



Reflections on Sentiment

Essays in Honor of George Starr

Edited by
Alessa Johns

Reflections on Sentiment
Essays in Honor of George Starr
Edited by Alessa Johns

UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE PRESS
Newark

Published by University of Delaware Press
Copublished with Rowman & Littlefield
4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200, Lanham, Maryland 20706
www.rowman.com

Unit A, Whitacre Mews, 26-34 Stannary Street, London SE11 4AB, United Kingdom

Copyright © 2016 by Rowman & Littlefield

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without written permission from the publisher, except by a reviewer who may quote passages in a review.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Information Available

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Johns, Alessa, editor. | Starr, G. A. (George A.), honouree.


Title: Reflections on sentiment : essays in honor of George Starr / edited by Alessa Johns.

Description: Newark : University of Delaware Press, [2015] | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2015038422 | ISBN 9781611495881 (cloth : alk. paper) | ISBN 9781611495904 (pbk. : alk. paper) | ISBN 9781611495898 (electronic)

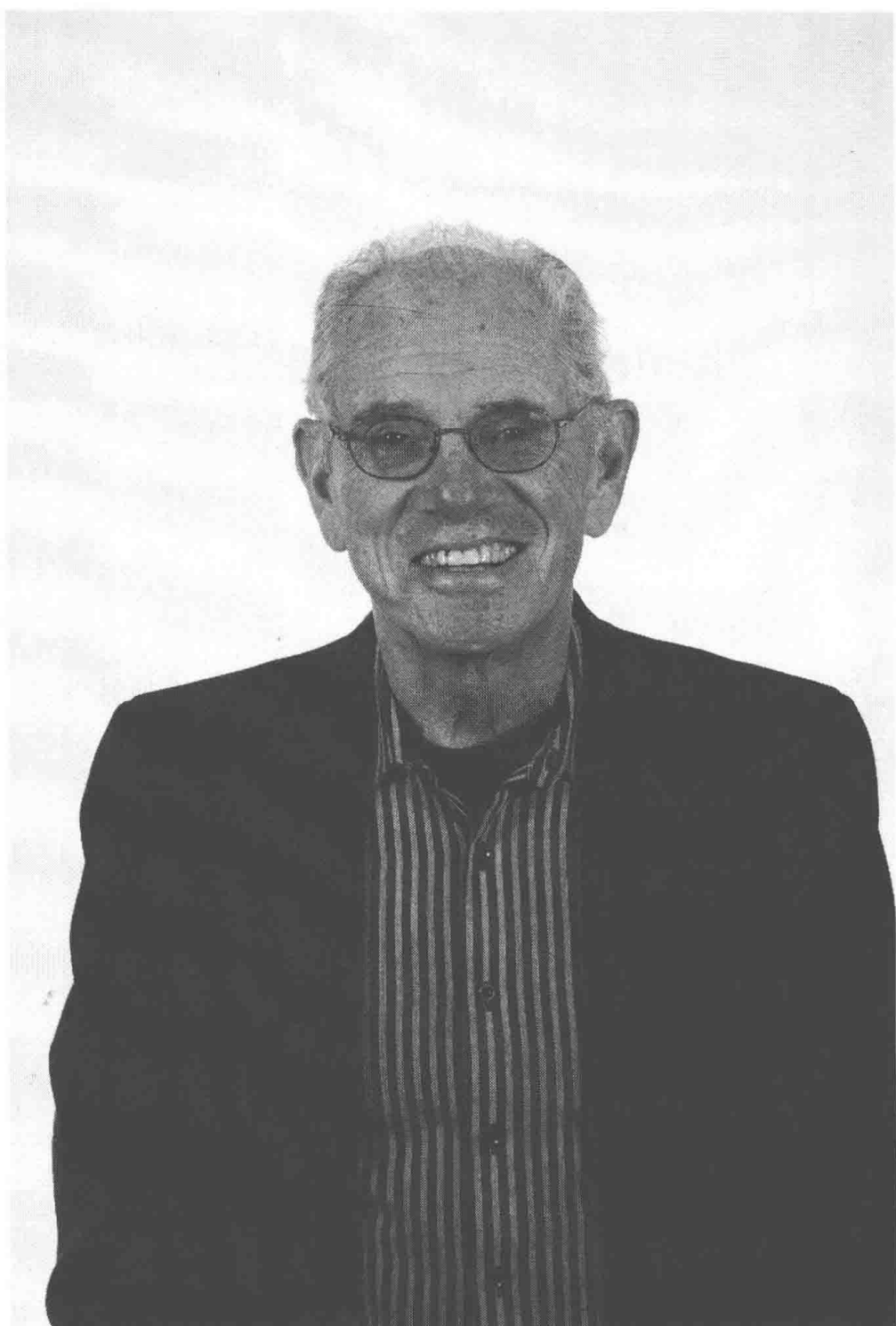
Subjects: LCSH: Sentimentalism in literature. | Sentimentalism. | Defoe, Daniel, 1661?-1731--Criticism and interpretation.

Classification: LCC PN56.S475 R44 2015 | DDC 809/.93353--dc23 LC record available at <http://lccn.loc.gov/2015038422>

™ The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992.

Printed in the United States of America

Reflections on Sentiment



George Starr, Professor of English, University of California, Berkeley.
Photo courtesy of George Starr.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Sara Austin (Ph.D. English, UC Berkeley, 1999), editor at the Huntington Library, for researching and selecting the illustrations to accompany the essays in this collection. Thanks also to Alison Conway, Simon Stern, and John Richetti for helpful suggestions on the introduction, and indeed to all of the authors for their copious efforts to bring this project to completion. Finally, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to George Starr for his generous mentorship over many years.

Contents

Acknowledgments	vii
Introduction <i>Alessa Johns</i>	1
I: Sympathetic Identification and Narrative Sociality	9
1 "Unequally Yoked": Defoe and the Challenge of Mixed Marriage <i>Alison Conway</i>	11
2 Circumstantial Particulars, Particular Individuals, and Defoe <i>Joanna Picciotto</i>	29
3 The Sentimental Animal <i>James P. Carson</i>	55
II: Sentimental Family Politics and the Novel	83
4 The Sentimental Servant: The Dangers of Dependence in Defoe's <i>Roxana</i> <i>Barbara M. Benedict</i>	85
5 Only a Girl?: Miss Milner, Matilda, and the Consolations of Filial Piety in <i>A Simple Story</i> <i>Amy J. Pawl</i>	105
6 The Abyss of Friendship in <i>Caleb Williams</i> <i>George E. Haggerty</i>	135
7 "Only a Boy": George Starr's "Notes on Sentimental Novels" Revisited <i>Geoffrey Sill</i>	153

III: Professing Literature in a Changing Marketplace	165
8 Satirical Authorship and Literary Commerce	167
<i>Simon Stern</i>	
9 Passion in Declamation and Dialogue: How Eighteenth-Century Verse Can Work	185
<i>John Richetti</i>	
Publications of George Starr	205
Index	209
About the Contributors	213

Introduction

Alessa Johns

A volume of essays offering *Reflections on Sentiment* is especially appropriate today, since it not only addresses current scholarly interest in feeling and affect, but also provides an occasion to celebrate the career of George Starr, who has done so much in over fifty years of incisive scholarship and committed teaching to elucidate the role of sentimentalism in what was once reductively termed an age of reason and realism. Because of the critique that Starr helped to further, scholars today can approach with greater assurance the complex interplay and communicability of reason and emotion, thought and sensibility, science and feeling, rationality and enthusiasm, judgment and wit, forethought and instinct, as they continue to pursue the multivalent implications of the scientific, religious, political, social, literary, and cultural revolutions of the Enlightenment.

The volume's title also echoes writings of Daniel Defoe, writings extensively explored by George Starr, and indeed the chapters of this book draw attention to the admirable scope, depth, and lasting influence of Starr's work, not only on Defoe and sentimentality, but also on the innovative queries his oeuvre has incited: the ways sentiment and sentimentalism inflect the moral and ideological ambit of Enlightenment discourses, the socio-politics of religious debate, the issues promoted by women writers, and by gender and family relations, the artistic and rhetorical uses of lived language, the impacts of cultural developments on novelistic form, and the wide fluctuations and shifts in the literary marketplace. Contributors to this anthology—students, colleagues, and fellow eighteenth-century scholars who have worked closely with Starr at various moments in his distinguished career—thus shed new light on Enlightenment thought and socio-cultural formations generally, offering fresh interpretations of a period in which *Reflection* and *Sentiment* circulated, mutually influenced each other, and contended equally for cultu-

ral attention. Deploying tools advanced by new work in animal studies, gender criticism, media analysis, genre studies, the new formalism, and ethical inquiry, and enabled by the power of digitization and new databases, the authors of this volume explain how and to what ends denizens of the Enlightenment were touched and moved.

A consideration of George Starr's career also reminds us of the intellectual power of literary history and criticism in the mid-twentieth century, when a volume on a formerly subordinate genre, Ian Watt's *The Rise of the Novel*, could incite vehement debate and provoke trenchant scholarly responses and counter-narratives. The meticulously researched and carefully crafted arguments of Starr's two monographs on Daniel Defoe, in particular, had an immediate impact and have remained essential reading to this day. Starr's *Defoe and Spiritual Autobiography* (1965) argued that, beyond depictions of *homo economicus*, Defoe's plots, characters, and themes revealed the overriding influence of this neglected self-scrutinizing Protestant form. Critics judged Starr's book a thoroughgoing "reappraisal of the grounds and motives of Defoe's fiction"¹ with "the quality of a *tour de force*"²; Starr's careful attention to the historical, literary, and ideological context helped the discipline to move beyond formalist well-wrought urns and the stifling enshrinement of "irony as the *sine qua non* of fiction."³ Starr's next volume, *Defoe and Casuistry* (1971)—"a major study," "impressive and important"—revealed how the casuistical approach to the advice columns of such periodicals as the *Athenian Mercury* offered Defoe a new method of rendering characters' complex dilemmas and deliberations. Instead of leaning on character types, Starr argued, Defoe had his protagonists present themselves so minutely and enthrallingly "that the reader is seduced into sympathizing with characters he would otherwise be disposed to condemn." Importantly, Starr thereby identified "the source of affective power in Defoe's fiction."⁴

Following this careful assessment of the inner life of Defoe's characters, Starr went on in the 1970s to analyze sentimental writing, and in particular to dissect its narrative form. He explained the fractured structure and mediated nature of sentimental novels as part of their didactic aim, showing, for example, how the nonlinear quality of sentimental texts served to obstruct chronological time, allowing a hero to avoid maturation into an inhospitable world. He demonstrated how texts questioned the "adequacy of language itself as a medium of expression or communication" since "language, like the world that uses it, is profoundly debased."⁵ And he suggested that the use of framing devices in sentimental texts allowed the author to devise a narratorial voice with a "necessary combination of oneness with the hero and distance from him," so that the hero's naivety could expose the brutality of the world even as the narrator could strive to enlighten his readers.⁶ These insights have influenced significant critical work over the years, very notably among students of the graduate program at Berkeley, where Starr has taught since

1962: for instance, Barbara Benedict's *Framing Feeling: Sentiment and Style in English Prose Fiction, 1745–1800* (1994); George Haggerty's *Unnatural Affections: Women and Fiction in the Later 18th Century* (1998); and Ann Jessie Van Sant's *Eighteenth-Century Sensibility and the Novel: The Senses in Social Context* (1993).

More recently Starr has produced valuable editions of Defoe's works: *An Essay on the History and Reality of Apparitions* (2005); *Religious Courtship* (2006); *Serious Reflections During the Life and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (2008); and he has made a cogent argument for attribution to Defoe in *Christianity Not as Old as the Creation: The Last of Defoe's Performances* (2012). As with his consequential edition of *Moll Flanders* for Oxford University Press (1971, paperback 1981, reissued 1998 and 2009), these editions for Pickering & Chatto's *Writings of Daniel Defoe* are characterized by a thoroughly helpful and impressive apparatus, with wide-ranging, authoritative introductions and characteristically informative explanatory notes. Starr has also contributed definitive articles that address current interest in transnationalism, the cultural impact of climate, in addition to other expanded spatial, geographical, and temporal registers: "Defoe and China"; "Defoe's Tour through the Dialects and Jargons of Great Britain"; "Defoe and Biblical Memory"; and "Defoe and Disasters."⁷

In the twenty-first century, scholars have continued to pursue themes invoked forcefully by Starr. For example, Starr, probing questions of class and gender in relation to sensibility, brought to light the self-serving underside of sentimentalism, arguing that it may have inspired philanthropic efforts on behalf of the socially downtrodden, but that it left "the existing social hierarchy intact or stronger than ever," and while it called into question the "subordination of feminine to masculine values," it did not do so "in the interest of equality." In a recent study, Ildiko Csengei favors medical and psychological explanations over the religious, didactic, and rhetorical ones employed by Starr, but she nonetheless continues to foreground how "self-interest, cruelty and violence . . . become constitutive aspects of the ostensibly benevolent, philanthropist ideology of eighteenth-century sensibility."⁸ Regarding the question of form in sentimental novels, Alex Wetmore has recently dubbed the "narrative self-reflexivity" of these works as markers of "corporeal defamiliarization": such novels, which might be expected to offer structural transparency as a way of connecting directly with readers' emotions, surprisingly "deploy self-conscious devices that actively intrude on and fracture the narrative" to further "somatic skepticism," a way of undermining "any illusions or pretension that readers are experiencing real, immediately beheld events."⁹ The frameworks of argument may have shifted since the 1970s, but George Starr's careful readings and keen insights are continually reconfirmed by the ongoing references scholars make to his nuanced and engaged criticism.

Today we witness a renewed interest in the history of emotion and affect encouraged by recent work in neuroscience and physiology; this has inspired scholars of the long eighteenth century to revisit such topics as the aesthetic and rhetorical triggers to readers' tears, the sources of passionate investment in literary characters, the social class implications of sentimentalism, the role of sensation and embodiment in broader cultural expression, and the emotional spurs to national and cosmopolitan identification.¹⁰ The essays in this volume similarly employ new modes of inquiry to approach the kinds of questions Starr has asked or to treat authors he has interpreted: sometimes they reinforce his theses with novel arguments and different examples, and at other times they offer alternative ways of addressing texts he has explicated. In the process, the authors advance *Reflections on Sentiment*: the correlation and movement between rumination and sensation, between the mental and emotional, the inner and outer, the passionate and detached, spontaneous and constructed, historical and formal, fervent and logical. The chapters of this collection offer three rubrics for suggesting how this is so.

Part I, with a focus on "Sympathetic Identification and Narrative Sociality," addresses Starr's interest in how literary spurs to readerly sensation and empathy issue in social meaning. The chapters probe representations that move from private epistemologies to public ties: characters come to tolerate religious difference not by fiat but through a mixed and conversational social milieu; providential signs are interpreted privately with public ramifications; animals move from being pathetic literary objects to feeling subjects in an affective pedagogy that furthers the mutuality of creatures.

In chapter 1, "'Unequally Yoked': Defoe and the Challenge of Mixed Marriage," Alison Conway discusses Defoe's conduct books *Religious Courtship* and *The Family Instructor* to show his complex comprehension of matrimonial religious difference and the negotiations necessary to overcome its challenges. She analyzes the conduct books as narratives that take up questions of tolerance in ways not possible in the public debates about toleration. Using novelistic methods, Defoe suggests that family harmony cannot emanate merely from a father's assertion of patriarchal sway on religious matters; social and narrative exchange among families, rather than authoritarian edicts, will more successfully insure sympathetic identification, family harmony, religious sincerity, and community cohesion.

Joanna Picciotto in chapter 2, "Circumstantial Particulars, Particular Individuals, and Defoe," also explores how Defoe's use of fictional narrative allows him more subtly to address religious issues, in particular questions of reading God's providential signs. Picciotto addresses Defoe's capacity to make things speak, and in particular the way his fictions allow material culture and environmental phenomena to take on emblematic and providential meanings, as Starr has suggested, rather than remain unidimensional tokens of an increasingly commercial economy, as articulated so colorfully

by Virginia Woolf in her discussion of Defoe's "earthenware pot" in the *Common Reader*. Picciotto consequently revisits the question of formal realism, focusing on the "circumstantial particular" and sorting out the claims of the emblematic (or allegorical) versus the verisimilar. Defoe is anxious about people inferring messages of a "public," political nature from circumstantial particulars; he is most comfortable with providential reading restricted to an individual, "private" context, and it is this kind of reading practice that his novels both fictionalize and invite. However, as Charles Gildon's criticism of Defoe rightly observes, this is a providentialism that is very difficult to "scale up." The eighteenth-century novel can be understood as a working out of this problem, with Defoe engaging the reader centrally in this epistemological and religious task.

Active readers' engagement also proves efficacious for considering the moral responsibility of powerless and sentimental figures, explored as well through animals' mental and emotional states. Chapter 3, James Carson's "The Sentimental Animal," confronts issues of anthropomorphism currently debated in animal studies to show how sentimental literature in the last decades of the eighteenth century came to represent non-human as well as human animals. He refers to Starr's article "'Only a Boy': Notes on Sentimental Novels," which explained how sentimental heroes and heroines expressed authors' suspicions of power and authority, to survey how sympathetic feelings are incited by the portrayal of animal powerlessness. He considers texts ranging from Henry Mackenzie's *Man of Feeling* to Eliza Fenwick's *Secresy*, by way of Mary Robinson, Thomas Day, and John William Polidori, and concludes that the literature transforms the animal "from sentimental object to feeling subject," making certain styles of sentiment newly legible to human subjects as it allows for emotional movement across the species boundary.

Overt forces of domestic subordination are taken up in part II of this volume, "Sentimental Family Politics and the Novel." The chapters consider how authors from Defoe to William Godwin used the genre to analyze dependency, even as they engage the ways in which George Starr's monographs, his synthesizing articles on the sentimental novel, as well as his admirable editions of Defoe's works gauge the impacts of familial sway. Barbara Benedict considers the master-servant relationship in chapter 4. Her essay, "The Sentimental Servant: The Dangers of Dependence in Defoe's *Roxana*," responds to Starr's argument that *Roxana* is a failed repentance narrative by suggesting that the story centers on moral corruption and unsuccessful reformation, and that these themes are treated most forcefully through the interactions of Amy and her mistress. Offering readings of Defoe's many tracts on servants, including *Every-Body's Business is No-Body's Business* and *The Great Law of Subordination Consider'd*, Benedict argues that Defoe novelistically probes the logical consequences of the master-servant tie once

the dominant role of the master has decayed. The reader's empathy with the protagonist does not dictate moral quiescence; Roxana's subordinate and alter-ego Amy generates and presses crucial ethical questions. In a darker and more emphatic way than in the non-fictional polemics, Defoe demonstrates how "the relationship between Amy and Roxana reflects the moral decadence of a society dependent on dependence, and the folly and danger of sentimental feeling in a world of contractual relations."

Chapters 5 and 6 consider intervening years and texts by taking up novels from the 1790s; they interrogate the effects and limits of dependency by addressing the repressive familial settings of a revolutionary era. Amy Pawl focuses on parent-child relationships in Elizabeth Inchbald's work. In "Only a Girl?: Miss Milner, Matilda, and the Consolations of Filial Piety in *A Simple Story*" she argues that the structure of Inchbald's 1791 novel unexpectedly gives the last word to earlier parent-child hierarchies, like those of Defoe's conduct books, rather than ending on a revolutionary-romantic, child-focused ethic. The comforts that Matilda gains through her acts of filial piety are weighed against the emotional tax of existence with her father. In chapter 6, "The Abyss of Friendship in *Caleb Williams*," George Haggerty considers domestic service and amity. He argues that, paradoxically, friendship lies at the root of conflict in William Godwin's 1794 novel. He bases his analysis on Jacques Derrida's *The Politics of Friendship*, which suggests that friendship has an ambiguous grounding in truth that is avoided; Haggerty demonstrates how Godwin tests the abyss, or the "bottomless bottom founding a friendship" as Derrida describes it, in the struggle between the protagonists Falkland and Caleb Williams.

Geoffrey Sill offers a different view of dependence in "'Only a Boy': George Starr's 'Notes on Sentimental Novels' Revisited." He takes up Starr's path-breaking essay in which Defoe's *Colonel Jack*, with its sentimental structure and themes, is shown to contest Ian Watt's theory of novelistic formal realism. Sill argues that Colonel Jack possesses overtones of the Biblical David—"but a youth"—facing and vanquishing the giant Philistine Goliath. Confronting obstacles in a cyclical and repeating pattern, Defoe's sentimental hero, like his Biblical forebear, can offer parables that serve the goal of social critique and persuade readers to support, in this case, the idea of children's education. Such lessons operate in ways inaccessible to purely realist narrative. Starr's thesis, Sill suggests, has proven a tenacious challenge to Watt.

Part III is titled "Professing Literature in a Changing Marketplace." Simon Stern, in chapter 8, "Satirical Authorship and Literary Commerce," elucidates the economics of authorship via textual analysis and publication history in his exploration of the fluid state of the literary marketplace in the 1740s. He draws on the ways in which Starr's work explicates the relationship of satire to sentiment, irony to empathy, with reference to the develop-

ment of the novel. Examining the published interactions of Henry Fielding, Sarah Fielding, and Samuel Richardson, Stern demonstrates how the authors employ satirical interventions to make room for each writer's different style of fiction in a literary marketplace where no style has yet become dominant.

Finally, John Richetti addresses the recital of sentiment in chapter 9, "Passion in Declamation and Dialogue: How Eighteenth-Century Verse Can Work," with an argument that crosses the textual and sonic. Starr, in his article "Defoe's Prose Style: The Language of Interpretation," had revealed how iambic pentameter undergirds Defoe's supposedly plain workaday prose. He argued that Defoe is able to convey feeling in seemingly objective narrative by transferring the impact of circumstantial detail, via accumulated subjective perception, onto the narrator. In a similar move, Richetti demonstrates how declamation, maligned and supposedly empty, actually serves to convey passion in mid-century poetry. In keeping with and furthering what Starr so convincingly argued, Richetti shows how depictions of the "real" in the Enlightenment demand attention to the sources of sentiment: in characters, in readers, and in speakers and listeners as well.

The essays in *Reflections on Sentiment* thus attest to the ongoing significance of George Starr's work, paying tribute to the breadth of Starr's interests, to the precision and accuracy of his writings, to the depth of his insights, and to the abiding import of his findings. We thank him for his half-century of pedagogy, for his carefully wrought, thoughtful critical contributions to our field, and we look forward to his upcoming work and wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

NOTES

1. I thank Alison Conway, Simon Stern, and John Richetti for helpful suggestions on this introduction. Martin Battestin, review of *Defoe and Spiritual Autobiography*, by George Starr, *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 71, no. 1 (1972): 140.

2. Maximillian E. Novak, review of *Defoe and Spiritual Autobiography*, by George Starr, *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 66, no. 1 (1967): 154; see also William H. Halewood, review of *Defoe and Spiritual Autobiography*, by George Starr, *Modern Philology* 66, no. 3 (1969): 274–78.

3. J. Donald Crowley, review of *Defoe and Spiritual Autobiography*, by George Starr, *Studies in the Novel* 4, no. 1 (1972): 124–28, esp. 128, 127.

4. Battestin, *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 142, 141; Crowley, *Studies in the Novel*, 128, 124.

5. G. A. Starr, "'Only a Boy': Notes on Sentimental Novels," *Genre* 10 (1977): 502.

6. Starr, "'Only a Boy,'" 513.

7. These articles are to be found in, respectively, *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 43 (2010): 435–54; *Modern Philology* 110 (2012): 1–22; *New Windows on a Woman's World: A Festschrift for Jocelyn Harris*, ed. Colin Gibson and Lisa Marr (Dunedin, NZ: University of Otago, 2006), 316–35; *Dreadful Visitations: Confronting Natural Catastrophe in the Age of Enlightenment*, ed. Alessa Johns (New York: Routledge, 1999), 31–48.

8. George Starr, "Sentimental Novels of the Later Eighteenth Century," in *The Columbia History of the British Novel*, ed. John Richetti (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994),

193, 194; see also George Starr, "Egalitarian and Elitist Implications of Sensibility," in *Egalité IX*, ed. Leon Ingber (Brussels: Etablissement E. Bruylant, 1984), 126–35; Ildiko Csengei, *Sympathy, Sensibility and the Literature of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 1.

9. Starr, "Sentimental Novels" 182, 186; Starr, "'Only a Boy': Notes on Sentimental Novels," *Genre* 10 (1977): 501–27; Alex Wetmore, *Men of Feeling in Eighteenth-Century Literature: Touching Fiction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 2, 8.

10. See, e.g., Paul Goring, *Rhetoric of Sensibility in Eighteenth-Century Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Evan Gottlieb, *Feeling British: Sympathy and National Identity in Scottish and English Writing 1707–1832* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2007); Suzanne Keen, *Empathy and the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Catherine Packham, *Eighteenth-Century Vitalism: Bodies, Culture, Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Jenefer Robinson, *Deeper than Reason: Emotion and Its Role in Literature, Music, and Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Blakey Vermeule, *Why Do We Care about Literary Characters?* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010).

Sympathetic Identification and Narrative Sociality