseers demanded unpaid maintenance, Thornhill instructed his solicitor to pay the debt but also 'to remark that the Colonel did not expect his old friends [perhaps the magistrate] at Chelmsford would have instructed you to address him in the terms you have done'.¹⁴⁰ Thornhill did not object to paying but resisted the imputation that he needed to be compelled to do so, or subjected to the same treatment as poor reputed fathers.¹⁴¹ This reflected distinct differences in how different classes viewed paternal responsibility. By imprisoning Allison and threatening Thornhill the overseers had treated them like any other father, perhaps reflecting a more middling intolerance of elite libertinism or, more likely, ratepayers' desire to recoup parish charges.¹⁴² Elite distaste for the publicity of filiation and a desire to differentiate themselves from poor fathers encouraged them to seek informal maintenance agreements, enabled by

¹³⁸ Similar evidence is noted in Harvey, 'Putative Fathers', p. 384.

¹³⁹ ERO: P/C M1/5, minutes, 2 June and 28 October 1820; P/C P9, letters from Thomas Brooksby, JP, to Thomas Archer, clerk to the magistrates, 28 October 1820 and 30 October 1820, both in *Narratives*, pp. 174-6.

¹⁴⁰ ERO: D/ P94/18/42, St Mary the Virgin, Chelmsford, correspondence, 1800-1830, William Brittlebank to James Read, vestry clerk of Chelmsford, 5 February 1827.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² Overseers were ideally of 'substantiall' standing, with 'respectability' and 'countenance to controll', *An Ease for Overseers of the Poore* (1601), pp. 8-10, quoted in Hindle, *On the Parish*, p. 257. For the social background of magistrates see Black, 'Illegitimacy and the Urban Poor', p. 65.

collusion from their peers on the bench. The desire for differentiation may have increased over the century, explaining the drop in elite fathers appearing in parish records.

When propertied men wrote about their own unmarried paternity they generally presented maintenance as a positive moral duty. This was explicitly linked to a genteel masculine identity, based on generosity and benevolence towards dependents and on the idea of reparation for lost maternal virtue. When advocate James Boswell discussed a possible pregnancy with his mistress Louisa in 1762, he responded "'if such a person should appear, he must be taken care of... I have the strongest principles of that kind'".¹⁴³ When Boswell's second child was born in 1767, his clergyman friend Temple asserted '[t]he damage [to maternal chastity] is irreparable, but since the thing is done you ought to make amends as much as you can by money'.¹⁴⁴ Paternal maintenance was considered a debt of honour, and failure to maintain criticised as ungentlemanly. When industrialist John Spencer died in 1775, his will made no provision for his nine-year-old illegitimate son John Smith even though he had maintained him previously. The first reaction of Spencer's executors 'was surprize'. They hoped to find a misplaced settlement among Spencer's papers 'for the Credit of... our deceased friend'.¹⁴⁵ His failure to provide was perceived as ungentlemanly and morally suspect and, rather than dismiss Smith's claim, Spencer's heir Walter Spencer-Stanhope took on his maintenance as a debt on the estate.¹⁴⁶

Financial duty was not just a consequence of elite benevolence but was explicitly related to paternity using the language of natural affection and blood. In 1777 Syllas

¹⁴³ *Boswell's London Journal, 1762-63*, ed. F.A. Pottle (London, 1950), p. 113.

¹⁴⁴ *Boswell in Search of a Wife, 1766-1769*, ed. Frank Brady and F.A. Pottle (London, 1956), p. 115, William Temple to James Boswell, 22 November 1767. Unmarried mothers also used this rhetoric. Anna Maria Bennett referred to maintenance not as 'a favour but... an act of Justice', as well as 'the Poor Gleaning of your Vaunted friendship, and my Ruin', LSU: LLMVC/31/box 7, Anna Maria Bennett to Sir Thomas Pye, [n.d].

¹⁴⁵ BALS: Sp/St 60554/15, Walter Spencer-Stanhope to Mary Smith, 13 November 1775; 60554/9, John Cholwell to Walter Spencer-Stanhope, 25 November [1775]. For similar language see NRO: MC7/272, Thomas Blackburne to Syllas Neville, 7 March 1778.

¹⁴⁶ The legitimate Spencer-Stanhope family are the subject of a forthcoming PhD, Nicola Walker, 'Industrialising Communities in South Yorkshire, 1650-1850: A Case Study of Cannon Hall', Ph.D. thesis (University of Sheffield, forthcoming). I am grateful to Nicola for alerting me to John Smith's existence.

Neville demanded that Major Bland, the father of Polly Bradford, repay his costs in housing her. Sylas appealed to a gentlemanly code of conduct and notions of paternal responsibility based on blood connection, male honour and elite charity. Firstly, he stressed compensation for Sally, 'for the injury you did her in taking away... that modesty wch in women is the most valuable possession'. He then moved on to specific duties of fatherhood, mandated through a biological link and natural affection. Sylas stated that Polly 'is most certainly your daughter' and Bland 'the only person upon earth from whom she has any right'. He also appealed to Bland's 'humanity & parental affection', using a rhetoric of feeling: '[c]onsider... the guilt of refusing the care of your own flesh & blood'. Sylas finally invoked the rhetoric of class distinction and paternalist charity. He stated that Sally had a respectable position, able to raise Polly 'in a very different stile from what she would have been in her own parish.' Polly was no parish bastard, but 'a fine girl' well brought up and worthy of 'an education as may inable her to earn' an 'honest & respectable' living.¹⁴⁷ His appeal to a triad of 'honour, principle and sensibility' had some aspects in common with normative fatherhood, particularly the connection of blood, responsibility and affection.¹⁴⁸ Polly was also posited as an object of charity, exemplifying the reciprocal nature of parental duty and filial gratitude which Bailey states was common in this period.¹⁴⁹ However, although Sylas considered this rhetoric an effective tactic, Bland was not persuaded and seems to have completely avoided all responsibility for Polly. No letters survive giving Bland's point of view and a further letter following Polly's death in 1779 suggests that Sylas received no reply. Sylas viciously blamed Bland that 'she is now in heaven crying for vengeance against a father so dead to every feeling of humanity, honor & natural affection.' Bland's paternal neglect was 'infamous & altogether unworthy ye character of a gent', a characterisation apparently not accepted by Bland himself.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ NRO: MC7/578, Sylas Neville to Major Bland [draft], 27 March 1777.

¹⁴⁸ NRO: MC7/578, Sylas Neville to Major Bland [draft], 27 March 1777; Katie Barclay, 'Natural Affection, Children, and Family Inheritance Practices in the Long Eighteenth Century', in Janay Nugent and Elizabeth Ewan (eds), *Children and Youth in Premodern Scotland* (Woodbridge, 2015), pp. 136-54.

¹⁴⁹ Bailey specifically relates parent-child imagery to that of philanthropy, Bailey, *Parenting in England*, pp. 118-23.

¹⁵⁰ NRO: MC7/580 Sylas Neville to Major Bland [draft], April 1779. Similar language of 'humanity' and 'care', appear in *Boswell in Search of a Wife*, p. 77, William Temple to James Boswell, 17 June 1767.

Although maintenance of some kind was generally considered a moral duty, the amount given varied greatly. Children of long-term relationships between relative social equals, particularly with periods of cohabitation or in a kept mistress arrangement, routinely received more maintenance than the children of short-term, perhaps exploitative relationships with low-status mothers. Charles Sackville, 6th Earl of Dorset, father of three illegitimate daughters, gave by far the greatest amount to the eldest, Mary Waldegrave. In a 1678 will she received £2200, double the inheritance of her younger sister Katherine, and four times that of her elder half-sister Ann.¹⁵¹ This reflected birth order and the status of Ann's mother, a servant in the Earl's household.¹⁵² Nearly a century later Henry Herbert, Lord Pembroke, bestowed thousands of pounds on two of his illegitimate children: Augustus, whose mother was from the gentry, and Caroline, whose mother was reportedly a Venetian noblewoman.¹⁵³ Four other children appear in his will. Although not specifically named as his children, he records their birthdates, names and maternal identities and commends them to the care of one of his oldest friends, Dr Eyre. These children all received less than £50, specifically so that they 'may be Educated properly for some trade'.¹⁵⁴ This reflected their mothers' low status. All lived in the parishes surrounding the Pembroke estates suggesting they may have been servants, and one, Betty Pranker, was the illegitimate daughter of a weaver.¹⁵⁵ Although some inequality according to birth order or gender, for example, was congruent with the legitimate norm, the gulf between siblings was much wider in the illegitimate context. Maintenance inequality in these cases indicates differing perceptions of the

¹⁵¹ KHLC: U269/T84/9, will of Charles Sackville, 6th Earl of Dorset, 1678. This is also reflected in their portions, as Mary received £5000 and Ann £1000, KHLC: U269/ T91/2, settlement agreement, 1674; HALS: DE/Z120/46243, marriage settlement of Edward Turner and Anne Lee alias Sackville.

¹⁵² KHLC: U269/A30, payment of wages, 1662-77. Philippa Waldegrave, the mother of Dorset's eldest two daughters, was from a professional background, KHLC: U269/C104/8, W. Waldegrave to Charles Sackville, 6th Earl of Dorset, 1 February 1684.

¹⁵³ Augustus got £200 per annum, with a further £120 p.a. on his father's death, and a settlement of £3000 on his sixteenth birthday. Caroline got an annuity of £150, an unspecified marriage settlement and an additional £400 plus shares on her father's death. WSHC: 2057/L/9, Pembroke accounts, bond dated 15 April 1762. Receipts exist for annuity payments for almost every year between 1771 and 1791, WSHC: 2057/A6/13; TNA: PROB 11/1243/157, will of The Right Honourable Henry Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, 21 March 1794; *The Pembroke Papers, 1734-1780: Letters and Diaries of Henry, Tenth Earl of Pembroke and his Circle*, ed. Sidney, Lord Herbert (London, 1942) (hereafter *PP1*), p. 41.

¹⁵⁴ TNA: PROB 11/1243/157, will of The Right Honourable Henry Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, 21 March 1794.

¹⁵⁵ WSHC: PR341, Wilton, parish register; 1242/87, apprenticeship indenture of Eudocia Pranker, 30 January 1758.

child's social status or the certainty of paternity, according to relationship type and maternal status.

Many of the children who received greater paternal provision were conceived in long-term kept mistress relationships, which seem to have been more likely to be conducted with women of higher status than servants. Wealthy men maintained kept mistresses in houses, paid their expenses and periodically cohabited with them. Women were sometimes presented as housekeepers, but never as de facto wives, and they usually had significantly more leverage than a perhaps more exploitative short-term or opportunistic master-servant relationship. A man could also more easily police a kept mistress's chastity due to his financial control of her home and lifestyle. This made paternity more secure and facilitated paternal contact with children. James Boswell entertained some doubts about the paternity of his first illegitimate child, Charles, whose mother was a servant. He finally became convinced after his friend Johnston sent him a physical description of the child; '[h]is resembling me is a most agreeable thing. I am positive that he is my own'.¹⁵⁶ This suggests that doubt existed until a physical resemblance 'proved' biological fatherhood. He never articulated such doubts about his second child, Sally, perhaps because her mother Mrs Dodds was of higher status and because he kept her as his mistress.¹⁵⁷ He maintained her in a furnished house and employed a maid, giving him much greater control and knowledge 'that since I first courted her... she has been constant to me'.¹⁵⁸ There was also a suggestion that higher-class women were more trustworthy and capable of higher feeling. When Boswell's friend Temple weighed up the pros and cons of an affair with a maidservant, he wrote, 'think of the want of delicacy in that rank. The coarse jest, the lewd reply, the falseness, the unfeeling heart, and the inexpressible meannesses and low arts': strikingly similar to John Cannon's presentation of the cuckolding Ann Heister.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ *Correspondence of James Boswell and John Johnston of Grange*, pp. 102-3, James Boswell to John Johnston, 30 July 1763.

¹⁵⁷ Pottle thinks she was the wife or daughter of small laird from Moffat, *James Boswell, The Earlier Years, 1740-1769*, ed. F.A. Pottle (London, 1966), p. 290.

¹⁵⁸ *Letters of James Boswell to the Rev. W.J. Temple*, ed. Thomas Seccombe (London, 1908), p. 58, James Boswell to William Temple, 1 February 1767.

¹⁵⁹ *Boswell in Search of a Wife*, William Temple to James Boswell, 14 April 1767.

Kept mistresses themselves also claimed greater financial entitlement through a superior emotional connection and certain paternity. When grocer's daughter Anna Maria Bennett and her employer Sir Thomas Pye separated after 16 years and four children together, she used a rhetoric of love and marriage-like monogamy to claim a superior attachment between her youngest child Caroline, and Pye. She objected to 'the Levelling in [Pye's] affections and Provision' between Caroline and another of his putative children with a 'Low woman'. She asserted that this woman's oath of paternity could not be trusted, and that his 'Natural tye' to that child was 'doubtfull... at best'. She was most affronted that 'the offspring of an hour of Vice and dissipations be sett Equal with a woman you call your wife have I givn up my character... to be at Last Rewarded by being made Equal in your care and Love with the fruit of such a Stock.'¹⁶⁰ Although written in anger in the midst of a disintegrating relationship, Bennett appealed to Pye by equating paternity with both financial and emotional responsibility. In this case she was successful; Pye left Caroline £5000 and recommended her to the care of his own siblings.¹⁶¹ Long-term, emotionally-invested relationships may have been considered morally legitimate and conveying similar economic rights to legal marriage. It is important to note that these relationships were not irregular marriages; Bennett was married to someone else at the time. Marriage comparisons were used strategically to convey emotional connection and obligation in the full knowledge that the comparison had no legal weight.¹⁶²

Many fathers paid maintenance but avoided, or performed only at a distance, other ideal paternal duties characterised by Bailey as 'the protection of the interests, bodies and emotions of offspring'.¹⁶³ This was due to a desire for secrecy. Secrecy was not the automatic reaction but was most common among the middling sorts, particularly younger men with fewer resources and no professional security. Syllas Neville aspired to the life of a country gentleman and, during the births of his illegitimate

¹⁶⁰ LSU: LLMVC/31/box 7, Anna Maria Bennett to Sir Thomas Pye, [n.d]. For further background on Bennett and Pye's relationship, see Sally Holloway. "'You know I am all on fire": Writing the Adulterous Affair in England, 1740-1830', *Historical Research* 89.244 (2016), pp. 317-39.

¹⁶¹ TNA: PROB 11/1136/416: will of Sir Thomas Pye, Admiral of the White Squadron of His Majesty's Navy, 30 December 1785.

¹⁶² Barclay, 'Illicit Intimacies'. For the contrasting argument that this rhetoric was used by mistresses who claimed to be wives, see Leah Leneman, 'Wives and Mistresses in Eighteenth-Century Scotland', *Women's History Review* 8.4 (1999), pp. 671-92.

¹⁶³ Bailey, "'Sensible Man'", p. 279.

children in the 1770s, was embarking on a career as a provincial physician, dependent upon his reputation for obtaining patients. He went to great lengths to ensure secrecy, sending his mistress Sally over 100 miles away to lie in and baptising his children under false names. When he and Sally returned to their original home in Norwich to set up his medical practice, he sent his surviving daughter Sarah to boarding school, as the physical presence of a small child of dubious parentage would have been awkward.¹⁶⁴ Sarah was a public reminder of an illicit relationship, made more threatening to the ideals of masculine household authority because it was between master and servant.

Secrecy was often related to marital status and life-cycle stage. Neville and fellow unmarried fathers James Boswell and James St Aubyn, the illegitimate son of a baronet, maintained secrecy because they were intent on marrying well, partly as a means of social mobility. Boswell's friend Temple wrote, after the birth of Boswell's daughter Sally, '[i]t must not be known on any account: it... might disgust the young lady' whom Boswell was courting.¹⁶⁵ Adultery and a spouse's attitude similarly affected acknowledgement. Lord Pembroke openly admitted paternity of his first illegitimate child Augustus from birth and, with his wife's acceptance, brought him up in the family home. His second illegitimate child Caroline was, however, kept secret from the family until she reached adulthood. Pembroke may have feared that his wife would not forgive a second adulterine child. His first affair had resulted in temporary estrangement, and both public opinion and his legitimate son's loyalties were firmly with his wife.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ *Diary of Syllas Neville*, pp. 213-17; NRO: MC7/527, John Wiggins to Syllas Neville, 22 January 1791; MC7/852/6, Syllas Neville to Thomas Sanden, [draft, September 1782]. Katie Barclay has also observed a desire for secrecy from Gilbert Innes, a Scottish banker of roughly similar social status to Neville, Boswell and St Aubyn, although he was considerably more wealthy, see Barclay, 'Illicit Intimacies', p. 581.

¹⁶⁵ *Boswell in Search of a Wife*, p. 77, William Temple to James Boswell, 17 June 1767; *Diary of Syllas Neville*, pp. 87-8, 105, 172; HHL: MssHM 80304, Diary of James St Aubyn, 1810-1819, pp. 4, 36-7, 51.

¹⁶⁶ *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, ed. W.S. Lewis (New Haven, 1937-83, online edition), vol. 10, p. 14, Horace Walpole to George Montagu, 22 February 1762; *Pembroke Papers (1780-1794): Letters and Diaries of Henry, Tenth Earl of Pembroke and his Circle*, ed. Lord Herbert (London, 1950) [hereafter *PP2*], pp. 254, 382, George, Lord Herbert to Reverend William Coxe, 23 December 1783; George, Lord Herbert to Henry, Lord Pembroke, [1788]; Retford, *Art of Domestic Life*, pp. 110, 113.

Men who became fathers later in life were also more likely to publicly acknowledge their children, evident in naming practices. James St Aubyn baptised his illegitimate daughters, born in his twenties, under a false name. His last illegitimate child, born when he was sixty-seven, was the only one baptised St Aubyn.¹⁶⁷ Illegitimates were also commonly publicly acknowledged when they reached adulthood.¹⁶⁸ As time went on, fathers may have become more attached to children or increasingly convinced of their paternity. Infant mortality was also a factor; it was perhaps not worth endangering parental reputation for a child that may not survive. Younger men may have intended to marry and have a separate legitimate family whose interests could have been damaged by an older illegitimate sibling. An older man, more established in his social and professional life, was more resilient to the financial and social implications of unmarried fatherhood, or may have been more willing to acknowledge illegitimate children as their chances of legitimate fatherhood were declining.

Secrecy was clearly important, but how did it impact on fathers' performance of social fatherhood? The exercise of affection, guidance and concern for welfare was often linked to cohabitation and physical presence but many unmarried fathers did not cohabit full time with their children. This was partly practical and did not necessarily reflect an avoidance of paternal responsibility. Vickery has argued that bachelor status often prevented men from setting up their own household, highlighting the 'makeshift quality' of their accommodation.¹⁶⁹ When Charles was born, Boswell inhabited lodgings consisting only of a bedroom and sporadic use of a parlour, and ate in chop houses. Boswell immediately decided to send Charles to a nurse which he depicted as in the child's best interests, 'as his nurse is a good creature and loves him'.¹⁷⁰ Nursing, fostering or boarding schools were the only viable option, as without a household or a respectable female companion there was no socially acceptable space for illegitimate children within the paternal home. In this illegitimates were not unusual; legitimate children were often sent to live with

¹⁶⁷ HHL: MssHM 80304, *Diary of James St Aubyn, 1810-1819*, p. 55; MssHM 63181, *Diary of James St Aubyn, 1819-1859*, pp. 84-5, 100, 244-5.

¹⁶⁸ This was the case with the children of Lord Pembroke, Edward Mann, Sir John St Aubyn and Syllas Neville.

¹⁶⁹ Amanda Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors in Georgian England*, (New Haven, 2009), pp. 57-8.

¹⁷⁰ *Correspondence of James Boswell and John Johnston of Grange*, pp. 102-3, James Boswell to John Johnston, 30 July 1763.

relatives on maternal death, or the maternal role filled within the home by another female relative.¹⁷¹ After his wife's death in 1789, Boswell was unsure where his younger legitimate children should live, ultimately deciding on boarding school.¹⁷² Cohabitation was possible only if fathers remained in marriage-like relationships with the children's mother.¹⁷³ There was, however, no cultural, social or economic space for fathers to be lone cohabiting and caring parents, and sending a child away was often considered as an appropriate discharge of paternal duty.

Some fathers also fulfilled paternal responsibilities of maintenance and concern for the child's welfare from a distance, using proxies. These were usually close friends who maintained physical contact with the child and acted as middlemen to preserve secrecy. Sylas Neville relied on his 'best friend', Thomas Blackburne, to pay maintenance to his daughter Sarah and report on her welfare while Neville travelled abroad.¹⁷⁴ Following Blackburne's sudden death in 1782, Sylas asked another friend, Thomas Sanden, if he could find Sarah a boarding school and administer the fees. He stated, the 'child m[us]t pass for a daughter of an officer a friend of yrs now abroad to any body but yr wife.'¹⁷⁵ Proxies were common in their social circle; Blackburne's brother William was also involved 'in the maintenance of a friends Child'.¹⁷⁶ As it was also common for legitimate orphans to be supported by patrons or guardians, fathers could appear as benevolent patrons without revealing their paternity.¹⁷⁷ Proxies allowed fathers to maintain distance and protect their reputations, whilst discharging their moral duty to maintain. Paternal delegation also resembled legitimate practice; Tosh argues that fathers often sent their legitimate children to boarding school as 'manliness was best instilled by proxy, under the care of a surrogate father', in this case school.¹⁷⁸ The use of proxies by unmarried fathers,

¹⁷¹ Julie-Marie Strange, "'Speechless with Grief": Bereavement and the Working-Class Father, c. 1880-1914', in Trev L. Broughton, Trev L., and Helen Rogers (eds), *Gender and Fatherhood in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke, 2007), p. 146.

¹⁷² *Letters of James Boswell to the Rev. W.J. Temple*, pp. 259-60, 338, James Boswell to William Temple, 28 November 1789; James Boswell to Mr Dempster, 19 April 1791.

¹⁷³ The Duke of Clarence and Dorothy Jordan are one example, as is the Earl of Egremont and his children by Elizabeth Ilive.

¹⁷⁴ NRO: MC7/274, Thomas Blackburne to Sylas Neville, 7 October 1778.

¹⁷⁵ NRO: MC7/852/6, Sylas Neville to Thomas Sanden [draft, September 1782].

¹⁷⁶ NRO: MC7/290, William Blackburne to Sylas Neville, 5 September 1783.

¹⁷⁷ Sir Thomas Pye partly paid for the education of his godchildren, nieces and nephews, for example, CWAC: 36/60-61, personal account books, 1780-1785.

¹⁷⁸ Tosh, *A Man's Place*, p. 119.

therefore, slotted into a well-established system in which paternal responsibilities of ensuring a good education and upbringing for a child were routinely accomplished from a physical distance.

The desire for secrecy had a complex relationship with paternal concern for reputation and feelings towards the child. Some fathers exhibited concern for their child's welfare, particularly their education, suggesting attempts to balance secrecy and an inability to cohabit with more normative paternal obligations. Sylas asked his proxy Thomas Sanden, a fellow physician, to help 'care of a little girl of mine for whom I thought it my duty to provide in ye least manner in my power'. Sylas' recourse to the minimal amount of duty seems unfeeling but he clearly also cared about her welfare. He continues to ask if Sanden knew of 'any little school or any dear motherly woman at Chichester or near it where she cd be taken care of', considering it would 'be a gr[ea]t satisfaction to me to have ye child near you, as if she shd be taken ill medical assistance will not be wanting.'¹⁷⁹ He did, however, have difficulty reconciling his paternal duties with his ambition and concern for his reputation: 'I am [th]e more embarrassed about this affair hav[in]g so many concerns of g[rea]t importance to manage just at this time.'¹⁸⁰ Concern for reputation did not necessarily lead to paternal resentment of the child and fathers could simultaneously feel concern for their child alongside a fear of exposure.

Despite considerable efforts to keep children secret, some fathers adopted the character and language of fond fatherhood as a positive facet of their identity. However, this was uneven, dependant on their audience and often bore no resemblance to the reality of physical absence. Sylas wrote to Sally, the mother of his child, using the normative language of sentimental fatherhood even though he did not meet Sarah until she was at least three years old. In one he writes, '[t]ake care of ye little Dear, you know it is what I wished for.'¹⁸¹ In others, he signs off '[k]iss ye dear child for me', and '[a]dieu! Papa's compts to Miss!'¹⁸² This may have been a

¹⁷⁹ NRO: MC7/852/6, Sylas Neville to Thomas Sanden [draft, September 1782].

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ NRO: MC7/740/13, Sylas Neville to Mrs Turner [Sarah Bradford], 17 December 1777.

¹⁸² NRO: MC7/740/14, J. Turner [Sylas Neville] to Mrs Turner [Sally Bradford], 28 October 1778; MC7/740/13, Sylas Neville to Mrs Turner [Sarah Bradford], 17 December 1777.

strategy to reassure Sally of his distant regard or he may actually have enjoyed some aspects of fatherhood which involved little personal inconvenience.

James Boswell welcomed his paternity as a marker of his adulthood, virility and independence, at a time when he had not yet achieved other markers such as marriage, house-holding or professional success. When his first (and illegitimate) child was born in 1762 he told his friend Johnston, 'I am really fond of the character of a Father. I feel myself more dignified somehow'.¹⁸³ He boasted of his virility to his friend Temple, stating, 'Mrs [Dodds] is with child. What a fellow am I!' ¹⁸⁴ He described the baby literally as a 'love child', as it proved his emotional capacity: '[a] man loves a woman to distraction. He would give the world to have a child by her... He hears she is pregnant. O world, world!'¹⁸⁵ Boswell mentioned his fatherhood in letters and his London Journal, written for his friends' amusement, because it suited his self-characterisation as 'a young fellow of spirit and fashion'.¹⁸⁶ Although historians have emphasised the importance of Boswell's sexual behaviour to his masculinity, Boswell clearly also saw unmarried paternity and its attestations of virility, adulthood and sentiment as an important component of his identity as a man of feeling and a libertine.¹⁸⁷

Some unmarried fathers also used tropes of the sentimental, tender father to describe their father-child relationship, even from a distance.¹⁸⁸ In one letter, Boswell

¹⁸³ *Correspondence of James Boswell and John Johnston of Grange* pp. 29-30, James Boswell to John Johnston, 14 December 1762.

¹⁸⁴ *Boswell in Search of a Wife*, p. 77, James Boswell to William Temple, 12 June 1767. Although Shepard notes virility as a positive marker of masculine identity, she sees this as subordinate to householding and marriage in marking adulthood, Shepard, 'Brokering Fatherhood', pp. 44-6.

¹⁸⁵ *Boswell in Search of a Wife*, p. 68.

¹⁸⁶ *Boswell's London Journal*, p. 94. For Boswell's sexuality and masculine identity see Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain, 1660-1800* (Harlow, 2001), pp. 163, 184-209; Felicity Nussbaum, *The Autobiographical Subject: Gender and Ideology in Eighteenth-Century England* (London, 1989), pp. 6, 103, 133; Patricia Meyer Spacks, *Imagining a Self: Autobiography and Novel in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, MA., 1976), pp. 230, 239.

¹⁸⁷ Carter, *Polite Society*, p. 184; Nussbaum, *Autobiographical Subject*, p. 115. Carter and Fletcher have noted that Boswell performed the character of the sentimental father only with his legitimate children, Carter, *Polite Society*, pp. 191, 196; Fletcher, *Growing up in England*, p. 133. And, although some historians have stated that Boswell felt remorse at his promiscuity, I have found no evidence that this affected his attitude towards his children. See for example, Barclay, 'Illicit Intimacies', p. 581.

¹⁸⁸ For these mainstream tropes see Bailey, "'Sensible Man'", p. 276.

articulated a highly romanticised, domestic and physically expressive image of fatherhood, but using his friend Johnston as proxy. He wrote:

You can scarcely believe what pleasure I received from the description of your Sunday's visit at the Residence of Charles. The circumstances delight my romantic Imagination. Fancy herself could not form finer ideas of the Scene, the time, the Persons, the Situation. And then your taking my Boy in your arms, and feeling your heart warm to him, is an exquisite Stroke. Poor little creature! I wish from my heart, that I had seen him, before I left England.¹⁸⁹

James St Aubyn, the illegitimate son of a baronet, used similar language to describe his decision to leave his mistress and four illegitimate daughters in order to make a more advantageous marriage. He described the break-up in his diary as 'the saddest story which befell man', relating 'the agony which struggled in my bosom' at leaving 'my little children'.¹⁹⁰ When his nine-year-old daughter Elizabeth died in 1818, he related his role in her illness using common tropes of the physically present, tender father: he stated, 'I took my turn to sit up at night... [and] fed her with my own hands', adding, 'I have nothing on my mind to reproach myself for... if it is possible to derive consolation under such extreme grief, I have it from a conviction of a conscientious discharge of duty'.¹⁹¹ St Aubyn had freely decided to marry, incidentally against his father's wishes, so it is unclear whether he created this narrative in order to assuage his guilt, or whether he believed that he had no alternative but to leave them. As with Boswell, St Aubyn may have wanted to present himself as a tender father because it suited his self-perception as a genteel man of feeling, even though he performed this role selectively.

When secrecy was not an issue, there is evidence of the adoption of ideal paternal behaviour. This included the assertion of authority and discipline, evident in articulations of paternal duty from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as well

¹⁸⁹ *Correspondence of James Boswell and John Johnston of Grange*, pp. 102-3, James Boswell to John Johnston, 30 July 1763. He uses similar tropes when describing his grief at Charles' death a year later, *Boswell in Holland, 1763-1764*, ed. F.A. Pottle (London, 1952), pp. 173-4.

¹⁹⁰ HHL: MssHM 80304, *Diary of James St Aubyn, 1810-1819*, pp. 36-7, 39-40.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 267-9.

as the growing belief by the late eighteenth century that fathers should display tenderness towards their children.¹⁹² This behaviour was particularly evident among fathers of much higher status and greater economic security, and more likely if fathers cohabited with the mother of their children. William, Duke of Clarence, the father of ten illegitimate children, wrote to his eldest son George clearly exemplifying Fletcher's argument that '[f]atherhood was about combining the exercise of guidance and authority with the expression of... affection'.¹⁹³ He counselled George on his career, exhibited normative anxiety for his health, and advised 'caution... against drinking and gambling' as 'I should not do my duty if I did not warn you against both vices'.¹⁹⁴ Another letter reprimanded George on falling into debt; '[t]his is... I trust the last letter I ever shall have to write to you in this way. I love you most sincerely... but you must not distress me'.¹⁹⁵ This duty of care was reciprocal and shared by George's siblings. His sister Sophie wrote of her 'love' and 'duty' to her '[d]ear Papa', and acted as the ideal daughter in nursing her father through illness.¹⁹⁶

Lord Pembroke similarly considered it his responsibility to prepare his illegitimate son Augustus for adult life and was determined that he should join the navy, speaking affectionately of the little boy as 'Commodore Reeb' and proudly reporting Augustus' growing weight and height.¹⁹⁷ As Augustus grew older Lord Pembroke worried about his future, writing to Augustus' legitimate brother in 1786, 'I am

¹⁹² For the continuation of authority as a behavioural model and its combination with more emotionally expressive fatherhood, see Tosh, *A Man's Place*, pp. 85-6, 89.

¹⁹³ Fletcher, *Growing up in England*, pp. 38, 40, 129, 136-9, 144. For similar arguments about the legitimate paternal ideal, see: Bailey, *Parenting in England*, p. 30; French and Rothery, *Man's Estate*, pp. 1-2, 56-67.

¹⁹⁴ *Mrs Jordan and her Family, being The Unpublished Correspondence of Mrs Jordan and the Duke of Clarence, later William IV*, ed. A. Aspinall (London, 1951), p. 81, William, Duke of Clarence to George Fitzclarence, [15 April 1809]. See also letters from William to George, ranging from 1808 to 1811, pp. 71, 74, 76, 78-9, 106, 216.

¹⁹⁵ *Correspondence of Mrs Jordan*, p. 223, William, Duke of Clarence to George Fitzclarence [1811]. William also exhorts George to 'depend on me as your best friend', a term which Bailey states was commonly used to describe legitimate father-son relationships: *Correspondence of Mrs Jordan*, p. xx, William, Duke of Clarence to George Fitzclarence [n.d.]; Bailey, *Parenting in England*, p. 85.

¹⁹⁶ *Correspondence of Mrs Jordan*, p. 62, Sophia Fitzclarence to William, Duke of Clarence, 28 September 1805; p. 146, William, Duke of Clarence to George Fitzclarence, 5 July 1810.

¹⁹⁷ *PP1*, p. 142, Henry, Lord Pembroke to Reverend William Coxe, 1 January 1779. William, Duke of Clarence was similarly proud of his sons' military and naval accomplishments, see *Correspondence of Mrs Jordan*, p. 68, William, Duke of Clarence to Thomas Coutts, [12 April 1808].

serious & unhappy about Augustus, because I really love him, & fear he will for want of application, come to shame thro' ignorance in his profession.'¹⁹⁸ These criticisms indicate not only that Lord Pembroke accepted paternal responsibility for Augustus' success but that he was concerned that his son be a credit to the family. Unlike more middling fathers intent on secrecy, elite fathers publicly solicited patronage for their children and cared about their public image as good fathers. The Duke of Clarence hoped to provide larger settlements for his children as means to 'prove to the world my real affection for you all.'¹⁹⁹ The emotional fulfilment and responsibility of a father-son relationship could exist independently of elite male pride in legitimate lineage and inheritance.²⁰⁰ This suggests that illegitimacy in itself was insufficient to exclude illegitimates from paternal protection, provision and care.

In summary, unmarried fatherhood outside the poor law was paradoxical. Most of the men discussed here accepted the principle of financial maintenance, associating it with a gentlemanly code of conduct. Attitudes varied considerably according to parental relationship type. Children of higher-status, longer-term relationships received generally more money and enjoyed more physical contact with their fathers. This reflected beliefs not only about the appropriate upbringing of a child of genteel parentage but also certainty of paternity. Some fathers went to great lengths to keep their children's existence secret but this was predominantly younger men who were professionally or financially insecure. Concern for reputation was linked directly to economic or social precarity and did not simply reflect different moral attitudes towards shame. Physician Erasmus Darwin was typically upper middling sort but as his illegitimate daughters were born in his middle age, when he had already married once, had legitimate children and established a successful practice, he did not decide to keep them secret. As chapter three discusses, he openly asserted his relationship

¹⁹⁸ PP2, p. 315, Henry, Lord Pembroke to George, Lord Herbert, 8 October 1786. For similar see pp. 272, 278, 303, 310, letters of 6 August 1785, 21 March 1786, 10 May 1785, 25 August 1786.

¹⁹⁹ *Correspondence of Mrs Jordan*, p. xx, William, Duke of Clarence to George Fitzclarence, [nd]. For more on patronage see chapter 3, pp. 187-8.

²⁰⁰ Shepard, 'Brokering Fatherhood', p. 45; Helen Berry and Elizabeth Foyster, 'Childless Men in Early Modern England', in Helen Berry and Elizabeth Foyster (eds), *The Family in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 166-8, 177-9. For more on lineage and inheritance see chapter 2. Cf. Retford, *Art of Domestic Life*, pp. 148, 233-4; French and Rothery, *Man's Estate*, pp. 210, 212, 220-1, 233.

with them to solicit pupils for their school.²⁰¹ Even when fathers maintained secrecy, they still fulfilled a basic responsibility of maintenance and expressed concern for the child's welfare, albeit from a distance. This responsibility often included paternal duties of education and protection, defined by Doolittle as 'caring about' not just physically 'caring for' a child.²⁰²

Unfiliated, unmarried fatherhood differed from the legitimate ideal in that men's access to the growing ideal of the sentimental, physically present father was limited. All the fathers here were clearly aware of this increasingly dominant ideal, but some were able to adhere to it only in the relative privacy of diaries and letters to close male friends. Unmarried fatherhood could be indulged in the emotional refuge provided by a community of like-minded friends, perhaps as a means of signalling belonging to an elite male community who prided themselves on being both sexually promiscuous and emotionally refined.²⁰³ The character of the tender unmarried father could not, however, be exhibited in public; on his son's death Boswell told his acquaintance, including a woman he hoped to marry, that he 'was distressed for the death of a friend' in order to avoid admitting his secret paternity.²⁰⁴ There were some attempts at normative fatherhood in its combination of provision, concern and feeling but these men evidently did not think that it was worth risking their reputations in order to publicly fulfil these social roles. In this frequent desire to hide, the unmarried father-child relationship fundamentally differed to the legitimate norm.

Maternity Outside the Poor Law

Evidence from letters and diaries suggests that unmarried motherhood among the propertied was experienced differently from unmarried mothers receiving poor relief. As we have seen, poor mothers exercised primary responsibility for both provision and nurture. The paternal role was largely limited to maintenance

²⁰¹ See chapter 3, p. 190.

²⁰² Megan Doolittle, 'Fatherhood, Religious Belief and the Protection of Children in Nineteenth-Century English Families', in Trev L. Broughton and Helen Rogers (eds), *Gender and Fatherhood in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke, 2007), p. 32.

²⁰³ For the concept of 'emotional refuge' see William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 128-9.

²⁰⁴ *Boswell in Holland*, pp. 173-4. He had previously told the woman that he was mourning a parent.

payments only and maternal authority supported by the parish. I suggest that when the poor law was not involved the emphasis on mothers as primary carers and decision-makers was reversed. Fathers were much more likely to take on primary responsibility for a child's welfare, albeit often at a distance, and children were seldom expected to cohabit with their birth mothers. This occurred from the middling sort upwards; Erasmus Darwin's daughters remained with him when their mother, a nursemaid, married and moved 25 miles away.²⁰⁵ This arrangement more closely echoed the gendered division of authority in legitimate parenthood, where 'the father is supposed to be absolute lord'.²⁰⁶ Although fathers had no legal claim to illegitimate offspring, among the professions, gentry and peerage many men claimed a right of authority and ownership that generally went unchallenged. I will demonstrate that mothers free from poverty and occupational constraints were not necessarily more able to cohabit with and nurture their children themselves. Propertied motherhood had its own distinct difficulties, namely in the differing value of female chastity, the importance of marriage to female status and subsistence, and a different balance of economic and cultural power within higher-status extra-marital relationships.

Social motherhood carried greater risk to reputation for middling or elite mothers. This partly reflects a double standard that held female chastity of higher value than male because 'all property depends upon it'.²⁰⁷ Sexual honour was undoubtedly important to lower-class women and some men but the economic and social value of marital status and motherhood to elite women was far greater.²⁰⁸ A woman whose chastity was suspect risked exposing her children to disinheritance; spurious heirs

²⁰⁵ *The Collected Letters of Erasmus Darwin*, ed. Desmond King-Hele (Cambridge, 2007), p. 140. Augustus Montgomery and Georgina Walpole similarly were left under the care of either their father or their father's representative, and their mothers Kitty Hunter and Mary Sheen married and moved away.

²⁰⁶ Anon., 'The Genuine Sentiments of an English Country Gentleman, upon the Present Plan of the Foundling Hospital', in Jonas Hanway, *A candid historical account of the Hospital for the reception of exposed and deserted young children* (London, 1759), p. 12.

²⁰⁷ James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, ed. David Womersley (London, 2008), p. 508. For context on the double standard see Keith Thomas, 'The Double Standard', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 20 (1959), pp. 195-216.

²⁰⁸ The classic reappraisal of the double standard is Capp, 'The Double Standard Revisited'. Most historians now agree that sexual reputation mattered to men, but that it was likely more significant for women: Foyster, *Manhood*, pp. 77-87; Turner, *Fashioning Adultery*, pp. 61-4; Bailey, *Unquiet Lives*, pp. 10, 140-67.

were legally contested throughout the period.²⁰⁹ The doubtful chastity of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, and her husband's mistress Lady Elizabeth Foster led to rumours decades later that Georgiana's son the 6th Duke was illegitimate.²¹⁰ Elite women were more likely to have adulterine children than poorer parents for whom illegitimacy resulted from courtship sex, a custom not common among the wealthy.²¹¹ Motherhood was proof of adultery and risked divorce, a penalty that did not apply to men and which could rarely be utilised at lower social levels.²¹² Divorce carried considerable economic and social penalties. As Turner argues, a woman 'stood to lose everything - her maintenance, portion and access to her [legitimate] children'.²¹³ The social penalty of adultery also became more acute over the century. Growing press intrusion and public demand for prurient details quickly made criminal conversation cases notorious.²¹⁴ It is unsurprising that women such as Georgiana Cavendish and Harriet Ponsonby, Countess of Bessborough kept pregnancies secret, gave birth abroad, and chose to relinquish their illegitimate children to their lovers' authority rather than risk a scandal.²¹⁵

Illicit sex was also increasingly perceived to render women unfit mothers. As Perry argues, after 1740 mothers were supposed to physically devote themselves to maternity, and sexual urges were 'interpreted as perverse'.²¹⁶ Illegitimate maternity was a catch 22; it proclaimed sexuality in its most dangerous form outside marriage, yet to abandon or physically distance oneself from a child was to be a bad mother. As Barclay argues, there was a widespread belief that 'a life of sexual immorality

²⁰⁹ Julie Shaffer, 'Bastardy and Divorce Trials, 1780-1809', in Rebecca Probert (ed.), *Cohabitation and Non-Marital Births in England and Wales, 1600-2012* (Basingstoke, 2004), pp. 80-99.

²¹⁰ Amanda Foreman, *The Duchess. Georgiana: Duchess of Devonshire* (London, 2008), p. 400.

²¹¹ Bigamous or adulterine bastardy comprised only 4.5 percent of filiation cases in Essex before 1834, Nutt, 'Paradox and Problems', p. 115. I only have one case of pre-marital conception by an elite woman in this thesis, and it would be impossible to quantify in the absence of poor law or accurate parish register evidence.

²¹² For the social background of litigants for separation or adultery see Turner, *Fashioning Adultery*, p. 147; Bailey, *Unquiet Lives*, pp. 49, 54-55.

²¹³ Turner, *Fashioning Adultery*, pp. 151, 153, 156; Bailey, *Unquiet Lives*, p. 151.

²¹⁴ Donna T. Andrew, *Aristocratic Vice: The Attack on Duelling, Suicide, Adultery and Gambling in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven, 2013), pp. 147-156.

²¹⁵ Judith Lewis, *In the Family Way: Childbearing in the British Aristocracy, 1760-1860* (New Brunswick, 1986), pp. 28, 39-40; Foreman, *The Duchess*, pp. 67, 69, 266, 355-6.

²¹⁶ Perry, 'Colonizing the Breast', p. 230. Perry's argument is supported by: Retford, *Art of Domestic Life*, p. 97; Marilyn Francus, *Monstrous Motherhood: Eighteenth-Century Culture and the Ideology of Domesticity* (Baltimore, 2012), pp. 63-5.

"hardened" the seduced woman'.²¹⁷ Some fathers used this belief to justify removing their children from maternal influence. William Temple condemned Boswell's married mistress Mrs Dodds as 'the unnatural mother of three [legitimate] children... a woman that has deserted three poor infants'. But, when she gave birth to Boswell's illegitimate daughter in 1767, Temple supported Boswell's decision to 'immediately take the child from her', negating Mrs Dodds' maternal rights despite earlier castigating her for desertion.²¹⁸

It was also feared that unmarried mothers would embark on other non-marital relationships, thus exposing their children to contact with men who were not their fathers. In the 1790s, actress Dorothy Jordan and gentleman Richard Ford at first cordially shared parental responsibility for their two illegitimate daughters. When Dorothy began an extra-marital relationship with William, Duke of Clarence, however, Richard began to undercut her maternal rights. He stated that it was his 'wish that she should, whenever she pleases, see and be with them', but crucially 'provided her visits are not attended by any circumstances which may be improper to them'.²¹⁹ He insisted that Dorothy could not see the girls in the home she shared with William because of the danger that they would 'receive impressions not to be hereafter eradicated'.²²⁰ Mothers who did not fit the ideal of sexual passivity were perceived as dangerous to their children's moral and physical welfare in a way that biological fathers were not.

The relative authority of mothers and fathers was also affected by the differing balance of economic and socio-cultural power within kept-mistress or socially-unequal relationships. Elite fathers with children born to lower-status mothers tended to assert their authority as guardians, although this was legally incorrect, because they had greater economic and social leverage. In his 1785 will Sir Thomas Pye nominated his siblings as guardians of his illegitimate children Caroline, Nancy and Polly, even though they were under the legal authority of their mother and

²¹⁷ Katie Barclay, 'Marginal Households and their Emotions: The "kept mistress" in Enlightenment Edinburgh', in Susan Broomhall (ed.), *Spaces for Feeling: Emotions and Sociabilities in Britain, 1650-1850* (Oxford, 2015), p. 102.

²¹⁸ *Boswell in Search of a Wife*, pp. 51, 113, William Temple to James Boswell, 20 March 1767; William Temple to James Boswell, 22 November 1767.

²¹⁹ *Correspondence of Mrs Jordan*, p. 12, Richard Ford to Dorothy Jordan, [October 1791].

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 14, Hester Bland to Dorothy Jordan, [1791-2].

technically her estranged husband. Their mother was Pye's nominal housekeeper and almost entirely financially dependent upon him.²²¹ Depending on paternal attitudes, kept mistresses' rights to motherhood were usually negated before their sexual duties and a need for secrecy. Tague argues that wives could assert their authority as mothers to demand a lying-in period, extra servants or abstinence from sex, backed by strong communal custom.²²² Kept mistresses lacked this communal support. To maintain secrecy, Sally Bradford gave birth to her first two illegitimate children by her employer Sylas Neville over 100 miles away from her home. She left them with a nurse to resume her position as Sylas' sexual partner, either at his instigation or because of her fears that Sylas would tire of her in her absence.²²³ They quickly resumed their sexual relationship; after returning from her first birth in March 1775 she became pregnant again within two months. This not only prevented Sally from exercising physical motherhood, but also endangered their children's welfare. Her first two children died in infancy, perhaps due to lack of breastfeeding, or their nurses' 'negligence and want of care'.²²⁴ Sally was only able to look after her third child, Sarah, because Sylas was abroad for several years.

The importance of relative economic and social status, and of gendered notions of authority, is evident in the custody dispute between Dorothy Jordan and Richard Ford. At the time of their separation, Dorothy was financially independent and protected by her new relationship with William, Duke of Clarence. As she did not need Richard, she could resist his attempts to retain authority over their children. Richard resented this curtailment of his paternal and masculine rights. He cancelled an annuity she had given them and lost his temper when she cut short a visit with

²²¹ TNA: PROB 11/1136/416: will of Sir Thomas Pye. Lord Orford similarly left the guardianship of his illegitimate daughter Georgina Walpole to genteel trustees, not her mother, who had been a maidservant. These trustees chose Georgina's school, and she had to ask their permission to visit her mother and to marry. See NRO: HMN 4/46/3/1, Mary Sparrow to Briggs Fountaine, 20 December 1795; HMN 4/46/2/3, Briggs Fountaine to Anthony Hamond, 22 April 1800; HMN 4/46/2/5, Georgina Walpole to Anthony Hamond, 30 August 1800.

²²² Ingrid Tague, 'Aristocratic Women and Ideas of Family in the Early Eighteenth Century', in Helen Berry and Elizabeth Foyster (eds), *The Family in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 198-203. These customs were also observed in the seventeenth century, see Crawford, 'The Construction and Experience of Maternity', p. 28.

²²³ *Diary of Sylas Neville*, p. 214, 15 February 1775.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 217. For the connection between lack of breastfeeding and infant mortality see chapter 2, pp. 124-5.

him.²²⁵ He was backed by Dorothy's sister Hester, who felt that it was in the children's best interests not to 'deprive them of a parent who so tenderly loves them' and who could lend them 'countenance and support'.²²⁶ Hester, moreover, felt that her sister should bow to customary (rather than legal) masculine authority and avoid a scandal: '[f]rom his education he knows what your right is; he also knows how very much you must be embarrassed and indelicately circumstanced in urging that right.'²²⁷ Clearly genteel women seldom asserted their legal rights due to cultural pressure. Eventually, Dorothy stood her ground and Richard became estranged from his daughters.²²⁸ Dorothy was unusual in having an independent income, and as an actress who was already an outsider she was perhaps less sensitive to social norms. Dorothy was also protected by William; when they separated 20 years later she was unable to retain custody of their children because the power balance had shifted, reflecting his superior status, her waning career and mounting debts.²²⁹ Nonetheless, this example suggests that if mothers had been practically able to support their children themselves they may not have agreed to separation.

Maternal separation was not always involuntary but could be a calculated decision to improve their children's status. In unequal relationships, in particular, some mothers allowed almost complete separation in order to inculcate a beneficial father-child relationship. Maria Burton, the mother of two daughters by the naval architect Samuel Bentham, had intended to 'part with my dear child' so she could 'be brought up under the eyes of her Father [as]... a means to insure his protection of her'.²³⁰ Separation was articulated using the imagery of emotional distress and maternal sacrifice, which Bailey has identified as a powerful self-identity for married women.²³¹ Dorothy Jordan stated on her separation from William, Duke of Clarence,

²²⁵ *Correspondence of Mrs Jordan*, p. 17, Hester Bland to Dorothy Jordan [n.d.]. Hester relates that Dorothy's decision 'to send for his favourite child, the very day after he came from France, and that for a week, and by a mere verbal message, was too much for his temper, perhaps too hasty, to bear'.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 14-16, Hester Bland to Dorothy Jordan [late 1791 or early 1792].

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16, Hester Bland to Dorothy Jordan [n.d.].

²²⁸ Claire Tomalin, *Mrs Jordan's Profession: The Actress and the Prince* (New York, 1995), p. 132.

²²⁹ *Correspondence of Mrs Jordan*, pp. 229-30, William Adam to Dorothy Jordan [24 January 1812].

²³⁰ Private archive: Koe MSS, Maria Burton to John Herbert Koe [April 1816], cited in Catherine Pease-Watkin, 'Jeremy and Samuel Bentham – The Private and the Public', *Journal of Bentham Studies* 5 (2002), p. 16.

²³¹ Bailey, *Parenting in England*, pp. 153-5.

that '[t]he idea of only partially parting with [her children] would be death to me if I was not so strongly impress'd with the certainty of its being for their future advantage'.²³²

Mothers also encouraged higher-status fathers to take on more of a normative paternal role of complete authority over a child's material and emotional welfare as a means of asserting the moral and emotional legitimacy of their relationship and reconciling their illicit position with the ideal of maternal passivity. Grocer's daughter Anna Maria Bennett adopted the normative rhetoric of patriarchal household authority to describe her children's relationship to their higher-status father, Sir Thomas Pye. After their separation she asserted, 'far be it from me to wish to divest you of the authority both Gratitude and duty ought to [e]nsure from Polly and Nancy'.²³³ Although Pye had no legal rights, Bennett acted as if he did. This may have been a strategy to remind Pye of his paternity, particularly as they had separated amidst accusations of her infidelity.²³⁴ His acknowledgement was essential to her children's future prospects and their adoption of their father's higher social status. She noted in 1780 when her children were still young that 'the girls are still Bro[ough]t up as mine but if we Live with you we must all Ra[i]se in our Notions', referring to the potential elevation of their status if they were publicly acknowledged as the children of a gentleman.²³⁵ It is unlikely that Bennett would ever have agreed to give up her children entirely but her immediate economic survival depended on presenting herself and her children as Pye's dependents, as close to the normative characterisation of wife and children as possible. Similarly, Dorothy Jordan deferred to William's authority, asking his permission to take their children to the theatre or visit their son at school, even though she was financially independent and he had no legal rights.²³⁶ This was an extension into motherhood of the rhetoric of 'domestic

²³² *Correspondence of Mrs Jordan*, p. 235, Dorothy Jordan to George Fitzclarence, [18 June 1812].

²³³ CWAC: 36/74, Anna Maria Bennett to Sir Thomas Pye, [1785]. Similar language is used by Dorothy Jordan to describe her children's relationship with their father, HHL: DJ 410, Dorothy Jordan to William, Duke of Clarence, [22 Nov 1810]; DJ 422, Dorothy Jordan to William, Duke of Clarence, 7 Dec 1810.

²³⁴ LSU: LLMVC/31/box 7, Anna Maria Bennett to Sir Thomas Pye [March 1785]. For more on Bennett's use of strategy, but as a lover not a mother, see Holloway, "'You know I am all on fire'", pp. 336-7.

²³⁵ CWAC: 36/62, Anna Maria Bennett to Sir Thomas Pye, [1780-1].

²³⁶ HHL: DJ 101, Dorothy Jordan to William, Duke of Clarence, [December 1804]; DJ 102, Dorothy Jordan to William, Duke of Clarence, [1804]; DJ 123, Dorothy Jordan to William, Duke of Clarence, 3 Sept [1806]; DJ 153, Dorothy Jordan to William, Duke of Clarence, [1806].

normality' observed by Barclay; mistresses characterised their lovers as 'absent husbands' in order to escape 'the anxiety and pain of an illegitimate relationship'.²³⁷ Perhaps in characterising these men as fathers, women were able to recast themselves as good mothers.

As with poor mothers, propertied women often expressed deep emotional attachment towards their children and valued their maternal status. Shame was generally only articulated during pregnancy, and was related to their sexual activity rather than focused towards the child.²³⁸ When pregnant with her youngest child, Anna Maria Bennett complained, '[e]very body observes how Lusty I grow in the waist I feel so awkward and ashamed of Every ones observation... I believe the Reason is Every Pregnant woman wants a male support'.²³⁹ This echoes Barclay's finding that kept mistresses were often subject to a shaming surveillance and could find it more difficult to rent houses or socialise without a male presence.²⁴⁰ However, shame at pregnancy rarely extended to resentment of the child; Bennett was an extremely fond mother. The circumstances of conception could even make mothers more attached. Dorothy Jordan referred to her first illegitimate child, Fanny, as '[a] dear and amiable little girl made doubly dear to me by mutual misfortune'.²⁴¹ Motherhood was also valued as a distinct state. Dorothy adopted the normative rhetoric of natural affection and an idealised domestic motherhood. She referred to mother-child relationships as 'the first and most sacred type of human nature' and felt that if she was not continually anxious for their welfare 'I should not deserve the name of Mother', reflecting the normative ideal that 'to be anxious was... a trait of good parenting'.²⁴² Although we only have evidence from women who remained in contact with their children, these examples do suggest that unmarried maternity

²³⁷ Barclay, 'Illicit Intimacies', p. 576.

²³⁸ For examples of the former type of shame, see Barclay, 'Marginal Households', p. 107.

²³⁹ CWAC: 36/67, Anna Maria Bennett to Sir Thomas Pye, [1781].

²⁴⁰ Barclay, 'Marginal Households', pp. 101-5.

²⁴¹ *Correspondence of Mrs Jordan*, pp. 9-10, Dorothy Jordan to William, Duke of Clarence, [September/October 1791].

²⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 263-4, Dorothy Jordan to George Fitzclarence, 20 January 1814; HHL: DJ 428, Dorothy Jordan to William, Duke of Clarence, 15 December 1810; Bailey, *Parenting in England*, pp. 31, 37-9. For similar sentiments see: *Correspondence of Mrs Jordan*, p. 237, Dorothy Jordan to George Fitzclarence, [21 August 1812]; HHL: DJ 482, Dorothy Jordan to William, Duke of Clarence, [10 August 1811].

could, in some circumstances, be reconciled with common tropes of self-sacrificial, anxious and tender motherhood, and did not invariably lead to feelings of shame.

In summary, the ability of unfiliated mothers to nurture their own children was highly contingent on paternal goodwill and the realities of women's limited economic independence. Adulterous women risked losing their social and economic status and endangering the welfare of any existing legitimate children within a culture that, increasingly, could not reconcile female sexuality with good maternity. Employment opportunities for single mothers were limited, particularly if they did not want to enter service. Filiation would have been an unwelcome prospect, entailing the ordeal of public examination in exchange for inadequate parish maintenance. Barclay has suggested that kept mistresses were subject to 'genteel poverty'; they had limited employment prospects or access to charity but their aspirations to normative femininity and respectability prevented them from seeking parish assistance.²⁴³ Unlike filiated mothers, these mothers did not present themselves as having maternal rights above those of the father and they themselves generally deferred to paternal authority. This was, however, much closer to the dynamics of marital relationships. When women remained in relationships with their children's fathers, they performed and described maternity as a positive identity, using remarkably similar tropes to the legitimate middling and elite ideal of the devoted mother. The only evidence I have of a mother who was able to assert maternal authority without the support of her children's father is Dorothy Jordan. She was in an unusual position of having financial independence and the support of the Duke of Clarence. Other similar examples of successful unfiliated maternity may simply not exist in the historical record, partly because of the more limited survival of female-authored material. I do think it is striking that in all the cases of unfiliated parenthood examined in this thesis, parental responsibility was routinely vested in fathers. This often limited mother-child contact.

Conclusion

The sources suggest that socio-economic background, class-based gender identities and the interference of the poor law significantly influenced the experience of

²⁴³ Barclay, 'Marginal Households', pp. 95-6, 99, 101-3.

unmarried parenthood. Fathers who were subject to poor law filiation were least likely to fulfil obligations of social parenthood. We would expect poor law evidence to over-represent reluctant paternity and financial obligations, but evidence from life-writing and correspondence also largely supports the conclusion that poor fathers resented paternity and sought to evade it. Upper-middling and elite sources, in contrast, suggest that higher-status mothers found it more difficult than fathers to socially parent their children. Some poor mothers, particularly those supported by the parish and family, were more able to adopt the roles associated with legitimate parenthood. For them, poverty and the absence of a male breadwinner were the most important variables, supporting Crawford's argument.²⁴⁴ However, the illegitimate context did result in subtle differences; illegitimates were more likely to be separated from their mothers for long periods of time. Available evidence suggests that wealthy fathers did adopt social fatherhood. In specific contexts, and to specific audiences, unmarried fatherhood among the wealthy could be a positive source of identity and much more closely echo the legitimate ideal. All of these parents viewed illegitimate parenthood differently to legitimate parenthood, but the gap between the two varied, and in many circumstances was not as great as historians have previously assumed. These findings suggest that a positive relationship with illegitimate children was possible, and in many cases could fit with wider ideals of parenthood and gendered identity. This opens up the possibility that there may have been many more parents of different socio-economic status with positive experiences of unmarried parenthood, but that their experiences have either not survived in the sources or have been obscured by historiographical emphasis on the poor law.

These findings raise questions about the separation of biological and social parenthood. An emphasis on disputed paternity as the key means to deny paternal responsibility suggests that blood was seen as conveying at least a right to maintenance. Elite paternal pride in a blood link to a child, partly as a demonstration of virility, suggests that blood and perhaps ideas of natural affection were seen as conveying responsibility to care about, if not directly physically care for, a child, in a way closely related to social parenthood norms. It was blood, rather than legal status, that determined the parent-child relationship and it seems that parents rationalised avoiding responsibility by suggesting that they were not related to the child. If

²⁴⁴ Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, p. 4.

fathers could be sure of paternity, for example if they had engaged in a kept mistress or long-term relationship, then they were more likely to take on aspects of the paternal role beyond maintenance, such as sustained contact, public acknowledgement of paternity and the ideal behaviours of love, guidance and discipline. Furthermore, given recent scholarship in the history of emotions that asserts a strong cultural association of financial provision with affection, we cannot be certain that maintenance was not considered to convey other parental responsibilities such as care and affection.²⁴⁵ Aspects of social parenthood were often done by proxy or at a physical distance, particularly by elite fathers and poor mothers, but biological parents still accepted ultimate responsibility for their children. Moreover, the adoption by some elite men and women, and poor women, of the specific identity of 'father' or 'mother', and the positive values associated with it, suggest that becoming a parent in a biological sense could be a marker of adulthood and gender identity. This concept of parenthood existed even if it was seen differently to legitimate parenthood.

These findings suggest that reputation was construed on wider terms than sexual morality, echoing studies of slander that emphasise the broad base of both masculine and female reputation.²⁴⁶ Among the filiated fathers studied here, loss of authority and lack of control over female sexuality were more damaging to masculine reputation than paternity itself. This is bolstered by comparison with unfiliated fathers; as they were in control of both the child's maintenance and care arrangements, they could perform fatherhood within masculine norms, and exhibited very little resentment. The importance of authority is reflected in Hester Bland's description of Richard Ford's unusual position relative to Dorothy Jordan's economic independence; 'his situation is rendered very awkward by being called a father, and possessing no such authority as a father ought to possess'.²⁴⁷ This supports Harvey and Shepard's emphasis that poor fathers evasion of paternity reflected their resentment at parish interference, as it disrupted their claims to

²⁴⁵ Bailey, *Parenting in England*, pp. 61-3; Strange, "Speechless with Grief", pp. 141-2, 145; Doolittle, 'Fatherhood, Religious Belief', p. 32; Philip Grace, *Affectionate Authorities: Fathers and Fatherly Roles in Late Medieval Basel* (Farnham, 2015), pp. 43-6, 58, 62-3; Barclay, 'Illicit Intimacies', p. 582-6; Barclay, 'Natural Affection'.

²⁴⁶ Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 156.

²⁴⁷ *Correspondence of Mrs Jordan*, p. 17, Hester Bland to Dorothy Jordan [n.d.].

masculine values of honesty, independence and household authority.²⁴⁸ It is likely, therefore, that filiation created an artificially antagonistic situation. Those fathers who were most concerned with hiding or avoiding paternity were often young and typical of the precarious middling sort. This group has been identified by Hunt as particularly vulnerable to financial ruin and therefore more conscious of maintaining a reputation for moral and financial self-discipline.²⁴⁹ Individuals such as John Cannon or Syllas Neville, although occupying different social circles, were both young men concerned with making good marriages and achieving occupational success at the point at which they became fathers. If fatherhood had come at a more secure point in their lives, they may have had very different attitudes towards their children.

These examples also suggest that we need to think more closely about the relationship between concern for public reputation and feelings of personal shame which negatively affected parent-child relationships. Fear for reputation did not necessarily cause complete repudiation of a parental relationship, although it did shape it. Many propertied fathers were concerned to hide their paternity, yet in certain contexts and to certain audiences, they exhibited a positive relationship with fatherhood. Moreover, this relationship was expressed using dominant cultural tropes of sentimental and physically demonstrative fatherhood. They were clearly worried that paternity would damage their occupational or marital opportunities but paradoxically used paternity to bolster their masculine identities as men of feeling, particularly within the context of male sociability. Privately-maintained mothers similarly exhibited some shame, or at least concern, over appearing pregnant in public but again did not blame or resent their children as a consequence, nor did it preclude them from deriving some positive identity from motherhood.

The most significant limitations on unmarried parenthood were practical impediments, such as poverty, the threat of poor law punishment or divorce, and cultural norms which made lone parent-child cohabitation conspicuous. Unmarried parenthood was to a certain extent a luxury, afforded by the wealthy or those

²⁴⁸ Shepard, 'Brokering Fatherhood', pp. 43, 46, 61; Harvey, 'Putative Fathers', pp. 379-80, 386-7.

²⁴⁹ Margaret Hunt, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender and the Family in England, 1680-1780* (Berkeley, 1996), pp. 21-3, 37-41.

supported by the parish. When they were able, parents frequently went far beyond Blackstone's minimum duty of maintenance, casting doubt on previous historiographical pessimism. The evidence presented here indicates that poor law and Foundling Hospital records have somewhat distorted the picture by over-representing reluctant and desperate mothers and fathers intent on abandonment. The personal testimony of life-writing and correspondence suggests that emotionally fulfilling relationships were possible at all social levels. But, poor fathers and unfiliated or elite mothers were most constrained in their ability to parent, primarily through a lack of economic agency or the greater social penalties attached to illicit sexuality. Most significantly, this evidence suggests that parent-child relationships were impeded not because illegitimate children were seen as automatically less entitled to parental care or responsibility, but because of a host of other variables which depended greatly on individual circumstances.

The inclusion of illegitimate children in some aspects of parenthood suggests that this flexibility may also have been present in other aspects of eighteenth-century society. Variations in parental acknowledgement may also have had life-long consequences on illegitimates' ability to form family bonds or their occupational and marriage chances, social status and experience of stigma. These long-term impacts are the subject of later chapters. Parent-child relationships also did not occur in a vacuum but varied according to family circumstances. Many parents had both legitimate and illegitimate children, and struggled to reconcile their competing responsibilities. Many of the responsibilities of parenthood were also taken on by individuals other than the biological parent: by step-parents, grandparents and other family members. It is to this familial context that we now turn.

Chapter Two: Family

Introduction

This chapter tests the inclusion of illegitimates in contemporary notions of family. Legally a 'nullius filius', an illegitimate child was 'of kin to nobody'.¹ They had no rights to property inheritance, settlement or paternal surname, all of which signalled their exclusion from family. This lonely image was echoed in cultural production. From Harriet Smith in Austen's *Emma* to Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones*, illegitimates were depicted by contemporaries as their parents' first and only child, their origins shrouded in secrecy, forced to make their own way through the world seemingly cut off from biological family. Illegitimacy was depicted as a threat to family life, through the betrayal of marital bonds or the diversion of money and affection away from the legitimate line.² Although conduct books regularly advised on how to best conduct complicated legitimate step- and half-relationships, none advised on the illegitimate relationships that would supposedly destroy familial happiness.³

This chapter argues that this cultural and legal isolation was to a certain extent a fiction. The high and increasing illegitimacy ratio makes it highly likely that many families would have had at least one illegitimate relative. Illegitimates also had a range of potential kin on whom they could theoretically call for support and recognition. An estimated 50 to 85 percent of mothers married after the birth of their first illegitimate child, but not commonly to that child's father.⁴ Most illegitimates

¹ William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England. In four books. By William Blackstone, Esq. Solicitor General to Her Majesty* (4th edn, Oxford, 1770), vol. 1, p. 459.

² Sarah Pearsall, *Atlantic Families: Lives and Letters in the Later Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 2008), pp. 49-50; Joanne Bailey, "'A Very Sensible Man": Imagining Fatherhood in England, c 1760-1830', *History* 95 (2010), p. 286. For more on literary representations, see chapter 5.

³ Conduct manuals have been widely used for evidence of familial relationships. See: Anthony Fletcher, 'The Protestant Idea of Marriage in Early Modern England', in Anthony Fletcher and Peter Roberts (eds), *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain: Essays in Honour of Patrick Collinson* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 161-81; Susan Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 34-66.

⁴ Richard Adair, *Courtship, Illegitimacy and Marriage in Early Modern England* (Manchester, 1996), pp. 79-80; J. Robin, 'Illegitimacy in Colyton, 1851-1881', *Continuity and Change* 2.2 (1987), pp. 313-5; Cathy Day, *Wiltshire Marriage Patterns, 1754-1914: Geographical Mobility, Cousin Marriage and Illegitimacy* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 2013), pp. 196, 202-3. An estimated 10 to 25 percent of mothers married the father of their child: Day, *Wiltshire Marriage Patterns*, p. 202;

therefore had nominal step-parents and half-siblings through both their father and mother. Illegitimates tended to be the eldest child but, as cohabitation rates were low, they rarely had full siblings, or half-siblings who were also illegitimate.⁵ As chapter one suggested, many unmarried parents did not live with their illegitimate children, due to a desire for secrecy, denial of paternity, or the demands of employment. Varying parental circumstances may have severely limited illegitimates' familial contact or made familial support crucial to the provision of everyday care and cohabitation.⁶ Illegitimates had access to multiple potential families but these families' obligation towards them was uncertain in both law and socio-cultural ideals.

Historians disagree on the levels of familial exclusion experienced by unmarried parents and their children. Gowing and others have suggested that sexual reputation was perceived to affect entire households. Families consequently ostracised unmarried parents out of a sense of collective shame.⁷ Levene, Nutt and Williams argued that the settlement laws and high mobility of single mothers meant women were often physically separated from families.⁸ Similarly, Crawford largely excluded kin from her study, arguing that 'a pregnant single woman was on her own', a view echoed by much early work on foundlings or infanticide.⁹ These sources would, however, disproportionately represent mothers who lacked family support. Blaikie and others have been more optimistic, contesting that maternal families provided

Rebecca Probert, *Marriage Law and Practice in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 115. The maternal marriage rate seems to have been much lower in London, but the reasons for this are unknown, John Black, 'Illegitimacy and the Urban Poor in London, 1740-1830', Ph.D. thesis (Royal Holloway, University of London, 2000), pp. 93, 100.

⁵ Brueton found that less than half a percent of illegitimate children baptised in South Wales between 1701 and 1840 had a full sibling who was also illegitimate, Anna Christina Brueton, 'Illegitimacy in South Wales, 1660-1870', Ph.D. thesis (University of Leicester, 2015), p. 227. This is echoed in Probert's findings for Welsh and Northamptonshire parishes, Probert, *Marriage Law*, pp. 255-6.

⁶ See chapter 1.

⁷ Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words, and Sex in Early Modern London* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 90-99; Amussen, *An Ordered Society*, p. 97.

⁸ Alys Levene, Thomas Nutt and Samantha Williams, 'Introduction', in Alys Levene, Thomas Nutt and Samantha Williams (eds), *Illegitimacy in Britain, 1700-1920* (Basingstoke, 2005), p. 7. Evans similarly suggested that mothers in London were more likely to rely on employers and neighbours than family, due to their migrant status, Tanya Evans, 'Unfortunate Objects': *Lone Mothers in Eighteenth-Century London* (Basingstoke, 2005), pp. 188-90.

⁹ Patricia Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children in England, 1580-1800* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 41-2; R.W. Malcolmson, 'Infanticide in the Eighteenth Century', in J.S. Cockburn (ed.), *Crime in England, 1550-1800* (London, 1977), pp. 193, 204; Patricia Crawford, *Blood, Bodies and Families in Early Modern England* (Harlow, 2004), p. 214.

vital childbirth assistance and childcare for unmarried mothers and their infants.¹⁰ But, family was about far more than childcare or cohabitation. In this work it is as yet unclear how illegitimates fitted into concepts of the household-, lineage or kinship family, whether the dominant cultural values of familial obligation, responsibility and reciprocity included illegitimate children, or whether illegitimacy impacted on the formation of relationships between illegitimates and relatives other than biological parents.¹¹ In histories of the family, illegitimates generally appear only as infants, looked after as an extension of their parents' kin relationships.¹² Tadmor and Harris found that aunts and uncles took on responsibility for housing and maintaining illegitimate children, often as a whole family effort and echoing mechanisms used to care for legitimate child relatives.¹³ However, no historian has examined how illegitimates operated as part of family networks in adulthood or how they themselves negotiated sibling or step-parent bonds. Carlton and Thornton noted that illegitimates appeared as beneficiaries in wills but had insufficient evidence on the quality of these relationships beyond financial obligation.¹⁴

Two main debates have characterised the history of the family: the extent to which kin relationships mattered outside the nuclear, and the balance between instrumental and affective considerations. Laslett, Wrightson, Macfarlane and others saw the family as primarily nuclear. Membership was based more rigidly on the legal bond

¹⁰ Andrew Blaikie, Eilidh Garrett and Ros Davies, 'Migration, Living Strategies and Illegitimate Childbearing: A Comparison of Two Scottish Settings, 1871-1881', in Alysa Levene, Thomas Nutt and Samantha Williams (eds), *Illegitimacy in Britain, 1700-1920* (Basingstoke, 2005), p. 154; Andrew Blaikie, 'Scottish Illegitimacy: Social Adjustment or Moral Economy?' *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 29.2 (1998), pp. 230, 233; Anna Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class* (Berkeley, 1995), p. 49; Black, 'Illegitimacy and the Urban Poor', pp. 336-7; Patricia Broomfield, 'Incidence and Attitudes: A View of Bastardy from Eighteenth-Century Rural North Staffordshire, c. 1750-1820', *Midland History* 28 (2002), pp. 80-98.

¹¹ For the household-, kinship and lineage families see Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship, Patronage* (Cambridge, 2001), discussed below, p. 104.

¹² Examples include: Carolyn Steedman, *Master and Servant: Love and Labour in the English Industrial Age* (Cambridge, 2007); Miranda Chaytor, 'Household and Kinship: Ryton in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries', *History Workshop Journal* 10.1 (1980), pp. 25-60.

¹³ Amy Harris, *Siblinghood and Social Relations in Georgian England: Share and Share Alike* (Manchester, 2012), pp. 115, 118; Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 186.

¹⁴ Katherine Carlton and Tim Thornton, 'Illegitimacy and Authority in the North of England, c. 1450-1640', *Northern History* 48 (2011), pp. 23-40.

of marriage and kinship links outside the household were shallow.¹⁵ This was challenged primarily by Cressy and Tadmor's demonstrations that affective and instrumental kinship links operated both inside and outside the household.¹⁶ This has been recently supported by work on sibling relationships which demonstrates the continued importance of siblings, aunts, uncles and cousins as members of an extended family across the life-cycle.¹⁷ More recent work on the history of emotions has supported the idea that different notions of 'family' were expansive and flexible, and questioned the importance of legal or blood ties in the formation of affective bonds.¹⁸ As yet, the illegitimate variable has not been fully considered but the acceptance of flexible and responsive modes of kinship would suggest that there was space for illegitimates within eighteenth-century family life.

Analysis of the illegitimate experience can reshape our understanding of the balance between blood and legal relationships as the basis of obligation and affection, and the mechanisms by which family relationships were recognised and maintained. It is now generally accepted that affective and instrumental bonds were mutually reinforcing. Instrumentality was often an expression of emotion and the acceptance of responsibility and obligation could lead to the development of affective relationships.¹⁹ Responsibility for material or spiritual welfare, such as that of a

¹⁵ Alan Macfarlane, *The Family Life of Ralph Josselin: a Seventeenth-Century Clergyman* (London, 1970), pp. 139, 153, 159; Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (London, 1977); Keith Wrightson, and David Levine, *Poverty and Piety in an English Village: Terling, 1525-1700* (2nd edn, Oxford, 1995), pp. 91-4, 102. For an overview of the early historiography see Keith Wrightson, 'The Family in Early Modern England: Continuity and Change', in Stephen Taylor, Richard Connors and Clive Jones (eds.), *Hanoverian Britain and Empire: Essays in Memory of Philip Lawson* (Woodbridge, 1998), pp. 1-22; Naomi Tadmor, 'Early Modern English Kinship in the Long Run: Reflections on Continuity and Change', *Continuity and Change* 25.1 (2010), pp. 15-48.

¹⁶ David Cressy, 'Kinship and Kin Interaction in Early Modern England', *Past & Present* 113 (1986), pp. 53, 67-8; Tadmor, *Family and Friends*; Chaytor, 'Household and Kinship'. See also H. Medick and D.W. Sabean, *Interest and Emotion: Essays on the Study of Family and Kinship* (Cambridge, 1984).

¹⁷ Leonore Davidoff, *Thicker than Water: Siblings and their Relations, 1780-1920* (Oxford, 2012), p. 5; Harris, *Siblinghood*, pp. 7-10.

¹⁸ Susan Broomhall, 'Emotions in the Household'; Anna Hansen, 'Bonds of Affection between Children and Their Foster-Parents in Early Icelandic Society'; Ivan Jablonka, 'Fictive Kinship: Wards and Foster-Parents in Nineteenth-Century France', all in Susan Broomhall (ed.), *Emotions in the Household, 1200-1900* (Basingstoke, 2008), pp. 18-19, 26, 38-52, 269-84; Philip Grace, *Affectionate Authorities: Fathers and Fatherly Roles in Late Medieval Basel* (Farnham, 2015).

¹⁹ Tadmor, 'Early Modern English Kinship in the Long Run', p. 26; Hans Medick and David Warren Sabean, 'Interest and Emotion in Family and Kinship Studies: a Critique of Social History and Anthropology', in H. Medick and D.W. Sabean (eds), *Interest and Emotion: Essays on the Study of Family and Kinship* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 11; Grace, *Affectionate Authorities*, pp.

master towards a servant, was undoubtedly governed by obligation but did not preclude the formation of affective bonds.²⁰ The affective concept of family employed in this chapter is defined as expressions of attachment, sincerity and concern for an individual's welfare, in correspondence and through what Broomhall and Van Gent call 'exchange acts', such as reciprocal hospitality or crisis assistance.²¹ Motivations of affection cannot be fully separated out from obligation, and in many ways the expression of affection was seen as obligatory within ideals of parent-child and sibling relationships in particular.²² Illegitimate inclusion despite limited socio-cultural pressure to do so, provides interesting evidence of the balance between obligation and affection.

The framework for this chapter is based on Tadmor's categorisations of the household-, lineage and kinship families.²³ It tests illegitimates' inclusion in each family type. These concepts overlapped and individuals' participation in them varied over the life-cycle.²⁴ They do, however, provide useful organising principles for the consideration of illegitimate children's unique place in family life: many did not cohabit with family members, had no claim to the usual markers of lineage such as inheritance or name, and often lacked the social and economic resources to fulfil instrumental kinship bonds. Moreover, their existence could damage family integrity and reputation. Yet, illegitimate children appear in accounts of family life, in correspondence and life-writing. A relationship of some kind clearly existed but existing work has not indicated the quality of these relationships and the impact of illegitimacy on them.

This chapter explores illegitimates' integration using correspondence and life-writing collections produced by nine landowning families, four middling-sort families and six labouring-poor families.²⁵ These sources, chosen from the larger group of cases

44-6, 58, 62; Susan Broomhall and Jacqueline Van Gent, 'Corresponding Affections: Emotional Exchange Among Siblings in the Nassau Family', *Journal of Family History* 34.2 (2009), p. 146.

²⁰ For one example see Steedman, *Master and Servant*.

²¹ Broomhall and Van Gent, 'Corresponding Affections', p. 144.

²² Harris, *Siblinghood*, pp. 29, 44.

²³ Tadmor, *Family and Friends*.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

²⁵ The Walpole, Mann, More, Herbert (Earls of Pembroke), Wyndham (Earls of Egremont), Barrett-Lennard (Lords Dacre), St Aubyn, Wilkes and Spencer-Stanhope families comprise the landowning group. The Cannon, Pepys, Darwin, and Bentham families provide middling perspectives. The labouring sort group comprises of the Shaw, Bradford and Burn families,

consulted in this thesis, contained the most detail of family life and often covered a considerable period of time. This enabled analysis of variation in family responses to more than one illegitimate relative, or towards an illegitimate child as they grew into adulthood. Correspondence was vital for the maintenance and practice of familial bonds over distance and can also be seen as an extension of the household space.²⁶ Correspondence indicates how relationships were negotiated and often provides multiple viewpoints of family life. Pauper letters indicate the ways in which the labouring poor presented their family to the authorities, balancing adherence to idealised family roles with economic expediency.²⁷ The ways in which families presented themselves in pauper letters were influenced by their primary purpose of obtaining relief. This purpose is useful in ascertaining which image of family dynamics was considered most effective for obtaining relief but may also have caused individuals to exaggerate illegitimate exclusion and economic need. The comparison of pauper letters with autobiographical sources less overtly connected with poor relief can indicate the extent to which individuals shaped their presentations of family for the authorities. Life-writing also provides levels of detail not found in other sources, indicating not only how individuals perceived their own family dynamic, but also their daily interaction with kin.

This approach has some limitations. The sources are unevenly spread across the period 1660 to 1834. Although several source groups span decades, only the Mores and Pepys sources contain significant material from the seventeenth century. This partly reflects more limited survival of manuscript sources generally but it may tentatively signify that families may have become more inclined to recognise illegitimate relatives later in the century. Family dynamics changed over this period in response to changing work patterns, growing rates of migration and urbanisation, and changing rates of nuptiality, mortality and fertility, not least the trebling of the illegitimacy ratio.²⁸ Historians of the family have debated continuity and change over

alongside primarily the Tabrum, Felgate and Argent families who appear in the pauper letters.

²⁶ Broomhall, 'Emotions in the Household', pp. 16-17; Harris, *Siblinghood*, pp. 64-7; Broomhall and Van Gent, 'Corresponding Affections', pp. 147-8.

²⁷ Joanne Bailey, '"Think Wot a Mother Must Feel": Parenting in English Pauper Letters c. 1760-1834', *Family and Community History* 13.1 (2010), pp. 5-19.

²⁸ Tadmor, 'Early Modern English Kinship in the Long Run', pp. 29-30. For the potential impact of changing demographics see Richard Wall, 'Economic Collaboration of Family

this period, with an older 'master narrative' suggesting that kinship links declined in importance over the early modern period.²⁹ Proponents of continuity countered that kinship ties had always been weak, but more recently Tadmor and others have suggested that these different family types co-existed and that kinship continued to be important across the socio-economic scale.³⁰ My evidence supports the continued importance of kin, whilst acknowledging that the role, value and availability of kin may have shifted in response to socio-economic and demographic change.

Evidence of different family types is also unevenly distributed according to socio-economic background. There is more evidence of family relationships within the household, among the poor. Poor families did not generally leave the caches of letters which detail middling and elite kin ties, so it is difficult to ascertain whether the lack of evidence of extra-household kin relationships reflects their absence in reality. However, many of the same ideals were manifest in different family types, such as crisis support, reciprocity, obligation and the equitable distribution of economic resources. It is likely that poverty did affect familial ability to support illegitimates in some ways but, as we shall see, there were consistent patterns of illegitimate inclusion or exclusion across socio-economic backgrounds. The emphasis here on the household-, lineage and kinship families as units of analysis also minimises the variability of relationship types. Sibling relationships, for example, had different dynamics to grandparent or step-parent relationships. However, none of these relationships worked in isolation. Perhaps more so in an illegitimate context, the attitude of one relative influenced others, creating a whole family response of integration or rejection.

Members Within and Beyond Households in English Society, 1600-2000', *Continuity and Change* 25.1 (2010), pp. 95-8.

²⁹ For an overview of the debate see Wrightson, 'The Family in Early Modern England'.

³⁰ Tadmor, 'Early Modern English Kinship in the Long Run', pp. 22-5; Margaret Hunt, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender and the Family in England, 1680-1780* (Berkeley, 1996), pp. 24-5; Ingrid Tague, 'Aristocratic Women and Ideas of Family in the Early Eighteenth Century', in Helen Berry and Elizabeth Foyster (eds), *The Family in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 198-203; Di Cooper and Moira Donald, 'Households and "Hidden" Kin in Early-Nineteenth-Century England: Four Case Studies in Suburban Exeter, 1821-1861', *Continuity and Change* 10.2 (1995), pp. 257-78; Sam Barrett, 'Kinship, Poor Relief and the Welfare Process in Early Modern England', in Alannah Tomkins and Steven King (eds), *The Poor in England, 1700-1850, An Economy of Makeshifts* (Manchester, 2003), pp. 199-227. The co-existence of nuclear and kinship families is exemplified in the continued importance of siblings and cousins throughout the life-cycle in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century families, see: Davidoff, *Thicker than Water*; Harris, *Siblinghood*.

This chapter argues that illegitimates could be included in some aspects of household-, lineage and kinship families but were not considered the same as legitimate relatives. They were included as acceptable financial dependents in household-families, with some entitlement to provision and care from household heads. This inclusion was, however, often transient and precarious, limited not only by poverty and the poor law but also by concerns for secrecy. Illegitimates were excluded most from the lineage family as defined by access to family property. Again, though, this was not absolute and in some cases definitions of lineage along bloodlines facilitated illegitimate inclusion. Illegitimates were also included in instrumental and affective notions of kinship, particularly evident during crises. There were two levels of inclusion: the first was a minimum level of primarily financial obligation open to all illegitimates as an extension of parental responsibility; the second was a more intimate and reciprocal relationship that developed over time and which was primarily voluntary. Again, secrecy and the differing social status of illegitimates made this second level of integration more difficult. In all family types, illegitimate participation in notions of family was characterised by inequality and the maintenance of difference but to varying degrees. The themes of obligation and choice in familial bonds are also explored, as is the impact of property.

Household: Proximity, Care, and Belonging

The household-family refers primarily to all those who cohabited in the same household. Early understandings of the 'household' emphasised its equation with the conjugal nuclear, with Laslett arguing that households rarely included other kin.³¹ Tadmor broadened this definition into the 'household-family', arguing that eighteenth-century individuals had a concept of 'family' that included other co-resident relatives, legitimate children, servants, apprentices, step-, foster or nurse children.³² The household-family ideally operated with duties of authority, responsibility and provision expected from the head, and obedience from their dependents, a reciprocal relationship noted in studies of household conduct books.³³

³¹ Peter Laslett, 'Mean Household Size in England Since the Sixteenth Century', in Peter Laslett and Richard Wall (eds), *Household and Family in Past Time* (Cambridge, 1972), pp. 125-158.

³² Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 19.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 20, 22-25, 27. This relationship of authority and dependence is also noted in Amussen, *An Ordered Society*, pp. 38-40.

Relationships were often contractual and instrumental, involving an 'exchange of work and material benefits'.³⁴ This concept of the household-family chimes with Wall's definition of the household as an 'income-pooling unit', in which co-residence went hand-in-hand with shared material resources and economic responsibility.³⁵ However, this instrumentality did not preclude membership of the household-family through affective bonds: kin could be taken into households in times of need or as part of life-cycle patterns of service, and affective bonds could form between household members.³⁶

The flexibility of the household-family certainly suggests that it could expand to include illegitimate children, particularly if they were perceived as dependants in need of assistance.³⁷ This section tests this suggestion, as well as evaluating the quality and extent of inclusion. Household heads had different perceptions of their duty towards their legitimate child than to a servant. Where did an illegitimate child fit into this hierarchy?³⁸ An obligation to maintain an illegitimate child within the household to avoid their destitution is also very different to a voluntary acceptance of an illegitimate child on the same terms as legitimate children. The illegitimates discussed here lived in households headed by grandparents, step-parents or unrelated foster-parents. Illegitimate integration is tested through their inclusion in concepts of responsibility and authority, of a household head towards dependents, but also in care and concern for their wellbeing. These latter duties echo the relationship between parent and child, reflecting the transferable nature of parental duties in this period.³⁹ The impact of illegitimacy is delineated through comparison of illegitimate and legitimate dependants. The importance of families in taking care of poor unmarried mothers and their infant children is known but here I go further to investigate how family members and illegitimates themselves felt about this. The place of illegitimates within middling and elite households also merits consideration.

³⁴ Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 28

³⁵ Richard Wall, 'Economic Collaboration', p. 90.

³⁶ Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 27; Broomhall, 'Introduction', pp. 18-19, 26.

³⁷ An emphasis on the flexibility and permeability of the household is in Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 23.

³⁸ Tadmor, for instance, suggests that Thomas Turner's illegitimate nephew Philip was included in the household as a 'child-servant': Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 186.

³⁹ For more on the duties expected of parents, see chapter 1, pp. 47-9, 52, 99. On transferable 'social parenthood', see Joanne Bailey, *Parenting in England, 1760-1830: Emotion, Identity, and Generation* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 144, 172, 199-204, 210-22.

Several studies suggest that illegitimate children often lived in multigenerational households with maternal grandparents, aunts and uncles.⁴⁰ The autobiography of Benjamin Shaw (1772-1841), a Lancashire mechanic, provides relatively rare insight into a practice which demographic studies suggest was common.⁴¹ Robin found that 72 percent of unmarried mothers in mid-nineteenth-century Colyton were living with a parent (their child's grandparent) in the year following their child's birth, with similar proportions found in studies of the Scottish highlands.⁴² As paternal maintenance was often inadequate, shared housing, income and childcare were crucial parts of the 'mixed economy of welfare' utilised by filiated unmarried mothers, particularly those who worked in service.⁴³ When Shaw's daughter Bella became pregnant in 1819, '[s]he continued to live with her Parents, who brought up the child, until She was Married' in 1822. Although the father admitted paternity, a delay in obtaining maintenance payments until the child was four months old meant that Bella would have been destitute without parental assistance.⁴⁴ Bella was not unusual; her three sisters also lived at home during illegitimate pregnancies in 1820, 1829 and 1835. When mothers worked in service and could not cohabit with their child, grandparental childcare was crucial. Shaw's aunt, Mariann Noddle, became pregnant whilst in service: 'the child lived & she left it at home with her mother & went to Service again... & soon after got married'.⁴⁵ If grandparental care was no longer possible, aunts and uncles often stepped in. After his daughter Agnes died shortly after giving birth, Shaw looked after his illegitimate granddaughter Betty alone until he was too ill to care for her. Crosby suggests that four-year-old Betty

⁴⁰ Blaikie, Garrett and Davies, 'Migration', pp. 154, 159, 161-3; Black, 'Illegitimacy and the Urban Poor', pp. 336-8.

⁴¹ For Shaw's background see chapters 1 and 4, pp. 66, 227. Patricia Crawford also notes Shaw's obligation to house his grandchildren, although she does not compare his attitudes towards his legitimate and illegitimate grandchildren: Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, p. 54.

⁴² Robin, 'Illegitimacy in Colyton', p. 320. 75 percent of unmarried mothers in Rothiemay and Skye lived with parents or siblings in the mid nineteenth century, Blaikie, Garrett and Davies, 'Migration', p. 159. Unfortunately, this statistical information is hard to recover prior to the 1841 census.

⁴³ See chapter 1, pp. 65-6.

⁴⁴ *The Family Records of Benjamin Shaw, Mechanic of Dent, Dolphinholme and Preston, 1772-1841*, ed. Alan G. Crosby (Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 1991), pp. 57, 90.

⁴⁵ *Family Records of Benjamin Shaw*, p. 20. Grandparents performed a similar function for mothers in service in Essex, see *Essex Pauper Letters, 1731-1837*, ed. Thomas Sokoll (Oxford, 2006), p. 115, no. 30, Maria Cousins to the Braintree overseers, 16 December 1828; ERO: D/P 94/18/42, Lucy Nevill to the Chelmsford overseers, 15 January 1825.

then went to live with her married uncle Joseph, keeping her care within the confines of the maternal family.⁴⁶

Kin support in raising legitimate children was not unusual but the assistance given to illegitimate children had some distinct differences, particularly the duration and type of support. Long-term, multigenerational cohabitation was peculiar to illegitimacy.⁴⁷ Legitimate diarists Benjamin Shaw and John Cannon stayed regularly with relatives but did so alone while their parents and siblings remained in their own household.⁴⁸ Couples commonly waited to marry until they could afford an independent household and even those who married in a hurry tended to leave the parental home as soon as possible.⁴⁹ Shaw explicitly stated that his daughter Bella moved out when she got married and Joseph, the only Shaw child not to have illegitimate children, left his parents' home immediately after marriage and never returned.⁵⁰ Kin support for married couples was also typically temporary. Mary Shaw lived with her parents for only three months after marriage (an event expedited by her pre-marital pregnancy) and her brother Thomas brought his wife

⁴⁶ *Family Records of Benjamin Shaw*, p. 116; Alan G. Crosby, 'Introduction', in *The Family Records of Benjamin Shaw, Mechanic of Dent, Dolphinholme and Preston, 1772-1841*, ed. Alan G. Crosby (Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 1991), p. xviii.

⁴⁷ Blaikie found in nineteenth-century Scotland that 80 percent of illegitimate children lived in households with grandparents, but fewer than 10 percent of legitimate children did, Blaikie, 'Scottish Illegitimacy', p. 233. Ottaway estimates that 3-20 percent of adults aged over sixty lived with grandchildren, but she does not specify legitimacy or whether these children also lived with parents, Susannah R. Ottaway, *The Decline of Life: Old Age in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 157. Similar findings are in Laslett, 'Mean Household Size', p. 149. Bailey states that grandparental care could be long term, although many of her examples are of illegitimate children, Bailey, *Parenting in England*, pp. 203-6, 210-4.

⁴⁸ *Family Records of Benjamin Shaw*, pp. 22, 24; *The Chronicles of John Cannon, Excise Officer and Writing Master*, ed. John Money (Oxford, 2010), pp. 10-11, 52. Similar patterns are noted in Ottaway, *Decline of Life*, p. 161.

⁴⁹ This pattern was first identified in John Hajnal, 'European Marriage Patterns in Perspective', in D.V. Glass and D.E.C. Eversley (eds), *Population in History: Essays in Historical Demography* (London, 1965), pp. 101-43, discussed in Lloyd Bonfield, 'Normative Rules and Property Transmission: Reflections on the Link between Marriage and Inheritance in Early Modern England', in Lloyd Bonfield, Richard M. Smith and Keith Wrightson (eds), *The World We Have Gained: Histories of Population and Social Structure* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 155-76. See also E.A. Wrigley, R.S. Davies, J.E. Oeppen and R.S. Schofield, *English Population History from Family Reconstitution, 1580-1837* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 122-4.

⁵⁰ Shaw himself had also followed this pattern. His wife Betty had lived with her parents during her pregnancy, but they moved into their own home as soon as they married, *Family Records of Benjamin Shaw*, pp. 30-31, 90, 104.

and child to live with his parents for only one month when he became unemployed.⁵¹ Unmarried Bella and her child lived with the Shaws for three years.

Poor illegitimate children also differed from poor legitimates in that support primarily came from maternal, rather than paternal family, in an extension of the restrictions on paternal cohabitation and social fatherhood described in chapter one.⁵² Marriage usually integrated a woman and her children into the paternal family; paternal kin support was most decisive in reducing reliance on relief and married lone parents, such as widows, remained closely linked to their husband's family.⁵³ When Thomas Shaw became unemployed in 1826, he and his dependants sought help within the paternal Shaw home.⁵⁴ Benjamin Shaw's son William had an illegitimate child with Martha Johnson in 1815. When Martha died, 'the Child was Brought up by her Parents' and no longer mentioned by Shaw in his family chronicle. William's second illegitimate child by another woman was also not brought up by the Shaws.⁵⁵ This lack of involvement is surprising given the extent of Shaw's care for his daughters' illegitimate children. Paternal familial reluctance may have reflected the belief in disputed paternity and therefore an uncertain blood link with a child.⁵⁶ Maternal family assistance was, in contrast, an extension of their responsibility towards their daughter. Care in childbirth easily translated into childcare and the growth of lifelong bonds with a matrilineal child who had a clear and undisputed blood link. In her conversion biography, Mary Saxby (1738-1801), the vagrant daughter of a silkweaver, related that the mother and sister of her child's father disowned her when the father abandoned her; '[t]he sister said it was all through me; and both of them deserted me'.⁵⁷ The family may have considered the desertion as a sign of disputed paternity and no longer considered Mary their responsibility. When paternal families did, rarely, acknowledge responsibility for a child, help was usually in the form of money rather than physical care or the offer of

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 96-7, 104.

⁵² See chapter 1. Crawford similarly found no evidence of paternal grandparental assistance for illegitimates, see Crawford, *Blood, Bodies and Families*, p. 127.

⁵³ Barrett, 'Kinship', pp. 215-6; Ralph A. Houlbrooke, *The English Family, 1450-1700* (London, 1984), pp. 39-40; Cressy, 'Kinship', p. 48.

⁵⁴ *Family Records of Benjamin Shaw*, pp. 96-7.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 53, 89.

⁵⁶ For more on disputed paternity, see chapter 1, pp. 59-62.

⁵⁷ Mary Saxby, *Memoirs of a Female Vagrant, written by herself*, ed. Samuel Greatheed (London, 1806), p. 18.

a home. In the Essex pauper letters, paternal family members appear only as negotiators over filiation and payment. All of those claiming relief for a child's subsistence were the mother or a maternal relative.⁵⁸

Many illegitimate children also had a second family to whom they could appeal for support: that of their stepparent. Stepfamilies were not unusual in this period, due to a high mortality rate and the desirability of joint incomes.⁵⁹ However, illegitimate children were unusual in that they remained legally illegitimate. Legitimate dependent children became their stepfather's legal responsibility, sharing his settlement rights, but illegitimate children remained in the awkward position of having separate claims to filiation, settlement and relief.⁶⁰ There is little consensus on how stepparents felt about illegitimate children. Laslett argued that upon maternal marriage children were provided with an unproblematic father figure and 'ceased effectively to be bastards'.⁶¹ Boulton, Black and Crawford have argued in contrast that maternal marriage often resulted in the abandonment of illegitimates.⁶² The first important point is that having one illegitimate child did not greatly impair maternal marriage chances, suggesting that men were not so reluctant to become stepfathers that women became unmarriageable.⁶³ Secondly, maternal marriage could be the only way that illegitimate children could achieve a stable home life, by providing a crucial second income and ideally providing them with fulfilling relationships with a second parental figure and half-siblings. Of the thirteen mothers of illegitimates whose marital status could be identified in the Essex pauper letters, all those who were unmarried were in service and all but one of the unmarried mothers did not cohabit with their child. In contrast, all of the illegitimate children whose mothers

⁵⁸ Authorship in pauper letters is difficult to determine, but my numbers are based on the identity of those whose name appears as author: three stepfathers, seven mothers, two maternal grandfathers and one was the mother's clergyman.

⁵⁹ Peter Laslett, *Family Life and Illicit Love in Earlier Generations* (Cambridge, 1979), p. 166.

⁶⁰ Stepfathers did not become liable for their wives' illegitimate children until the 1834 New Poor Law, see 4 & 5 Will. 4. c. 76, s. 57, *An Act for the Amendment and better Administration of the Laws relating to the Poor in England and Wales, 1834*, in John Tidd Pratt (ed.), *A Collection of all the Statutes in Force respecting the Relief and Regulation of the Poor* (2nd edn, London, 1843), p. 424.

⁶¹ Laslett, *Family Life and Illicit Love*, p. 160.

⁶² Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, pp. 107, 174; Jeremy Boulton, "It Is Extreme Necessity That Makes Me Do This": Some "Survival Strategies" of Pauper Households in London's West End During the Early Eighteenth Century", *International Review of Social History* 45 (2000), p. 60; Black, 'Illegitimacy and the Urban Poor', pp. 303-5.

⁶³ For maternal marriage rates see above, pp. 102-3.

had married lived with them. The existence of a stepfather, therefore, generally encouraged cohabitation between mother and child.⁶⁴

After the child's mother, maternal grandfathers and stepfathers were the most frequent applicants for relief on behalf of an illegitimate child in the Essex pauper letters, suggesting that they considered them as dependants under their responsibility as household heads.⁶⁵ Bailey has shown that legitimate fathers commonly presented themselves in pauper letters as providers, emphasising that their necessity was temporary and resulted from their inability to provide, for example through illness, rather than unwillingness.⁶⁶ This was a means of reconciling an independent masculinity with the rhetoric of deserving poverty. The language used by stepfathers is strikingly similar; they present themselves as good fathers to illegitimate children in terms of provision and concern for their welfare. Arthur Tabrum wrote repeatedly to Chelmsford parish on behalf of his illegitimate stepson Arthur Good, who had been under six years old when his mother married. In 1828 Tabrum asked the parish to pay for Arthur's apprenticeship, using rhetoric of paternal duty and concern that closely mirrors Bailey's legitimate examples: 'if some means are not taken to get him some where I am afraid worse will become of him... I have done my Duty by him ever since he was born as you may say, and I am sorry to say I cannot do it any Longer'.⁶⁷ In another letter he stated that 'if I had not been out of Work I would not have troubled myself about [applying for relief]', a reference to temporary incapacity echoed by fellow stepfather John Argent. John stated that he needed more money to care for his six-year-old illegitimate stepdaughter Mary because he was 'in ill health' and so 'not able to Do what I would for her'.⁶⁸ The inclusion of illegitimate stepchildren in similar rhetorical registers used by fathers about legitimate children suggests that they were considered by their stepfathers and

⁶⁴ Five out of thirteen married before their child was six years old. This is slightly less than the proportions of 50-85 percent found in other whole parish studies, see above, pp. 102-3.

⁶⁵ Although pauper letters were often written by multiple authors, letters claiming relief on behalf of a child were often signed or appeared in the narrative voice of the stepfather or grandfather, suggesting that either they or their families considered them to be the child's representative.

⁶⁶ Bailey, "'Think Wot a Mother Must Feel'", p. 6-8. Similar rhetoric is also noted in Thomas Sokoll, 'Writing for Relief: Rhetoric in English Pauper Letters, 1800-1834', in Andreas Gestrinch, Steven King and Lutz Raphael (eds), *Being Poor in Modern Europe: Historical Perspectives, 1800-1940* (Oxford, 2006), p. 101.

⁶⁷ *Essex Pauper Letters*, p. 275, no. 260, Arthur Tabrum to James Read, 23 December 1828.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 209, no. 157, Arthur Tabrum to James Read, 17 May 1825; p. 181, no. 114, John Argent to the Chelmsford overseer, 28 April 1824.

the parish as acceptable dependents, with a claim to assistance from the household head. Step-parental emphasis on their inability, rather than unwillingness, to provide, through accident or misfortune, further suggests that to refuse to provide for an illegitimate stepchild would damage masculine reputation.

Step-parents and grandparents usually only asked for relief when times were particularly difficult. Groups of pauper letters written over time indicate that some illegitimate children did live in stable and seemingly supportive households, enabled by the payment of regular out-relief. Mrs Felgate first asked for help in 1816 when her daughter Mary was six. She had just given birth to twins, putting the household under greater financial pressure.⁶⁹ Clergyman George Turner wrote to their home parish for relief as her husband, a thatcher, was 'from the pressure of the times & want of employment unable to support the child'.⁷⁰ Presumably Mr Felgate had been supporting the child with no other parish assistance. After maintenance was granted, Mary continued to live with her stepfamily with no other problems. In 1823 when she was fourteen, Turner stated, '[i]t is but justice to the mother & her husband to state, that the girl has been put to school, & very decently brought up'. They applied for further support only when Mary required a place in service, and her parents' ability to help her was limited by their own 'large & increasing family'.⁷¹ Step-parents commonly asked the parish for assistance only when children reached the age of apprenticeship, an expensive outlay. William Deer asked the parish to apprentice his wife's ten-year-old son to him, as 'the Boy has been at the Busness this four months'. Deer had already been teaching him, as a legitimate father might be expected to, and contacted the parish only to formalise the arrangement.⁷²

However, poverty and the exigencies of the poor law did create barriers to illegitimates' integration. Settlement laws limited familial capacity to help and reinforced illegitimate exclusion from the household-family as a unit. Until 1795, settlement was earned or inherited through birth, marriage, apprenticeship, yearly

⁶⁹ Families with dependent children were usually those most in need of relief, see Wales, 'Poverty, Poor Relief and the Life-Cycle', pp. 365, 374-8.

⁷⁰ ERO: D/P 178/18/23, George Turner to the overseers of St Peter's Colchester, 8 April 1816.

⁷¹ ERO: D/P 178/18/23, George Turner to the overseers of St Peter's Colchester, 13 August 1823; 16 March 1825; 7 August 1823. Similar sentiments appear in *Essex Pauper Letters*, p. 275, no. 260, Arthur Tabrum to James Read, 23 December 1828.

⁷² ERO: D/P 94/18/42, William Deer to the Chelmsford overseers, 14 February 1828.

service or paying parish rates. Legitimate children inherited settlement from their fathers, ensuring that all members of the nuclear family shared settlement. In contrast, an illegitimate child uniquely derived their settlement from their place of birth, and so might not share settlement with any relatives.⁷³ This also led to the practice of removal, in which parishes forced pregnant women over parish boundaries in order to avoid financial responsibility for the child.⁷⁴ Levene's study of late-eighteenth-century London parishes indicated that although parishes often tried to keep mother and child together, illegitimate children were at greater risk of removal and separation from siblings or other kin.⁷⁵ Removal made it more difficult for women to obtain familial support. Most of Benjamin Shaw's daughters were settled in Dolphinholme, 18 miles away from their Preston home. Bella lived with her parents throughout her pregnancy in 1819 but had to lie-in at lodgings in Dolphinholme. Preston refused to provide out-relief for Bella at home because they would then be responsible for her child. She returned home only 12 days after the birth, suggesting a strong desire to return to her family.⁷⁶ Although many paupers suffered removal and kin separation, married mothers could give birth in their husband's place of settlement; Thomas Shaw's legitimate child was born in his father's Preston home.⁷⁷ The suggestion that unmarried women often gave birth alone, or were isolated from kin, arguably reflects the power of settlement restrictions and lack of mobility, rather than choice, in preventing support.⁷⁸

Illegitimates' entitlement to a separate fund of relief also artificially separated illegitimates from the pauper household as a unit of relief. The law, parish and wider society considered responsibility for illegitimate children to belong primarily

⁷³ This was mandated in the 1662 and 1691 laws. For a legislative overview see J.S. Taylor, 'The Impact of Pauper Settlement, 1691-1834', *Past & Present* 73 (1976), pp. 49-53. In 1795 'illegitimate children born to women under an order of removal were given their mother's settlement', Alys Levene, *The Childhood of the Poor: Welfare in Eighteenth-Century London* (Basingstoke, 2012), p. 9.

⁷⁴ Hindle, *On the Parish*, pp. 312-3, 338-47; E.M. Hampson, 'Settlement and Removal in Cambridgeshire, 1662-1834', *Cambridge Historical Journal* 2 (1928), pp. 273-89. The impact of settlement on pauper marriage and the welfare of the pregnant woman is well known, but few have considered its impact on the subsequent care of the illegitimate child. The main exception is Alys Levene, 'Poor Families, Removals and "Nurture" in Late Old Poor Law London', *Continuity and Change* 25.2 (2010), pp. 233-62.

⁷⁵ Levene, 'Poor Families, Removals and "Nurture"', pp. 252-4.

⁷⁶ *Family Records of Benjamin Shaw*, pp. 57, 90.

⁷⁷ Crosby, 'Introduction', p. xxxviii.

⁷⁸ For the argument of kin isolation, see: Levene, Nutt and Williams, 'Introduction', p. 7; Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, p. 42.

to their putative father.⁷⁹ When households experienced economic crisis, therefore, legitimate and illegitimate children were differentiated through a language of entitlement to relief and parental maintenance. In letters to overseers, David Rivenall referred to 'his Wife Child'.⁸⁰ Blacksmith Mr Manning stated in 1828 that 'he Cannot afford to Keep' his wife's fifteen-year-old son 'without Some allowanc[e] as he has got a young Family of his own to provide for'.⁸¹ Similarly, Arthur Tabrum complained that he was 'hardly able to support his own', a phrase that did not include his illegitimate stepson.⁸² This is very different to the language used by other married fathers, who referred to their legitimate children as 'my family'.⁸³ This supports Crawford's assertion that 'in practice fathers and mothers made subtle distinctions between children who were their own, their stepchildren, orphaned relatives, illegitimates, and foundlings'.⁸⁴

Difference does not necessarily imply inferiority, however, and in some cases articulation of illegitimates' separate entitlement enabled families to stay together. A filiated illegitimate child could be a lucrative source of regular relief unavailable to legitimate children, as their entitlement was mandated from birth and independent from judgement of need. King argues that paupers were fully aware of any ambiguities in the law and openly asserted their rights in order to obtain relief.⁸⁵ Arthur Tabrum threatened to return his stepson Arthur to the parish, stating that 'whilst I keep him I shall expect to be Paid for it... to maintain that I have no business to Do myself'.⁸⁶ He was likely fully aware that the parish could not compel him to support little Arthur and so was acting in the best interests of both the child and the wider household by depicting his role as conditional. In demanding payment and

⁷⁹ See chapter 1, pp. 53-4, 58.

⁸⁰ *Essex Pauper Letters*, p. 273, no. 257, David Rivenall to the Chelmsford overseer, 22 November 1828. Similar sentiments are expressed in p. 181, no. 114, John Argent to the Chelmsford overseer, 28 April 1824.

⁸¹ *Essex Pauper Letters*, p. 263, no. 240, Mr Manning to James Read, 14 May 1828.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 219, no. 171, Arthur Tabrum to James Read, 16 October 1825.

⁸³ Bailey, "'Think Wot a Mother Must Feel'", pp. 7-8. 'My family' also appears regularly in the pauper letters of married fathers, see in particular letters from Walter Keeling to the overseers of Colwich, Staffordshire, 1784-1811, and letters from Samuel Parker and Philip James to the overseers of Uttoxeter, Staffordshire, 1832-7, in *Narratives of the Poor in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, ed. Steven King, Thomas Nutt and Alannah Tomkins, vol. 1 (London, 2006), pp. 219-223, 261-83.

⁸⁴ Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, p. 21.

⁸⁵ Steven King, 'Negotiating the Law of Poor Relief in England, 1800-1840', *History* 96 (2011), pp. 410-35.

⁸⁶ *Essex Pauper Letters*, p. 219, no. 171, Arthur Tabrum to James Read, 16 October 1825.

detaching the illegitimate child from the family, stepfathers and grandfathers were utilising a survival strategy. Repeated threats from Tabrum to send Arthur home do not seem to have been realised; by 1829, the date of the last reported payment, Arthur had been living with his mother and stepfather for over six years.⁸⁷ In taking charge of illegitimates' relief, stepfathers and grandparents clearly included illegitimates as dependants within a base level of household responsibility. This provides further evidence that the reluctance of putative biological fathers was based more on their resentment of parish interference and the personal impact of unmarried paternity on their reputation, than a wholesale dismissal of family or parental obligation towards illegitimates. Unrelated parental figures were not legally compelled to take in illegitimate children and so could do so on their own terms in a way that did not damage their independence and authority.

Poverty was not the only difficulty. Other consequences of illegitimacy could result in precarious living situations, particularly if mothers did not marry, had insecure employment or if the child's existence was kept secret. Autobiographical evidence suggests that familial acceptance of responsibility was often accompanied by a conviction that caring for illegitimate children was more difficult because of their birth status. In contrast to existing scholarship, I argue that willingness to cohabit did not simply indicate normalisation or familial indifference. Crosby argued that illegitimacy 'simply did not matter to Benjamin [Shaw]... he accepted [it] as perfectly normal and unremarkable'.⁸⁸ This echoes Laslett's argument that the high incidence of illegitimacy in some families, known as the 'bastardy prone sub-society', indicated defiant sexual nonconformism and acceptance of illegitimacy.⁸⁹ Although illegitimacy was very common in Shaw's family, making them a classic example of

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 185, 284. Similar threats were made by Mr Felgate, see ERO: D/P 178/18/23, George Turner to the overseers of St Peter's Colchester, 8 April 1816; 13 August 1823; 16 March 1825. It was common for parents to threaten to send home their legitimate children as a strategy for relief, see Bailey, 'Think Wot a Mother Must Feel', pp. 10-11.

⁸⁸ Crosby, 'Introduction', p. xlii. A similar suggestion appears in Emma Griffin, 'Sex, Illegitimacy and Social Change in Industrialising Britain', *Social History* 38 (2013), p. 155.

⁸⁹ Peter Laslett, 'The Bastardy Prone Sub-Society', in Peter Laslett, Karla Oosterveen and Richard M. Smith (eds), *Bastardy and its Comparative History* (London, 1980), pp. 230-2, 239-40. In King's re-examination of this hypothesis he relates multiple illegitimate pregnancies in one family to a 'lack of shame', Steven King, 'The Bastardy Prone Sub-Society Again: Bastards and Their Fathers and Mothers in Lancashire, Wiltshire, and Somerset, 1800-1840' in Alys Levene, Thomas Nutt and Samantha Williams (eds), *Illegitimacy in Britain, 1700-1920* (Basingstoke, 2005), pp. 82-4.

the sub-society, he did not regard illegitimacy as negligible.⁹⁰ Shaw had a strong sense of familial obligation and never refused to help his relatives, but frequently used a language of misfortune and trouble to describe the financial problems and emotional anxiety attendant on caring for illegitimate relatives.⁹¹ His daughter Hannah's pregnancy was 'a mater of grief & trouble to us' and a 'misfortune', stating, '[p]arents trouble is not done when they have reared their Children'. This concern was specific to illegitimate status; Bella's pregnancy gave them 'no Smale concern for her as... she did not get married soon'. Concern was not only confined to daughters. When his son William had two illegitimate children with two different women in 1815, Shaw wrote that they 'had a good deal of trouble on that account'.⁹² He did not describe similar levels of anxiety about his legitimate grandchildren. What Crosby perceived as normalisation was in fact resignation to make the best of a bad situation. But, Shaw's repeated assistance, despite the attendant anxiety, indicates the strength of his obligation towards family, and the inclusion of illegitimate members within it.⁹³

So far we have focused on how families felt about the illegitimate children in their households, but how did illegitimates themselves feel? There is compelling evidence that illegitimates did not feel that they belonged within a household-family, particularly in comparison with legitimate half-siblings. Autobiographer James Burn (c. 1800-) was brought up primarily by his mother, an itinerant pedlar, and his stepfather William McNamee, a former soldier. Burn saw McNamee as a father figure, 'my mentor', who had a significant impact on his early life: 'I owe him an eternal debt of gratitude for having left an indelible impression of the noblest aspiration of his mind upon my own.' Burn and McNamee did at points have a mutually fulfilling affective relationship: 'he... not unfrequently evinced as much real

⁹⁰ All of Shaw's seven children had illegitimate children or bridal pregnancies, and he had seven illegitimate grandchildren. Between them, he and his wife Betty had thirteen illegitimate half-siblings, first cousins, nieces or nephews. Calculated from *Family Records of Benjamin Shaw*.

⁹¹ For Shaw's strong sense of family loyalty see: Crosby, 'Introduction', p. xx; Karen Harvey, *The Little Republic: Masculinity and Domestic Authority in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 151-2; Shani D'Cruze, 'Care, Diligence and "Usfull Pride": Gender, Industrialization and the Domestic Economy, c. 1770 to c. 1840', *Women's History Review* 3 (1994), p. 326.

⁹² *Family Records of Benjamin Shaw*, pp. 56-8, 52. This language was commonly applied to illegitimate children, see Evans, 'Unfortunate Objects', pp. 109-12, 125.

⁹³ Similar evidence is found among a cottager family of North Staffordshire in the same period, in Broomfield, 'Incidence and Attitudes', p. 92.

affection for me as if I had been his own child'. However, Burn's position weakened once his parents had their own children, suggesting that many poor parents prioritised their affective and provisioning responsibilities towards legitimate offspring. As his brother Robert grew older, 'little hold I formerly had upon McNamee's good graces seemed to be waning', and he began to be 'made the scape-goat for both [Robert's] sins and my own.'⁹⁴ Aged 12 he went to live with his biological father and stepmother, neither of whom he had met before. He attributed his stepmother's 'coldness and disdain' towards him as a result of her prioritisation of her own children, and because 'my father had deceived her in hiding my existence'. A lack of blood tie, and therefore natural affection, was also significant, according to common stepmother stereotypes; Burn 'knew my step-mother could not love me – it was not in the nature of things for her to do so'. As a result, Burn felt like 'a complete stranger in my father's house', a notion of exclusion that Burn emphasised in his narrative persona as an outsider struggling to overcome hardship. His use of stock tropes suggests that it was plausible to his readers that illegitimates would be excluded in these ways.⁹⁵

Illegitimates also occupied a liminal position in higher-status households where poverty and settlement were less relevant. This partly reflected difficulties in maintaining secrecy and uncertainty over their place in the household. Elizabeth Gordon (c.1795-), the illegitimate daughter of professional Samuel Bentham, cohabited for most of her childhood with her father, stepmother and legitimate half-siblings. Her half-brother George remembered her as 'a favorite in our family' who 'had been brought up as one of us'.⁹⁶ However, her identity was unknown to her or her siblings. She seems to have occupied a position more similar to a ward, but differentiated from the legitimate children. She did not travel with the family when they went abroad for Samuel's work and was known by a separate surname, Gordon.

⁹⁴ James Burn, *The Autobiography of a Beggar Boy*, ed. David Vincent (London, 1978), pp. 47, 49, 54-55, 60, 71.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 37, 73-5. The assumption that stepmothers would find it difficult to love children that they were not biologically related to was common, see: Crawford, *Blood, Bodies and Families*, pp. 88, 98-9; Stephen Collins, 'British Stepfamily Relationships, 1500-1800', *Journal of Family History* 16.4 (1991), pp. 337-8. For more on Burn's rhetorical aims, see chapter 5, pp. 278-9.

⁹⁶ George Bentham, *Autobiography, 1800-1834*, ed. Marion Filipiuk (Toronto, 1997), pp. 94-5; Catherine Pease-Watkin, 'Jeremy and Samuel Bentham – The Private and the Public', *Journal of Bentham Studies* 5 (2002), p. 18. Pease-Watkin sees Elizabeth Gordon's childhood as 'happy', in contrast to my assertions.

When their uncle Jeremy brought all the children identical presents, he wrote that '[t]he announcement of Gordon's cost her a night's sleep: but report says that her joy was a little damped by the apprehension lest her's should be taken from her; which, of course, it will not be.'⁹⁷ This suggests that Elizabeth was unused to being treated the same as her siblings. Jeremy's reference to her as 'Gordon' indicated a subordinate position by referring to her as one would a companion or servant. As neither Elizabeth nor her siblings knew of her identity until she was in her late twenties, it is understandable that a desire for discretion complicated equitable treatment within the household.⁹⁸ Physician Erasmus Darwin's illegitimate daughters had lived with family friends of their father, and cohabited with their father, stepmother and legitimate half-siblings only as adults. Darwin wrote to his friend Josiah Wedgwood that '[o]ne of the Miss Parkers... is at our house as a governess to our girls at present'.⁹⁹ Although elder children did often help younger ones, it is unusual to refer to this role using the occupational term. Families had difficulty categorising illegitimates; they were dependents in need of protection, but lacked the same rights, relationships and life trajectories as legitimate children. The same 'subtle distinctions' observed in poor families were also present in those of higher status.¹⁰⁰

Illegitimates' household membership was also typically transient. They moved between households as economic circumstances changed, or parents became able to cohabit with them due to subsequent marriage or a waning need for secrecy.¹⁰¹ The Parker girls were not unusual in having lived in several different households before

⁹⁷ *The Correspondence of Jeremy Bentham*, vol. 7, January 1802-December 1808, ed. J.R. Dinwiddie (Oxford, 1988), p. 323, Jeremy Bentham to Samuel Bentham, 22 August 1805. This episode is also mentioned in Pease-Watkin, 'Jeremy and Samuel Bentham', p. 18.

⁹⁸ Bentham, *Autobiography*, p. 94.

⁹⁹ *The Collected Letters of Erasmus Darwin*, ed. Desmond King-Hele (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 429-30, nos 94-3, Erasmus Darwin to Josiah Wedgwood, 7 January 1794. A visitor also mistakenly identified Eliza Courtney, living with her paternal grandparents, as a governess, *Lord Granville Leveson Gower, Private Correspondence 1781-1821*, ed. Castalia, Countess Granville (London, 1916), vol. 2, p. 320, Lady Bessborough to Granville Leveson-Gower, 22 August 1808. Georgina Walpole, the daughter of the Earl of Orford and a maidservant, also only lived in her stepfather's home as an adult, when she paid for her own board. See NRO: HMN 4/46/2/5, Georgina Walpole to Anthony Hamond, 30 August 1800.

¹⁰⁰ See above, p. 118.

¹⁰¹ For the changing imperative of secrecy according to paternal age in particular, see chapter 1, pp. 81-2.

the age of fourteen.¹⁰² This partly reflected the differing occupational trajectories intended for illegitimates, suggesting a conceptual separation between illegitimate and legitimate siblings. Elizabeth Gordon left her father's household aged 12 to train as a governess, unlike her legitimate half-sisters who remained in the parental home.¹⁰³ In other cases, transience reflected parental inability to bring them into the same household as their legitimate family. Augustus Montgomery (1762-97), the adulterine illegitimate son of the Earl of Pembroke, left his father's home for boarding school at the exceptionally young age of five. Although he returned home periodically, he spent the majority of his young adulthood either at school or in the navy, in marked contrast to other peers' sons who were usually educated for a period at home.¹⁰⁴ Augustus did develop close affective and instrumental relationships with his stepmother and siblings, explored below, but his presence in the household was ultimately conditional. As his stepmother stated, 'he cou'd never have come into the House, had I not desir'd it.'¹⁰⁵ These children were not born to poor parents, so their temporary membership of the household did not reflect financial insecurity.

In other cases, the precarity of illegitimate inclusion reflected the insecurities of maternal employment and was particularly evident in households formed by publicly unsanctioned relationships, such as master-servant. Sally Bradford convinced her employer and lover Syllas Neville to include her illegitimate daughter Polly in his household in 1770. Syllas enjoyed some aspects of this domesticity, suggesting that small children could elicit affection from even reluctant householders. He admitted six months after four-year-old Polly's arrival that 'I feel an affection for both [Sally] & her child', as Polly 'seems to love me pretty well now & is at least very obedient'. However, Syllas' unusual status as Sally's master and lover, but not husband, created difficulties. In October 1770 he recorded, '[h]ad a

¹⁰² Tadmor notes that the illegitimate nephew of diarist and shopkeeper Thomas Turner similarly moved between the households of his legitimate kin, Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 186.

¹⁰³ Marion Filipiuk, 'Introduction', in George Bentham, *Autobiography, 1800-1834*, ed. Marion Filipiuk (Toronto, 1997), pp. ix-xxviii, p. xxi.

¹⁰⁴ *The Pembroke Papers (1734-1780): Letters and Diaries of Henry, Tenth Earl of Pembroke and his Circle*, ed. Lord Herbert (London, 1942) (hereafter *PP1*), p. 497.

¹⁰⁵ *Pembroke Papers (1780-1794): Letters and Diaries of Henry, Tenth Earl of Pembroke and his Circle*, ed. Lord Herbert (London, 1950) (hereafter *PP2*), p. 34, Elizabeth, Lady Pembroke to George, Lord Herbert, 21 August [1780].

violent dispute with [Sally] about correcting her child, which she promised I should have the full power of doing, before I consented to have her here.¹⁰⁶ Polly's uncertain position disrupted the smooth running of relationships based on authority and obedience, particularly as Syllas had no legal authority over Polly or Sally. Polly's position was also highly insecure. When Syllas decided to move the household to Edinburgh he insisted that Polly be left behind, perhaps fearing that the presence of a small child would damage his reputation in a new social circle.¹⁰⁷ Polly was sent back to her maternal family, but never saw her mother again. Sally became increasingly financially dependent on Syllas and, after giving birth to three of his children in the next three years, was unable to visit her daughter.¹⁰⁸ A factor that is not readily acknowledged by historians is that when women gave birth to a second illegitimate child by another man, they often had to choose to stay with one child over another. By the time she was 12, Polly had lived in households headed by her grandmother, aunt, great uncle, mother's lover/employer, and foster parents.

Evidence of the quality of illegitimates' relationships with foster parents is scarce. Multiple studies of different national and chronological contexts indicate that illegitimate infants had far higher mortality, most likely reflecting their greater tendency to live in overcrowded or disease-ridden institutions, or limited maternal breast-feeding.¹⁰⁹ Garðarsdóttir's study of nineteenth-century Iceland found that children whose mothers were servants, and who therefore lived in non-maternal households, had far higher mortality than children integrated into households with stepfathers or maternal family.¹¹⁰ However, Newall suggested that nursing or

¹⁰⁶ *The Diary of Syllas Neville, 1767-1788*, ed. Bazil Cozens-Hardy (London, 1950), pp. 81, 85. Quarrels over Polly continued into November, p. 105.

¹⁰⁷ NRO: MC7/578, Syllas Neville to unknown [draft], 5 February 1777.

¹⁰⁸ *The Diary of Syllas Neville*, pp. 213, 214, 246.

¹⁰⁹ The so-called 'mortality penalty' is observed from the early modern period right through to the early twentieth century, and at its worst illegitimate infants were twice as likely to die than their legitimate counterparts. See: Alys Levene, 'The Mortality Penalty of Illegitimate Children: Foundlings and Poor Children in Eighteenth-Century England' in Alys Levene, Thomas Nutt and Samantha Williams (eds), *Illegitimacy in Britain, 1700-1920* (Basingstoke, 2005), pp. 34-49; Alice Reid, 'The Influences on the Health and Mortality of Illegitimate Children in Derbyshire, 1917-1922' in Alys Levene, Thomas Nutt and Samantha Williams (eds), *Illegitimacy in Britain, 1700-1920* (Basingstoke, 2005), pp. 168-89.

¹¹⁰ Ólöf Garðarsdóttir, 'The Implications of Illegitimacy in Late-Nineteenth-Century Iceland: The Relationship between Infant Mortality and the Household Position of Mothers Giving Birth to Illegitimate Children', *Continuity and Change* 15.3 (2000), pp. 438-9, 447-8, 453-5, 457.

fostering may also have improved illegitimate survival, particularly compared to institutional alternatives.¹¹¹ Conflicting evidence exists of both foster parental neglect and long-term diligent care.¹¹² In some circumstances, long-term nursing may have created stability and allowed the formation of affective relationships. In St Margaret Westminster several children stayed with the same nurses for years, and were in some cases apprenticed to them in a kind of de facto adoption.¹¹³ Widespread acceptance of the transferable nature of 'social parenthood', and the relatively common practice of taking dependent legitimate children into households as nurse children, or later as servants or apprentices, would certainly facilitate normative bonds of authority and duty, if not necessarily affection. Jablonka's study of nineteenth-century France suggests that dependent illegitimates could slot into bonds of 'fictive kinship' between a foster parent and child, echoing a biological relationship.¹¹⁴

Testimony from adult illegitimates certainly suggests that foster relationships could be remembered positively. John Wilkes sent his illegitimate son John Smith, whom he publicly identified as his nephew, to be brought up by fencing instructor Domenico Angelo. Angelo's son Henry remembered Smith as 'an inmate at our house', who only periodically visited Wilkes.¹¹⁵ Years later, when stationed in Bengal, Smith asked Wilkes, '[w]hen you see the Angelo Family I beg you will assure them of my esteem. I shall always have a very great regard for them.'¹¹⁶ Smith regularly asked for news of the Angelos suggesting a desire to maintain some sort of

¹¹¹ Fiona Newall, 'Wet Nursing and Child Care in Aldenham, Hertfordshire, 1595-1726: Some Evidence of the Circumstances and Effects of Seventeenth-Century Child Rearing Practices', in Valerie Fildes (ed.), *Women as Mothers in Pre-Industrial England: Essays in Memory of Dorothy McLaren* (London, 1990), pp. 122-39.

¹¹² On neglectful nurses see Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, pp. 65-6. For the debate see Valerie Fildes, 'Maternal Feelings Re-assessed: Child Abandonment and Neglect in London and Westminster, 1550-1800', in Valerie Fildes (ed.), *Women as Mothers in Pre-Industrial England: Essays in Memory of Dorothy McLaren* (London, 1990), pp. 162-8.

¹¹³ CWAC: E230-E239 (MF978-MF979), St Margaret Westminster, overseers' accounts, 1714-1722, records for Alice Middleton, Evans Coot, Watlington Bambridge and Frances Bayley.

¹¹⁴ Jablonka, 'Fictive Kinship'. See also Hansen, 'Bonds of Affection'.

¹¹⁵ Henry Angelo, *Reminiscences of Henry Angelo, with memoirs of his late father and friends, including numerous original anecdotes and curious traits of the most celebrated characters that have flourished during the last eighty years* (London 1830), vol. 1, p. 55.

¹¹⁶ BL: Add. MSS 30874/47, John Smith to John Wilkes, 18 August 1791. Similar sentiments appear in: 30874/194, John Smith to John Wilkes, 10 November 1796; 30873/134, John Smith to John Wilkes, 5 November 1788. Smith was born around 1760 or 1762, 30868/40, John Wilkes to Cotes, 17 February 1764; Peter D.G. Thomas, *John Wilkes: A Friend to Liberty* (Oxford, 1996), p. 207.

relationship.¹¹⁷ Sarah Read (Neville) also maintained relationships with the Robb family, with whom she and her mother had lived until she was five. When she visited the Robbs in her thirties her father wrote, 'I am glad you had an opportunity of meeting Mr & Mrs R with whom you spent so many years of early life. Doubtless they were happy to see a young person who had been their assistant so long & so faithfully.'¹¹⁸ Former cohabitation was sufficient claim to both contact and residual affective bonds, conceptualised as mutual goodwill and some kind of obligation of remembrance, based on proximity and in exchange for care. This was similar to relationships with long-term servants or nurses.¹¹⁹ Such bonds were not particular to illegitimate children but they may have been of greater value in providing another potential source of affection in an otherwise unstable childhood.

Illegitimates were physically included in household-families. These were often multigenerational, with a mixture of biologically and non-biologically related members. Illegitimate children were often accepted as dependants, with maternal grandparents and step-parents providing crucial economic support. Financial responsibility was often weighted with emotional language similar to that of normative parenthood. However, illegitimate inclusion in the household was marked by liminality and insecurity, echoing the position of foster children found by Jablonka.¹²⁰ The flexibility and fluidity of household composition that allowed inclusion also facilitated exclusion according to changing household circumstances. Illegitimates were the family members most vulnerable in times of crisis and their claim was always subordinate to that of legitimate family. Poverty did not mean that families loved illegitimate children less but rather that their practical capacity to help was more limited.¹²¹ Among higher-status families the uncertain position of illegitimates, and the lack of a legal or cultural template for their role in the household, often resulted in them occupying an unstable position.

¹¹⁷ 'With pleasure I understand that one of the Miss Angelo's is married to a Lieut St Leger, I believe it is the youngest, Nancy, I wish with all my heart they were all well provided for, I think it is a very worthy family, which I beg you will remember me very kindly to.' BL: Add. MSS 30873/38, John Smith to John Wilkes, 4 October 1786; 30872/278, John Smith to Polly Wilkes, 19 November 1785.

¹¹⁸ NRO: MC7/740/35, Syllas Neville to Sarah Read, 11 March 1810.

¹¹⁹ Steedman, *Master and Servant*, pp. 53-4; Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 61.

¹²⁰ Jablonka, 'Fictive Kinship', pp. 272, 282.

¹²¹ In this they echo poor families whose capacity to live with or express care for legitimate children was limited by economic ability, see Medick and Sabeian, 'Interest and Emotion', p. 22.

Lineage: Blood, Name, and Property

Lineage is described by Tadmor as 'notions of ancestry, pedigree, and lineal descent'.¹²² This concept emphasised long-term continuity of blood, name and property, and external recognition of the family as a social and public institution.¹²³ The inclusion of genealogies in labouring and middling-sort writings suggests that the concept of posterity was also important to those of lower status.¹²⁴ However, lineage was discussed most in terms of property inheritance and title, so most available evidence, and that which will be discussed here, comes from landed gentry or aristocratic families. At first glance, illegitimate children appear entirely excluded from lineage. They had no legal right to inherit property or titles, no customary right to name, and were often not publicly acknowledged. Lineage was perpetuated through marriage and the birth of legitimate children, making illegitimates of limited value.¹²⁵ However, a main organising principle of the lineage family was blood. The desire for a continued bloodline could in some circumstances privilege the claims of direct illegitimate heirs above more distant legitimate relatives.¹²⁶ The emotional pull of lineage, particularly as an arbiter of elite identity, could also be applied to and felt by illegitimates. The policing of illegitimates' inclusion within the lineage family further indicates contemporary perception of the balance between individual and family loyalty. Legitimate claims were usually prioritised above illegitimate ones but in certain situations illegitimates could be perceived as dynastic assets.

There is limited evidence of illegitimates' inclusion in concepts of lineage among non-elites. Richard Gough, a yeoman and antiquary, included illegitimate individuals in his genealogies of the families of the Shropshire village of Myddle but took care to explicitly differentiate illegitimate and legitimate children. When

¹²² Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 73.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 73-4, 85-6.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 79-82, 100-1; Natalie Zemon Davis, 'Ghosts, Kin, and Progeny: Some Features of Family Life in Early Modern France', *Daedalus* 106. 2 (1977), pp. 87-114; Houlbrooke, *English Family*, p. 40; Bailey, *Parenting in England*, pp. 126-31.

¹²⁵ For the valuing of legitimate children as an asset in family dynasties see Linda A. Pollock, 'Embarking on a Rough Passage: The Experience of Pregnancy in Early-Modern Society', in Valerie Fildes (ed.), *Women as Mothers in Pre-Industrial England: Essays in Memory of Dorothy McLaren* (1990), p. 40.

¹²⁶ Helen Berry and Elizabeth Foyster, 'Childless Men in Early Modern England', in Helen Berry and Elizabeth Foyster (eds), *The Family in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 166-7. This discussion is specifically related only to legitimate children.

recounting the history of the Matthews family, he stated that the only daughter of John Matthews 'was married to Habakkuk Heylin, a bastard son of Mr John Heylin, of Alderton... This Mr Heylin was descended of a good, but yet a decaying family'.¹²⁷ Similarly, lower middling-sort authors Thomas Turner and John Cannon mentioned the births, marriages and deaths of illegitimate relatives in family genealogies but again clearly differentiated them from legitimate relatives.¹²⁸ This suggests that they saw illegitimacy as part of the history of a family as a whole, with familial membership based on blood as well as the legal ties of marriage and legitimate birth. However, among non-elites there is insufficient evidence of inclusion beyond nominal identification.

More evidence exists for landed families, for whom property inheritance was a central manifestation of lineage. Houses and landed estates were endowed with symbolic importance as the seat of family power and the source of familial wealth.¹²⁹ Between 1650 and 1850, Habakkuk argues, landed families increasingly sought to ensure the smooth patrilineal inheritance of intact estates using strict settlement. Settlements established the line of inheritance for three generations at once, making the current owner only a life tenant and limiting their powers to dispose of the estate.¹³⁰ This produced an opposition between viewing estates as personal property, free for an individual to bequeath as they wished, or family property, in which all potential heirs had a stake. Strict settlement provided for legitimate younger children but not illegitimacy, as including a potential illegitimate child in a settlement made before their birth risked exposing the estate to contention from imposter heirs.¹³¹

¹²⁷ Richard Gough, *The History of Myddle*, ed. David Hey (Harmondsworth, 1981), p. 147. For similar examples see pp. 84, 175, 203. For more on Gough's identification of illegitimacy see chapter 4, pp. 220-3.

¹²⁸ See, for example, *The Diary of Thomas Turner, 1754-1765*, ed. David Vaisey (Oxford, 1984), p. 294; *Chronicles of John Cannon*, pp. 16-18.

¹²⁹ Lawrence Stone and Jeanne C. Fawtier Stone, *An Open Elite? England 1540-1880* (Oxford, 1984), p. 295.

¹³⁰ H.J. Habakkuk, *Marriage, Debt and the Estates System: English Landownership, 1650-1950* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 1-2, 4, 7, 14-15, 51-2.

¹³¹ Habakkuk, *Marriage, Debt and the Estates System*, pp. 1-4, 14-20, 77-8, 98-102. The extent to which settlement provided for younger children and its implications for understanding of familial affective relationships is debated. See: Stone and Stone, *Open Elite*, pp. 69-85; H.J. Habakkuk, 'Marriage Settlements in the Eighteenth Century', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 32 (1950), pp. 15-30; Lloyd Bonfield, 'Affective Families, Open Elites and Strict Family Settlements in Early Modern England', *Economic History Review* 39 (1986), pp. 341-54; Eileen Spring, 'The Strict Settlement: its Role in Family History', *Economic History Review* 41.3 (1988), pp. 454-60.

Legal birth status became the main arbiter of inclusion in a family defined by strict settlement. Illegitimate children were widely perceived as a potential threat to family unity and prosperity. It was feared that fathers seeking to provide for loved illegitimate children would prioritise personal feelings over dynastic loyalty, depriving legitimate children of their birthright and financially ruining the family in the long-term.¹³² Boswell, who as we have seen liked to present himself as a fond father to his illegitimate children, condemned Scottish noble Lord Colville as 'a strange man' who 'left the fee of all he had to two natural sons... It is terrible to see a man pay no regard to his family, especially when there is a Peerage to support'.¹³³ 'Family' in this context meant legitimate children and the lineage family of title and estate passed down through generations. The state did all it could to preserve normative inheritance by legally excluding illegitimate children from any claim to entailed property or title, or property left by individuals who died intestate.

However, legal exclusion was not absolute. The ways in which families conceptualised illegitimate exclusion, and the extent of that exclusion, indicates a common rationale for illegimates' status in the family. Exclusion was not based on illegitimate inferiority, lack of affection or belief that they were not entitled to familial property. Instead, it was based on complex beliefs of natural justice, competition, and the difference between personal and family property. In 1756, Horace Walpole contested a new entail because it excluded the female line, his illegitimate sister Lady Mary Churchill and the children of his deceased legitimate sister. He repeatedly included Mary within the lineage family and its accompanying sense of solidarity and obligation, stating 'I owed it to... my nephews, to my sister [Mary], and to their children' to fight the entail.¹³⁴ Mary's inclusion was explicitly

¹³² Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, pp. 73-4; Bailey, "'Sensible Man'", p. 281; Margaret Hunt, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender and the Family in England, 1680-1780* (Berkeley, 1996), pp. 67-8. Zunshine argues that this fear drove the proliferation of foundling and bastard plots in eighteenth-century fiction, Lisa Zunshine, *Bastards and Foundlings: Illegitimacy in Eighteenth-Century England* (Columbus, 2005), p. 165.

¹³³ *The Correspondence of James Boswell and John Johnston of Grange*, ed. Ralph S. Walker (London, 1966), pp. 260-2, James Boswell to John Johnston, 31 May 1770.

¹³⁴ For the background to the entail, see Philip Woodfine, 'Walpole, Horatio, first Baron Walpole of Wolterton (1678-1757)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004-2011) <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28595> [accessed 15 Nov 2017]. *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, ed. W.S. Lewis (New Haven, 1937-83, online edition), vol. 36, p. 26, Horace Walpole to Lord Orford, 10 April 1756. Similar defence of Lady Mary's rights is undertaken by her nephew, Lord Malpas, vol. 36, p. 302, Lord Malpas to Horatio Walpole (senior), 10 April 1756.

based on her status as their father's 'favourite daughter'. Horace stated that to disinherit her would be 'entirely annulling the will of my father, that great man'.¹³⁵ Sir Robert had been the architect of the family fortune, earning him the right to dispose of the estate as his personal property along affective lines. Consequently, Horace sought to exclude illegitimate relatives in the next generation, his nieces and nephew, because the property had now become part of a shared family patrimony. Horace had no objection to his brother Edward providing for his illegitimate children as long as he did not disinherit his brother and legitimate nephew in the process, separating personal and family estates.¹³⁶ He told his legitimate nephew that he feared Edward's 'laudable affection for very deserving though natural children, might have induced him to leave the estate from me, if he died first'.¹³⁷ Although 'deserving', their illegitimacy barred them from an equal share in the familial property and title. Walpole was otherwise greatly attached to his nieces; he regularly wrote of his love for them, interfered in their marriages and brought them into his house during crises.¹³⁸ He saw no conflict in his affection for them and his restriction of their rights to family property.

Illegitimates were also excluded from family property if they endangered the expectations of an existing legitimate heir. Horace Mann objected to his brother Edward's plans to break the entail and leave the family estate to his illegitimate son in 1764, primarily because it would disinherit their nephew 'Little Hory'. Thirteen years previously the brothers had made a pact never to marry and so to ensure little Hory's status as their joint heir. Edward promised "'Little Horace is my son, as I hope he will be yours'".¹³⁹ Horace Mann explicitly saw the dispute as a conflict between parental affection and family loyalty, as he was 'afraid that [Edward's] love of his

¹³⁵ *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 36, p. 28, Horace Walpole to Horatio Walpole (senior), 13 April 1756; vol. 36, pp. 24-5, Lord Orford to Horace Walpole, 10 April 1756.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 24, p. 159, Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 17 December 1775.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 36, pp. 25-6, Horace Walpole to Lord Orford, 10 April 1756.

¹³⁸ For just a selection of examples see: *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 10, p. 62, George Montagu to Horace Walpole, 11 April 1763; vol. 10, p. 59, Horace Walpole to George Montagu, 8 April 1763; vol. 34, p. 410, Horace Walpole to Lady Ossory, 27 December 1777; vol. 36, p. 150, Horace Walpole to Maria, Duchess of Gloucester, 27 September 1777; vol. 11, p. 61, Horace Walpole to Mary Berry, 27 August 1789.

¹³⁹ Reported in *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 23, pp. 112-3, Horace Mann to Horace Walpole, 29 April 1769. Hory's status as heir is also noted in earlier correspondence, *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 21, p. 129, Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 3 September 1757.

natural children would preponderate'.¹⁴⁰ Horace's concern did not reflect a conviction that illegitimates themselves were inferior but rather the strength of belief in a birthright similar to primogeniture. Inheritance according to birth order, gender and legitimacy was not only enshrined in law but was also so culturally entrenched that it was only, and even then rarely, questioned if an heir was grossly incapable of administering an estate.¹⁴¹ Illegitimates were excluded primarily if property was considered misappropriated, either through breaking an entail, disrupting primogeniture, or inserting illegitimate children into the line of succession late. Education, occupation and even marriages were commonly conducted on the basis of a child's expected inheritance; the idea that this would be frustrated at the last minute by illegitimate children was anathema to a whole system of child-rearing and family organisation.¹⁴² In order for primogeniture to work smoothly to ensure both family prosperity and goodwill, the rules had to be adhered to. Any attempts to circumvent the rules were perceived as an injustice, regardless of the strength of personal affection. However, the apparently common fear that fathers would disinherit legitimate heirs for their illegitimate children in itself indicates the perceived strength of parental affection.

The exclusion of illegitimates from family property worked as long as illegitimates accepted this status quo and did not claim equal inheritance status. In both the Walpole and Mann cases, familial acrimony was eventually avoided: both sets of illegitimate children received considerable cash bequests, and the entailed estates went to their original legitimate heirs. The rules of normative inheritance prevailed and the illegitimates remained on close terms with the legitimate family.¹⁴³ However, successful inheritance by illegitimates of landed estates could cause considerable familial estrangement. Shropshire landowner Robert More and his younger siblings spent years opposing their illegitimate nephew Thomas, who had inherited the More

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 22, p. 568, Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 14 December 1767.

¹⁴¹ Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving: Informal Support and Gift-exchange in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2008), p. 20; Nicola Phillips, *The Profligate Son* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 54-5.

¹⁴² Anthony Fletcher, *Growing up in England: The Experience of Childhood, 1600-1914* (New Haven, 2008), pp. xiv, 5-7; Harris, *Siblingshood*, pp. 31, 33.

¹⁴³ *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 10, p. 62, Horace Walpole to George Montagu, 14 April 1763; vol. 21, p. 440, Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 5 October 1760; Gerald M. D. Howat, 'Mann, Sir Horatio, second baronet (1744-1814)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004-2011) <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/64807> [accessed 15 Feb 2017].

estates on the death of his father Richard, the eldest brother, in 1698.¹⁴⁴ Thomas' mother Dorcas had married Richard bigamously in 1670, but the More family were intent on proving her children's illegitimacy and excluding them not only from inheritance, but also the Mores' public familial identity as landlords.¹⁴⁵ Within days of Richard's death, the legitimate Mores quickly acted together to obtain property deeds, find witnesses and turn tenants against Dorcas and her children.¹⁴⁶ Robert's brother-in-law Sir John Turton recommended threatening them, sending 'some person to... Dorcas & ye bastards, who should not pretend to goe from you but of his owne kindness to them, who may [persuade them of] the ...trouble they are like to incounter'.¹⁴⁷ Dorcas and her children were not easily cowed, however, and by November 1698 had seized disputed property, destroyed crops, and threatened tenants with pistols.¹⁴⁸ Robert appealed to the rhetoric of rightful inheritance based, like the Walpoles, on the will of his own father. He told his sister-in-law 'I have beene lately inform'd that Mr Thomas as they call him, the oldest bastard declares hee hath a title to... my fathers estate, wch I am sure was never design'd to be inherited by spurious issue.'¹⁴⁹ In this way he could bypass his brother Richard's right to dispose of his land in any way he chose, by asserting his patrilineal right of inheritance from their father Samuel. At the same time they launched a Chancery suit to prove Thomas' illegitimacy and petitioned the Hereford church courts to

¹⁴⁴ Richard had already transferred lands that had belonged to his father Samuel More in the parish of More, Shelve and Claines, Worcestershire, to Dorcas and his children during his lifetime, but on his death Thomas moved into the family seat of Larden Hall. Robert More asserted that these lands belonged to him as Samuel More's second surviving son. SA: 4572/11/1/1, 1679, bargain and sale; 4572/11/1/2, conveyance, n.d.; 4572/11/1/13-14, mortgages 29, 30 August 1707.

¹⁴⁵ They married in January 1670 in St Mary Marylebone, London, but Richard remained married to his first wife Bridget, as evinced by his letters to her in 1683, SA: 4134/5/8, Richard More to Bridget More, 22 May 1683; Richd. Moor and Dorcas Owen, 2 January 1670, St Marylebone, London, FHL microfilm 942 B4HA V. 47, 942 B4HA V. 48, in 'England Marriages, 1538-1973' *Family Search*, <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:V52Q-BCC> [accessed 10 December 2014].

¹⁴⁶ Richard's will was written on 4 July 1698 and he died sometime that month. The legitimate Mores had a plan in place by 23 July. TNA: PROB/11/449/366, Will of Richard More of Linley, 4 July 1698; SA: 4572/5/6, Sir John Turton to Robert More, 23 July 1698; 4572/5/7, Thomas Hill to Robert More, 6 Nov 1698; 4572/5/10, Thomas Hill to Robert More, 20 December 1698.

¹⁴⁷ SA: 4572/5/6, Sir John Turton to Robert More, 23 July 1698.

¹⁴⁸ SA: 4572/5/7, Thomas Hill to Robert More, 6 November 1698; 4572/5/12a, Sir John Turton to Robert More, 1 June 1699; 4572/5/13, notes on potential quarter sessions case, 3 October 1699.

¹⁴⁹ SA: 4572/5/9, Robert More to Bridget More, 30 November 1698.

prosecute Dorcas for fornication.¹⁵⁰ The range of strategies used by the entire extended More family, even when only Robert and Richard's widow Bridget would actually materially benefit, indicates a united desire to completely discredit Dorcas and her children's claim on moral grounds.¹⁵¹

Landed property was not the only manifestation of the lineage family as a public unit. A surname was also a family commodity, entitling the possessor to social status and material assistance within the eighteenth-century 'reputation economy', as well as reinforcing a sense of collective identity.¹⁵² Illegitimates were not entitled to a paternal surname because as 'the son of a nobody... he may gain a surname by reputation, though he has none by inheritance'.¹⁵³ In policing illegitimate access to surnames, families delineated the boundaries of family. The Mores consistently refused to refer to illegitimate Thomas as 'More', within their campaign to discredit him. Thomas' signature in every surviving document is clearly 'Tho: More', but his uncles referred to him by his maternal name, either as 'Thomas Owen', or 'T.O.' Whilst copying a letter of Thomas' to forward to his brother-in-law and supporter Sir John Turton, Robert faithfully copied his illegitimate nephew's signature as 'T.M.' but entitled it 'Coppay of T.O. letter'.¹⁵⁴ Sir John Turton identified Thomas to Robert as 'your Antagonist (whose name ought to be written with an Alias)', connecting the use of name directly to the property dispute.¹⁵⁵

Even families with otherwise positive relationships with illegitimate children excluded them from shared family names. Augustus Montgomery was brought up in

¹⁵⁰ The charges against Dorcas were brought 'at the voluntary wish of Robert More Esq', [my translation of 'voluntar Robt More'], SA: 4572/11/3/1, 30 January 1698/9. See also SA: 4572/3/5, 1698. The chancery suits are detailed in TNA: C5/311/20, More vs More, 1701; C5/257/4, More vs More, 1702; C5/311/11, More vs Owen alias More, 1702. The legal battle continued until 1707 with C7/222/44, More vs More.

¹⁵¹ The campaign involved all but one of the surviving siblings, their spouses and their children. The sisters' husbands were particularly committed, even though they would not benefit financially.

¹⁵² Sophie Coulombeau, "'The Knot, that ties them fast together': Personal Proper Name Change and Identity Formation in English Literature, 1779-1800", Ph.D. thesis (University of York, 2014), pp. 48, 96; Daniel Scott Smith, 'Child-Naming Practices, Kinship Ties, and Change in Family Attitudes in Hingham, Massachusetts, 1641-1880', *Journal of Social History* 18.4 (1985), p. 546; Stephen Wilson, *The Means of Naming: A Social and Cultural History of Personal Naming in Western Europe* (London, 1998), pp. 221, 255-6.

¹⁵³ Blackstone, *Commentaries*, vol. 1, p. 459.

¹⁵⁴ SA: 4572/5/48, Thomas More to Mr Edward, 12 July 1707 [copy enclosed in] Robert More to Sir John Turton, 18 July 1707.

¹⁵⁵ SA: 4572/5/30b, Sir John Turton to Robert More, 17 December 1702.

his father's household and enjoyed a close relationship with his stepmother and half-siblings.¹⁵⁶ He used the surname 'Reebkomp', an anagram of Pembroke, until his commission as a naval lieutenant. His father then proposed giving him the family surname of Herbert, the same as his legitimate half-siblings.¹⁵⁷ Lady Pembroke vehemently opposed the name change, making it clear that Augustus was subordinate to her legitimate children and viewing his nominal difference as a potent public demonstration of this. She wrote to her son George:

The more I think of it, the more I see it as a most impudent thing in itself & highly improper by me... I do not think I can ever leave off resenting it... I never can see Rep [Augustus]: as Herbert. It is very hard for he cou'd never have come into the House, had I not desir'd it. Pray write to Rep: & tell him I cannot bear it.¹⁵⁸

Augustus could be included in the household and, as we shall see, kinship families, but not in the lineage family of 'Herbert'. Onomastic inclusion would have damaged Lady Pembroke's reputation as matriarch of the legitimate Herbert line by publicly admitting her husband's adultery. In the end, Augustus was given the name Montgomery, a subsidiary Pembroke title that indicated his connection to the family whilst still proclaiming his difference.¹⁵⁹ The use of subsidiary titles as illegitimate surnames was common amongst elites in this period.¹⁶⁰ The aim was not secrecy but rather differentiation, as such pseudonyms were tacitly understood by contemporaries to signify illegitimacy. As Horace Walpole noted when Hugh Smithson changed his name to Percy to inherit his wife's estate, 'his patent does not enable him to beget Percys - a Master or Miss Smithson would sound like natural children'.¹⁶¹ In the majority of cases, illegitimates' exclusion from family surnames

¹⁵⁶ See below, pp. 154-6.

¹⁵⁷ *PP1*, p. 162, Henry, Lord Pembroke to George, Lord Herbert, [2-8 April, 1779]; *PP2* p. 50, Henry, Lord Pembroke to George, Lord Herbert, 16 October 1780. This case is also discussed in Kate Retford, *The Art of Domestic Life: Family Portraiture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven, 2006), pp. 109-14.

¹⁵⁸ *PP2*, p. 34, Elizabeth, Lady Pembroke to George, Lord Herbert, 21 August [1780].

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 73, Major Floyd to George, Lord Herbert, 23 December 1780; *PP1*, p. 497.

¹⁶⁰ For example, Augustus Clifford, the illegitimate son of the 5th Duke of Devonshire, was named after the family barony of Clifford, and Roosilia Drake's unusual forename came from her father the Earl of Rutland's subsidiary title as Lord Roos.

¹⁶¹ *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 24, p. 99, Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 7 May 1775. Hugh Smithson did have an illegitimate son who became known by the surname

indicates a desire to differentiate them from the public-facing lineage family and from their legitimate half-siblings.

Illegitimate children were included in more personal notions of lineage. The passing down of objects with monetary or emotional value in wills was often intended and perceived as an affective act, symbolising continuity as well as interpersonal relationships.¹⁶² The movement of personal property is perhaps more reflective of illegitimates' lived emotional relationships because it was relatively free from law and customs such as primogeniture.¹⁶³ Lady Pembroke included the son of her illegitimate stepson in her will, acknowledging his connection to her and her family. She not only made George Montgomery her executor but left him 'drawings of Lord Pembroke, Lady Charlotte etc', George's paternal grandfather and Lady Pembroke's beloved daughter who had died young.¹⁶⁴ The other beneficiaries of objects specifically related to the Herberts, such as portraits, were all her close collateral or affinal kin.¹⁶⁵ George had no legal claim to any of these objects, suggesting that they were intended either in gratitude for his service to her, or as a mark of affection or remembrance.

Smithson, see H.S. Torrens, 'Smithson [formerly Macie], James Lewis (1764-1829)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004-2011), <https://doi-org.sheffield.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/25944> [accessed 15 Jan 2018].

¹⁶² Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven, 1998), pp. 190-4; Amy Louise Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (London, 1995), p. 221. Most work on wills for evidence of kinship focused on the identity of beneficiaries, not the objects being bequeathed, for example: Cressy, 'Kinship', pp. 59-63; Wrightson and Levine, *Poverty and Piety*, pp. 92-6. This has only changed in recent years as the history of emotions has intersected with the history of material culture, see Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson (eds), *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture and its Meanings* (Farnham, 2010).

¹⁶³ The influence of law and custom are a primary reason, according to Orlin, that inheritance is unreliable as an indicator of affection, Lena Cowen Orlin, 'Empty Vessels', in Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson (eds), *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture and its Meanings* (Farnham, 2010), p. 307.

¹⁶⁴ TNA: PROB 11/1785/403, will of the Right Honourable Elizabeth Countess of Pembroke and Montgomery, codicil, 8 May 1828.

¹⁶⁵ Lady Pembroke's other bequests of her own personal property were to her daughter-in-law Catherine, née Vorontsova and her father Semyon Romanovich Vorontsov, her grandchildren, her nephews and nieces by blood, and George Montgomery and his wife. The only exceptions were her servant Martha Bolton who received 'my unmade articles of clothing', and Caroline Lucy Scott, the daughter of Lady Pembroke's close friend Lady Douglas who received items given to Lady Pembroke by Lady Douglas. Neither received property previously owned by the Herbert family. TNA: PROB 11/1785/403, will of the Right Honourable Elizabeth Countess of Pembroke and Montgomery, codicil, 8 May 1828.

Illegitimates themselves bequeathed objects identifiable by their 'past histories of ownership', tracing a line between generations of the same family.¹⁶⁶ In her 1846 will, illegitimate Elizabeth Knollys, née St Aubyn, bequeathed to her illegitimate sister, legitimate children and niece objects originally inherited from members of the legitimate line. To her sister she gave 'two Indian scarfs', originally the property of her paternal aunt, to her niece a brooch containing the hair of her legitimate paternal cousin, and to her sons a miniature of her father and three of his shirt pins.¹⁶⁷ Bequests also indicate the importance of lineage to illegitimate self-identity. Augustus Montgomery bequeathed to his own son George 'the testament from the heralds office granting me a coat of arms and by which my father the Earl of Pembroke acknowledged me as his son'.¹⁶⁸ Although, as Orlin argues, it is difficult to identify an object as demonstrating love rather than duty, respect or financial debt, the movement of objects between illegitimate and legitimate family members does demonstrate illegitimate inclusion in shared familial inheritance networks.¹⁶⁹ Moreover, the types of objects being bequeathed - portraits, hair-objects or clothing - were intimate, corporeal reminders of connection to the legitimate family and were intended to have longevity within a bloodline that included illegitimates.¹⁷⁰

Shared blood also justified illegitimate inclusion in a lineage family identified by ancestry rather than property. As Crawford argues, 'blood was a central symbolic concept for the kinship structure'.¹⁷¹ Historians have previously considered these ideals as the primary rationale for illegitimate exclusion based on doubtful paternity.¹⁷² This was the case for adulterine children, reflected in Horace Walpole's differentiation between his illegitimate nieces and his legally legitimate nephew

¹⁶⁶ Orlin, 'Empty Vessels', p. 303.

¹⁶⁷ HALS: 21M69/13/1, draft will of Elizabeth Knollys, née St Aubyn, 22 August 1846.

¹⁶⁸ TNA: PROB 11/1287/78, will of Augustus Montgomery, Captain of His Majesty's Ship Theseus, 11 March 1797. For more on self-identity see chapter 4, pp. 238-41.

¹⁶⁹ Orlin, 'Empty Vessels', pp. 302-3, 305-6.

¹⁷⁰ For these types of objects, their corporeality and emotional weight, see: Susan M. Stabile, *Memory's Daughters: The Material Culture of Remembrance in Eighteenth-Century America* (Ithaca, 2004), pp. 223-5; Arianne Fennetaux, 'Fashioning Death/Gendering Sentiment: Mourning Jewelry in Britain in the Eighteenth Century', in Maureen Daly Goggin and Beth Fowkes Tobin (eds.), *Women and the Material Culture of Death* (Farnham, 2013), pp. 30-1.

¹⁷¹ Crawford, *Blood, Bodies and Families*, pp. 2, 114. Similar arguments feature in Berry and Foyster, 'Childless Men', pp. 166-7.

¹⁷² Crawford, *Blood, Bodies and Families* is a prime example, see especially pp. 10, 117-9, 125-6.

George, Lord Orford, whom he suspected of being adulterine.¹⁷³ When Horace's second cousin (another Horatio Walpole) married Sophia, the daughter of illegitimate Lady Mary Walpole, Horace stated that the Walpole 'blood will be better derived to them that it would have been through the late Countess's most doubtful son'.¹⁷⁴ These suspicions were facilitated by George's erratic behaviour, which the family perceived as a heritable madness not present in the Walpole family. Although the Walpoles never legally challenged George's legitimacy, his allegedly spurious birth was a convenient explanation for his failure to live up to Walpolean standards. Walpole felt 'I am forced to give up him and all my Walpole-views... He is the most selfish man in the world... he loves no body but himself, yet neglects every view of fortune and ambition'. In these defects he echoed the bad character of his non-Walpole mother; 'he is certainly her son, whose ever else he is'.¹⁷⁵

However, when paternity was acknowledged and believed by the family, blood could be a powerful claim to inclusion in a way that did not threaten loyalty to the lineage family. Horace's illegitimate nieces were beautiful, accomplished and, therefore, in his eyes familial assets.¹⁷⁶ As their father Edward Walpole had always openly admitted his paternity, these qualities could be attributed to their blood.¹⁷⁷ Consequently, Horace congratulated himself when his niece Maria married Lord Waldegrave that '[m]y family don't lose any rank or advantage, when they let me dispose of them,' and described Maria's second marriage to the Duke of Gloucester

¹⁷³ *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 23, pp. 548-9, Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 2 February 1774; vol. 25, pp. 132-3, Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 25 February 1781. The rumour that Lord Orford was illegitimate was long-standing and widely reported on, see: *Manuscripts of the Earl of Egmont, Diary of Viscount Percival, afterwards First Earl of Egmont* (London, 1920), vol. 1, p. 213, 7 January 1732; *The Diary of Joseph Farington*, ed. Kenneth Garlick, Angus D. Macintyre, Kathryn Cave and Evelyn Newby (New Haven, 1978-1998), vol. 2, p. 558; vol. 15, p. 325. The fear that an estate would be inherited by an adulterine illegitimate who was not a blood relation was also common in inheritance disputes and divorce trials, see Julie Shaffer, 'Bastardy and Divorce Trials, 1780-1809', in Rebecca Probert (ed.), *Cohabitation and Non-Marital Births in England and Wales, 1600-2012* (Basingstoke, 2004), pp. 80-99.

¹⁷⁴ *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 25, pp. 132-3, Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 25 February 1781.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 23, pp. 548-9, Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 2 February 1774; vol. 20, p. 482, Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 15 June 1755. The belief that Lord Orford was not blood-related to the Walpole family also explains their refusal to acknowledge his illegitimate daughter Georgina, see chapter 3, p. 176.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 31, p. 330, Horace Walpole to Hannah More, 4 November 1789; vol. 11, p. 69, Horace Walpole to Mary Berry, 18 September 1789; vol. 21, pp. 239-40, Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 9 September 1758. For their marriages see chapter 3, pp. 195-6.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 43, p. 365, Sir Edward Walpole to William Sloper, [n.d., 1737].

as 'an honour to her and her family'.¹⁷⁸ This closely echoed the language used to describe legitimate daughters' marriages as vehicles for dynastic alliance and social mobility.¹⁷⁹

The final test of illegitimate inclusion is in the treatment of illegitimate only children, particularly sons. It was relatively common for parents to make illegitimate children their primary heirs if there were no competing legitimate half-siblings and no entail, thereby removing the primary objection that illegitimates would disinherit legitimate counterparts.¹⁸⁰ As George Montague told Horace Walpole, there could be no objection to illegitimate success 'since there is no issue by the rest of the family'.¹⁸¹ In these circumstances, illegitimate children often received considerable estates and were included in symbolic representations of family, such as name or portraiture. This was largely dependant on paternal attitudes but reflects the flexibility of lineage ideals that could be appropriated in a type of fictive kinship, similar to the cultural and legal mechanisms that allowed unrelated individuals or the husbands of daughters to adopt family names or inherit estates.¹⁸² Thomas Barrett-Lennard, Lord Dacre, had no legitimate offspring and so left almost his entire estate to his two illegitimate children Thomas and Barbara on condition that they adopt the Barrett-Lennard name.¹⁸³ Thomas became a landowner, MP and was created baronet in 1801,

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 36, pp. 64-5, Horace Walpole to Edward Walpole, 20 May 1772; vol. 21, pp. 284-5, Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 11 April 1759.

¹⁷⁹ Katie Barclay, *Love, Intimacy and Power: Marriage and Patriarchy in Scotland, 1650-1850* (Manchester, 2011), p. 73; Rosemary O'Day, 'Matchmaking and Moneymaking in a Patronage Society: The First Duke and Duchess of Chandos, c. 1712-35', *Economic History Review* 66 (2013), pp. 273-96.

¹⁸⁰ The only instances I have found in which a father did not leave his estate to an only illegitimate child were the Manns and the Spencer-Stanhopes. In these cases there was either an entail or an older legitimate nephew who had already been designated heir. This tendency is also noted in a study of gentry wills in an earlier period, see Carlton and Thornton, 'Illegitimacy and Authority', p. 28.

¹⁸¹ *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 9, p. 302, George Montagu to Horace Walpole, 5 October 1760. For a similar statement see *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 22, p. 576, Horace Mann to Horace Walpole, 9 January 1768.

¹⁸² Coulombeau, "The Knot", pp. 187, 199-210; Stone and Stone, *Open Elite*, pp. 70, 83; Wilson, *Means of Naming*, pp. 254-5. Nephews were also commonly used in this way, as a means to unite blood and affection with inheritance, Berry and Foster, 'Childless Men', pp. 181-2.

¹⁸³ *An Account of the Families of Lennard and Barrett. Compiled largely from original documents* (Printed for private circulation, 1908), ed. Thomas Barrett-Lennard, pp. 610, 615, 621-2; ERO: D/DL/F170, Grant of Arms, 3 June 1801; D/DL E72, Lady Dacre's Account Book, 1768. Similar requests were made by landowner Basil Bacon, who had no legitimate children, TNA: PROB 11/1016/22, will of Basil Bacon of Farnham, Surrey, 3 February 1776.

whilst also producing six male Barrett-Lennard heirs.¹⁸⁴ Dynastic integration could be secured by the nominal fudging of illegitimacy; in a few generations the illegitimate link in the chain could be forgotten.

Illegitimates with no legitimate siblings were also included in portraiture, which Retford argues was a key means of displaying ancestry and affective familial ties.¹⁸⁵ George Wyndham, 3rd Earl of Egremont, had no legitimate children and designated six of his illegitimate children as his heirs. He brought them up in his home, gave them the Wyndham name and landed estates, and years later married their mother. In bequeathing them the estate he was crucially not frustrating the expectations of a legitimate heir; the title went to his nephew, who was the same age as the Earl's eldest illegitimate son and who had been brought up in the knowledge that he would not inherit the unentailed estates.¹⁸⁶ Lord Egremont employed the same artist, Thomas Phillips, to paint his mother, sister and his illegitimate children, creating a clear visual link between legitimate and illegitimate family.¹⁸⁷ The paintings exhibit idealised parent-child poses. In one his daughter Mary stands behind her father, who is showing her a map, perhaps of the estate (figure 2).¹⁸⁸ In a later series by George Clint, he appears as a doting grandfather to his grandchildren by the illegitimate line

¹⁸⁴ 'Barrett Lennard, Thomas (1788-1856)', *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1820-1832*, ed. D.R. Fisher (Cambridge, 2009), <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1820-1832/member/barrett-lennard-thomas-1788-1856> [accessed 25 July 2017].

¹⁸⁵ Retford, *Art of Domestic Life*, pp. 150-2.

¹⁸⁶ WSRO: PHA/684, George Francis Wyndham, 4th Earl of Egremont to George Wyndham, 25 December 1837.

¹⁸⁷ Thomas Phillips, *Lady Elizabeth Alicia Maria Wyndham, Countess of Carnarvon (after Joshua Reynolds)*, 1790-1826, oil on canvas, Petworth House, The Egremont Collection, <http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/485056> [accessed 17 January 2018]; Thomas Phillips, *Alicia Maria Carpenter, Countess of Egremont (the face after Liotard)*, 1799, oil on canvas, Petworth House, The Egremont Collection, <http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/485051> [accessed 17 January 2018]. Phillips also painted Lord Egremont's mistress and mother of his children before their 1801 marriage: Thomas Phillips, *Elizabeth Iliffe, Countess of Egremont*, 1797, oil on canvas, Petworth House, The Egremont Collection, <http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/486814> [accessed 17 January 2018].

¹⁸⁸ Thomas Phillips, *George O'Brien Wyndham, 3rd Earl of Egremont and his Daughter Mary Wyndham, Countess of Munster*, c. 1811, oil on canvas, Petworth House, The Egremont Collection, <http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/486284> [accessed 17 January 2018]. The children appear in various media in the Petworth gallery, see for example John Edward Carew, *Lady Charlotte Wyndham, Mrs John King*, 1831-4, marble bust, Petworth House, The Egremont Collection, <http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/486412> [accessed 17 January 2018]; Sir William Beechey, *Frances Wyndham, late Lady Burrell as Hebe*, 1803-4, oil on canvas, Petworth House, The Egremont Collection, <http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/486224> [accessed 17 January 2018].

(figure 3).¹⁸⁹ Lord Egremont's public as well as domestic inclusion of his children is underlined in Philips' 1817 painting *The Allied Sovereigns at Petworth*, in which Lord Egremont is depicted meeting Tsar Alexander I and Frederick-Wilhelm III. Lord Egremont's illegitimate children and their spouses line up behind him, symbolising his power and posterity (figure 4).¹⁹⁰ These paintings were specifically for public view, at the Royal Academy and a purpose-built gallery at the family estate, indicating that Egremont included his illegitimate children in his notions of his family's standing on the world stage.¹⁹¹ These children were not hidden but instead bolstered his status as a patriarch and statesman. This was possible primarily because Lord Egremont had no other children and intended his illegitimate children to inherit his entire estate; their inclusion was a means of visually smoothing over dynastic disruption.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ George Clint, *George O'Brien, 3rd Earl of Egremont and his Granddaughter the Hon. Caroline Sophia Wyndham, later Mrs Kingscote*, 1836, oil on canvas, Petworth House, The Egremont Collection, <http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/485132> [accessed 17 January 2018]; George Clint, *George O'Brien Wyndham, 3rd Earl of Egremont and his Granddaughter Harriet King*, c. 1832, oil on canvas, Petworth House, The Egremont Collection, <http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/485164> [accessed 17 January 2018].

¹⁹⁰ Thomas Phillips, *The Allied Sovereigns at Petworth, 24 June, 1814, 1817*, oil on canvas, Petworth House, The Egremont Collection, <http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/486228> [accessed 17 January 2018]. Lord Egremont stands on the right, behind him are his sons Henry, Charles and George (all in uniform), his daughters Frances Lady Burrell, Mary Wyndham and Caroline Wyndham, and Frances' husband Sir Charles Burrell alongside the Earl of Yarmouth, clergymen T. Sockett and Stanier Clarke, and the Hon. Berkeley Craven.

¹⁹¹ William Derby, *Lady Adelaide Georgiana Fitzclarence as a Child*, c. 1824, oil on canvas, Petworth House, The Egremont Collection, <http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/485079> [accessed 17 January 2018] and Beechey, *Frances Wyndham*, were exhibited at the Royal Academy.

¹⁹² This strategy was common with legitimate indirect heirs, see Retford, *Art of Domestic Life*, pp. 14, 150, 152.



Figure 2: Thomas Phillips, *George O'Brien Wyndham, 3rd Earl of Egremont and his Daughter Mary Wyndham, Countess of Munster*, c. 1811, oil on canvas, 1359 x 1192 mm, Petworth House, The Egremont Collection



Figure 3: George Clint, *George O'Brien Wyndham, 3rd Earl of Egremont and his Granddaughter Harriet King*, c. 1832, oil on canvas, 1255 x 990 mm, Petworth House, The Egremont Collection



Figure 4: Thomas Phillips, *The Allied Sovereigns at Petworth, 24 June 1814, 1817*, oil on canvas, 1280 x 1470 mm, Petworth House, The Egremont Collection

Although direct legitimate heirs were preferable, flexibility within the ideals of blood and natural affection allowed illegitimates to be substituted as members of the lineage family.¹⁹³ Lord Dacre explicitly stated in his will that 'I think fit hereby to declare that I am far from justifying such connection as gave them birth, yet as I have no tie or obligatory motive to prefer others to them, natural affection prevails'.¹⁹⁴ Debates on illegitimate inheritance regularly referred to natural affection and the belief that estates should pass down bloodlines. A 1796 debate on the tax on collateral succession, from which legitimate children were exempt as direct heirs, suggested that the law unfairly treated illegitimate children as strangers in a way that did not reflect practice. Alderman Nathaniel Newnham argued that illegitimates were 'a class of men not recognised by Law, but who were recognized by the personal feelings of every Gentleman' and for whom 'a man might, very properly, have a tender affection'.¹⁹⁵ The belief that inheritance should go to those 'nearest of blood' was echoed by those lower down the social scale.¹⁹⁶ Grocer's daughter Sarah Hurst commented on the death of Arthur Bridger, a friend's husband, in 1759: 'he... lost his fortune to those he never cared for; & disinherited a son who had a natural tho' not a lawfull right to his possessions'. Bridger had left an annuity of 80 pounds to his illegitimate son but left the bulk of the estate to his nephew.¹⁹⁷

Illegitimates were generally excluded from the lineage family, particularly in its most public manifestations of name, title and landed estate. This was primarily about protecting legitimate children's rights, according to widely-held rules of justice and birthright. Exclusion, therefore, did not reflect personal animosity towards illegitimates but rather emphasised the maintenance of difference between illegitimate and legitimate, reflecting widely accepted legal norms of illegitimate disinheritance. Serious familial disputes were generally avoided because fathers

¹⁹³ Katie Barclay has argued that inheritance was closely linked to concepts of natural affection, although she excludes illegitimate children, see Katie Barclay, 'Natural Affection, Children, and Family Inheritance Practices in the Long Eighteenth Century', in Janay Nugent and Elizabeth Ewan (eds), *Children and Youth in Premodern Scotland* (Woodbridge, 2015), pp. 136-154.

¹⁹⁴ Lord Dacre's will, 1786, in Barrett-Lennard, *Account*, p. 623.

¹⁹⁵ *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* 20992, 23 March 1796, (London, England); *Parliamentary Register 1780-1796*, House of Commons Debates, 22 March 1796, pp. 347-8.

¹⁹⁶ *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 36, pp. 297, 299, 'Case of the entail of the estate of Sir Robert Walpole Earl of Orford'.

¹⁹⁷ *The Diaries of Sarah Hurst, 1759-1762: Life and Love in Eighteenth-Century Horsham*, ed. Susan C. Djabri (Stroud, 2009), p. 100, 16 July 1759.

followed these rules, and separated their public and personal property. Concern for lineage could be separated from affection for children, and individuals could exclude illegitimates from property inheritance whilst exhibiting pride at their beauty, accomplishments or character as a credit to the family group. Illegitimates were included in more personal and private aspects of lineage, often based around blood, evident in their inclusion in networks of object inheritance. This rationale enabled only illegitimate children to be adopted in a type of fictive legitimacy, in the absence of competing legitimate heirs. Lineage was undoubtedly of great emotional and material importance to eighteenth-century families, particularly the landed elite, but that illegitimates could be valued despite their acknowledged exclusion from inheritance, suggests a more complex and flexible model of ideal eighteenth-century family relations than historians have hitherto acknowledged.¹⁹⁸

Kinship: Obligation, Reciprocity, and Affection

The kinship family describes a slightly amorphous 'broader group of relations by blood and marriage'.¹⁹⁹ Kinship was often expressed instrumentally, at all social levels. Ideally, kin could be relied upon for assistance such as hospitality, patronage, marriage negotiations or crisis support.²⁰⁰ These actions were ideally reciprocal and, much like notions of friendship, implied a measure of service.²⁰¹ Kinship was not measured by proximity. Reciprocal ties could be maintained over great distances, and 'awoken' in response to need after years of dormancy.²⁰² Behaviour was governed by a set of strong cultural expectations and emotional standards, based on relationship type, age or gender.²⁰³ Many relationships were a mixture of obligation and affection; duty prescribed a minimum level of assistance and emotional expression, but greater instrumental effort was often a consequence of greater

¹⁹⁸ For example, Retford, *Art of Domestic Life*, pp. 148, 234.

¹⁹⁹ Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 104.

²⁰⁰ Cressy, 'Kinship', p. 50; Diana O'Hara, *Courtship and Constraint: Rethinking the Making of Marriage in Tudor England* (Manchester, 2000), pp. 30-51.

²⁰¹ Pearsall, *Atlantic Families*, p. 28; Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, pp. 30-31, 179, 191, 204-6, 212-4; Cressy, 'Kinship', pp. 46-7; Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, 'Reciprocal Bonding: Parents and their Offspring in Early Modern England', *Journal of Family History* 25.3 (2000), pp. 291-312; Harris, *Siblinghood*, pp. 57, 68-69, 133.

²⁰² Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, pp. 113-6, 188; Pearsall, *Atlantic Families*, pp. 65-6; Hansen, 'Bonds of Affection', p. 42; Cressy, 'Kinship', pp. 46-9; Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and Youth in Early Modern England* (New Haven, 1994), p. 169.

²⁰³ Broomhall and Van Gent, 'Corresponding Affections', pp. 159, 146; Davidoff, *Thicker than Water*, pp. 133-4; Broomhall, 'Emotions in the Household', p. 4; Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, pp. 27-8.

emotional intimacy.²⁰⁴ This balance between obligation and emotion is key to understanding the place of illegitimates within the kinship family. Almost all illegitimates were seen as entitled to some measure of kin support as acceptable dependants but only some reached a second level of greater intimacy and reciprocity. As kinship was so often based on actions, illegitimates could earn their place in the kinship family. In turn, individuals appropriated the language and ideals of normative kin relationships to inform their behaviour towards illegitimate relatives.

As we have seen, poorer families often expressed an obligation to provide and care for illegitimate relatives by accepting them into their household. Higher-status families were less likely to cohabit with illegitimate relatives but took on financial responsibility for them outside the household. This was to a certain extent an extension of paternal maintenance, as it was articulated in the same moral code of genteel benevolence.²⁰⁵ It also operated in tandem with other ideal family behaviour such as hospitality, sustained personal contact and concern for welfare, according to the legitimate norm where inheritance inequalities were ideally counterbalanced by a duty of assistance from the family head towards younger or less fortunate relatives.²⁰⁶ When industrialist John Spencer died in 1775 without providing for his nine-year-old illegitimate son John Smith, Spencer's nephew and heir Walter Spencer-Stanhope accepted financial responsibility. Walter paid John and his mother an annuity and the costs of John's genteel education. Walter's support of John was presented as an act of generosity towards a child in need but also reflected the obligation and reciprocity of kinship. Walter and his friends saw maintenance as repaying a debt, in exchange for the considerable estate he had inherited from his uncle. In letters to John's mother Mary, Walter referred to Spencer as 'your Friend & mine, our common Benefactor' and Spencer's friend John Cholwell counselled Walter to maintain the Smiths as a 'duty & act of gratitude'.²⁰⁷ Walter also accepted responsibility for John as part of the family that he now headed, writing to Mary,

²⁰⁴ Broomhall and Van Gent, 'Corresponding Affections', pp. 149-50; Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 192; Medick and Sabeen, 'Interest and Emotion', pp. 11-13.

²⁰⁵ See chapter 1, pp. 76-7.

²⁰⁶ Harris, *Siblinghood*, pp. 33, 112-4, 117.

²⁰⁷ BALS: Sp/St 60554/15, Walter Spencer-Stanhope to Mary Smith, 13 November 1775; 60554/9, John Cholwell to Walter Spencer-Stanhope, 25 November [1775]. The original French is 'le devoir, & la reconnaissance', and the translation is my own.

'[t]he Yorkshire Estate is left to me... As such I stand in the Place of him [Spencer]... like him you shall always find me ready to assist you & to protect your Son'.²⁰⁸ Similarly, George, 11th Earl of Pembroke, accepted responsibility for the children of his illegitimate half-brother Augustus Montgomery, paying annuities, arranging marriage settlements and providing patronage.²⁰⁹ The two Montgomerys were acknowledged in his will alongside other dependent kin; the only other collateral kin mentioned were the unmarried daughters of George's maternal cousins.²¹⁰ George was the Montgomerys' primary source of support and so he included them in concepts of familial duty alongside other kin that needed him most.²¹¹ These relationships were unequal, but based on strong concepts of familial duty and of illegitimates as acceptable dependants.

Kinship obligations entailed not only money but also continued concern and personal contact. Walter Spencer-Stanhope included John Smith within normative affective and material exchanges. John was a regular visitor to the family seat, Cannon Hall, and he and Walter maintained a life-long correspondence, accompanied with occasional presents of venison from the family estate, which John acknowledged in letters of thanks for such 'kind attention'.²¹² John reciprocated through his occupation as a schoolmaster and clergyman; he took charge of Walter's

²⁰⁸ BALS: Sp/St 60554/15, Walter Spencer-Stanhope to Mary Smith, 13 November 1775. Similar in 60554/10, Walter Spencer-Stanhope to Mary Smith, 3 December 1775.

²⁰⁹ TNA: PROB 11/1733/88, will of the Right Honourable George Augustus Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery.

²¹⁰ He gave £100 to Misses Georgiana and Caroline Spencer, and £50 to Miss Louisa Spencer. Their fathers were younger sons with limited resources of their own, TNA: PROB 11/1733/88, will of the Right Honourable George Augustus Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, 1826.

²¹¹ Their mother Susan Maltass was the daughter of a Turkish merchant and lived in Paris after her husband's death. Their biological grandmother Kitty Hunter pre-deceased her son and had no other surviving biological or step-children. *PPI*, p. 33; TNA: PROB 11/1806/240, will of Sir Alured Clarke, 1832; PROB 11/2176/128, will of Susan Otherwise Suzanne Maltass otherwise Montgomery, Widow of Paris, France, 1853. For similar legitimate examples see Harris, *Siblinghood*, p. 144; Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving*, p. 19.

²¹² BALS: Sp/St 60554/12, Mary Smith to Walter Spencer-Stanhope, 22 September 1779; 60556/1, John Smith to Walter Spencer-Stanhope, 30 July 1782; 60556/109, John Smith to Walter Spencer-Stanhope, [1803]; 60556/19, John Smith to Walter Spencer-Stanhope, 8 November 1804. There are at least 109 extant letters between John and Walter or Walter's son, covering the period 1782-1824 held in Barnsley Archives. A similar relationship of visiting was maintained between Lady Dacre and her illegitimate step-son, Lady Dacre to William Tyler, 23 May 1793, in Barrett-Lennard, *Account*, p. 624.

sons at school, organising their holidays and giving them advice.²¹³ John's relationship with Walter and his sons was both instrumental and affective, evident in expressions of anxiety and a desire to see each other. Walter wrote to John on the occasion of his moving to a new parish, 'I long to hear how you go on, & what are your schemes... I hope you can continue to spend some Time with us in London'.²¹⁴ John, in turn, counselled his young cousin John Spencer-Stanhope in terms similar to those used by elder relatives. He warned him to be careful of 'first impressions' at university, jokingly concluding '[y]ou must hear & read with patience my lecture & exhortations: if I was less anxious than I am about your welfare I could the more readily refrain'.²¹⁵ John occupied an uncertain position, entirely dependent on Walter for income and social status and employed in tasks which served the legitimate Spencer-Stanhopes, such as ordering books, travelling with his young cousins, and gathering political intelligence. This inequality was, however, balanced with considerable affective integration and he was clearly valued by the family.

John Smith's liminal position is encapsulated in a condolence letter written on John's death by Walter's wife Mary. She felt that 'our poor Friend' had 'in every possible way proved his gratitude to [Walter] for all he had done for him, & I always considered him as an attached & sincere Friend to us all, & on that account feel it right to show my regard to his Memory by going into Mourning'.²¹⁶ John was

²¹³ For further details, see chapter 3, pp. 189-90. George Montgomery had a similar reciprocal relationship; a clergyman, he was given the family's most profitable living. In return he acted as family representative in the parish and stood as the executor of his step-grandmothers' will. WSHC: 2057/F4/45, Bishop of Salisbury to Lord Herbert, 19 August 1810; 28 September 1810; Thomas Bromley to Lord Herbert, 21 September 1810; TNA: PROB 11/1785/403, will of the Right Honourable Elizabeth Countess of Pembroke and Montgomery. The role of executor was overwhelmingly performed by close kin, noted in 87 percent of the wills tested by Keith Wrightson, 'Kinship in an English Village: Terling, Essex 1550-1700', in Richard M. Smith (ed.), *Land, Kinship and Life-Cycle* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 330.

²¹⁴ BALS: Sp/St 60556/29, Walter Spencer-Stanhope to John Smith, 9 July 1805.

²¹⁵ BALS: Sp/St 60556/18, John Smith to John Spencer-Stanhope, 27 October 1804. Smith frequently joked that his cousin would become tired of receiving letters from Smith rather than a beautiful young lady, writing for example, 'God bless me, what, you exclaim, am I pester'd with another Letter... I had at least hop'd on seeing the frank, that I should have heard... from Marianne!' BALS: Sp/St 60556/38, John Smith to John Spencer-Stanhope, 19 October 1805.

²¹⁶ BALS: Sp/St 60557/2, Mary Winifred Spencer-Stanhope to Elizabeth Spencer-Stanhope, 27 January 1826. Family solidarity at illegitimates' funerals was not only confined to elite families like the Spencer-Stanhopes. Shopkeeper Thomas Turner supplied mourning favours at the funeral of Alice Stevens (1728-57), illegitimate daughter of farmer Benjamin Stevens and smallholder Avis Smith. He stated that 'a large company of people' attended. Turner records distributing hatbands and favours to 21 attendees, seven named Stevens, including

considered the inferior in this relationship, the recipient of Walter's generosity, echoing the insecurity of illegitimates' inclusion in the household-family. But, he was included in an affective concept of family, expressed as attachment, sincerity and regard in family correspondence and, crucially, in public through mourning rituals, by this time perceived to reflect an emotional relationship.²¹⁷ This status was conveyed through his active affective and instrumental service as a 'friend'.²¹⁸

Many instrumental benefits of kinship were expressed through patronage. Illegitimate children were considered acceptable beneficiaries of family patronage and significantly their claim was considered using affective terms. Naval patron Admiral Rodney assured Lord Pembroke that his illegitimate son Augustus 'is really worthy the affection with which you honour him, and I shall ever be happy to... shew that regard which I shall ever retain for the Earl of Pembroke' by promoting him.²¹⁹ Helping an illegitimate was seen as a favour to the whole family. Lady Cowper assumed that Lord Melbourne would assist illegitimate George Wyndham in a legal matter as, 'from his regard for [their] father he would like to oblige any of his family'.²²⁰ Families explained requests for patronage through open reference to an illegitimate relationship. George Herbert justified a patronage request for his nephew through the boy's origin, 'his being [a child] of... a lefthanded Sister of mine, will perhaps plead my excuse'.²²¹ Patrons assumed that parents and relatives had obligation and affection towards illegitimates and did not question the propriety of such requests.

Alice's half-brother, and two named Smith, suggesting that members of both her maternal and paternal family were considered close mourners, *Diary of Thomas Turner*, pp. 77-8. For the occupations and property of her parents see: ESRO: PBT 2/1/8/248, Deanery of South Malling, will of Benjamin Stevens, 26 November 1763; ESRO: SAS/F 256, archive of Frere & Co of London, solicitors, year lease, 16 October 1735.

²¹⁷ Pat Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 300-2. Going into mourning was expensive and a public, ritual display of connection to the deceased. The inclusion of illegitimates within mourning customs is striking, as customs were highly governed by etiquette. See Lou Taylor, *Mourning Dress: A Costume and Social History* (London, 1983), pp. 19-20, 108-112, 130.

²¹⁸ For the language of friendship as also applying to kin, and having both affective and instrumental components see Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, pp. 177, 179, 191, 204-6, 212-4; Cressy, 'Kinship', pp. 46-7, and below, p. 154.

²¹⁹ PP2, p. 160, Admiral G.B. Rodney to Henry, Lord Pembroke, 5 October 1781.

²²⁰ Reported in WSRO: PHA 8641, Lady Frances Burrell to George Wyndham, 22 December 1838.

²²¹ WSHC: 2057/F4/45A, George, Earl of Pembroke, to [unknown], 30 March 1814.

Illegitimacy did limit inclusion within some gestures of kinship. Parental efforts to keep illegitimates secret and physically separate from legitimate family limited the formation of affective and instrumental bonds. For example, illegitimate baptisms rarely included family celebrations or the selection of godparents. Illegitimates were therefore excluded from these rituals of 'incorporation', designed to 'underline and extend bonds of friendship' and kinship.²²² John Cannon bitterly contested his son's paternity and made no mention of any celebration on his birth in 1711.²²³ In contrast, when Cannon's legitimate son was born in 1716, the godparents were Cannon's father and his employer, cementing instrumental ties and following family tradition.²²⁴ James St Aubyn, himself the illegitimate son of a baronet, kept his four children secret from most of his family until his youngest child was at least five.²²⁵ As a result, no St Aubyns attended the christenings of his daughters Anne and Elizabeth in 1811. The choice of godparents indicates some attempt to provide useful kin connections, echoing normative conventions; one was their maternal aunt Anne, who was connected by marriage to the aristocratic Halliday family.²²⁶ However, the other godparents were their biological mother and father, plus James' intended wife and therefore his children's future stepmother. This selection of biological or step-parents was very unusual. It may have been a way of cementing unacknowledged parental ties through socially acceptable godparentage but limited the children's links to only the nuclear family. James saw his children as participating in his own affective familial ties. He 'nam[ed] my child Elizabeth... because Mrs Prideaux, my

²²² Clodagh Tait, 'Spiritual Bonds, Social Bonds: Baptism and Godparenthood in Ireland, 1530-1690', *Cultural and Social History* 2.3 (2005), pp. 302, 321-2; Will Coster, *Baptism and Spiritual Kinship in Early Modern England* (Aldershot, 2002), pp. 9-10, 72-3. For a later example of the importance of godparents for male social and professional networks see Valerie Sanders, 'Godfathering: The Politics of Victorian Family Relations', in Lucy Delap, Ben Griffin and Abigail Wills (eds), *The Politics of Domestic Authority in Britain since 1800* (London, 2009), pp. 243-60. Coster notes that illegitimate children may have been more likely to be given godparents as a means of providing them with additional parental figures, but that connection ceased from the seventeenth century onwards, pp. 41-2. I have found only one reference to a celebration or the selection of godparents, and none involving paternal kin. See chapter 4, p. 228.

²²³ *Chronicles of John Cannon*, pp. 103-4.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 10, 180, 134. Cannon's own godfather had been his paternal grandfather, suggesting a family tradition. When his youngest son was born in 1725, the godparents were all paternal relatives.

²²⁵ It is unclear at what point all the family knew about the children. Their earliest contact with only a select number of paternal aunts and uncles was 1818, and they met their grandmother in 1821, HHL: MssHM 80304, Diary of James St Aubyn, 1810-1819, pp. 268-9; MssHM 63181, Diary of James St Aubyn, 1819-1859, p. 71.

²²⁶ Coster states that godparents were frequently chosen from both kin and social superiors who could be of use to the child, Coster, *Baptism*, pp. 137, 143-4, 147, 151, 155, 158-9.

father's eldest sister was so named, and whose remembrance will ever be dear to me'. But their inclusion in instrumental networks was limited; Mrs Prideaux did not attend or stand as godmother.²²⁷ When Elizabeth died aged nine in 1818, only two paternal relatives whom James had 'acquainted with this secret part of my family concerns' attended her funeral.²²⁸ Although families often took on caring responsibilities for illegitimate infants, their arrival was not marked within the usual systems of public, ritual acknowledgement of kinship. Illegitimates therefore lacked automatic membership in kin groups from birth.

However, once illegitimates made contact with kin they could form normative instrumental and affective relationships, given the right circumstances. As the St Aubyn girls got older, their father began living full time with them and their mother, and slowly introduced them to his family.²²⁹ James was himself well integrated into his paternal and maternal kin, partly because his father had always openly acknowledged his illegitimate children as the offspring of two long-term cohabiting relationships. His diary indicates that he socialised regularly with his legitimate paternal cousins, siblings, mother, father and stepmother.²³⁰ He also participated in reciprocal bonds of support, financial assistance and advice. In 1816 his brother-in-law Edmund Prideaux (who was also his paternal uncle's brother) loaned him £100, repaid when Edmund made James his children's guardian in his will three years later.²³¹ In 1822, six months after his children met their paternal grandmother, James threw her a birthday party, 'solely that [the girls] might be introduced to my brother & sister-in-law, & from a more particular family concern'. When their grandmother did not turn up, James considered it 'indelicate, unpolite, and unfeeling'.²³² He wanted to bring his daughters into an affective familial network and, significantly, seems to have expected this to be possible. Over time, the girls were accepted. In

²²⁷ HHL: MssHM 80304, Diary of James St Aubyn, 1810-1819, pp. 54-5.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 268.

²²⁹ They move into a house together on 27 December 1822, HHL: MssHM 63181, Diary of James St Aubyn, 1819-1859, p. 101.

²³⁰ In the year 1810 alone he stayed with his paternal legitimate cousins the Barrett-Lennards five times and they visited him or met at another location a further five times. He stayed with his legitimate cousins the Molesworths twice and they visited him once, HHL: MssHM 80304, Diary of James St Aubyn, 1810-1819. For sociability with his father and stepmother see HHL: MssHM 80304, Diary of James St Aubyn, 1810-1819, pp. 36; 62, 63; HALS: 21M69/14/1, Emma St Aubyn to General Sir William Knollys, 23 May [1833].

²³¹ HHL: MssHM 63181, Diary of James St Aubyn, 1819-1859, pp. 28, 226.

²³² *Ibid.*, pp. 84-5.

1826 their grandmother stayed with them for 'nearly four months', and in their twenties they went on long visits alone to a range of paternal and maternal kin.²³³ When Mary died in 1838 aged 25 the funeral was conducted by her cousin and 'attended by all our Relations and some few other friends'. Her aunt Emma considered that this level of attendance was 'very unusual' and that although James 'has done all he could do dissuade [his paternal family] from it... they will go', indicating the affection and duty shown to James and his children.²³⁴ Once known about, the girls were included in an extension of their father's kin links, which over time deepened into normative kin relationships in their own right.

What were the mechanisms that allowed integration to happen, despite multiple disadvantages of secrecy, physical distance and instrumental inequality? Within legitimate sibling groups, inequalities of age, gender and personality were theoretically overcome by the strength of the bonds of blood and affection, from which historians have generally excluded illegitimates.²³⁵ Evidence suggests, however, that discovery of a blood connection was sufficient entitlement to a minimum of kin support, primarily financial. Horace Walpole's younger illegitimate half-sister Catherine Daye was brought up by her mother in Chichester, separately from the other Walpoles. She was apparently unknown to the brothers until 1769, when the Canon of Chichester reportedly told Horace "that he had a very near relation in the utmost distress and necessity, and of whom, he presumed, [Horace] was an entire stranger". Horace's friend William Cole related, '[u]pon this information Mr Walpole immediately sent for her up to town, and took her, as a sister, into his own house, where she lives with him half the year'. Both the Canon and Cole reasoned that Catherine became destitute only because 'the family knew nothing about her', and assumed, correctly, that the discovery of a connection would prompt immediate assistance.²³⁶ Horace not only brought Catherine into his home, but also defended her property interests as part of the Walpole bloodline. He

²³³ For only a selection of examples, see HHL: MssHM 63181, Diary of James St Aubyn, 1819-1859, pp. 139-40, 148, 210, 231, 264.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 170; HALS: 21M69/14/6, Emma St Aubyn to William Knollys, 31 July 1838.

²³⁵ Crawford, *Blood, Bodies and Families*, p. 214; Broomhall and Van Gent, 'Corresponding Affections', pp. 153-4; Harris, *Siblinghood*, pp. 33, 150-1, 160.

²³⁶ *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 2, p. 371, 'Cole's Account of his Visit to Strawberry Hill, 29-31 October 1774'.

contacted her former intended husband who had made off with an inheritance to 'remind him that he cheated my father's daughter of a living and of a marriage'.²³⁷

The discovery of a relationship also often prompted a desire for affective bonds, eventually achieved through renewed proximity and compatible personalities. After six years of sustained contact, Horace began describing his relationship with Catherine in normative affective terms. In 1775 he told his friend Lady Ossory, 'I am in great distress, with a near relation dying in my house - you have heard me mention Mrs Daye'. Horace left her to go to Paris but when she died three weeks later he wrote that he was unable to visit Lady Ossory because 'my poor sister Mrs Daye is dead, and I have her affairs to settle'.²³⁸ George Bentham had not seen his illegitimate half-sister Elizabeth since he was seven years old, when they were reintroduced to each other in their twenties.²³⁹ When they met again George stated, 'I took much to her, whom I remembered as a favorite in our family when children'. At this meeting George confirmed her 'suspicions' that she was indeed his illegitimate half-sister and noted that 'this discovery led to an active correspondence'.²⁴⁰ George and Elizabeth were far apart, in England and Russia respectively, but maintained a mutually fulfilling affective bond through letters and other marks of emotion. Elizabeth named her first child after George, and offered to send him a portrait of her son because 'I do not want him to be an unknown person to you'.²⁴¹ Individuals quickly adopted normative kin behaviour and endeavoured to maintain relationships despite physical distance and childhood estrangement.

The integration of illegitimate relatives was, however, uneven. Families commonly treated illegitimate half-siblings differently, beyond the usual inequalities of age, gender and personality clashes. There were two levels of integration. A minimum level of one-sided obligation, primarily financial, developed quickly following the discovery of a relationship and was achieved by almost all illegitimates. This could

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 28, p. 252, Horace Walpole to William Mason, 11 March 1776.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 32, p. 245, Horace Walpole to Lady Ossory, 3 August 1775; vol. 32, p. 271, Horace Walpole to Lady Ossory, 21 October 1775.

²³⁹ Bentham, *Autobiography*, pp. xxi, 561, 94.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 94-5. There are also visits: George and his younger sisters visit in 1823 and 1824, and Elizabeth's husband visits them in 1829, Bentham, *Autobiography*, pp. 204, 209, 339.

²⁴¹ My translation of 'je voudrais tu faire son portrait au je tiens a ce qu'il ne te soit pas un personnage inconnu', TLS: 322/6, Elizabeth Harvey, née Gordon, to George Bentham, copied into George Bentham to Mary-Louise de Chesnel, née Bentham, 20 November 1826.

deepen into a reciprocal affective and instrumental bond but depended on the circumstances of the parental relationship, pre-existing family dynamics and need. George Herbert had very different relationships with his illegitimate half-siblings Augustus and Caroline, born from their father's adulterous relationships with two different women. When George was told of Caroline's existence when he was 21, awareness of a sibling relationship triggered a minimum level of obligation. George administered Caroline's paternal maintenance and, on his father's request, interviewed her prospective husband and negotiated her marriage settlement.²⁴² He stood as godfather to her first child and once attempted to use his influence to assist her son's career.²⁴³ In this, George was acting as his father's proxy, and as the future family head towards a dependant. The relationship was not reciprocal and was emotionally and physically distant. Despite their father's repeated encouragements, George showed no desire to deepen their relationship or to include her socially within the family group. George complained to his father in 1787, 'I do not know why you wish me so particularly to take Caroline in my way, as you do not mention any particular motive for so doing'.²⁴⁴ In another letter he responded that his mother 'I should suppose cannot know any thing of Caroline, & I have not had an opportunity of making Augustus known to her [Caroline]'.²⁴⁵ A primary reason for this distance was Caroline's origin in their father's second adulterous relationship. As George aged he became increasingly critical of his father's infidelity, indiscretion and 'insult' towards his mother and increasingly defensive of his mother's position as her beloved only child.²⁴⁶

George had a much closer, reciprocal relationship with his other illegitimate half-sibling Augustus. Augustus was their father's first illegitimate child, openly acknowledged by him and brought up in the paternal household with the support of George's mother Lady Pembroke. In contrast, Caroline had been kept secret from

²⁴² *PP2*, pp. 265, 270, 281, 289, Henry, Lord Pembroke to George, Lord Herbert, 16 February 1785; 28 April 1785; 17 September 1785; 20 November 1785.

²⁴³ WSHC: 2057/F4/30, George, Lord Herbert to Henry, Lord Pembroke, 12 August 1787.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁵ Lord Pembroke requested meetings in August and October 1786, with no extant response from George until December: *PP2*, pp. 310, 315, 317-8, Henry, Lord Pembroke to George, Lord Herbert, 25 August 1786; 8 October 1786; 19 October 1786; George, Lord Herbert to Henry, Lord Pembroke, 14 December 1786.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 254, 382, George, Lord Herbert to Reverend William Coxe, 23 December 1783; George, Lord Herbert to Henry, Lord Pembroke, [1788].

George and the wider family. Lady Pembroke provided vital sustenance for George and Augustus' relationship despite a widening gulf in their life courses. When George went on Grand Tour and Augustus joined the navy, she forwarded letters and sent news between the brothers.²⁴⁷ George and Augustus' relationship was also formed through need; George was an only child for much of his life and the presence of a brother only three years his junior was a source of significant support for him in a household led by a volatile and often absent father.²⁴⁸ Intercession with a parent was common normative sibling behaviour and encouraged by those around them.²⁴⁹ George's mentor Major Floyd warned him that 'poor Aug: will frequently stand in need of the interposition of your good word' with their father.²⁵⁰ Augustus also supplied emotional aid to his brother. When George's wife Elizabeth died suddenly from childbirth complications in 1793, Augustus left his posting and returned to London immediately to be with George. His letters to family friends on George's behalf were full of fraternal concern:

Lord Herbert... hopes you will excuse his not writing himself... He is now with the children here... & it is to be hoped his mind will be more at ease than when I first met him when he was much affected. I am obliged to leave him tomorrow, my Ship being... ready for sea. I had only leave for a few days to come & see him.²⁵¹

Augustus then asked their friend William Coxe to come and stay with George as he was 'obliged to leave this immediately & quitting Ld H: without any person being with him is a matter of distress.'²⁵² Augustus assumed the role of elder brother, comforting and organising the family while George was grieving, and in the absence

²⁴⁷ *PP1*, pp. 177, 387, Elizabeth, Lady Pembroke to George, Lord Herbert, 4 May 1779; 13 January 1780. Augustus also sent news to George about Lady Pembroke, for example, *PP1*, p. 161, Augustus Reebkomp (Montgomery) to George, Lord Herbert, 6 April 1779.

²⁴⁸ His sister Charlotte (1773-1784) died aged only eleven, and he had spent the majority of her childhood on Grand Tour (1775-1780), *PP1*, p. 51. For George's opinion of his father's temper see *PP2*, p. 254, George, Lord Herbert to Reverend William Coxe, 23 December 1783.

²⁴⁹ Similar behaviour between legitimate siblings is found in Leonore Davidoff, 'Kinship as a Categorical Concept: A Case Study of Nineteenth-Century English Siblings', *Journal of Social History* 39.2 (2005), p. 414; Davidoff, *Thicker than Water*, pp. 33-34, 114; Harris, *Siblinghood*, p. 42.

²⁵⁰ *PP1*, p. 489, Major Floyd to George, Lord Herbert, 20 June 1780. For an example of George's defence of Augustus see WSHC: 2057/F4/30, George, Lord Herbert to Henry, Lord Pembroke, 3 April 1787.

²⁵¹ WSHC: 2057/F4/32, Augustus Montgomery to Reverend William Coxe, 30 March 1793.

²⁵² *Ibid.*

of their father or other close family.²⁵³ This combination of affective sympathy, instrumental support and physical presence during crisis was as close to the ideal fraternal bond as you could get, but was facilitated by George's lack of alternative sources of support and the particular circumstances of Augustus' birth.²⁵⁴

Crises provided significant impetus for the formation of affective and instrumental bonds but timing was crucial. George Bentham developed a close relationship with Elizabeth partly because their reunion occurred during a particularly difficult time of his life; he had suffered multiple courtship disappointments and had become responsible for his younger sisters after his elder brother's death and his elder sister Mary-Louise's marriage.²⁵⁵ In letters to Mary-Louise he repeatedly included Elizabeth ('Lise') within his sibling support group. In 1827 he wrote, 'those whom I have most loved and confided in have been separated from me, my poor brother [after]... his last fatal illness... Lise separated from me so far [living in Russia], and now I am away from you'.²⁵⁶ He valued Elizabeth's counsel as a normative elder sister, stating that 'I benefitted greatly, from the sound advice she always gave me... as a very superior person in intellect and mental capacity'.²⁵⁷ In another letter he equalled his feelings for both sisters, stating, '[h]ow I wish I had you or Lise, the two best friends I have in the world... Love her as I do you and her'.²⁵⁸ This latter request suggests that Mary-Louise and Elizabeth did not correspond with each other, perhaps because they needed each other less.

The terminology used to describe illegitimate relatives provides further evidence of two levels of integration, and also underlines the voluntary and conditional aspect of these relationships. As Tadmor argues, '[t]he recognition of these relationships by naming... was an announcement of status and a possible undertaking of obligations'.²⁵⁹ The use of normative terms to describe illegitimate relationships was

²⁵³ Augustus similarly travelled abroad to be with the family when their younger legitimate sister Charlotte was dying in 1783, *PP2*, pp. 242-50, George's diary, 10 November-17 December 1783.

²⁵⁴ Crawford, *Blood, Bodies and Families*, pp. 218-23; Broomhall and Van Gent, 'Corresponding Affections', p. 150; Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, pp. 188; Cressy, 'Kinship', pp. 47, 49.

²⁵⁵ Filipiuk, 'Introduction', pp. xxx-xxxi.

²⁵⁶ Bentham, *Autobiography*, p. 262.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 94-5.

²⁵⁸ TLS: 322/6, George Bentham to Mary-Louise de Chesnel, 20 November 1826.

²⁵⁹ Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 140.

not automatic and had to be earned. The Walpoles and their circle referred to Catherine as 'our friend' and 'near relation', only using the word 'sister' immediately prior to her death after they had developed an affective relationship with her.²⁶⁰ They universally used 'sister' to refer to their other illegitimate half-sibling Lady Mary Walpole.²⁶¹ Although legally illegitimate, she had already earned the term through lifelong proximity and affection, as she had been brought up in the parental household and included in family name and inheritance.²⁶² However, even if contemporaries did not directly call illegitimates 'my sister', for example, it was relatively common to prefix kinship terms with the comparative 'as'. John Cannon wrote of his paternal adulterine half-sibling Edith Pitman that they 'both acknowledged each other *as* brother & sister' [my emphasis].²⁶³ Edith and John developed a quasi-sibling relationship through their adoption of sibling-like behaviour towards each other and sustained by Edith's instrumental and affective utility. He described her as 'frugal' and 'never a disgrace to the legitimate children', and as participating in multigenerational gestures of hospitality and affection: 'she ever very much affected our author & his children', 'highly respected me and my family [and]... nobly entertained them during their stay with her'.²⁶⁴ This adherence to abstract ideals of siblinghood was sufficient for John to include Edith 'as' a sister even though they had never cohabited and rarely saw each other. Similarly, Cole stated that Horace Walpole accepted Catherine 'as a sister', suggesting that he had chosen to see her in this light and governed his behaviour accordingly.²⁶⁵

It was also common to refer to illegitimate kin as 'friend', a term used by the Spencer-Stanhopes, George Bentham and Edward Walpole.²⁶⁶ This may have more accurately

²⁶⁰ *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 36, p. 53, Edward Walpole to Horace Walpole, 22 May 1769; vol. 2, p. 371, 'Cole's Account of his Visit to Strawberry Hill, 29-31 October 1774'; vol. 32, p. 271, Horace Walpole to Lady Ossory, 21 October 1775.

²⁶¹ For example, *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 17, p. 320, Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 4 February 1742; vol. 36, pp. 25-6, Horace Walpole to Lord Orford, 10 April 1756.

²⁶² See above, pp. 129-30.

²⁶³ *Chronicles of John Cannon*, pp. 17-18.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 425.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 18; *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 2, p. 371, 'Cole's Account of his Visit to Strawberry Hill, 29-31 October 1774'.

²⁶⁶ BALS: Sp/St 60557/2, Mary Winifred Spencer-Stanhope to Elizabeth Spencer-Stanhope, 27 January 1826; 60556/26, John Spencer-Stanhope to John Smith, 25 March [nd]; 60556/63, John Spencer-Stanhope to John Smith, 3 August 1807; *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 36, p. 53, Edward Walpole to Horace Walpole, 22 May 1769; TLS: 322/6, George Bentham to Mary-Louise de Chesnel, née Bentham, 20 November 1826.

conceptualised the relationship for these individuals; a friend was 'one with whom one was presumed to have an *active* relationship... of both obligation and choice'.²⁶⁷ Obligation triggered contact with illegitimate relatives but choice defined the depth of the affective and instrumental bond that developed over time. Resistance to universal and immediate adoption of kinship terminology could indicate a desire to differentiate legitimate and illegitimate relatives. But, clearly, use of a kinship term or a term with similar affective and instrumental connotations could be earned. Illegimates, it seems, could be simultaneously not simply a 'sister', but entitled to similar obligations and expectations 'as a sister'.

Strikingly, the letters and diaries analysed here provide little evidence of the jealousy, resentment and rivalry that plagued legitimate families.²⁶⁸ Harris, Davidoff and Tadmor have compiled considerable evidence that individuals kept up family ties, even unwillingly, and that notions of duty and obligation made relationships highly durable despite often intense personal animosity.²⁶⁹ Among illegitimate relationships outright antagonism was rare; more common was a sense of benign distance that betrayed a lack of intimacy. As Broomhall and Van Gent argue, 'some of the family members who appeared to enjoy the closest relationships... were also those who most readily displayed and discussed negative emotions'.²⁷⁰ John Cannon's descriptions of Edith were equanimous, in marked contrast to his highly competitive, jealous relationship with his legitimate full siblings. This originated in childhood parental favouritism and competition over familial inheritance, and was expressed in almost constant interference and judgement of each other's actions.²⁷¹ John and Edith's relationship was positive but also distant; she appears only once in Cannon's diary, in contrast to his regular, spontaneous and often antagonistic social interactions with his legitimate siblings.²⁷² Edith was excluded from the fraught intensity of the legitimate sibling group, or what Davidoff characterises as '[a] dance

²⁶⁷ Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 191. Harris explicitly says that siblings did not see each other as 'friends', Harris, *Siblinghood*, p. 73.

²⁶⁸ For legitimate examples see: Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, pp. 178-80, 188, 191, 273; Broomhall and Van Gent, 'Corresponding Affections'; Harris, *Siblinghood*, pp. 73-4, 80-96; Davidoff, 'Kinship as a Categorical Concept', p. 413; Davidoff, *Thicker than Water*, pp. 115-9.

²⁶⁹ Harris, *Siblinghood*, p. 170; Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 188; Davidoff, *Thicker than Water*, pp. 131, 133, 157.

²⁷⁰ Broomhall and Van Gent, 'Corresponding Affections', pp. 155, 158.

²⁷¹ *Chronicles of John Cannon*, pp. 25, 31, 34, 140, 199, 252, 356, 372, 439, 472.

²⁷² For example, *Chronicles of John Cannon*, pp. 148, 159, 372.

of intimacy, mutual involvement and profound irritation'.²⁷³ Illegitimates lacked the entitlement to anger and, if anything, were supposed to express gratitude.²⁷⁴ All legitimate families were unequal; primogeniture, gender, age, birth order, marital status and parental favouritism all created inequalities. But, these inequalities were balanced with a strong sense of entitlement and claim at least to abstract equality.²⁷⁵ This expectation created the competition and disagreement missing from illegitimate relationships.

Notably, shame was rarely articulated as a reason for familial estrangement. Other relatives may have found it easier than parents to accept illegitimates because their existence was not connected to any personal moral failing. John Cannon bitterly resented his own unmarried paternity but his half-sister Edith's origins in their father's adultery had no discernible negative impact on their relationship.²⁷⁶ Of course, many families may have abandoned or hidden illegitimates so successfully that no trace is left in the historical record. Occasionally glimpses emerge. Diarist Samuel Pepys was confronted with responsibility for his illegitimate infant niece Elizabeth when her father Tom died in 1664.²⁷⁷ Tom had secretly paid 'one Cave, a poor pensioner' to take Elizabeth, but after Tom's death Cave approached Samuel for more money.²⁷⁸ Samuel refused and showed no concern for Elizabeth's welfare or

²⁷³ Davidoff, *Thicker than Water*, p. 146.

²⁷⁴ 'Gratitude' was used to describe illegitimate behaviour by the Spencer-Stanhopes and the Pembrokes, see: BALS: Sp/St 60554/9, John Cholwell to Walter Spencer-Stanhope, 25 November [1775]; 60557/2, Mary Winifred Spencer-Stanhope to Elizabeth Spencer-Stanhope, 27 January 1826; *PP2*, p. 36, Major Floyd to George, Lord Hebert, 5 September 1780. It was also used by illegitimates John Smith and at a lower social level, James Burn, to describe their relationship to legitimate family, BALS: Sp/St 60556/5, John Smith to Walter Spencer-Stanhope, [n.d.]; 60556/6, John Smith to Walter Spencer-Stanhope, [n.d.]; Burn, *Autobiography*, pp. 54-5. For the cultural context of this expectation see chapter 5, pp. 280, 29-300.

²⁷⁵ Harris, *Siblinghood*, pp. 31-33, 44, 57, 62, 148-51, 160; Davidoff, *Thicker than Water*, pp. 38-44, 114.

²⁷⁶ See chapter 1, pp. 60-62.

²⁷⁷ Although Pepys' extra-marital affairs are well known, his illegitimate niece is rarely mentioned. For his sexual behaviour and family life see: Kate Loveman, 'Samuel Pepys and Deb Willet after the Diary', *Historical Journal* 49.3 (2006), pp. 893-901; Karl E. Westhauser, 'Friendship and Family in Early Modern England: the Sociability of Adam Eyre and Samuel Pepys', *Journal of Social History* 27.3 (1994), pp. 517-36; Ian Wallace Archer, 'Social Networks in Restoration London: the Evidence of Samuel Pepys's Diary', in Alexandra Shepard and Phil Withington (eds), *Communities in Early Modern England: Networks, Place, Rhetoric* (Manchester, 2000), pp. 76-94; Houlbrooke, *The English Family*, pp. 56-7. The main exception is Claire Tomalin, *Samuel Pepys: The Unequalled Self* (London, 2002), pp. 164-5.

²⁷⁸ *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. R.C. Latham and W. Matthews (London, 1970-83), vol. 5, pp. 114-5, 6 April 1664.

any sense of family obligation, even though Tom's paternity was not doubted.²⁷⁹ The Pepys family feared both sexual and financial shame, which they perceived to affect the whole family. Samuel consulted with 'Cosen Scotts', the executor of Tom's will, who told him, 'we are like to receive some shame about the business of [Tom's] bastard; but no matter, so it cost us no money'.²⁸⁰ Months later Samuel wrote that the affair had threatened to end 'in our disgrace and discontent' but was satisfied that he had acted well with the result that '[m]y credit in the world and my office grows daily'.²⁸¹

Pepys's abandonment of Elizabeth is understandable given his views on extra-marital sex and highly utilitarian approach to kinship. Although Pepys was frequently adulterous, he was discreet and highly sensitive to public opinion. He was deeply ashamed of a rumour that Tom died of the pox and criticised noblemen who appeared in public with their mistresses.²⁸² This could, as Tomalin argues, reflect the 'Puritan morality' of his upbringing but is also congruent with the centrality of both sexual and financial probity to a specifically early modern middling masculinity that arguably diminished over the eighteenth century.²⁸³ In his quest for upward social mobility, Pepys excluded many of his less useful legitimate kin, not only Elizabeth. Tomalin and Houlbrooke argue that, as he grew older and gained social status, he dropped his poor cousins in favour of more socially acceptable connections and disinherited his legitimate nephew because he disapproved of his marriage.²⁸⁴ Elizabeth's abandonment had more to do with Pepys' own as yet insecure economic and social position, than her illegitimacy. Had he been older at the time of her birth, their relationship may have been very different. Pepys' reaction suggests that family could share a parental sense of shame but this was much more likely among upwardly mobile families who were perhaps already more sensitive to reputation.

²⁷⁹ Both Cave and the midwife swore that Tom admitted paternity, and Pepys referred privately to 'my brother's bastard', *Diary of Samuel Pepys*, vol. 5, p. 253, 25 August 1664; Tomalin, *Samuel Pepys*, p. 164.

²⁸⁰ *Diary of Samuel Pepys*, vol. 5, p. 142, 4 May 1664.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 360, 31 December 1664.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, vol. 5, pp. 81, 85-6, 13 and 15 March 1664; vol. 8, p. 322, 5 July 1667; Tomalin, *Samuel Pepys*, pp. 155-7.

²⁸³ Tomalin, *Samuel Pepys*, p. 201; Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 44-5, 70, 186-95.

²⁸⁴ Tomalin, *Samuel Pepys*, p. 286; Houlbrooke, *The English Family*, p. 56.

Poverty was also an important limitation on individuals' ability to maintain kinship ties. The evidence presented so far has suggested commonalities across the socio-economic scale, from lower middling-sorts, such as the Cannons, to titled families such as the Walpoles. Evidence from labouring-poor authors is rare but there are suggestions of similar claims to kin support and affection. Illegitimate vagrant James Burn had grown up with his legitimate maternal half-siblings, a shared experience which led to the development of affective bonds. When he was separated from them and sent to live with his biological father's family in Ireland he wrote, 'I lost three brothers as dear to me as if we had all owed our being to one father.' In contrast, he stated of his legitimate paternal half-siblings, '[m]y new-found brother and sisters were strangers to me, and from the peculiar circumstances of our left-handed relationship... it was very likely we should remain strangers to each other, at least in feeling.'²⁸⁵ Proximity was important in the formation of normative bonds and there is less evidence of the abstract claim to support or natural affection found in higher-status examples. Once formed, bonds withstood years of separation. Reunited after at least a decade, Burn took on archetypal elder brother responsibilities as protector and advisor towards his younger legitimate half-brother Robert. When their mother remarried and moved away, Burn found Robert an apprenticeship as soon as he reached a settled position himself.²⁸⁶ Burn stated, '[t]his relieved my mind a great deal, as I considered myself responsible... for his well-being'.²⁸⁷ Burn's sibling relationship had many similarities with those of higher status discussed above, particularly the acceptance of both siblinghood terminology and an obligation of responsibility. Poverty and migration were significant in that Burn was unable to maintain correspondence contact with his family, and indeed could not find them for many years, 'having no certainty of finding them where I left them'.²⁸⁸ Illegitimate Burn also occupied a less dependent position than many higher-status illegitimates discussed here, acting as the bestower of support towards his legitimate family, rather than the recipient. This perhaps reflects the less marked economic differences between illegitimate and legitimate kin in poorer families with limited property inheritance.

²⁸⁵ James Burn, *The Autobiography of a Beggar Boy*, ed. David Vincent (London, 1978), p. 71.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 106. They were separated when Burn was about 15 years old, and prior to their reuniting Burn had completed a seven-year apprenticeship.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 105. He eventually found them in Ayrshire, but the family had moved between Ireland, London, Doncaster and Hexham in previous years.

Conclusion

Illegitimate individuals were included to a certain extent in household, lineage and kinship concepts of family. In all these types inclusion was conditional and insecure. Legitimate counterparts were always prioritised above illegitimates, reflecting the strength of legitimate children's entitlement to family resources at all socio-economic levels. However, if legitimate rights were protected then illegitimate relatives could be included with little conflict. Most significantly, family members did not generally feel collective shame and exclusion was more due to pragmatic limitations, such as household poverty, or the actions of a child's parents in creating secrecy or distance. The fear that illegitimates would threaten familial integrity was largely not realised, partly due to the separation of personal and family property. Most families accepted that illegitimates could share personal parental property, while most parents followed the rules of normative inheritance enshrined in the entail. This limited familial conflict and allowed relatives to simultaneously hold positive affective relationships with illegitimate relatives whilst excluding them from the more public aspects of familial identity. The flexibility of concepts of family to include illegitimates, and limited evidence of familial shame, suggest that historiographical emphasis on familial exclusion due to fears for collective reputation has been overstated. Once recognised, illegitimates could slot into the framework of ideal legitimate relationships.

This chapter has shown that affective bonds - expressions or active proofs of attachment and concern - could flourish even in the most unlikely circumstances. Proximity during childhood was useful, but not essential, to the adoption of affective bonds.²⁸⁹ The boundaries of family were flexible and inclusive and, moreover, can be separated into public and personal. Formal exclusion hid personal integration and attachment and the most valuable interpersonal relationships were not necessarily those which appear most in public manifestations of family.²⁹⁰ Illegitimates were valued as instrumental and affective friends and members of a shared bloodline, despite their limitations as heirs to property or title. Their inclusion in systems of

²⁸⁹ Similar in Harris, *Siblinghood*, pp. 42, 44. Cf. Davidoff, 'Kinship as a Categorical Concept', p. 413; Davidoff, *Thicker than Water*, pp. 7, 85.

²⁹⁰ A point which Davidoff makes in relationship to legitimate sibling relationships, Davidoff, *Thicker than Water*, p. 338.

reciprocal crisis support is the strongest evidence of their inclusion in family, as is what Hansen describes as 'proximity-seeking'.²⁹¹ There are multiple cases in which legitimates and illegitimates tried to remain near each other; they wrote, visited, employed and married each other, maintaining relationships across physical and generational distance.²⁹² Kinship was, as Cressy argues, 'selective... voluntary' and 'egocentric'.²⁹³ Legitimates did not have to accept their illegitimate relatives beyond a base level of primarily financial obligation, but many pursued active, reciprocal and affective relationships with illegitimate relatives because they wanted to.

Measured inequality, and difference rather than animosity, characterised the majority illegitimate experience. My aim here has been to try to extract common patterns from deeply personal and idiosyncratic family narratives. Illegitimate inclusion did vary slightly according to individual personality, gender, life-cycle or socio-economic background. It may have been easier for wealthier families to absorb illegitimate children as dependents within a family system run through patronage. The implications of outside interference also had variable impact. Poor families were limited by the laws of settlement and relief, as elite families were limited by entails. Limited evidence of labouring-poor families suggests that reciprocal kinship ties were also more difficult to maintain among the poor and the evasion of paternal responsibility, discussed in chapter one, meant that filiated illegitimate children relied primarily only on maternal family. Upwardly mobile middling sorts, such as the Bentham's or the Darwin's, may also have found it more difficult to provide for illegitimate children within the household and focused instead on finding them employment. However, there are some patterns. Relatives did feel some sense of moral obligation, based on notions of charity, shared blood or extended paternal duty, common throughout family types and across the socio-economic scale. Obligation was ultimately finite and subordinate to obligation towards legitimate relatives. The parameters and consequences of inclusion may have differed according to class, but the consistent differentiation between illegitimates and their legitimate counterparts in all family types suggests a common sense of illegitimate inequality and limited entitlement.

²⁹¹ Hansen, 'Bonds of Affection', p. 46.

²⁹² For kin marriage and employment, see chapter 3.

²⁹³ Cressy, 'Kinship', p. 67.

There is also some evidence of changing attitudes over time. The most antagonistic and exclusionary familial reactions, of the More and Pepys families, occurred in the late seventeenth century. This may have reflected more punitive attitudes to extra-marital sex, or greater concern over collective family reputation. Later chapters will investigate a suggestion that cultural change over the eighteenth century may have made it easier to include illegitimate children within ideals of family unity and loyalty that were increasingly based on affection.

These findings have implications for historiographical understanding of the family in this period. Blood could be just as important as legal status in determining membership and access to systems of obligation and reciprocity. Obligation towards dependent family members, of which illegitimates are a prime example, remained strong well into the early nineteenth century. Principles of obligation did not depend on prior contact or shared upbringing and were strong enough not only to withstand lengthy physical separations, but also to apply to individuals with limited or no entitlement to family support in either law or social custom. This supports and furthers arguments that kinship remained a valued and motivating concept to individuals of different socio-economic classes long after the supposed rise of the nuclear family.²⁹⁴ These findings also suggest that it might be helpful to think about family relationships in terms of multiple levels. Access to family resources changed over the life-cycle and could be earned. Membership of the family was not binary or absolute. Individuals were not necessarily 'in' or 'out' but could participate in different, related definitions of 'family'. Variations in the extent of individual participation suggest that one of the most significant variables in family relationships was level of need. Families often responded to individuals in need, and crisis support was a catalyst for the development and extension of affective and instrumental bonds.

Inequality was partly a function of illegitimates limited access to property. Medick and Sabeian's argument that 'the behaviour of family members and the power relations among them are linked to the resources available to them' applies here.²⁹⁵ Illegitimates often remained financially dependent throughout their life-cycle, which

²⁹⁴ For an overview of the debate over a change to a nuclear family type in the early modern period, see Wrightson, 'The Family in Early Modern England'.

²⁹⁵ Medick and Sabeian, 'Interest and Emotion', p. 16.

facilitated the adoption of emotionally unequal kin relationships. To explore this further, we must turn to the often very different marital and occupational trajectories followed by legitimate and illegitimate relatives. Decisions on education, marriage and occupation were commonly made with the whole family in mind and could drastically affect illegitimates' ability to maintain contact and reciprocity. The extent to which illegitimates were almost always in a lesser position of social influence and economic power will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Three: Education, Occupation and Marriage

Introduction

A primary measure in determining the extent to which illegitimacy was a stigmatised category is its effect on individual life chances. This chapter investigates the extent to which illegitimates could achieve parity of social status with their legitimate counterparts, measured through educational, occupational and marital prospects. This partly indicates parental intent; the choices parents made in their children's education suggest how they viewed their future potential. Detailed analysis of life trajectories allows a more nuanced understanding of the extent and causes of disadvantage. In particular, it indicates whether any disadvantage resulted from reduced access to wealth and influence, labelled here as structural disadvantage, or from direct stigma against illegitimates as inherently tainted and inferior.

Illegitimates' life chances have received limited historiographical attention. Cathy Day, the only historian to examine illegitimates' marriages, concluded from parish reconstitution that 'there were no statistically significant differences' in the legitimate and illegitimate marriage rate.¹ Limited research into the education of foundling and pauper children found no particular difference. Most poor children, legitimate or not, went into service, the army and navy, or parish apprenticeship.² Research into higher-status illegitimates contended that wealth made illegitimacy immaterial; McClure considered that illegitimacy 'in no way interfered with marriage chances nor, usually, with preferment to high office'.³ Stone argued that 'illegitimate boys...

¹ Cathy Day, *Wiltshire Marriage Patterns, 1754-1914: Geographical Mobility, Cousin Marriage and Illegitimacy* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 2013), pp. 212-3.

² Ruth McClure, *Coram's Children: The London Foundling Hospital in the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven, 1981), pp. 47-8.

³ McClure, *Coram's Children*, p. 10. This is echoed in multiple secondary works, which generally state only that the aristocracy were relaxed about extra-marital sex and treated illegitimate children well, without providing detail about why or in what way. See: Randolph Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution. Volume One: Heterosexuality and the Third Gender in*

suffered no social discrimination in terms of professional career or marriage' but that daughters faced considerably reduced marriage prospects.⁴ These hypotheses are, however, based only on the evidence of a few superlatively successful illegitimate individuals and have not been tested in a systematic study. There has been no consideration of the motives behind parental choices or the causes of differing life trajectories. Research in French, German and Russian contexts indicates that illegitimates did find it more difficult to marry and enter occupations comparable with that of their birth fathers, resulting in reduced socio-economic status.⁵ This chapter argues that illegitimacy caused some disadvantage among English illegitimates. This varied considerably according to gender, but not in the way suggested by Stone.

This argument is reached through quantitative analysis of a dataset of 24 families from the peerage and baronetage. This elite group was chosen due to the availability of biographical data. It is not only difficult to trace the life trajectories of lower-status individuals but discussion of motivations and the consequences of illegitimate disadvantage requires complementary manuscript sources. The dataset comprises 225 individuals, all the children or grandchildren of peers or baronets, born between 1667 and 1819.⁶ Roughly half of the individuals were illegitimate and the dataset includes only slightly more males than females. Families were selected from the same archive searches used to identify the main case studies of this thesis. These are families whose illegitimate members could be identified in a primary source.⁷ Family

Enlightenment London (Chicago, 1998), pp. 172-5; Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (London, 1977), pp. 532-4; Lisa Zunshine, *Bastards and Foundlings: Illegitimacy in Eighteenth-Century England* (Columbus, 2005), pp. 134-8, 166; H.J. Habakkuk, *Marriage, Debt and the Estates System: English Landownership, 1650-1950* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 153-4.

⁴ Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*, p. 534.

⁵ Maria R. Boes, "'Dishonourable' Youth, Guilds, and the Changed World View of Sex, Illegitimacy, and Women in Late-Sixteenth-Century Germany', *Continuity and Change* 18.3 (2003), pp. 349-50; Otto Ulbricht, 'The Debate about Foundling Hospitals in Enlightenment Germany: Infanticide, Illegitimacy, and Infant Mortality Rates', *Central European History* 18 (1985), p. 231; Matthew Gerber, *Bastards: Politics, Family and Law in Early Modern France* (Oxford, 2012); pp. 103-5; Olga E. Glagoleva, 'The Illegitimate Children of the Russian Nobility in Law and Practice, 1700-1860', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 6.3 (2005), p. 497.

⁶ See appendix 3 for a summary of the dataset, and appendix 5 for a full list of the individuals.

⁷ This included manuscript correspondence and published works, such as *The Diary of Joseph Farington*, ed. Kenneth Garlick, Angus D. Macintyre, Kathryn Cave and Evelyn Newby, vols 1-16 (New Haven, 1978-1998); *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, 48 vols, ed.

trees were constructed using genealogical data in Debrett's and Burke's peerages and the International Genealogical Index, supplemented with the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* and *History of Parliament Online*. Education information was found in published and manuscript diaries and correspondence, as well as the published registers of the main public schools and Oxford and Cambridge Universities.⁸ I collected information on education, occupation and marriage for each illegitimate and their legitimate half-siblings or first cousins to produce a legitimate control group for comparison.⁹ I could then compare illegitimates of the same gender, similar age and family background and, crucially, compare illegitimate sons with both younger sons and heirs. I excluded children who died young, in this case before the age of twenty-one, to create an 'at-risk' group for marriage and occupation.¹⁰

The dataset is supplemented with qualitative evidence from upper middling and elite correspondence and life-writing. Qualitative sources from some of the families who appear in the dataset provide context of the reasons behind educational,

W.S. Lewis (New Haven, 1937-83, online edition). For more on the identification of manuscript sources, see introduction, pp. 32-3.

⁸ I used a variety of sources, including: John Burke, *A General and Heraldic Dictionary of the Peerage and Baronetage of the British Empire*, 2 vols (London, 1832); William R. O'Byrne, *A Naval Biographical Dictionary, Comprising the Life and Services of Every Living Officer in Her Majesty's Navy, from the Rank of Admiral of the Fleet to that of Lieutenant, Inclusive. Compiled from Authentic and Family Documents* (London, 1849); *History of Parliament Online*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org> [accessed 21 May 2017]; *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn), <http://www.oxforddnb.com>. <http://www.sheffield.idm.oclc.org/view/article/10025> [accessed 21 May 2017]; *A Cambridge Alumni Database: a database of all alumni of the University of Cambridge, 1200-1900*, <http://venn.lib.cam.ac.uk/Documents/acad/2016/search-2016.html> [accessed 21 May 2017]; *Alumni Oxonienses: The Members of the University of Oxford, 1715-1886*, ed. Joseph Foster 4 vols (Oxford, 1888-1891); *The Eton College Register, 1753-1790*, ed. Richard Arthur Austen-Leigh (Eton, 1921); *The Harrow School Register, 1800-1911*, ed. R. Courtenay Welch, M.G. Daughlish and P.K. Stephenson (3rd edn, London, 1911); *The Record of Old Westminster; a biographical list of all those who are known to have been educated at Westminster school from the earliest times to 1927*, ed. A.H. Stenning and G.F.R. Barker, 2 vols (London, 1928); *Alumni Carthusiani: A Record of the Foundation Scholars of Charterhouse, 1614-1872*, ed. Bower Marsh and Frederick Arthur Crisp (London, 1913); *Winchester College, 1836-1906: A Register*, ed. John Bannerman Wainwright (Winchester, 1907); *List of Carthusians, 1800-1879*, ed. W. D. Parish (Lewes, 1879); *Winchester Scholars*, ed. Thomas Frederick Kirby (London, 1888). I also searched the register books of smaller local school, and newspapers such as *The Gazette* for promotions, obituaries, and birth, marriage and death announcements.

⁹ I chose one set of cousins, the children of a comparable sibling i.e. the next brother in the line of inheritance if the parent was the eldest, or another younger brother if the parent was also a younger sibling.

¹⁰ Thomas included children who had reached the age of seventeen in his 'at risk' group. David Thomas, 'The Social Origins of Marriage Partners of the British Peerage in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', *Population Studies* 26.1 (1972), p. 100.

occupational and marital limitations. The middling families were not included in the quantitative dataset. 'Middling' is here defined as individuals who did not have titles and whose primary income was not from land. The Benthams, Darwins and Nevilles had professional occupations, including physician and civil servant, and were upwardly mobile. Erasmus Darwin, for instance, purchased a landed estate later in his life. Their wealth and professional employment made them characteristic of a particularly upper middling sort, socially and economically distinct from the lower middling sort. This latter group was much more economically precarious, encompassing shopkeepers, smallholders or skilled artisans. Upper middling sources are partly included to demonstrate that the motivations and experiences of illegitimates from titled families were not unusual, and to indicate the impact of more limited financial resources. Many titled families, particularly the baronetage, were economically more comparable with the professional classes in their access to cash in particular. Lower middling sort and labouring families could not be included due to insufficient qualitative evidence of the motivations behind life choices and the difficulty of tracing their family trees.

This evidential approach does come with some caveats. The dataset is not statistically representative, as the identification of illegitimates is too unreliable. Previous studies, such as Hollingsworth's demography of the peerage, used a well-defined group recorded in published genealogies such as *Burke's Peerage*, or membership of the House of Lords.¹¹ This is not possible for illegitimates, as birth and parentage were not uniformly recorded. I could only include children whose illegitimacy and parentage were known to their peers and recorded in a primary source.¹² Individuals were located using every likely iteration of their name, as well as other clues such as additional relatives' names and place names. The dataset also cannot satisfactorily provide numbers on female educational choices because women did not attend public schools. Discussion of female education, in particular, is therefore based on qualitative sources only. I have made it clear in the following

¹¹ Thomas, 'Social Origins', p. 99; T.H. Hollingsworth, 'The Demography of the British Peerage', *Population Studies* 18.2 (1964), supplementary issue, p. 6. Hollingsworth measured the number of illegitimate births to members of the peerage, but did not trace their marriages and deaths. Gerber's study of illegitimate life trajectories in France relied on tax rolls produced from the 1697 tax on illegitimates, Gerber, *Bastards*, pp. 103-5. Similar sources unfortunately do not exist for England.

¹² For more on the reliability of contemporary identification see chapter 4, pp. 219-22.

discussion when I am referring to the dataset (the quantitative analysis of the 225 individuals) or the qualitative correspondence and life-writing evidence. Most individuals in the group were also born in the latter half of the period examined in this thesis. It is unclear whether this reflects the increasing illegitimacy ratio, or greater willingness to acknowledge illegitimate relatives. I also could only include the children of elite fathers because elite mothers were much less likely to either have or acknowledge illegitimate children.¹³ Acknowledgement here means the acceptance of some kind of parental responsibility and public knowledge of a relationship. It did not necessarily mean cohabitation or familial integration.¹⁴ The dataset includes only those children whose parentage and illegitimacy were known; we cannot be sure how many children were abandoned or raised entirely under false names. The inclusion only of known illegitimate children allows like-for-like comparison, as it tests the impact of illegitimacy itself, rather than poverty or obscurity, on life chances. However, these conclusions can only apply to a proportion of illegitimate individuals, and indicate the best case scenario for those who were fortunate enough to be acknowledged by their fathers.

This chapter first considers illegitimates' educational opportunities. It argues that illegitimates were not excluded from public schools and universities, but that legitimates' education was prioritised within individual families. Illegitimate daughters experienced the greatest difference, partly because their education was focused on employment. The chapter then considers occupational differences. Comparison of illegitimate sons with legitimate younger sons suggests that illegitimates were disadvantaged primarily because of their limited access to the traditional sources of wealth and influence. Their status was derivative and many had to wait until much later life to receive paternal inheritance or political office, a particular disadvantage for men. The final section investigates marriage opportunities. Illegitimate daughters experienced little disadvantage, in contrast to illegitimate sons who generally married lower down the social scale. The choice of partner, according to birth status and kinship, provides interesting evidence of how illegitimates' social status was perceived by families.

¹³ See chapter 1, pp. 90-1.

¹⁴ For the limits on paternal cohabitation see chapter 1, pp. 82-4.

Education

Education was the primary means by which parents prepared their children for life. Over the eighteenth century an education at the public schools of Eton, Westminster, Winchester, Charterhouse or Harrow, followed primarily by Oxford or Cambridge universities, became ubiquitous among elite men.¹⁵ A boarding school education was not only essential for aspiring politicians, clergy or professionals but formed the basis for military or naval service, and for younger and older sons alike. Nearly 60 percent of peers born in the mid-eighteenth century were educated at Oxford or Cambridge, a dominance echoed in the highest ranks of church and politics.¹⁶ Schools were regarded as teaching one to 'shift for himself' and were therefore the sensible choice for a boy requiring an occupation, without the safety net of inherited land.¹⁷ Education was also integral to daughters' prospects. The daughters of the peerage were usually educated at home by governesses, with only a small break, if at all, for school.¹⁸ Growing numbers of commercial girls' boarding schools offered a basic education as well as genteel accomplishments, such as French, dancing and music.¹⁹ Female education was designed to increase marriageability but also provided some middling women with a respectable profession if access to portions was limited.²⁰ Despite the proliferation of educational options in this period, the right education remained key to the hegemonic formation and inculcation of elite

¹⁵ John Chandos, *Boys Together: English Public Schools 1800-1864* (London, 1984), p. 22; Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783* (Oxford, 1989), p. 84; John Cannon, *Aristocratic Century: The Peerage of Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 34, 40.

¹⁶ Cannon, *Aristocratic Century*, pp. 40-2, 47. Wallbank states that 87 percent of the ministers of state between 1775 and 1800 went to one of the main public schools, M.V. Wallbank, 'Eighteenth-Century Public Schools and the Education of the Governing Elite', *History of Education* 8.1 (1979), p. 2. Similar proportions are found for English bishops and sons of peers in this period, Rosemary O'Day, *Education and Society, 1500-1800: The Social Foundations of Education in Early Modern Britain* (New York, 1982), pp. 204-6, 269.

¹⁷ *Lord Chesterfield's Letters to his Godson* (Oxford, 1889), ed. Earl of Carnarvon, p. 359, cited in Wallbank, 'Public Schools', p. 3.

¹⁸ Anthony Fletcher, *Growing up in England: The Experience of Childhood, 1600-1914* (New Haven, 2008), pp. 220, 244; Michèle Cohen, "'To think, to compare, to combine, to methodise': Girls' Education in Enlightenment Britain", in Sarah Knott and Barbara Taylor (eds), *Women, Gender and Enlightenment* (Basingstoke, 2005), p. 230.

¹⁹ Fletcher, *Growing up in England*, pp. 32, 246, 259-65; Susan Skedd, 'Women Teachers and the Expansion of Girls' Schooling in England, c. 1760-1820', in Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (eds), *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations and Responsibilities* (London, 1997), p. 101; O'Day, *Education and Society*, pp. 187-90, 193-4.

²⁰ Skedd, 'Women Teachers'.

identity.²¹ Illegitimate children's education differed in some distinct ways, such as the choice or duration of boarding school. However, the commitment of many parents to their illegitimate children's education indicates that they considered them capable of integrating into public life at a similar social status to their legitimate peers.

Within the peerage dataset, illegitimate sons did attend the main public boarding schools and universities, suggesting that fathers intended them to obtain an education normative to their socio-economic class. The average age at which legitimate and illegitimate sons started school was not significantly different, at ten years five months and nine years five months respectively, in line with Wallbank's average of nine years, four months.²² However, at individual family level illegitimates went to a different school to that of their legitimate siblings or cousins. In 16 peerage families, illegitimates and legitimates of the same generation attended the same school in only three cases. In seven cases illegitimates definitely attended a different school and difference can be inferred in another six cases where illegitimates were not traced in the school registers even when their siblings were present. The difference was based on legitimacy rather than between heirs and non-heirs and persisted in multiple generations. Families seem to have had a preferred school, from which illegitimates were excluded. The Earl of Sandwich, his heir, younger son and eldest and younger grandsons all went to Eton, but his three illegitimate sons attended Charterhouse. This may have been to avoid contact or embarrassing competition between legitimate and illegitimate children, to save money or to exclude illegitimates from family traditions. In some cases, fathers may have chosen cheaper or more discreet local schools for illegitimates; the two illegitimate sons of the first Marquis of Waterford attended schools in Catterick and York, while their three legitimate brothers attended Eton.

Illegitimates were also less likely to attend Oxford or Cambridge universities. Half of legitimate boys attended Oxford or Cambridge, compared with 25 percent of

²¹ Fletcher, *Growing up in England*, pp. 50, 196, 218-9; Chandos, *Boys Together*, p. 28; Cannon, *Aristocratic Century*, pp. 43-4.

²² School entry age data was not available for all children, so this group included only 29 boys, of whom 14 were illegitimate. Wallbank, 'Public Schools', pp. 1-2.

illegitimate boys.²³ Furthermore, illegitimates were more likely to attend as an occupational requirement; 61 percent of illegitimates who attended university entered the clergy, law or civil service. Only 35 percent of legitimates shared these occupations. This suggests that parents invested in illegitimates' education as a necessity, enabling them to be self-sufficient within a system of limited inheritance.²⁴ Legitimate education may have been valued more as a social experience.²⁵ Overall, illegitimate boys were not systematically excluded from public schools or universities but within individual families there was a persistent difference, and often a reduced financial investment, attached to illegitimate education.

Qualitative evidence suggests that educational difference was more pronounced among girls. Elite legitimate daughters were usually taught at home, and if they attended boarding school they did so only for a few years at the end of their education, before being launched into society by female relatives.²⁶ Illegitimates attended school at a much younger age and for longer duration. Barbara Thomas and Georgina Walpole, illegitimate daughters of peers, attended school in the 1770s and 1780s aged six and seven respectively, leaving only when they turned eighteen.²⁷ Illegitimate daughters of non-peers also went to school early, unlike their legitimate counterparts. Sylas Neville's daughter Sarah Read attended a Hertfordshire boarding school aged only five, until her early twenties. Once at school, illegitimates seldom returned home for the holidays, a marked difference from their legitimate peers. Sarah wrote to her mother in 1790: '[a]s the approaching vacation is the occasion of all our young Ladies addressing their Friends, I shall avail myself of the same opportunity of writing to you, tho' I cannot be gratified with the same pleasure they are going to enjoy, of visiting their Parents'.²⁸ This disparity reflects the absence of maternal influence. Fletcher found that mothers and female relatives usually took sole charge of legitimate girls' education, including close maternal supervision of

²³ Data was available for 105 boys, of which 51 were illegitimate. Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses; A Cambridge Alumni Database*.

²⁴ This was also the case with middling female occupations, see below, pp. 190-1.

²⁵ Fletcher, *Growing up in England*, pp. 208, 218.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 244-7, 270-2, 360; Cohen, 'Girls' Education', pp. 230-1.

²⁷ *An Account of the Families of Lennard and Barrett. Compiled largely from original documents* (Printed for private circulation, 1908), ed. Thomas Barrett-Lennard, p. 619; NRO: HMN 4/46/3/3, Mary Sparrow to Anthony Hamond, 27 November 1798.

²⁸ NRO: MC7/740/30, Sarah Read to 'Mrs Read' [Sarah Bradford], 18 June 1790.

their progress at boarding school.²⁹ As chapter one argued, high-status men often prevented the mothers of their children from exercising normative maternal duties, out of fear of their potentially damaging influence.³⁰ The mothers of Georgina Walpole and Barbara Thomas, both servants, were entirely excluded from their daughters' education, with fees, clothing and lessons decided by a stepmother or trustee.³¹ Where mothers were present, norms were more closely followed. The illegitimate daughters of George, 3rd Earl of Egremont, were taught at home by visiting masters, primarily because their father had no legitimate children and cohabited openly with their mother, who later became his wife.³² The absence of maternal influence was a distinct difference, although not necessarily a negative one. These girls received a genteel education which could have opened up opportunities denied to their lower-status mothers.

The effects and reasons for these differences varied. Institutional education, in contrast to the more typical 'mixed economy' of public and private education, had practical advantages.³³ Children of higher-status fathers rarely cohabited with either parent so boarding school conveniently maintained secrecy and habitational stability.³⁴ Schools acted essentially as a means of fostering. Children could be sent to school straight from nurses, only resuming contact with their biological parents in adulthood. Sarah Read was the only one of her mother's children sent to boarding school; as the eldest and only illegitimate child of a physician and his housekeeper her presence in the parental home could have damaged her father's fledgling career.³⁵ Removing children to boarding school also made it easier to falsify their identities; they could be enrolled as orphans and their family pose as guardians. Sylas Neville paid his daughter's school fees and maintained contact with her as her mother's employer without revealing his true identity.³⁶ Similarly John Smith, the

²⁹ Fletcher, *Growing up in England*, pp. 247, 270-2.

³⁰ See chapter 1, pp. 91-93.

³¹ NRO: HMN 4/46/3/1, Mary Sparrow to Briggs Fountaine, 20 December 1795; HMN 4/46/3/2, Mary Sparrow to Anthony Hamond, 12 June 1798; ERO: D/DL F134/1, 1768-1801, account books of Lady Ann Dacre, 1787.

³² WSRO: PHA 9363, receipted bills, 1812.

³³ Henry French and Mark Rothery, *Man's Estate: Landed Gentry Masculinities, 1660-1900* (Oxford, 2012), p. 40.

³⁴ See chapter 1, pp. 80-2.

³⁵ For Sylas Neville's secrecy see chapter 1, pp. 81-5.

³⁶ NRO: MC7/852/6, Sylas Neville to Thomas Sanden, [September 1782]; MC7/532, Sylas Neville to Sarah Read, 18 August 1791.

son of industrialist John Spencer, was enrolled at Westminster in 1777 as the son of the fictional and conveniently vague 'John Smith, of London'.³⁷ Anonymity allowed his father's family to maintain him at school without difficulty. Schools apparently colluded in this deception, with some gaining reputations for treating illegitimates well. Georgina Walpole's trustee Charlotte Dashwood openly described Georgina to her prospective schoolmistress as 'a natural daughter of the late Lord Orford, she is very sensible and well informed'. Significantly, she had chosen the school because of 'the many instances of children in the same predicament doing well under your roof'.³⁸ Mrs Dashwood trusted that the schoolmistress was well aware of the disadvantages of illegitimacy but also that a disclosure of Georgina's status would not damage her entrance prospects. Boarding schools were a well-known method of dealing with these inconvenient children and schoolteachers seem to have had no issue in accepting them.

Boarding schools also had clear advantages for illegitimates themselves, providing a stable upbringing, socialisation, and the appearance of legitimacy by anonymising their backgrounds. Boarding schools equipped illegitimate girls with social connections and genteel accomplishments, suggesting that their parents expected them to marry well. Caroline Medcalf was kept secret from her father Lord Pembroke's legitimate family and raised by a Parisian foster family before being sent to a Newcastle boarding school.³⁹ As her mother was dead and her stepmother ignorant of her existence, she had no female relatives to chaperone her and depended on the school to introduce her into polite society. Her father's accounts indicate that she appeared as a wealthy and genteel young woman; she attended concerts, plays and balls in hired chairs, and sported the latest fashions, evident by spending on yards of 'rich sattin'. No expense was spared: her father paid for drawing lessons, 'the use of the harpsichord' and replacement lute strings.⁴⁰ Whilst at boarding school

³⁷ *Record of Old Westminsters*, vol. 2, p. 859. Thomas, son of Lord Dacre, was also admitted to Oxford as Thomas Thomas, son of 'Thomas, of London', *Alumni Oxonienses*, vol. 4, p. 1408.

³⁸ NRO: HMN 4/46/7, Charlotte Dashwood to Mrs Collet, [September 1792].

³⁹ *The Pembroke Papers, 1734-1780: Letters and Diaries of Henry, Tenth Earl of Pembroke and his Circle*, ed. Sidney, Lord Herbert (London, 1942) (hereafter PP1), p. 393, Major Floyd to George, Lord Herbert, 20 January 1780; *Pembroke Papers (1780-1794): Letters and Diaries of Henry, Tenth Earl of Pembroke and his Circle*, ed. Lord Herbert (London, 1950) (hereafter PP2), p. 136, Major Floyd to George, Lord Herbert, 18 August 1781.

⁴⁰ WSHC: 2057/A6/13, account books, 1782. Georgina Walpole similarly received lessons in French, dancing and the pianoforte, NRO: HMN 4/46/2/10, Georgina Walpole to Anthony

she met her future husband, and confirmed her place in comfortable and respectable gentility.⁴¹ Although her parentage was likely an open secret (her prospective husband knew), boarding school to an extent socially legitimated Caroline by allowing her to appear respectable without an awkward illegitimate parental presence. School also acted as a means of social mobility for girls whose mothers were of lower status. Georgina Walpole's trustees chose her London school explicitly 'to give her a chance of being noticed by some of my Lord's relatives', those of her deceased father, 'who live in [the] neighbourhood'.⁴² At school she befriended the daughters of Westminster professionals and graduated with enough genteel accomplishments that Mrs Dashwood was able to sponsor her entrance into polite society alongside her own daughters.⁴³ Georgina's education enabled her to socialise openly in circles from which her mother, a servant, was excluded.

A public school and university education was also imperative for the social success of illegitimate boys. Elite society was fairly small and attending the correct school or college exposed illegitimates to elite culture and the inter-connected networks of polite society, as well as teaching them the tools to demonstrate their belonging.⁴⁴ James Boswell considered sending his youngest legitimate son to Westminster school because 'the first people in the nation... keep their sons there' and '[t]he *éclat* of Westminster... would be of service to him'.⁴⁵ John Smith went to Westminster aged eleven in 1777. He attended Cambridge University before becoming a clergyman and junior master at Westminster. Although he could not inherit the family estates, his education and occupation kept him within the legitimate family's social network. Six

Hamond, 9 January 1802; HMN 4/46/8, Mrs Collet to Charlotte Dashwood, 14 September 1792

⁴¹ Caroline's future husband John Williams asked to marry her in April 1785, and at that time he confessed that he had not seen her in person for two or three years, which means he must have met her at school. See: *PP2*, p. 270, Henry, Lord Pembroke, to George, Lord Herbert, 28 April 1785; p. 282, George, Lord Herbert, to Henry, Lord Pembroke, 23 October 1785.

⁴² NRO: HMN 4/46/7, Charlotte Dashwood to Mrs Collet, [September 1792]. This scheme did not work and the Walpole family did not acknowledge Georgina, see chapter 2, p. 137.

⁴³ NRO: HMN 4/46/4/1, Miss Walker to Anthony Hamond, 26 July 1798; HMN 4/46/2/2, Georgina Walpole to Briggs Fountaine, 12 April 1800; HMN 4/46/2/4, Georgina Walpole to Briggs Fountaine, [April 1800]; HMN 4/46/2/1, Georgina Walpole to Miss Hamond, 17 May 1799.

⁴⁴ Langford, *Polite and Commercial People*, pp. 87-8; Chandos, *Boys Together*, pp. 26-7; French and Rothery, *Man's Estate*, pp. 80-1; Fletcher, *Growing up in England*, p. 5.

⁴⁵ *Letters of James Boswell to the Rev. W.J. Temple*, ed. Thomas Seccombe (London, 1908), pp. 261-2. Boswell intended his son to become a barrister.

of Smith's younger legitimate cousins also attended Westminster.⁴⁶ His Cambridge diary entries indicate that he socialised most with men of comparable rank, including the sons of MPs and the younger sons of peers, many of whom became high-profile clergymen, like Smith.⁴⁷ Letters between Smith and his cousin John Spencer-Stanhope are peppered with college slang and references to mutual friends, signalling his belonging to elite culture.⁴⁸ To be a 'Westminster Man' was a ready-made stamp of belonging; when discussing the election of landowner and MP Walter Fawkes, Smith approvingly noted 'Mr Fawkes was a West man of my own time at School and at Cambridge and with whom I liv'd much.'⁴⁹ Connections were life-long; Smith's 1788 university diary indicates that he dined at the Westminster Club every week throughout April and May, a practice echoed by a fellow illegitimate 'Old Westminster' James St Aubyn, who attended the Westminster school anniversary dinner when he was in London.⁵⁰ Attendance at these institutions gave illegitimates a vital sense of belonging within an elite male community and cemented them within a web of mutual social contacts. Education was a conscious parental choice. Just as legitimate children were educated according to their age, gender and future role, the comparable education given to illegitimate children indicates that parents thought them capable of success in elite society.

When parents had no other children illegitimates' education did not differ from normative standards. This suggests that difference was partly due to a prioritisation of legitimate children who had future utility as heirs and family representatives. For illegitimates, education was a further means of creating a fiction of legitimate succession, similar to illegitimate heirs' inclusion in aspects of lineage.⁵¹ Thomas Barrett-Lennard, the illegitimate only son of Lord Dacre, was sent to Harrow and

⁴⁶ *Record of Old Westminsters*, vol. 1, p. 382. William Spencer-Stanhope was the only exception, as he attended Sunbury School.

⁴⁷ BALS: Sp/St 60636/2. This is based on analysis of his engagements in February, May and November 1786, and students who he met over five times. I chose these months because they fall roughly in the middle of each university term. Smith attended Trinity College, the college with the highest peerage attendance over the century, Cannon, *Aristocratic Century*, pp. 49-51.

⁴⁸ BALS: Sp/St 60556/30, John Spencer-Stanhope to John Smith, 11 July 1805; 60556/ 36, John Smith to Walter Spencer-Stanhope; 60556/47, John Smith to John Spencer-Stanhope, 12 February 1806. Similar behaviour amongst other Westminster men appear in: Cannon, *Aristocratic Century*, p. 44; French and Rothery, *Man's Estate*, p. 81.

⁴⁹ BALS: Sp/St 60556/46, John Smith to John Spencer-Stanhope, 13 November 1806.

⁵⁰ HHL: MssHM 80304, Diary of James St Aubyn, 1810-1819, p. 7.

⁵¹ See chapter 2, pp. 138-40.

Oxford. His father and stepmother took great pains over his education and utilised a mixture of private and public education, in 1778 deciding 'to remove him from harrow & put him under a private Tutor as at publick schools very little is to be learned'.⁵² Their investment in Thomas' education was clearly calculated for his future as their heir and indicates no scruple at his illegitimacy. In 1780, his stepmother wrote: 'I hope he will not be deficient in what a gentleman should know; I flatter myself too that he... will in time become a rational and useful member of society'.⁵³ Similarly, Joseph Farington noted of Sir John St Aubyn, father of twelve illegitimate children: '[a]ll the Children He educates as He wd. have done legitimate Sons and daughters: the latter are placed under the care of His Sister... The eldest Son... has been at one of the Universities, & His Father now allows Him a separate establishment'.⁵⁴ The fact that Farington found this notable in itself suggests that illegitimates' education was expected to differ, but also reflects St Aubyn's intention to include his illegitimate children in his lineage family. Illegitimates generally received a slightly different education because parents expected different things of them; illegitimates were not future heirs. This was an extension of the established method of educating heirs, younger sons and daughters according to their future role. Parents wanted their illegitimate children to get a good education and invested what they considered appropriate amounts of time and money into it. Differential treatment of legitimate and illegitimate half-siblings indicates, however, that parents did not envisage complete parity of occupational and marital prospects between legitimate and illegitimate children.

Occupation

In England, illegitimates were not in practice barred from any occupations.⁵⁵ They did, however, consistently enter slightly different occupations to legitimates. This may have been through parental design, following on from the choices made over

⁵² Barrett-Lennard, *Account*, p. 614.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 615.

⁵⁴ *Diary of Joseph Farington*, vol. 11, p. 3903, 31 March 1811.

⁵⁵ Illegitimates in France and Germany were barred from guild membership, for example. See: Mary Jo Maynes, 'Adolescent Sexuality and Social Identity in French and German Lower Class Autobiography', *Journal of Family History* 18.4 (1992), p. 402; Boes, "'Dishonourable" Youth', pp. 349-50; Ulbricht, 'Foundling Hospitals', p. 231. A canon law requirement that illegitimates obtain dispensation for ordination seems not to have been enforced, see Richard Burn, *Ecclesiastical Law. By Richard Burn, L.L.D. Chancellor of the Diocese of Carlisle, and Vicar of Orton, in Westmorland* (2nd edn, London, 1767), vol. 3, pp. 30-1.

illegitimates' education, or indicate illegitimates' own preferences. On this latter possibility there is unfortunately very little evidence. It may also reflect their limited access to family resources. Illegitimates could not inherit entailed estates and titles and, as chapters one and two demonstrated, were highly dependent on parental and familial goodwill. Among the wealthiest families with plenty of financial resources and social patronage illegitimates do not seem to have been held back; some achieved stellar occupational success. Among less prosperous families the difference between legitimate and illegitimate occupations was more pronounced. Evidence suggests that this was primarily because parents focused scarce resources into the upward mobility of legitimate children and encouraged illegitimates to enter occupations where they could become self-sufficient.

The most obvious and economically damaging consequence of illegitimacy was exclusion from entailed estates and titles. This caused the greatest relative disadvantage for the illegitimate eldest sons of peers. Charles Richard Fox, the illegitimate eldest son of Baron Holland, was born only one year before his parents' marriage. The title and most of the family estates went to his younger brother and Charles became an army officer, not a peer.⁵⁶ Illegitimates also did not have the same inheritance status as younger siblings, who were often eligible to inherit subsidiary family estates and titles, usually down the maternal line, through strict settlement.⁵⁷ Lord Algernon Percy, the second son of the 1st Duke of Northumberland, inherited the family's secondary title of Baron Lovaine, and Robert and George Manners, the sons of the 3rd Duke of Rutland, inherited their maternal grandfather's lands.⁵⁸ Fifteen percent of the legitimate younger sons in the dataset eventually gained hereditary titles, an opportunity closed to illegitimates. A similar proportion of legitimate younger sons and illegitimate sons, 18.4 and 16.9 percent respectively, had

⁵⁶ C. J. Wright, 'Fox, Charles Richard (1796-1873)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004-2011), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/sheffield.idm.oclc.org/view/article/10025> [accessed 21 May 2017].

⁵⁷ For more on illegitimates' exclusion from strict settlement, and the historiographical debate surrounding the practice, see chapter 2, pp. 128-9.

⁵⁸ 'Lord Algernon Percy', *History of Parliament Online*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1754-1790/member/percy-lord-algernon-1750-1830> [accessed 18 April 2017]; 'Lord George Manners', *History of Parliament Online*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1754-1790/member/manners-%28afterwards-manners-sutton%29-george-1723-83> [accessed, 18 April 2017]; 'Lord Robert Manners', *History of Parliament Online*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1754-1790/member/manners-sutton-robert-1722-62> [accessed 18 April 2017].

no discoverable profession and lived solely off landed income. The majority of the illegitimates in this case were, however, their fathers' only children and so inherited estates not as younger sons but as de facto heirs.⁵⁹ Illegitimate sons were generally much less likely to inherit land or to have the potential of doing so, immediately creating a distinct difference between illegitimate and legitimate younger sons.

Access to land was the most significant determinant of illegitimate occupations and social status because it opened up opportunities to so many other markers of elite influence, such as political office.⁶⁰ Lord Egremont's illegitimate sons George, Henry and Charles Wyndham became important political figures in the early nineteenth century because they owned most of Sussex and employed much of the local population.⁶¹ In consequence, George was created Baron Leconfield, albeit in his seventies, and his brothers became MPs. George explicitly grounded his status within his ownership of the ancestral Egremont estate of Petworth. In a hunting dispute in 1839, after his father's death, he asserted his rights as the 'possessor' of Petworth and Lord Egremont's 'Representative at Petworth'.⁶² He was accepted by the community, became leader of the hunt, and he and his siblings were referred to reverentially as 'the only Family in West Sussex worth preserving'.⁶³ I have found no suggestion that the Wyndham brothers were not considered the rightful owners of Petworth or that their illegitimacy made them unfit for public office. Illegitimacy was not irrelevant, as George was still excluded from the Earldom, but the influence that could be derived from land ownership considerably mitigated the disadvantages of illegitimacy.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Seven legitimate younger sons (18.4 percent), and nine illegitimate sons (16.9 percent). Of the nine illegitimates, four were the Manners brothers, who were unusually well looked after by their grandfather the Duke of Rutland. Four of the remaining five illegitimates were their fathers' only sons and so therefore inherited in a more normative primogenitural way.

⁶⁰ French and Rothery, *Man's Estate*, pp. 16-17.

⁶¹ Queen Victoria reported that Henry Howard, then Earl of Surrey and later 13th Duke of Norfolk, felt 'he couldn't stand [as MP] again for Sussex, against Col: Wyndham with his immense property', RA: VIC/MAIN/QVJ (W), (Princess Beatrice's copies), Queen Victoria's Journals, 1832-1901 [online edition], 16 May 1839.

⁶² WSRO: Burrell Mss. Acc. 5927/1/8/6, George Wyndham to the Duke of Beaufort, 21 March 1839; 5927/1/8/7, Statement by George Wyndham, 12 April 1839.

⁶³ WSRO: Burrell Mss Acc 5927/1/8/29, [William Holmes] to Sir Charles Burrell, 6 November 1839. This letter dates from after Lord Egremont's death so must refer to the illegitimate line.

⁶⁴ Cannon argued that 'land was prized, not only as an investment, but for the political and social position it gave', Cannon, *Aristocratic Century*, p. 128.

The timing of inheritance was also significant. Legitimates' expectation of inheritance was far more secure, partly due to strict settlement. They were known as their fathers' heirs, with considerable social and financial credit in their own right as future peers or landowners. Illegitimates' status was much more dependent on paternal whim and could be supplanted if their father had a legitimate child late in life. They generally only inherited on paternal death, when they were usually in middle age, and unlike legitimate younger siblings lacked the leverage or legal rights mandated by strict settlement. James St Aubyn, the eldest illegitimate son of a baronet with no legitimate offspring, inherited the majority of his father's estates aged 56. Before this, he had worked as a barrister, living in lodgings and dependent on his father's temper and 'cruel and deliberate treatment'.⁶⁵ His father prevented an earlier marriage and withheld his allowance, prompting James to seek loans from relatives.⁶⁶ Three weeks after inheriting his father's estate, he declared his intention to stand for Parliament, which would have been impossible previously given his uncertain income.⁶⁷ With no estate of his own he was excluded from many of the markers of masculine adulthood, such as financial independence or house-holding. Had he been legitimate, he would likely have been able to live off his expectancy, and its accompanying social credit, as a marker of both gentility and adult masculinity.⁶⁸ Illegitimates' relationship to land as a source of income and social status was marked by insecurity.

The relationship between land and other sources of power can be seen in table 1. Illegitimates were half as likely as legitimate younger sons to become Members of Parliament because they lacked the landed estates necessary to meet the property

⁶⁵ For James' disagreements with his father see: HHL: MssHM 44329, John Poole to James St Aubyn, 23 March 1827; MssHM 44291, John Poole to James St Aubyn, 77 March 1822.

⁶⁶ HHL: MssHM 80304, Diary of James St Aubyn, 1810-1819, p. 4, 27 January 1810; p. 126, 29 December 1812; p. 226, 1 August 1816. He states on 1 August that the loan was made necessary from the 'hardships I was enduring from the harsh treatment of my father'.

⁶⁷ HHL: MssHM 63181, Diary of James St Aubyn, 1819-1859, p. 175, 21 September 1839; p. 177, 17 October 1839.

⁶⁸ For the importance of independence for genteel masculine identity see: French and Rothery, *Man's Estate*, pp. 15, 59-62, 115, 123; Fletcher, *Growing up in England*, pp. 15-16, 172. Cannon notes that the sons of peers attending school and university could often command considerable respect as 'young persons, who, in the course of time, might command very considerable patronage', Cannon, *Aristocratic Century*, p. 54.

qualification.⁶⁹ They were also half as likely to obtain other royal or political office, again perhaps reflecting the connection between landholding and official posts such as Lord Lieutenant. Illegitimates were more likely to be ennobled, generally for military service. This is partly a false difference; many legitimate younger sons already had titles. While these results indicate that illegitimates were not systematically excluded from public markers of status, there is compelling evidence of disadvantage. Among illegitimates, high-status positions were concentrated among a few very successful individuals who held titles and political office simultaneously.⁷⁰ In contrast, status positions were more evenly distributed amongst the legitimate cohort; half of legitimate younger sons had at least either a title, royal or political office, versus only a quarter of illegitimate sons (table 2). Furthermore, there was a striking difference in age. Illegitimates had access to positions of power, but only in much later life. They became MPs on average 13 years later than legitimate younger sons (40 and 26.8 years respectively), at an age closer to that of the average for the Commons as a whole. This suggests that the chances of the illegitimate sons of peers echoed those of legitimate members of a lower social status.⁷¹ Many legitimate younger sons became MPs the moment they came of age, in family-controlled seats. Their place in the governing elite was assured and intended from birth. Illegitimates, in contrast, only obtained power after long and distinguished careers, and after they had been able to build up sufficient income and landed estates of their own. This is a significant difference in access to the main markers of not only power but also class and masculine status.

⁶⁹ Following the 1710 Property Qualifications Act, county MPs had to have an income of £600 per annum, and borough MPs at least £300 per annum derived from land, from which heirs were exempt, 9 Anne cap. 5 1710/11, cited in Penelope J. Corfield, *Power and the Professions in Britain, 1700-1850* (London, 1995), p. 10.

⁷⁰ One example would be illegitimate Augustus Clifford who became a Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, MP and baronet, partly under the influence of his supportive half-brother the 6th Duke of Devonshire. See G. C. Boase, rev. Roger Morriss, 'Clifford, Sir Augustus William James, first baronet (1788-1877)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004-2011), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/sheffield.idm.oclc.org/view/article/5643> [accessed 21 May 2017].

⁷¹ The average age for the Commons as a whole was 33.3 years for the period 1790-1820, 32.6 for 1754-1790, *The House of Commons 1790-1820; The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1754-1790*, ed. L. Namier and J. Brooke (London, 1964), <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1754-1790/survey/iii-members> [accessed 21 May 2017]. For the correlation between age and social status see *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1690-1715*, ed. D. Hayton, E. Cruickshanks and S. Handley (London, 2002), <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1690-1715/survey/members> [accessed 21 May 2017].

Although access to land was restricted, illegitimates' access to occupations that did not require landownership mirrored the legitimate norm. Table 3 indicates that illegitimates appear in similar proportions to legitimate younger sons in all the genteel occupations, primarily the clergy, law, army, or navy.⁷² Illegitimate employment was slightly more dispersed across the social scale; there are three cases where illegitimates slipped down to the more middling occupations of solicitor, physician, and banker, which were not generally thought appropriate for noble sons.⁷³ In these cases, though, the fathers had either died when their children were young or were less forthcoming with patronage.⁷⁴ The empire was also not as significant a source of employment for illegitimate or younger sons as other historians have suggested.⁷⁵ These occupational profiles suggest that elite families perceived illegitimate sons to share their elite social status; the absence of empire, trade and less learned professions suggests that these occupations were not considered genteel enough, even for illegitimate sons.

⁷² O'Day and Corfield argue that the clergy and barristers were drawn from landed elites: Rosemary O'Day, *The Professions in Early Modern England, 1450-1800* (Harlow, 2000), pp. 110, 141-3; Corfield, *Power and the Professions*, pp. 88, 224-5.

⁷³ O'Day, *Professions*, pp. 114, 241, 243-5.

⁷⁴ The illegitimate sons of Lord Tyrconnel became a solicitor and a physician, but their father died when they were under five years old.

⁷⁵ Lawrence Stone and Jeanne C. Fawtier Stone, *An Open Elite? England 1540-1880* (Oxford, 1984), p. 281. Stone and Stone's emphasis on colonial employment may reflect the later terminus of their sample, from 1540 to 1879.

Table 1: Access to titles and political office

Type of Status Marker	Legitimate Younger Sons (38)		Illegitimate Sons (59)	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
(N.B. individuals can fit into more than one category; percentages are for comparison only)				
Created peers, baronets or knights	2	5.26	8	13.6
Inherited peerage or baronetage late in life	6	15.8	0	0
Members of Parliament ⁷⁶	15	39.5 ⁷⁷	11 ⁷⁸	18.6
Other royal or political office ⁷⁹	8	21.1	5	8.5

Table 2: Summary of access to titles and political office

	Legitimate Younger Sons		Illegitimate Sons	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Discoverable title, royal or political office	19	50	16	27.1
No discoverable title, royal or political office	19	50	43	72.9
Total	38	100.0	59	100.0

⁷⁶ Using the online databases *History of Parliament Online*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/> [accessed 21 May 2017] and *Hansard 1803-2005*, <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com> [accessed 21 May 2017].

⁷⁷ This is higher than Thorne's estimates for the entirety of the House of Commons, as he says that over 20 percent of the house were the heirs or younger sons of peers between 1790 and 1820, *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1790-1820*, ed. R.G. Thorne (London, 1986), <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1790-1820/survey/iii-members> [accessed 21 May 2017].

⁷⁸ Thorne identified only 25 illegitimate MPs between 1790 and 1820, *The House of Commons 1790-1820*.

⁷⁹ For example: Lord of the Admiralty, Colonial Governor, High Sheriff, Lord of the Bedchamber or Lord Lieutenant. I did not include magistrates or church offices such as archbishop.

Table 3: Occupational distribution

Occupation	Legitimate Younger Sons		Illegitimate Sons	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Army officer	10	26.3	19	32.2
Naval officer	6	15.8	11	18.6
Clergy	8	21.1	9	15.3
MP, landowner, peer (no other discoverable profession)	7	18.4	10	16.9
Domestic civil service (e.g. ordnance office clerk)	1	2.6	3	5.1
Barrister	3	7.9	2	3.4
East India Company employee or colonial worker	1	2.6	2	3.4
Solicitor	0	0	1	1.7
Physician	0	0	1	1.7
Banker	0	0	1	1.7
Profession unknown	2	5.3	0	0
Total	38	100.0	59	100.0

Illegitimates were slightly more likely than legitimate younger sons to enter military occupations, rather than the learned clerical or legal professions.⁸⁰ Although the social exclusivity of both the army and the navy have been debated, both attracted officers from landed backgrounds and the social status of the navy, in particular, increased over the century.⁸¹ Significantly, military employment was an opportunity

⁸⁰ 29 percent of illegitimates went into clerical or legal professions vs 32 percent of legitimates; 50 percent of illegitimates went into the army or navy vs 42 percent of legitimates.

⁸¹ A.B. Wood, 'The Limits of Social Mobility: Social Origins and Career Patterns of British Generals, 1688-1815', Ph.D. thesis (London School of Economics and Political Science, 2011),

for illegitimates to demonstrate merit and service to their country, allowing them to earn high office, prize money and respect as rewards for military valour without disrupting legitimate inheritance systems. This could cancel out the disadvantages of illegitimacy bestowed at birth and allow them to re-enter the same socio-economic sphere as their legitimate peers in later life. Lord Pembroke hoped that his illegitimate son Augustus Montgomery's part in the lucrative capture of the Dutch island of St Eustatius in 1782 would lead to 'such an increase and accumulation of riches' that he would be promoted, giving him 'a sure fair wind throughout life in his line of profession'.⁸² George Wyndham and his brothers lacked status as the heirs to Lord Egremont, but their military ranks gave them secure, publicly recognised identities within a traditionally armigerous class.⁸³ The Wyndhams appear in their father's famed art collection primarily in their military roles, in paintings specially commissioned following their action in the Napoleonic Wars.⁸⁴ George's memorial stone in Petworth church refers to him as 'Colonel George Wyndham', rather than his later title 'Lord Leconfield', and consists primarily of a list of his military achievements, a conscious rendering of character in terms of service to the state. It was much easier for illegitimates to claim promotion and status through merit and selfless service according to pre-existing ideals of gentility, without threatening social order. Five out of the eight illegitimates who were knighted or ennobled had reached the top of military professions, and all the illegitimates who became MPs but were not ennobled had been army officers.⁸⁵ Other professions, particularly the

pp. 3, 36–43, cited in Evan Wilson, 'Social Background and Promotion Prospects in the Royal Navy, 1775–1815', *English Historical Review* 131 (2016), pp. 570, 578; N.A.M. Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain, 1649–1815* (London, 2005), pp. 383, 388, 513; Cannon, *Aristocratic Century*, pp. 188–9.

⁸² *PP2*, p. 89, Henry, Lord Pembroke to George, Lord Herbert, 14 March 1781. Horace Walpole similarly hoped of his illegitimate nephew Edward when he demonstrated bravery in battle, that 'I don't see, with this... spirit... and presence of mind, why he should not make a general', *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 21, pp. 239–40, Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 9 Sept 1758.

⁸³ French and Rothery, *Man's Estate*, p. 121. Rodger states similarly that naval rank afforded public recognition and status, Rodger, *Command of the Ocean*, p. 387.

⁸⁴ For example: George Jones, *The Battle of Vittoria, 21 June 1813, 1827*, oil on canvas, Petworth House, The Egremont Collection, <http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/485064> [accessed 2 February 2018]; George Jones, *The Battle of Waterloo, 1815: The Retreat of the French, 1827*, oil on canvas, Petworth House, The Egremont Collection, <http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/485066> [accessed 2 February 2018]. Both were hung in the public 'Beauty Room' at Petworth.

⁸⁵ Those ennobled or knighted included two admirals, one vice-admiral, one general and one lieutenant-colonel. The other three were landowners. Illegitimates therefore benefited from a general trend in rewarding service with peerages. Between 1802 and 1830, 30 percent of new

clergy, were less lucrative for illegitimates. Although illegitimates entered holy orders in similar proportions to their legitimate counterparts, I have yet to find an illegitimate who became a bishop.⁸⁶

Illegitimates' success in the military and clergy was partly facilitated through familial patronage. Patronage could considerably improve promotion chances and mitigate any institutional prejudice against illegitimacy. It is very difficult to measure promotion prospects. As Rodger has demonstrated, luck and timing were perhaps the most important variables and cannot easily be compared like-for-like. Individuals born 20 years before a major war were far more likely to be promoted than comparably talented and well-connected individuals in later cohorts.⁸⁷ Patronage did, however, ensure that individuals were in the right place at the right time, in postings with influential officers.⁸⁸ In 1805, eighteen-year-old George Wyndham thanked his father for 'the arrangements you are so good as to make for my seeing the Campaign on the Continent next Spring... the great advantages to be derived from it are not often to be met with.' By the age of 25 he had served in Ireland, Jamaica and the Peninsula, in aide-de-camp roles that put him in close personal proximity to influential commanders. Their father seems to have counselled his sons into following this path; George promised him that he would improve his French and his handwriting 'so as to render myself capable of holding a staff situation'.⁸⁹

The dataset and other direct comparisons suggest the Wyndhams were not unusually fortunate. The majority of illegitimate sons in the dataset who entered the

peers were virtually landless, and there was a 'stress on political merit rather than birth or wealth', Stone and Stone, *An Open Elite?*, p. 262.

⁸⁶ Two legitimates in the database became archbishops. Cannon argues that peers' sons who entered the clergy commonly became bishops or archbishops, securing the most lucrative and powerful appointments, Cannon, *Aristocratic Century*, pp. 61-3. It seems there were more issues about illegitimates becoming bishops. In the outcry about George Fitzclarence, illegitimate son of William IV, becoming Earl of Munster, the hypothetical promotion of his brother to Dean or Bishop was seen as even worse, *The Morning Chronicle* 19277, 10 June 1831 (London, 1831). This is in contrast to the often lucrative clerical careers of illegitimates pre 1600, suggesting that the church may have become less tolerant, see Katharine Carlton and Tim Thornton, 'Illegitimacy and Authority in the North of England, c. 1450-1640', *Northern History* 48 (2011), pp. 35-6.

⁸⁷ Rodger, *Command of the Ocean*, pp. 380-1; N.A.M. Rodger, 'Commissioned Officers' Careers in the Royal Navy, 1690-1815', *Journal for Maritime Research* 3.1 (2001), pp. 85, 95. This is disputed in Wilson, 'Social Background', p. 587.

⁸⁸ Rodger, *Command of the Ocean*, pp. 115, 317-8, 388-9; Wilson, 'Social Background', p. 583.

⁸⁹ WSRO: PHA 74, George Wyndham to Lord Egremont, 30 September 1085; 2 October 1805.

navy reached the rank of post-captain by the age of 35, in contrast to only 20 percent of all naval officers from any social background.⁹⁰ Illegitimacy did not, therefore, cancel out the advantages derived from their connections with elite families. Augustus Montgomery entered the navy aged 16 at the same time as his legitimate messmate Augustus Ryves, a Harrow-educated gentleman. They both became temporary and full lieutenant at the same time but Augustus reached captaincy 17 years earlier due to his father's willingness 'to... toad-eat Sir George Rodney', his commanding officer.⁹¹ Augustus Clifford, the illegitimate son of the Duke of Devonshire, was treated similarly to his friend William Ponsonby, the legitimate younger son of the Earl of Bessborough. Both entered naval service in 1800 on the same ship, both sponsored by Lord St Vincent, who, according to Lady Bessborough, 'says he is determin'd to make something of them, and hopes to live to see them Post Captains'.⁹² Clifford was promoted to Lieutenant after six years, the shortest possible time, eventually becoming vice-admiral and receiving a knighthood and a baronetcy.⁹³ Illegitimacy was not a barrier to promotion, particularly if individuals had influential family members who were willing to work on their behalf.

Illegitimate and legitimate younger sons also entered the clerical or legal professions in similar proportions.⁹⁴ This indicates that they were perceived as belonging largely to the same economic class and social universe as their paternal family. These professions were part of what Langford terms a 'distinct circle of wealth, power, and prestige' due to their high level of contact with the landed elite.⁹⁵ Although there could be considerable variation in income and status within each profession, families

⁹⁰ Wilson, 'Social Background', p. 583. Four out of the five legitimates, and seven out of the eight illegitimates in the dataset for whom promotion information could be found reached post-captain by 35.

⁹¹ J. K. Laughton, rev. Michael Partridge, 'Ryves, George Frederick (1758-1826)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004-2011), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24433> [accessed 29 June 2015]; PP2, p. 174, Henry, Lord Pembroke to George, Lord Herbert, 31 October 1781. Rodney was notorious for 'abusing his powers of patronage', Rodger, *Command of the Ocean*, p. 344.

⁹² *Lord Granville Leveson Gower, Private Correspondence 1781-1821*, ed. Castalia, Countess Granville (London, 1916), vol. 1, p. 280, Lady Bessborough to Granville Leveson-Gower, [July 1800].

⁹³ Boase, 'Clifford'.

⁹⁴ 29 percent of illegitimates went into clerical or legal professions vs 32 percent of legitimates.

⁹⁵ Langford, *Polite and Commercial People*, p. 73. O'Day and Corfield also agree that the social status of barristers and clergy increased over the century, making them part of a 'common culture' with the landed elite: O'Day, *Professions*, pp. 103, 110, 141; Corfield, *Power and the Professions*, p. 126.

generally encouraged illegitimates to take on specific roles which kept them in close geographical and social proximity to their paternal families. Clerical appointments, in particular, were also part of the family business, commonly given to junior ranks of elite families because they occupied useful positions of authority in the community.⁹⁶ This strategy applied not only to illegitimates but also relatives through the illegitimate line. Roosilia Drake, the illegitimate daughter of the 3rd Duke of Rutland, married the Duke's agent, Thomas Thoroton. Her legitimate son John became a clergyman but was employed for almost his entire career as the domestic chaplain to his cousin the 4th Duke and was described in his epitaph as the Duke's 'valued friend, and... faithful companion'.⁹⁷ John Smith's occupation as a teacher and clergyman made him instrumentally useful to his family. He gathered political intelligence, bought books and conducted his legitimate cousins to school.⁹⁸ He rose to become vicar of Newcastle upon Tyne, a position partly obtained through his cousin Walter Spencer-Stanhope's patronage, and his school and university connections. The Bishop of Carlisle obtained him a living as 'proof of [his] satisfaction respecting [Smith's] conduct towards his children' as their schoolmaster at Westminster.⁹⁹ His move to Newcastle was calculated to establish him as a conduit for his paternal family's connections with prominent Northumberland landowners, the Collingwoods, Roddams and Blacketts, who were all related to Walter's wife.¹⁰⁰ Smith became the Spencer-Stanhope representative in the north-east, charged with attending Roddam and Collingwood will readings on Walter's behalf and designing

⁹⁶ Cannon, *Aristocratic Century*, p. 65; O'Day, *Professions*, pp. 96-7; Stone and Stone, *An Open Elite?*, pp. 229-30. Similar strategies have been noted by Carlton and Thornton amongst sixteenth-century northern peerage families, who placed illegitimate sons in official positions to extend familial interests, Carlton and Thornton, 'Illegitimacy and Authority', p. 36.

⁹⁷ *The Gentleman's Magazine* (London, 1841), p. 57. Charles Powlett, the illegitimate son of the 3rd Duke of Bolton was also chaplain to his cousins the 5th and 6th Dukes, and George Montgomery, the grandson through the illegitimate line of Lord Pembroke, received the family living.

⁹⁸ BALS: Sp/St 60556/8-25, letters from John Smith to Walter Spencer-Stanhope, 1800-1805.

⁹⁹ BALS: Sp/St 60556/13-15, John Smith to Walter Spencer-Stanhope, 26 November 1803; 1 December 1803; 2 December 1803, and inclosed letter from the Bishop of Carlisle to John Smith, [n.d.]

¹⁰⁰ John's legitimate cousins ended up inheriting the Roddam and Collingwood estates. For instances of John's role as go-between, see BALS: Sp/St 60556/102, John Smith to John Spencer-Stanhope, 14 January 1823; 60556/29, Walter Spencer-Stanhope to John Smith, 9 July 1805; 60556/83, Diana Beaumont to John Smith, 25 August 1810; 60556/34, John Smith to Walter Spencer-Stanhope, 19 August 1805; 60556/32, John Smith to Walter Spencer-Stanhope, 7 August 1805.

family funeral monuments.¹⁰¹ His paternal family did not think that his illegitimacy damaged his ability to act on their behalf and Smith, in turn, became fully integrated into his paternal family's occupational, political and educational network.

Qualitative evidence suggests that there were more distinct differences between the occupational prospects of illegitimate and legitimate daughters. Elite illegitimate girls were generally maintained by their fathers before marriage and, like their legitimate counterparts, were not expected to find paid employment. However, middling fathers explicitly encouraged their illegitimate daughters to enter occupations, whilst encouraging their legitimate daughters to marry. Teaching was particularly attractive in offering independence and respectability.¹⁰² This was particularly the case for upwardly mobile professional families, who concentrated their fairly scarce resources on marrying their legitimate daughters upwards, leaving little for illegitimates. Physician Erasmus Darwin split the future opportunities of his daughters according to legitimacy from childhood. He educated his illegitimate daughters 'on purpose to set up a school' so that they could augment the '2 or 300£ a piece at marriage' that he was able to give them. He concluded, '[b]y this sum and some employment as Lady's Maid or teacher of work, they may be happier than my other girls, who will have not much more than double or treble that sum, and brought up in a more genteel life'.¹⁰³ Darwin was deeply attached to his illegitimate daughters and did all he could to help them; he bought them their own school and solicited his own patients for pupils.¹⁰⁴ His plans were practical and focused on their

¹⁰¹ BALS: Sp/St 60556/53, John Smith to Walter Spencer-Stanhope, 24 May 1807; 60556/76, John Smith to Walter Spencer-Stanhope, 18 April 1808. George Montgomery, a member of the Pembroke family through his illegitimate father Augustus was similarly instrumental; a clergyman, he was given the family's most profitable living. He acted as family representative, building a school and setting up a local charity. See: WSHC: 2057/F4/45, Bishop of Salisbury to Lord Herbert, 19 August 1810; 28 September 1810; Thomas Bromley to Lord Herbert, 21 September 1810; A. P. Baggs, Elizabeth Crittall, Jane Freeman and Janet H. Stevenson, 'Parishes: Bishopstone,' in *A History of the County of Wiltshire: Volume 11, Downton Hundred; Elstub and Everleigh Hundred*, ed. D A Crowley (London, 1980), pp. 3-19. *British History Online*, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/wilts/vol11/pp3-19> [accessed 30 November 2017].

¹⁰² Skedd, 'Women Teachers', pp. 102, 115-6.

¹⁰³ *The Collected Letters of Erasmus Darwin*, ed. Desmond King-Hele (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 378-9, 429-30, Erasmus Darwin to Richard Nixon, 30 March 1791; Erasmus Darwin to Josiah Wedgwood, 7 January 1794.

¹⁰⁴ Darwin also wrote a 'treatise on the conduct of boarding schools I am much persuaded to print for the public good', *Collected Letters of Erasmus Darwin*, pp. 438-9, 475-6, Erasmus Darwin to Josiah Wedgwood, 1 June 1794; Erasmus Darwin to Robert Darwin, 13 April 1795.

future comfort, whilst at the same time acknowledging their limited social expectations.

Similarly, the illegitimate daughters of naval engineer Samuel Bentham were intended as schoolteachers. Two were sent to teach at a Moravian school for poor girls, and the other was sent aged 12 as companion and later governess to a Russian noble family who were friends of her father.¹⁰⁵ This arrangement was arguably in the girls' best interests as they could become self-sufficient and obtain a good education and stable home life, albeit separate from their legitimate family. Their uncle Jeremy advocated the placement of his two illegitimate nieces in a school as they had a better chance 'of doing well on that plan, than if left to themselves'.¹⁰⁶ The Benthams struggled to pay their legitimate daughters' portions so were unable to support three extra children. The legitimate Benthams also inherited money from their grandfather and childless uncle, family bequests from which the illegitimate daughters were excluded. Two of their legitimate half-sisters did not marry but also never worked for a living, indicating a clear difference in how illegitimate girls' future lives were supposed to evolve.¹⁰⁷ This difference in female employment reflects illegitimates' reduced social status, as the necessity of female waged labour was linked to poverty and loss of gentility.¹⁰⁸

The career paths of many male illegitimates indicate that they were considered part of the same social class but that their interests were always considered subordinate to legitimate children. The social skills and connections learnt through education enabled them to enter occupations which were seen as genteel and compatible with elite status. Male illegitimates were valued members of elite families, acting as their representative on the battlefield or in the parish church. However, they were dependents in this highly unequal relationship. Their limited access to titles, land and office in their own right meant that they were almost always the object rather

¹⁰⁵ *The Correspondence of Jeremy Bentham*, ed. Stephen Conway (London, 1981), vol. 9, pp. 398, 406, Jeremy Bentham to Samuel Bentham, February-March 1820; 11-14 March 1820; George Bentham, *Autobiography, 1800-1834*, ed. Marion Filipiuk (Toronto, 1997), pp. 6, 94, 95, 365; Marion Filipiuk, 'Introduction', in Bentham, *Autobiography*, pp. xxv-ix.

¹⁰⁶ *Correspondence of Jeremy Bentham*, vol. 9, p. 406, Jeremy Bentham to Samuel Bentham, 11-14 March 1820.

¹⁰⁷ Bentham, *Autobiography*, pp. 365, 385-6.

¹⁰⁸ Bridget Hill, *Women Alone: Spinsters in England, 1660-1850* (New Haven, 2001), pp. 55-6, 63, 179-80.

than the originator of patronage even late in their life-cycle, and were often heavily dependent on goodwill. Whilst at Cambridge, illegitimate John Smith had to apologise for not writing to his cousin and patron, Walter Spencer-Stanhope. John grovelled, writing that '[i]t would be superfluous for me to relate, what and how great my dependence is on you... as it was not the mere advancement in the future stages of my life, but even my present existence which depended on a continuance of your favour'.¹⁰⁹ Their rights, unlike those of younger sons, were not legally protected. Nonetheless, there was no systematic exclusion of male illegitimates from genteel occupations and success could be achieved, given the right combination of family support, patronage and talent. Gender and socio-economic background were significant. The occupations of upper middling sort girls, like their educational opportunities, varied more distinctly from those of their legitimate counterparts.

Marriage

The characteristics of illegitimates' marriages indicate whether they were considered to share paternal social status. Marriage rates among the peerage, in particular, have been used to measure not only levels of class endogamy and social mobility but also the balance between individual and kin, affection and instrumentality.¹¹⁰ I follow the view of O'Hara, among others, that individuals chose marriage partners with kin help and that marriage for love was usually accompanied with consideration of other factors, such as wealth and status.¹¹¹ The ease with which illegitimates found marriage partners who fulfilled both types of criteria, and the extent to which families approved the matches, indicate social integration.

Rates of marriage and average age at first marriage did not differ significantly (table 4).¹¹² As with occupation, male illegitimates had similar opportunities to legitimate

¹⁰⁹ BALS: Sp/St 60556/5, John Smith to Walter Spencer-Stanhope, 1 June [n.d.].

¹¹⁰ Hollingsworth, 'Demography'; Cannon, *Aristocratic Century*, pp. 71-92.

¹¹¹ For the debate on the balance between individual and kin opinion, and affective and instrumental motivations in marriage negotiations, see: Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*, pp. 180-193, 270-4; Alan Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love in England: Modes of Reproduction, 1300-1840* (Oxford, 1986); Keith Wrightson, *English Society, 1580-1680* (London, 1982), pp. 77-8, 80-6; Ralph A. Houlbrooke, *The English Family, 1450-1700* (London, 1984), pp. 69, 76. Diana O'Hara, *Courtship and Constraint: Rethinking the Making of Marriage in Tudor England* (Manchester, 2000), pp. 3-7.

¹¹² My results roughly correspond to Hollingsworth's findings on legitimate marriage, Hollingsworth, 'Demography', p. 25, table 17. Elite men generally married later, and elite

younger sons. This suggests that limited inheritance was the main issue, not illegitimacy. Female illegitimates also remained spinsters at a similar rate to their legitimate counterparts and the very low level of singlehood at nearly eight percent suggests that men were not discouraged from having an illegitimate wife.¹¹³ Although singlehood could be a positive choice, it does not appear that illegitimates faced greater constraints on their ability to choose married or single life.

Table 4: Rate of marriage and average age at first marriage

Category (peerage and baronetage)	Proportion who never married (and survived to 21)		Average age at first marriage
	Number	Percentage	
Legitimate male heirs (25)	6	24	28
Legitimate younger sons (38)	14	36.8	30.3
Illegitimate sons (59)	21	35.6	31.0
Legitimate daughters (51)	4	7.8	23.8
Illegitimate daughters (51, 1 unknown)	4	7.8	22.9

However, the social status of the partners that illegitimates married did differ significantly; they tended to marry lower down the social scale. Table 5 shows the socio-economic origin of marriage partners of peers' children only, excluding the baronetage families in the overall dataset.¹¹⁴ I focused on this group because there is a clear distinction between peer and non-peer and comparisons could be made with

women earlier, than the national average, which was 27.5 for men and 26.2 for women, E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield, *The Population History of England, 1541-1871: A Reconstruction* (Cambridge, 1981), p. 255. Stone puts the average for elite women in particular slightly lower, with 24 for elite women and 28 for elite men, Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*, p. 318.

¹¹³ Amy Louise Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (London, 1995), pp. 83-4.

¹¹⁴ In deciding social origin I went for either father's occupation or individuals' occupation, whichever was higher. I also included second marriages. For the full breakdown of categories, see appendix 4.

other larger studies of peerage endogamy.¹¹⁵ Both male and female illegitimates were significantly more likely to marry outside the peerage and, significantly, also outside the landed elite, than their legitimate counterparts.¹¹⁶ Although the peerage did become relatively less endogamous over the period, most legitimate children still married into landed families.¹¹⁷ There is also a gender difference; male illegitimates were nearly twice as likely as female illegitimates to marry outside the landed elites. The reasons for this discrepancy are found in the qualitative evidence, discussed in the remainder of this section. I suggest that illegitimates' marriage chances depended considerably on genteel blood and wealth, broadly following the ideals of normative elite matchmaking.¹¹⁸ If both these criteria were satisfied, then there was no particular impediment to an advantageous marriage on a par with their legitimate counterparts. However, both were dependent on paternal acknowledgement and so could vary considerably, to an extent not generally found among legitimates. Limited access to wealth, family name and parental identity impacted men and women in different ways.

Table 5: Summary of social status of spouses

Children of Peers only (total, first and second marriages)	Peerage & landed gentry (categories 1-4 in appendix 4)		Non-landed (categories 5-9 in appendix 4)	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Legitimate male heirs (18)	16	89	2	11
Legitimate younger sons (17)	13	77	4	23
Illegitimate sons (30)	15	50	15	50
Legitimate daughters (35)	33	94	2	6
Illegitimate daughters (29)	21	73	8	27

¹¹⁵ Other studies of peerage marriage include: Thomas, 'Social Origins', Hollingsworth, 'Demography', Cannon, *Aristocratic Century*; Kimberly Schutte, *Women, Rank and Marriage in the British Aristocracy, 1485-2000: An Open Elite?* (Basingstoke, 2014).

¹¹⁶ This echoes the French evidence, as Gerber concluded that illegitimate daughters of French elite tended to marry down the social scale, Gerber, *Bastards*, pp. 103-5.

¹¹⁷ Thomas, 'Social Origins', p. 109. Hollingsworth argues that the peerage became less endogamous over the century, Hollingsworth, 'Demography'. Cannon and Schutte, in contrast argue that class endogamy remained the norm, Cannon, *Aristocratic Century*, pp. 76-90; Schutte, *Women, Rank, and Marriage*, pp. 8, 21, 70.

¹¹⁸ Cannon, *Aristocratic Century*, p. 73.

The size of illegitimates' portions varied considerably, reflecting paternal circumstances or parental relationship type.¹¹⁹ Mary Sackville, illegitimate daughter of the Earl of Dorset, married her cousin the 3rd Earl of Orrery in 1692. Her elder half-sister Anne, in contrast, married a Cambridge-educated yeoman's son with only a little property. Money was the primary difference; Mary Sackville had a portion of £5000, compared to Anne's of £1000.¹²⁰ Both sums paled in comparison to their legitimate half-sister Lady Mary Sackville, whose portion of £12,000 assisted her marriage to the Duke of Beaufort.¹²¹ Timing of inheritance also made a difference. The elder illegitimate daughters of landowner Edward Mann were born when their father was still an unmarried young man. He was only able to give them small portions, and so they married a book printer and an East India Company officer, with origins in trade and no landed property.¹²² Their half-siblings Mary and James, in contrast, married kin whose status mirrored that of their father: a gentry landowner and a baronet's daughter respectively.¹²³ They were their father's favourites and born later in his life when Mann was unlikely to have competing legitimate children. He left them at least £20,000 each in stocks and property.¹²⁴

Good portions were particularly important for illegitimate daughters. Serving a similar function to intermarriages between peers and trade heiresses, they could raise the fortunes of impoverished but genteel families.¹²⁵ The three illegitimate

¹¹⁹ See chapter 1, pp. 78-80.

¹²⁰ HALS: DE/Z120/46243, marriage settlement of Edward Turner and Anne Lee alias Sackville, 8 September 1688.

¹²¹ KHL: T69/8-9, deeds of trust for the marriage of Lady Mary Sackville to the Duke of Beaufort. £5000 was roughly average for the aristocracy in the seventeenth century, Erickson, *Women and Property*, p. 86

¹²² *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 22, pp. 240-1, Horace Mann to Horace Walpole, 19 May 1764; vol. 22, pp. 241-2, Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 8 June 1764.

¹²³ Barbara Laning Fitzpatrick, 'Rivington family (per.c.1710-c.1960)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004-2011), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/70881> [accessed 31 July 2016].

¹²⁴ Edward Mann's will gave Mary £17,000 in 4 percent annuities, plus estates in Surrey and Tortola, and a house in London. James got £1000 per annum plus interest from a debt of £6000 and interest from the family estate of Linton, TNA: PROB 11/1015/65, will of Edward Louisa Mann of Linton, Kent, 5 January 1776. Altogether, Edward Mann's executor Croft estimated it to be as much as £35,000 each: *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 24, p. 160, Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 26 Dec 1775; vol. 24, p. 168, Horace Mann to Horace Walpole, 13 January 1776.

¹²⁵ There were several similar cases. William Pierrepont, Earl of Kingston married illegitimate heiress Rachel Baynton in 1710, at which all his sister Lady Mary Wortley Montagu could say was 'I am told my Brother is going to marry a great Fortune', an estimated £60,000, *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, ed. Robert Halsband (Oxford, 1965-7), vol. 1, p.

daughters of Sir Edward Walpole had portions of £8000 each. In 1758 Laura married Frederick Keppel, a clergyman with only £400 a year.¹²⁶ However, he was the younger son of an Earl with good prospects for preferment. He became royal chaplain-in-ordinary and ended his career as Bishop of Exeter, partly due to his family's influence with the royal family.¹²⁷ Charlotte Walpole married Lord Huntingtower, the eldest son of Lord Dysart. Although he had a considerable estate of £70,000 a year entailed on him, he had a very small annual income of only £400 until his father's death.¹²⁸ Charlotte provided ready money, in return for 'the chance of being Lady Dysart'.¹²⁹

Illegitimate heiresses could also be attractive sources of upward social mobility for the middling sorts. Thomas George Bucke was a Norfolk farm owner and merchant who in 1801 'form'd an attachment for Miss Walpole', the illegitimate daughter of Lord Orford. His father 'approve[d] of [the] Connection' and her trustees had 'no objection... providing a proper settlement is made... equal to her fortune' of £5000.¹³⁰ This fortune was decisive in the marriage negotiations; when the validity of Georgiana's inheritance was questioned by her Walpole relatives, Bucke stated that it would be 'impossible for me to marry' until it was settled, as he needed her portion to expand his business.¹³¹ Georgina's secluded upbringing and lack of social

53, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu to Edward Wortley Montagu, [20 August 1710]. Charles Ingram, 9th Viscount Irwin married illegitimate Frances Gibson in 1758. £20,000 of her estimated £60,000 fortune was used to pay off a mortgage on the Ingram estates, E. H. Chalus, 'Ingram, Frances, Viscountess Irwin (1734?-1807)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004-2011), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/68378> [accessed 3 May 2017].

¹²⁶ *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 10, p. 62, Edward Walpole to Frederick Keppel, 4 July 1758.

¹²⁷ W. P. Courtney, rev. William C. Lowe, 'Keppel, Frederick (1729-1777)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004-2011), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/15440> [accessed 17 March 2017].

¹²⁸ *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 9, pp. 301-2, Horace Walpole to George Montagu, 2 October 1760. Third sister Maria Walpole also married an impoverished peer, James 2nd Earl Waldegrave, see Peter D. G. Thomas, 'Waldegrave, James, second Earl Waldegrave (1715-1763)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004-2011), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/sheffield.idm.oclc.org/view/article/28438> [accessed 19 March 2017].

¹²⁹ *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 21, p. 440, Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 5 October 1760.

¹³⁰ NRO: HMN 4/46/5/2, Thomas George Bucke to Anthony Hamond, 22 April 1801, and enclosed reply; HMN 4/46/5/3, Thomas George Bucke to Anthony Hamond, 12 July 1801. Georgina's total wealth is unclear, but she had at least £3000 in the four percents, plus £2000 cash as a marriage settlement, NRO: HMN 4/46/2/8, Georgina Walpole to Anthony Hamond, 20 October 1801; HMN 4/46/2/10, Georgina Walpole to Anthony Hamond, 9 January 1802.

¹³¹ NRO: HMN 4/46/5/3, Thomas George Bucke to Anthony Hamond, 12 July 1801.

connections limited her marriage options and led her to marry down the social scale despite her fortune. More negatively, illegitimate heiresses' weaker kin protection and uncertain legal status made them more vulnerable to fortune hunters. On his death in 1771, Irish peer Baron Baltimore left £30,000 to his illegitimate daughter Frances Mary Harford and appointed his lawyer, Robert Morris, as her guardian.¹³² Morris abducted twelve-year-old Frances from her boarding school and escaped abroad to marry her. Although their marriage was eventually annulled, it was subject to a lengthy and disputed court case because Morris' lawyers argued that as Frances was illegitimate she could have no guardian, so Morris was guilty neither of abusing his position nor of failing to obtain her relatives' consent. Morris' lawyer Dr Harris dismissed the charge by stating simply that '[b]astards are out of our marriage laws'.¹³³

Elite illegitimate daughters were also valued as marriage partners because they carried genteel blood, which was not perceived as tainted by illegitimacy. Paternity was the most important thing; it did not matter if their mothers were lower status. Horace Walpole was proud that his illegitimate nieces Charlotte and Laura had 'married into the house of Stuart', as both their husbands were descended from Charles I through the illegitimate line.¹³⁴ Blood was the main arbiter of status and character, thereby giving the illegitimate children of great men an inherent nobility. Walpole argued that his niece Maria was a fit wife for the royal Duke of Gloucester as she was 'a lady from their own class into which Princes of the Blood used to marry'.¹³⁵ This view was particular to the peerage, and perhaps specifically the

¹³² TNA: PROB 11/975/305, will of the Right Honourable Frederick, Lord Baltimore, Lord Proprietary of the Provinces of Maryland and Avalon in America, written at Naples, 11 November 1771.

¹³³ Samuel Compton Cox, *Cases determined in the Courts of Equity, from 1783 to 1796 inclusive* (London, 1816), vol. 1, pp. 302-7; William Hamilton, *The Intrepid Magazine* (London, 1784), pp. 1-11. Illegitimate children, as legal non-entities, were not covered under the concept of parent and child under Hardwicke's Marriage Act. For the uncertainty over the act's application to illegitimate children see Rebecca Probert, *Marriage Law and Practice in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 237-9. On the legality of sexual relationships between guardians and wards, see Cheryl L. Nixon, *The Orphan in Eighteenth-Century Law and Literature: Estate, Blood and Body* (Farnham, 2011) pp. 171, 189-91. Nixon does look at *Harford v. Morris* (1776), but she refers to Frances Mary Harford only as an underage orphan without taking account of her illegitimacy, pp. 201-3.

¹³⁴ *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 21, pp. 284-5, Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 11 April 1759.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 36, p. 110, Horace Walpole to the Duke of Gloucester, 17 January 1775.

English. When his illegitimate daughter married the son of a disapproving French comte in 1789, Lord Sandwich acknowledged:

[T]he circumstances of my daughter's birth must, to a person at a distance, have made the first impression disadvantageous to her alliance... but in this country... we have... many examples of persons of the highest classes... who have thought that they did not degrade themselves by marriage with a woman of merit though she was not legitimately born.¹³⁶

The acceptance of blood as the vehicle for status and moral virtue and, as will be explored further below, character and beauty, meant that marriage to an illegitimate child of a peer was preferable to a legitimate child of inferior socio-economic status. As chapter two demonstrated, blood was also a claim to familial inclusion so marriage with illegitimates had value as a means of family alliance.¹³⁷

The balance of wealth and blood operated differently according to gender. Not only were illegitimate sons almost twice as likely as illegitimate daughters to marry partners of lower social status, they were also twice as likely to have to wait until after their father's death to do so (tables 5 and 6). This echoes the time lag observed in their access to land, titles and parliamentary office, and further supports the idea that illegitimate sons were damaged by their uncertain expectation of inheritance. Legitimate younger sons could marry higher-status daughters during their fathers' lifetime because they had a secure expectation of future income. An illegitimate son, subject to their father's whims, was a risky match. Illegitimate daughters, in contrast, were often given cash portions, which not only echoed the normative system of legitimate daughters' portions but were also a less controversial means of providing for illegitimates without splitting an estate.

The traditionally gendered qualities of an ideal marriage partner could also more easily apply to illegitimate women. Female attractions of beauty, character (similar to Lord Sandwich's assertion of 'merit'), and genteel behaviour were derived from blood and upbringing, not legal status or landed inheritance. Lady Wortley Montagu

¹³⁶ Letter from Lord Sandwich, reprinted in *The Times*, 10 October 1928, cited in 'Speed, Henry', <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1790-1820/member/speed-henry-de-viry-alias-1766-1820> [accessed 21 May 2017].

¹³⁷ See chapter 2, pp. 137-8.

noted on illegitimate Maria Walpole's marriage to Lord Waldegrave in 1759, 'I am not surprised at Lady Waldegrave's good fortune; Beauty has a large prerogative. Her Mother's was the most remarkable I have ever heard of'.¹³⁸ The fact that her mother was a milliner was not an issue. Female social status was also less negatively affected by illegitimacy because the name and rank they acquired from their husband superseded their birth status. An illegitimate woman could more easily hide her origin and be in a sense rehabilitated by her absorption into her husband's familial identity. Maria Walpole's illegitimacy had prevented her being presented at court until after her marriage, when she was afforded the status and recognition of a countess.¹³⁹ George Greville criticised the Duchess of Kent's 'peculiarly uncivil' attitude towards William IV's illegitimate children, stating that she was 'forgetting that the women... have their husband's rank, in which the stain of their own birth is merged'.¹⁴⁰ Although Zunshine suggests that illegitimate women's marital prospects were damaged by fears they had inherited maternal promiscuity, I have found no evidence of this.¹⁴¹ Any suspicions were easily overcome by wealth and paternal support, given contemporary beliefs that generous maintenance reflected a monogamous, affective and thereby morally more legitimate parental relationship.¹⁴² There was a 'connection between moral and material worth', especially for women.¹⁴³ Traditionally elite masculine attributes such as independence, title or landownership, were more negatively affected by illegitimacy and therefore widened the gap between illegitimate and legitimate younger sons.¹⁴⁴ Illegitimate women gained consequence through marriage to legitimate men, whereas legitimate women lost consequence through marriage to illegitimate men.¹⁴⁵

¹³⁸ *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, vol. 3, p. 213, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu to Lady Bute, 24 June 1759.

¹³⁹ Violet Biddulph, *The Three Ladies Waldegrave (and their mother)* (London, 1938), p. 34; *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 9, pp. 234-5, Horace Walpole to George Montagu, 26 April 1759.

¹⁴⁰ *The Greville Memoirs, 1814-1860*, ed. Lytton Strachey and Roger Fulford (London, 1938), vol. 2, p. 191, 5 September 1831.

¹⁴¹ Even Zunshine contends this is only a theory as she has 'found no consistent evidence of such discrimination', Zunshine, *Bastards and Foundlings*, p. 14.

¹⁴² See chapter 1, p. 80.

¹⁴³ Erickson, *Women and Property*, pp. 95, 122

¹⁴⁴ French and Rothery, *Man's Estate*, pp. 52, 115, 123, 210, 212, 220-1.

¹⁴⁵ Glagoleva found a similar phenomenon among Russian elite illegitimates, Glagoleva, 'Illegitimate Children', p. 497. This finding directly contravenes Stone's argument that illegitimate boys 'suffered no social discrimination in terms of professional career or marriage', but that girls were disadvantaged, Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*, p. 534. It also more generally echoes legitimate daughters' reluctance to marry down the social scale, as they would lose their natal rank, Schutte, *Women, Rank and Marriage*, pp. 20, 27, 73.

Table 6: Proportion marrying after father's death

Category (first marriages, peerage and baronetage)	Proportion who married after their father's death	
	Number	Percentage
Legitimate male heirs (19)	6	31.6
Legitimate younger sons (23)	7	30.4
Illegitimate sons (38)	21	55.3
Legitimate daughters (47)	19	40.4
Illegitimate daughters (47)	13	27.6

Significantly, the marriage data further indicates that illegitimates were more likely to marry other illegitimates and more likely to marry kin (tables 7 and 8). Illegitimates of either gender were over three times more likely to marry other illegitimates as either their first or second spouse.¹⁴⁶ This was not necessarily due to limited choice. Aged 21, illegitimate Lady Mary Walpole married another illegitimate, Charles Churchill. She had previously been courted by Lord Hartington, Lord Fitzwilliam, and Henry Legge, son of the Earl of Dartmouth.¹⁴⁷ Her half-brother reported that Lady Mary had 'married herself, that is, declared she will, to young Churchill. It is a foolish match', as although Churchill was the son of her father's good friend and had 'a great deal of merit', he had very little money.¹⁴⁸ Nonetheless, the marriage was apparently happy and they remained socially integrated within the Walpole family and elite society. One of their daughters married an earl, and the other married back into the legitimate Walpole line. Lady Mary may simply have fallen in love with Churchill but she also might have been attracted by their shared experience of illegitimate disadvantage.

¹⁴⁶ Again this is echoed in the French case, Gerber, *Bastards*, pp. 103-5.

¹⁴⁷ *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 17, pp. 176-7, Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 22 October 1741; vol. 19, pp. 457-8, Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 26 January 1749.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 19, p. 104, Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 6 September 1745; vol. 19, p. 132, Horace Mann to Horace Walpole, 19 October 1745.

Table 7: Marriages to other illegitimates

Category (total, first and second marriages, peerage and baronetage)	Proportion who married illegitimates	
	Number	Percentage
Legitimate male heirs (23)	0	0
Legitimate younger sons (29)	1, first cousin	3.4
Illegitimate sons (45)	5, all unrelated	11.1
Legitimate daughters (52)	1, first cousin	1.9
Illegitimate daughters (54)	5, all unrelated	9.25

Table 8: Marriages to kin

Category (total, first and second marriages, peerage and baronetage)	Married first cousins, siblings-in-law, parent- or child-in-law	Married other kin, including first cousins once removed, aunts, uncles or cousins-in-law	Kin total	
			Number	Percentage
Legitimate male heirs (23)	2	1	3	13.0
Legitimate younger sons (29)	4	0	4	13.8
Illegitimate sons (45)	4	5	9	20.0
Legitimate daughters (52)	4	0	4	7.7
Illegitimate daughters (54)	5	5	10	18.5

Moreover, if elite legitimates married illegitimates they were much more likely to be closely related; the two cases here married first cousins. This suggests that illegitimates' wider social integration beyond their own families was limited.

Marriage with illegitimates who already belonged to one's family was acceptable, but bringing in fresh illegitimate blood was less so. One of the primary objections to marrying illegitimates was that their background was a mystery but if related, their genteel parentage, blood, and therefore virtue, would be known. As Jane Austen's hero Mr Knightley reasoned, '[m]en of family would not be very fond of connecting themselves with a girl of such obscurity...[as the illegitimate Harriet Smith] afraid of the inconvenience and disgrace they might be involved in, when the mystery of her parentage came to be revealed'.¹⁴⁹ Legitimate individuals might also be less bothered about the illegitimacy of a person they already knew, and presumably liked. Studies of nineteenth-century cousin marriage have also found that they were more common where individuals' social interaction was restricted to family, as may have been the case with many illegitimates.¹⁵⁰ Even if individual choice was respected, most people could only choose someone they already knew socially.

Families may have engineered illegitimates' marriages with kin as a means of legally incorporating them into the family and ensuring their socio-economic status. This might explain why illegitimate daughters married at a slightly earlier age to their legitimate counterparts and were one and a half times more likely to marry before their father's death (table 6), as fathers wanted to ensure their future comfort as soon as possible.¹⁵¹ In the earlier part of the period this could be controversial. The Duke

¹⁴⁹ Jane Austen, *Emma. A Novel. In Three Volumes. By the Author of 'Pride and Prejudice,' &c. &c.* (London, 1816), vol. 1, p. 134.

¹⁵⁰ Leonore Davidoff, *Thicker than Water: Siblings and their Relations, 1780-1920* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 235-6; Adam Kuper, *Incest and Influence: The Private Life of Bourgeois England* (Cambridge, Mass., 2009), p. 17; Nancy Anderson, 'Cousin Marriage in Victorian England', *Journal of Family History* 11.3 (1986), pp. 285-301; Day, *Wiltshire Marriage Patterns*, p. 219. Eliza Courtney, illegitimate daughter of Earl Grey, married kin after being brought up in seclusion by her father's family, see: Gordon F. Millar, 'Ellice, Edward (1783-1863)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004-2011), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8650> [accessed 13 Jan 2017]; *Leveson Gower*, vol. 2, p. 502, Lady Bessborough to Granville Leveson Gower, [October 1814].

¹⁵¹ Illegitimates may have been further disadvantaged in comparison with their legitimate counterparts in this respect, as Elizabeth Foyster has argued that in cases of paternal death, mothers frequently took on responsibility for arranging marriages, Elizabeth Foyster, 'Parenting was for Life, Not Just for Childhood: The Role of Parents in the Married Lives of their Children in Early Modern England', *History* 86.283 (2001), p. 319. Many of the illegitimates in the dataset had lower-status mothers, who would have had limited financial or social leverage over their children. Illegitimates' rights to paternal inheritance could also be more easily contested by hostile relatives following paternal death, for one example of the late-seventeenth-century More family, see SA: 4572/5, papers of Robert More, explored in chapter 2, pp. 128-30.

of Dorset's illegitimate daughter Mary married her paternal first cousin Lionel, 3rd Earl of Orrery in 1692, when they were 19 and 21 years old respectively. The marriage was unpopular. Dorset's friend Sir John Brodwick warned that 'this match has made some noise abroad... all advantages will be taken, to represent whatsoever is done relating to it, in the worst colours'. Wealth was not the issue, as Lord Orrery was heir to estates worth only £1200 per annum, and Mary brought a portion of £5000. Brodwick conceded, '[m]y Ladies worst enemies cannot say that my Lord of Orrery has been hardly dealt with in that particular,' but clearly Mary was unpopular, perhaps because of her illegitimacy, and suggestions that Lord Orrery, an orphan, had been coerced into the marriage.¹⁵² The Duke and his critics may have considered that Mary was unable to make a good marriage on her own merit.

By the later eighteenth century kin, particularly first cousin, marriages had become more acceptable and were increasingly used by the middling sorts as a family strategy to reunite blood and property lines.¹⁵³ They were not yet common among elites, except it seems among illegitimates.¹⁵⁴ First cousin marriages could reconcile affective and dynastic priorities by combining the interests of both legal and biological heirs in one married couple. It was particularly common for illegitimate heiresses to marry a male relative and keep estate and family name together. When Baron Walpole's son made a 'match of love' with his cousin Sophia, the daughter of illegitimate Lady Mary Churchill, his cousin Horace was 'content, as he still marries a granddaughter of Sir Robert's.' He hoped that by reuniting the legitimate and illegitimate bloodlines, 'all the descendants of my father, the author of the greatness of the whole family, will not be deprived of his fortune.'¹⁵⁵ Landowner Edward Mann planned to leave his estate to his nephew George Foote on the condition he marry Edward's illegitimate daughter Mary. Family friend Horace Walpole was in favour of the marriage, writing to Edward's brother Horace Mann, 'it would have

¹⁵² KHL: C139, Sir John Brodwick to Simon Smith, [n.d.]; U269/A10/3-4, accounts kept for Lionel, 3rd Earl of Orrery, 1685-9.

¹⁵³ Davidoff, *Thicker than Water*, pp. 228, 230; Anderson, 'Cousin Marriage', p. 285; Kuper, *Incest and Influence*, pp. 11, 17, 24, 27; Day, *Wiltshire Marriage Patterns*, pp. 157-9. Of these works, only Day considers illegitimates.

¹⁵⁴ Hollingsworth, 'Demography' pp. 9-10; Kuper, *Incest and Influence*, pp. 22-3, Trumbach argues that 1 percent of aristocrats in eighteenth-century England married first cousins, Randolph Trumbach, *The Rise of the Egalitarian Family: Aristocratic Kinship and Domestic Relations in Eighteenth-Century England* (London, 1978), pp. 18-30.

¹⁵⁵ *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 25, p. 133, Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 25 February 1781.

kept you all together, and your brother from carrying his views [and his money] out of the family.¹⁵⁶ Although Mary's marriage fell through, her illegitimate brother James married his first cousin once removed, Lucy. The match reunited James' inheritance of the Mann family fortune with Lucy's status as the daughter of the last Mann baronet.¹⁵⁷ James' illegitimacy was not an issue. Horace Walpole stated that there were 'no very striking or disgraceful objections', focusing instead on James' 'excellent good qualifications', and 'very considerable' fortune.¹⁵⁸ The kin connection was also significant. Walpole counselled his friend Horace Mann to approve of the match because of James' *'name'*.¹⁵⁹ James was, despite his illegitimacy, a 'Mann', and therefore worthy of his cousin's hand.

Conclusion

On the whole, illegitimates who were supported by their paternal families were closely integrated into the same socio-economic class. This finding is to a certain extent shaped by the sample; I could only include those illegitimates whose existence and identity was clear in the sources, thereby excluding a potential unknown number whose families abandoned them. However, the evidence presented here does indicate that known illegitimates were not systematically excluded by their socio-economic peers. Illegitimate sons' education and occupations generally mirrored those of legitimate younger sons, ensuring lifelong respectability and access to what O'Day refers to as a 'common culture' of elite sociability.¹⁶⁰ The level of familial and parental emotional and material investment in illegitimates' education, occupation and marriages suggests that families wanted them to succeed, and to remain closely allied with them. Illegitimates were valued and instrumentally useful members of elite families and as such benefited from the elite 'monopoly of power'

¹⁵⁶ *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 23, pp. 100-1, Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 23 March 1769.

¹⁵⁷ The ancestral estate of Linton went to their cousin James Cornwallis as the next legal male heir, but Lucy gained access to the non-entailed property, including the bulk of the cash holdings, through her marriage.

¹⁵⁸ *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 25, p. 580, Horace Mann to Horace Walpole, 12 May 1785; vol. 25, pp. 582-3, Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 29 May 1785; vol. 25, p. 595, Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 25 July 1785; vol. 25, p. 615, Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 4 December 1785.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 25, pp. 582-3, Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 29 May 1785. The emphasis is Walpole's own.

¹⁶⁰ O'Day, *Professions*, p. 110.

over patronage.¹⁶¹ The prevalence of kin marriages also indicates that an illegitimate blood connection was valued and confirmed often pre-existing affective integration with further nominal, legal and economic legitimation. Illegitimates' blood was seen as conferring nobility, rather than tainted by sin, and the illegitimate child of a peer was always preferable to a legitimate of lower status.¹⁶² Furthermore, illegitimates were able to obtain significant social success and political influence through military valour, as this did not undermine the principle of legitimacy for upholding orderly inheritance. These findings support arguments by Zunshine and others that among elites illegitimacy 'was one of several factors (but by no means the decisive factor) that could, but just as often did not, endanger... marital prospects', as well as occupational success.¹⁶³ Wealth and family connection substantially mitigated any disadvantage of illegitimacy. However, close analysis suggests complicating factors, particularly gender, and a rationale behind the parameters of illegitimate social integration.

Contrary to Stone's argument, illegitimacy mattered most for elite men relative to their legitimate counterparts.¹⁶⁴ They were less likely to become MPs and more likely to marry spouses of lower social status. They did not benefit from the same social capital as their legitimate counterparts in being known as the future heirs of peers. They were heavily dependent on familial goodwill and remained the object rather than the originator of patronage throughout their lives. Lacking the rights of younger legitimate children, their entitlement to family assistance and inheritance was insecure. Although they could achieve success, they did so considerably later in life, which had a subsequent effect on their ability to support a spouse or enter politics. Dependency and financial insecurity well into adulthood was also more damaging to a specifically genteel masculinity, particularly as the male role as the progenitor of a dynasty meant that their illegitimacy could not easily be subsumed by their

¹⁶¹ Cannon, *Aristocratic Century*, pp. 116-22, quote p. 122.

¹⁶² Illegitimacy was not seen as negatively affecting blood as much as madness, for instance, which was a common reason to object to a marriage. Lucy Mann was originally engaged to Jacob Marsham, but her father objected on grounds of insanity in the Marsham family. She married her illegitimate first cousin James two years later, *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 25, p. 268.

¹⁶³ Quote is Zunshine, *Bastards and Foundlings*, pp. 134-5. See also Habakkuk, *Marriage, Debt and the Estates System*, p. 154; McClure, *Coram's Children*, p. 10.

¹⁶⁴ See above, pp. 166-7.

spouse.¹⁶⁵ The illegitimate daughters of upper middling families were also more negatively affected. Upper middling families often encouraged their illegitimate daughters to follow a different life trajectory from birth, focused on employability rather than marriage. Families brought up illegitimate daughters to be self-sufficient and concentrated their limited resources on improving legitimate daughters' marriageability.

In all of these cases, illegitimates' life opportunities were restricted most by structural disadvantage, namely the legal restrictions on inheritance. If illegitimates were only children, or if they were born to parents later in life, then their greater access to wealth at an earlier age considerably improved their prospects. The lack of systematic exclusion suggests that there was not a blanket prejudice against illegitimates as a group. Some illegitimates could achieve stellar success, based on their individual family circumstances. In general, though, parents always prioritised their legitimate children and most families did not have sufficient resources to treat all their children the same. Illegitimacy was accepted as limiting individuals' social expectations but largely as a fact of life alongside gender and birth order.¹⁶⁶ This was inequality, but not to the extent that they were completely excluded from their paternal families' social sphere. Illegitimacy can, therefore, be considered as placing boundaries on illegitimates' opportunities but the extent of these limitations varied according to parental choices, as well as the agency of illegitimates themselves and even luck. Although the group considered here is only a small one, the emphasis on pragmatism and the lack of systematic prejudice is echoed not only in the parental and familial responses to illegitimacy discussed in earlier chapters, but also in community identification and policing at other social levels beyond the elite. This aspect, alongside the impact of these differing life trajectories on individuals' sense of self, is explored further in chapter four.

¹⁶⁵ On the importance of autonomy, independence and dynasty to genteel masculine identity, see French and Rothery, *Man's Estate*, pp. 52, 115, 123, 210, 212, 220-1.

¹⁶⁶ For the importance of gender and birth order in family allocation of resources see: Fletcher, *Growing up in England*, pp. xiv, 5-7; Amy Harris, *Siblinghood and Social Relations in Georgian England: Share and Share Alike* (Manchester, 2012), pp. 31, 33.

Chapter Four: Identification, Stigma and Identity

Introduction

This chapter examines the identification and stigmatisation of illegitimates in the wider community, investigating the means and rationale of state and community identification. It delineates the variables that governed attitudes towards illegitimates and the effects of stigma on illegitimates' sense of self-worth and self-identity. Stigma is defined as an attribute which reduces the worth of an individual 'from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one'.¹ Stigma and identification were interrelated; individuals were labelled in order to 'accomplish some degree of separation of "us" from "them"', and to enable the association of negative qualities with illegitimates as an 'other'.² It seems that there was a spectrum of attitudes; identification and the negative evaluation of illegitimates varied according to parental relationship type and socio-economic status. Moreover, these variables became more influential over the century. The distinction between illegitimate and legitimate remained important, but some illegitimates were perceived more positively than others.

Previous research into the stigmatisation of illegitimates has assumed a correlation between incidence, poverty, and tolerance. Laslett's 'bastardy prone sub-society' hypothesis argued that the greater incidence of illegitimacy among the poor reflected an alternative morality where extra-marital births were routine and unstigmatised.³ Identification through parish registers and the poor law has been associated with a top-down desire to police illegitimacy and, although historians acknowledge that registers under-reported, it has been assumed that this primarily reflected contested

¹ Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (London, 1963), p. 3.

² Bruce Link and Jo Phelan, 'Conceptualizing Stigma', *Annual Review of Sociology* 27 (2001), p. 367.

³ Peter Laslett, 'The Bastardy Prone Sub-Society', in Peter Laslett, Karla Oosterveen and Richard M. Smith (eds), *Bastardy and its Comparative History* (London, 1980), pp. 217-46. For a more recent reappraisal of this concept see Steven King, 'The Bastardy Prone Sub-Society Again: Bastards and Their Fathers and Mothers in Lancashire, Wiltshire, and Somerset, 1800-1840' in Alys Levene, Thomas Nutt and Samantha Williams (eds), *Illegitimacy in Britain, 1700-1920* (Basingstoke, 2005), pp. 66-85.

definitions of marriage, or migration.⁴ This chapter investigates the identification and stigmatisation of illegitimates among all social groups to fully indicate the importance of socio-economic status. I suggest that parish identification was highly unreliable partly because elite falsification of illegitimate births was rampant, casting doubt on the assumed relationship between poverty, incidence and tolerance. Although socio-economic status was important, it is not true that illegitimacy did not matter among the poor.

It has also been assumed, rather than proven, that illegitimates felt shame. This is based primarily on rhetoric surrounding infanticide, abandonment, and unmarried motherhood, rather than on testimony from illegitimates themselves.⁵ It is assumed that the word 'bastard' was pejorative, without any investigation of how common such labels were or their context.⁶ Some level of shame or feelings of stigma are likely. Illegitimates' shame has been observed in multiple studies of other European and twentieth-century contexts.⁷ Modern psychologists and sociologists have observed far-reaching consequences of similar stigmas, on the grounds of race,

⁴ Richard Adair, *Courtship, Illegitimacy and Marriage in Early Modern England* (Manchester, 1996), pp. 36, 45-7; Keith Wrightson and David Levine, *Poverty and Piety in an English Village: Terling, 1525-1700* (2nd edn, Oxford, 1995), pp. 80-1; Alysa Levene, Thomas Nutt and Samantha Williams, 'Introduction', in Alysa Levene, Thomas Nutt and Samantha Williams (eds), *Illegitimacy in Britain, 1700-1920* (Basingstoke, 2005), pp. 11-16; King, 'Bastardy Prone Sub-society Again', pp. 68-75; Peter Laslett, 'Introduction: Comparing Illegitimacy Over Time and Between Cultures', in Peter Laslett, Karla Oosterveen and Richard M. Smith (eds), *Bastardy and its Comparative History* (London, 1980), pp. 49-51; Anthea Newman, 'An Evaluation of Bastardy Recordings in an East Kent Parish', in Peter Laslett, Karla Oosterveen and Richard M. Smith (eds), *Bastardy and its Comparative History* (London, 1980), pp. 141-57.

⁵ See introduction, pp. 24-5. For discussion of how historians might measure shame and stigma, see Alan Macfarlane, 'Illegitimacy and Illegitimates in English History' in Peter Laslett, Karla Oosterveen and Richard M. Smith (eds), *Bastardy and its Comparative History* (London, 1980), pp. 71-85.

⁶ Adair, *Courtship*, pp. 89-90; Laslett, 'Introduction', pp. 4-5, 49; Patricia Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children in England, 1580-1800* (Oxford, 2010), p. 31.

⁷ Mary Jo Maynes, 'Adolescent Sexuality and Social Identity in French and German Lower Class Autobiography', *Journal of Family History* 18.4 (1992), pp. 404-6; Olga E. Glagoleva, 'The Illegitimate Children of the Russian Nobility in Law and Practice, 1700-1860', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 6.3 (2005), pp. 465, 493; Maria R. Boes, "'Dishonourable" Youth, Guilds, and the Changed World View of Sex, Illegitimacy, and Women in Late-Sixteenth-Century Germany', *Continuity and Change* 18.3 (2003), pp. 356, 361-2; Jane Robinson, *In the Family Way: Illegitimacy between the Great War and the Swinging Sixties* (London, 2015), pp. 36, 46; Ginger Frost, *Illegitimacy in English Law and Society, 1860-1930* (Manchester, 2016), pp. 195-99, 238-69; Deborah Cohen, *Family Secrets: Living with Shame from the Victorians to the Present Day* (London, 2013), pp. 138-42.

ethnicity or sexuality, on individual self-esteem and mental health.⁸ This chapter investigates the extent to which stigma had a similar impact on illegitimates in eighteenth-century England.

This chapter examines both the official identification and stigmatisation of illegitimates and a more insidious practice of social discrimination in everyday interactions. The first section uses early-eighteenth-century parish registers and poor law documents from the parish of St Margaret Westminster to examine the consistency of illegitimate identification across multiple sources. I supplement this large cohort study with smaller studies of parish documents from East Hoathly, Sussex, and the metropolitan parish of St Giles Cripplegate alongside correspondence from middling and elite authors, to suggest the extent to which illegitimacy could be hidden from official records.⁹ The second section analyses the identification of illegitimates in correspondence and life-writing from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. I argue that illegitimate identification was desirable but the moral value attached to identification changed according to socio-economic status and parental relationship type, a practice that became more evaluative over the period. It then examines the practice of social discrimination towards illegitimates primarily in middling and elite society. The third section uses defamation cases alongside illegitimate-authored correspondence and life-writing to suggest that illegitimates' self-identity was negatively affected by illegitimate status, but that this was not as extreme as historians have assumed. The illegitimates studied here rarely expressed a sense of shame in connection to their own self-worth but more commonly expressed frustration and a desire to blend in within their socio-economic class.

State Registration and the Poor Law

The clear identification of illegitimates by the state was considered desirable at both local and national level. Although before 1837 registration of illegitimates was not

⁸ Link and Phelan, 'Conceptualizing Stigma', pp. 373-4, 380; Daniel D. Reidpath, Kit Y. Chan, Sandra M. Gifford and Pascale Allotey, "'He hath the French Pox": Stigma, Social Value and Social Exclusion', *Sociology of Health and Illness* 27.4 (2005), p. 469.

⁹ The parish boundaries of St Giles Cripplegate were partially in the City of London, and partially in the county of Middlesex.

compulsory, most parish registers identified them in some way.¹⁰ Identification 'highlighted the respectably legitimate status of the offspring of the majority of parishioners', demarcating practical entitlement to inherited property and settlement as well as a more slippery assertion of communal belonging.¹¹ Identification was also considered morally valuable. An 1833 select committee report advocated greater accuracy in parochial registration to prevent the 'impious fraud' of illegitimates masquerading as legitimate.¹² This reflected earlier criticisms that the Foundling Hospital's anonymity policy would allow foundlings to 'artfully conceal' their origins, thereby disrupting the orderly running of a society stratified according to parentage and inherited status.¹³ Identification, and the subsequent discrimination and shaming of illegitimates, was also considered to act as a deterrent against extra-marital sex.¹⁴ Even Jonas Hanway, vocal defender of foundlings, acknowledged that the ostracism of illegitimates was a necessary 'evil', as 'good arises from it... [in] preserving the sanctity... of the marriage-bed'.¹⁵ Identification was crucial to the operation of stigma as a deterrent in the defence of social order.

Parish registers and poor law documents were one of the primary means of identifying illegitimates. Parish registers were notoriously unreliable; one witness to an 1833 Parliamentary select committee complained that the 'registers are... singularly defective in regard to identity or particularisation of illegitimate persons'.¹⁶ Official identification was not necessarily in opposition to popular opinion. Clerks and overseers were members of the community, often with

¹⁰ Peter Laslett, 'Introduction', pp. 48-9; Adair, *Courtship*, p. 37. For a range of terms used in parish registers see Adair, *Courtship*, pp. 32-5.

¹¹ Adair, *Courtship*, p. 38. This concept, the so-called 'principle of legitimacy', is discussed further in: Laslett 'Introduction', pp. 6, 62; Alison Findlay, *Illegitimate Power: Bastards in Renaissance Drama* (Manchester, 1994), pp. 28-33.

¹² *Report from the Select Committee on Parochial Registration with the Minutes of Evidence and Appendix* (House of Commons Papers, 1833), p. 115, statement of S. Grimaldi, Fellow of the Antiquarian Society. For similar opinions from other witnesses see pp. 136, 161, 163.

¹³ Jonas Hanway, *A candid historical account of the Hospital for the reception of exposed and deserted young children* (London, 1759), p. 33.

¹⁴ Cato, *Six concluding letters to a senator, on the tendencies of the foundling hospital in its boundless extent* (London, 1760), vol. 2, p. 27. Similar contemporary criticisms of the poor law are detailed in U.R.Q. Henriques, 'Bastardy and the New Poor Law', *Past & Present* 37 (1967), p. 109.

¹⁵ Hanway, *A candid historical account*, p. 32. Similar arguments appear in: Decus, 'To the Printer', *Bingley's London Journal* 121 (London, 1772); Britannicus, 'To the Author', *London Evening Post* 4796 (London, 1758); John Brydall, *Lex spuriorum: or, the law relating to bastardy. Collected from the common, civil and ecclesiastical laws* (London, 1703), p. 25.

¹⁶ *Select Committee on Parochial Registration*, p. 136, testimony of Joseph Parkes.

illegitimate relatives themselves, and reliant on community policing. In the St Margaret Westminster settlement book, widow Jane Hallford deposed in July 1727 that 'she was at the delivery of Elizabeth Davis of a Child named John George Mercer' in St Martin in the Fields, on 3 January that year. The overseers recorded: 'this Depon[en]t further saith that she has been to the Fleet to search the Register for the said Eliz Davis's Marriage but to no Effect. Whereupon she went to St Giles Cripplegate Workhouse where the said Eliz Davis is, who told [her] that she never was Married & that the said Child was a Bastard'.¹⁷ Hallford may have wanted to contest John's settlement, in a long tradition of female policing of illegitimate births, but whatever her motivation she clearly wanted to identify John as illegitimate.¹⁸ This case highlights the flexible and sometimes misleading ways in which illegitimates were identified; John had originally been baptised legitimate.¹⁹

Comparison of baptism, marriage and burial registers in the parish of St Margaret Westminster with other official documents, such as bastardy depositions, bonds and accounts, indicates inconsistent official identification.²⁰ At first glance it appears that illegitimate baptisms in St Margaret were clearly marked. Baptisms appearing as legitimate were all recorded in the same format, such as 'Edward Cole, s. to Geo by Eliz', which assumed that both parents shared a surname. Illegitimate children were marked 'B.B.', meaning 'base-born'. However, 'B.B.' and parental surnames were recorded inconsistently. I examined a group of 181 children identified as illegitimate in at least one source (baptism registers, bastardy bonds or bastardy depositions)

¹⁷ CWAC: E3225 (MF1413), St Margaret Westminster, register of affidavits relating to settlement, 1724-27, examination of Jane Hallford, 15 July 1727. This interestingly suggests that a Fleet marriage was considered legal for the purposes of legitimating a child, despite its clandestine nature. For the argument that Fleet marriages were considered legal see Rebecca Probert, *Marriage Law and Practice in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 177-84.

¹⁸ For the wider social context of female policing of sexual transgression, see Laura Gowing, 'Ordering the Body: Illegitimacy and Female Authority in Seventeenth-Century England', in Michael J. Braddick and John Walter (eds), *Negotiating Power in Early Modern Society: Order, Hierarchy and Subordination in Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 43-62.

¹⁹ CWAC: St Martin in the Fields, register of baptisms, vol. 12 (microfilm), 'John George Mercer son of William and Elizabeth', baptised 15 January 1726.

²⁰ For background on St Margaret Westminster see introduction, pp. 37-8. This method of comparing different record types is used by King, 'Bastardy Prone Sub-Society', p. 74. He attributes under-recording to migration, rather than selective reporting on moral grounds.

between 1711 and 1721.²¹ Tracking every child is impossible. Illegitimates were more likely to be stillborn or die before baptism and some will have been baptised elsewhere.²² But, it is possible to identify whether children identified as illegitimate in poor law records were baptised as such and, therefore, suggest the scale of under-reporting. A smaller cohort of 51 children appeared in both the baptism registers and one other source.²³ Thirty-two (63 percent) were explicitly identified as 'B.B.' The remaining 19 (37 percent) appear in the register as legitimate, and only knowledge of their parents' names and circumstances would indicate otherwise (table 9). Edmund Hammond was baptised as the 'son of William and Lucinda' in March 1713. Hammond was his mother's name; his father William Richards, a footman, had been in a sexual relationship with Lucinda for eight months before she gave a bastardy deposition in December 1712, and had paid a £5 bastardy bond. No marriage record survives and in every surviving record except the baptismal register Edmund appears as illegitimate.

²¹ I only included depositions from 1711-1713 in the original group due to available research time. The name of every child in the original group was then cross-referenced with every source type available.

²² Alysa Levene, 'The Mortality Penalty of Illegitimate Children: Foundlings and Poor Children in Eighteenth-Century England', in Alysa Levene, Thomas Nutt and Samantha Williams (eds), *Illegitimacy in Britain, 1700-1920* (Basingstoke, 2005), pp. 34, 38.

²³ The remaining 130 children appeared in other sources, for example, bastardy bonds or depositions, but not in the baptism register.

Table 9: Designations of illegitimacy at baptism, St Margaret Westminster

Designation (Out of the 51 children in the baptism register cohort)	Example	Number	Percentage
Appear legitimate, paternal surname	'Susannah Anne Smart, dau. of Richard [Smart] and Rebecca [Huddle]', bap. 20 Jan. 1711/12	14	27
Appear legitimate, maternal surname	'Evans Coot, son of Mark [Evans] and Elizabeth [Coot]', bap. 10 Feb. 1711/12	4	8
Appear legitimate, maternal surname, no parents listed	'Peter Pollinfax, son of [blank] and [blank]', bap. 28 June 1713	1	2
Total that appear legitimate		19	37
B.B., both parents' full names listed	'Elizabeth, BB dau. of Thomas Weston and Elizabeth Purcher', bap. 15 May 1715	23	45
B.B., mother only named	'Rachael BB of Mary Ackerly by [blank]', bap. 28 Dec. 1712	5	10
B.B., father only named	'John BB of [blank] by Will Clark', bap. 8 Jan 1716/17	1	2
B.B., maternal surname, no parents listed	'Margaret Fox BB', bap. 22 July 1712	2	4
B.B., paternal surname, no parents listed	'Mary BB alias Choak &c', bap. 25 March 1712/13	1	2
Total that appear illegitimate		32	63

Some patterns tentatively suggest why some children in the cohort were marked 'B.B.' and not others. The majority of children marked legitimate appear with their paternal surname, perhaps suggesting that these couples were considered married.²⁴ But, 89 percent of the births marked legitimate also had bastardy bonds, suggesting that couples were not considered sufficiently stable to make maintenance security unnecessary. In their depositions, none of the couples were described as cohabiting, echoing Trumbach's finding that only two percent of couples in the entire collection of St Margaret bastardy depositions cohabited.²⁵ None of the couples had more than one child together, again suggesting low cohabitation rates. Women also did not claim that they were married or had been promised marriage, surprising given arguments that quasi-marriage was viewed more sympathetically. These couples were, therefore, not simply equated with legally married couples.²⁶ It is more likely that officials sought to strike a balance between practical identification to indemnify the parish against economic burdens and the moral identification of children as relatively less illegitimate because of popular opinion of their parents' relationship.

Table 10 indicates that children were more likely to be marked illegitimate if their parents' relationship was more socially transgressive: for example, if they were their parent's second illegitimate child (by another partner), if their parents' social status was unequal, their mothers were widows, or their fathers adulterous. This implies that the community was more lenient towards children of relationships that were expected to result in marriage: frustrated courtships between single people of equal status. The link between 'B.B.' and transgression suggests that labelling carried a moral value and was not just a neutral identifier. Difference in labelling did not simply reflect the differing potential economic charge that each child could be on the parish. Similar numbers of children marked 'illegitimate' or 'legitimate' had elite or filiated fathers (those who had paid bonds or given depositions), theoretically indemnifying the parish against the child's maintenance costs. Although this sample is small and the conclusions tentative, it is clear that the issue is not only under-reporting or the non-baptism of illegitimates but the selective reporting of some

²⁴ This meaning of paternal surnames is suggested in: Angela Muir, 'Illegitimacy in Eighteenth-Century Wales', *The Welsh History Review* 26.3 (2013), pp. 366-8, 378; Newman, 'Bastardy Recordings', pp. 145-6.

²⁵ Randolph Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution. Volume One: Heterosexuality and the Third Gender in Enlightenment London* (Chicago, 1998), p. 268.

²⁶ Similar results for other parishes are detailed in Probert, *Marriage Law*, p. 100.

illegitimate children as legitimate. Parish authorities were understanding of individual circumstances and not solely intent on punishment.²⁷ The tendency to identify illegitimates varied according to popular perception of the morality of the parental relationship, but not necessarily on the equation of cohabitation and informal marriage with legitimacy.

Table 10: Categorisation of births in baptism registers, St Margaret Westminster

Categories (Out of the 51 children in the baptism register cohort. N.B. individuals can fit into more than one category, percentages are for comparison only)	Marked 'B.B.' (32)		Appear legitimate (19)	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Widows	4	12.5	0	0
Second illegitimate child - mothers	4	12.5	0	0
Second illegitimate child - fathers	1	3	0	0
Adulterous fathers	2	14	0	0
Elite fathers ²⁸	7	22	3	16
Paid bonds	24	75	17	89
Gave depositions	25	79	17	89

Other poor law documents, primarily settlement examinations, also suggest that identification was inconsistent. Settlement examinations theoretically recorded illegitimacy throughout the life-cycle, as illegitimates had different settlement rights.²⁹ Reflecting the importance of settlement as a type of property, illegitimates knew they were illegitimate and could recite their birthplace and their mother's

²⁷ In contrast to Trumbach's argument, Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution*, pp. 249-50, 255.

²⁸ Elite fathers whose children were marked 'B.B.' included two clerks, a financier, a naval captain and a JP. This is slightly above the average of 17 percent found in analysis of the St Margaret bastardy depositions in Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution*, p. 96. Elite fathers whose children appear legitimate include two 'gent.' and an 'esq.'

²⁹ Illegitimates could not inherit settlement from a parent, and instead obtained it from their parish of birth, or, like legitimate individuals, earned it through public office, apprenticeship, or at least one year of service, see J.S. Taylor, 'The Impact of Pauper Settlement, 1691-1834', *Past & Present* 73 (1976), p. 51.

details.³⁰ Christiana Spencer, examined in St Giles Cripplegate in 1806, deposed that 'she is an illegitimate child of Ann Bloggis, late Ann Spencer and that she was born in this parish at a house in Grub Street facing Jacobs Well. That the name of the person with whom her Mother lived was Howse.'³¹ Legal illegitimacy was specified even after parental marriage. Mary Ranger of Lewes, Sussex deposed that eleven-year-old 'James Ranger otherwise Webb... is my Son and was born before my Marriage with my present Husband... He... has done no act to gain a Settlement in his own Right'.³²

However, in practice illegitimacy became irrelevant as individuals aged and gained a new settlement through apprenticeship, a year's service, or marriage (for women). Individuals identified as illegitimate in the St Margaret Westminster settlement books were almost always children, who had not yet earned an alternative settlement.³³ Alice Middleton was baptised illegitimate in St Margaret in 1713. She was born in the house of a maternal relative, and nursed and apprenticed by the parish. Examined aged 19, she stated 'she was born in Gardners Lane Westmr', but not her illegitimacy, as her service with a mantua maker had bestowed a new settlement.³⁴ The consistency of identification varied between parishes and over time. In St Giles Cripplegate between 1804 and 1810 officials routinely asked examiners if they were legitimate, and regularly checked baptism and marriage records.³⁵ The

³⁰ Lynn Hollen Lees, *The Solidarities of Strangers: The English Poor Laws and the People, 1700-1948* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 29, 78-9; Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, p. 163; John Black, 'Illegitimacy and the Urban Poor in London, 1740-1830', Ph.D. thesis (Royal Holloway, University of London, 2000), p. 321.

³¹ LMA: P69/GIS/B/042/MS06059, St Giles Cripplegate, register of paupers' admissions, removals, discharges etc, 1803-10, examination of Christiana Spencer, 12 June 1806. See also ESRO: PAR 409/32/4/8, Laughton, settlement examination of James Blaber, 2 December 1810.

³² ESRO: PAR 409/32/4/10, settlement examination of James Ranger otherwise Webb, 15 June 1831.

³³ CWAC: E3225 (MF1413), St Margaret Westminster, register of affidavits relating to settlement, 1724-27; E3221 (MF1412), St Margaret Westminster, register of affidavits relating to settlement, 1711-14. Out of a total of 377 examinations in both these periods, only 7 admitted illegitimacy, and these were all children under the age of 12.

³⁴ CWAC: E2574 (MF1211), St Margaret Westminster, bastardy depositions, 1711-18; E230-239 (MF978-979), St Margaret Westminster, overseers' accounts, 1714-22; F5025 (MF2487), St Martin in the Fields, settlement book, 1732-3, examination of Alice Middleton, 16 February 1732; St Margaret Westminster, register of baptisms, vol. 9 (microfilm), 25 December 1713.

³⁵ LMA: P69/GIS/B/042/MS06059, St Giles Cripplegate, register of paupers' admissions, removals, discharges etc, 1803-10. Depending on whether the individual had another more recent claim to settlement, the depositions often say positively that someone was born in wedlock, suggesting that it was a question that they were asked, see for example entries for 6 November 1806 and 4 May 1809.

illegitimacy ratio was far higher by this time and poor law administration more professionalised. It was therefore in the parish interest to double check baptism and marriage records if they suspected illegitimacy.³⁶ Moreover, as Levene argues, by the late eighteenth century increasingly short-term service places made it more difficult to earn settlement, so more people relied on their inherited or birth settlement.³⁷ Nonetheless, only five adults in St Giles over the six-year period admitted illegitimacy, and only as doing so demonstrated their entitlement to relief.³⁸ As Taylor notes, 'the examinant was himself the principal authority on his own settlement'.³⁹ If an adult did not want to reveal their illegitimacy and had an alternative claim to settlement, they could avoid identification. Labelling occurred only when practically necessary to prove entitlement to relief, not to identify them socially as outsiders, and was not an inherent quality that remained attached to an individual's official record over a lifetime.

Middling and elite families could also escape official identification in parish registers. Name, parentage and birth status were easily falsified, particularly by going to a strange parish. In one case, notable for its implications for the Royal Marriages Act, the clerk of St George's Hanover Square excused his inability to prevent the clandestine marriage of Prince Augustus and Lady Augusta Murray in 1794 by stating, 'I never ask more than whether they are of the parish'.⁴⁰ This 'don't ask, don't tell' attitude allowed illegitimacy to be hidden. The two eldest children of Sally Bradford and Syllas Neville were baptised as the legitimate sons of 'John Turner & Sarah his Wife', as Sally used a pseudonym when lying in at lodgings in Newcastle,

³⁶ K.D.M. Snell, *Annals of the Labouring Poor: Social Change in Agrarian England, 1660-1900* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 108. Probert also notes that marriage validity was routinely investigated, particularly after the 1753 Clandestine Marriages Act, Probert, *Marriage Law*, pp. 58, 101-3, 267-8.

³⁷ Alysa Levene, 'Poor Families, Removals and "Nurture" in Late Old Poor Law London', *Continuity and Change* 25.2 (2010), p. 234.

³⁸ LMA: P69/GIS/B/042/MS06059, St Giles Cripplegate, register of paupers' admissions, removals, discharges etc, 1803-10, examinations of Anne Miller, 6 June 1805; Christiana Spencer, 12 June 1806; Elizabeth Patston, 27 November 1806; William Golder, 18 December 1806; Martha Deacon, 20 August 1807. These individuals were not referred to as 'child', and were unaccompanied by other family members. The overseers' label of choice was 'born out of wedlock'. The settlement book contains 384 examnants.

³⁹ Taylor, 'Impact of Pauper Settlement', p. 60. The amount of agency enjoyed by paupers is debated, see Norma Landau, 'The Eighteenth-Century Context of the Laws of Settlement', *Continuity and Change* 6 (1991), pp. 417-39; K.D.M. Snell, 'Pauper Settlement and the Right to Poor Relief in England and Wales', *Continuity and Change* 6 (1991), pp. 378-9, 383-5.

⁴⁰ *The Later Correspondence of George III*, ed. A. Aspinall (Cambridge, 1962), vol. 2, pp. 150, 152.

where they were unknown. The clerk only became suspicious when a third child arrived, and recorded her as 'Sarah da[ughter] John Turner baseborn.'⁴¹ This practice was apparently common. Baronet's son James St Aubyn had his three illegitimate children christened in the early 1800s by the same clergyman as the legitimate children of 'James & Sara West', a completely false surname.⁴²

Much depended on the scruples of individual clergymen. In 1781 Anna Maria Bennett attempted to hide the paternity of her fifth illegitimate child by her employer Sir Thomas Pye:

[W]hen the Parson was going to Register the Child he asked the Parents Name[,] I told him mine[,] but the fathers Madm[,] I should suppose Sir mine sufficient[,] No madm I must have the fathers. I Recollected myself a moment... and then with the Composure truth ever inspires but I hope no impudence I told him your Name so that in Marylebone Church Books you may find Caroline Sophia ye Daughter of Thos Pye and AM Bennett Born ye 8 Oct tho with the time of her Christening and Birth Proof Enough to divorce me if B[ennett, her husband] was so disposed once more.⁴³

Many parents fabricated an official record of legitimacy out of concern for their own reputation, to avoid divorce or, perhaps, to mitigate stigma towards the child.⁴⁴ Proof of baptism or age could be required regardless of socio-economic status for settlement, entrance into the military or clerical ordination, so parents may have wanted to avoid an embarrassing revelation in later life. ⁴⁵ In 1766 military wife

⁴¹ NRO: MC7/740/13, Syllas Neville to 'Mrs Turner' [Sally Bradford], 17 December 1777; 24 February 1778. TWA: MF 272, St John the Baptist, Newcastle, parish register, March 1774-July 1786, entries for John Turner, 22 February 1775, Nicholas Turner, 22 March 1776 and Sarah Turner, 30 December 1777.

⁴² HHL: MssHM 80304, Diary of James St Aubyn, 1810-1819, pp. 54-55. Samuel Pepys relates that his brother's illegitimate twin daughters were in 1664 'christened and entered in the parish-book of St Sepulchers by the name of Anne and Elizabeth Taylor', a pun on their father's occupation: *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. R.C. Latham and W. Matthews (London, 1970-83), vol. 5, p. 168.

⁴³ CWAC: 36/69, Anna Maria Bennett to Sir Thomas Pye, [October 1781].

⁴⁴ For parental motivations in keeping illegitimate children secret see chapter 1.

⁴⁵ James St Aubyn needed his baptism certificate to take out life insurance with the Globe Insurance Office, MssHM 63181, Diary of James St Aubyn, 1819-1859, p. 120. John Humphrey St Aubyn had to produce an affidavit from the male midwife who delivered him as proof of

Christiana Shuttleworth reassured her brother that although her sons had been baptised in a barracks producing 'no Certificates... there is still people of sufficient Credit yt will prove if required both their Age and Lawfulness of Birth'.⁴⁶ This documentation was required to obtain the Shuttleworths' apprenticeships. This may have mattered less for daughters, particularly from middling families who did not have to prove entitlement to poor relief or inheritance. The diarist Sarah Hurst (1736-1808), daughter of a Hampshire shopkeeper, was baptised six months before her parents' marriage as 'the base born daughter of Mary Tasker'.⁴⁷ She lived in the same village until her marriage, and yet her diary offers no indication that she knew of her legal illegitimacy or suffered any adverse effects, primarily because her legitimacy was never relevant.⁴⁸ There was no consistent requirement to prove legitimacy at baptism, and questions may not have been asked if children were obviously privately maintained. It was rare for a child to receive a false surname and be registered illegitimate, suggesting the motive was to falsify legitimacy, not just the parental identity. The lengths parents went to in order to hide children's illegitimacy suggest that identification was linked in some way to discrimination.

Social Identification and Stigma

Although official identification was inconsistent, it was seemingly less easy to hide illegitimacy in everyday social life. Correspondence and life-writing suggest considerable communal knowledge of individual circumstances and relationship histories. Authors tended to identify illegitimates in their community using labels, single adjectives or nouns such as 'bastard' or 'natural', or through context, noting specific details of birth, marriage or poor law filiation, but using language that could be applied to legitimates, such as 'being with child'.⁴⁹ All mentions of illegitimates through labelling or context were tracked in six published diaries, four middling, one elite and one labouring poor, from the 1690s to the 1820s.⁵⁰ I keyword and index

age for clerical ordination in 1814. HALS: 21M65/E1/4/2531, ordination papers of John Humphrey St Aubyn, 25 September 1814.

⁴⁶ BALS: Sp/St 60537/85, Christiana Shuttleworth to John Spencer, 8 October 1766.

⁴⁷ Susan C. Djabri, 'Introduction', in *The Diaries of Sarah Hurst, 1759-1762: Life and Love in Eighteenth-Century Horsham*, ed. Susan C. Djabri (Stroud, 2009), p. 17.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁴⁹ For the relationship between labeling and stigma, see Link and Phelan, 'Conceptualizing Stigma', p. 368.

⁵⁰ This detailed keyword tracking approach is used by Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship, Patronage* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 11. The works

searched a further three elite diaries and one correspondence collection with middling and poor authors for labels and known illegitimates.⁵¹ Shifts in language use, particularly the labelling of certain groups, can reflect how groups or concepts were perceived.⁵² The range of synonyms for illegitimacy alone suggests that there was not a simple dichotomy between legitimate and illegitimate, but that word choice conveyed moral judgement along a spectrum. Labels varied according to socio-economic class, poor law dependence and parental relationship type, and their meanings changed over the century.⁵³

Illegitimacy was precisely identified particularly in the context of birth, marriage, death, or family history. Antiquary Richard Gough recorded illegitimate members of local families over three generations in the Shropshire village of Myddle, suggesting that distinction was preserved in local memory. Gough's 'History of Myddle' existed in the intermarriage and property inheritance of its inhabitants, so differentiation between legitimate and illegitimate mattered. A typical entry reads, 'Thomas

were: Richard Gough, *The History of Myddle*, ed. David Hey (Harmondsworth, 1981); *The Chronicles of John Cannon, Excise Officer and Writing Master*, ed. John Money (Oxford, 2010); *The Diary of Thomas Turner, 1754-1765*, ed. David Vaisey (Oxford, 1984); *The Diary of Syllas Neville, 1767-1788*, ed. Basil Cozens-Hardy (London, 1950); *Manuscripts of the Earl of Egmont, Diary of Viscount Percival, afterwards First Earl of Egmont*, vols 1-3 (London, 1920-23); *The Family Records of Benjamin Shaw, Mechanic of Dent, Dolphinholme and Preston, 1772-1841*, ed. Alan G. Crosby. (Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 1991). These works were chosen because they could be read in entirety to find all references to illegitimates.

⁵¹ These works were: *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, vols 1-11, ed. R.C. Latham and W. Matthews (London, 1970-83); *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, 48 vols, ed. W.S. Lewis (New Haven, 1937-83, online edition); *The Diary of Joseph Farington*, vols 1-16, ed. Kenneth Garlick, Angus D. Macintyre, Kathryn Cave and Evelyn Newby (New Haven, 1978-1998); *Essex Pauper Letters, 1731-1837*, ed. Thomas Sokoll (Oxford, 2006). These sources are published as entire indexed collections, but I also supplemented the pauper letters in Sokoll, *Essex Pauper Letters* with my own archival research in ERO. The index of *The Diary of Samuel Pepys* was supplemented by keyword searching a digital version held by Project Gutenberg, https://goldin.shinyapps.io/Search_Pepys/ [accessed 4 February 2018].

⁵² Penelope J. Corfield, 'Introduction: Historians and Language', in Penelope J. Corfield (ed.), *Language, History and Class* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 23, 27-8; Judith Spicksley, 'A Dynamic Model of Social Relations: Celibacy, Credit and the Identity of the "Spinster" in Seventeenth-Century England', in Henry French and Jonathan Barry (eds), *Identity and Agency in England, 1500-1800* (Basingstoke, 2004), pp. 106-46; Robert Jütte, *Poverty and Deviance in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 8-14; Peter Burke, 'Introduction', in Peter Burke and Roy Porter (eds), *The Social History of Language* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 2, 13-15; David M. Turner, *Fashioning Adultery: Gender, Sex, and Civility in England, 1660-1740* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 23-50.

⁵³ For synonyms see R.J. Hetherington, 'Synonyms for Bastard', *The Midland Ancestor: Journal of the Birmingham and Midland Society for Genealogy and Heraldry* 36 (1975), pp. 15-16.

Kinaston of Wallford had two legitimate daughters and a bastard son'.⁵⁴ Shopkeeper Thomas Turner only referred directly to the illegitimacy of his nephew Philip when noting a bequest to him in his grandmother's will or on Philip's death: 'my brother Moses came over to acquaint me of the death of Philip Turner, natural son of my half-sister Eliz. Turner... He lived with my brother in order to learn the trade of a tailor, and died this morning... aged 15 years'.⁵⁵ Philip's illegitimacy, like age, parentage, occupation and living situation, was considered an important marker of his identity and memorialisation.

Higher-status authors also primarily identified new acquaintances by illegitimacy and parentage. Horace Walpole reported to his friend Horace Mann that 'a natural son of the last Lord Albemarle' had captured a ship in 1780, and responded to Mann's request for 'the history of Burgoyne', a new acquaintance, by stating, '[h]e is a natural son of Lord Bingley'.⁵⁶ James Boswell spent a rowdy night in the Hague with two gentry friends and 'Colonel Scott of the Guards, natural son to the late Duke of Buccleuch', whom he described as a 'a fine, gay, hearty fellow'.⁵⁷ Identification was often descriptive and unaccompanied by moral judgement or social ostracism. Contemporaries considered it valuable to routinely and clearly distinguish illegitimate from legitimate as part of a social system in which familial origin and its consequences for social status, wealth and patronage were significant. Difference did not necessarily mean ostracism; authors mentioned these illegitimates because they socialised openly together.

The ease with which illegitimacy could be hidden varied. In small communities such as Myddle or Turner's East Hoathly, personal details were known. Turner identified

⁵⁴ Gough, *The History of Myddle*, p. 84. Turner similarly notes illegitimacy alongside parentage for example, in January 1757 'I set out for the funeral of Alice Stevens, otherwise Smith, natural daughter of Ben. Stevens'. Alice wasn't baptised illegitimate but her mother was described in legal documents after her birth as a 'single woman'. *Diary of Thomas Turner*, pp. 77-8; ESRO: SAS/F 257, archive of Frere & Co of London, solicitors, counterpart of mortgage, 20 October 1735; PAR 286/1/1/2, Buxted, parish register, 1723-1806, 'Alice, daughter of Benjamin & Avis Stephens', 30 November 1728.

⁵⁵ *Diary of Thomas Turner*, p. 294, 26 May 1764.

⁵⁶ *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 25, p. 91, Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 7 October 1780; vol. 28, p. 336, Horace Walpole to Rev. William Mason, 5 October 1777.

⁵⁷ *Boswell in Holland, 1763-1764*, ed. F.A. Pottle (London, 1952), pp. 258-9. The other friends present were Boswell's great-uncle Major Cochrane and William Nairne, the younger son of a baronet. Other illegitimates are described in similar ways in: *Boswell in Search of a Wife, 1766-1769*, ed. Frank Brady and F.A. Pottle (London, 1956), p. 324; *Diary of Syllas Neville*, pp. 92-3.

all the children who were baptised illegitimate in the East Hoathly parish register in his diary; as overseer it was his business to know.⁵⁸ Labelling was less consistent at a higher social level and in larger communities where precise knowledge was less readily available. The diary of Joseph Farington, a well-connected artist living in London between 1793 and 1821, was searched for the names of illegitimates whose status was known from other sources. Farington noted some individuals' illegitimacy on every appearance, and others only the first time they were mentioned. Labelling relied more on gossip and the customary markers of illegitimacy, than on legal status. Thomas Barrett-Lennard appears three times in the diary without any mention of his illegitimacy. Although Barrett-Lennard was unequivocally illegitimate, his inheritance of paternal estates and name, as well as his elevation to the baronetcy as a reward for military service, were all social cues that suggested legitimacy. Farington was insufficiently acquainted with the family to know otherwise.⁵⁹

Barrett-Lennard was unusual: most elite illegitimates were distinguished through name or exclusion from estates or titles, and popular knowledge about family genealogies was considerable. In a story in *The Weekly Entertainer* in 1819, the author is alerted to the illegitimacy of heroine Emily White because their host's introduction was vague; 'he uttered the name as if it were a complete blank in the *beau monde*: for it is not uncommon, when a man names his friends [to give some background]... explanatorily stating, "a good family, a good fortune, a person of talent"', a custom followed by Walpole and Boswell in the examples above.⁶⁰ Omission aroused suspicion in a society governed by genealogical transmission of wealth and status. Individuals may also have openly admitted valuable illegitimate connections. The parentage and status of earl's daughter Caroline Medcalf was an open secret despite her false name and secluded upbringing.⁶¹ When Farington met her husband John Williams in 1794, he discovered that he had 'married a natural daugr of Lord

⁵⁸ There were four children baptised as illegitimate in East Hoathly between 1754 and 1765, the duration of Turner's diary: William Vinal, Sarah Durrant Day, Mary Hubbard and Thomas Jenner. ESRO: PAR 378/1/1/2, East Hoathly, general register, 1735-72; *Diary of Thomas Turner*, pp. 93, 125, 133, 266.

⁵⁹ *Diary of Joseph Farington*, vol. 10, pp. 3742, 3752; vol. 13, p. 4650. For Barrett-Lennard's illegitimacy see chapter 2, pp. 138, 144.

⁶⁰ 'The Natural Child', *The Weekly Entertainer: or, Agreeable and Instructive Repository* 59, 17 May 1819 (London, 1819), pp. 386-9.

⁶¹ See chapters 2 and 3, pp. 154, 175-6.

Pembroke' and, moreover, that 'Lord Pembroke gave Mrs Williams £3000'. Farington did not note that Mr Williams was himself illegitimate, possibly because his parentage, minor gentry, was not so worth bragging about.⁶²

Labelling varied according to parental relationship type and the relative socio-economic status of author and subject. In the 1690s, yeoman Richard Gough identified illegitimates through context or the word 'bastard' in equal proportions. 'Bastard' was a blanket label applied to children of elite or poor parents and from incestuous, adulterous or master-servant relationships, or what Gough refers to as 'lewdnesse'.⁶³ It acted to differentiate illegitimate from legitimate, not to indicate moral disapproval. However, Gough never used 'bastard' to refer to a child of doubtful illegitimacy, including foundlings or children of bigamous or alleged marriages; nearly half of the contextual references were in this category.⁶⁴ Writing before the 1753 Marriage Act, Gough clearly specified which marriages he considered legal or only alleged, stating in one case that when Sarah Tyler 'was found to be with child... she said (and some believed,) was married to Robert Outram'.⁶⁵ Gough did not consider these children legitimate, as he clearly noted incriminating dates of birth and marriage, but rather employed a third option of doubtful legitimacy, the nuances of which could be explained through context. All the non-elite authors in the sample, Cannon, Shaw and Turner, preferred context over labels, suggesting perhaps greater understanding of the variety of relationship types. ⁶⁶ Elites tended to differentiate more by socio-economic class than parental relationship, perhaps as the validity of marriage was more distinct among elites because of inheritance implications. Farington specifically noted whether children

⁶² *Diary of Joseph Farington*, vol. 1, p. 141. John Williams was the son of Basil Bacon, who owned an estate in Farnham, Surrey, TNA: PROB 11/1016/22, will of Basil Bacon of Farnham, Surrey, 3 February 1776.

⁶³ Gough, *History of Myddle*, p. 221. Gough documented 36 cases of illegitimacy. In half of cases illegitimacy was deduced from the context, but in the 18 cases where a specific noun or adjective was used, he always used 'bastard'.

⁶⁴ For example, Gough, *History of Myddle*, pp. 139, 181-3, 190-1, 207, 256.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

⁶⁶ Cannon used context in 16 out of 28 cases, Gough in 18 out of 36, Turner in 42 out of 54, and Shaw in 29 out of 34.

were adulterine or whether their parents lived together, but always referred to them by the same label, 'natural'.⁶⁷

Socio-economic background became more significant over the century. 'Bastard' ceased to be merely descriptive, and became associated with the poor or used as an insult. Seventeenth- and early-eighteenth-century authors Pepys, Gough, Cannon, and Viscount Percival used 'bastard' or 'base' as their primary label to describe children of all socio-economic backgrounds, unconnected to poor relief.⁶⁸ By the mid-eighteenth-century there was a decisive shift: 'bastard' had fallen out of use except in the specific circumstances of poverty or pejorative judgement. Thomas Turner, writing in the 1750s, used the word 'bastard' only in specific poor law contexts.⁶⁹ Turner referred to Elizabeth Day's child as illegitimate through context in his numerous daily interactions with her as overseer, but labelled the child only when discussing its status with a clerk; 'the child, though born a bastard, would not belong to this parish'.⁷⁰ Turner used the term 'natural' five times, in all but one case referring to children of his own socio-economic class who were not on poor relief.⁷¹

Walpole and his high-status correspondents primarily used 'bastard' to refer to foreign or historical royal illegitimates, legal contexts, or the poor, and referred to members of their own class as 'natural'.⁷² This was not only the case among individuals with illegitimate relatives, who may have been considered more sympathetic. Farington had no illegitimate connections but followed the same pattern. When 'bastard' was used, although rarely, it appeared primarily in a

⁶⁷ For example, Miss Shirley, the adulterine daughter of Earl Ferrers, and the several non-adulterine children of Sir John St Aubyn are described in the same way: *Diary of Joseph Farington*, vol. 6, p. 2347; vol. 8, p. 3015.

⁶⁸ Cannon uses 'bastard' in 11 out of 16 label usages, Viscount Percival uses it in 10 out of 14 label usages. In Pepys, 'bastard' appears 17 times, to refer to all from royalty down to his own niece. Pepys never uses the words 'base', 'natural', 'illegitimate' or 'spurious' to refer to people. Similarly, 'bastard' was the word of choice to describe illegitimate kin in a sample of fifteenth-century gentry wills, see Katharine Carlton and Tim Thornton, 'Illegitimacy and Authority in the North of England, c. 1450-1640', *Northern History* 48 (2011), p. 28.

⁶⁹ This included obtaining legal advice from court clerks, in public vestries, or when talking about bonds. *Diary of Thomas Turner*, pp. 56, 110, 135, 158, 266, 268.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 77, 125, 181, 294. He refers to pauper child Sarah Durrant Day as 'natural' when describing her baptism, and therefore in the context of church, not the poor law.

⁷² *Walpole's Correspondence*. For uses of 'natural', see: vol. 2, p. 306; vol. 18, pp. 506-7; vol. 20, p. 246; vol. 23, p. 325; vol. 24, p. 99; vol. 25, pp. 91, 570-1; vol. 28, p. 336; vol. 30, p. 346; vol. 36, pp. 25-6, 69, 77.

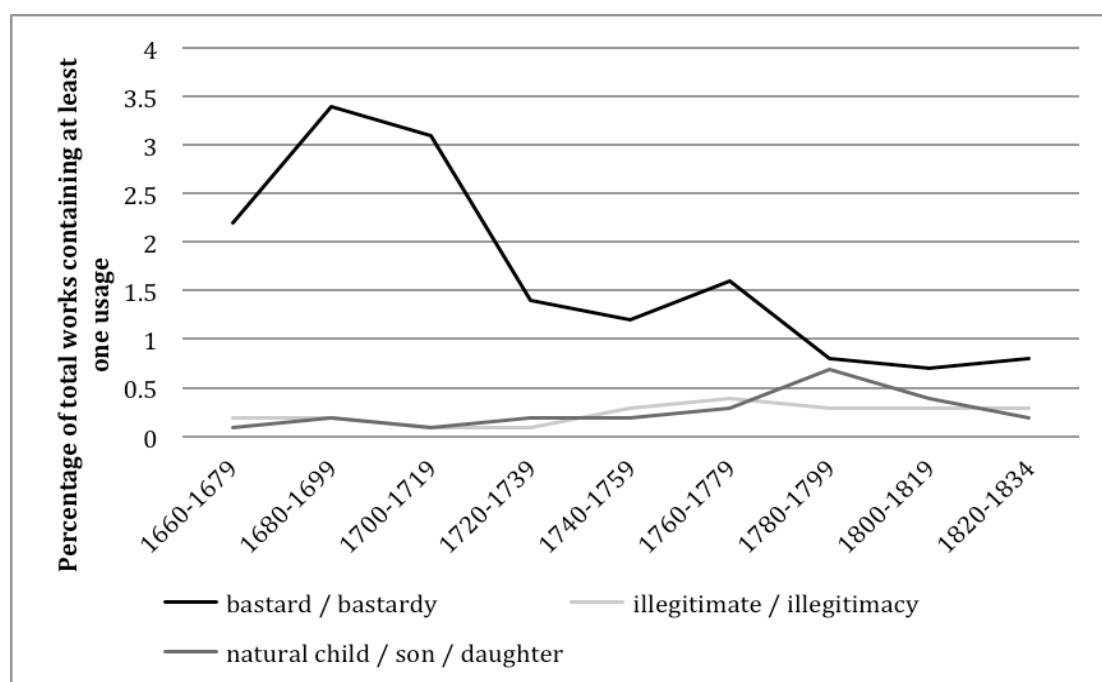
negative sense. Kept mistress Anna Maria Bennett feared that a reluctant potential lodger viewed her children as a '[p]arcel of Bastards', and Walpole reported its use as an insult.⁷³ This trend can also be observed more widely; figure 5 indicates that usage of 'bastard' and its variants declined within published prose, poetry and drama texts held in the *Literature Online* database.⁷⁴ Illegitimate characters remained important over the eighteenth century so this does not reflect a change in content. Rather 'bastard' became pejorative, no longer appropriate for publication or description of characters designed to appeal to an increasingly polite audience.⁷⁵

⁷³ CWAC: 36/72, Anna Maria Bennett to Sir Thomas Pye, [July 1785]. Walpole reported that Lady Isabella Finch refused to present an illegitimate relative of hers to the King as she 'called it publishing a bastard at Court', *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 19, p. 389, Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 10 April 1748. Gentleman Charles Greville also used 'bastard' as an insult, see below, pp. 230-1.

⁷⁴ These numbers were obtained through word searches of 45,354 texts published between 1660 and 1834 held in the database *Literature Online* <http://literature.proquest.com.sheffield.idm.oclc.org> [accessed 22 May 2017]. Percentages were calculated from the number of works mentioning those words as a percentage of the total works published in each twenty-year period. All search terms included plurals and spelling variants as recommended by the *Literature Online* search function. This method is used in: Phil Withington, "'Tumbled into the dirt': Wit and Incivility in Early Modern England", *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 12 (2011), pp. 156-77; Phil Withington, 'The Invention of "Happiness"', in Mike Braddick and Joanna Innes (eds), *Happiness and Suffering in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2017), pp. 23-45; Mark Knights, 'Towards a Social and Cultural History of Keywords and Concepts by the Early Modern Research Group', *History of Political Thought* 31.3 (2010), pp. 427-48; Spicksley, 'Social Relations'. *Literature Online* was chosen because of its well-defined collection and keyword search capabilities. Although Withington uses *Early English Books Online*, the Text Creation Partnership for *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* is not yet large enough to produce meaningful results.

⁷⁵ For more on word usage see chapter 5, pp. 275-6.

Figure 5: Percentage of total works in *Literature Online* containing at least one usage of 'bastard'



'Bastard' was rarely used by lower-status authors, who preferred instead descriptors which highlighted the accidental nature of illegitimacy. Metalworker Benjamin Shaw was related to many of the illegitimates he mentioned and well-acquainted with their birth circumstances, perhaps influencing why he used labels in only 15 percent of references.⁷⁶ Shaw's label of choice was 'chance children', echoed by other lower-status authors John Clare and Thomas Johnson.⁷⁷ A typical reference detailed his uncle William Shaw, who in 1796 'married [Esther] Richmond... she had a child by chance before'.⁷⁸ Lack of labelling does not suggest that Shaw considered illegitimacy irrelevant; he usually specifies that parents were not married, and that he did not consider them as such.⁷⁹ Lower-status authors did not link 'bastard' to the poor law,

⁷⁶ 5 out of 34 references in *Family Records of Benjamin Shaw*.

⁷⁷ John Clare similarly described his own father as 'one of fates chance-lings', and both Shaw and furniture maker Thomas Johnson used the word 'misfortune': *John Clare's Autobiographical Writings*, ed. Eric Robinson (Oxford, 1983), p. 2; *Family Records of Benjamin Shaw*, p. 90; Thomas Johnson, 'The Life of the Author', ed. Jacob Simon, *Furniture History* 39 (2003), pp. 15-16. Similar language has been observed in Foundling Hospital petitions and Yorkshire slang, see: Tanya Evans, *'Unfortunate Objects': Lone Mothers in Eighteenth-Century London* (Basingstoke, 2005), pp. 109-12; John R. Gillis, *For Better, For Worse: British Marriages, 1600 to the Present* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 129-30.

⁷⁸ *Family Records of Benjamin Shaw*, p. 14.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 19, 20, 29, 37, 56, 58, 74, 89, 91, 104, 115. He is clear to note down when they do get married as a distinct event.

but reserved it as a moral pejorative. Shaw used 'bastard' only once, to describe the illegitimate child of his brother-in-law Benjamin Leeming, a cheat and a thief who was 'Constantly Poor' as 'he did not like work'. It therefore reflects the industrious Shaw's judgement of Leeming's wastefulness, rather than his sexual activity or the child itself.⁸⁰ In the Essex pauper letters only middling or elite authors used 'bastard', reflecting the poor law context. The only usage by a pauper correspondent was pejorative. Reputed father Henry Blomfield complained of his insolvency and loss of social credit in paying for 'this Cursed Bastard'.⁸¹ In general, though, the poor rejected the value-laden association of bastard with poverty and immorality, and instead implemented their own taxonomy which emphasised the variability of individual circumstance.⁸²

Identification did not necessarily reflect social exclusion. There was a difference between identification in the relative privacy of letters and diaries, and the public treatment of illegitimates in everyday social interaction. Again, however, acceptance varied according to the relative moral standards of that particular socio-economic group. Thomas Turner adopted a fairly neutral moral stance towards illegitimate pregnancies he encountered as overseer. But, when the wife of his friend and fellow parish officer Thomas Davy was delivered of their first child 'after being married only six months' Turner complained that they were 'two people whom I should the least have suspected of being guilty of so indiscreet an act'.⁸³ Similarly, he considered his half-sister, who had an illegitimate child, to be an 'unhappy wretch' and 'vagabond'.⁸⁴ Turner expected more from his fellow middling sort but considered lower-class illegitimacy as inevitable parish business. Individuals judged illegitimacy

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 87. For Shaw's pride in industriousness see Karen Harvey, *The Little Republic: Masculinity and Domestic Authority in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 71, 86; Shani D'Cruze, 'Care, Diligence and "Usfull Pride": Gender, Industrialization and the Domestic Economy, c. 1770 to c. 1840', *Women's History Review* 3 (1994), pp. 315-45.

⁸¹ ERO: D/P178/18/23, Henry Blomfield to Mr Swinborne, overseer of St Peter, Colchester, 30 July 1821. For more on Blomfield see chapter 1, pp. 54-5. For other usages by higher-status correspondents see: ERO: D/P 94/18/42, William Brittlebank to the Chelmsford overseers, 21 Dec 1827; 1 Sept 1828; Church & Sons, Colchester to the Chelmsford overseers, 5 February 1828; D/P 178/18/23, George Turner to the overseers of St Peter, Colchester, 7 August 1823; Henry Blomfield to the overseers of St Peter, Colchester, 10 January 1824; 30 July 1821.

⁸² Knights, 'Keywords', pp. 444-5.

⁸³ *Diary of Thomas Turner*, p. 244. Tadmor notes that Turner held those he considered as his friends to high moral standards, Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 205.

⁸⁴ Thomas Turner, 'Notes on Family History', in Appendix, *The Diary of a Georgian Shopkeeper*, ed. R.W. Blencowe, M.A. Lower and G.H. Jennings (Oxford, 1979), p. 80.

more harshly if it reflected badly on their own character, through their family or close friends. The greater desire for secrecy among the middling sort, observed earlier, may also have been linked to the higher value placed on sexual probity for social or professional reputation.⁸⁵

In contrast, among individuals of higher status than Turner illegitimacy was more socially acceptable if it was not also tainted by the stigma of poverty.⁸⁶ Just as wealth and genteel upbringing could enable illegitimates to make good marriages, it could also smooth the way to more superficial social integration.⁸⁷ Anna Maria Bennett maintained a respectable image by spending lavishly on house renovations, clothes and furniture.⁸⁸ After the illegitimate baptism of her youngest daughter Caroline in 1781, Anna Maria threw a lavish celebratory supper, attended by her father, their friends and the parson, who was 'monstrous civil' despite having insisted on baptising Caroline as illegitimate. The christening party followed all the conventions of normative sociability, to the extent that Anna Maria noted that 'my Little Angel to my infinite Pleasure was Pronounced by Every Body to resemble both father and Mother'.⁸⁹ This acceptance was precarious and depended on conspicuous consumption. After she and Sir Thomas separated, she sought lodgers to fund her genteel, solvent appearance 'in order to fence against Every Possibility of Censure to my self and daughters'. She eventually 'fixed on Quitting' the house as she feared she would not be able to find any 'female of Character' to lodge there. One prospective tenant was 'an infirm old woman... who to my astonishment turns out to be a Lady who Chuses to be young enough to be afraid of her Character and who is distressed to death at living among a Parcel of Bastards'.⁹⁰ Not only does this indicate that Anna Maria's reputation preceded her, but also that certain social groups, such as single women or a more financially or socially precarious middling sort, may have avoided socialising with illegitimates in order to safeguard their own reputations.

⁸⁵ See chapters 1 and 2, pp. 99-100, 159-60.

⁸⁶ Jütte, *Poverty and Deviance*, pp. 158-77.

⁸⁷ See chapter 3.

⁸⁸ CWAC: 36/61, account book. See in particular entries for August and October 1784, including Pye's annotations despairing at her spending.

⁸⁹ CWAC: 36/69, Anna Maria Bennett to Sir Thomas Pye, [November 1781]. For Caroline's baptism, see above, p. 218.

⁹⁰ CWAC: 36/72, Anna Maria Bennett to Sir Thomas Pye, [July 1785].

Open prejudice and the public identification of illegitimates varied, partly because middling and higher-status groups considered it impolite. Shoemaker argues that sexual defamation declined over the period because public insults were increasingly seen as vulgar and ineffective.⁹¹ The same process occurred here: to publicly ostracise illegitimates was increasingly considered vulgar, and as displaying a lack of virtuous feeling which reflected more badly on the speaker than on the illegitimate. Jonas Hanway argued in 1759 that prejudices prevailed only 'in weak minds' or among the 'common people'.⁹² Similarly, baronet Sir John Delaval counselled his illegitimate nephew Frank in the 1780s that no 'liberal person' would discriminate against him.⁹³ Individuals were also rarely referred to as illegitimate in print, particularly obituaries or genealogical studies such as Burke's *Peerage*.⁹⁴ Unorthodox family arrangements were glossed over as distasteful. The obituary of the Earl of Egremont, notorious for having at least eight illegitimate children, made no mention of his family as '[t]o describe in minute detail... the idiosyncrasies which illustrate character, would be an indecorous violation of the sanctities of private life'.⁹⁵

The idea that open prejudice was impolite did not render illegitimacy irrelevant, but it opened up a gap between how illegitimates were discussed privately and how they were treated publicly. Middling and elite illegitimates were included in social interactions but they were also subject to a subtle discrimination and 'othering' in the way they were discussed. Speculation about their birth and upbringing were prime subjects for gossip. Sarah Burney, the sister of novelist Frances Burney, wrote to a friend that Lord and Lady Cholmondeley had come to stay:

⁹¹ Robert Shoemaker, 'The Decline of Public Insult in London, 1660-1800', *Past & Present* 169 (2000), pp. 115, 117, 121.

⁹² Hanway, *A candid historical account*, pp. 32-3.

⁹³ NAW: 2DE/42/5, Sir John Delaval to Frank Delaval, 23 February 1780. For a larger excerpt of this letter, see introduction, p. 8.

⁹⁴ See, for example, the obituaries of Edward Walpole and Lady Dysart: *The Gentleman's Magazine, and Historical Chronicle*, vol. 41 (London, 1771), p. 191; *Walpole's Correspondence*, vol. 31, p. 315.

⁹⁵ WSRO: 5927/1/2/35, obituary of the Earl of Egremont. This chimes with Ralph Houlbrooke's suggestion that eighteenth-century obituaries concentrated on the secular public life rather than on the individual's private character, reflecting a growing desire to respect the family's privacy, Ralph A. Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England, 1480-1750* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 329-30.

They brought with them two young Ladies; one of them, Miss Seymour, is a celebrated beauty, and a very amiable creature: but during twenty years that she has lived in the world, nobody has been able to settle who is her Papa; some say it is the P----- of W-----; others think it my lord Cholmondeley himself... The other young lady was a Miss Cholmondely, really, I believe, a little unlawful chip of his Lordship... She is a pretty French-looking girl of sixteen; very lively & quick.⁹⁶

Although Sarah openly accepted the girls' presence and maintained a good opinion of them, their illegitimacy was well-known and discussed as the most notable aspect of their identities. The illegitimate children of the 3rd Earl of Egremont were openly acknowledged by their father, well-educated and exposed to polite society in their father's own home. Farington recounted meeting 'Mrs Wyndham, who lives with Lord Egremont... She had a fine little Boy with her, abt. 2 years old, *very like Lord Egremont*'.⁹⁷ Farington was apparently courteous to Lord Egremont's mistress in person but could not resist insinuating about her child's parentage in his diary. The Wyndhams were also subject to comment about their morality. Lady Bessborough wrote that '[n]othing could persuade' her sister-in-law Lady Spencer 'that Ld Egremont has not *forty three* Children who all live in the House with him... and make scenes worthy of Billingsgate or a Madhouse'. They continued to be visited by the Quality, including Lady Bessborough, but were subjected to a distancing and voyeuristic curiosity.⁹⁸

Other individuals were less subtle but still maintained a public veneer of tolerance. Elite civil servant Charles Greville was socially on good terms with the illegitimate sons of William IV, riding with them regularly and giving them advice.⁹⁹ In the relative privacy of his diary, however, he was persistently scathing of their

⁹⁶ *The Letters of Sarah Harriet Burney*, ed. Lorna Clark (Athens, Georgia, 1997), p. 75, Sarah Harriet Burney to Charlotte Francis, 20 November [1806].

⁹⁷ *Diary of Joseph Farington*, vol. 3, pp. 1113-5, Farington's emphasis. On another occasion he expressed surprise one of Lord Egremont's daughters, Mary, 'calls Lord E. Pappa', vol. 6, pp. 2280-1. Mrs Wyndham was an assumed name; had they been married she would have been Lady Wyndham, and they did not marry until 1801.

⁹⁸ *Lord Granville Leveson Gower, Private Correspondence 1781-1821*, ed. Castalia, Countess Granville (London, 1916), vol. 2, p. 474, Lady Bessborough to Granville Leveson Gower, 31 August [1813], Lady Bessborough's emphasis.

⁹⁹ *The Greville Memoirs, 1814-1860*, ed. Lytton Strachey and Roger Fulford (London, 1938), vol. 2, p. 3; vol. 3, pp. 127-8, 207-8.

illegitimacy, referring to them as 'good for nothing bastards'.¹⁰⁰ James Boswell's father informed him that his landlord's wife Mrs Brown was illegitimate. Boswell senior warned, 'I mention this to you in confidence; don't speak of it. Mrs Brown may be a good woman notwithstanding this *macula natalium* [stain on her birth], so it should not be published.'¹⁰¹ This incident sums up the paradox of illegitimacy in this period; respectable illegitimates were regarded sympathetically, as the largely innocent victims of their parent's transgressions, which ultimately had little bearing on a person's social acceptance.¹⁰² There was, however, a residual suspicion and subtle discrimination towards them. Boswell senior considered it important that his son was aware of Mrs Brown's status, even though he had no objection to him socialising with her daily.

In summary, life-writing and correspondence suggest that illegitimacy was frequently noted as pertinent information alongside age, gender and social status. Illegitimacy was clearly considered important enough to be recorded, suggesting that it did have some impact on how individuals were perceived. Identification did not always convey social exclusion. Illegitimates are regularly described as socialising openly with their peers and there is limited evidence of overt ostracism. Prejudice towards illegitimates was highly variable, most notably according to socio-economic status. Middling and elite authors increasingly differentiated poor illegitimates from those of their own social class using labels such as 'bastard'. The reluctance of poor authors to use words such as 'bastard' about other poor illegitimates further suggests that labelling conveyed a moral judgement based on class. Lower-middling-sort authors, such as Turner, were seemingly most judgemental of illegitimacy within their own peer group. This may reflect this group's greater economic and social vulnerability and echoes their greater emphasis on secrecy and parental reputation discussed in chapter one. Among elites, individuals rarely exhibited open prejudice

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 3., p. 127. He refers to them as bastards throughout, vol. 2, pp. 1, 7, 181, 191, 199, 297. He also referred to Lord Egremont's children as 'bastards', vol. 2, pp. 335-6. Greville instructed that the diary be published ten years after his death, so he was not writing for publication per se.

¹⁰¹ *Boswell in Holland*, p. 107, Lord Auchinleck to James Boswell, December 1763. Boswell followed his father's advice and did not mention Mrs Brown's illegitimacy in letters to his close friend John Johnston. See *The Correspondence of James Boswell and John Johnston of Grange*, ed. Ralph S. Walker (London, 1966), pp. 149-50, James Boswell to John Johnston, 19 December 1764.

¹⁰² This is explored further in chapter 5.

towards illegitimates in public. However, evidence of attitudes expressed about, rather than directly to illegitimates, such as continual speculation about their family life, suggests that they were considered inferior 'others'. Illegitimates were the subjects of gossip and curiosity, suggesting that social interaction was always overshadowed by a subtle prejudice. Further evidence of the impact of this prejudice can be found in evidence written by illegitimates themselves.

Shame and Identity

The ways in which illegitimates themselves presented their status, and how they expressed their reactions to labelling or exclusion, provides the best available evidence of the impact of illegitimacy on self-worth and identity. The relationship between stigma (the identification and discrimination of individuals) and shame is complex. Illicit sex has long been associated with shame. Shame was considered a useful incentive to modesty, and punishments, from church penance to rough music, involved public shaming.¹⁰³ The infanticide laws and the Foundling Hospital were based on the assumption that unmarried parents would murder or abandon their children 'to avoid their shame'.¹⁰⁴ The parental demand for secrecy, noted earlier, would certainly suggest that illegitimacy was shameful, with concealment presented as in the best interests of both parents and child. The shame attached to parents and child should be separated, however. To give birth to or father an illegitimate child was the result of an individual's actions, whereas an illegitimate child, an 'innocent', was not to blame for their origin.¹⁰⁵ Illegitimates were not subject to specific shaming punishments but it is as yet unclear whether they internalised feelings of inferiority in response to the legal disabilities they faced. This section argues that illegitimates perceived themselves as disadvantaged but, crucially, not as inferior. The impact of illegitimacy on identity varied according to socio-economic background and its intersection with other aspects of self, such as gender. Illegitimates did not often self-

¹⁰³ Julien Deonna, Raffaele Rodogno and Fabrice Teroni (eds), *In Defense of Shame: The Faces of an Emotion* (Oxford, 2011), p. 4; David Nash and Anne-Marie Kilday, *Cultures of Shame: Exploring Crime and Morality in Britain, 1600-1900* (Basingstoke, 2010), pp. 26-46; Peter N. Stearns, *Shame: A Brief History* (Urbana, 2017), pp. 10-56; David Underdown, 'The Taming of the Scold: the Enforcement of Patriarchal Authority in Early Modern England', in Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson (eds), *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 116-36.

¹⁰⁴ 21 Ja. 1. c. 27, *Act to prevent the destroying and murthering of bastard children*, 1624, cited in Macfarlane, 'Illegitimacy', p. 77.

¹⁰⁵ See chapter 5, pp. 254-6.

identify and particularly not as a group. In this, they differ from other stigmatised groups observed by modern sociologists and psychologists.¹⁰⁶

The definition of shame is crucial to these discussions. Shame is a reflexive emotion, 'the evaluation of the self as unworthy, as degraded, or as exhibiting an unwanted identity', often exhibited through 'embarrassment, humiliation, or feelings of failure or inadequacy'.¹⁰⁷ Whereas guilt relates to an action, shame relates to the whole self and therefore has the potential to be more damaging.¹⁰⁸ Stigma can lead to shame if the stigmatised individual begins to internalise and accept an inferior status.¹⁰⁹ The evidence here suggests that the emotion felt by English eighteenth-century illegitimates was not shame, as they perceived the root of their disadvantage as external and not linked to the evaluation of themselves as unworthy. In fact, it was often the opposite; illegitimates described their disadvantage as unfair precisely because they thought they were just as worthy as legitimates. It is more correct to say that illegitimates felt the impact of stigma - of legal and social discrimination - rather than shame.

One way of measuring the shame and reputational cost of illegitimacy is through defamation. Although accusations of begetting or giving birth to an illegitimate child were very common, accusations of *being* illegitimate were strikingly rare.¹¹⁰ Only 13

¹⁰⁶ Richard Handler, 'Erving Goffman and the Gestural Dynamics of Modern Selfhood', *Past & Present* 203.4 (2009), pp. 297-8; Dawne Moon, 'Who Am I and Who Are We? Conflicting Narratives of Collective Selfhood in Stigmatized Groups', *American Journal of Sociology* 117.5 (2012), pp. 1336-79; Goffman, *Stigma*, pp. 31-6. Much historiographical scholarship on identity also emphasises its collective nature and a sense of consciousness or fellow feeling. See Henry French and Jonathan Barry, 'Introduction', in Henry French and Jonathan Barry (eds), *Identity and Agency in England, 1500-1800* (Basingstoke, 2004), pp. 1-2, 21.

¹⁰⁷ Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni, *In Defense of Shame*, p. 7. See also T.J. Scheff, 'Shame and the Social Bond: A Sociological Theory', *Sociological Theory* 18.1 (2000), pp. 96-7.

¹⁰⁸ Peter N. Stearns, 'Shame, and a Challenge for Emotions History', *Emotion Review* 8.3 (2016), p. 199; Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni, *In Defense of Shame*, pp. 44-9, 71-5, 82-7; Scheff, 'Shame and the Social Bond', p. 92.

¹⁰⁹ Goffman, *Stigma*, pp. 18-19.

¹¹⁰ The prevalence of sexual slander in defamation has been noted in multiple studies, see: J.A. Sharpe, *Defamation and Sexual Slander in Early Modern England: the Church Courts at York* (York, 1980), p. 10; Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words, and Sex in Early Modern London* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 61-5; Tim Meldrum, 'A Women's Court in London: Defamation at the Bishop of London's Consistory Court, 1700-1745', *The London Journal* 19.1 (1994), pp. 8-11; Martin Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage in England, 1570-1640* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 300-2; David Garrioch, 'Verbal Insults in Eighteenth-Century Paris', in Peter Burke and Roy Porter (eds), *The Social History of Language* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 107, 112. Shoemaker argues

of the 1249 cases of defamation between 1660 and 1834 held in the York church court cause papers database involved an individual accused of being illegitimate.¹¹¹ This small number is comparable with the earlier period: between 1517 and 1660 there were only eight cases.¹¹² It is also unlikely that the York courts were unusual. Quantitative studies of slander terms in other courts have not found sufficient numbers of illegitimacy insults to include them in discussion.¹¹³ This paucity is not due to the particular jurisdiction of the church courts, in which defamation was generally only actionable if it 'maliciously imputed a spiritual crime that fell under ecclesiastical jurisdiction'.¹¹⁴ Although being illegitimate was not a spiritual crime, several legal manuals stated that calling someone a 'bastard' was actionable in both the ecclesiastical and civil courts. Barrister John March stated that 'calling of a man a Bastard, a Heretique, a Schismaticque, an Advowterer, a Fornicator, [or] calling of a woman a Whore' were all actionable by imputing a moral crime and causing material damage.¹¹⁵ 'Bastard' was particularly actionable if it questioned an individual's inheritance or caused 'loss of a mans advancement'. March specifically noted that a clergyman could prosecute if he lost preferment through being slandered as illegitimate.¹¹⁶ 'Bastard' could also be prosecuted alongside other generally 'reproachful Words' such as '[d]og', 'knave' or 'filthy fellow'.¹¹⁷ Although none of these specifically imputed a spiritual crime, their inclusion in multiple defamation cases suggests that in practice there was a more flexible interpretation of the law, which allowed for the prosecution of any insults considered sufficiently damaging.¹¹⁸

that sexual insult became less dominant after 1700, Shoemaker, 'Decline of Public Insult', p. 115.

¹¹¹ For a full breakdown of defamation types see appendix 2. *Cause Papers in the Diocesan Courts of the Archbishopric of York, 1300-1858*, The Borthwick Institute for Archives, University of York, <https://www.hrionline.ac.uk/causepapers/> [accessed 28 January 2018]. Two cases of defamation of parentage were discounted because they slandered the plaintiff's parents but not by stating they were illegitimate. In CP. H. 4335A and CP. H. 4327 [1693], related cases, the plaintiff's mother was accused of being a 'perjur'd bitch'. For more on the methodology of the database study, see introduction, pp. 39-40.

¹¹² Sharpe, *Defamation*, p. 9; Shoemaker, 'Decline of Public Insult', pp. 99-100; Meldrum, 'A Women's Court', p. 5.

¹¹³ For example, Gowing did not list 'bastard' or its synonyms in her quantification of slander terms in the London consistory court deposition books between 1572 and 1640, Gowing, *Domestic Dangers*, p. 64.

¹¹⁴ Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2003), p. 155.

¹¹⁵ John March, *March's Actions for Slander and Arbitrments* (London, 1674), p. 74.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 65, 68, 70.

¹¹⁷ Henry Consett, *The Practice of the Spiritual or Ecclesiastical Courts* (London, 1685), p. 18.

¹¹⁸ 'Dog', 'rogue' and 'knave', for example, appear in other York defamation cases, see appendix two. Sharpe similarly found in his study of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century

The appearance of illegitimacy in defamation cases, through words like 'bastard' and/or its implication, 'son of a whore', suggests that illegitimacy was used, and perceived as, an insult. In three cases, illegitimacy was the primary insult. In 1747 John Dalkin reportedly called William Armstrong, 'a natural son of a whore and a Right Real Bastard'.¹¹⁹ Illegitimate individuals were not primarily slandered as a means to attack their parents. Only one case, from 1692, discussed damage to both the individual and their mother's reputations, and in this case George Byfield and his mother appear as joint plaintiffs.¹²⁰ Most cases were brought by the reputedly illegitimate individual with no mention of their parents' reputations, suggesting that they considered illegitimacy to have a personal reputational impact.

In most cases, 'bastard' and its synonyms appear as adjectives, such as 'bastardly rogue', or as general pejoratives alongside other slanders.¹²¹ Illegitimacy seems therefore to have carried connotations of general immorality, congruent with alternative meanings of 'base' as lowly or corrupt.¹²² This insult could defame both an individual and their family. Following Gowing's argument that sexual insults were actually about the patriarchal control of women, not about sex at all, 'bastard' implied that a person's male relatives had been unable to control the women in their household, and perhaps that moral failings were hereditary.¹²³ This is reflected in one compound insult from 1684, when Joshua Fenwick accused John Thorp of being 'a Bastard and the son of a whore and yt all his Relations were whores and theeves'.

defamation cases in the York courts that most contained 'a wide range of slanderous words' which the court 'had no theoretical right to try', Sharpe, *Defamation and Sexual Slander*, p. 15.

¹¹⁹ BIA: CP. I. 1277, John Dalkin vs William Armstrong, [1747].

¹²⁰ BIA: CP. H. 4291, Richard Rimer vs George Byfield, 1692. Other cases where damage to maternal reputation is not even mentioned include: CP. I. 276, George Hippon, vs. Rowland Gwinn, [1713-15]; DC.CP.1701/5, Thomas Naylar vs Henry Wallis, [1701]; CP. H. 4267, Alice Sandyman vs Seth Potter, 23 July 1691; CP. I. 566, Henry Kirkby vs William Chambers, [1715].

¹²¹ 'Bastardly rogue' appears in BIA: CP. H. 3833, Joshua Fenwick vs John Thorp, [1684]. 'Bastardly theefe' also occurs in CP. H. 4619, Dorothy Roberts vs Robert Barraclough, 23 July 1663. Other particularly creative compound insults include 'base, beggarlie and whoremasterlie rogue', in CP.H. 4775, Timothy Scotson vs Richard Moseley, [1665], and 'bastardly rogue & fornicator of the pew', in CP. H. 3107, Christopher Wright vs John Aveyard, [1671].

¹²² 'Bastard' and its synonym 'base' commonly meant that something was polluted, corrupted or inherently inferior. Secondary meanings included 'false... not genuine' or 'low, mean, vile; cowardly, dishonest', see: Nathan Bailey, *An Universal Etymological English Dictionary* (26th edn, Edinburgh, 1789); John Ash, *The new and complete dictionary of the English language* (London, 1775), vol. 1; Samuel John, *A dictionary of the England language*, (6th edn, London, 1785), vol. 1. See also chapter 5, pp. 267-8.

¹²³ Gowing, *Domestic Dangers*, pp. 116-9, 194-7.

In this case 'bastard' was deployed as an apparently effective insult in a dispute over the non-payment of wages. Fenwick used the slander in multiple ways, calling Thorp a 'bastardly curr' and 'bastardly rogue' as well as simply 'bastard'.¹²⁴

The gender and status of litigants suggest that accusations of illegitimacy were perceived to have specific reputational consequences. In nine out of 13 cases both litigants were male. Only one of those accused of being illegitimate was female.¹²⁵ Overwhelmingly, men were more likely to be accused of being illegitimate or to bring defamation cases on those grounds, in stark contrast to the majority of defamations in this period.¹²⁶ Litigants in illegitimacy defamation were also more likely to be higher status, again differing from the norm. Eight out of 13 cases involved at least one litigant who was described as 'gentleman' and two of these cases involved baronets.¹²⁷ It appears that illegitimacy was a more effective insult against propertied men, who could have more to lose from its potential practical impact on inheritance. In 1715, gentleman John Murgatroyd reportedly called Sir William Lowther 'a son of a whore or son of a bitch, a lousy Baronett and a stubborn Rascall'.¹²⁸ This was part of a long running dispute over Lowther's estates so the insult was deployed specifically to attack Lowther's economic and political legitimacy.¹²⁹

¹²⁴ BIA: CP. H. 3833, Joshua Fenwick vs John Thorp, [1684].

¹²⁵ BIA: CP. H. 3978, James Dawson vs Mary Moore, [1660-1700]. This was also the case for the earlier period (1517-1659), where 6 out of 8 cases involved at least one male litigant. Both male: BIA: CP.G.83, 1517; CP.G.203K, 1528; DC.CP.1583/5, 1583; CP.G.2447, 1584. At least one male: CP.H.5335, 1640; CP.H.5362, 1641.

¹²⁶ For the generally female character of defamation cases see Gowing, *Domestic Dangers*, p. 60; Shoemaker, 'Decline of Public Insult', p. 114; Meldrum, 'A Women's Court'. Although men became increasingly involved in defamation cases in the eighteenth century, the proportions found by Shoemaker and Clark do not exceed 53 percent.

¹²⁷ BIA: CP. I. 276, [1713-15], George Hippon vs Rowland Winn [1713-15]; CP. I. 565, John Murgatroyd vs Sir William Lowther, baronet [1715]. In the remaining five cases social status was unknown. That is a rate of 46 percent, versus 19 percent (238 out of 1249) litigants in the other York defamation cases who described themselves as 'gentleman'. For the generally middling and declining status of defamation litigants see: Anna Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class* (Berkeley, 1995), p. 56; Shoemaker, 'Decline of Public Insult', pp. 114-7. Meldrum, 'A Women's Court', p. 7.

¹²⁸ BIA: CP. I. 565, John Murgatroyd vs Sir William Lowther, [1715].

¹²⁹ Lowther sued John Murgatroyd and three others for Breach of Privilege in 1719. The whole dispute was because Lowther was accused of not performing a decree in chancery for payment of over £300, 'The case of Mr John Murgatroyd, Mr Edward Gee, Mr Henry Jacomb and Mr Christopher Barnard, upon the Complaint of Sir William Lowther, Bart.', *Harper Collection of Private Bills (1695-1814)*, 1719.

The specificity and rarity of illegitimacy defamations suggest that illegitimacy had a limited reputational impact. 'Bastard' was undoubtedly pejorative, but was either not commonly used or not generally considered sufficiently damaging to warrant prosecution, unless it also importuned a person's socio-economic status through inheritance or title. Among other social groups alternative insults were more common. It was seemingly more effective to call a woman a 'whore', for instance, than a 'bastard'. Most of the other insults noted in defamation cases, such as 'thief', 'knave', or 'whore', implied individual moral failing: conscious untrustworthy or promiscuous behaviour that threatened community wellbeing. To accuse an individual of being illegitimate was unsatisfying, perhaps because they were fundamentally not blamed for their status. In line with earlier arguments, such public insults may also have reflected badly on the accuser.¹³⁰ The insulting power of 'bastard', particularly as an adjective or combination insult, came from its association with being base, or low. Although these negative connotations may have contributed to a general perception of illegitimates as inferior, it does suggest that the charge of being a 'bastard' alone was insufficiently damaging. As Garrioch argues, insults rely on communal consensus.¹³¹ The striking rarity and specific target of illegitimacy defamations suggest that communities did not openly ostracise illegitimates, through loss of business, for example, and illegitimacy was not sufficiently linked to unworthiness of character to warrant its broad usage and prosecution as an insult.

Nonetheless, correspondence and life-writing indicate that external observers expected illegitimates to feel shame. In the 1760s, James Boswell discussed sending his illegitimate son Charles to 'some School at a pleasant Village in England, where his Parentage shall not be known; as the scoffing of his Companions might break his spirit.'¹³² In the 1809 parliamentary enquiry into Mary Anne Clarke's illegal sale of commissions through her sexual relationship with the Duke of York, the Chancellor of the Exchequer accused witness Mary Ann Taylor of hiding her illegitimacy in order to appear 'respectable'. William Smith, MP, countered in her defence that '[i]t was natural that she should feel a reluctance to disparage herself by acknowledging

¹³⁰ See above, p. 229.

¹³¹ Garrioch, 'Verbal Insults', pp. 113, 117.

¹³² *Correspondence of James Boswell and John Johnston*, p. 103, James Boswell to John Johnston, 30 July 1763.

that she was illegitimate'.¹³³ Queen Victoria and Lord Melbourne similarly considered that stigma was not only considerable, but that it had a negative impact on illegitimate self-worth. Melbourne suggested that noted illegitimates Charles Fox and Augustus Clifford 'feel... it very much... I never knew one who didn't feel it... they are under a slur and a ban, and not their own fault'.¹³⁴

Testimony from illegitimates themselves confirms these external opinions only to a certain extent. Illegitimacy was considered to have a negative impact but this was expressed more as frustration at its consequences, such as the deprivation of estates or familial isolation, rather than the expression of shame attached to their very self-worth. On William IV's accession to the throne in 1837, his illegitimate sons the Fitzclarences demanded titles, public office and financial support to enable them to exercise what they felt was their natural purpose as carriers of royal blood. They sought reparation and equality, stating, '[w]e are well aware of the cruel position in which we are placed as natural children, and feel too acutely that, in the eyes of the law, we are at present nameless, and devoid of many rights and advantages of our fellow subjects'.¹³⁵ In letters hoping to gain sympathy from a political opponent, Frederick Fitzclarence emphasised that their experience of parental affection and elite upbringing had created a gap between expectation and reality: it makes 'our situation now the more painful as it naturally made us look for more than perhaps we ought and certainly for more than we have any real claim or right to expect'. He depicted their position as 'wretched... without any place in society'.¹³⁶

Frederick's experience suggests that illegitimacy had its greatest impact on a particularly elite, masculine identity, because it clashed with their class and gender identity. As earlier chapters demonstrated, many elite illegitimates were educated and socialised within polite society and exposed to the same values of independence,

¹³³ Hansard, House of Commons Debates, 22 February 1809, vol. 12, cc. 1024-5.

¹³⁴ RA: VIC/MAIN/QVJ (W), (Princess Beatrice's copies), Queen Victoria's Journals, 1832-1901, 26 December 1838. For similar see: 11 July 1838; 12 October 1838.

¹³⁵ *Mrs Jordan and her Family, being The Unpublished Correspondence of Mrs Jordan and the Duke of Clarence, later William IV*, ed. A. Aspinall (London, 1951), pp. xxiv, xxv, George, Frederick, Augustus and Adolphus Fitzclarence to William IV, 17 November 1830.

¹³⁶ CWAC: D Jon/4, Frederick Fitzclarence to Leslie Grove Jones, 16 February 1831.

dynastic pride and paternalistic duty as legitimate boys.¹³⁷ These central tenets of elite manhood were frustrated by illegitimate exclusion from inheritance, title and often social purpose, with status and office achieved only late in life, if at all.¹³⁸ This point is further illustrated by the experience of Frederick's eldest brother George. George was the most vocal of his siblings in demanding '[j]ustice', which his father attributed to his 'peculiar situation' as an eldest son who could not benefit from legal primogeniture.¹³⁹ George experienced frustrated ambition, feeling that his father and father-in-law had 'treated me like a child of ten years old' in refusing to grant him complete financial independence.¹⁴⁰ Despite his 'ambition and confidence', George never achieved the political office he sought, and his suicide in 1842 aged 48 was attributed by his acquaintance Charles Greville to 'that disappointment of the expectations he once formed'.¹⁴¹ A combination of illegitimates' often dependent position in kinship groups, the common expectation of gratitude and their often limited access to status markers unsurprisingly grated on particular aspects of elite masculine identity.¹⁴²

Although the frustrations and material disadvantages of illegitimacy for elite males were considerable, they seldom sought to hide their illegitimacy but instead asserted it within a normative pride in their lineage. George Wyndham, the eldest illegitimate son of the Earl of Egremont, petitioned Queen Victoria to grant him use of the Wyndham name in 1837. This was partly to legally confirm his social identity, as '[h]aving borne the name & signed it all my life it was a matter of consequence, to me in particular, that it should be confirmed'.¹⁴³ But, it was also linked to public

¹³⁷ Henry French and Mark Rothery, *Man's Estate: Landed Gentry Masculinities, 1660-1900* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 15, 52, 80, 115, 123, 220-1.

¹³⁸ See chapter 3, pp. 181-2.

¹³⁹ WSRO: PHA 86, William IV to George Wyndham, 3rd Earl of Egremont, 22 May 1837.

¹⁴⁰ WSRO: PHA 82, George, Lord Munster to George Wyndham, 3rd Earl of Egremont [c.1830].

¹⁴¹ WSRO: PHA 82, George, Lord Munster to George Wyndham, 3rd Earl of Egremont [n.d.]; *The Greville Memoirs*, vol. 5, p. 22, 23 March 1842.

¹⁴² See chapters 2, 3, and 5.

¹⁴³ WSRO: PHA 684, George Wyndham to Lord Melbourne, [n.d.]. For the importance of name to familial identity, see: Sophie Coulombeau, "'The Knot, that ties them fast together": Personal Proper Name Change and Identity Formation in English Literature, 1779-1800', Ph.D. thesis (University of York, 2014), pp. 18-19; Stephen Wilson, *The Means of Naming: A Social and Cultural History of Personal Naming in Western Europe* (London, 1998), pp. 221, 255; Jacques Dupâquier, 'Naming-practices, godparenthood, and kinship in the Vexin, 1540-1900', *Journal of Family History* 6 (1981), p. 135; Edward Tebbenhoff, 'Tacit Rules and Hidden Structures: Naming Practices and Godparentage in Schenectady, New York, 1680-1800', *Journal of Social History* 18.4 (1985), pp. 567, 578.

confirmation of lineage, as the grant of name recognised '[t]hat the Petitioners are the children of the said Earl of Egremont'.¹⁴⁴ In many social situations, admitting to being the illegitimate child of a noble could arouse interest and access to patronage; it was better to be the illegitimate child of somebody than the legitimate child of nobody. Parental acknowledgement, familial affection and the perception that blood was the primary arbiter of gentility made many elite male illegitimates certain of their own worth.¹⁴⁵ External disadvantage, not their own inferiority, prevented them from fulfilling what they perceived to be their natural role in society. Frederick Fitzclarence complained of the 'insolence' shown him by the aristocracy: 'the origin of most of the nobility... are come from the same sort of root as we do bad as it is and others not so good, indeed... great commercial families'.¹⁴⁶ He was certain of the superiority of his royal blood and so did not display the self-loathing and sense of inferiority which characterises shame and stigma.

In some cases, elite male illegitimates' own positive sense of self-worth clashed with the treatment they received from society. This was particularly the case in polite society, where behaviour and social position were highly codified. Each individual knew their place and minute gradations of status were observed by systems such as precedence, or the use of titles. Such highly visible, public performances of status could cause considerable social awkwardness for illegitimates, and served as continual reminders of their status. Augustus Clifford, the illegitimate son of the Duke of Devonshire, had his parentage confirmed to him after his parents' marriage and his father's death in 1811. Aged 23, he was a successful young naval officer with an annual allowance of £2000.¹⁴⁷ According to their relative Lady Bessborough, Augustus now 'express'd a wish... to tell people who he was' and 'have his proper

¹⁴⁴ WSRO: PHA 684, copy of royal grant. Augustus Montgomery similarly kept and passed down to his own son 'the testament from the heralds office granting me a coat of arms and by which my father the Earl of Pembroke acknowledged me as his son', TNA: PROB 11/1287/78, will of Augustus Montgomery, Captain of His Majesty's Ship Theseus, 11 March 1797. There were also five other cases of illegitimate sons of peers successfully petitioning the crown for change of name between 1811 and 1823, WSRO: PHA 8641, 'Instance of the confirmation by Royal Licence, of surnames of noble families, borne by acknowledged natural children'.

¹⁴⁵ See, for example, chapter 2, pp. 132-3.

¹⁴⁶ CWAC: D Jon/9, Frederick Fitzclarence to Leslie Grove Jones, 21 April 1831.

¹⁴⁷ *Leveson Gower, Private Correspondence*, vol. 2, p. 402, Lady Bessborough to Granville Leveson Gower, 2 October 1811; G. C. Boase, rev. Roger Morriss, 'Clifford, Sir Augustus William James, first baronet (1788-1877)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004-2011), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/sheffield.idm.oclc.org/view/article/5643> [accessed 21 May 2017].

place allotted to him.' Augustus began to act as if he was legitimate. At a dinner party he sent a message 'to beg it might be understood he took the rank of a Duke's son' and 'made a point of walking out of the room' in front of the legitimate sons of the Duke of Portland and the Earl of Leven. Although the company politely 'gave him the precedence he desir'd', his 'folly' was reported to Lady Bessborough so she could intervene. Lady Bessborough was clearly worried that Clifford would offend someone important, writing to Granville Leveson Gower, 'you can have no idea of the noise it makes here, nor of the offence people take at it'. She sympathetically reasoned, 'I think he is asham'd of it [his illegitimacy], tho' he still marches in before every one else; it is a great pity, for it makes him enemies when he has a thousand merits to make him friends'.¹⁴⁸ It is hard to measure tangible effects of social awkwardness but it may be that illegitimates found it harder to make the social connections that bestowed power and influence.¹⁴⁹

Illegitimacy had a different impact on self-worth and identity among non-elites, who had comparatively less to gain from a public admission of status. Middling and lower-status illegitimates tended to blame their parents more and sought to conceal their illegitimacy by distancing themselves from their parents' actions. Secrecy and familial estrangement were particularly identified as causing disadvantage. Sarah Read was separated from her mother Sally Bradford and sent to boarding school in 1782, aged five. She never cohabited with her father Sylas Neville and was not told of his true identity until adulthood. In a letter following her father's death to his friend Reverend Howes, she complained of isolation and lack of familial support. When she discovered Sylas' real identity, 'my poor little prospects were at that time nearly blighted by the depression of my spirits and the want of a kind friend to open my mind to... for long was I left entirely unnoticed'. She focused on Sylas' character flaws, his 'folly and inconsistency', in order to distance herself from her parents and any suggestion of inherited immorality. She wrote, 'though I cannot but lament being

¹⁴⁸ *Leveson Gower, Private Correspondence*, vol. 2, pp. 422-3, Lady Bessborough to Granville Leveson Gower, 13 December 1811. For similar instances affecting the Fitzclarences see also *Leveson Gower, Private Correspondence*, vol. 2: p. 307, Lady Bessborough to Granville Leveson-Gower, 18 November 1807; pp. 426-7, 24 December 1811.

¹⁴⁹ As observed by sociologists in twentieth-century contexts of race or gender discrimination, for example. See Link and Phelan, 'Conceptualizing Stigma', p. 371. This may have been a contributing factor to illegitimate sons' limited occupational and marital success, see chapter 3.

the offspring of such a Parent... I am thankful, that, though I am quite a dependant on the world, I have hitherto passed through life with so much respectability'. She resolved to 'destroy all [her father's] letters... for I am truly ashamed of them', a resolution she apparently kept.¹⁵⁰

Non-elites also attempted to distance themselves from their fathers, in particular, by changing their names and thus remaking their identities. In his *Autobiography of a Beggar Boy*, illegitimate James Burn relates his bitter disappointment at meeting his biological father for the first time in 1817, aged 14. Abandoned in his father's home by his mother, he felt unloved by his paternal family and ran away; 'in order that I might sever the only remaining link that bound me to my family, I tore two syllables from my name [from McBurney to Burn] and thus I wandered forth into the wide world a fugitive from kindred and from home'.¹⁵¹ He viewed his name as symbolic of his illegitimacy and by changing it could reinvent himself as an independent, proto middle-class family man, uncorrupted by his illegitimate or vagrant past. Burn moved across the country, married, learnt a trade and created a whole new identity for himself.

Burn's reinvention was also a bid to distance himself from the familial instability and relative promiscuity of his parents. His narrative omits any evidence of pre-marital sex and dwells disproportionately on his identity as a loving father.¹⁵² His courtship of a girl from Hexham is accomplished 'without compromising her maiden delicacy', and when he 'had some vague idea that matrimony would be the only legitimate cure [for falling in love]... I made up my mind to merge the lover in the responsible character of a husband'. Determined that his children would not be illegitimate, he married despite not having yet finished his apprenticeship.¹⁵³ He intended to distance himself from his family background and demonstrate to his readers that the

¹⁵⁰ NRO: MC7/740/8, Sarah Read to Reverend Howes, 15 July 1842.

¹⁵¹ James Burn, *The Autobiography of a Beggar Boy*, ed. David Vincent (London, 1978), p. 78. Gagnier sees his rejection of the name as a reaction against patriarchal and propertied culture, but I think its more about his failure to evidence an ideal father-son relationship from his father, Regenia Gagnier, 'The Literary Standard, Working-Class Autobiography, and Gender', in Susan Groag Bell and Marilyn Yalom (eds), *Revealing Lives: Autobiography, Biography and Gender* (Albany, 1990), pp. 107-8.

¹⁵² Many working-class autobiographies on this period do not mention sex, but neither do they generally mention family life, see David Vincent, *Bread, Knowledge and Freedom: A Study of Nineteenth-Century Working Class Autobiography* (London, 1981), pp. 40-2.

¹⁵³ Burn, *Autobiography*, pp. 123, 129, 137, 147-9, 178.

taint of illegitimacy and promiscuity were not inherited. Similar reactions appear in later nineteenth-century French illegitimate autobiographies, suggesting that James Burn and Sarah Read were not unusual in seeking to prove their respectability.¹⁵⁴ Although their desire to distance themselves from, and in Sarah's case to conceal, their origins are classic signs of shame, they generally attach blame to their parents' moral shortcomings rather than their own self-worth.¹⁵⁵ Instead of displaying 'feelings of failure or inadequacy', both felt that they had proved themselves more inherently worthy by their ability to attain respectability and solid middle-class moral values despite adversity.¹⁵⁶

Illegitimacy did have a negative effect on self-identity, but primarily through the consequences of secrecy, family estrangement and disinheritance. The illegitimates who appear in surviving evidence do not seem to have experienced debilitating shame; they were able to separate their parents' actions from their own self-worth. These individuals were of course the lucky ones; they had at least some parental support and were able to record their experiences. The damage of illegitimacy came primarily from the frustration of feeling oneself to be worthy in character and, for the elite, in blood and upbringing, but incapable of exercising a rightful identity due to illegitimacy's external legal disabilities. Elite children also derived a certain amount of pride from blood connection, echoing the importance of blood, affection and provable paternity in concepts of family and social status discussed in earlier chapters. This was not the case for non-elites, who were more likely to hide their status out of concern for their reputation. Significantly, illegitimates did not identify as a group; there was no illegitimacy consciousness, subculture or imagined community.¹⁵⁷ Illegitimates appealed for equality by asserting their own individual merit and never sought a wholesale repeal of the illegitimacy laws. Illegitimates did consider themselves disadvantaged, and illegitimacy did cause individuals to

¹⁵⁴ Maynes, 'Adolescent Sexuality', p. 404. This reaction is also noted as typical among stigmatised groups in Goffman, *Stigma*, pp. 130-1.

¹⁵⁵ Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni, *In Defense of Shame*, p. 8; Goffman, *Stigma*, pp. 102, 108.

¹⁵⁶ Scheff, 'Shame and the Social Bond', pp. 96-7.

¹⁵⁷ For the use of these concepts in other measures of collective identity, see: French and Barry, 'Introduction', pp. 1-2, 21; Jütte, *Poverty and Deviance*, pp. 178-80; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 1983), pp. 15-16.

question and remake their identities. However, most illegitimates articulated negative feelings not necessarily about illegitimacy itself, but through its consequences, the deprivation of estate or title, familial isolation or secrecy, and frustration over what they could have been had they been legitimate. They did not talk about shame attaching to their very self-worth and they rarely gave examples of direct insult or exclusion of the kind feared by Boswell and other legitimate observers.

Conclusion

There was a desire to identify illegitimate individuals in both official records and social life. Individuals distinctly noted which members of their communities were illegitimate and which were not. However, within the category of illegitimacy there was a wide spectrum of attitudes. This spectrum was expressed through differences in labelling and in official records through selective parish registration. The subtle differentiation exercised in social identification was less easily expressed in registers through the binary distinction of 'B.B.', but appeared through the selective identification of illegitimates in other poor law records. There was considerable popular understanding of the range of circumstances that could lead to illegitimacy. Children resulting from irregular marriage and legitimated through subsequent parental marriage were often not labelled in the same way, both in baptism registers and in qualitative accounts. This does not mean that the children of cohabitation, irregular marriage or frustrated courtship were considered legitimate, but rather less illegitimate than the children of more transgressive relationships. Illegitimacy was also more important in certain contexts such as settlement, family histories or when forming new acquaintances. This suggests that there was widespread demand to differentiate legitimate and illegitimate members of the same family and that illegitimacy was an important socially-imposed marker of identity.

There is little evidence that illegitimates experienced overt social exclusion. However, stigma can be observed in the persistent 'othering' of illegitimates; they were considered in some way different, and in most cases inferior.¹⁵⁸ This was

¹⁵⁸ Link and Phelan, 'Conceptualizing Stigma', pp. 364-5; Goffman, *Stigma*, p. 15.

evident in the gap between public tolerance and private prejudice, manifest through persistent identification and gossip. The desire of some parents and illegitimates to hide illegitimacy certainly suggests that there was some reputational damage associated with illegitimacy. Defamation evidence and the fact that secrecy was not practised by all the individuals discussed here, suggests that reputational damage was specific and not widespread. The experience of illegitimate individuals suggests the existence of stigma but not shame. Illegitimates rarely displayed self-loathing, but rather frustration at their inability to fulfil what they believed to be their high moral worth. The common belief that they had been greatly disadvantaged is a primary marker of stigma.¹⁵⁹

In the rationale behind both identification and stigma, it is clear that the socio-economic background of both legitimate observer and illegitimate individual was significant. The legal identification of illegitimacy was most relevant to those requiring relief, or excluded from title and inheritance. All socio-economic groups practised identification. Poor individuals were generally just as likely to identify illegitimate relatives or acquaintances and higher incidence did not make illegitimacy immaterial. The impact of illegitimacy also differed as it intersected with class and gender. Elite men were more likely to feel frustration at their limited socio-economic independence, but were also more likely to assert their illegitimacy as a means to claim genteel blood. Middling illegitimates, or those aspiring to middling status, were more likely to attempt to hide their status or remake their identities. This may not have been an option for elites, whose illegitimacy was more immediately obvious through their exclusion from property and titles. Socio-economic background also became more important over the period. Identification and discrimination increasingly depended on class rather than parental relationship type, as the increasingly pejorative term 'bastard' became attached to poor law dependence. Elites also separated themselves from the poor through their treatment of illegitimates, as public ostracism was denounced as vulgar. The increasing gulf between polite society and the poor occurred in response to wider cultural change. This, alongside changes in how illegitimates presented themselves in public discourse according to dominant cultural stereotypes, will be explored further in chapter five.

¹⁵⁹ Goffman, *Stigma*, pp. 17-19, 21, 130-1.

Chapter Five: Cultural Change

Introduction

So far, this thesis has investigated family and community attitudes. These attitudes did not occur within a vacuum, but within wider social, religious and cultural contexts which changed over the period. Ideals of familial and interpersonal relationships shifted with the growth of sensibility as a behavioural model, and attitudes towards social regulation, particularly perceptions of the poor, responded to changing political and economic pressures. Previous chapters have focused on illegitimacy as individuals, highlighting the variation and complexity of illegitimate experience. This chapter contextualises these variations by examining the representation of illegitimacy as a concept, and of illegitimacy as an abstract collective, in eighteenth-century culture.

I argue that the dominant representations of illegitimacy shifted between 1660 and 1834. Representations of illegitimacy were not monolithic. There were multiple contradictory 'illegitimacies' in a pluralistic eighteenth-century culture.¹ However, I think it is possible to discern a general trend towards more positive representations of illegitimacy, albeit dependent on adherence to certain criteria. I argue that this shift was facilitated by changing modes of cultural expression, particularly the novel. The novel as a genre was a tool for the exploration of different forms of emotional expression, particularly acting as a site for the exercise of virtuous feeling within the tenets of sensibility.² Concurrent changes in religious and philosophical thought could be safely explored within novels, and their experimental form enabled the 'working out' of concepts such as sin, natural affection or illegitimacy.³ Tropes and

¹ Lisa Zunshine, *Bastards and Foundlings: Illegitimacy in Eighteenth-Century England* (Columbus, 2005), p. 2.

² John Mullan, 'Feelings and Novels', in Roy Porter (ed.), *Rewriting the Self: Histories from the Renaissance to the Present* (London, 1997), pp. 119-31; Thomas Laqueur, 'Bodies, Details and the Humanitarian Narrative', in Lynn Hunt (ed.), *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley, 1989), p. 181.

³ For novels as a means of 'working out' problems facing the family in this period, see Ruth Perry, *Novel Relations: The Transformation of Kinship in English Literature and Culture* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 5-6.

vocabulary developed in novels then spread to other forms of print culture, such as newspapers, and by the late eighteenth century had begun to inform how legitimate and illegitimate individuals wrote and talked about illegitimacy in everyday life. Individuals drew on a common back of perceptions to explain illegitimates' place in the world or to construct their own public personas, with the same tropes recurring in autobiographies, correspondence or parliamentary debates.⁴ This shared meaning of 'illegitimacy' and the characteristics associated with it changed between 1660 and 1834.⁵ This cultural context is vital in answering the question of what it meant to be illegitimate.

This chapter examines representations of illegitimacy in a range of published works, including ballads, plays, novels, poetry, autobiographies, biographies, newspapers, periodicals, religious tracts, and parliamentary debates.⁶ Printed material indicates the tropes and characteristics associated with illegitimacy in public discourse, and provides context for previous chapters' emphases on unpublished evidence. The amount and accessibility of printed material boomed following the lapse of the licensing act in 1695 and readership of printed works expanded over the century as literacy increased.⁷ The socio-economic background of readers is debated. Recent analysis of subscription lists has suggested that novels and magazines had diverse audiences, from the aristocracy to a lower-middling sort, their servants and apprentices, particularly in provincial areas.⁸ Newspapers and periodicals were

⁴ On the blurred line between fact and fiction and the use of narrative tropes in trial records and legal documents in particular, see: Keith Thomas, *History and Literature, The Ernest Hughes Memorial Lecture, 7 March 1988, University College Swansea* (Swansea, 1988); Natalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Cambridge, 1987). On the imaginative nature of autobiographies see Patricia Meyer Spacks, *Imagining a Self: Autobiography and Novel in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, MA., 1976), pp. 16, 19, 236, 239.

⁵ On the plural and unstable nature of 'meaning', see Peter Mandler, 'The Problem with Cultural History', *Cultural and Social History* 1.1 (2004), p. 109. This is similar to Tadmor's argument that there was a shared understanding of concepts of 'family' in eighteenth-century England, Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship, Patronage* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 16.

⁶ For the selection and scope of these works, see introduction, pp. 40-1.

⁷ Robert Shoemaker, 'Print Culture and the Creation of Public Knowledge about Crime in Eighteenth-Century London', in Paul Knepper, Jonathan Doak and Joanna Shapland (eds), *Urban Crime Prevention, Surveillance, and Restorative Justice* (Boca Raton, 2009), p. 1.

⁸ Jan S. Fergus, *Provincial Readers in Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 6, 18-19, 197. Watt notes that although the middle class was 'in a dominating position', readership was 'ever-widening', particularly after 1750, Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (London, 1957), p. 48.

perhaps more accessible as they were cheaper and easily passed around. By the 1780s approximately one third of London residents read a newspaper.⁹ Periodicals and newspapers also usefully solicited letters from their readership, creating a dialogue that can indicate disagreement or consensus. A range of sources are analysed together, reflecting the considerable overlap in their themes, authorship and readership. Periodicals, for instance, often contained short fictional stories and autobiographies utilised the tropes found in novels as rhetorical devices. My research into these genres suggests that there was a dominant image of illegitimacy that was eventually replicated across different narrative forms.

This chapter argues that perceptions of illegitimates as inherently sinful and villainous were replaced by the idea that they were innocent victims of a socially imposed law. The cultural work performed by illegitimate characters was no longer as a symbol of social disorder but as a vehicle for cultivating virtuous feeling, influenced by the development of sensibility as a cultural ideal. Illegitimates were depicted as sympathetic and capable of familial affection, reducing the perception of them as inherently different and minimising their threatening power. However, sympathy was dependent on the fulfilment of certain criteria and particularly required that illegitimates remain inferior. Narratives featuring illegitimates generally had conservative morals, illustrating the negative consequences of extra-marital sex rather than agitating for illegitimate equality. Moreover, sympathetic qualities were generally only applied to illegitimate characters of middling or elite social status, or those who at least aspired to respectability through their adherence to middling values of industriousness and domesticity. Illegitimates were primarily only tolerated within the private sphere. The ways in which royal illegitimates were represented indicates that illegitimates could be accepted within a domestic familial setting but that calls for public equality were perceived negatively. This distinction between private and public also excluded illegitimates who were chargeable on the state. Chargeable pauper illegitimates continued to be demonised as burdens on the state, precisely because pauper family life was considered public business. Pauper illegitimates were not endowed with sympathetic qualities and so were excluded from the general improvement in perceptions of illegitimates over this period.

⁹ Fergus, *Provincial Readers*, pp. 212-3; Hannah Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society, 1695-1855* (Harlow, 2000), p. 47.

This chapter has wider implications for historical understanding of class identity and its relationship with sexual morality. Multiple scholars, most notably Davidoff and Hall, have argued that sexual morality and virtuous domesticity were central, and growing, means of class differentiation in this period.¹⁰ Analyses of the discourses surrounding adultery, seduction and recurrent Reformation of Manners campaigns have suggested that there was a tripartite split, in which the middling sort defined themselves against the profligate aristocracy and labouring poor.¹¹ I use evidence of attitudes towards illegitimates to suggest in contrast that a binary split developed, based around the public consequences of sex. Difference developed between chargeable and privately-maintained illegitimates, as the latter were rehabilitated as 'respectable'. I extend Clark's argument that 'middling' standards of sexual morality were appropriated by a predominantly radical and evangelical section of the nascent working class to differentiate themselves from paupers, to argue that the aristocracy and royal family were also able to appropriate middling morality in this manner.¹² Public acceptance and sympathy did not require individuals to hide their illegitimacy but rather was contingent on the presentation of a certain type of respectable illegitimacy, within middling discourses of sensibility and domesticity.

Public discussion of illegitimacy up to the reforms of the 1834 New Poor Law has previously been seen in terms of class antagonism. Cody, for example, stated that:

[T]he growth of evangelicalism, enthusiasm for "respectability," and legal marriage and domesticity; and the decline of libertinism and bawdiness among the middle and elite classes – also helped to make the bastard-bearer a dangerous figure by heightening moral and cultural differences between the middle and working classes.¹³

¹⁰ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1790-1850* (London, 1987), pp. 18-27; Margaret Hunt, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender and the Family in England, 1680-1780* (Berkeley, 1996), pp. 11-12, 18, 69-71.

¹¹ Donna T. Andrew, *Aristocratic Vice: The Attack on Duelling, Suicide, Adultery and Gambling in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven, 2013); Katherine Binhammer, 'The Sex Panic of the 1790s', *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 6.3 (1996), pp. 409-34.

¹² Anna Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class* (Berkeley, 1995), pp. 48, 52-4, 61. For divisions within the labouring poor around ideas of respectability, and in particular its employment as a means of resistance to middling and state regulation, see Lynn MacKay, *Respectability and the London Poor, 1780-1870: The Value of Virtue* (London, 2013), pp. 9-11.

¹³ Lisa Forman Cody, 'The Politics of Illegitimacy in an Age of Reform: Women, Reproduction

This growing hostility towards pauper reproduction, both legitimate and illegitimate, has been well-documented. Cody and Lees have argued that by the 1770s pro-populationist movements were replaced by concern that the population, and the proportion of poor, were growing at unsustainable rates. This led to a crackdown on the provision of poor relief, and through it the policing of lower-class sexuality and family life under the 1834 New Poor Law.¹⁴ However, this narrative of an increasing moral gulf between middling and elite society and the working classes does not take into account the prominence of middling and elite illegitimate characters in public discourse and their real-life presence in middling and elite families across the nation. There is no understanding of how more punitive attitudes towards pauper illegitimates were reconciled with growing tolerance of non-pauper illegitimates, or of the mechanisms and limits of these shifts. There have also been few attempts to reconcile the growing illegitimacy ratio and theories that a sexual revolution made illicit sexuality more acceptable in this period, with perceptions of domestic morality as the dominant cultural force by the early nineteenth century.¹⁵ I suggest that sympathy towards a certain type of illegitimacy reconciled these two developments; illegitimates' capacity to provoke virtuous feeling and their inclusion in essentially conservative discourses such as natural affection could actually be used to bolster ideals of domestic morality. Representations of illegitimacy were reformulated to fit the new cultural values of evangelicalism, respectability and domesticity. Class antagonisms were expressed not necessarily through the assumption that illegitimacy only existed among the poor but that pauper illegitimacy was different, and more dangerous, than illegitimacy among those who aspired to 'middle-class' values.

and Political Economy in England's New Poor Law of 1834', *Journal of Women's History* 11.4 (2000), p. 133. Similar in Clark, *Struggle for the Breeches*, p. 61.

¹⁴ Lisa Forman Cody, *Birth of the Nation: Sex, Science, and the Conception of Eighteenth-Century Britons* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 269-71, 283; Lynn Hollen Lees, *The Solidarities of Strangers: The English Poor Laws and the People, 1700-1948* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 7-8, 127, 135-41. Crawford also argues that the state sought to deny pauper parenthood, although she places less emphasis on population increase, Patricia Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children in England, 1580-1800* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 211, 217-8.

¹⁵ Dabhoiwala sees domestic morality, characterised by belief in female sexual passivity and informed by evangelical religion, as constituting a backlash against eighteenth-century permissiveness. He does not consider that they may have co-existed, Faramerz Dabhoiwala, *The Origins of Sex: A History of the First Sexual Revolution* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 351-4.

Changing perceptions of illegitimates have received scholarly attention, primarily within literary studies. Findlay and Neill noted that sixteenth- and seventeenth-century illegitimates were invariably portrayed as villains, symbolising their capacity for social disruption and their status as outsiders, particularly in drama.¹⁶ Eighteenth-century authors, in contrast, utilised the liminal social status and mysterious origins of the foundling/orphan/illegitimate as ciphers for the discussion of social mobility, property inheritance and familial bonds of blood and affection.¹⁷ König, Stratmann and Zunshine all argue that disruptive illegitimate characters were transformed into virtuous legitimate foundling/orphan characters, with Zunshine, in particular, suggesting that this reflects the declining economic threat of illegitimates to a middle-class authorship and readership, as property was increasingly earned rather than inherited.¹⁸ Schmidgen and McKeon also highlight economic arguments, suggesting that the virtuous illegitimate/foundling/orphan character was made into a symbol of meritocracy, used to critique rigid social order and aristocratic corruption following the 1688 Glorious Revolution.¹⁹ However, these arguments rely primarily on evidence of legitimate foundling characters, not illegitimate characters.²⁰ The foundling/orphan's eventual legitimacy was integral to their narrative function, allowing the reveal of legitimacy later in the plot, and their subsequent rightful property inheritance. This limits any complicating associations with sexual immorality. I argue instead that illegitimate and foundling characters were not interchangeable. Authors continued to specify characters' illegitimacy, suggesting that illegitimacy meant something different to foundling status. I also

¹⁶ Alison Findlay, *Illegitimate Power: Bastards in Renaissance Drama* (Manchester, 1994); Michael Neill, 'In Everything Illegitimate': Imagining the Bastard in Renaissance Drama', *Yearbook of English Studies* 23 (1993), pp. 270-92.

¹⁷ Zunshine, *Bastards and Foundlings*; Wolfram Schmidgen, 'Illegitimacy and Social Observation: The Bastard in the Eighteenth-Century Novel', *English Literary History*, 69.1 (2002), pp. 133-66; Cheryl L. Nixon, *The Orphan in Eighteenth-Century Law and Literature: Estate, Blood, and Body* (Farnham, 2011); Eva König, *The Orphan in Eighteenth-Century Fiction: The Vicissitudes of the Eighteenth-Century Subject* (Basingstoke, 2014); Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600-1740* (Baltimore, 1987).

¹⁸ König, *The Orphan*; Zunshine, *Bastards and Foundlings*, p. 165; Gerd Stratmann, 'Nobody's Child, Everybody's Child: Discourses of Illegitimacy in Eighteenth-Century England', *Journal for the Study of British Cultures* 18.2 (2011), pp. 109-19.

¹⁹ Schmidgen, 'Illegitimacy and Social Observation', p. 133; Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600-1740* (Baltimore, 1987), pp. 158-9.

²⁰ For example, Zunshine uses *Evelina* in Frances Burney's *Evelina* (1778), *Virginia* in Maria Edgeworth's *Belinda* (1801), *Fidelia* in Edward Moore's *The Foundling* (1748) and *Indiana* in Richard Steele's *The Conscious Lovers* (1723), all of whom turn out to be legitimate foundlings.

indicate that changing perceptions of illegitimates were not necessarily confined to the novel, but were later replicated across multiple genres.

This chapter examines first the shift in dominant representations of illegitimates, from being inherently sinful and endowed with an exceptional and threatening power, to being seen as capable of innocence and virtue, much like their legitimate counterparts. This reflected changing religious and philosophical beliefs about the nature of sin and human potential. The second section examines the influence of sensibility on representations of illegitimates, suggesting that illegitimates were increasingly used in tragic plot lines to provoke virtuous feelings among their readers. In order to achieve this, authors presented illegitimates as empathetic individuals, exploring the psychological burden of illegitimacy on characters and illegitimates' capacity for familial bonds of natural affection. This discourse did, however, have some limitations: sympathy was generally used to convey a moral of the dangers of illicit sex and was largely confined to presentations of illegitimates of middling or elite origin. Finally, the relationship between the more positive depiction of illegitimates and their consideration in social and legal public policy is considered. The experience of the two most prominent groups of illegitimates in long-eighteenth-century society, the royal family and paupers, indicates that illegitimacy could be tolerated as long as it was presented as a private family matter. Those who claimed legal equality or whose illegitimacy was considered an economic burden on the state continued to be presented negatively using much older tropes of illegitimacy as a source of vice and social disorder.

From Villainy to Virtue

A fundamental component of medieval and early modern prejudice against illegitimates was that they were intrinsically corrupted by their sinful origins. Legal and religious tracts argued that '[b]astardy staineth the Blood' and that illegitimates born out of '[I]ust' were 'therefore... corrupt & abominable'.²¹ This was predicated on biblical teachings, which decreed '[a] bastard shall not enter into the Congregation of the Lord: even to his tenth generation', or illegitimates 'shall not thrive, nor take

²¹ John Brydall, *Lex spuriorum: or, the law relating to bastardy. Collected from the common, civil and ecclesiastical laws* (London, 1703), pp. 3, 46.

deepe rooting' as they are like 'imperfect branches... their fruit unprofitable'.²² Their lustful origins made them more susceptible to sin. One author stated that illegitimates were 'born in Uncleaness, and bear the Blot of Bastardy upon them.'²³ Sinfulness was depicted as inherent, inescapable and manifest in their very being and blood, applicable to all illegitimates regardless of the circumstances of their conception, gender, or socio-economic class. This was reflected in popular literature. Findlay found that the dominant illegitimate character in renaissance drama was the villain, inevitably bound to destroy the social order from motivations of vengeance and self-interest.²⁴ Neill similarly found that illegitimate characters were closely associated with dirt, deformity and disorder, an essential baseness that was physical as well as moral.²⁵ Illegitimate characters were monstrous, grotesque mixtures of unnatural couplings, the most famous example being Caliban in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.²⁶ This chimed with popular belief in the power of maternal imagination, through which a mother's experience during pregnancy could deform a child's appearance or character.²⁷ It was, therefore, eminently plausible that a lustful conception could leave a mark upon a child.

Over the century, philosophical and religious beliefs in essential sinfulness were replaced by an emphasis on natural innocence, influenced by the views of Locke and, subsequently, Rousseau on childhood, nature and individuality. The child was reconceptualised as a 'tabula rasa', by nature good and only corrupted by the external influences of mankind.²⁸ These views opened up a new avenue for

²² King James Bible, *The Holy Bible, Conteyning the Old Testament and the New* (London, 1611), Deuteronomy 23:2; The Wisdom of Solomon 4:3. These bible passages were often quoted, see for example: Anon., *This treatise proving three worlds, fou[n]dations, mentioned in Scripture* (London, 1696), pp. 399-400; Edward Billing, *Words in the Word; To Be Read by Friends in the Simplicity, Felt in the Power, and Received in the Love* (London, 1661), p. 3.

²³ Samuel Acton, *A modest reply humbly offer'd, as an answer to, and confutation of seven arguments collected and deliver'd by Mr. Samuel Lawrence* (London, 1692), p. 28. For similar see: Anon., *A representation of the state of Christianity in England, and of it's decay and danger from sectaries aswel as papists*, (London, 1674), p. 12; Anon., *Aristotle's master-piece compleated in two parts* (London, 1697), pp. 44-5.

²⁴ Findlay, *Illegitimate Power*, pp. 39, 151.

²⁵ Neill, "In Everything Illegitimate", pp. 275-9, 285-92.

²⁶ William Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (London, 1623), discussed in Findlay, *Illegitimate Power*, pp. 148-52; Neill, "In Everything Illegitimate", pp. 277-8, 285-7.

²⁷ Alexandra Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 198-203; Cody, *Birthing the Nation*, pp. 120-3.

²⁸ J.H. Plumb, 'The New World of Children in Eighteenth-Century England', *Past & Present* 67 (1975), pp. 65-70; Anthony Fletcher, *Growing up in England: The Experience of Childhood, 1600-*

perceiving an illegitimate child as innocent, and separate from their parents' moral failings.²⁹ Adjectives such as 'innocent' and 'poor' (to mean pitiable, not economically disadvantaged) became common in narrative sources as descriptors of all children, both legitimate and illegitimate.³⁰ Nature was also established as a positive force associated with innocence, simplicity and freedom from artifice. Illegitimates had long been associated with nature, as the children of the body born outside of the man-made structure of legal marriage. Prior to 1700 this signalled their 'destructive bestiality' and hostility to civilised law and order.³¹ By the late eighteenth century, civilisation was feared to cause corruption, vanity and avarice.³² Illegitimates' association with an unspoiled natural state now indicated instead their greater capacity for virtue because they were uncorrupted by social norms. Adult illegitimate characters, such as Celinda in Smollett's 1753 novel *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom*, were described as having a 'purity of sentiment' and 'inviolable attachment to religion and virtue'.³³

Religious arguments were now utilised to defend illegitimate innocence. In Thomas Holcroft's 1795 play *The Deserted Daughter*, the character Joanna repurposes the biblical injunction that illegitimates are like 'imperfect branches... broken off, and their fruit unprofitable' in the line 'I am nobody... a branch lopped off and cast away;

1914 (New Haven, 2008), pp. 6-8; W.B. Carnochan, 'The Child is Father of the Man' in Patricia Meyer Spacks and W.B. Carnochan (eds.), *A Distant Prospect: Eighteenth-Century Views of Childhood* (Los Angeles, 1982), pp. 31, 35-6.

²⁹ Carolyn Steedman, *Master and Servant: Love and Labour in the English Industrial Age* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 114-20.

³⁰ The word 'innocent' is used to refer to both legitimate and illegitimate children in: Elizabeth Camden Lambert, *The Bar-Sinister, or Memoirs of An Illegitimate. Founded on Facts. In Two Volumes* (London, 1836), vol. 1, p. 31, vol. 2, pp. 96, 159; Amelia Alderson Opie, *Adeline Mowbray, Or the Mother And Daughter: A Tale, In Three Volumes. By Mrs Opie* (London, 1805), vol. 3, p. 156; Mary Wollstonecraft, *The Wrongs of Woman: Or, Maria. A Fragment. In Two Volumes* (London, 1798), vol. 2, p. 18; Daniel Defoe, *Roxana* (London, 1724), pp. 94-5; Charlotte Smith, *Emmeline, the Orphan of the Castle* (London 1788), vol. 3, pp. 155, 209. For examples in periodicals see: 'An Uncommon History of a Natural Child', *Weekly Miscellany: or, Instructive entertainer* 9, 15 December, (London, 1777), p. 254; John Bidlake, 'The Natural Son', *The Weekly Entertainer: or, Agreeable and instructive repository* 29, 3 April 1797 (London, 1797).

³¹ Findlay, *Illegitimate Power*, pp. 130-6, 149-51.

³² McKeon, *Origins of the English Novel*, p. 250; Richard Whatmore, 'Luxury, Commerce and the Rise of Political Economy', in James A. Harris (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of British Philosophy in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 575-98.

³³ Tobias Smollett, *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom. By the Author of Roderick Random* (London, 1753), vol. 1, pp. 251-4. Similar adjectives are used to describe illegitimate Lucy Sindall in Henry Mackenzie, *The Man of the World. In Two Parts* (London, 1773), vol. 2, pp. 10, 21-2, 28-31, 42, 53, 72, 85-6.

that might have grown, but that could find no root'. Holcroft uses this idea to persuade others to pity and support rather than exclude her, citing her individual potential, 'misfortune and an active spirit, struggling to shake off oppression'.³⁴ The disadvantages of illegitimacy become external, rather than linked to her inferiority or sinfulness. Religious arguments were also combined with ideas of natural innocence in charitable tracts. Foundling Hospital campaigner Jonas Hanway considered illegitimate and abandoned children as 'object's of [God's] peculiar tenderness', advocating 'compassion' for 'innocent' children born out of 'human frailty'.³⁵ Even works purporting to educate children on correct morals argued that the exclusion of illegitimacy was 'void of justice and humanity'.³⁶ Religion also became fused with beliefs in Enlightenment rationality and liberality. The *Monthly Magazine* discussed the '[i]neligibility of Bastards for Holy Orders' through a belief that stigmatisation was backward; 'bastards... were anciently considered infamous persons' but 'such is the liberality of the present day... that no one need apprehend that his preferment would be impeded by the incontinence of his parents, or by any demerit but his own'.³⁷

Growing religious sympathy occurred in both Anglican and dissenting contexts. Steedman argues that the late-eighteenth-century Anglican God was one of care rather than condemnation. Religious teaching absorbed Lockean ideas of child innocence to produce a view of humanity as the children of God, with sin as a consequence of free will rather than an inherited vice, and empathy, charity and love as the route to salvation.³⁸ Anglican clergyman and poet John Bidlake advised his

³⁴ Thomas Holcroft, *The Deserted Daughter: A Comedy. As it is acted at the Theatre Royal, Covent-Garden* (London, 1795), p. 50.

³⁵ Jonas Hanway, *An earnest appeal for mercy to the children of the poor*, (London, 1766), p. 139; Jonas Hanway, *A candid historical account of the Hospital for the reception of exposed and deserted young children* (London, 1759), p. 12; Jonas Hanway, *Letters to the guardians of the infant poor to be appointed by the act of last session of Parliament*, pp. 91, 109. For similar see Britannicus, 'To the Author', *London Evening Post* 4864, 6-9 January 1759 (London, England).

³⁶ Mark Anthony Meilan, *The Friend of Youth; being a sequel to The Children's friend; and like that work, consisting of apt stories, entertaining dialogues, and moral dramas: All Intended to excite Attention, cherish Feeling, and inculcate Virtue in The Rising Generation* (London, 1788), vol. 7, p. 44.

³⁷ 'Ineligibility of Bastards for Holy Orders, and curious legal custom in Kent against their reputed Fathers', *Monthly Magazine, or, British Register* 49.228 (London, 1820), p. 238.

³⁸ Steedman, *Master and Servant*, pp. 114-20, 173, 187-91. The prevalence of this view among Anglican clergy has been demonstrated in a recent larger study, see William Gibson and Joanne Begiato, *Sex and the Church in the Long Eighteenth Century: Religion, Enlightenment and the Sexual Revolution* (London, 2017), pp. 45-6, 52, 240. This benevolent God is in direct

readers, the '[c]hildren of plenty', not to 'spurn misfortune's outcast child' but instead treat them with 'pity' and 'friendship'.³⁹ Religion now became a justification of benevolence and understanding, not ostracism. Despite their emphasis on moral discipline, evangelical or dissenting doctrines such as Methodism also had space for a more positive perception of illegitimates in their focus on conversion. Dissenters believed that all sinners could be saved, and suffering only increased the glory of salvation.⁴⁰ Antinomians took the most extreme view, that sins did not matter as ultimately God would forgive all.⁴¹ Illegitimates could, therefore, be redeemed, in contrast to earlier depictions of unending and inherent sinfulness.

Illegitimate birth status was often specifically noted in conversion narratives to demonstrate suffering and redemption. Narratives emphasised individuals' past sins to demonstrate the extent of their repentance, and to elicit sympathy from the congregations they hoped to convert.⁴² Methodist clergyman Robert Young published a 'Memoir of Miss Sarah Racster', the illegitimate daughter of 'respectable' and cohabiting, but not legally married, plantation owners. She was 'unhappily neglected by her parents; and... had the misfortune to be born an illegitimate child'. Although she repeats her parents' sins and enters into an extra-marital relationship, she is saved by Methodists and proclaims "'a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness'". Young emphasises Racster's virtue as an example of a 'Christian character'; her illegitimacy and previous sins serve to underline the importance of redemption and true spirituality.⁴³ Controversial Antinomian preacher William Huntington proclaimed openly 'I am a bastard... the offspring of double adultery', to

contrast to the vengeful, judgemental God of the seventeenth century, see Walsham, *Providence*, pp. 90-95.

³⁹ Bidlake, 'The Natural Son', p. 279.

⁴⁰ Mark A. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys* (Leicester, 2004), pp. 128-9, 141. For the views of John and Charles Wesley in particular, see Phyllis Mack, *Heart Religion in the British Enlightenment: Gender and Emotion in Early Methodism* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 38, 40, 41-3.

⁴¹ Clark, *Struggle for the Breeches*, p. 107.

⁴² Mack, *Heart Religion*, pp. 62-9, 94; Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism*, pp. 270, 273-4. Clark, *Struggle for the Breeches*, pp. 114-6. Clark specifically notes that minister John Church emphasised his status as a foundling in his autobiographical work *The Foundling, or, The child of providence* (London, 1823) in order to portray himself as a particularly sympathetic preacher.

⁴³ Robert Young, 'Memoir of Miss Sarah Racster, Of Jamaica: By the Rev. Robert Young', *The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* 6 (London, 1827), pp. 366-70.

underline his 'embittered' childhood and subsequent success.⁴⁴ Just as conversion narratives often portrayed orphaned or neglected children, illegitimates were perfect examples of marginalisation, suffering and sin.⁴⁵ These views were not uncontested; dissenters were often criticised for excusing sinful behaviour.⁴⁶ It is also important to note that most religious groups continued to view extra-marital sex negatively. But, significantly, the sin of extra-marital sex was no longer viewed as intrinsically attached to illegitimate individuals themselves. The inclusion of illegitimate children as figures of redemption chimed with a growing perception of illegitimates as capable of inner virtue and, crucially, worthy of pity, that echoed across denominations, including Anglicanism.

The transition from sin to virtue is also evident in the changing depiction of illegitimates as powerful and exceptional. Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century literature utilised a 'bastard as prodigy' discourse as a reason to fear illegitimates. Their lustful conception was thought to bestow a superior intellectual or physical strength, manifest as cunning villainy, animalistic appetite or lack of self-control.⁴⁷ As McKeon argues, by 1700 this had merged with new beliefs in self-determination to repurpose illegitimate characters of any social background as symbols of meritocracy: the triumph of natural virtue and "true nobility" despite marginal social status.⁴⁸ In the story collection *The English Rogue* (1671) the sea-captain, 'left... carelessly to the world' by his lustful parents, attributes his tenacity to his illegitimacy as 'that which was gotten with so much heat, would live in spite of

⁴⁴ 'Art. IX, The Works of the Reverend William Huntington, S.S. Minister of the Gospel, at Providence Chapel. Gray's Inn Lane, completed to the close of the Year 1806', *The Quarterly Review* 24.48 (London, 1821), pp. 462-3. For details of Huntington's life, see George M. Ella, *William Huntington, Pastor of Providence* (Darlington, 1994).

⁴⁵ Mack, *Heart Religion*, pp. 75-6.

⁴⁶ For example, 'Confessions of a Methodist', *The Satirist, or, Monthly Meteor* 4 (London, 1809), pp. 551-63.

⁴⁷ Findlay, *Illegitimate Power*, pp. 130-3, 149-51; Zunshine, *Bastards and Foundlings*, p. 88; Neill, "In Everything Illegitimate", p. 275.

⁴⁸ McKeon, *Origins of the English Novel*, pp. 364-5, 418-9. 'True nobility' appears in Samuel Richardson, *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded*, ed. T.C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel (Boston, 1971), pp. 349-50, cited in McKeon, *Origins of the English Novel*, p. 365. Illegitimates and other lower-status individuals such as Richardson's servant maid Pamela, for example, were presented as more virtuous, and more deserving of material reward, than their socio-economic superiors. See also: Stratmann, 'Nobody's Child', pp. 110-11; Schmidgen, 'Illegitimacy and Social Observation', pp. 146-7.

Fate'.⁴⁹ Poet Richard Savage, claiming to be the lost illegitimate son of the 4th Earl Rivers, utilised this trope in the 1720s to suggest that his illegitimacy gave him an intellectual edge as a 'great *Natural Genius*', superior to 'dull domestic *Heir[s]*' born in wedlock.⁵⁰ As Zunshine notes, Savage was here co-opting a much older idea; in Shakespeare's *King Lear*, Edmund states that illegitimates 'in the lustie stealth of Nature, take/ More composition, and fierce qualitie' than legitimates born 'within a dull stale tyred bed'.⁵¹ But, whereas Edmund's energy was dangerous, conforming to the villainous stereotype, Savage portrays his as a sign of meritocratic triumph against adversity: his 'good Qualities... ought the more to be esteem'd and cherish'd because he owes them to himself only'.⁵² This was echoed in semi-fictional articles published in periodicals. In 1735 *The Gentleman's Magazine* quoted a letter from an illegitimate man seeking support for 'the Cause of the helpless natural Children'. The editor combined developing beliefs in illegitimate innocence with the continuing perception of them as exceptional. He agreed that illegitimates 'by their Virtue and Merit, have wiped out the Stain' of illegitimacy, but that their stigmatisation was 'a natural Reason... why they have generally more Spirits, and are endow'd with a more lively Genius than the Children of Wedlock'.⁵³ These early examples took place within a transitional period in the representation of illegitimates. Although now recast as the hero rather than the villain, they remained an exceptional 'other'.

By 1800, representations of illegitimates had lost this power of exceptionality.⁵⁴ They were portrayed increasingly as the everyman figure.⁵⁵ This neutralised their potential

⁴⁹ Richard Head and Francis Kirkman, *The English Rogue: Continued in the Life of Meriton Latroon, and Other Extravagants: Comprehending the most Eminent Cheats of Both Sexes. The Fourth Part* (London, 1671), p. 103.

⁵⁰ Richard Savage, *The bastard. A poem, inscribed with all due reverence to Mrs Bret, once countess of Macclesfield. By Richard Savage, son of the late Earl Rivers* (3rd edn, London, 1728), p. 3. Similar imagery appears in Charles Beckingham, *The Life of Mr Richard Savage* (London, 1728), p. 7. This trope also appears in ballads, see *A Poem Against Marriage; Directed to that Inconsiderable Animal, call'd Husband* ([unknown, n.d.]), National Library of Scotland, Crawford 536, EBBA 32912.

⁵¹ William Shakespeare, *King Lear* (London, 1623), act 1, scene 2, p. 285; Zunshine, *Bastards and Foundlings*, p. 88.

⁵² Beckingham, *Life of Savage*, p. 14, echoed in Aaron Hill, *The Plain Dealer* (London, 1730), vol. 1, p. 223; vol. 2, p. 141. Similar sentiments occur in Savage's own writings, see Richard Savage, 'The Picture', in Richard Savage, *Miscellaneous poems and translations. By several hands. Publish'd by Richard Savage, Son of the late Earl Rivers* (London, 1726), p. 296.

⁵³ 'Of Bastardy', *The Gentleman's Magazine: or, Monthly Intelligencer*, 5 September (London, 1735), p. 528, responding to a letter in *The Universal Spectator* 360, 30 August (London, 1735).

⁵⁴ Cf. Zunshine, *Bastards and Foundlings*, p. 88.

threat to social order and encouraged reader sympathy by creating common links between reader and subject. By this time Savage had been dismissed as an outlandish imposter, attempting to trick the world into 'mistaking an idle, ungrateful libertine, for a man of genius and virtue'.⁵⁶ Illegitimates were no longer represented, or presented themselves, as special, but rather claimed compassion in their ordinariness. The 'bastard as prodigy' had become sufficiently passé by 1815 for Austen to satirise it in *Emma*; the illegitimate Harriet Smith is profoundly ordinary, much to the heroine's dismay.⁵⁷ The illegitimate Eliza in Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) appears not as the consequence of inherited maternal promiscuity but as a virtuous innocent deceived by Willoughby. The power of Eliza's example is that she is sufficiently similar to the legitimate Marianne to act as a tragic cautionary tale, deserving of compassion rather than blame.⁵⁸ The 'everyman' trope significantly ended the assumption that illegitimates were inherently different, whether positive or negative. It increased sympathy for illegitimates by suggesting that illegitimacy could happen to anyone in a 'there but for the Grace of God' scenario and conceptualised illegitimacy as an externally imposed legal category, rather than an inherent quality.

By the later eighteenth century, illegitimates were no longer considered as inherently sinful or evil, but instead as innocent symbols of human potential. Religious arguments were repurposed to recast illegitimates as appropriate symbols of charity, or exemplars of the power of faith in overcoming suffering and unlocking inner virtue. So complete was this transition that one of the only villainous illegitimates to appear around 1800 is Gifford, in William Godwin's *Fleetwood* (1805). No reviewer mentioned Gifford's illegitimacy, concentrating instead on his mixed-race status as a reason for his villainy. One reviewer concluded even in this that 'the unnatural

⁵⁵ The phrase 'everyman' is first used by Schmidgen, in his argument that after the 1688 Glorious Revolution illegitimates were no longer associated with social disorder. He does not link it to growing sympathy, see Schmidgen, 'Illegitimacy and Social Observation', p. 137.

⁵⁶ Maria Edgeworth, *Castle Rackrent. An Hibernian Tale. Taken from Facts, and from The Manners of the Irish Squares, Before the year 1782* (London, 1800), p. vi.

⁵⁷ Jane Austen, *Emma. A Novel. In Three Volumes. By the Author of 'Pride and Prejudice,' &c. &c.* (London, 1816), vol. 3, p. 357. Similar ordinariness occurs in Henry Fielding, *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling. In Six Volumes. By Henry Fielding, Esq.* (London, 1749), discussed in Zunshine, *Bastards and Foundlings*, pp. 86-8, 92, 167. Zunshine sees *Tom Jones* as atypical in this respect, rather than an early example of a changing archetype.

⁵⁸ Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility. A Novel. In Three Volumes. By a Lady* (London, 1811), vol. 2, pp. 171, 173-4, 178. Cf. Zunshine, *Bastards and Foundlings*, pp. 155-6.

atrociousness of Gifford' is 'rather improbable'.⁵⁹ The declining belief in illegitimates' intrinsic sinfulness, replaced by faith in their innocence, capacity for virtue and essential similarities to legitimate individuals was the first step towards a more sympathetic cultural discourse. As we shall see, it opened up the possibility of empathy for illegitimates' predicament and their inclusion in normative family ideals. This change was facilitated by the developing genre of the novel, and the rise of sensibility as a dominant culture in late eighteenth-century society.

Sympathy and Sensibility

Between 1660 and 1834, the narrative utility of illegitimate characters changed. In Restoration and early-eighteenth-century novels, ballads and plays, illegitimates appear primarily as anonymous infants rather than as individuals with their own thoughts and narrative arcs. Their purpose is to illustrate the comic or subversive consequences of extra-marital sex. In common 'battle of the sexes' plots, illegitimate infants appear as weapons to be utilised or burdens for men and women to avoid; once their purpose is achieved they disappear from the narrative and there is little compassion for the infant as an individual.⁶⁰ In the ballad *A Tryal of Skill* (c. 1677), an unmarried mother tricks her would-be seducer into keeping her illegitimate child so she can escape the economic burden.⁶¹ Variations on this theme appear in numerous other ballads. In *The Country Girl's Policy* (1701), the heroine tricks a stranger into stealing her basket. It turns out to contain a baby, which his wife assumes is his,

⁵⁹ 'Art. XV. Fleetwood: or the New Man of Feeling', *The Edinburgh Review* 6.11, April 1805 (Edinburgh, 1805), pp. 190, 192. For other reviews that do not mention his illegitimacy but instead focus on his race see: 'Art. XI. Fleetwood; or, the New Man of Feeling', *The British Critic*, 26 August (London, 1805), p. 193; 'Essays, Historical, Literary, and Moral', *The European Magazine, and London Review* 49, April 1806 (London, 1806), pp. 259-61. The conservative *Anti-Jacobin Review* went so far to call Gifford's villainy 'absurd' and 'ridiculous', 'Book Review', *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine, or Monthly Political, and Literary Censor* 21.86, August 1805 (London, 1805), p. 338. Similar criticisms appear in: 'Book Review', *The Critical Review, or, Annals of Literature* 4.4, April 1805 (London, 1805), p. 384; 'Book review', *Literary Journal, or, Universal review of Literature* 5.3, March 1805 (London, 1805), p. 246.

⁶⁰ For the ubiquity of 'battle of the sexes' plots see: Tanya Evans, "'Blooming Virgins all Beware": Love, Courtship, and Illegitimacy in Eighteenth-Century British Popular Literature', in Alys Levene, Thomas Nutt and Samantha Williams (eds), *Illegitimacy in Britain, 1700-1920* (Basingstoke, 2005); Joy Wiltenburg, *Disorderly Women and Female Power in the Street Literature of Early Modern England and Germany* (Charlottesville, VA., 1992), pp. 7-9, 95, 156-61, 174; Zunshine, *Bastards and Foundlings*, p. 24.

⁶¹ *A Tryal of skill, performed by a poor decay'd Gentlewoman* (unknown, [1674-79]), National Library of Scotland, Crawford 733, EBBA 33399.

damaging his reputation and his purse. The heroine escapes the burden of unmarried motherhood as '[i]f she has but Wit to take Care of her T----t, She may pass for a Maid again'.⁶² Even in tragic ballads the child appears only as a proof of seduction and is usually abandoned or killed.⁶³ These tropes were repeated over the century in ballads but appear only in early novels, plays and stories. In the story collection *The English Rogue* (1665-71), a libertine apprentice gets his comeuppance for abandoning his first two pregnant lovers by being cuckolded into marriage with a third. The female characters falsely filiate their children for financial gain and then abandon them.⁶⁴ In Defoe's novels *Roxana* (1724) and *Moll Flanders* (1722), the eponymous characters have multiple illegitimate children who are seldom named, and exist only to provide jeopardy at certain points in the plot before they disappear, often without explanation of their fate.⁶⁵ Other than the Shakespearean villainous bastard, there were very few adult illegitimate characters in seventeenth- and early-eighteenth-century literature.

Over the eighteenth century, novels, plays and other fictionalised narratives increasingly included illegitimates as main characters. Novels such as *Tom Jones* (1749), *The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker* (1771), *Fleetwood* (1805) or *Emma* (1816), among others, featured illegitimates as main characters and discussed illegitimacy as a defining feature of their identity and situation. Plots increasingly focused on illegitimacy itself as the cause of tragedy and adversity, and comedic illegitimacy

⁶² *The Country Girl's Policy: Or, the Cockney Outwitted* ([unknown, 1701]), British Library, Roxburghe 3.300-1, EBBA 31022. Similar plots occur in: *Countryman's Garland; In Two Parts* ([unknown, 1779-85]), British Library, Roxburghe 3.865, EBBA 31371; Anon., *Love in a Barn. Or, Right Country Courtship* (unknown, 1670).

⁶³ There are numerous examples of this plot type published throughout the period: *A New Ballad, intituled, A Warning to Youth* ([unknown, 1619-29]), British Library, Roxburghe 1.447, EBBA 30301; *The Mournful Lady's Garland* ([unknown, 1750]), Huntington Library, Miscellaneous 289756, EBBA 32486; *Northamptonshire Tragedy* (London, [1765-1844]), National Library of Scotland, Crawford 1451, EBBA 34142; *The Oxfordshire Tragedy: Or, the Virgin's Advice* (London, [1763-75]), British Library, Roxburghe 3.750-1, EBBA 31458.

⁶⁴ Richard Head, *The English Rogue; Described, in the Life of Meriton Latroon, A Witty Extravagant. Being a compleat History of the Most Eminent Cheats of Both Sexes* (London, 1665), p. 166; Richard Head and Francis Kirkman, *The English Rogue: Continued, In the Life of Meriton Latroon, And other Extravagants. Comprehending the Most Eminent Cheats of Most Trades and Professions. The Second Part* (London, 1668), pp. 343, 497; Richard Head and Francis Kirkman, *The English Rogue: Continued in the Life of Meriton Latroon, and Other Extravagants: Comprehending the most Eminent Cheats of Both Sexes. The Third Part* (London, 1671), pp. 10, 13.

⁶⁵ Defoe, *Roxana*; Daniel Defoe, *The Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Famous Moll Flanders* (2nd edn, London, 1722). One late example is the trick Qualmsick plays on Mr Williams in Francis Coventry, *Pompey the Little: or, the Life and Adventures of a Lap-Dog* (London, 1751), pp. 234-40.

plots almost completely disappeared.⁶⁶ Illegitimate characters were an ideal opportunity for novelists to experiment with conveying empathy and interiority, as well as exploring the impact of the environment on individual identity, a defining feature of the novel.⁶⁷ Novels such as *The Bar-Sinister* (1836) emphasised the psychological and emotional impact of illegitimacy on the individual using first-person narrative. The whole plot revolves around the negative impact of illegitimacy on narrator Charles, who describes learning of his status as 'a deep sense of inferiority [which] pinioned me to the earth'.⁶⁸ An emphasis on individual experience was partly enabled by the greater character exploration possible in longer-form novels, but by the later eighteenth century was replicated in shorter-form periodicals and plays.⁶⁹ Periodicals published letters supposedly authored by illegitimates appealing to readers for compassion.⁷⁰ John Bidlake slipped between second- and first-person voices in his 1797 poem 'The Natural Son' in order to emphasise his charitable moral: '[a]nd is to me, alas! no pity due?/ Thus, guiltless, must I pay the tax of vice?'⁷¹

The primary reason for this change was a demand that novels, in particular, provoke feeling amongst readers within the discourse of sensibility. Sensibility championed the 'aggrandizement of feeling and its investment with moral value' and had become dominant in English culture by 1770.⁷² Originally explored by philosopher Adam

⁶⁶ One exception is Fielding, *Tom Jones*. Turner similarly notes that cuckoldry plots became much less common after 1700, and became more often used for tragic rather than comic effect, David M. Turner, *Fashioning Adultery: Gender, Sex, and Civility in England, 1660-1740* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 16, 112-5.

⁶⁷ For individualism in the novel see Watt, *The Rise of the Novel*, pp. 13, 18, 21. Although Defoe explores individualism it is only later 'sentimental' novels such as Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) which explore individual feelings and encourage reader empathy, see Watt, *The Rise of the Novel*, pp. 109, 174-5, 200-1.

⁶⁸ Lambert, *The Bar-Sinister*, vol. 1, p. 36.

⁶⁹ For example, when Mary in the play *The Victim of Prejudice* learns of her illegitimacy she has a physical and mental breakdown, Mary Hays, *The Victim of Prejudice. In Two Volumes* (London, 1799), vol. 1, pp. 170-6.

⁷⁰ 'The Cruelty of deserting natural Children, and the Danger of slight Breaches of Duty: Exemplified in the History of a natural Daughter, as related by herself', *The Weekly Amusement*, 25 October 1766 (London, 1766), pp. 694-6; 1 November 1766, pp. 713-6; 8 November, 1766, pp. 729-33; 'Of Bastardy', p. 528; A Bastard, 'Cursory Remarks on Bastardy', *The Town and country magazine, or, Universal repository of knowledge, instruction, and entertainment* 22 (London, 1790), p. 407.

⁷¹ Bidlake, 'The Natural Son', p. 279.

⁷² G.J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago, 1992), pp. xix, 215; Janet Todd, *Sensibility: An Introduction* (London, 1986), pp. 3, 7.

Smith, sensibility rested on the idea that humans had a natural capacity for empathy and that the cultivation of empathy was morally improving for both individual and society.⁷³ Individuals seeking moral improvement engaged in the 'conscious consumption of feelings' through novels, plays and other cultural productions.⁷⁴ Literary works containing 'melancholy occurrences' of illegitimate experience were advertised for their capacity to 'excite surprize and commiseration in the mind of every reader' and reviewers praised the moralising 'feeling and sensibility' achieved by 'heart-rending scenes'.⁷⁵ One reviewer praised the portrayal of illegitimate Frederick in Inchbald's play *Lovers' Vows* (1798) for 'touch[ing] some of the finest chords of sensibility' and being believable in its 'vindication of distressed innocence'.⁷⁶ The didactic purpose of illegitimate characters had changed. Illegitimacy had provided perfect motivation for the anger and subversion of early modern villains but by the mid eighteenth century illegitimate characters were utilised for their ability to provoke sympathy for the moral improvement of readers.

Representations of illegitimates' familial relationships also shifted. Illegitimates became less likely to be abandoned (literally or figuratively) midway through the narrative, never to be mentioned again. If they were abandoned, their quest for family reunification became significant plot drivers.⁷⁷ It became assumed that a desire for familial proximity and affection was natural, inevitable, and followed bloodlines, providing ample justification for illegitimate inclusion in familial ideals.⁷⁸

⁷³ Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. By Adam Smith, Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Glasgow (London, 1759), discussed in Eamonn Butler, *The Condensed Wealth of Nations and The Incredibly Condensed Theory of Moral Sentiments* (London, 2011), pp. 78-9. On the connection between sensibility and virtue see: Laqueur, 'Humanitarian Narrative'; Mullan, 'Feelings and Novels', pp. 120-1, 125; Todd, *Sensibility*, p. 8.

⁷⁴ Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London, 1983), pp. 281-2.

⁷⁵ *The Star, and Evening Advertiser*, 3 February 1798 (London, 1798); *The Critical Review, or, Annals of Literature* 4.2, February 1805 (London, 1805), pp. 219-21; *The British Critic* 2954, 25 June 1805 (London, 1805), pp. 624-30; *General Review of British and Foreign Literature* 1.1, January 1806 (London, 1806), pp. 22-7.

⁷⁶ *The Critical Review, or, Annals of Literature* 2.4, October 1815 (London, 1815), pp. 416-20. Lady Bessborough reported being reduced to tears by the play, *Lord Granville Leveson Gower, Private Correspondence 1781-1821*, ed. Castalia, Countess Granville (London, 1916), vol. 1, p. 491, Lady Bessborough to Granville Leveson Gower, 5 December [1804].

⁷⁷ Examples include: Charles in Lambert, *The Bar-Sinister*; Joanna in Holcroft, *The Deserted Daughter*; Frederick in Elizabeth Inchbald, *Lovers' Vows, A play, In five acts. Performing at the Theatre Royal, Covent-Garden* (London, 1798); Mary in Hays, *The Victim of Prejudice*.

⁷⁸ Nussbaum suggests that natural affection was not widely accepted in the seventeenth- and early-eighteenth centuries, Felicity A. Nussbaum, "'Savage' Mothers: Narratives of Maternity in the Mid-Eighteenth Century", *Cultural Critique* 20 (1991), pp. 131, 141-2.

Findlay and Stratmann have found that illegitimates in biblical and classical stories as well as Renaissance drama were consistently depicted as the agents of familial breakdown. Self-serving and vengeful, characters destroyed natural bonds through deliberate actions such as incest or patricide. Parents were presented as despising their children as causes of their shame and children as resenting their parents for their disadvantage.⁷⁹ The transition between older and newer discourses is evident in Defoe's *Roxana* (1722). Roxana is confused by the affection her lover shows for their illegitimate child: 'I have often wonder'd with what Pleasure... the Prince cou'd look upon the poor innocent infant' as it 'must always afterwards be a Remembrancer to him of his... Crime'. She resolved to exhibit no affection for the child, as 'our Affection will be ever his Affliction, and his Mother's Crime be the Son's Reproach'. Any maternal attachment Roxana expresses is directed towards only her legitimate children. Defoe, himself an advocate for abandoned and illegitimate children's rights, presents Roxana's adherence to an older trope, her lack of 'the common Affection of a mother', as evidence of her moral degradation.⁸⁰

In later works, particularly novels, affection between blood relatives was seen as automatic, natural and independent of prior physical contact. Maternal love, in particular, was presented as instinctive and powerful. In *The Man of the World* (1773) the appearance of Harriet's illegitimate child 'drew forth [her soul's] instinctive tenderness; she... forgot the shame attending its birth in the natural meltings of the mother'.⁸¹ In 'The Story of Rosalie' (1780), Rosalie is forced to put her child out to nurse, but keeps watch from afar. When the nurse and child fall off a bridge, she intervenes to save them as '[t]he feeling of a mother were not to be suppressed; she screamed aloud "O save my child from perishing!"'⁸² Straightforward child

⁷⁹ Findlay, *Illegitimate Power*, pp. 92-8; Stratmann, 'Nobody's Child', p. 112.

⁸⁰ Defoe, *Roxana*, pp. 94-6, 126-7, 191-2, 199, 341. For Defoe's beliefs regarding child abandonment see Daniel Defoe, *The generous projector, or a friendly proposal to prevent murder and other enormous abuses* (London, 1731). For Defoe's utilisation of Roxana as a cautionary fallen woman see Dawn A. Nawrot, 'The Female Accomplice: Rape and the Servant Problem in *Roxana*', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 29.4 (2017), pp. 563-82.

⁸¹ Mackenzie, *Man of the World*, vol. 1, p. 328.

⁸² 'The Story of Rosalie', in Dr Goldsmith, Mrs Griffith &c, *Novellettes, selected for the use of young ladies and gentlemen* (London, 1780), pp. 169, 174. Instances of fathers or father-figures having unexplained affective or life-saving links with illegitimates who are later revealed to be related to them include the relationship between Squire Allworthy and Tom Jones in Fielding, *Tom Jones*, and the relationship between Humphry Clinker and his father Matthew

abandonment or neglect not only became less common, but was depicted as either evidence of villainy or as provoking emotional torment for maternal characters. Roxana, Moll Flanders and the ballad heroines abandon their children so that they can continue through the plot as free agents. In contrast, later maternal abandonment is forced and so traumatic that mothers either retire into seclusion or die.⁸³ Lack of maternal affection was suspicious evidence of sexual depravity. Miss Burchell in *The Memoirs of Sidney Bidulph* (1761) neglects her child so she can return to society entertainments and is later unmasked as an adulteress.⁸⁴ Being a bad mother was equally damaging to female character whether the child was legitimate or illegitimate, clearly presenting illegitimates as having rights to maternal care.

Natural affection also applied to siblings, reflected in the proliferation of incest plots over the period.⁸⁵ Legitimate and illegitimate siblings separated at birth are depicted meeting in adulthood, only to mistake natural sibling affection for romantic love. When illegitimate Charles unknowingly encounters his legitimate half-sister Anastasia in *The Bar-Sinister* (1836), he relates that 'from that hour I knew that I loved Anastasia'. Such is their immediate bond that he cannot resist seducing her.⁸⁶ Early-modern illegitimate characters had deliberately pursued incest in a vengeful desire for family destruction. In later texts incest was depicted as unconscious and involuntary, serving to increase the tragedy of the narrative or as a cautionary tale for separating illegitimates from their natural family, as in *The Man of the World*.⁸⁷

Bramble in Tobias Smollett, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*. By the Author of *Roderick Random*. In Two Volumes (Dublin, 1771).

⁸³ For example: Harriet in Mackenzie, *Man of the World*, vol. 1, pp. 330, 336-9; Charles' mother in Lambert, *The Bar-Sinister*, vol. 1, p. 297.

⁸⁴ Frances Sheridan, *Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph, Extracted from Her Own Journal, And now First Published*. In Three Volumes (London, 1761), vol. 1, pp. 239-40; vol. 2, p. 283; vol. 3, pp. 24-5, 169, 243. Similarly, in *The Bar-Sinister*, the child of lower-status, promiscuous kept mistress Mary Smith dies of neglect, Lambert, *The Bar-Sinister*, vol. 2, pp. 232, 313-4, 319, 321-2, 326, 332.

⁸⁵ The increase in incest plots is noted in several works, but is not generally related to illegitimacy. See: Seth J. Denbo, 'Speaking Relatively: A History of Incest and the Family in Eighteenth-Century England', Ph.D. thesis (University of Warwick, 2001), pp. 109-10; Amy Harris, *Siblings and Social Relations in Georgian England: Share and Share Alike* (Manchester, 2012), pp. 98-100; Ellen Pollak, *Incest and the English Novel, 1684-1814* (Baltimore, 2003). Pollak refers to illegitimacy only in discussion of Fielding's *Tom Jones*, in which she asserts that Tom becomes socially legitimate, Pollak, *Incest*, pp. 143-7.

⁸⁶ Lambert, *The Bar-Sinister*, vol. 1, p. 128. A similar plot appears in Delarivier Manley, 'The Perjur'd Beauty' in *The Power of Love: In Seven Novels* (London, 1720), pp. 361-2.

⁸⁷ Mackenzie, *Man of the World*, vol. 2, pp. 129-35, 214-231.

Finally, belief in natural affection served to minimise illegitimate characters' symbolism as economic threats. Zunshine and Stratmann emphasise that the illegitimate/foundling character embodied fears about the dangers of male infidelity and the misappropriation of property away from the legitimate line. Growing sympathy towards illegitimate/foundling characters resulted from changing economic structures as 'the absolute importance of inherited capital diminished'.⁸⁸ However, this hypothesis only applies to foundling characters, who are revealed to be legitimate and therefore unproblematic heirs.⁸⁹ I suggest that illegitimate characters were not depicted stealing legitimate property but claiming property that is rightfully theirs under the justification of natural affection. Illegitimates were presented as having a greater claim to an estate than a legal, more biologically distant heir, and disinheritance perceived as cruel, although legally correct. In *Adeline Mowbray* (1805), the heroine complains of a father who died intestate: 'the fellow's money is gone to the heir at law, scarce of kin to him, while his own flesh and blood is left to starve'.⁹⁰ While earlier depictions argued that illegitimates would try to harm legitimate relatives to steal inheritance, by the late eighteenth century illegitimates held the moral high ground and plots routinely demonstrated evil legitimate relatives seeking to cheat them of their rightful patrimony.⁹¹ The only cases in which illegitimates are perceived as misappropriating legitimate inheritance, and the single case relied upon by Zunshine, are those in which the illegitimates are not blood relatives and paternity has been mistaken. Zunshine argues that a 'bourgeois redistribution of wealth' according to familial affection and merit became common by 1800 but that this did 'not apply to illegitimate children'.⁹² The evidence

⁸⁸ The quote is Zunshine, *Bastards and Foundlings*, p. 165. The argument is also made in Stratmann, 'Nobody's Child', p. 112.

⁸⁹ For example, the character Emmeline in Smith, *Emmeline*.

⁹⁰ Opie, *Adeline Mowbray*, vol. 2, p. 129. Strikingly similar language appears in the diary of Sarah Hurst, written in the 1760s: see chapter 2, p. 144.

⁹¹ For example, Lambert presents the virtuous Charles as being robbed of his paternal inheritance by his evil cousin, the legitimate legal heir. Charles specifically sees his father's disinheritance of him as a sign that 'he did not deem me worthy of... affection', a mistake rectified in the novel's denouement, Lambert, *The Bar-Sinister*, vol. 1, pp. 7-8, 25, vol. 2, p. 205. This plot also recurs into the nineteenth century, see Margot Finn, Michael Lobban and Jenny Bourne Taylor, 'Introduction: Spurious Issues' in Margot Finn, Michael Lobban and Jenny Bourne Taylor (eds), *Legitimacy and Illegitimacy in Nineteenth-Century Law, Literature and History* (Basingstoke, 2010), pp. 9-10.

⁹² Zunshine's example is of Belton in Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa or The History of a Young Lady*, ed. Angus Ross (Harmondsworth, 1985). Belton evicts his illegitimate sons when he finds that their mother, his kept mistress, has been unfaithful, Zunshine, *Bastards and Foundlings*, pp. 81-2.

here indicates that illegitimates *were* included. The personal freedom to bequeath property to illegitimates, and their right to receive it, was increasingly respected, particularly as blood, natural affection and genteel merit were increasingly intertwined in defence of illegitimates' rights.

The idealisation of familial affective bonds was partly about blood but also reflected the valorisation of compassion. As the capacity to feel was increasingly associated with moral worth under sensibility, compassion became a primary means of signalling a character's virtue. In a complete reversal of Renaissance tropes of the wicked illegitimate, legitimate villains were distinguished by their intolerance towards the illegitimate hero or victim. In *The Bar-Sinister* (1836), illegitimate Charles is persecuted by his legitimate cousin Augustus, who is depicted as unfeelingly taking possession of the family estate, by 'driv[ing] forth the friendless from their... home'.⁹³ Augustus is the only character to reproach Charles for being illegitimate. Augustus' prejudice is part of a catalogue of other villainies, such as forging wills or seducing innocent women.⁹⁴ Those who accept Charles, such as his friend Cleveland and future wife Emily, are depicted as generally virtuous, exhibiting charity and generosity.⁹⁵ In Smith's novel *Emmeline* (1788), Godolphin's acceptance and 'tenderness' towards his illegitimate nephew demonstrates that he 'possessed a softness of heart', echoing what Carter calls 'a new style of refined and virtuous manliness' idealised in the later eighteenth century.⁹⁶

Parental and step-parental characters were also depicted as virtuous and benevolent for bringing up illegitimates within the legitimate family. In *Maria* (1798), Wollstonecraft's heroine Maria takes on responsibility for her husband's adulterine child, telling the divorce court, 'though I could excuse the birth, I could not the

⁹³ Lambert, *The Bar-Sinister*, vol.1, p. 144.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 44, 63; vol. 2, pp. 93-4. Similarly, the villainous characters in Fielding, *Tom Jones* are those who ostracise illegitimate Tom, see König, *The Orphan*, pp. 47-8.

⁹⁵ Lambert, *The Bar-Sinister*, vol. 2, p. 134. Similar dynamics appear in Sheridan, *The Memoirs of Sidney Bidulph*, vol. 4, p. 217. The virtue and sensibility of Colonel Brandon is also evinced by his guardianship of the illegitimate Eliza in Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*. See also the opinion of the reviewer in *The Critical Review, or, Annals of Literature*, 11 March 1761 (London, 1761), p. 187.

⁹⁶ Smith, *Emmeline*, vol. 2, pp. 139, 144, 209; Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain, 1660-1800* (Harlow, 2001), pp. 10-11, 80. Similar reactions from other characters can be seen in Smith, *Emmeline*, vol. 4, p. 315.

desertion of this unfortunate babe'.⁹⁷ In *The Memoirs of Sidney Bidulph* (1761), the heroine's self-sacrificial virtue is proved when she encourages her former love interest to marry his son's mother, and then brings up 'the dear innocent' herself when his father dies.⁹⁸ These tropes also appear in periodicals and newspapers. One periodical criticised the 'jealous wife' who refused to shelter her husband's child and stated that 'vicious and unfeeling parents' should be 'shot for desertion'.⁹⁹ One correspondent to the *Public Advertiser* in 1782 encouraged women to follow the example of Andromache who went 'so far even as to suckle [her husband's illegitimate children]... In our Days it would be difficult to find so much Virtue and Softness united'.¹⁰⁰ As step-maternity did not impugn female chastity, women could derive social status from appearing both maternal and self-sacrificially virtuous in their acceptance of an innocent child.

As Steedman argues, '[b]abies and small children were good to think with - above all, to feel with - in this new society of sentiment'.¹⁰¹ I would add illegitimates of any age to this list. As it became accepted that illegitimates were not inherently sinful, their legal disadvantage became the ideal tragedy and they became the ideal objects of a virtuous benevolence. Illegitimate characters were well suited to the developing genre of the novel, and its experimental focus on individuals' feelings and the impact of an adversity on identity and personal relationships. By the late eighteenth century, these tropes were replicated in plays and periodicals. Ballads were, however, much more resistant to change and continued to depict illegitimates of varying social status in both comic and tragic plots. Cuckoldry continued as a theme alongside child abandonment and homilies on the inconstancy of men. Variations on the ballad *The Miser Outwitted* [1736-1820] for example, in which a pregnant 'country-maid' tricks

⁹⁷ Wollstonecraft, *Maria*, vol. 2, p. 146. In this Wollstonecraft is emphasising a wife's superior virtue over her husband, but also presents the decision as that of a woman in charge of her own destiny. See Johnson, 'Mary Wollstonecraft's Novels', pp. 200-2.

⁹⁸ Sheridan, *The Memoirs of Sidney Bidulph*, vol. 2, pp. 314, 337; vol. 3, pp. 3-4, 11, 304; vol. 4, p. 14. Similarly, heroine Adeline refuses to prosecute her bigamous husband in case she bastardises the child of his second supposed marriage, Opie, *Adeline Mowbray*, vol. 3, p. 156.

⁹⁹ 'The Natural Child', *The Weekly Entertainer: or, Agreeable and instructive repository* 59, 17 May 1819 (London, 1819), pp. 386-9.

¹⁰⁰ 'H.', 'To the Printer of the Public Advertiser', *Public Advertiser* 15019, 7 August 1782 (London, 1782). For another example of a stepmother praised for taking in her husband's illegitimate child, see 'The Natural Daughter', *Walker's Hibernian magazine, or Compendium of entertaining knowledge*, August 1787 (Dublin, 1787), pp. 140-2. The topic was also publicly debated, see *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser* 4575, 14 January 1784 (London, 1784).

¹⁰¹ Steedman, *Master and Servant*, pp. 190-1.

the lecherous miser of the title into buying her illegitimate child, continued to be published well into the nineteenth century.¹⁰² In general, though, illegitimates were increasingly presented as innocent victims, capable of idealised familial and affective relationships. This immediately presented them as less threatening. They were no longer associated with unnatural or disorderly familial relationships, and their inclusion in home and community was seen as a demonstration of legitimate benevolence. However, as the next section argues, sympathy was predicated on continued inequalities and conformity to certain criteria which lower-status illegitimates could rarely fulfil.

Continued Inequalities

Sympathetic portrayals of illegitimates conformed to certain criteria, primarily based on parental relationship type and the avoidance of poor law dependence. Most novels, and later plays and periodicals, presented illegitimate tragedy as a cautionary moral about the dangers of extra-marital sex, rather than advocating equality or legal reform. The casual sex, cuckoldry and subversive female sexual agency of Restoration literature was replaced by depictions of sexual relationships which closely mirrored normative gender norms and marital behaviour, particularly female sexual passivity.¹⁰³ Parents of illegitimates were largely depicted as emotionally legitimate and monogamous, engaging in extra-marital sex only because they were prevented from marrying by mercenary parents. Illegitimacy was, therefore, used to delineate the tragic consequences of mercenary matches and to highlight the importance of conjugal love. Although adultery still featured in late eighteenth century works, it was generally depicted tragically.¹⁰⁴ In Smith's *Emmeline* (1788), Lady Adelina is driven towards her lover Fitz-Edward by her neglectful husband, her mercenary marriage having been engineered by her fortune-hunting parents.

¹⁰² *Bite upon bite: or, The miser outwitted by the country lass* (London, [1736-1763]), Douce Ballads 3 (4a), ESTC: N70794, Bod24138; *The Miser Outwitted by a Woman* (London, [1780-1812]), Harding B 6 (73), ESTC: T225057, Bod17548; *The Miser Outwitted* (London, [1813-1820]), Harding B 6 (74), Bod18945. For the same plot under a different title see, *The crafty lass's garland. Who'll buy the rabbit? Or, the coney brought to a fair market* (London, [1736-1763]), Harding B 39 (174), V9994, Bod654.

¹⁰³ This occurs in depictions of extra-marital sex generally, see: Turner, *Fashioning Adultery*, pp. 83-115; Ruth Perry, 'Colonizing the Breast: Sexuality and Maternity in Eighteenth-Century England', *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 2.2 (1991), pp. 204-34; Sarah Lloyd, "'Pleasure's Golden Bait': Prostitution, Poverty and the Magdalen Hospital in Eighteenth-Century London', *History Workshop Journal* 41 (1996), pp. 54, 58, 61-2.

¹⁰⁴ Turner, *Fashioning Adultery*, p. 200.

Both she and her child consequently become victims.¹⁰⁵ These tragic couples generally only have one child before neutralising their disruptive potential by dying or marrying; parenthood is crucially not the beginning of a slide into vice.¹⁰⁶ This is in distinct contrast to Restoration works, where mothers such as Roxana successfully escape maternity, free to have more illegitimate children or to seek their fortunes.¹⁰⁷

Unmarried mothers were, therefore, rarely depicted as physically mothering their children. The first child of Opie's heroine Adeline Mowbray results from a monogamous true love relationship, prevented from marriage by her lover's radical principles. Her first child dies and Adeline then herself dies shortly after the birth of her second child, the result of an estranged marriage, so that she cannot become 'a dangerous example to her' as a single mother. Although Opie's conservative moral has been considered by some as subversive, it nonetheless indicates the impossibility that a woman could live happily in her illegitimate maternity.¹⁰⁸ Genteel female adultery was too transgressive in its implications for property inheritance and social order to be included in an essentially conservative discourse. Representations of illegitimacy which conformed to sexual passivity and tragic gentility were perceived as moral and received sympathetically by readers.

¹⁰⁵ Smith, *Emmeline*, vol. 3, p. 37. Charles' mother is also pressured into marrying her husband for money, Lambert, *The Bar-Sinister*, vol. 1, pp. 286, 288-9. In William Godwin's *Fleetwood* (1805), the only novel I have found to emphasise the emotional cost of adultery, the adultery is only suspected and no child results, Godwin, *Fleetwood*.

¹⁰⁶ Lady Adelina becomes a recluse and Smith only hints that she will marry after an appropriate period of penitence and mourning, Smith, *Emmeline*, vol. 2, p. 267; vol. 3, pp. 390-1; Charles' parents pretend to be married, but when their relationship ends his mother leaves her child, changes her name and becomes a recluse, Lambert, *The Bar-Sinister*; the parents of illegitimate Orlando Faulkland both die in Sheridan, *Memoirs of Sidney Bidulph*, vol. 3, pp. 329-32; unmarried mother Harriet dies shortly after her child's birth in Mackenzie, *Man of the World*, vol. 1, p. 338. Rosalie enters a convent after her child is born, limiting her opportunities for vice until her child's father returns to marry her, 'The Story of Rosalie', p. 178.

¹⁰⁷ For example: Defoe, *Roxana*; Defoe, *Moll Flanders*.

¹⁰⁸ Opie, *Adeline Mowbray*, vol. 3, pp. 210-11, 296. I have no examples of women being able to be adulterous successfully. The novel was received as having a conservative moral, but Opie's potentially subversive intentions are debated, see Roxanne Eberle, 'Amelia Opie's "Adeline Mowbray": Diverting the Libertine Gaze: or, the Vindication of a Fallen Woman', *Studies in the Novel* 26 (1994), pp. 121-52; Matthew Grenby, 'Review of *Memoirs of Emma Courtney* by Mary Hays, Miriam L. Wallace; *Adeline Mowbray: Or, the Mother and the Daughter* by Amelia Alderson Opie, Miriam L. Wallace', *The Modern Language Review* 102.2 (2007), pp. 488-9; Barbara Taylor, *Mary Wollstonecraft and the Feminist Imagination* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 247.

Representations of illegitimates were used to deter extra-marital sex, no longer by portraying them as monstrous villains, but as tragic sufferers. A good parent would abstain from extra-marital sex out of fear for their child's welfare. Lambert stated that she was writing in the 'cause of virtue, morality, and religion' by 'endeavour[ing]... to show that the lawless indulgence of illicit passions ever bears its own punishment... the danger, the misery, the remorse'.¹⁰⁹ Opie's heroine Adeline Mowbray later admits the folly of her radical dismissal of marriage, stating that she does so in 'consideration of the interest of children'. If parents became 'lost in selfish indulgence' and 'unbridled licentiousness' then 'their offspring would... die the victims of neglect'.¹¹⁰ Any happy ending for illegitimate characters was achieved by adhering to the law, not calling for its abolition. In Lambert's *The Bar-Sinister*, a rediscovered will bequeaths the illegitimate Charles his father's personal property and he is safely reintegrated into the legitimate family when he marries his virtuous cousin in a love match.¹¹¹ Authors continued to espouse conservative aims, conforming, as König notes, to a 'broadly bourgeois morality'.¹¹²

Any subversive aspects of growing sympathy towards illegitimates were also limited by the representation of positive qualities as class-specific. Almost all the illegitimate characters in eighteenth-century fictional works were of middling or elite status or aspired to be.¹¹³ This partly reflected the developing genre of the novel; lower-status characters of any birth status became less common. However, novels, plays and periodicals specifically emphasised illegitimate characters' respectable parentage in order to heighten their tragic potential and increase their capacity to provoke feeling among readers. In *The Bar-Sinister*, Lambert portrays illegitimacy's negative impact as specifically class-based. Charles is of noble parentage, good-hearted, generous and specifically 'not a libertine', the opposite of villainous and sexually voracious early-

¹⁰⁹ Lambert, *The Bar-Sinister*, vol. 2, pp. 340-1.

¹¹⁰ Opie, *Adeline Mowbray*, vol. 2, pp. 206, 209.

¹¹¹ Lambert, *The Bar-Sinister*, vol. 2, pp. 170, 174, 220. Charles' fate is strikingly similar to the marriage and inheritance strategies used in real life, see chapter 3, pp. 203-4.

¹¹² König, *The Orphan*, p. 2.

¹¹³ For example: Tom in *Tom Jones*; Lucy in *The Man of the World*; Frederick in *Lovers' Vows*; Charles in *The Bar-Sinister*; Gifford in *Fleetwood*; Eliza in *Sense and Sensibility*; and the infant illegitimate children in *Adeline Mowbray* and *Memoirs of Sidney Bidulph*. Even illegitimates of less-exalted parentage are solidly middling, such as Harriet Smith in *Emma*. The primary exceptions are ballads, which continued to portray characters of a range of socio-economic backgrounds.

modern stereotypes.¹¹⁴ The tragedy is heightened by frustrated gentility; Charles' 'noble spirit' makes him an ideal aristocrat, but he is forced to seek 'menial employment' against his genteel 'education and [...] sentiments'.¹¹⁵ Illegitimacy did cause greater relative disadvantage to the propertied or titled; the predicament of a poor child would have been less exciting.¹¹⁶ In Opie's *Adeline Mowbray*, Adeline encounters 'a little boy... sobbing violently' as he is excluded from playing with his peers because he 'is only a little bastard'. The tragedy is heightened by the child's gentility and his parents' natural affection for him: '[t]he child was beautiful... better dressed than the rest... Adeline was certain he was the darling object of some fond mother's attention', confirmed by his father's subsequent appearance as 'an elegant-looking man'. The virtuous Adeline is struck with empathy: '[t]he cause of the child's affliction was a dagger in her heart'.¹¹⁷ Emily White, the presumably fictional illegitimate daughter of a nobleman, was described in one periodical as 'sensible, highly polished, and modest'. Her physical beauty and 'dignified' nature were key to the author's message of compassion: '[h]ow many a lovely plant perishes in the shade... and withers beneath the cold blast of neglect'.¹¹⁸ A combination of virtue, gentility and beauty could depict illegitimates as otherwise perfect children cast into adversity by cold, impersonal laws.

Virtue was also related specifically to gentility through the common 'blood will out' plot type. Illegitimate characters of unknown parentage, often abandoned, were depicted as unusually virtuous. This virtue was then explained through the later revelation that they were of genteel parentage. In *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771), illegitimate Humphry was raised a parish orphan. His virtue is revealed when he saves his biological father's life, before his genteel paternity is unmistakably and

¹¹⁴ Lambert, *The Bar-Sinister*, vol. 1, p. 128. For these earlier stereotypes see Findlay, *Illegitimate Power*, pp. 150-1.

¹¹⁵ Lambert, *The Bar-Sinister* vol. 1, pp. 25-6, 176, 188; vol. 2, p. 230.

¹¹⁶ See chapter 3, p. 179.

¹¹⁷ Opie, *Adeline Mowbray*, vol. 2, pp. 133-8.

¹¹⁸ 'The Natural Child', pp. 386-9. There are several other examples from periodicals. The illegitimate author of a letter reprinted in *The Gentleman's Magazine* states explicitly that his family has 'a small estate' whilst detailing the world's 'contempt' for his status, 'Of Bastardy', p. 528. The illegitimate child in 'The Natural Daughter' is also explicitly of genteel status as the child of a military Governor and a formerly wealthy goldsmith's daughter, 'The Natural Daughter'.

conveniently proven via tokens and a birth certificate.¹¹⁹ Humphrey's virtue is presented as natural, and inevitable despite his upbringing. His aunt contends that he 'has more grace and religion' than his father who had the advantage of 'profane learning and repeated opportunity'.¹²⁰ By establishing a child's gentility, often alongside maternal sexual passivity, illegitimates could be presented as sympathetic, virtuous, and tragic in a morally conservative 'safe' manner.

In contrast, representations of lower-status illegitimates continued to draw on older stereotypes of sin and social disorder. One of the few depictions of a lower-status illegitimate is the character Jemima in Wollstonecraft's 1798 novel *Maria*. Critics have read Jemima's suffering as a means for Wollstonecraft to attack societal oppression of women, emphasising her status as variously a prostitute or a slave.¹²¹ However, Wollstonecraft repeatedly and specifically invokes Jemima's illegitimacy and poverty, suggesting that both were important to the character's didactic purpose. Jemima's negative portrayal indicates the class-specific nature of many of the positive tropes increasingly associated with illegitimacy in this period. Her story is characterised by the absence of natural affection, moral legitimacy and feeling emphasised in portrayals of genteel illegitimacy. The child of two servants, her father seduced and abandoned her mother. Their relationship is characterised not by love but 'neglect and unkind treatment'. Older tropes of inherited vice recur: Jemima has a 'natural propensity to vice... inherited from my mother'.¹²² Jemima is depicted as unsocialised, angry, and a potential threat to society: she 'loved not her fellow-creatures, because she had never been beloved... Thus degraded, was she let loose on

¹¹⁹ Smollett, *Humphry Clinker*, vol. 2, pp. 119, 196-7, 199. On the symbolism of tokens see Zunshine, *Bastards and Foundlings*, pp. 36-8; Laura Schattschneider, 'The Infants' Petitions: An English Poetics of Foundling Reception, 1741-1837', *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 33 (2004), pp. 71-99.

¹²⁰ Smollett, *Humphry Clinker*, vol. 2, p. 198. The kind-hearted Tom Jones is also revealed to be genteel, see König, *The Orphan*, pp. 44-5. Illegitimate Lucy Sindall's virtue is presented as obvious until her gentility is definitely proved at the denouement of *The Man of the World*. The narrator states, 'I could have sworn to her goodness... without any information besides... her countenance', Mackenzie, *Man of the World*, vol. 2, p. 5. The character of Frederick in *Lovers' Vows* is also revealed to be a baron's son by the end of the play, although this reveal is trailed through his obvious virtue, bravery, and affection for his mother, Inchbald, *Lovers' Vows*. See also the review in *The Critical Review, or, Annals of Literature* 2.4 (London, 1805), p. 419.

¹²¹ Taylor, *Wollstonecraft*, pp. 132-3, 231-6, 240-1; Vivien Jones, 'Placing Jemima: Women Writers of the 1790s and the Eighteenth-Century Prostitution Narrative', *Women's Writing* 4.2 (1997), pp. 201-2; Janet Todd, 'Reason and Sensibility in Mary Wollstonecraft's "The Wrongs of Woman"', *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 5.3 (1980), p. 19.

¹²² Wollstonecraft, *Maria*, vol. 1, pp. 78-9, 85-6.

the world; and virtue, never nurtured by affection, assumed the stern aspect of selfish independence.¹²³ Jemima's disruptive capacity is confirmed by her descent into prostitution and crime, her own illegitimate pregnancy and abortion, and her unfeeling rejection of a fellow pregnant servant.¹²⁴

Further evidence of the exclusion of the poor from sympathetic tropes comes from language use. The number of published novels, plays and poetry collections mentioning the terms 'bastard' or 'bastardy' declined from a high of 3.4 percent in the period 1680-99, to a low of 0.7 percent between 1800-19. References to 'natural' or 'illegitimate' children remained at a much more constant rate of 0.1 to 0.7 percent throughout the period 1680-1834.¹²⁵ This decline reflected the genteel backgrounds of most characters and their increasingly positive portrayal. Echoing the evidence of unpublished correspondence and life-writing discussed in chapter 4, published literature increasingly used 'bastard' to refer to poor illegitimates or to convey a pejorative moral judgement.¹²⁶ Earlier novels such as *Tom Jones* (1749) or *Roxana* (1724) used 'bastard' indiscriminately.¹²⁷ In later works, rare usages of 'bastard' refer to lower-status characters such as Jemima in *Maria* (1798) or, as in *Adeline Mowbray*

¹²³ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 22-3. Wollstonecraft also describes that poverty 'hardened [the] heart' of Jemima's wet nurse, vol. 1, p. 80. Periodical *The Weekly Amusement* featured a similar story; an illegitimate apprenticed to a cruel mantua-maker develops 'indignation and resentment' against society and eventually becomes a prostitute, 'The Cruelty of deserting natural Children'.

¹²⁴ Wollstonecraft, *Maria*, vol. 1, pp. 75-6, 89-91, 98-100, 117-8.

¹²⁵ For an overview of these results see chapter 4, pp. 225-6. These numbers were obtained through word searches of 45,354 texts published between 1660 and 1834 held in the database *Literature Online*, <http://literature.proquest.com.sheffield.idm.oclc.org> [accessed 22 May 2017]. Percentages were calculated from the number of works mentioning those words as a percentage of the total works published in each twenty-year period. All search terms included plurals and spelling variants as recommended by the *Literature Online* search function. This method is used in: Phil Withington, "'Tumbled into the dirt": Wit and Incivility in Early Modern England', *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 12 (2011), pp. 156-77; Phil Withington, 'The Invention of "Happiness"', in Mike Braddick and Joanna Innes (eds), *Happiness and Suffering in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2017), pp. 23-45; Mark Knights, 'Towards a Social and Cultural History of Keywords and Concepts by the Early Modern Research Group', *History of Political Thought* 31.3 (2010), pp. 427-48. *Literature Online* was chosen because of its well-defined collection and keyword search capabilities. Although Withington uses *Early English Books Online*, the Text Creation Partnership for *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* is not yet large enough to produce meaningful results.

¹²⁶ See chapter 4, pp. 223-6.

¹²⁷ In *Tom Jones*, Fielding uses 'bastard' indiscriminately 41 times, but does not use 'natural' or 'illegitimate' to refer to a child. In *Roxana*, Defoe uses 'bastard' and 'illegitimate' to refer to children of any parentage, Defoe, *Roxana*, vol. 1, pp. 90, 94-5, 97, 193-4, 199.

(1805), are used by unsympathetic characters to insult illegitimates.¹²⁸ Turner has found similar changes in the word 'whore' in published works, suggesting that the growing specificity of 'bastard' was part of a more general realignment of sexual sins according to socio-economic status.¹²⁹

Word choice also reflects the increasing association of the negative aspects of illegitimacy with the poor. 'Bastard' and its synonym 'base' commonly meant that something was polluted, corrupted or inherently inferior. Secondary meanings included 'false... not genuine' or 'low, mean, vile; cowardly, dishonest'.¹³⁰ It had connotations of villainy, as well as deception and falseness, echoing fears of imposter heirs and dubious paternity. This closely echoes the dominant depictions of illegitimates of any status in literature before 1700 as dangerously deceptive cheats.¹³¹ The word 'natural', in contrast, had a primary definition of 'proceeding from nature' and being 'easy, free, unaffected' or 'tender, affectionate in temper'.¹³² As well as invoking unspoiled nature and innocence, this definition had a positive affective component, linking emotion and blood together within the discourse of natural affection. When authors used the word 'natural', they implied the child of genteel and loving parents, an innocent of known paternity and deserving of emotional investment. A 'bastard' was in contrast associated with the dependent poor, uncertain paternity and maternal deception. In differentiating characters as either 'bastard' or 'natural', authors were applying older connotations of illegitimacy, of inferiority, deception and chargeability, to the poor and the newer, more positive associations of illegitimacy, of unspoiled natural innocence, to those of higher status.

Inequalities also remained because sympathy required illegitimates to remain inferior objects of pity. This did not necessarily result in a negation of illegitimate

¹²⁸ Jemima and other lower-status characters refer to her as a bastard, Wollstonecraft, *Maria*, vol. 1, pp. 88, 92, 99. The word 'illegitimate' is used once, vol. 1, p. 82, but Jemima is never referred to as 'natural'. In *Adeline Mowbray*, Opie uses 'bastard' only twice, both by characters who are engaged in uncharitably snubbing or bullying sympathetic illegitimate characters, Opie, *Adeline Mowbray*, vol. 2, pp. 36, 137. In *Emmeline*, Charlotte Smith uses only the word 'natural' to refer to the genteel heroine, Smith, *Emmeline*, vol. 1, p. 2.

¹²⁹ Turner, *Fashioning Adultery*, pp. 36-45.

¹³⁰ Nathan Bailey, *An Universal Etymological English Dictionary* (26th edn, Edinburgh, 1789); John Ash, *The new and complete dictionary of the English language* (London, 1775), vol. 1; Samuel Johnson, *A dictionary of the English language* (6th edn, London, 1785), vol. 1.

¹³¹ Neill, "In Everything Illegitimate", pp. 280-82

¹³² Ash, *Dictionary*, vol. 1; Johnson, *Dictionary*, vol. 1.

agency. Autobiographers who were themselves illegitimate or the parents of illegitimate children could exploit the tropes of the pitiable illegitimate in their own public self-characterisation. Quasi-fictional autobiographical works echoed the first-person narrative style and themes of tragic innocence used in novels.¹³³ Both forms focused on individual identity and novels often presented themselves as biographical 'true stories'.¹³⁴ We have already seen that illegitimacy could be used in dissenting narratives of sin and salvation but they could also be used in secular contexts to garner public sympathy. Richard Savage and Robert Nugent, who claimed to be the illegitimate sons of Earls, rooted their claims for public support in supposed parental neglect. Savage presented himself as the victim of the 'unaccountable Severity of a *Mother*', suggesting that he and his publishers felt that maternal neglect would be a plausible and sympathetic explanation for his misfortunes.¹³⁵ Savage's poems and biographies are early examples, ranging from the 1720s to the 1740s, and as such emphasise newer tropes of natural affection whilst acknowledging Savage's faults as a rake and a criminal, more similar to the earlier picaresque novels of Defoe.¹³⁶ By 1755, when Nugent's pamphlet *The Unnatural Father* was published, illegitimates' spotless innocence was made more prominent using the sentimental and tragic language developed in novels. Nugent emphasised his 'Tragical Story', portraying himself as the 'innocent Sacrifice' to his father's attempts to protect his reputation. His father's 'indifference' and 'relentless malice' is contrasted with the 'Compassion' shown by various genteel people he meets on his journeys.¹³⁷

¹³³ Susan Groag Bell and Marilyn Yalom, 'Introduction' in Susan Groag Bell and Marilyn Yalom (eds), *Revealing Lives: Autobiography, Biography and Gender* (Albany, 1990), pp. 1-12; Michael Mascuch, *Origins of the Individualist Self: Autobiography and Self-Identity in England, 1591-1791* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 163-5.

¹³⁴ Spacks, *Imagining a Self*, pp. 1, 4-6, 26.

¹³⁵ Savage, *Miscellaneous Poems*, p. ix. Unnatural or cruel motherhood appears in the dedication, 'The Wanderer', and 'Fulvia', all in Richard Savage, *The poetical works of Richard Savage. In two volumes. With the life of the author* (Edinburgh, 1780), vol. 1, p. 163; vol. 2, pp. 47, 162. See also Nussbaum, "'Savage' Mothers".

¹³⁶ Johnson's 1744 biography of Savage, for example, presents him as flawed, Samuel Johnson, *An account of the life of Mr Richard Savage Son of the Earl Rivers* (London, 1744), pp. 15-16, 35-7, 64-5.

¹³⁷ Robert Nugent, *The Unnatural Father, or the Persecuted Son. Being A Candid Narrative of the most Unparalleled Sufferings of Robert Nugent, Junr by the Means and Procurement of his own Father* (London, 1755), pp. 4, 6, 9, 17.

By the early nineteenth century, lower-status illegitimates were also able to use positive depictions of illegitimacy as a means to differentiate themselves from paupers and claim adherence to middling ideals of domesticity and industry. As Clark argues, some aspects of the nascent working-class, particularly evangelicals or radicals, asserted their adherence to the rhetoric of domesticity and economic independence to claim political rights and distance themselves from the negative associations of pauperism.¹³⁸ This was particularly displayed in autobiographies, which as Vincent notes were seen as popular within the middle-class market and therefore politically influential.¹³⁹ Illegitimate authors displayed similar virtues, but did so significantly not by hiding their status, but rather by conforming to a specific type of respectable illegitimacy using the middle-class tropes found primarily in novels. In his 1855 autobiography, chartist James Burn refers to himself as a 'beggar boy', but interactions with the poor law are suspiciously absent.¹⁴⁰ He presents himself as ashamed of his vagrancy and continually emphasises his desire to get a trade 'whereby I would be looked upon as an honest member of society'. He rails against intemperance and 'open profligacy', signalling his membership of a moral and respectable labouring group.¹⁴¹ According to by now established tropes of respectable illegitimacy, he depicts his mother using a seduction narrative of passive female sexuality. '[S]he had been unfortunate in placing her affections upon my father, who had deceived her', and quickly marries another, thereby removing her from the charge of continued immorality.¹⁴² His narrative establishes his innocence, enhancing the tragedy of his 'sorrows and sufferings' and his triumph over adversity;

¹³⁸ Clark, *Struggle for the Breeches*, pp. 34, 143-50, 157, 178.

¹³⁹ David Vincent, *Bread, Knowledge and Freedom: A Study of Nineteenth-Century Working Class Autobiography* (London, 1981), pp. 36-7. For other examples of this rhetoric used by legitimate authors, see: Emma Griffin, 'The Making of the Chartists: Popular Politics and Working-class Autobiography in Early Victorian Britain', *English Historical Review* 129 (2014), p. 602; Felicity Nussbaum, *The Autobiographical Subject: Gender and Ideology in Eighteenth-Century England* (Baltimore, 1989), pp. 53-8.

¹⁴⁰ They once get a vagrant pass but he never refers to his place of settlement. His mother doesn't seem to have received any paternal maintenance, and he consistently refers to her as working to support the family, James Burn, *The Autobiography of a Beggar Boy*, ed. David Vincent (London, 1978), pp. 43, 54, 58. For his chartism see Vincent, 'Introduction', pp. 20, 22-3.

¹⁴¹ Burn, *Autobiography*, p. 105. He states on other occasions his dislike of being out of work as it was against his 'spirit of independence', and entailed 'the degradation of my situation, which required to live on the bounty of others instead of my own industry', pp. 50, 102, 115, 117. For his attachment to domesticity and marriage, see chapter 4, pp. 242-3.

¹⁴² Burn, *Autobiography*, p. 41.

one reviewer praised him for overcoming the 'terrible privations through which he had to fight his way upwards'.¹⁴³

In his published autobiographical works, written between 1817 and 1849, radical weaver Samuel Bamford presented his paternity of his two illegitimate children differently, as a means to demonstrate his journey through youthful temptations and towards masculine independence. Although his references to religion are subtle, his Methodist background is reflected in the redemptive qualities of his story. His first child is the product of a casual affair when he was young and 'getting on very fast in sin'.¹⁴⁴ His relationship with this child's mother is depicted using literary stereotypes of pauper illegitimacy. Their relationship is unfeeling and mercenary, with no hint of seduction: she 'took the affair less to heart than many would have done, and... the obtainment of a handsome weekly allowance was with her as much a subject of consideration as any other'.¹⁴⁵ In contrast, he depicts his second extra-marital relationship with his later wife Mima as based on a legitimising monogamous love, citing 'the tenderness of her innocent and devoted heart' and passive 'maidenly shame'.¹⁴⁶ He describes his first meeting with their illegitimate daughter Ann using all the tropes of tragic, respectable illegitimacy. Whilst Mima weeps 'trembling tears' he tells his child, '[b]less thee, my little innocent... though a proud and supercilious world may view with contempt the misfortune of thy birth... I will be a kind father to thee'.¹⁴⁷ This was part of Bamford's claim to masculine independence; McCormack has noted that working-class radicals claimed to be affectionate and responsible fathers as a means of demonstrating their entitlement to enfranchisement.¹⁴⁸ In order to portray himself as a reformed family man, he significantly did not pretend that Ann was legitimate but rather depicted her illegitimacy as conforming to a more respectable type.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 62; *The Times* 22295, 20 February 1856 (London, 1856), p. 8.

¹⁴⁴ Samuel Bamford, *Early Days*, ed. Henry Dunckley (London, 1893), pp. 154, 190-2.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 192. For similar rhetoric from the poor law commissioners about poor unmarried mothers, see below, p. 294.

¹⁴⁶ Bamford, *Early Days*, pp. 154, 184.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 240.

¹⁴⁸ Matthew McCormack, "'Married Men and the Fathers of Families": Fatherhood and Franchise Reform in Britain', in Trev. L. Broughton and Helen Rogers (eds), *Gender and Fatherhood in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke, 2007), pp. 43-54.

In some ways the presentation of illegitimates as innocent, tragic victims reinforced inequalities by reducing them to emotional objects designed to bolster the virtue of the legitimate individual who bestowed benevolent sympathy. To be pitied they also had to remain pitiable: like other forms of 'quasi-contractual... charity', sympathy was predicated on their adherence to the tragic stereotype and exhibition of appropriate humility and gratitude.¹⁴⁹ This discourse recurred from the 1750s onwards in novels, periodicals and charitable tracts. In the 1750s the Foundling Hospital taught their charges to remember 'the Principles of Humility and Gratitude to their Benefactors'.¹⁵⁰ Tracts and periodicals calling for charity towards innocent illegitimates referred to them as objects; one described a 'little victim' abandoned by their parents.¹⁵¹ Austen's heroine Emma is moved to help her illegitimate friend Harriet because of her 'proper and becoming... deference [in] seeming so pleasantly grateful'.¹⁵² As Gatrell has noted concerning attitudes towards capital punishment, pity and sensibility were voyeuristic. Individuals attended hangings to 'monitor their own sympathetic responses' and did not necessarily convert this sympathy into demand for the abolition of public hanging.¹⁵³ Self-presentation as a tragic victim could be a powerful weapon in accessing compassion and charity.¹⁵⁴ But, legitimate and illegitimate authors alike never called for legal reform and illegitimates' tragic plotlines were most often used as cautionary tales. Sympathy rested on the assumption that illegitimates could be contained within the family and personal relationships. As the next section suggests, when illegitimacy became of public concern sympathy quickly reached its limits.

Public and Private

A clear public discourse existed by the start of the nineteenth century in which illegitimacy's associations with social disorder and inherent sin had, for the most

¹⁴⁹ Steve Hindle, *On the Parish? The Micro-Politics of Poor Relief in Rural England c. 1550-1750* (Oxford, 2004), p. 170.

¹⁵⁰ Ruth K. McClure, *Coram's Children: The London Foundling Hospital in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1981), p. 233; Zunshine, *Bastards and Foundlings*, pp. 109, 129-30.

¹⁵¹ 'An Uncommon History of a Natural Child', p. 254.

¹⁵² Austen, *Emma*, vol. 1, p. 41. Harriet is also later described as having a 'sweet, docile, grateful disposition', vol. 1, p. 48.

¹⁵³ V.A.C. Gatrell, *The Hanging Tree: Execution and the English People, 1770-1868* (Oxford, 1994), p. 598.

¹⁵⁴ Similar tactics were used by scandalous memoirists to obtain not only financial gain but also public authority, see Mascuch, *Origins of the Individualist Self*, pp. 189-90.

part, been replaced by associations with innocence and sympathy. This was not hegemonic: sympathy depended on adherence to tropes of female sexual passivity, respectable financial independence and an unequal and objectifying pity. This discussion now turns to the implications of this discourse for social and legal policy towards illegitimates and its relationship with changing political and economic realities. There is no simple causal relationship between literature and practice. There is clear evidence that tropes developed in the novel were replicated in correspondence, parliamentary debates and newspaper discussion of living illegitimates. Novels produced a vocabulary and justificatory framework for the expression of positive attitudes towards non-chargeable illegitimates but illegitimacy's cultural associations could also be manipulated to justify exclusionary policies. The rehabilitation of respectable illegitimates using the discourses of sensibility and natural affection was limited to their position in the private sphere. Those who sought public equality or public financial support were excluded and remained associated with much older negative characteristics. This divergence widened slowly across the century, becoming more significant from the 1770s in response to demographic and economic pressures, and the political pressures of growing radicalism. This section tests the impact of changing cultural contexts on legislation, and on representations of the most prominent and discussed groups of illegitimates in this period: the royal family and paupers.

In the late seventeenth century, royal illegitimates were a central focus for anxieties about social and political disorder.¹⁵⁵ Charles II's illegitimate son James, Duke of Monmouth (1649-1685) and James II's son James, Prince of Wales (1688-1766), who was rumoured to be illegitimate, were presented according to negative early-modern stereotypes which linked illegitimate birth and illegitimate government. Schmidgen notes that Monmouth's opponents presented him as a deformed mixture of royal and low blood, stereotypically promiscuous, discontented and debased.¹⁵⁶ Complaints of his ambition and pride drew on depictions of literary illegitimate villains and connected them to despotic and anarchic government; one ballad considered he had been given 'too much Indulgence' and become 'puff[ed]... up with a supposed

¹⁵⁵ Cody, *Birthing the Nation*, pp. 72-84; Fissell, *Vernacular Bodies*, pp. 196-7, 221-42.

¹⁵⁶ Wolfram Schmidgen, 'The Last Royal Bastard and the Multitude', *Journal of British Studies* 47.1 (2008), pp. 57-61, 64-5, 72. For these stereotypes in literature, see Findlay, *Illegitimate Power*, pp. 132-3.

Right'.¹⁵⁷ John Evelyn denounced Monmouth in similar terms, stating, '[se]e what *Ambition* and want o[f] principles brought him to'.¹⁵⁸ Monmouth's supporters similarly drew on older traditions of the illegitimate as fiery, talented and successful through merit, connecting it to their demands for a mixed government of monarchy and democracy.¹⁵⁹ Monmouth was 'a favorite of the people' and appealed to the 'dissaffected' by calling 'a free-Parliament'. His illegitimacy made him balladeers' ideal romantic hero; he could not only appear the true blood heir to the throne but also the champion of the oppressed, against autocratic popery.¹⁶⁰ Part of his unsettling power was the mystery surrounding his birth. Rumours persisted that his parents had married, making him 'both *illegitimate* and *legitimate*'.¹⁶¹ This liminality was fuelled by contemporary representations of literary illegitimates as unsettling 'others' both inside and outside society and therefore with a unique capacity to destroy it.¹⁶²

In 1688, illegitimacy again threatened the throne when it was rumoured that the infant Prince of Wales was an imposter, smuggled into the royal birthing chamber in a warming pan. Rumours of illegitimacy were a potent means of contesting the child's status as heir; if he was not of royal blood then opposition could be characterised as lawful and defensive of the monarchy's integrity.¹⁶³ Suspicions of a Catholic plot tapped into contemporary motifs of illegitimacy to suggest that the English throne was essentially being cuckolded by Rome; one ballad stated '[f]ull many a Year, has the Bastard been Nursd,/ By Paris and Rome, who engenderd him first'.¹⁶⁴ Illegitimacy, with its connections to deception, imposition and disorder, was

¹⁵⁷ *The Countreys Advice To the Late Duke of Monmouth, And Those in Rebellion with Him* (London, 1685), National Library of Scotland, Crawford 1439, EBBA 34130.

¹⁵⁸ *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. E.S. de Beer (Oxford, 1955), vol. 4, pp. 456-7, 15 July 1685.

¹⁵⁹ Schmidgen, 'Royal Bastard', pp. 57-61, 64-5, 72.

¹⁶⁰ *The Diary of John Evelyn*, vol. 4, p. 449, 14-17 June 1685; pp. 451-2, 8 July 1685; pp. 455-6, 15 July 1685. Angela McShane similarly argues that royal blood was explicitly evoked in positive depictions of Monmouth within traditional black-letter ballads which may reflect popular opinion more closely, McShane, "England's Darling", pp. 140-2.

¹⁶¹ Roger L'Estrange, *The Character of a Papist in Masquerade* (London, 1681), p. 60, cited in Schmidgen, 'Royal Bastard', p. 55. The rumours are reported in *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. R.C. Latham and W. Matthews (London, 1970-83), vol. 3, p. 238, 27 October 1662; p. 303, 31 December 1662; vol. 4, pp. 113-4, 27 April 1663; p. 134, 14 May 1663; p. 138, 15 May 1663.

¹⁶² Findlay, *Illegitimate Power*, pp. 1, 21, 100.

¹⁶³ Cody, *Birthing the Nation*, pp. 77, 80. One pamphlet using this argument is John Dunton, *The hereditary-bastard: or, the royal-intreague of the warming-pan*, pp. 7, 10, 12-13, 20.

¹⁶⁴ *A New Song Entituled, The Warming-Pan* ([unknown, n.d.]), British Library, Roxburghe 3.724, EBBA 31441. For earlier similar examples of the Catholic cuckoldry motif, see: Anon.,

here writ large and backed by a specifically Protestant providential warning that illegitimates were sent as 'a Curse... a Scourge and a Plague'.¹⁶⁵ Older illegitimacy tropes also blended seamlessly with traditional Catholic stereotypes in their connection to lawlessness, corruption and insatiable sexual appetite.¹⁶⁶ In the ballad *The Young Bastards Wish* (1685), the supposed Prince of Wales states he would '[g]rant Lisence for Whoring' and debauch wives, founding an illegitimate lineage of his own. Furthermore, a bastard king would grant peerages to 'e'ry Buffoon', ensuring that '[a]mbition and Faction shall never decay'.¹⁶⁷ Both Catholics and illegitimates were easily tempted by power, money and worldly ambition. Representations of Monmouth and James' infant son mirrored depictions of illegitimate villainy found by Findlay in Renaissance drama: illegitimates were subversive by their very existence, inevitably seeking to disrupt the natural order out of inbuilt greed, ambition or revenge.¹⁶⁸ Illegitimacy was a highly useful and effective means of attacking the monarchy because its negative associations were so ubiquitous in seventeenth-century English culture.

Over the eighteenth century illegitimacy ceased to have such discursive power in representations of the monarchy. Royal illegitimates continued to be born; both George I and George IV had illegitimate children who provoked little public comment. Illegitimate birth was less destabilising to the monarchy partly due to constitutional changes. The 1753 Clandestine Marriages Act and the 1772 Royal Marriages Act minimised the uncertainty that had followed Monmouth's birth. Diminished crown power following the 1688 Glorious Revolution also limited the

An Anti-Brekekekex-Coax-Coax, or, A throat-hapse for the frogges and toades that lately crept abroad, croaking against the Common-prayer book and Episcopacy (London, 1660); Anon., *The Great Work of Redemption: Deliver'd in Five SERMONS At St. Paul's, and at the Spittle, April, 1641* (London, 1660), p. 76.

¹⁶⁵ Dunton, *The hereditary-bastard*, pp. 7-8. Cody relates the warming pan scandal to a 'crisis in paternity and patriarchy', and uncertainty about female power, Cody, *Birthing the Nation*, p. 84. See also Fissell, *Vernacular Bodies*, pp. 196-7. On widespread early modern belief in providence see Walsham, *Providence*.

¹⁶⁶ On the sexual depravity linked to Catholics, see: An Anti-Papist, *Fair warning to take heed of popery, or, A short and true history of the Jesuits fiery practices and powder-plots, to destroy kings, ruin kingdoms, and lay cities* (London, 1674), p. 80; Findlay, *Illegitimate Power*, pp. 130-3.

¹⁶⁷ *The Young Bastards Wish, A Song To the Tune of the Old Mans Wish* (London, 1685), National Library of Scotland, Crawford 628, EBBA 33189. The French king was also described as illegitimate in similar terms, see Anon., *The Great bastard, protector of the little one, done out of French* (Cologne, 1691), pp. 7-8, 14.

¹⁶⁸ Findlay, *Illegitimate Power*, pp. 15, 251.

significance of royal blood and its association with divine right.¹⁶⁹ However, Clark has argued that contractual government actually increased the importance of royal sexual morality. Sexual scandal continued to damage the monarchy, exemplified most significantly through the Mary Anne Clarke affair (1809), in which a royal mistress was found to have been selling military promotions, and the Queen Caroline affair (1820), in which George IV was widely criticised for his double standard in attempting to divorce his wife whilst he himself was adulterous.¹⁷⁰ Clearly, the private lives of the royal family continued to have public resonance, but I suggest that attitudes towards royal illicit sexuality were separated from those towards illegitimate children. The ten illegitimate children of William IV, the Fitzclarences, did not provoke much public censure, and were represented in public discourse using the sympathetic tropes outlined earlier. The association of higher-status illegitimates with innocence, sensibility and natural affection diminished royal illegitimacy's association with public disorder.

Depictions of the Fitzclarences were infused with tropes of virtuous love, monogamy and domesticity. The relationship between William, then Duke of Clarence, and Dorothy Jordan was at first lampooned as further evidence of royal immorality, crucially before the birth of their first child in 1794. In Gillray's *Vices overlook'd in the New Proclamation* (1792) they appear as 'Debauchery' alongside the other royal brothers as 'Avarice', 'Gambling' and 'Drunkenness'.¹⁷¹ However, when it became evident that their relationship was long term, cohabitational and seemingly monogamous, 'in the eye of morality, equivalent to a marriage', public opinion swung in their favour and began to criticise the Royal Marriages Act as 'cold' and 'cruel' in preventing the legalisation of this happy, pseudo middle-class domesticity.¹⁷² Key to this was the presentation of illegitimacy as a private, family

¹⁶⁹ Schmidgen, 'Illegitimacy and Social Observation', p. 137.

¹⁷⁰ Anna Clark, *Scandal: The Sexual Politics of the British Constitution* (Princeton, 2004). Clark's view is supported by recent research into the church's attitudes towards royal sexual indiscretions, see Gibson and Begiato, *Sex and the Church*, pp. 73-83.

¹⁷¹ James Gillray, *Vices overlook'd in the New Proclamation*, 24 May 1792, Brighton Museums, http://brightonmuseums.org.uk/discover/collections/collection-search/?cblid=BTNRP_FA_208918 [accessed 25 January 2018]. Similar in William Dent, *The Contrast*, 8 January 1792, hand-coloured etching on paper, British Museum, BM Satires 8057, http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1526805&partId=1 [accessed 25 January 2018].

¹⁷² *The Examiner* 1219, 12 June 1831 (London, 1831), p. 371; Anon., *The Great Illegitimates!! Public and Private Life of that Celebrated Actress Miss Bland* (London, [1830]), p. 196; James

matter. William's 'domestic habits' and desire to live in 'the unpretending quietude of a private country gentleman' endeared him to the public.¹⁷³ Ballads and pamphlets praised Dorothy for her maternal 'tender affection' and William for his paternal 'liberality and generosity'.¹⁷⁴ By 1797, artists criticised William by suggesting that he was not generous enough towards his children, rather than for his illegitimate paternity in the first place.¹⁷⁵ This sentiment was specifically contrasted with earlier royal illegitimate relationships: one newspaper highlighted the gulf between 'Charles II and his Majesty... in reference to the parental affections of the latter, as compared with the profligate sensuality of the former'.¹⁷⁶ Although Pepys and Evelyn had noted Charles II's apparent affection for his illegitimate children, they feared it as a sign of destabilising and unwise partiality, not as a source of sympathy.¹⁷⁷ Representations of the Fitzclarences as the children of a loving monogamous relationship minimised their threatening potential as an unknown 'other'. Their paternity was openly acknowledged and born of love against the odds, not lust, they could not be accused of inheriting parental promiscuity. They had also been properly socialised in as close to a normative upbringing as possible, avoiding the risks of poor parenting and moral abandonment.

Boaden, *The Life of Mrs Jordan; including original private correspondence, and numerous anecdotes of her contemporaries* (3rd edition, London, 1831), vol. 2, pp. 356-7; *The Morning Chronicle* 19277, 10 June 1831 (London, 1831).

¹⁷³ *The Monthly Magazine*, December 1837 (London, 1837), p. 606.

¹⁷⁴ *La Belle Assemblée: or Court and Fashionable Magazine* 13, January 1831 (London, 1831), pp. 9-10. See also the ballad USSC: *Lines to the Memory of Mrs Jordan* (North Shields, 1819), Firth D15 (2). Dorothy cultivated this image by being always careful to appear as a good mother in public. She noted with satisfaction in 1809 that William's 'goodness to... [his] children is become proverbial', HHL: DJ 293, Dorothy Jordan to William, Duke of Clarence, 2 October 1809.

¹⁷⁵ See for example, James Gillray, *La promenade en famille - a sketch from life*, 23 April 1797, hand-coloured etching on paper, British Museum, BM Satires 9009, http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1634512&partId=1 [accessed 26 December 2017]; George Cruikshank, *Princely piety, or the worshippers at Wanstead*, 1 December 1811, hand-coloured etching on paper, BM Satires 11744, http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1657068&partId=1&people=18201&peoA=18201-1-9&page=1 [accessed 26 December 2017]; William Heath, *The R---l lover, or, the admiral on a lee shore*, 1812, hand-coloured etching on paper, BM Satires 11844, http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1479608&partId=1&people=178784&peoA=178784-1-9&page=1 [accessed 26 December 2017]. In all three the children's physical resemblance to their father is highlighted, dismissing any fears of cuckoldry.

¹⁷⁶ 'The Silent Member', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 28.171 (Edinburgh, 1830), pp. 464-5.

¹⁷⁷ *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, vol. 3, p. 303, 31 December 1662; vol. 4, pp. 113-4, 27 April 1663; p. 134, 14 May 1663; p. 138, 15 May 1663; vol. 5, p. 41, 8 February 1664; *The Diary of John Evelyn*, vol. 4, pp. 409-10, 6 February 1685.

Awareness of a clear boundary between public and private was key to maintaining public sympathy, a dynamic entirely absent from Restoration attitudes to royal illegitimates. As children, antipathy was only roused when they were included in the royal family beyond their parents' domestic circle. Both radical and conservative press objected, with the former viewing the Fitzclarences as symptomatic of royal extravagance and corruption.¹⁷⁸ William Cobbett was most virulent, criticising the children's attendance at their father's birthday party as an 'ostentatious' example of royal hypocrisy, 'of that vice and immorality which his royal father's proclamation... commands us to shun and to abhor'.¹⁷⁹ It was publicity, not their actual existence, that was judged 'dangerous to the stability of the throne' as it undermined the contractual right to rule through moral example.¹⁸⁰ Criticism from the conservative *Anti-Jacobin Review* focused not on vice but indiscretion, stating, '[i]t is not necessary... to probe in to the *private connections...* of our Royal family; but private sufferance, *not countenance*, is all that can, with any shew of propriety be *tolerated*'.¹⁸¹ The inclusion of illegitimates within discourses of natural affection, sensibility and domesticity allowed them to be tolerated as part of a private family but not as public individuals.¹⁸²

The Fitzclarences' capacity for virtue and individual success was accepted within the literary 'everyman' trope because this related to their status as private individuals rather than public symbols. The *Anti-Jacobin Review* allowed: '[l]et the sons of such connections mix with the mass of the people; and if by their own personal talents they can bring themselves into notice, let them receive the full reward of their real deserts.'¹⁸³ The Fitzclarences benefited from belief in illegitimates' innocence and human potential; they received praise for their beauty, bravery and virtue, particularly the boys' military careers.¹⁸⁴ *The Times* of 1831 stated, '[t]hese young

¹⁷⁸ For example: *The Examiner* 1219, 12 June 1831 (London, 1831), p. 371; *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* 3.36 (Edinburgh, 1836), p. 782.

¹⁷⁹ *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register*, 6 September 1806 (London, 1806), pp. 386-8.

¹⁸⁰ *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register*, 9 June 1832 (London, 1832), p. 615.

¹⁸¹ Mercurius Rusticus, 'To the Editor of the Antijacobin Review', *Anti-Jacobin review and true churchman's magazine, or, Monthly, political and literary censor* 39.159 (London, 1811), pp. 330-1. The emphasis is original.

¹⁸² This echoes the exclusion of illegitimates from public concepts of family evident in attitudes towards lineage and property inheritance, see chapter 2.

¹⁸³ Mercurius Rusticus (ie anon), 'To the Editor of the Antijacobin Review', pp. 330-331.

¹⁸⁴ HHL: DJ 293, Dorothy Jordan to William IV, 2 October 1809; *The Gentleman's Magazine: and Historical Chronicle*, February 1820 (London, 1820), pp. 165-8.

gentlemen are much respected; they have been advanced rapidly in their professions, and no complaint has been made. They must aspire, however, to be only gentlemen.¹⁸⁵ Attitudes towards illegitimates had changed considerably since the Restoration; the Fitzclarences were not inferior or deformed, but had individual rights and the ability to succeed. But sympathy stopped short of full equality, as commentators were clear that they had no right to be considered as members of the royal family, as if they had been legitimate.

Controversy over the Fitzclarences' position illustrates the justificatory framework for the continued legal exclusion of illegitimates despite their increasingly positive cultural representations. Just as public sympathy was predicated on illegitimates in general appearing pitiable, so did public acceptance of the Fitzclarences rest on their acceptance of inferior positions. George and Frederick's petitions for greater rank or title after William's accession to the throne in 1830 were deeply unpopular and associated with corruption. George's appointment as Privy Councillor caused 'disgust' and unruliness in the House of Commons and Frederick was 'compelled to resign [his office] at the Tower' as it was thought 'probable that the H[ouse] of C[ommons] would refuse to vote the pay of it'.¹⁸⁶ The perception of illegitimates as 'everyman' meant that they were unable to claim special treatment on the grounds of an illegitimate relationship. *The Morning Chronicle* published a letter damning George as a 'man who, without substantial merit of any kind, and having no public services to boast of, has preferred claims to rank on the ground of a shameful birth alone'.¹⁸⁷ This public assertion of equality was linked to political disorder through the association between sex and corruption, similar to criticisms of the Mary Anne Clarke and Queen Caroline affairs which emphasised royal despotism.¹⁸⁸

When the Fitzclarences claimed public parity, older representations of illegitimates as overly ambitious reasserted themselves. One biographer referred to them as 'upstart illegitimates' with 'pretensions to honours'.¹⁸⁹ Lord Melbourne and his fellow

¹⁸⁵ Radical, 'To The Editor Of The Times', *The Times*, 1 January 1831 (London, 1831), p. 3.

¹⁸⁶ *The Greville Memoirs, 1814-1860*, ed. Lytton Strachey and Roger Fulford (London, 1938), vol. 2, p. 362, 27 February 1833; vol. 2, p. 359, 16 February 1833.

¹⁸⁷ 'Vindex', 'To the Earl of Munster', *The Morning Chronicle* 19584, 2 June 1832 (London, 1832). For similar see Anon., *Great Illegitimates*, p. 114.

¹⁸⁸ Clark, *Scandal*, pp. 148, 183.

¹⁸⁹ Anon., *Great Illegitimates*, p. 119, similar p. 116.

politicians saw them as 'impertinent', and out 'to get as much as they could for themselves'.¹⁹⁰ However, ambition was now most often couched as a lack of filial obedience and affection, so complete was the inclusion of illegitimates within the normative ideal of natural affection. Diarist Charles Greville emphasised their 'great insolence and ingratitude' towards the king, echoed in the *Morning Chronicle's* criticism that George Fitzclarence had 'forgot his gratitude to his parent... [and] duty to his Sovereign'.¹⁹¹ In the end, William IV was able to appease his sons' demands for public recognition as well as public demand for inequality by granting his eldest son the Earldom of Munster, a title that William had held as Prince, and his younger children the rank of a peer's children. These titles were presented and perceived as William's personal property, rather than that of the crown, and justified as a natural 'mark of paternal regard'.¹⁹² Greville noted that there were few objections as 'the public allow natural feeling to supersede law and etiquette'.¹⁹³ The country respected sentimental connection and parental duty towards illegitimate children, although they were keen to maintain legal difference. Domesticity, seen by historians as the conservative backbone of the monarchy's political authority, could be used to neutralise any remaining threat associated with illegitimacy.¹⁹⁴

By the early nineteenth century, royal illegitimates were no longer feared as having the power to destabilise social and political order by their very existence. This partly reflects growing sympathy towards illegitimates, made mainstream through the novel, but also depended on the representation of the Fitzclarences as private individuals, maintained and socialised within a private family setting. The Fitzclarences and their parents were praised using discourses of natural affection and potential virtue. Nell Gwyn was a 'prostitute Creature' but Dorothy Jordan 'a pattern

¹⁹⁰ RA: VIC/MAIN/QVJ (W), (Princess Beatrice's copies), Queen Victoria's Journals, 1832-1901 (hereafter QVJ), 31 August 1838; 4 September 1838.

¹⁹¹ *The Greville Memoirs*, vol. 2, pp. 9-10, 92, 297; vol. 3, p. 379; 'Vindex', 'To the Earl of Munster'. For similar see HALS: 75 M91/E12/1, Reverend John C. Stapleton to the Earl of Carnarvon [December 1830].

¹⁹² *The Times* 14537, 13 May 1831 (London, 1831), p. 2. For similar see: *The Examiner* 1217, 22 May 1831 (London, 1831), p. 330; *The Examiner* 1216, 15 May 1831 (London, 1831), pp. 314-6; QVJ, 4 September 1838.

¹⁹³ *The Greville Memoirs*, vol. 2, p. 134, 24 March 1831.

¹⁹⁴ Cody, *Birthing the Nation*, p. 232; Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (London, 2003), pp. 206-7, 232-6, 268-73.

of matronly excellence'.¹⁹⁵ The only trope to survive was that of ambition and this was considerably limited by acceptance of paternal natural affection. By the early nineteenth century reproductive illegitimacy was no longer used as a metaphor for unlawful government, and good fatherhood, even unmarried, could actually improve a monarch's claims as a good ruler. Fundamentally, William was able to give his children considerable social and political status, as well as inclusion in the royal household as adults, without causing serious political damage.

The distinction between illegitimacy as a private matter or a public concern also affected attitudes towards non-royal illegitimates. Public consequences had always been central to the policing and regulation of illegitimacy, but over the period judgements of public impact became increasingly dependent on socio-economic background. The earlier discourse of bastardy, of illegitimates as inherently sinful and inferior, had been democratic. Religious stigmatisation had a blanket application; all children born out of wedlock were stained in the same way, regardless of their social status. This was reflected in the primary method for policing illegitimacy before 1700: the church courts. Fornicators and adulterers were subject to shaming punishments, such as penance, rather than economic sanctions. Although the wealthy did try to avoid prosecution, Ingram argues that the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century church courts were assiduous in their pursuit of wrongdoers, regardless of status.¹⁹⁶ The decline of the church courts was long term and regionally variable but it is clear that by the mid eighteenth century prosecutions had declined considerably.¹⁹⁷ Only two of the case studies examined in this thesis involved the church courts: Dorcas Owen was prosecuted in 1699, 20 years after her offence and aggravated by an inheritance dispute, and James Boswell was fined for fornication by the Edinburgh kirk.¹⁹⁸ Boswell considered England far safer for his

¹⁹⁵ *The Diary of John Evelyn*, vol. 3, p. 573, 1 March 1671; vol. 4, p. 374, 30 March 1684; Anon., *Great Illegitimates*, p. 25.

¹⁹⁶ Martin Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage in England, 1570-1640* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 224, 256, 270-2, 279-80, 288-9. Cf. Walter King, 'Punishment for Bastardy in Early Seventeenth-Century England', *Albion* 10 (1978), pp. 130-51.

¹⁹⁷ Ingram, *Church Courts*, pp. 7-11, 371-2; R.B. Outhwaite, *The Rise and Fall of the English Ecclesiastical Courts, 1500-1860* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 80-2.

¹⁹⁸ SA: 4572/11/3/1, copy of citation by the Bishop of Hereford, 30 January 1698/9. This clearly states the accusation was made 'at the voluntary wish of Robert More Esq', with whom she was engaged in an inheritance dispute. For further discussion of the Mores see chapter 2, pp. 131-3. *The Correspondence of James Boswell and John Johnston of Grange*, ed. Ralph S. Walker (London, 1966), pp. 30-1, James Boswell to John Johnston, 24 December 1762.

extra-marital activities, echoed in a treatise of 1782 that '[i]n England the church seldom interferes with the matter' and cannot 'exact... penance'.¹⁹⁹ Economic status was not irrelevant; the poor law had been a means of punishing poor unmarried parents since the 1576 statute.²⁰⁰ But, until the eighteenth century, this had occurred in tandem with religious punishment, creating a social context in which extra-marital sex was morally unacceptable.²⁰¹ While the church courts functioned, there remained the possibility that elites could be prosecuted, as well as the fundamental assertion that all illegitimacy was a sin.²⁰²

Social and legal policy towards illegitimates of all social backgrounds did, in the early eighteenth century, incorporate shifting cultural beliefs in innocence and natural affection. The 1576 poor law mandated that both parents pay maintenance, but little attention was paid to the child's welfare beyond this.²⁰³ Over the eighteenth century the laws became increasingly concerned with the child's welfare, at least theoretically. By 1727 Dalton stated that unmarried mothers could not be brought before the justices until one month after giving birth out of concern for maternal and child health, 'such is the humanity of our laws'.²⁰⁴ In 1727 it was 'common Opinion and Practice' to keep mother and child together until the age of seven, later codified in a 1773 law.²⁰⁵ Successive acts streamlining the filiation process established the child's right to receive parish relief, as Nutt says, 'whether the putative father paid or not', recasting the illegitimate as a deserving object of communal resources, a 'filius populi'.²⁰⁶ By the 1730s, legislation fundamentally recognised an illegitimate child's

¹⁹⁹ *Boswell's London Journal*, 1762-63, ed. F.A. Pottle (London, 1950), p. 120, 4 January 1763; *The Protestant Magazine; or Christian Treasury. Designed to encourage a perfect knowledge of the Protestant Religion* (London, [1781-3]), vol. 2, pp. 46-7.

²⁰⁰ 18 Eliz. c. 3, *Justices of Peace shall order the Punishment of the Mother, and reputed Father of a Bastard, &c*, 1576, in John Tidd Pratt (ed.), *A Collection of all the Statutes in Force respecting the Relief and Regulation of the Poor* (2nd edn, London, 1843), p. 28.

²⁰¹ Ingram, *Church Courts*, p. 166.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 280-1, 366-7. A similar point about adultery prosecutions is made in Turner, *Fashioning Adultery*, pp. 5-6.

²⁰³ 18 Elizabeth c. 3; Michael Dalton and William Nelson, *The Country Justice: containing the practice, duty and power of the Justices of the Peace, As well in as out of their sessions* (London, 1727), pp. 44, 47.

²⁰⁴ Dalton and Nelson, *Country Justice*, p. 45.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 46, 227. This point is also made in Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, pp. 36, 66.

²⁰⁶ 6 George II c. 31, *An Act for the Relief of Parishes and other Places from such Charges as may arise from Bastard Children Born in the same* (1733), cited in Nutt, 'Paternal Financial Responsibility', p. 337.

right to maintenance and conceptualised responsibility for the child in a way that reflected normative parental and community bonds.

Innocence was also crucial to the recasting of illegitimates as appropriate beneficiaries of charity, through institutions such as the London Foundling Hospital, established in 1739.²⁰⁷ The Foundling Hospital theoretically took in children of any birth status or social background, reflecting cultural beliefs in human potential and that legitimate and illegitimate individuals were not inherently different.²⁰⁸ This philanthropy was rationalised through contemporary economic and demographic theories that the population was stagnating and that economic success relied on a growing workforce.²⁰⁹ In one 1766 tract, campaigner Jonas Hanway 'compute[d] the value of a life in the mercantile state of profit and loss' but also saw it as one of the 'duties of humanity', articulated specifically as a Christian humanity, to save 'the forsaken and distressed infant'.²¹⁰ Illegitimate, orphaned and other poor children were also targets of a raft of child welfare legislation passed in the 1760s and 1770s. In response to a series of high profile child neglect scandals, parishes were required to keep records of infant mortality and inspect parish nurses and apprentice masters.²¹¹ Illegitimates were included alongside legitimate parish poor children as charitable dependents in need of state support, not as an intrinsically wicked and disruptive threat.²¹² Belief in illegitimates' innocence underlined their potential as useful workers and as objects of charity, calculated to improve the virtue of their genteel benefactors.

²⁰⁷ For the history of the hospital see: McClure, *Coram's Children*; Tanya Evans, 'Unfortunate Objects': *Lone Mothers in Eighteenth-Century London* (Basingstoke, 2005), pp. 67-98.

²⁰⁸ See above, pp. 254-5.

²⁰⁹ Humanus, 'To the Printer of the London Evening Post', *London Evening Post* 6091, November 1766 (London, 1766); Britannicus, 'To the Author', *London Evening Post* 4864, 6-9 January 1759 (London, 1759); Hanway, *An earnest appeal for mercy*, pp. 82, 85, 88. For more on the populationist view, although not connected to innocence, see Zunshine, *Bastards and Foundlings*, pp. 47-8; Stratmann, 'Nobody's Child', p. 114.

²¹⁰ Hanway, *An earnest appeal for mercy*, p. 72.

²¹¹ 2 Geo. III c. 22, *An Act for the keeping of regular, uniform and annual registers of all parish poor infants under a certain age, within the bills of mortality*; 7 Geo. III c. 39, *An Act for the better regulation of the parish poor children*, both cited in Hitchcock and Shoemaker, *London Lives*, pp. 293-4. For details of the child neglect scandals see: *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, 5 January 1778 (London, 1778); *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal* 204 (Bristol, 1787); *Public Advertiser*, 8 February 1792 (London, 1792).

²¹² Evident, for example, in the inclusion of illegitimate and legitimate children on parish nursing lists under the combined heading 'Orphans at the charge of the Parish', CWAC: E228 (MF978), St Margaret Westminster, overseers' accounts, 1713.

Over time, however, attitudes towards chargeable illegitimates in legislation and public discourse became increasingly punitive and drew on older negative tropes of illegitimacy which had largely disappeared in discussions of higher-status illegitimacy. Firstly, by the eighteenth century, 'analogies between familial and political order began to break down' and state interference in private matters seen as increasingly unacceptable.²¹³ In consequence, the policing of immorality, particularly through Reformation of Manners campaigns which recurred throughout the century, focused more on public manifestations of sexual immorality linked to civic disorder, such as prostitution, and less on individual interpersonal relationships. Clergyman and reformer John Disney stated in 1710 that 'vice when it is private and retired is not attended with those provoking circumstances, as when it revels in your streets... in the face of open day'.²¹⁴ Although both rich and poor were criticised for extra-marital sex, criticism of illegitimate individuals themselves was increasingly connected to public disorder on economic, rather than moral terms.²¹⁵ Illegitimates who were not privately maintained were perceived as a burden on the nation, within this new rationale that the state was concerned only with public order. By 1770, Blackstone considered sexual sins such as adultery a 'private injury' and that only 'maintenance' was 'a civil concern'.²¹⁶

The association of chargeable illegitimacy with public order occurred partly due to changing political and economic pressures. The population, which had stagnated until the 1730s, was by the 1770s known to be increasing. Poor rates were rising unsustainably amidst high unemployment, escalating grain prices and recurrent cycles of war and demobilisation.²¹⁷ As Lees has argued, this led to a growing desire to differentiate between deserving and undeserving poor and to view some types of poverty as rooted in wilful vice.²¹⁸ Attitudes towards the poor generally became

²¹³ Turner, *Fashioning Adultery*, p. 7; Dabhoiwala, *Origins of Sex*, pp. 81, 92, 109-16. Cf. Andrew, *Aristocratic Vice*, p. 244. For the importance of providence pre-1700 see: Walsham, *Providence*, pp. 116-24, 135-42; Ingram, *Church Courts*, pp. 125, 153-4, 261-2.

²¹⁴ John Disney, *A second essay upon the execution of the laws* (London, 1710), p. 48, cited in Dabhoiwala, *Origins of Sex*, p. 57.

²¹⁵ For criticism of aristocratic promiscuity, see: Andrew, *Aristocratic Vice*; Binhammer, 'Sex Panic'.

²¹⁶ Blackstone, *Commentaries*, vol. 4, p. 65.

²¹⁷ K.D.M. Snell, *Annals of the Labouring Poor: Social Change in Agrarian England, 1660-1900* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 60-61, 108-11; Lees, *Solidarities of Strangers*, pp. 45, 83-4.

²¹⁸ Historians disagree on the timing of this crackdown, between 1780 and 1834. For a discussion of the debate see: Alannah Tomkins and Steven King, 'Introduction' in Alannah

more punitive but illegitimate children and their parents were singled out as a root cause of escalating costs. This partly reflected the demographic reality. The illegitimacy ratio increased more steeply after 1720, more than doubling from 2.6 percent in 1730 to 6.3 percent by 1810.²¹⁹ The costs of pauper illegitimacy were also more visible and easily quantified. Fewer wealthy fathers appeared in poor law records over the century and, as Nutt has demonstrated, parishes were finding it increasingly difficult to recoup maintenance costs from putative fathers.²²⁰

Parliamentary discussions and social policy pamphlets seeking to enumerate the extent of poverty in this period specifically singled out illegitimacy. The 1829 *Reports from the Select Committee on the Police of the Metropolis* detailed numbers of illegitimate children, and no other type of poor relief dependence, alongside crime statistics and population growth.²²¹ Parliament ceased funding the Foundling Hospital from 1760, and MPs considered the exclusion of illegitimates from an entitlement to relief as the simplest way to reduce costs.²²² In an 1822 debate Sir James Scarlett advocated ending the prohibitions on removal on the grounds that pregnant unmarried women should not be 'a burthen upon the country... [t]here could exist no moral obligation to support such spurious issue'.²²³ In an 1819 debate on the Sturges Bourne acts, which sought to cut costs through greater differentiation between the deserving and undeserving poor, MP John Curwen argued that 'bastardy was become in a great measure a crime without a punishment. Some check seemed indisputably necessary, as well for morals as for relieving the country from so grievous a burthen'.²²⁴ Illegitimates' entitlement to public maintenance was eventually abolished under the

Tomkins and Steven Kings (eds), *The Poor in England, 1700-1850, An Economy of Makeshifts* (Manchester, 2003), pp. 8-10; Lees, *Solidarities of Strangers*, pp. 93-9.

²¹⁹ Peter Laslett and Karla Oosterveen, 'Long-Term Trends in Bastardy in England: A Study of the Illegitimacy Figures in the Parish Registers and in the Reports of the Registrar General, 1591-1960', *Population Studies* 27.2 (1973), p. 267.

²²⁰ Only an average of 50.7 percent of costs were covered by paternal payments, or what Nutt calls the 'bastardy recovery rate', Nutt, 'Paternal Financial Responsibility', p. 346. On wealthy fathers see chapter 1, pp. 74-5.

²²¹ 'Reports from the Select Committee on the Police of the Metropolis', *The Gentleman's Magazine: and Historical Chronicle* (London, May 1829), pp. 433-6. Reformer Eden also stated that 'parishes are burdened [with a]... considerable proportion of children (more especially of bastards)', and that 'every bastard supported at the charge of the parish... costs double the sum' of legitimate children, Sir Frederic Morton Eden, *The State of the Poor, or, an history of the labouring classes in England* (London, 1797), vol. 1 pp. 449-50.

²²² Evans, 'Unfortunate Objects', pp. 92-3, 171.

²²³ *Hansard*, House of Commons Debates, 30 May 1822, vol. 7, cc. 400-15.

²²⁴ *Hansard*, House of Commons Debates, 9 February 1819, vol. 39, cc. 400-15.

1834 New Poor Law, which reclassified illegitimate children as undeserving poor and ended the principle that all children were deserving of the relief which had characterised the poor law from its inception.²²⁵

The exclusion of pauper illegitimates and their parents was justified on the grounds of immorality, through the revival and re-application of negative illegitimacy tropes. Unlike novels and other cultural depictions, extra-marital sex among the poor was not depicted in legal documents and newspaper reports as loving, tragic and necessitated by external cruelties, but as lustful and voluntary, motivated by greed. The commissioners of a report recommending poor law reform consistently represented poor mothers as deliberately having illegitimate children for lucrative maintenance payments. One witness stated, '[t]o the woman... a single illegitimate child is scarcely any expence, and two or three are a source of positive profit'.²²⁶ Unmarried mothers seeking poor relief were referred to as 'prostitutes' and their children as 'the offspring of promiscuous concubinage'.²²⁷ There was very little understanding of illegitimacy as a misfortune or accident and certainly no perception of women as victims of seduction or in love with their partners. Strikingly, as Henriques notes, the commissioners' report evoked the language of sin.²²⁸ This language had all but disappeared from depictions of genteel illegitimacy. Older associations of illegitimacy with cuckoldry and threatening female reproductive power were explicitly recalled and associated with poverty.²²⁹

Unmarried mothers could only appear deserving of sympathy and therefore charity if they conformed to narratives of seduction, victimhood and sexual passivity, similar to Burn and Bamford's appropriation of middle-class ideals. Lloyd argues that applicants to the London Magdalen Hospital in the 1760s claimed assistance using a rhetoric of feeling but that this had a clear 'connection with decency and even

²²⁵ Hindle, *On the Parish*, p. 103. For an overview of the 1834 law's bastardy clauses see Henriques, 'Bastardy', pp. 103-4.

²²⁶ *Report from His Majesty's commissioners for inquiring into the administration and practical operation of the Poor Laws* (House of Commons Papers, 1834), p. 93. For similar statements see p. 94.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

²²⁸ Henriques, 'Bastardy', pp. 109-10.

²²⁹ 'Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1834', in S.G. Checkland and E.O.A. Checkland (eds), *The Poor Law Report of 1834* (Harmondsworth, 1974), pp. 263-4 cited in Nutt, 'Paternal Financial Responsibility', p. 338. Cody sees the reports as indicating a profound distrust of the poor and of women, Cody, 'Politics of Illegitimacy', pp. 143-5.

gentility'.²³⁰ Similarly, the women who petitioned the Foundling Hospital in the period following the General Reception (1756-60), when admission was more difficult, also emphasised the respectability of their backgrounds and the emotional investment they made in their relationship.²³¹ Demands that women conform to a pseudo-middle class respectability intensified over the period; Evans notes that enquiries into the mother's previous virtue increased from 1770.²³² This, alongside the loophole that admitted children with no questions asked upon payment of a fee of 100 pounds, suggests that the only illegitimate children considered redeemable and useful to the nation were of respectable parentage.²³³ Female sexual passivity was key to representations of elite and middle class immorality, evident in criminal conversation trials.²³⁴ It is striking that historians have observed the use of seduction tropes primarily in contexts of Foundling Hospital petitions and infanticide depositions. These women were specifically not mothering their own children and could thereby conform to the rhetoric of tragic, absent motherhood prominent in novels.²³⁵ Poor women who worked, sought to keep their children or whose pregnancy resulted from consensual sex, could not conform to this narrative.²³⁶

MPs and legislators also presented unmarried pauper parents as lacking in feeling, 'othering' pauper families as essentially different to a feeling middle class and justifying the punitive measures of poor law reform.²³⁷ The 1834 commissioners' report focused on mothers' perceived lack of shame, stating, 'the women... feel no disgrace'.²³⁸ Thomas Malthus, whose views greatly influenced the Commissioners, argued that the 'principal value' of children was as 'the object of one of the most delightful passions in human nature - parental affection' but that 'this value [was]

²³⁰ Lloyd, 'Pleasure's Golden Bait', pp. 61-2, 65-6.

²³¹ R.B. Outhwaite, 'Objects of Charity': Petitions to the London Foundling Hospital, 1768-72', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 32.4 (1999), pp. 501, 503.

²³² Evans, 'Unfortunate Objects', pp. 13-14, 93-5, 99-102, 109. Demand for respectability continued into the Victorian period, see Jessica A. Sheetz-Nguyen, *Victorian Women, Unwed Mothers and the London Foundling Hospital* (London, 2012), pp. 188-9.

²³³ Evans, 'Unfortunate Objects', p. 97.

²³⁴ Binhammer, 'Sex Panic', pp. 427-8; Perry, 'Colonising the Breast'.

²³⁵ For infanticide see Dana Rabin, 'For the shame of the World, and fear of her Mother's Anger': Emotion and Child Murder in England and Scotland in the Long Eighteenth Century', in Carolyn Strange, Robert Cribb and Christopher E. Forth (eds), *Honour, Violence and Emotions in History: Historical Perspectives* (London, 2014), pp. 69-88

²³⁶ Lloyd, 'Pleasure's Golden Bait', pp. 53, 67.

²³⁷ Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, p. 206.

²³⁸ *Report from His Majesty's commissioners*, pp. 95-6.

disregarded' by poor unmarried parents.²³⁹ These unfeeling parents then treated their illegitimate children unkindly; abandonment and neglect were not recognised as strategies of makeshift, but as evidence of emotional absence. Unmarried mothers were particularly depicted as hardened by vice, 'grown vicious', they were 'unfit to be trusted with their own children'.²⁴⁰ Illegitimate poor children would therefore grow up unsocialised, unused to paternal or state authority and hardened by cruel treatment, strikingly similar to Wollstonecraft's depiction of Jemima.²⁴¹ Through poor parenting the cycle of illegitimacy and dependence would repeat itself. In an 1817 committee report, Staffordshire magistrate George Chetwynd confirmed the committee's suspicions that 'bastards [were]... the children of paupers, who have been themselves upon the rates'.²⁴² Early modern works had depicted illegitimates' threatening and disruptive potential as resulting from an internalised resentment, directed against a stigmatising society and the families that excluded them.²⁴³ This had been neutralised amongst the genteel, who had domesticated illegitimates through virtuous tolerance and natural affection, but was thought to be missing from the experience of the poor.

It is difficult to directly compare perceptions of pauper and non-pauper illegitimates in legislation and parliamentary debates to confirm that this rhetoric was not only a product of legislative language. The poor law was amended throughout the period and generated considerable public debate but laws relating to non-chargeable illegitimates remained largely unchanged. One of the only debates to discuss the position of higher-status illegitimates, the 1796 debate on the tax on collateral succession, used much more sympathetic language than the debates considering

²³⁹ Thomas R. Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (London, 1826), in E. A. Wrigley and David Souden (eds), *The Works of Thomas Robert Malthus* (London, 1986), vol. 3, p. 517, cited in Nutt, 'Paternal Financial Responsibility', p. 355. Similar sentiments are expressed by Sir James Scarlett in *Hansard*, House of Commons Debates, 30 May 1822, vol. 7, cc. 761-79: '[l]ocal attachments were strong in the more virtuous and amiable. To them a removal was the bitterest affliction: but to the ideal and profligate, who felt not the attachments arising from industrious and virtuous habits, a removal was no punishment'.

²⁴⁰ Hanway, *An earnest appeal for mercy*, p. 76. Similar evidence appears in: Bailey, *Parenting in England*, p. 103; Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, p. 203.

²⁴¹ See above, pp. 274-5.

²⁴² *Select Committee of House of Lords to consider Poor Laws. Report, Minutes of Evidence, Appendix* (House of Commons Papers, 1818), p. 101. For similar beliefs see [Patrick Colquhoun], *A Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis, explaining the various crimes and misdemeanors which at present are felt as a pressure upon the community; and suggesting remedies for their prevention* (London, 1796), pp. 87, 151.

²⁴³ Findlay, *Illegitimate Power*, pp. 92-8, 128.

chargeable illegitimates. Alderman Nathaniel Newnham referred to higher-status illegitimates not as bastards but as 'natural' or 'illegitimate' children, 'persons not acknowledged by the law, for whom a man might, very properly, have a tender affection'. He was concerned that they would 'feel severely' the effects of the bill, a recourse to empathy that contrasts distinctly with the perception of pauper illegitimates and their parents as unfeeling.²⁴⁴ MP Charles James Fox agreed 'that a great hardship would be cast on children who had the misfortune to be of illegitimate birth'.²⁴⁵ Debates over divorce bills generally did not mention illegitimate children and Parliament was often reluctant to bastardise 'innocent infants' out of sympathy for the tragic consequences of illegitimacy.²⁴⁶ Opinion on this varied; MP and reactionary conservative Edmund Burke referred to adulterine illegitimates of cuckoldry as 'bastards... the pledges of his disgrace'.²⁴⁷ This was, however, in relation to the illegitimate children of adulterous wives who, as discussed above, were specifically excluded from sympathetic portrayals of illegitimacy in published works. The prominence of a language of feeling as a means to differentiate between chargeable and higher-status illegitimates in legal discourse suggests that contemporaries were utilising concepts and vocabulary developed in the novel to inform or justify legal policy.

The distinction between higher-status illegitimacy as a private matter and chargeable illegitimacy as a public concern had specific impacts on legal and social policy. The legal rights of chargeable illegitimates diminished. The 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act removed their entitlement to relief and, alongside legitimate poor children, they were more likely to be separated from their parents under workhouse legislation.²⁴⁸ The legal position of non-chargeable illegitimates stayed largely the same; a

²⁴⁴ *Parliamentary Register 1780-1796*, House of Commons Debates, 22 March 1796, p. 347. Newnham had allied with the Whigs but defected to support the government during war with France. By 1796 he had allied himself more strongly with the Tories against parliamentary reform and in defence of the royal family, see 'Newnham, Nathaniel', <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1790-1820/member/newnham-nathaniel-1742-1809> [accessed 10 February 2018].

²⁴⁵ *Parliamentary Register 1780-1796*, House of Commons Debates, 22 March 1796, pp. 350-1.

²⁴⁶ *Public Advertiser* 15211, 28 February 1783 (London, England); Julie Shaffer, 'Bastardy and Divorce Trials, 1780-1809', in Rebecca Probert (ed.), *Cohabitation and Non-Marital Births in England and Wales, 1600-2012* (Basingstoke, 2004), p. 97. Analyses of criticisms of aristocratic vice do not mention illegitimate children: Andrew, *Aristocratic Vice*, pp. 156-64; Binhammer, 'Sex Panic'.

²⁴⁷ *Parliamentary Register 1780-1796*, House of Commons Debates, 28 March 1783, p. 545.

²⁴⁸ Cody, 'Politics of Illegitimacy', p. 146.

sympathetic cultural context and private tolerance did not lead to legal equality. Any legal respite was difficult to grant due to the centrality of the legitimacy laws to the basic principles of property inheritance, the building blocks of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century society. In an 1820 debate over the Marriage Act Amendment Bill, the Lord Chancellor feared that a redefinition of marriage would open up ambiguities in legitimacy, a 'measure calculated to affect the whole mass of private property in this kingdom'.²⁴⁹

The implications of growing radicalism following the French Revolution only reinforced legal inequality. When illegitimate equality was mentioned, albeit rarely, it was within wider radical political demands, such as universal suffrage and the abolition of primogeniture, making it appear more radical and dangerous by association. The radical views of William Hodgson, one of the few authors who advocated complete abolition of the category of illegitimacy, were dismissed as 'wild speculations', in danger of 'destroy[ing] all distinction between virtue and vice, between worth and profligacy'.²⁵⁰ As Clark and Binhammer have demonstrated, from the 1790s illicit sexuality was used as a means for conservatives to attack radical politics, equating sexual freedom with political anarchy.²⁵¹ Discussions of illegitimates' legal rights were situated within this larger debate and it was therefore politically impossible to even consider a relaxation of the legitimacy laws. The association of illegitimacy with radicalism was made worse by the French revolutionary government's abolition of the legitimacy laws in 1793, causing *Lloyd's Evening Post* to report fearfully that this measure was 'extremely impolitic at the present time, when the morass of the people are deeply corrupted, and when consequently it must be highly dangerous to loosen the sacred ties of wedlock, and to authorise the offspring of criminal connexions to share in the privileges of legitimate

²⁴⁹ *Hansard*, House of Lords Debates, 19 July 1820, vol. 2, cc. 553-69.

²⁵⁰ William Hodgson, *The commonwealth of reason. By William Hodgson, now confined in the prison of Newgate, London, for sedition* (London, 1795), pp. 19, 21, 35, 73-4; *The Critical Review, or, Annals of Literature* 16 (London, 1796), p. 461; *The Monthly Review, or, Literary Journal* 18 (London, 1795), p. 57. See also the widespread condemnation of Mary Wollstonecraft after her unmarried maternity was revealed in William Godwin's *Memoirs of the Author of the Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (London, 1798), for example, *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine, or, Monthly Political, and Literary Censor* 1 (London, 1798) pp. 97-8.

²⁵¹ Binhammer, 'Sex Panic', p. 413; Clark, *Scandal*, pp. 122-6, 137-8. See also Andrew, *Aristocratic Vice*, pp. 156, 163-4.

children'.²⁵² The *Oracle and Daily Advertiser* reported in 1800 of 'the general immorality spread through France by the revolutionary spirit' resulting in an 'excess of libertinism' which has 'multiplied bastard children' and 'dissolved the sacred bands of marriage'.²⁵³ In France, a trajectory of growing sympathy for illegitimacy led to improvements in legal rights.²⁵⁴ This did not occur in England, partly because of the different poor relief context, but also because illegitimacy was associated with a dangerously radical revolutionary France.

Cultural change may, however, have influenced the ways in which individual illegitimates were treated in everyday social interaction. Language and motifs that appear in novels and other published works were used in correspondence and diaries. Compassion and tolerance were praised as positive attributes. A young Queen Victoria noted approvingly in her diary that Lord Melbourne was 'so affected' by the plight of her illegitimate cousins the Fitzclarences 'that his eyes filled with tears', proof of his 'excellent, kind' character and 'tender heart'.²⁵⁵ Victoria's 'bounty and civility' towards her cousins was interpreted as 'liberality' and 'kindness', constructing her as a benevolent monarch.²⁵⁶ Contemporaries praised genteel stepmothers for their acceptance of illegitimates, again using rhetoric common in novels. In the 1780s, Major Floyd referred to Lady Pembroke's 'most noble behaviour' towards Augustus Reebkomp, and Horace Walpole considered when Lord Dacre appointed his wife executrix and trustee for his children in his will, that 'Lady Dacre has deserved it by her kindness to his children, who both live with her'.²⁵⁷ The continued representation of illegitimates as pitiable could also be used strategically

²⁵² Christie McDonald, 'Legitimizing Change: The Decrees on Bastardy during the French Revolution', *University of Toronto Quarterly* 61.4 (1992), pp. 450-59; *Lloyd's Evening Post* 6240, 21-23 August 1797 (London, 1797).

²⁵³ *Oracle and Daily Advertiser* 22.390, 8 November 1800 (London, 1800).

²⁵⁴ Matthew Gerber, *Bastards: Politics, Family and Law in Early Modern France* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 10, 185-6. The Napoleonic Code did reverse some of the equality legislation, but illegitimate rights were still better under French law than English. Articles 312 and 338, *Code Civil* (Paris, 1819), pp. 39, 41, cited in McDonald, 'Legitimizing Change', p. 456.

²⁵⁵ QVJ, 23 January 1838. Similar in 25 January 1838.

²⁵⁶ *The Greville Memoirs*, vol. 3, p. 388, 28 July 1837. Greville refers also to Victoria's 'bounty and civility to the King's children' as indicative of her fondness for her uncle William IV, vol. 4, pp. 44-5, 25 March 1838.

²⁵⁷ *Pembroke Papers (1780-1794): Letters and Diaries of Henry, Tenth Earl of Pembroke and his Circle*, ed. Lord Herbert (London, 1950), p. 43, Major Floyd to George, Lord Herbert, 24 September 1780; *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, ed. W.S. Lewis (New Haven, 1937-83, online edition), vol. 36, p. 236, Horace Walpole to Thomas Walpole the Younger, 8 April 1786.

by illegitimates themselves. Frederick Fitzclarence defended his siblings' claims for public support to critic Leslie Grove Jones by emphasising their gratitude: 'any thing that could be given us would be a boon or gift... would it not be cruel to leave us poor & wretched'. He also expected sympathy and appealed to his correspondent's humanity: 'I feel... that I am addressing a person who has been wronged and can feel for the misfortunes of others'.²⁵⁸ Parents also exploited sensibility on behalf of their children. Prince Augustus appealed to Parliament for clemency after the birth of his legally illegitimate son in 1794, stating that 'a man of feeling' could not 'forsake... a helpless infant... doomed to misfortune from the very hour he was conceived'.²⁵⁹ Illegitimates and their parents were fully aware of the cultural baggage surrounding their status and could utilise and manipulate it for their own ends.²⁶⁰

The expectation and idealisation of natural affection and empathy created a cultural space in which emotional connections with illegitimates could be justified. As we saw in earlier chapters, George Bentham, John Cannon, Horace Walpole and James Boswell all turned to blood as a conveyor of feeling and obligation to justify the adoption of normative family ideals even during physical separation.²⁶¹ Illegitimate relationships were expected to have emotional weight and so contemporaries expressed empathy on the loss of such relationships. Walter Spencer-Stanhope and his fellow trustee William Smith both expressed considerable concern for John Smith's mother Mary, notwithstanding her unsanctioned position as a mistress. When communicating the news of her lover John Spencer's death, William Smith worried, 'I gave her all the comfort in my power but still left her in great distress', and counselled Walter to speak with her in 'the most tender manner'.²⁶² Queen Victoria praised her illegitimate cousin Lady Falkland's filial devotion and sympathised with her on the occasion of her father's death that 'it must have been a

²⁵⁸ CWAC: D Jon/4, Frederick Fitzclarence to Leslie Grove Jones, 16 February 1831.

²⁵⁹ *The Later Correspondence of George III*, ed. A. Aspinall (Cambridge, 1962), vol. 2, pp. 422-3, Prince Augustus to King George III, [14 November 1795].

²⁶⁰ For more on rhetoric as a 'weapon of the weak', see James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, 1990), discussed in Henry French and Jonathan Barry, 'Introduction', in Henry French and Jonathan Barry (eds), *Identity and Agency in England, 1500-1800* (Basingstoke, 2004), pp. 10-11, 21-3.

²⁶¹ See chapters 1 and 2.

²⁶² BALS: Sp/St 60554/8, William Smith to Walter Spencer-Stanhope, 25 November 1775. William Smith was no relation to John or Mary Smith.

sad trial for her to see me for the 1st time in place of her poor father.'²⁶³ I am not suggesting that affection for illegitimates increased over the eighteenth century, as there is insufficient evidence to prove this claim. What I can say is that the normalisation of empathy may have made it easier for individuals to express positive feelings. The presentation of tolerance as proof of virtue gave parents, stepparents and others conspicuous moral justification that may have made it easier for them to publicly accept an illegitimate child.

Conclusion

Over the course of the eighteenth century, attitudes towards some illegitimates became much more positive. Some, particularly non-chargeable, illegitimates were recast as innocent and virtuous victims, deserving of pity and sympathy. This occurred partly due to the narrative needs of the developing genre of the novel. The tragic illegitimate was the perfect vehicle for the exploration of individual identity, and provoking feeling amongst readers within the discourse of sensibility. The novel was a space in which illegitimacy and its implications for family life could be safely explored. In encouraging readers to identify with illegitimates as individuals with the same virtues and desires as legitimate individuals, novels normalised the idea that sympathy for illegitimates was acceptable and even desirable as a demonstration of virtuous sensibility. The tropes and vocabulary developed in the novel then spread to other media. By the later eighteenth century, this language was used by contemporaries to describe and inform perceptions of illegitimates in everyday correspondence or life-writing and in debates over policy in newspapers and parliament. These representations of illegitimates, of course, lacked many of the complexities of real life that have been demonstrated in previous chapters. But, representations did provide a vocabulary and justificatory framework for the expression of positive attitudes towards illegitimates, which may explain some of the long-term changes discussed in previous chapters. The decline in the language of sin to describe illegitimates, increasing evidence of familial integration and the growing differentiation of community attitudes according to socio-economic class and chargeability across the century are all changes which echo across this thesis as a whole.

²⁶³ QVJ, 24 January 1838. Similar sentiments are expressed in entries for: 14 April 1838; 7 December 1838, 16 February 1839; 24 March 1839.

Sympathetic and positive representations of illegitimacy were limited to certain criteria and diverged along class lines. The inclusion of illegitimates within discourses of natural affection and sensibility was unequal and socially conservative. Genteel unmarried parenthood was depicted as loving, monogamous and tragic, bolstering gender hierarchies by removing the threat of cuckoldry and female reproductive power. Narratives emphasised illegitimates' suffering as a didactic cautionary tale. Illegitimates and their families could exploit these tropes only in certain circumstances, by appearing grateful or underlining their respectability and difference from the chargeable poor. The perception that all illegitimacy was a sin was replaced by the belief that certain types of illegitimacy were more acceptable than others. Depictions of chargeable illegitimates retained their association with vice and social disorder, which was related to growing concerns over rising poor relief costs, the illegitimacy ratio and population. Although this discrimination occurred as part of a general hardening of attitudes towards the poor in this period, it is significant that it occurred at a time when attitudes towards illegitimacy outside poor relief were improving.

This shift partly reflects the changing relationship between illegitimacy and understandings of public and private. Genteel illegitimacy could be tolerated because it was recast as a private matter, in the context of declining church court prosecutions and belief in providence. Illegitimates were included within the family and discourses of natural affection, immediately mitigating the threat of unsocialised and uncontrollable illegitimacy that characterised early representations. Royal illegitimates came to be accepted as private citizens, praised for filial obedience, rather than constituting a threat to the body politic by their very existence. Poor illegitimates were excluded as their poverty made them by definition a public burden. Ultimately, however, private toleration and the acceptance that sympathy towards illegitimates was a sign of virtue occurred in tandem with continued public discrimination. There were very few attempts to lessen legal inequality, suggesting that illegitimacy was too closely bound up with property and the structures of social order. This situation did not change until 1926.²⁶⁴

²⁶⁴ 16 & 17 Geo. 5. c. 60, *Legitimacy Act*, 1926, <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo5/16-17/60/contents> [accessed 13 March 2018].

Most importantly, this chapter has demonstrated that illegitimacy could be included in ideals of domestic morality in this period, and that representations of illegitimacy could be reformulated to fit the middling values supposedly expressed in the novel. Class differentiation was not only signalled through abstention from illicit sexuality but also in the way that illegitimates were treated and presented themselves. In this, my argument has much in common with Gatrell's observations of changing attitudes towards criminals in this period, that there was 'an economy of the emotions organised along notions of class'. Contemporaries reserved their sympathy for individuals who resembled them, whether genteel criminals or respectable illegitimates.²⁶⁵ Benevolence and virtue were proven through the capacity to sympathise with illegitimates, not in excluding them or, as Zunshine has suggested, in rebranding them as legitimate foundlings. This discourse could be utilised by illegitimates and their parents and was flexible enough to include anyone who could demonstrate respectability. Hunt has suggested that one area of cooperation between the middle and upper classes was in the discovery of the "'virtuous aristocrat", that man or woman who stood out from the dissolute throng!²⁶⁶ This virtue was not only displayed through chastity and companionate marriage but, as William IV and Dorothy Jordan's example demonstrates, through the display of natural affection towards illegitimate children, in short being a good parent regardless of marital status. Lower-status authors and applicants to charities such as the Foundling Hospital asserted their belonging to a respectable middle class, not by hiding their illegitimacy or unmarried parenthood, but by presenting it using acceptable tropes of seduction, monogamous romantic love or domesticity and by distancing themselves from the shadow of dependent poverty. Illegitimate individuals were not depicted as the antithesis of domestic morality but could be recast to fit within this discourse. As illegitimacy became more common and more visible over the period, class differentiation was maintained by splitting illegitimacy into the acceptable and the unacceptable.

²⁶⁵ Gatrell, *The Hanging Tree*, p. 280.

²⁶⁶ Hunt, *The Middling Sort*, p. 204.

Conclusion

Illegitimacy mattered in long-eighteenth-century England. It had some negative impact on illegitimate individuals' relationships with parents and family, and on marriage and educational opportunities. Illegitimates were identified and to a certain extent stigmatised by the society around them. However, illegitimacy did not lead to universal and complete exclusion; its negative impacts were manifest in complex and in some cases highly variable ways. Attitudes varied most according to socio-economic status and, for some, improved over the period. Illegitimates were not considered as inherently tainted and in the right circumstances could achieve considerable integration. Primarily, this thesis has demonstrated that it is possible to write a history of the illegitimate individual, rather than their parents, and has sought to capture the nuances of illegitimacy as a category of difference.

Attitudes towards illegitimacy varied. The distinction between illegitimacy and legitimacy was almost always observed but within the category of illegitimacy there was a spectrum of attitudes. The type of parental relationship and the parents' social status were of considerable importance. Children of monogamous and longer-term relationships were more likely to be openly acknowledged by their parents and experience greater parity with legitimate counterparts in parents' emotional and material investment in their welfare. These children were also less likely to experience overt stigma, as expressed through identification and social exclusion. In turn, illegitimates whose paternity was doubted, often the case in casual or socially unequal parental relationships, were more likely to be excluded from concepts of family and regarded with considerable resentment by their parents. This suggests that public parental acknowledgement not only mitigated the material disadvantages of illegitimacy but was also seen as in some way morally legitimating. Knowledge of paternity bestowed knowledge of social status and blood connection, combating the association of illegitimacy with dangerous social liminality. However, it is clear that variations in attitudes and experience did not simply reflect the equation of long-term relationships with informal marriage, supporting Probert's view that legal marriage was perceived distinctly throughout the period and casting doubt on earlier

arguments by Gillis and others.¹ There may have been cases in which children of informal marriage easily passed as legitimate. These cases would be largely undetectable to historians and are impossible to analyse with certainty. The evidence presented here indicates that although some individuals pretended to be married as a means of falsifying parish registers, the child's illegitimacy was known to family and wider society and therefore remained potentially significant in the way they were treated.

Wealth made a considerable difference to the experience of illegitimacy, but its impact was more complicated than previous assumptions that tolerance was practised by the very wealthy and the very poor.² Among the very wealthy, resources could be shared with illegitimate relatives without damaging the legitimate line, and well-established systems of patronage and the concept of elite duty towards dependents could easily incorporate illegitimate relatives. Illegitimacy meant different things to the propertied, however. They escaped the material disadvantage of poor illegimates but were perhaps more affected by their liminal social position. The legal disadvantages and social difference of illegitimacy through markers such as name was frustrating for illegimates who felt prevented from fulfilling their potential. The ideals of a particularly male elite identity, such as title, property and lineage, were most affected by illegitimacy. Illegimates from middling or upwardly mobile families perhaps experienced the most difference from their legitimate peers in terms of upbringing and marital and occupational opportunities.

¹ Rebecca Probert, *Marriage Law and Practice in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 2009). For the view that informal marriages were significant, see: John R. Gillis, *For Better, For Worse: British Marriages, 1600 to the Present* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 84, 99, 206-8; Stephen Parker, *Informal Marriage, Cohabitation and the Law, 1750-1989* (Basingstoke, 1990); R.B. Outhwaite, *Clandestine Marriage in England, 1500-1850* (London, 1995); Anthea Newman, 'An Evaluation of Bastardy Recordings in an East Kent Parish', in Laslett et al (eds), *Bastardy*, pp. 141-157; Belinda Meteyard, 'Illegitimacy and Marriage in Eighteenth-Century England,' *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 10.3 (1980), pp. 479-89.

² For tolerance among the wealthy, see: Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (London, 1977), pp. 528-34, 568-99; H.J. Habakkuk, *Marriage, Debt and the Estates System: English Landownership, 1650-1950* (Oxford, 1994), p. 214; Lisa Zunshine, *Bastards and Foundlings: Illegitimacy in Eighteenth-Century England* (Columbus, 2005), pp. 3-4, 18-19, 166. For tolerance among the poor, see: Steven King, 'The Bastardy Prone Sub-Society Again: Bastards and Their Fathers and Mothers in Lancashire, Wiltshire, and Somerset, 1800-1840' in Alysa Levene, Thomas Nutt and Samantha Williams (eds), *Illegitimacy in Britain, 1700-1920* (Basingstoke, 2005), pp. 66-85; Peter Laslett, 'The Bastardy Prone Sub-Society', in Peter Laslett, Karla Oosterveen and Richard M. Smith (eds), *Bastardy and its Comparative History* (London, 1980), pp. 217-46.

Their existence was more likely to be kept secret to protect more vulnerable parental reputation, so they had fewer opportunities to make emotionally and instrumentally beneficial family connections. Middling families rarely had sufficient financial or patronage resources to support all children so legitimate children were invariably prioritised.

Among the poor, illegitimacy does seem to have been less influential than the consequences of poverty, the difficulties of lone parenthood and the absence of a dual wage, supporting Crawford's argument.³ A mixture of family support, temporary shelter in the workhouse and employment was part of an economy of makeshifts for many women and their children, regardless of marital status. Prior to the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act, illegitimates' right to relief was actually perhaps more robust than other legitimate pauper children, as their entitlement to paternal maintenance, and in its absence parish relief, was legally mandated from birth. Illegitimate children did not have to prove their need in order to obtain an allowance. There were of course difficulties: paternal maintenance was often inadequate or late and it was more difficult for unmarried women to utilise family support if their child was settled in another parish. Stepfathers also often prioritised their own children. Illegitimate children, as the first-born and with a separate right to relief, were often the first to leave the family when times were hard. The evidence presented here supports a growing historiographical awareness that abandonment and, to a certain extent, infanticide was a reaction to economic deprivation rather than the product of shame or lack of affection.⁴

Socio-economic background was also significant in determining the perception and policing of illegitimates, and became more important over the period. Contemporaries increasingly differentiated between illegitimates chargeable to the parish and those privately maintained, using specific labels such as 'bastard' for the former in everyday usage.⁵ As chapter five demonstrated, the cultural discourse

³ Patricia Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children in England, 1580-1800* (Oxford, 2010).

⁴ Tanya Evans, *'Unfortunate Objects': Lone Mothers in Eighteenth-Century London* (Basingstoke, 2005); Alys Levene, 'The Origins of the Children of the London Foundling Hospital, 1741-1760: A Reconsideration', *Continuity and Change* 18.2 (2003), pp. 201-36; Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*; Valerie Fildes, 'Maternal Feelings Re-assessed: Child Abandonment and Neglect in London and Westminster, 1550-1800', pp. 139-79.

⁵ See chapter 4, pp. 219-27.

surrounding illegitimacy became more class-specific. Illegitimates born to 'respectable' parents were depicted as virtuous and innocent, and included within the normative ideals of natural affection. The mitigations of parental relationship type were seen to apply only to those children who were privately maintained. Higher-status children were perceived as the offspring of loving, monogamous, albeit misguided relationships. Cultural discourse excluded poor unmarried parents from virtuous sensibility and natural affection, recasting pauper mothers as deliberately promiscuous, having multiple illegitimate children as means of gaining relief. This supports the arguments of Cody, Henriques, and Nutt that the New Poor Law reflected a hardening of attitudes towards unmarried mothers but specifies that this was more reflective of attitudes towards the poor, than towards illegitimacy generally, by contrasting perceptions of non-pauper illegitimates.⁶ I suggest that two separate images of illegitimacy emerged; privately-maintained children born of love between passive but misguided women and men who would benevolently accept paternal financial responsibility, and pauper children born of vice between active and designing women and men who sought to escape responsibility and leave their children dependent on the state. The extent of this change is evident in the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act which abolished an illegitimate child's right to paternal relief and made state relief contingent on institutionalisation. This not only suggested that poor illegitimates were not members of the community, but by making it more difficult for them to be brought up by their parents and families excluded them from the ideals of sensibility, domesticity and natural affection.

Despite these variations, even among elites illegitimacy was never immaterial and illegitimates were never seen as equal to legitimates. Available evidence suggests that they were rarely treated with complete parity by parents and families and were subject to a distancing curiosity or suspicion in social interaction. This was not always deliberate or malicious but rather a reflection of the often practical difficulties of lone parenthood, or among the propertied, an extension of the already existing and unquestioned inequalities of gender and birth order. The legal disadvantage of

⁶ U.R.Q. Henriques, 'Bastardy and the New Poor Law', *Past & Present* 37 (1967), pp. 103-29; Lisa Forman Cody, 'The Politics of Illegitimacy in an Age of Reform: Women, Reproduction and Political Economy in England's New Poor Law of 1834', *Journal of Women's History* 11.4 (2000), pp. 131-50; Thomas Nutt, 'Illegitimacy, Paternal Financial Responsibility, and the 1834 Poor Law Commission Report: the Myth of the Old Poor Law and the Making of the New', *Economic History Review* 63.2 (2010), pp. 335-61.

illegitimacy could never be completely overcome, regardless of good intentions or affection. They simply did not have the same legal rights to inheritance, settlement or even name, and the official endorsement of this difference affected how they were viewed by families and communities. There was a demand for differentiation, through parish records or social conventions such as naming, and some level of stigmatisation was accepted as necessary to safeguard the property rights and civic order of the majority. Tolerance was also fundamentally unequal. Illegitimates were almost always dependents in familial relationships. Their access to economic parity, social status and occupational and marital success was highly contingent on the goodwill of their parents and family. More work needs to be done to examine whether the impact of illegitimacy on marriage and occupation, detailed in chapter three, occurred among lower-status groups. This would require mass family reconstitution in combination with qualitative sources, for which evidence among lower-status groups is patchy. It is clear, however, that illegitimates among the labouring poor and middling sort experienced similarly precarious household positions to their elite counterparts. Entitlement to the obligations of kinship was similarly precarious and the maintenance of emotional relationships often depended on their display of gratitude. As chapter four suggested, this could lead to considerable frustration for illegitimates. Sympathy for illegitimates' position never led to parity because pity to a certain extent objectified and condescended to illegitimates as inferiors, with limited agency and rights of their own. This observation chimes with wider scholarship on other systems of inequality such as patriarchy; benevolence and, in some cases, considerable affection for illegitimates co-existed with a largely unquestioned acceptance of their inequality.⁷

This thesis has wider implications for the study of sexuality, unmarried parenthood and the family. Firstly, there was a separation of attitudes towards extra-marital sex and attitudes towards illegitimates. Individuals were able to condemn illicit sexuality and the existence of illegitimates as an abstract group, whilst forming positive relationships with the illegitimate individuals in their own lives. Illegitimacy was never the desirable option but when it happened parish authorities, families and

⁷ Keith Wrightson for instance characterises marital relationships as involving 'the *private* existence of a strong complementary and companionate ethos side by side with, and often overshadowing, theoretical adherence to the doctrine of male authority and *public* female subordination', Keith Wrightson, *English Society, 1580-1680* (London, 1982), p. 92.

communities in general reacted with pragmatism. Even when sexual activity was considered deviant and policed by the state, contemporaries reacted flexibly with an awareness of the variability of personal circumstances. As Evans has shown that unmarried mothers received considerable sympathy and practical support from employers and relatives, so this thesis has shown that their children were also generally accepted, with an understanding that their status was unfortunate rather than deviant.⁸ The awareness that it could happen to anyone was an important mitigating factor in the perception of extra-marital sex as a deviant activity. Benjamin Shaw was, as we have seen, understanding of the circumstances leading to the births of these 'chance children'. He strictly recorded marriages and illegitimacy, and experienced considerable emotional and financial stress over his children's offspring. Illegitimacy was not negligible to him but neither did he ostracise illegitimates in his family or community.⁹ Muldrew has suggested that John Cannon 'was certainly less censorious of bastardy... as both he and his father had illegitimate children'.¹⁰ As chapters one and two demonstrated, Cannon could be simultaneously bitterly resentful of his own putative child and respectful towards his illegitimate half-sister, which suggests that scholars need to be more careful of how they measure attitudes towards sex and deviancy.¹¹ Unmarried parenthood was rarely a deliberate choice and individuals did not always practice the moral probity they preached. Individuals rarely had one single attitude towards sex or illegitimacy but instead held multiple contradictory and nuanced views that were specific to personal circumstance.

These arguments raise further questions about the relationship between ideals and practice. Few contemporaries challenged the legal and cultural differentiation of illegitimates; their legal rights remained constant or, for those claiming poor relief, actually worsened over the period. Contemporaries were capable of having mutually fulfilling and loving relationships with illegitimate relatives, whilst simultaneously advocating their continued legal exclusion. In this, I support Steedman's assertion

⁸ Evans, '*Unfortunate Objects*'.

⁹ In this I agree with Emma Griffin, 'Sex, Illegitimacy and Social Change in Industrialising Britain', *Social History* 38 (2013), p. 151.

¹⁰ Craig Muldrew, 'Class and Credit: Social Identity, Wealth and the Life Course in Early Modern England', in Henry French and Jonathan Barry (eds), *Identity and Agency in England, 1500-1800* (Basingstoke, 2004), pp. 169-70.

¹¹ See chapters 1 and 2.

that individuals were able to 'think, feel and act in ways contrary... to the laws of church and state'.¹² Ideal models of familial or parental behaviour were flexible enough in practise to include and in many cases actually justify illegitimate relationships. Ideals were not rigidly adhered to but could be manipulated and appropriated to fit relationships according to individual need. This thesis' emphasis on qualitative evidence, in particular life-writing and correspondence, evinces the importance of examining the flexibility in which seemingly harsh legislative and cultural exclusion was actually practised.

Unmarried parenthood was much more complex than historians have previously acknowledged, particularly in its relation to class-based gender identities. In contrast to most scholarly opinion on masculinity and illicit sexuality, unmarried fatherhood did not invariably damage masculine identity, particularly among elites.¹³ Financial and emotional support for an illegitimate child could demonstrate virility, independence and adulthood. Fathers were not invariably absent or reluctant but could derive emotional fulfilment from parenthood. Elite fathers were most able to reconcile biological and social fatherhood because both were encompassed within a class identity that prioritised blood and elite patronage, and because their paternity did not result in loss of authority. Higher-status mothers found it difficult to nurture their own children because unmarried motherhood clashed particularly with chastity as an arbiter of elite femininity. However, kept mistresses were able to draw on a cultural discourse of domesticity and ideal motherhood in order to justify their attachment to their children. This suggests that much more work needs to be done on the dynamics of non-marital relationships, beyond that achieved by Barclay and in this thesis.¹⁴ Studies of illicit relationships should examine how they worked for

¹² Carolyn Steedman, *Master and Servant: Love and Labour in the English Industrial Age* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 1. Gowing similarly argues that 'we cannot assume an unproblematic community whose moral interests and ideas were more or less in accord with... lawgivers', Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words, and Sex in Early Modern London* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 9-11.

¹³ Ben Harvey, 'The Putative Fathers of Swinton, England: Illegitimate Behavior under the Old Poor Laws, 1797-1835', *Journal of Family History* 40.3 (2015), pp. 384, 387-8; Bernard Capp, 'The Double Standard Revisited: Plebeian Women and Male Sexual Reputation in Early Modern England', *Past & Present* 162 (1999), pp. 70-100; Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 154-6, 168; Patricia Crawford, *Blood, Bodies and Families in Early Modern England* (Harlow, 2004), p. 128.

¹⁴ Katie Barclay, 'Illicit Intimacies: The Imagined "Homes" of Gilbert Innes of Stow and his Mistresses (1751-1832)', *Gender & History* 27.3 (2015), pp. 576-90; Katie Barclay, 'Marginal

those *in them*, rather than how they were perceived by society. Greater attention should also be paid to how external constraints, particularly the poor law, impacted on illicit relationships. Fathers who were filiated under the poor law were more likely to resent their paternity and to evade the responsibilities of social fatherhood. Poor mothers were also greatly constrained by poverty and employment restrictions from nurturing their children themselves. These observations chime with other historiography on poor unmarried parenthood, primarily the work of Shepard, Evans, Crawford, Nutt, and Harvey, but suggest that chargeability rather than illegitimacy was the primary limitation.¹⁵ Further cross-class comparisons are needed, including evidence not generated by the poor law, to test the extent to which a range of familial relationships were shaped by the imperatives of obtaining relief.

Analysis of illegitimate experience indicates that blood was an important organising principle of eighteenth-century society, informing how individuals of all social classes felt about reproduction, female power, and the affective and obligational ties of family. Security of paternity was the most crucial mitigation of the disadvantages of illegitimacy, suggesting that it was biological not legal legitimacy that mattered most. This contrasts with historiographical consensus in recent years on the distinction between biological and social parenthood in non-marital contexts.¹⁶ Unrelated 'parents' could adopt certain aspects of social parenthood: stepfathers, for instance, included unrelated illegitimate children in their concepts of household and responsibility. The transferability of social parenthood does not, however, negate the importance of blood as a signifier of parental responsibility and natural affection, indicated in the significance of disputed paternity in governing parental and familial attitudes. Paternal resentment of children derived from masculine anxiety over cuckoldry and female sexual deception, suggesting that the avoidance of social

Households and their Emotions: The "kept mistress" in Enlightenment Edinburgh', in Susan Broomhall (ed.), *Spaces for Feeling: Emotions and Sociabilities in Britain, 1650-1850* (Oxford, 2015), pp. 95-111.

¹⁵ Alexandra Shepard, 'Brokering Fatherhood: Illegitimacy and Paternal Rights and Responsibilities in Early Modern England', in Steve Hindle, Alexandra Shepard and John Walter (eds), *Remaking English Society: Social Relations and Social Change in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge, 2013), pp. 41-64; Harvey, 'Putative Fathers'; Thomas Nutt, 'The Paradox and Problems of Illegitimate Paternity in Old Poor Law Essex', in Alysa Levene, Thomas Nutt and Samantha Williams (eds), *Illegitimacy in Britain, 1700-1920* (Basingstoke, 2005), pp. 102-21; Evans, 'Unfortunate Objects'; Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*.

¹⁶ Shepard, 'Brokering Fatherhood'; Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, p. 71; Joanne Bailey, *Parenting in England, 1760-1830: Emotion, Identity, and Generation* (Oxford, 2012), p. 21.

parenthood reflected the perceived absence of a blood connection. This brings the operation of unmarried parenthood more in line with concepts of married parenthood and family, in which blood remained central as an organising concept.¹⁷ If shared blood could be assured, then legal illegitimacy could be overlooked. Gentility, virtue and claims to affective and obligational kinship were all conveyed through blood, as were individuals' sense of self and attachment to class and gender identities. The strength of sibling relationships as an affective ideal despite often long-term physical separation and the widespread belief in parental and to a certain extent familial responsibility for children is testimony to the symbolic value of blood.

The evidence presented here calls for a reconsideration of how historians approach shame and stigma. Shame was not the dominant experience for either parents or children. Individuals were able to separate shame or remorse at sexual activity, from their perception of parenthood or their attitudes towards an illegitimate child. In particular, there has not been enough historical analysis on the relationship between labelling and the internalisation of shame. Pejoratives such as 'whore', and in this case 'bastard', may have been used as social insults without actually resulting in an internalisation of shame. Labels may have been used just as statements of fact, their intent or reception could have differed, or their insulting power may have operated in more complex ways than a simple attack on sexual promiscuity. Parental concern for outward reputation was not necessarily associated with resentment towards the child and, moreover, varied over the life-cycle of both parent and child. Reputational concerns were highly dependent on specific economic contexts, suggesting that they reflect a pragmatic caution to avoid damaging marital or occupational opportunities rather than a personal sense of shame. Sociological and psychological concepts of shame and stigma are useful in analysing historical experience. My finding that illegitimates experienced stigma but not shame, and that they were able to separate frustration at their disadvantage without feeling that they themselves were inferior, raises possibilities for the study of other stigmatised groups differentiated through race, gender or disability.

¹⁷ Helen Berry and Elizabeth Foyster, 'Childless Men in Early Modern England', in Helen Berry and Elizabeth Foyster (eds), *The Family in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 158-183; Crawford, *Blood*.

The perception and experience of illegitimacy did change between 1660 and 1834. This raises questions for our understanding of long-term continuity and change, particularly in the idea and timing of a 'sexual revolution' or an inevitable progress towards sexual liberation. The comparative reduction in the punishment of sexual 'crimes' and the rising illegitimacy ratio over the eighteenth century have led to its characterisation as a period of sexual revolution.¹⁸ I found that families were increasingly tolerant of illegitimacy. The most extreme negative responses towards illegitimate relatives were from the More and Pepys families, both late-seventeenth-century examples. There is unfortunately insufficient evidence of seventeenth-century attitudes amongst lower-status families to test this argument across the socio-economic scale, but early-nineteenth-century evidence certainly suggests that familial attitudes among the poor did not worsen. I also found that cultural perceptions of non-chargeable illegitimates became more positive but that attitudes became increasingly polarised according to socio-economic status. As chapter five suggested, illegitimate children who were privately maintained were by the mid eighteenth century not considered dangerous to the general moral wellbeing of the nation, in contrast to the widespread policing of all illegitimate births under the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century church court system. In this, increased tolerance of higher-status illegitimacy matches Turner and Dabhoiwala's findings that tolerance of higher-status illicit sexual behaviour increased as sex was reconceptualised as individuals' private business and unworthy of state interference.¹⁹ The experience of illegitimacy also changed over time in response to wider cultural changes. Contrary to perceptions that sensibility and domesticity were moralising influences, illegitimates could be included in these ideals as opportunities to display virtuous benevolence.²⁰ The idealisation of physically and emotionally expressive parent-child relationships also led to the perception that an absent unmarried parent was 'unnatural' and provided an important cultural justification

¹⁸ Faramerz Dabhoiwala, *The Origins of Sex: A History of the First Sexual Revolution* (Oxford, 2012); Randolph Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution. Volume One: Heterosexuality and the Third Gender in Enlightenment London* (Chicago, 1998).

¹⁹ Dabhoiwala, *The Origins of Sex*; David M. Turner, *Fashioning Adultery: Gender, Sex, and Civility in England, 1660-1740* (Cambridge, 2002).

²⁰ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1790-1850* (London, 1987); pp. 18-27; Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*, pp. 502-4; Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain, 1660-1800* (Harlow, 2001), pp. 23, 28-30, 44, 58-9; Margaret Hunt, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender and the Family in England, 1680-1780* (Berkeley, 1996), pp. 67-9, 162, 198-9, 212-3; Kate Retford, *The Art of Domestic Life: Family Portraiture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven, 2006).

for illegitimate familial inclusion. This is not to suggest that medieval or early modern unmarried parents did not love their children. Instead, these long-term cultural changes made it easier to admit to loving illegitimate children and provided a cultural space for tolerance.

The relationship between the rising illegitimacy ratio and tolerance remains unclear. Growing tolerance may have led to an increase in recording rates. The collapse of the church courts and the greater cultural value placed on sympathy towards illegitimates may have made parents and families less afraid to acknowledge them, making them more visible in historical records such as parish registers. The dip in the illegitimacy rate from the mid nineteenth century further supports this; the growing association of illegitimacy with shame and the greater difficulties in obtaining relief after the 1834 New Poor Law could have acted as powerful incentives to falsify birth status.²¹ My intention was not to provide any hypothesis for the rising ratio, but if punishment and stigmatisation of illegitimates declined or became less overt then there would be less incentive to marry before the birth or to abstain from sex. Further research is needed into individuals' motivations for entering into or maintaining extra-marital relationships, particularly in light of my arguments that illegitimate familial relationships were often personally fulfilling and not necessarily shameful. Closer analysis of the illegitimacy ratio according to socio-economic background would also be useful, as we do not yet know definitely whether the increase occurred across all socio-economic groups. My qualitative evidence certainly suggests that illegitimacy occurred across the social scale well into the nineteenth century.

How distinctive was the eighteenth century in the perception and experience of illegitimates? Research into medieval illegitimacy indicates striking similarities. Noble and royal families commonly utilised illegitimate children as valuable resources in creating alliances or acting as family representatives, office-holders and property owners.²² This was based on the power of blood in conveying class status,

²¹ Ginger Frost, *Illegitimacy in English Law and Society, 1860-1930* (Manchester, 2016), p. 9. For more on the illegitimacy ratio see introduction, pp. 14-15.

²² Kathleen Thompson, 'Affairs of State: the illegitimate children of Henry I', *Journal of Medieval History*, 29.2, pp. 129-51; Katherine Carlton, and Tim Thornton, 'Illegitimacy and Authority in the North of England, c. 1450-1640', *Northern History* 48 (2011), pp. 23-40.

which, as we have seen, remained important in the eighteenth century. The combination of wealth, paternal acknowledgement and talent was just as useful in mitigating the disadvantages of illegitimacy in the medieval period as it was in the eighteenth century. A fruitful area of further research would be the experience of non-elite illegitimates prior to 1660, although this may have evidential problems. Comparison with the much more extensive literature on nineteenth- and twentieth-century illegitimacy suggests that the period around 1800 was the site of distinct and far-reaching change in attitudes. Cohen, Frost, Evans and Thane all argue that working- and middle-class unmarried mothers and their children experienced significant stigma in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, manifest in the exclusion of mothers from employment and welfare benefits, diminished occupational opportunities for children, and very high levels of poverty and deprivation. Many children were fostered or adopted, or brought up in families with their origins kept secret.²³ Poverty, the difficulties of combining childcare with maternal employment, and the movement of children between different care providers are significant continuities. Although secrecy is an undercurrent in all these works, the extent and purpose of it shifted over the nineteenth century. In the eighteenth century, secrecy was used primarily by the middling sorts in tandem with the upbringing of children away from biological relatives, enabled by boarding schools or proxy parents. In later periods, secrecy was employed widely by the lower classes to allow children to be raised by grandparents in the belief that they were their natural legitimate children.²⁴ I have found no evidence of similar strategies among the poor in use before 1850, suggesting that the shame of bringing up an illegitimate child was not so acute for the labouring poor in the eighteenth century and so secrecy was less imperative.

The impact of shame and stigma on the child also heightened over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Frost and Robinson found that illegitimates born in the later period suffered considerable psychological damage.²⁵ They exhibit the more classic signs of shame, particularly internalised feelings of worthlessness, which are missing

²³ Jane Robinson, *In the Family Way: Illegitimacy between the Great War and the Swinging Sixties* (London, 2015); Frost, *Illegitimacy*; Deborah Cohen, *Family Secrets: Living with Shame from the Victorians to the Present Day* (London, 2013); Pat Thane and Tanya Evans, *Sinners? Scroungers? Saints? Unmarried Motherhood in Twentieth-Century England* (Oxford, 2012). See also the special issue of *Women's History Review* on 'Lone Mothers' 20.1 (2011).

²⁴ Frost, *Illegitimacy*, pp. 179-80; Cohen, *Family Secrets*, pp. 3-37, 113-140.

²⁵ Robinson, *In the Family Way*; Frost, *Illegitimacy*, chapters 6 and 8.

from eighteenth-century examples. This of course may be a trick of the evidence; there is far more personal testimony available from later periods, particularly oral history. It may, however, also be due to a cultural change in the nineteenth century over how the blame and stigma of illegitimacy was apportioned. The 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act fundamentally abolished the centuries-long principle that illegitimate children and their mothers were entitled to parental maintenance and state relief. This occurred in tandem with changing ideas of gender and class: illegitimacy among the poor was seen as resulting from the deliberate promiscuity of young women. By the late nineteenth century, the rise of Social Darwinism and eugenicist theories of hereditary sexual immorality made blood no longer a claim for acceptance, but evidence of illegitimates' tendency to repeat parental promiscuity.²⁶ Illegitimates were therefore inherently tainted by their status, leading to a change in the way that shame was experienced, an intensification of stigma and a particularly gendered reading of inherited immorality which perceived illegitimate girls as particularly susceptible. This is in direct contrast to the eighteenth-century experience, where the external consequences of illegitimacy such as inheritance or paternal acknowledgement were of far greater impact and which as a result penalised boys more. A fear of hereditary immorality was not notable in sources before the 1830s and then only in the context of poor relief. As chapter five discussed, sexual promiscuity was linked to economic improvidence and it was feared that bad parents would bring up future generations of paupers. Over the nineteenth century this may have broadened to include all illegitimates and become defined in more explicitly biological terms.

This thesis has reappraised several previous assumptions about illegitimate experience, as well as the methods used to study it and the questions that historians ask of the evidence. Illegitimacy did not just impact on the poor and it is possible to find evidence of illegitimate experience in sources other than bastardy depositions and filiation bonds. Illegitimate experience should also be integrated into what we know about eighteenth-century society more broadly. Unmarried fatherhood was practiced within the context of the ideal sentimental father, for example, and illegitimate elite men were influenced by similar ideals of elite masculinity, such as landholding and family pride, as their legitimate counterparts. The study of the

²⁶ Frost, *Illegitimacy*, pp. 192-3, 196-8, 224, 240.

operation of the poor law is of course important, but laws were made and implemented by individuals who did not operate in isolation and who had their own, often personal, experience of illegitimacy. Illegitimacy was a life-long and individual condition, and levels of stigma and parental involvement persisted over time, to varying degrees. The study of illegitimacy should, therefore, not stop with conception and infancy. Illegitimate individuals had agency, both in how they presented themselves and how far they sought to integrate into families and communities or to advertise their difference as a survival strategy. Fundamentally, the study of illegitimacy is not just the study of sex, but about the ostracism and categorisation of an entire social group. We know that some illegitimates were the victims of abandonment and infanticide, and there are many more illegitimates whose fates will never be known to historians. This thesis does not deny these facts but argues that there was a greater variety of illegitimate experience than has been hitherto acknowledged.

The aim of this thesis has been to demonstrate that it is possible to write a history of illegitimacy that focuses on its consequences for the illegitimate individual. These individuals were more than a baptism record or an unnamed pregnancy 'unlawfully begotten' on a bastardy bond. The use of personal testimony by illegitimate authors has I hope given the reader a sense of the sometimes considerable personal impact that illegitimate birth status could have as well as the sheer variety of circumstances that could mitigate or aggravate stigma. The records detailing the personal lives of individuals long dead, which reveal the love or bitterness of the relationships that resulted in these children, have been employed as a means of getting at the anxieties and tensions of eighteenth-century culture and society. Illegitimacy was more complex and more significant in eighteenth-century society than hitherto acknowledged. It was the site of debates about gender authority, property inheritance, appropriate charity, and the policing of community and familial belonging. It was about what makes a parent, and what defines familial relationships unacknowledged by law. Illegitimacy mattered, not least to the many individuals who were perceived, or perceived themselves to be, illegitimate.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Case studies

Case studies are arranged according to their primary focus on an individual, family or area, such as a parish. Cases are then arranged chronologically. The illegitimate individuals and relationship types are not exhaustive lists of all those mentioned in the source, but highlight the main subjects that appear in this thesis. If an individual was known by more than one surname, these are also listed. 'Multiple' usually designates an author who does not describe illegitimacy in their own family, but rather comments on multiple types of illegitimacy in their community. Groups are also classified according to the social status of the main author or subject using the three main descriptors of elite, middling and labouring.

Individual Authors	Dates	Occupation or Social Status	Location	Illegitimate Individuals	Parental Relationship Type	Main Source
Samuel Pepys	1660s-1670s	Middling - metropolitan professional	London	Elizabeth and Anne Taylor/Pepys (infants, b. c. 1664) Multiple	Both single, master-servant Multiple	<i>The Diary of Samuel Pepys</i> , ed. R.C. Latham and W. Matthews (11 vols, London, 1983)
John Evelyn	1660s-1700s	Elite - gentry	London	Multiple	Multiple	<i>The Diary of John Evelyn</i> , ed. E.S. de Beer (5 vols, Oxford, 1955)
Richard Gough	1660s-1700s	Middling - provincial yeomanry	Shropshire	Multiple	Multiple	Richard Gough, <i>The History of Myddle</i> , ed. David Hey (Harmondsworth, 1981)

John Cannon	1680s-1740s	Middling - provincial yeomanry, excise officer	Somerset, Oxfordshire	Unnamed infant Edith Cannon (unknown) Multiple	Multiple	<i>The Chronicles of John Cannon, Excise Officer and Writing Master</i> , ed. John Money (2 vols, Oxford, 2010) John Cannon, 'Memoirs of the Birth Education, Life and Death of: Mr John Cannon', SALS: DD/SAS/C1193/4
Richard Savage	1690s-1740s	Elite - peerage, poet	London	Richard Savage (1697-1743)	Female adultery, disputed	Charles Beckingham, <i>The Life of Mr Richard Savage</i> (London, 1728) Samuel Johnson, <i>An Account of the Life of Mr Richard Savage, Son of the Earl Rivers</i> (London, 1744) <i>The Poetical Works of Mr Richard Savage</i> (2 vols, Edinburgh, 1780)
Mary Wortley Montagu	1700s-1750s	Elite - peerage	London	Multiple	Multiple	<i>The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu</i> , ed. Robert Halsband (3 vols, Oxford, 1965-7)
John Percival	1730s-1740s	Elite - peerage	London	Multiple	Multiple	<i>Diary of Viscount Percival, afterwards First Earl of Egmont</i> , Historical Manuscripts Commission (3 vols, London, 1920-23)
Mary Saxby	1730s-1800s	Labouring poor - unskilled	Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire	Multiple	Multiple	Mary Saxby, <i>Memoirs of a Female Vagrant, written by herself</i> , ed. Samuel Greatheed (London, 1806)
Thomas Johnson	1740s-1790s	Middling - furniture carver	London	Unnamed infant (1746-?)	Both single, casual	Thomas Johnson, 'The life of the author', ed. Jacob Simon, <i>Furniture History</i> 39 (2003), pp. 1-64

Robert Nugent	1750s	Elite - gentry	London	Robert Nugent (1730-?)	Both single	Robert Nugent, <i>The Unnatural Father, or the Persecuted Son</i> (London, 1755) Robert Nugent, <i>A Supplement to the Unnatural Father, or the Persecuted Son</i> (London, 1755)
Sarah Hurst	1750s-1760s	Middling - provincial, grocer	West Sussex	Sarah Hurst (1736-1808)	Both single, courtship	<i>The Diaries of Sarah Hurst, 1759-1762: Life and Love in Eighteenth-Century Horsham</i> , ed. Susan C. Djabri (Stroud, 2009)
James Boswell	1760s-1780s	Elite - gentry	London	Charles Boswell (1762-1764) Sally Boswell (1767-?)	Both single, kept mistress, master-servant	<i>The Correspondence of James Boswell and John Johnston of Grange</i> , ed. Ralph S. Walker (London, 1966) <i>Boswell's London Journal, 1762-63</i> , ed. F.A. Pottle (London, 1950) <i>Letters of James Boswell to the Rev. W.J. Temple</i> , ed. Thomas Seccombe, (London, 1908) <i>Boswell in Holland, 1763-1764</i> , ed. F.A. Pottle (London, 1952) <i>Boswell in Search of a Wife, 1766-1769</i> , ed. Frank Brady and F.A. Pottle (London, 1956)
Granville Leveson Gower	1790s-1810s	Elite - peerage	London	Multiple	Multiple	<i>Lord Granville Leveson Gower, Private Correspondence 1781-1821</i> , ed. Castalia, Countess Granville (2 vols, London, 1916)

Robert Blincoe	1790s-1830s	Labouring poor - factory worker	London Derbyshire	Robert Blincoe (c. 1792-1860)	Unknown	John Brown, <i>A Memoir of Robert Blincoe, An Orphan Boy</i> (Manchester, 1832), in <i>Factory Lives: Four Nineteenth-Century Working-Class Autobiographies</i> , ed. James R. Simmons and Janice Carlisle (Toronto, 2007), pp. 87-179
Anthony Errington	1800s-1820s	Labouring poor - wheelwright	Newcastle-upon-Tyne	Sarah Errington (1810-?)	Both single	Anthony Errington, <i>Coals on Rails, or, The Reason of My Wrighting</i> , ed. P.E.H. Hair (Liverpool, 1988)
John Clare	1800s-1830s	Labouring poor - agricultural worker, poet	Northamptonshire	Parker Clare (1765-1846)	Both single	<i>John Clare's Autobiographical Writings</i> , ed. Eric Robinson (Oxford, 1983)
Benjamin Shaw	1800s-1830s	Labouring poor - mechanic	Lancashire	Betty Shaw (1836-?) Multiple	Both single, courtship	<i>The Family Records of Benjamin Shaw, Mechanic of Dent, Dolphinholme and Preston, 1772-1841</i> , ed. Alan G. Crosby. (Chester, 1991)
Samuel Bamford	1800s-1830s	Labouring poor - weaver	Lancashire	Ann Bamford (1809-1834) Unknown infant	Both single, casual, courtship	Samuel Bamford, <i>Passages in the Life of a Radical</i> , ed. Henry Dunckley (London, 1893) Samuel Bamford, <i>Early Days</i> , ed. Henry Dunckley (London, 1893)
James Burn	1800s-1850s	Labouring poor - hatter, peddler	Northumberland	James Burn/McBurney (1800-1889)	Both single	James Dawson Burn, <i>The Autobiography of a Beggar Boy</i> , ed. David Vincent (London, 1978)

Charles Greville	1810s-1840s	Elite - gentry, politician	London	Multiple	Multiple	<i>The Greville Memoirs, 1814-1860</i> , ed. Lytton Strachey and Roger Fulford (6 vols, London, 1938)
Queen Victoria	1830s-1850s	Elite - royal	London	George Fitzclarence (1794-1842) Sophia Fitzclarence (1795-1837) Frederick Fitzclarence (1799-1854) Multiple	Multiple	Queen Victoria's Journals, RA: VIC/MAIN/QVJ (W)

Family Groups	Dates	Occupation or Social Status	Location	Illegitimate Individuals	Relationship Type	Main Source
Sackville	1670s-1720s	Elite - peerage	London, Kent	Mary Sackville/Waldegrave (1673-1714) Ann Sackville/Lee (1667-1738) Katherine Waldegrave (1675-1690)	Male adultery, master-servant	Manuscript correspondence, accounts and wills, KHLC: U269

More	1690s-1720s	Elite - gentry	Shropshire	Thomas More/Owen (d. 1731) Richard More/ Owen (1677-1709) Susanna More/Owen (unknown)	Bigamy, long-term cohabitation	Manuscript correspondence, accounts and wills, SA: 4572
Walpole	1720s-1800s	Elite - peerage	London, Norfolk	Catherine Daye (1724-1775) Lady Mary Walpole (1725-1801) Laura Walpole (1734-1813) Maria Walpole (1736-1807) Edward Walpole (1737-1771) Charlotte Walpole (1738-1789) Georgina Walpole (1782-1868)	Both single, male adultery, long-term cohabitation	<i>The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence</i> , ed. W.S. Lewis (48 vols, New Haven, 1937-83, online edition) Manuscript correspondence, NRO: HMN 4
Spencer-Stanhope	1770s-1820s	Elite - gentry	South Yorkshire, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, London	John Smith (1766-1826)	Both single, kept mistress	Manuscript diaries, correspondence, accounts and wills, BALS: Sp/St

Herbert	1760s-1830s	Elite - peerage	London, Wiltshire	Augustus Reebkomp/Montgomery (1762-1797) Caroline Medkaff (1768-1845)	Male adultery	<i>The Pembroke Papers (1734-1780): Letters and Diaries of Henry, Tenth Earl of Pembroke and his Circle</i> ed. Lord Herbert (London, 1942) <i>Pembroke Papers (1780-1794): Letters and Diaries of Henry, Tenth Earl of Pembroke and his Circle</i> ed. Lord Herbert (London, 1950) Manuscript correspondence, accounts and wills, WSHC: 2057
Barrett-Lennard	1760s-1820s	Elite - peerage	Essex	Thomas Thomas/Barrett-Lennard (1762-1857) Barbara Thomas (1766-1837)	Both single	Manuscript correspondence, accounts and wills, ERO: D/DL
Mann	1760s-1780s	Elite - peerage	London	Mary Mann (?-1818) James Mann (1762-1838)	Both single	<i>The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence</i> (48 vols, New Haven, 1937-83)
Delaval	1760s-1800s	Elite - peerage	Northumberland, London	Frank Delaval (1751-1826)	Male adultery	Manuscript correspondence, accounts and wills, NAW: 2DE

Wilkes	1760s-1790s	Elite - gentry	London	John Smith (c. 1760-?)	Both single	Henry Angelo, <i>Reminiscences of Henry Angelo</i> (vol. 1, London 1830) Manuscript correspondence, BL Add. MSS 30873-4
Neville	1770s-1830s	Middling - provincial professional, physician	Norfolk East Sussex Newcastle-upon-Tyne	Polly Bradford (1766-1778) Sarah Read (1777-?)	Both single, master-servant	<i>The Diary of Syllas Neville, 1767-1788</i> , ed. Basil Cozens-Hardy (London, 1950) Manuscript correspondence, NRO: MC7
Pye-Bennett	1770s-1790s	Elite - gentry	London	Harriet Pye Bennett (1761-1865) Nancy Pye Bennett (c. 1775-1803) Caroline Pye Bennett (1781-1857)	Female adultery, kept mistress	Manuscript correspondence, accounts and wills, CWAC: 36; LSU: LLMVC/31
Wyndham	1780s-1850s	Elite - peerage	West Sussex	George Wyndham (1787-1869) Henry Wyndham (1790-1860) Charles Wyndham (1796-1866)	Both single, long-term cohabitation	Manuscript correspondence, accounts and wills, WSRO: PHA.
Darwin	1790s-1830s	Middling - provincial professional, physician	Derbyshire	Susanna Parker (1772-1856) Mary Parker (1774-	Both single, master-servant	<i>The Collected Letters of Erasmus Darwin</i> , ed. Desmond King-Hele (Cambridge, 2007)

				1859)		
Fitzclarence	1790s-1830s	Elite - royal	London	Frances Bettesworth (1782-1821) Dodee Ford (1787-?) Lucy Ford (1789-1850) George Fitzclarence (1794-1842) Sophia Fitzclarence (1795-1837) Frederick Fitzclarence (1799-1854)	Both single, long-term cohabitation.	<i>Mrs Jordan and her Family</i> , ed. A. Aspinall (London, 1951) Manuscript correspondence, HHL: mssDJ; CWAC: DJon
Joseph Farington	1790s-1830s	Middling - metropolitan professional, artist	London	Multiple	Multiple	<i>The Diary of Joseph Farington</i> , ed. Kenneth Garlick, Angus Macintyre and Evelyn Newby (15 vols, (New Haven, 1978-1998)
Bentham	1790s-1830s	Middling - metropolitan professional, naval architect	London	Elizabeth Gordon (c. 1795-?) Alicia Burton (unknown) Sophia Burton (unknown)	Both single, unknown	George Bentham, <i>Autobiography, 1800-1834</i> , ed. Marion Filipiuk (Toronto, 1997) <i>The Correspondence of Jeremy Bentham</i> , ed. J.R. Dinwiddy, Stephen Conway and Catherine Fuller, vols 7-11 (Oxford, 1988-2000) Manuscript correspondence, TLS: MS328

St Aubyn	1800s-1830s	Elite - gentry	Cornwall, London	James St Aubyn (1783-1862) Martha St Aubyn (1807-1859) Anne St Aubyn (1808-?) Elizabeth St Aubyn (1809-1818) Mary St Aubyn (1813-1838)	Both single, long-term cohabitation	Manuscript diaries, HHL: MssHM 80304, 81168, 63181
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Poor Law and Church Court Studies	Dates	Occupation or Social Status	Location	Illegitimate Individuals	Relationship Type	Main Source
York Cause Papers	1660s-1830s	Multiple	Yorkshire	Multiple	Multiple	Cause papers, defamation, BIA: CP.H
Parish of St Margaret Westminster	1711-1721	Multiple	London	Multiple	Multiple	Poor law documents, accounts and parish registers, CWAC
Parish of East Hoathly, East Sussex	1750s-1760s	Multiple	East Sussex	Multiple	Multiple	<i>The Diary of Thomas Turner, 1754-1765</i> , ed. David Vaisey (Oxford, 1984) Poor Law documents and parish registers, ESRO

Parishes of St Mary's, Chelmsford, St Peter and St Botolph, Colchester and Upminster, Essex	1800s-1830s	Multiple	Essex	Multiple	Multiple	<i>Essex Pauper Letters, 1731-1837</i> , ed. Thomas Sokoll (Oxford, 2006) Manuscript correspondence and poor law documents, ERO
Chelmsford petty sessions court	1814-1834	Multiple	Essex	Multiple	Multiple	Depositions and minutes, in <i>Narratives of the Poor in Eighteenth-Century Britain</i> , vol. 1, ed. Steven King, Thomas Nutt and Alannah Tomkins (London, 2006), pp. 135-203

Appendix 2: Defamation types in the York Cause Papers

Defamation type	Number	Total	Percentage
Sexual slander only (e.g. adultery, fornication)	813		
Sexual slander/character (e.g. 'whoremasterlie rogue')	58		
Sexual slander/theft	22		
Sexual slander/witchcraft	9		
Sexual slander/character/theft	4		
Sexual slander/dog	3		
Sexual slander/religion	3		
Sexual slander/murder	2		
Sexual slander/incest	1		
Sexual slander/forgery	1		
Sexual slander total			
Character only (e.g. 'knave', 'rogue')	154		
Character/theft	24		
Character/dog	4		
Character/theft/dog	1		
Character/murder	1		
Character/perjury	1		
Character total			
Parentage only (e.g. 'base', 'bastard', 'son of a whore')	4		
Parentage/character (e.g. 'bastardly rogue')	6		
Parentage/theft	1		
Parentage/sexual slander	3		
Parentage/sexual slander/character	1		
Parentage total		15	1.2
Theft only	26		
Witchcraft only	4		
Fraud	1		
Adulteration	1		
Bribery	1		
Other total		33	2.7
Unknown (an incomplete, damaged or unspecified defamation)		100	8
Total		1249	100

Appendix 3: Summary of the dataset used in chapter 3

Category		Number of individuals (225)	Percentage
Birth status	Legitimate	114	50.6
	Illegitimate	111	49.4
Gender	Male	122	54.2
	Female	103	45.8
Birth status and gender	Legitimate male	63	28.0
	Illegitimate male	59	26.2
	Legitimate female	51	22.7
	Illegitimate female	52	23.1
Birth order	Legitimate eldest sons or heirs by proxy	25	11.1
	Legitimate younger sons	38	16.9
	Daughters and illegitimate children	162	72
Class	Peerage dataset (children of peers)	143	63.6
	Baronetage dataset (children of baronets)	82	36.4
Chronological distribution	Born after 1750	170	75.5
	Born before 1750	55	24.5

Appendix 4: Social status of the spouses of peers' children

Occupation of spouse or spouse's father (total, first and second marriages, peerage only)	Legitimate male heirs (18)	Legitimate younger sons (17)	Illegitimate sons (30)	Legitimate daughters (35)	Illegitimate daughters (29)
1: peer or direct heir to a peer.	1	0	0	17	5
2: younger child or sibling of a peer; baronets; foreign and Irish peers	11	6	7	3	6
3: younger child or sibling of a baronet or Irish peer; grandchildren of peers ¹³¹⁸	4	3	5	0	0
4: gentry, MPs, diplomats, knights, large landowners, wealthy bankers or merchants	0	4	3	13	10
5: professionals, including physicians, barristers, clergy, civil servants, small landowners, 'Esq.'	1	2	7	2	5
6: army or navy officers, East India Company workers	0	0	1	0	2
7: tradesmen, smaller merchants, actors, singers	0	1	2	0	0
8: servants, labourers	0	0	0	0	0
9: unknown	1	1	5	0	1

¹³¹⁸ In this classification I hope to encompass the potential asset of a peerage connection regardless of eventual occupation, which is a pitfall identified in John Cannon, *Aristocratic Century: the Peerage of Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 86.

Appendix 5: Dataset of individuals used in chapter 3

Key

Total: 225 individuals

U - unknown

/ - not applicable

UN - unmarried

land. - landowner

inh. - inherited

sp. - spouse

W - woman

I - illegitimate

Y - younger

E - eldest

M.A.P.D. - married after paternal death

Ox. /Cam. - Oxford or Cambridge universities

Schools -

WR - Westminster

WI - Winchester

CH - Charterhouse

E - Eton

HW - Harrow

L - local school (Newcastle, Brighton, Caterrick Bridge, Clyst Hydon, Sevenoaks, Chelsea, Ripon, Cheam, Hammersmith, French convent, Beaconsfield)

H - educated at home

Status -

(prefixed with L (lower), E (equal), H (higher), relative to status of spouse)

1 - peer or direct heir to a peer.

2 - younger child or sibling of a peer; baronets; foreign and Irish peers.

3 - younger child or sibling of baronets and Irish peers; grandchildren of peers

4 - gentry, MPs, diplomats, knights, large landowners, wealthy bankers or merchants

5 - professionals: physicians, barristers, clergy, civil servants, small landowners, 'Esq.'

6 - army or navy officers, EIC

7 - tradesmen, smaller merchants, actors, singers

8 - servants, labourers

9 - unknown

Kin relationship with spouse -

1 - first cousins, siblings in law, parent or child in law

2 - other kin, including first cousins once removed, aunts, uncles or cousins in law

Surname	First name	Birth year	Gender	Legitimate?	Birth order	Social status at birth	Occupation at death	Wealth at marriage	Age at first marriage	Sp. 1 status	Sp. 1 occupation	Sp. 1 wealth	Sp. 2 status	Sp. 2 occupation	Sp. 2 wealth	Sp. 1 legit?	Sp. 2 legit?	Sp. 1 kin?	Sp. 2 kin?	M.A.P.D	Illegitimate children?	Age at death	School age	Years in Sch.	School	Ox./Cam.	Inns of Court
Powlett	Charles	1729	M	N	I	2	clergy	£3000	26	L4	dau. civil servant	U	L	U	/	Y	U	N	/	Y	0	80	11	4	WR	Y	0
Powlett	Percy	1734	M	N	I	2	navy	£3000	24	L6	L6	U	/	/	/	Y	/	N	/	Y	0	42	6	U	WR		0
Powlett	Horatio	1732	M	N	I	2	clergy	£3000	29	L6	L6	U	/	/	/	Y	/	N	/	Y	0	U	U	U	U		0
Powlett	Charles	1718	M	Y	E	1	duke, lt-col., MP, lord-lieut		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	1	47	10	1	WI	Y	0
Powlett	Harry	1720	M	Y	Y	2	admiral, lord-lieut, MP, duke, inh. from brother		32	L4	dau. small land., esq	U	E2	sister peer		Y	Y	/	/	N	0	74	8	1	WI	N	0

Powlett	Catherine	1719	F	Y	W	2	W		30	L3	MP, land.	U	L3	MP, lawyer		Y	Y			N	0	74	U	U	W	W	W
Powlett	Henrietta	1716	F	Y	W	2	W		25	L3	MP, son banker	U	/	/	/	Y	/			N	0	37	U	U	W	W	W
Powlett	Jean Mary	1751	F	N	W	2	W		27	L3	gentry, land.		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	Y	0	63	U	U	W	W	W
Powlett	Mary	1753	F	Y	W	2	W		19	E1	peer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	26	U	U	W	W	W
Powlett	Catherine	1766	F	Y	W	2	W		21	E1	peer		/	/	/	Y	/	1	/	N	0	41	U	U	W	W	W
Percy (Smithson)	James	1764	M	N	I	2	minerologist, land.	inh. maternal estates, \$500,000	UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	95	U	U	CH	Y	0
Percy	Philadelphia	1770	F	N	W	2	W		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	21	U	U	W	W	W	
Percy	Hugh	1742	M	Y	E	1	duke, army general, lord-lieut, MP		22	E2	dau. peer		E2	dau. peer		Y	Y	/	1	N	0	75	11	5	E	Y	0
Percy	Algernon	1750	M	Y	Y	2	MP, earl through maternal line		25	E2	dau. peer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	80	6	7	E	0	0
Montagu	Robert	1763	M	N	I	2	navy admiral		23	L4	dau. civil servant		L4	dau. esq		Y	Y	N	/	N	0	67	U	U	U	0	0
Montagu	Basil	1770	M	N	I	2	law, King's Counsel, 1835	cut off by his father	20	L4	dau. lawyer		L3	dau. knight		Y	Y	N	/	N	0	81	10	6	CH	Y	Y
Montagu	Augusta	1767	F	N	W	2	W		22	E1	French comte, MP		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	82	U	U	W	W	W
Montagu	John	1773	M	N	I	2	navy		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	U	11	6	CH	Y	0
Montagu	John	1744	M	Y	E	1	earl, MP, army		22	E2	dau. peer	heiress	E2	dau. peer		Y	Y	2	/	N	1	70	9	5	E	N	N
Montagu	William Augustus	1752	M	Y	Y	2	MP		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	24	7	9	E	Y	Y	
Montagu	Anna Maria	1759	F	N	W	2	W	inh. manor	21	L3	Irish land., MP		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	Y	0	46	U	U	W	W	W
Montagu	John-George	1767	M	Y	E	1	viscount		23	L4	dau. Esq, land., granddau. lawyer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	23	11	6	E	Y	N

Montagu	George-John	1773	M	Y	Y	2	earl, inh. from brother		31	E2	dau. Irish peer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	45	7	10	E	Y	N
Montagu	Mary	1774	F	Y	W	2	W		22	E1	peer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	50	U	U	W	W	W
Montagu	William Augustus	1785	M	N	I	2	navy vice-admiral, MP, knighted 1832		38	L3	dau. baronet		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	Y	0	67	U	U	U	N	N
Herbert (Reebkomp)	Augustus	1762	M	N	I	2	navy captain		29	L6	dau. merchant		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	35	5	4	E	N	N
Herbert (Medcalf)	Caroline	1768	F	N	W	2	W		18	L4	son land., civil servant		/	/	/	/	/	/	/	N	0	77	14	3	L	W	W
Herbert	George	1759	M	Y	E	1	earl		28	L3	dau. land., granddau. peer	E2	dau. Russian noble	/	Y	Y	1	/	N	0	68			HW	N	N	
Williams	John	1753	M	N	I	3	civil servant, land., bought estate		33	H2	dau. peer		/	/	/	/	/	/	/	Y	0	74	U	U	U	U	U
Williams	Charles	U	M	N	I	3	land., clerk of board of works	inh. estate 1796	UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U
Williams	Sophia	1749	F	N	W	3	W		24	L4	surgeon		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	76	U	W	W	W	W
Williams	Henry	U	M	N	I	3	clergy		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	U	U	U	U	Y	N	
Mann (Fillmore)	Sarah	1736	F	N	W	3	W		23	L6	master printer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	39	U	W	W	W	W
Mann (Fillmore)	Eleanor	U	F	N	W	3	W		U	L5	EIC ship captain		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	U	U	W	W	W	W
Mann	Mary	U	F	N	W	3	W		U	E3	land., gentry		/	/	/	Y	/	2	/	Y	0	U	U	W	W	W	W
Mann	James	1762	M	N	I	3	land.		24	E3	dau. baronet	E2	dau. Irish baronet and MP		Y	Y	2	/	Y	0	76	11	U	L	Y	N	
Mann	Catherine	1742	F	Y	W	3	W		29	E2	son. peer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	Y	0	69	U	W	W	W	W
Mann	Horace	1743	M	Y	E	2	baronet, MP, land.		22	E2	dau. peer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	Y	0	71	U	U	CH	Y	N
Mann	Eleanor Mary	1747	F	Y	W	3	W		30	E3	land., MP		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	Y	0	76	U	W	W	W	W
Herries	Nina	1774	F	N	W	3	W		19	L5	naval officer		/	/	/	Y	/	1	/	N	0	U	U	W	W	W	W
St Aubyn	Hebe Elizabeth	1781	F	N	W	3	W	£10,000	16	E4	lawyer		/	/	/	Y	/	2	/	N	0	63	U	U	W	W	W

St Aubyn	James	1783	M	N	I	3	barrister, land.,		46	L4	dau. clergy		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	6	79	U	U	WR	Y	Y
St Aubyn	Martha	1784	F	N	W	3	W	£10,000	17	L5	army officer, son army officer		/	/	/	N	/	/	/	N	0	77	U	U	W	W	W
St Aubyn	Robert Thomas	1786	M	N	I	3	clergy	£10,000	27	E4	dau. clergy		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	89	U	U	WR	Y	N
St Aubyn	Mary	1787	F	N	W	3	W	£10,000	14	E4	clergy		/	/	/	Y	/	2	/	N	0	65	U	U	W	W	W
St Aubyn	John Humphrey	1790	M	N	I	3	clergy	£10,000	39	H2	dau. baronet		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	67	U	U	WR	Y	N
St Aubyn	William John	1794	M	N	I	3	clergy	£10,000	28	H3	dau. baronet		/	/	/	Y	/	1	/	N	0	83	14	3	WR	Y	N
St Aubyn	Edward	1799	M	N	I	3	land., baron 1866	£10,000	29	H2	dau. peer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	88	U	U	L	Y	Y
St Aubyn	Catherine	1803	F	N	W	3	W	£10,000	29	H2	clergy, son peer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	96	U	U	W	W	W
St Aubyn	Richard John	1807	M	N	I	3	clergy	£10,000	UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	42	U	U	L	Y	N	
St Aubyn	Elizabeth	1808	F	N	W	3	W	£10,000	22	H2	son peer, courtier	£32,000	/	/	/	Y	/	1	/	N	0	70	U	U	W	W	W
St Aubyn	Thomas John	1811	M	N	I	3	army captain	£10,000	UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	35	U	U	U	N	N	
St Aubyn	John Molesworth	1791	M	Y	E	4	clergy, land., inh. entail		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	53	U	U	U	Y	N	
St Aubyn	Hender Molesworth	1798	M	Y	Y	4	clergy, land., inh. entail		31	E4	dau. clergy		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	Y	0	69	15	2	HW	Y	N
St Aubyn	Barbara Molesworth	1792	F	Y	W	4	W		38	E4	clergy, son clergy		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	Y	0	43	U	U	W	W	W
St Aubyn	Mary Ann Molesworth	1795	F	Y	W	4	W		45	E4	clergy		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	Y	0	89	U	U	W	W	W
St Aubyn	St Aubyn Molesworth	1800	M	Y	Y	4	army colonel		33	E4	dau. Irish lawyer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	Y	0	58	U	U	U	N	N
St Aubyn	Martha	1807	F	N	W	3	W		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	52	U	U	H	W	W	
St Aubyn	Anne Henrietta	1808	F	N	W	3	W		40	U	U	U	/	/	/	U	/	/	/	N	0	88	U	U	H	W	W

St Aubyn	Mary	1813	F	N	W	3	W		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	25	U	U	H	W	W		
Sackville	Charles	U	M	N	I	2	banker		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	U	U	U	U	U	U		
Sackville	John Frederick	1745	M	Y	E	1	duke		45	L3	dau. baronet	£140,000	/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	Y	1	54	9	U	WR	N	N	
Sackville	Mary	1746	F	Y	W	2	W		21	H1	peer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	Y	0	32	U	U	W	W	W	
Sackville	Diana	1756	F	Y	W	2	W		21	E2	Irish peer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	/	0	58	U	U	W	W	W	
Sackville	Elizabeth	1762	F	Y	W	2	W		19	L3	Irish land.		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	/	0	U	U	U	W	W	W	
Sackville	Charles	1767	M	Y	E	1	viscount, duke		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	76	9	8	WR	Y	N		
Sackville	George	1770	M	Y	Y	2	U		44	L3	U, 'genteel'		/	/	/	/	/	/	Y	0	66	9	9	WR	Y	N		
Sackville	Caroline	1764	F	Y	W	2	W		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	25	U	U	W	W	W			
Sackville	John Frederick	1778	M	N	I	2	army captain		18	L7	dau. pastry cook		/	/	/	U	/	/	/	N	1	18	6	U	L	N	N	
Sackville	Mary	1792	F	Y	W	2	W		19	E1	peer		E1	peer		Y	Y	N	1	Y	0	72	U	U	W	W	W	
Sackville	Elizabeth	1793	F	Y	W	2	W		18	E1	peer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	Y	0	75	U	U	W	W	W	
Tufton	Sackville	1769	M	Y	E	1	earl		42	U	U		/	/	/	U	/	/	/	Y	0	56	U	U	U	N	N	
Tufton	Caroline	1771	F	Y	W	2	W		21	L3	MP, land.		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	Y	0	U	U	U	W	W	W	
Tufton	Charles	1770	M	Y	Y	2	earl, inh. from brother		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	62	U	U	U	N	N		
Tufton	John	1773	M	Y	Y	2	MP, army captain		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	26	13	U	WR	Y	N		
Tufton	Henry	1775	M	Y	Y	2	army captain, lord-lieut, MP, earl, inh. from brother		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	1	74	11	4	WR	N	N		
Tufton	Alfred	1764	M	N	I	2	civil servant, EIC, judge in India		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	48	U	U	U	N	N		
Tufton	Richard	1813	M	N	I	2	land., inh. 40,000 acres, baronet 1851		30	U	U		/	/	/	U	/	/	/	N	0	58	U	U	U	N	N	
Sackville	Ann Lee	1667	F	N	W	2	W	£1000 portion	21	L4	son yeoman		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	61	U	U	W	W	W	
Sackville	Mary Waldegrave	1673	F	N	W	2	W		19	E2	Irish peer		E2	Irish peer	Y	Y	Y	1	/	N	0	41	U	U	W	W	W	

Sackville	Lionel Cranfield	1688	M	Y	E	1	duke		21	E2	dau. peer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	Y	0	77	7	U	WR	Y	N
Sackville	Mary	1688	F	Y	W	2	W		14	E1	peer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	17	U	U	W	W	W
Wyndham	George	1787	M	N	I	2	baron, land., army lt-col.		28	L4	dau. clergy		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	84	U	U	U	N	N
Wyndham	Frances	1789	F	N	W	2	W		19	E2	land., MP, baronet		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	59	U	U	W	W	W
Wyndham	Henry	1790	M	N	I	2	army general, MP, land.		22	E2	dau. peer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	70	U	U	U	N	N
Wyndham	Charlotte	1795	F	N	W	2	W		28	E3	land.		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	75	U	U	W	W	W
Wyndham	Charles	1796	M	N	I	2	brevet-colonel, MP, land.		39	E2	dau. peer		/	/	/	Y	/	2	/	N	0	70	U	U	U	N	N
Wyndham	Mary Fox	1792	F	N	W	2	W		27	E1	peer		/	/	/	N	/	/	/	N	0	50	U	U	W	W	W
Wyndham	Charles Richard Crole	1793	M	N	I	2	captain		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	57	U	U	U	N	N
Wyndham	William John Crole	1797	M	N	I	2	clergy		43	U	dau. clergy		/	/	/	U	/	/	/	Y	0	68	U	U	U	Y	N
Wyndham	George Francis	1786	M	Y	E	3	inh. earl, navy officer		34	L4	dau. schoolmas- ter, clergy		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	59	U	U	U	N	N
Wyndham	Frances	U	F	Y	W	3	W		U	E3	land.		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	U	U	U	W	W	W
Wyndham	Laura	1790	F	Y	W	3	W		22	L4	clergy		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	43	U	U	W	W	W
Wyndham	Caroline Hodges	1791	F	N	W	3	W		17	H2,	clergy, son peer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	85	U	U	W	W	W
Wyndham	Charles Hodges	1792	M	N	I	3	army colonel		40	U	U		/	/	/	U	/	/	/	Y	0	84	U	U	U	N	N
Crole	George Seymour	1799	M	N	I	2	army major		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	64	U	U	U	N	N
Harford	Frances Mary	1759	F	N	W	2	W		13	L4	law		E2	army officer, diplomat, son peer		Y	Y	/	/	Y	0	63	12	U	L	W	W
Harford	Henry	1758	M	N	I	2	land.		34	L3	dau. tea trader		L3	dau. baronet		Y	Y	/	/	Y	0	66	U	U	U	Y	N
Fitzclarence	George Augustus	1794	M	N	I	2	army officer		25	E2	dau. peer		/	/	/	N	/	/	/	N	0	48	U	U	U	N	N
Fitzclarence	Sophia	1795	F	N	W	2	W		30	E2	baronet		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	42	U	U	W	W	W

Fitzclarence	Mary	1798	F	N	W	2	W		26	E2	navy/army officer		/	/	/	N	/	/	/	N	0	66	U	U	W	W	W
Fitzclarence	Frederick	1799	M	N	I	2	navy officer		22	E2	dau. peer		/	/	/	Y	/	2	/	N	0	55	U	U	U	N	N
Fitzclarence	Elizabeth	1801	F	N	W	2	W		19	E1	peer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	55	U	U	W	W	W
Fitzclarence	Adolphus	1802	M	N	I	2	navy officer		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	54	U	U	U	N	N
Fitzclarence	Augusta	1803	F	N	W	2	W		24	E2	land.		E2	navy officer, MP		Y	Y	/	/	N	0	62	U	U	W	W	W
Fitzclarence	Augustus	1805	M	N	I	2	clergy		40	L3	granddau. peer, dau. army officer		/	/	/	Y	/	2	/	Y	0	49	U	U	U	Y	N
Fitzclarence	Amelia	1807	F	N	W	2	W		23	H1	peer	poor	/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	51	U	U	W	W	W
Fitzgerald	Frederick March	U	M	N	I	3	civil servant, ordnance office clerk		U	L6	dau. actress		/	/	/	N	/	/	/	Y	0	U	U	U	U	U	U
Fitzgerald De Ros	Henry William	1793	M	Y	E	1	baron, MP		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	46	15	U	E	N	N
Fitzgerald De Ros	Arthur John Hill	1793	M	Y	Y	2	army lt-col		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	33	12	3	E	N	N
Fitzgerald De Ros	William Lennox	1797	M	Y	Y	2	army major-general, baron, inh. from brother		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	77	U	U	U	N	N
Fitzgerald De Ros	John Frederick	1804	M	Y	Y	2	navy rear admiral		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	57	13	U	E	N	N
Fitzgerald De Ros	Henrietta-Mabel	1802	F	Y	W	2	W		26	L3	land., MP		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	77	U	U	W	W	W
Fitzgerald De Ros	Olivia-Cecilia	1807	F	Y	W	2	W		26	E1	peer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	Y	0	78	U	U	W	W	W
Fitzgerald De Ros	Geraldine	1808	F	Y	W	2	W		22	L4	clergy		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	Y	0	73	U	U	W	W	W
Fitzgerald De Ros	Cecilia	1811	F	Y	W	2	W		24	E2	MP		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	Y	0	58	U	U	W	W	W
Fitzgerald De Ros	Jane	1810	F	Y	W	2	W		20	L3	army officer, MP		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	Y	0	U	U	U	W	W	W
Fox	Charles Richard	1796	M	N	I	2	MP, army general, surveyor general, royal A-D-C		28	E2	dau. peer		/	/	/	N	/	/	/	N	0	77	10	3	E	N	Y
Fox	Henry Edward	1802	M	Y	E	1	baron, MP, diplomat		31	E2	dau. peer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	57	H	H	H	Y	N
Fox	Mary Elizabeth	1806	F	Y	W	2	W		24	E1	peer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	85	U	U	W	W	W

Grey	Eliza Courtenay	1792	F	N	W	2	W		22	L5	army officer, son merchant		/	/	/	Y	/	2	/	N	0	67	U	U	W	W	W
Grey	Elizabeth	1797	F	Y	W	2	W		29	L3	MP, land.		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	83	U	U	W	W	W
Grey	Louisa	1797	F	Y	W	2	W		19	E1	peer, MP		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	44	U	U	W	W	W
Grey	Caroline	1799	F	Y	W	2	W		28	E2	navy officer, MP		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	76	U	U	W	W	W
Grey	Georgiana	1801	F	Y	W	2	W		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	99	U	U	W	W	W	
Grey	Henry	1802	M	Y	E	1	earl, MP, lord-lieut		30	L3	dau. baronet		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	92	H	H	H	Y	N
Grey	Charles	1804	M	Y	Y	2	MP, army general, royal private secretary		32	L3	dau. baronet		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	66	H	H	H	N	N
Grey	Frederick	1805	M	Y	Y	2	knighted, navy admiral, magistrate, land.		41	L4	dau. clergy		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	Y	0	73	U	U	U	N	N
Grey	Mary	1807	F	Y	W	2	W		22	L3	MP, land., son baronet		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	77	U	U	W	W	W
Grey	George	1809	M	Y	Y	2	navy admiral		36	L3	granddau. peer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	82	U	U	U	N	N
Grey	John	1812	M	Y	Y	2	clergy		24	E2	dau. peer		L3	grand-dau. merchant and MP		Y	Y	/	/	N	0	83	U	U	L	Y	N
Grey	Francis	1813	M	Y	Y	2	clergy		27	E2	dau. peer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	77	U	U	L	Y	N
Grey	Henry	1814	M	Y	Y	2	army captain		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	56	U	U	U	N	N	
Grey	William	1819	M	Y	Y	2	U		U	E2	dau. Swedish peer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	U	0	46	U	U	U	N	N
Beresford	William Carr	1768	M	N	I	2	army general, governor of Jersey, MP, knighted 1810, baron 1814, viscount 1823,bought estate		64	E2	dau. baron, widow banker	richest woman in England	/	/	/	Y	/	1	/	Y	0	86	U	U	L	N	N
Beresford	John Poo	1766	M	N	I	2	navy admiral, MP, baronet		43	L5	dau. navy officer		L3	dau. MP and land.		Y	Y	/	/	Y	0	78	U	U	L	N	N
Beresford	Henry	1772	M	Y	E	1	marquis		33	E2	dau. peer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	Y	0	54	13	4	E	Y	N
Beresford	John George	1773	M	Y	Y	2	clergy, archbishop		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	89	12	4	E	Y	N	

Beresford	Isabella	1776	F	Y	W	2	W		36	L3	gentry, army officer, MP	£4,000	/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	Y	0	74	U	U	W	W	W
Beresford	Catherine	1777	F	Y	W	2	W		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	66	U	U	W	W	W
Beresford	Anne	1779	F	Y	W	2	W		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	63	U	U	W	W	W	
Beresford	George Thomas	1781	M	Y	Y	2		army lt-gen., MP, comptroller of the household	27	L3	dau. land.		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	Y	0	58	9	3	E	N	N
Beresford	Elizabeth	1783	F	Y	W	2	W		33	L5	army officer, son clergy		E2	baronet, army officer		Y	Y	/	/	Y	0	73	U	U	W	W	W
Barrett- Lennard	Thomas	1762	M	N	I	2		baronet, land., MP	25	E3	dau. baronet		E3	dau. baronet		Y	Y	/	1	Y	0	95	8	8	L, HW	Y	N
Barrett- Lennard	Barbara	1766	F	N	W	2	W		33	E3	land.		L4	clergy		Y	Y	/	/	Y	0	71	6	12	L	W	W
Barrett- Lennard	Thomas	1788	M	Y	E	3		land., MP	27	E3	dau. MP, land.		E3	dau. land., heiress		Y	Y	/	/	N	0	68	U	U	CH	Y	Y
Barrett- Lennard	John	1798	M	Y	Y	3		civil servant, chief clerk, privy council office	25	E3	dau. MP, land., baronet		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	56	14	1	CH	N	N
Barrett- Lennard	George	1796	M	Y	Y	3		barrister	24	E4	dau. lawyer		L5	wid. army officer		Y	Y	1	/	N	0	74	0	5	CH	Y	Y
Barrett- Lennard	Dorothy	1797	F	Y	W	3	W		25	E4	son baronet, clergy		/	/	/	N	/	1	/	N	0	85	U	U	W	W	W
Barrett- Lennard	Henry	1798	M	Y	Y	3		clergy	22	E4	dau. lawyer		/	/	/	Y	/	1	/	N	0	72	9	4	CH	Y	N
Barrett- Lennard	Edward	1799	M	Y	Y	3		colonial settler	38	E4	U		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	U	U	U	U	N	N
Barrett- Lennard	Dacre	1801	M	Y	Y	3		clergy	24	E4	dau. clergy		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	38	U	U	U	Y	N
Barrett- Lennard	Charles	1802	M	Y	Y	3		barrister	36	E4	U		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	89	12	U	E	Y	Y
Barrett- Lennard	Julia	U	F	Y	W	3	W		U	E4	physician		L5	army officer		Y	U	/	/	N	0	U	U	U	W	W	W
Cavendish	Georgiana	1783	F	Y	W	2	W		18	E1	peer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	75	H	H	H	W	W
Cavendish	Harriet	1785	F	Y	W	2	W	portion £10,000	24	E1	peer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	77	H	H	H	W	W
Cavendish	William Spencer	1790	M	Y	E	1	earl		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	68	10	5	HW	Y	N	
Cavendish	Charlotte Williams	1774	F	N	W	2	W		19	L5	clergy		/	/	/	U	/	2	/	N	0	U	H	H	H	U	U

Cavendish	Caroline St Jules	1785	F	N	W	2	W	portion £30,000	24	E1	peer		/	/	/	Y	/	2	/	N	0	77	H	H	H	W	W
Cavendish	Augustus Clifford	1788	M	N	I	2	navy admiral, MP, knighted, baronet	£2000 pa from 1811, plus portion 1813	25	E2	dau. peer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	Y	0	89	8	U	HW	N	N
Delaval	Francis	1751	M	N	I	3	army lieut-general, governor of St Lucia		U	L4	U		/	/	/	Y	/	2	/	Y	0	75	U	U	U	N	N
Delaval	Frances	1755	F	N	W	3	W		31	L6	artist		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	Y	0	71	U	U	L	W	W
Delaval	Frances Clarke	1755	F	N	W	3	W	£500	21	L6	druggist	over £10,000	/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	Y	0	U	U	U	U	W	W
Delaval	Sophie	1755	F	Y	W	3	W		U	L5	army officer	very little	/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	1	38	U	U	U	W	W
Delaval	Elizabeth	1757	F	Y	W	3	W		24	H1	peer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	28	U	U	U	W	W
Delaval	Frances Cawthorne	1759	F	Y	W	3	W		19	E3	MP, land., son lawyer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	80	U	U	U	W	W
Delaval	Sarah Hussey	1763	F	Y	W	3	W		17	H1	peer		/	/	/	Y	/	N	/	N	0	37	U	U	U	W	W
Carpenter	Susan	1784	F	Y	W	2	W		21	E1	peer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	Y	0	43	U	U	U	W	W
Carpenter	Emilia	U	F	N	W	2	W		U	U	U	U	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	U	U	U	U	W	W	
Carpenter	George Moore	U	M	N	I	2	army		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	U	U	U	HW	N	N	
Carpenter	Frederick Henry Oriel	1804	M	N	I	2	physician		42	U	U		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	Y	0	63	U	U	CH	N	N
Carpenter	Charles George Oriel	1800	M	N	I	2	solicitor		U	L6	dau. farmer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	Y	0	74	12	3	CH	N	U
Churchill	Charles	1678	M	N	I	3	army colonel, MP, governor of Plymouth		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	1	67	U	U	U	N	N
Churchill	Charles Oldfield	1720	M	N	I	3	army lieutenant, MP, magistrate,		26	H2	dau. peer		/	/	/	N	/	/	/	Y	0	92	9	6	WR	N	N
Churchill	Harriet	1725	F	N	W	3	W		22	E3	diplomat, gentry	trade wealth	/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	Y	0	52	U	U	U	W	W
Manners	Roosilia Drake	1736	F	N	W	2	W		15	E3	land., MP		/	/	/	Y	/	N	/	N	0	87	U	U	U	W	W
Manners	Edward	1745	M	N	I	2	army captain, land.	inh. paternal estates	UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	5	66	11	U	E	N	N
Manners	John	1721	M	Y	E	1	marquess, MP, lord-lieut, lieut-general	inh. paternal estates but in £10,000 of debt	29	E2	dau. peer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	2	49	11	U	E	Y	N

Manners-Sutton	Robert	1722	M	Y	Y	2	army colonel, lord of the bedchamber, MP, land.	inh. maternal estates worth over £4000 pa	UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	1	40	U	U	U	N	N	
Manners-Sutton	George	1723	M	Y	Y	2	land., MP	inh. maternal estates worth over £4000 pa	26	E3	dau. gentry, land.		L4	dau. attorney to King's Bench		Y	Y	/	/	N	0	60	16	2	E	N	N
Manners	Fursan	1779	M	N	I	3	land., bought estate		U	U	U	U	/	/	/	U	/	/	/	/	0	56	U	U	U	N	N
Manners	Elizabeth	1771	F	N	W	3	W		17	E3	clergy, son MP, land.		/	/	/	Y	/	1	/	N	0	66	U	U	U	W	W
Manners	Edward	1786	M	N	I	3	clergy, land.		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	71	U	U	U	Y	N
Manners	Walter	1789	M	N	I	3	land.		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	67	U	U	U	Y	N	
Manners	Otho	1794	M	N	I	3	land.		22	E4	dau. clergy		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	Y	0	85	U	U	U	N	N
Manners	George	1747	M	N	I	2	army captain, MP		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	25	11	5	E	N	N	
Manners	Anne	1750	F	N	W	2	W		28	E3	MP, army officer		/	/	/	Y	/	1	/	Y	0	72	U	U	U	W	W
Manners	Charles	1754	M	Y	E	1	duke, MP, Lord-Lieut		21	E2	dau. peer	/	/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	Y	0	33	8	9	E	Y	N
Manners	Robert	1758	M	Y	Y	2	navy captain, MP		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	24	5	8	E	N	N	
Manners	Frances	1753	F	Y	W	2	W		19	E1	peer		E2	U		Y	Y	/	/	Y	0	39	U	U	U	W	W
Sutton	Evelyn	1747	M	N	I	3	navy rear admiral		25	E3	dau. MP, land.		/	/	/	Y	/	1	/	Y	0	70	U	U	U	U	U
Manners-Sutton	George	1751	M	Y	E	3	MP, land.	only £200 pa in 1784	UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	53	12	6	E	Y	N	

Manners-Sutton	John	1752	M	Y	Y	3	army lt-col, MP		26	E2	dau. peer		/	/	/	N	/	1	/	N	0	74	U	U	U	U	U
Manners-Sutton	Charles	1755	M	Y	Y	3	clergy, Archbishop of Canterbury		23	E3	dau. land., MP		/	/	/	Y	/	1	/	N	0	73	U	U	CH	Y	N
Manners-Sutton	Thomas	1756	M	Y	Y	3	barrister, solicitor-general, Lord Chancellor of Ireland, baron, MP		47	E3	dau. baronet	E3	dau. baronet		Y	Y	N	N	Y	0	86	U	U	CH	Y	Y	
Manners-Sutton	Louisa Bridget	U	F	Y	W	3	W		U	L4	son clergy, small land.		/	/	/	Y	/	N	/	Y	0	U	U	U	W	W	W
Manners-Sutton	Diana	U	F	Y	W	3	W		U	L3	MP, land., son lawyer		/	/	/	Y	/	1	/	N	0	U	U	U	W	W	W
Manners-Sutton	Mary	U	F	Y	W	3	W		U	L4	clergy, son clergy		/	/	/	Y	/	N	/	Y	0	U	U	U	W	W	W
Manners-Sutton	Robert	1754	M	Y	Y	3	navy captain		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	40	U	U	U	U	U	U
Manners-Sutton	Charlotte	1765	F	Y	W	3	W		24	U	son clergy		/	/	/	Y	/	N	/	Y	0	62	U	U	W	W	W
Manners	Mary Anne	1784	F	N	W	3	W		23	L4	land., son farmer	L4	esq		U	U	/	/	N	0	85	U	U	U	W	W	
Manners	Laura	1778	F	N	W	3	W		30	E4	gentry, land.		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	77	U	U	U	W	W
Manners	Emma	1788	F	N	W	3	W		25	E4	gentry, land.		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	Y	0	U	U	U	U	W	W
Manners	Alithea	1782	F	N	W	3	W		30	L4	surgeon		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	Y	0	69	U	U	U	W	W
Manners	Roger	1787	M	N	I	3.	land.		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	62	U	U	U	N	N	
Manners	Arthur	1780	M	N	I	3	army, EIC		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	46	U	U	U	N	N	
Leveson-Gower	Granville	1815	M	Y	E	1	earl, MP, foreign secretary		25	E2	widow baronet, dau. German peer	heiress	/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	76	8	8	L, E	Y	N

Leveson-Gower	Edward Frederick	1819	M	Y	Y	2	MP, JP, purchased estate		34	E2	dau. peer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	Y	0	88	8	8	L, E	Y	N
Leveson-Gower	Susan	1810	F	Y	W	2	W		23	E1	peer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	56	H	H	H	W	W
Leveson-Gower	Georgiana	1812	F	Y	W	2	W		21	L3	land.		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	73	H	H	H	W	W
Leveson-Gower	Harriette Arundel Stewart	1800	F	N	W	2	W		24	E1	peer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	52	U	U	U	W	W
Leveson-Gower	George Arundel Stewart	1802	M	N	I	2	army, became his father's private secretary		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	73	U	U	U	N	N
Walpole	Robert	1701	M	Y	E	1	earl		23	E1	peeress	heiress	/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	50	U	U	U	N	N
Walpole	Mary	1705	F	Y	W	2	W		18	E1	peer	income of £3700 pa in 1730s	/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	26	U	U	U	W	W
Walpole	Edward	1706	M	Y	Y	2	MP, govt secretary, knighted	£3000-7000 a year from govt office	UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	4	78	U	U	U	Y	Y
Walpole	Horace	1717	M	Y	Y	2	earl inherited from brother, MP, govt office	over £2000 pa from govt office	UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	80	U	U	E	Y	Y
Walpole	Catherine Daye	1724	F	N	W	2	W		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	51	U	U	U	W	W	
Walpole	Mary Skerrett	1725	F	N	W	2	W		21	L3	MP		/	/	/	N	/	/	/	Y	0	76	U	U	U	W	W
Walpole	Laura	1734	F	N	W	3	W		24	E2	son peer, clergy		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	79	U	U	U	W	W
Walpole	Maria	1736	F	N	W	3	W		23	H1	peer		H1	royal duke		Y	Y	/	/	N	0	71	U	U	U	W	W
Walpole	Edward	1737	M	N	I	3	army, lt-col		UN	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	0	34	U	U	U	N	N
Walpole	Charlotte	1738	F	N	W	3	W		22	H1	peer		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	51	U	U	U	W	W
Cholmondeley	George	1724	M	Y	E	1	viscount		23	L3	dau. baronet	heiress	/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	40	U	U	U	N	N
Cholmondeley	Robert	1727	M	Y	Y	2	clergy		19	L6	dau. labourer	very little	/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	N	0	77	U	U	U	N	N
Walpole	Georgina	1782	F	N	W	2	W		20	L4	son merchant, small land.		/	/	/	Y	/	/	/	Y	0	86	7	11	L	W	W

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