

FORMS OF

Feeling in Victorian Fiction

BARBARA HARDY

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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The Appropriate Form: An Essay on the Novel (*Athlone Press*)
The Moral Art of Dickens (*Athlone Press*)
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Feeling in Victorian Fiction

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*To friends and former colleagues
at Royal Holloway College
and especially
Patricia Ball, Peter Caracciolo, Tony Davenport,
Martin Dodsworth, Joan Grundy, Tony Ladd,
Katie Wales and Katharine Worth
with love*

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B.H.

A Note on References

The editions used in the present work for the purpose of quotation are as follows:

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INTRODUCTION

The novel generates forms of feeling, for writer, characters, and reader. As it creates, it inquires and analyses. Novelists often insist that the attempt to know our feelings is fraught with difficulty, not many sharing the assurance of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who begins *Les Confessions*, 'Je sens mon coeur, et je connois les hommes'. Proust, as intent as Rousseau on examining the heart, sees the strenuousness of rejecting emotional certainty, stereotype, and 'our most cherished illusions, ceasing to believe in the objectivity of our own elaborations'. We have to use intelligence, 'to distinguish, and with how much difficulty, the shape of that which we have felt' (*Remembrance of Things Past; Time Regained*, Chapter 3). The enterprise demands 'sentimental courage'.

D.H. Lawrence, in 'The Novel and the Feelings',¹ also admits the obscure shape of personal feeling, the inaudibility of 'the cries in our own forests of dark veins'. He shifts the Dantean darkness and search to our intimate but arcane interior life. Introspection may not clarify affective experience and, since Lawrence has little faith in science, he concludes that we have scarcely begun to 'educate ourselves in the feelings' - a usefully ambiguous phrase which brings out the possibility of knowledge and improvement. He asserts the value of looking 'in the real novels', where we may 'listen in' more easily than to our own heartbeats. It is not an exclusively twentieth-century proposal; it echoes John Stuart Mill's *Autobiography*, with its record of arid education, breakdown, and recovery. Mill claimed poetry as a means of affective education,² Lawrence proposed fiction.

Lawrence mocks one traditional form of emotional expression, the figure of personification. He sees that it can represent a dangerous taxonomy: 'We see love like a woolly lamb, or like a decorative panther, in Paris clothes, according as it is sacred or profane. We see

fear, like a shivering monkey. We see anger, like a bull with a ring through his nose, and greed, like a pig' (op. cit.). This traditional bestiary is dangerous and convenient, implying control, knowledge, system; Lawrence uses an arbitrary, but useful, distinction between emotion and feeling, meaning by emotion a feeling which has been classified, named, limited, and falsified. His satiric zoology has the ring of personal polemic, but refers to a faculty psychology as old as Sophocles and as new as Freud. It also derives from traditional rhetoric. The figures of personification, and its narrative extension, allegory, of course much older than the novel, occupy a central place in English fiction. As forms for feeling they may imply a systematized moral and psychological knowledge, like that distrusted by Lawrence, but even in Bunyan, where allegorical simplicity is a functional dogmatic form, it is occasionally amplified by other modes. In later novels, from Defoe and Fielding to George Eliot and Henry James, allegory either criticizes fixity and definiteness, or appears in combinations with other figures which qualify and transform its simplification.

This book deals with the attempt made by the major Victorian novelists to discover 'the shape of that which we have felt'. Their effort can be polarized in terms of the figure of personification, with its claim to definition and analysis, and its opposite, the figure of incapacity, or what Ernst Robert Curtius called 'the topos of inexpressibility' (*European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, translated by W.R. Trask, London, 1979). This is the device which in one stroke expresses powerful feeling, and the impossibility of expressing it: 'I cannot tell you how much', 'I cannot say what', 'Words fail me.' The figure is a cliché of everyday speech, an intensifier, and a denial of stereotype. It is as central in fiction as personification, which is also a cliché, an intensifier, and a satire of stereotype. The topos of inexpressibility is a key figure in Defoe, whose simple characters utter their strong and unutterable fears, longings, faiths, and joys, as it is in George Eliot, whose narrators and dramatized characters recognize the limits of emotional clarity and comprehension. It is present in the sophisticated dumbshow of *The Golden Bowl*, where Maggie Verver, for example, discovers and communicates feelings, not by words but by actions, as she goes to meet her husband at home, instead of her father's house. It appears in an elaborate, sometimes sentimental use, in the deadpan stoisms of Hemingway, and other modern masters of understatement.

Personification and the topos of inexpressibility are twin aspects of a

mimetic representation of emotional crisis, conflict, and continuity. They also form part of the self-conscious narrative medium which moves from particularity to generalization. Personification may figure conflict, dislocation and resolution in character, or an image offered in the narrator's discourse. The expression of incapacity can show the characters' frustration, rapture, and powerlessness, or the narrator's admission of doubt and difficulty. My brief sketch of pre-Victorian models from Bunyan to Sterne is a reminder that the eighteenth-century novel is more conspicuously self-analytic and reflexive than Victorian forms of fiction. The early novels show, in origin and resemblance, those non-realistic, even anti-mimetic, procedures which are prominent but sometimes neglected features of the so-called period of realism.

In Victorian as well as eighteenth-century fiction, the forms and languages which represent affective experience break with - and break - mimesis. The narrative medium in all the major Victorian novelists is reflexive, constantly diverting attention from verisimilitude to analysis. It is discursive, constantly drawing attention to its own fictitious form. Literary history is less tidy than we might wish: although the great eighteenth-century novelists are predominantly unrealistic, placing fictions in a comic or discursive medium, there is the exception of Richardson, as interested as any Victorian novelist in representing individual characters in depth and flux. Fielding, like Jane Austen, anticipates both the comic fragmentations of Thackeray and the tentative realism of Charlotte Brontë and George Eliot, who combine discursive analysis of feeling with the particularized representation of characters. The great Victorians are never simply mimetic. The formal collaboration of narrator and character, in Dickens, Thackeray, and George Eliot, makes for an open and overt analysis of feeling, moving beyond the limits of realistic representation to register an admission of fictional effort, author's awareness, and reader's response. When we examine the representation of feeling in fiction, we find the assertion of artifice placed in realistic character, and in reflexive narrative. Victorian novelists are fully aware of the response of the reader, and build the awareness into their medium. They see the response as created and structured by the text, and, less conventionally, as actively creating that text. What is apparent in Dickens, Thackeray, and George Eliot, is the manipulation of the readers' feelings, and a sense of the multiplicity of response. Thackeray and George Eliot, like Sterne and Diderot, admit the existence of a reader and set tests and exercises which reveal an awareness of this multiplicity. They can force

the reader to see the difference between responding to novels and responding to experience outside novels. Emma Bovary tries to make life as fresh, intense, renewable, and particularized as fiction, imposing its structures and languages on what Flaubert splendidly calls 'the eternal monotony of passion'; the reader ironically contrasts her loss of distance and Flaubert's expectation of a cold response to unfictionalized, but fictionalizing, emotions. Dickens, in *Bleak House*, makes the reader stop weeping for Jo; Thackeray, in *The Newcomes*, makes the reader stop longing to console Clive and Ethel; George Eliot, in *Middlemarch*, makes the reader stop sympathizing with Dorothea Brooke. As they do so, they insist on the manipulative power of art, and make us judge our response to fiction. The earnest Victorian realists, like the comic jugglers who precede and succeed them, experiment with sleights and shifts of emotional language.

The major Victorian novelists show anger, desire, jealousy, anguish, pity, terror, joy, and love. So of course do the minor and popular novelists, but through crude, manipulative and stereotyped forms which we call sentimental, pornographic, or gothic. Bad novels represent the affective experience falsely, through lies and mistakes, while good novels try to know and understand. In practice, however, we find profound inquiries into emotion and passion which lapse into sentimentality and sensationalism. But the Victorian novel, at its best, does not represent the passions simply or singly, bringing them on one at a time, but carefully shows the company they keep. The complexity of affective experience can be analysed even in forms which are lyrical and condensed, like the novella or short story. Twentieth-century novels, like *Jacob's Room* or *Mrs Dalloway*, tend to be more emotionally selective than Victorian narratives, but they still blur and blend emotions and passion. George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is centrally concerned with the conditioning and crippling of feeling, but dramatically illustrates its emotional theme by showing a movement from familiar norms to a 'world [where] there will be no emotions except fear, rage, triumph and self-abasement' (Part 3, Chapter 3). Samuel Beckett's *How It Is*, a novel of remarkable emotional reduction, pierces a muddy darkness to show nostalgic glimpses of joy and love, not to raise false faiths, but to keep suffering familiar, as well as strange.

These modern instances make a special thematic emphasis, in concentrated forms rather different from the typical comprehensive stretch of the Victorians. The few comparable examples in the last

century always combine the variety of emotional experience with images of distortion, like that of Esmond in *Henry Esmond*, Arthur Clennam in *Little Dorrit*, and Gwendolen Harleth in *Daniel Deronda*. These novels are thematically concentrated, but they are not exclusively concerned with single or simple passions. They show a restriction or obsession of feeling as deviant; the argument depends on a sense of norms. In *Daniel Deronda*, for instance, where there is an unusually specialized drama of fear or dread, the emphasis is placed on the movement and growth of feeling. George Eliot never concentrates on one passion, unlike contemporary scientists, from whom she clearly derives support and knowledge. Darwin's *Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872) deals with the emotions one at a time. Not so the novelist. Daniel tells Gwendolen to transform her dread, and the analytic allegory which presents his model, and Gwendolen's experience, shows emotional conflict and complexity.

The question of scientific influence on the art of affective representation is a difficult one. We know that Shakespeare is likely to have read Timothy Bright's *Treatise of Melancholy*, that George Eliot studied Darwin,³ that D.H. Lawrence was introduced to Freudian ideas by his wife; but Hamlet, Gwendolen, and Paul Morel are more complex, in their dynamism and particularity, than the classified illustrations of Bright, Darwin, and Freud. Emotional experience precedes scientific and artistic taxonomy, though the scientist and the artist provide forms and languages which influence and direct our feelings by affecting our ways of thinking about feelings. In *Middlemarch*, George Eliot cleverly makes Casaubon feel disappointed by his lack of rapture because his reading in poetic precedent invokes invidious comparisons. He is not stupid, however, in his consoling reflection that the poets probably exaggerate the force of masculine passion. Nor is he alone in being betrayed by poetry. Will Ladislaw is potent enough to beguile children, if not to please Henry James, who understandably thought that after Casaubon Dorothea needed a trooper, but he is persuaded by love-poets to underestimate the pains of courtly love. As George Eliot uses literature to investigate the emotional life, she prudently draws attention to the limits and dangers of literary knowledge, like Cervantes, Jane Austen, and Flaubert before her.

Novelists draw on personal as well as literary and scientific sources in their representation of feeling. Biographical evidence tempts us to speak of *The Newcomes* and *Henry Esmond* as products of Thackeray's unhappy affection for Jane Brookfield, though he himself spoke only of

the latter novel as uttering his 'Cut-throat melancholy', and melancholy marks all his work. When George Eliot in *Middlemarch* creates images of withered dying and infertile waste, we remember how Thornton Lewes was slowly dying as she wrote, and that it was a novel conceived in her middle age, with years of voluntary sterility behind and involuntary sterility ahead. But the sense of dreariness and self-negation was a common experience of her early womanhood, before she wrote novels; its imagery permeates her fiction from beginning to end.

George Eliot acknowledged an ancient and distinguished tradition when she told R.C. Jebb, the great Sophocles scholar, that Sophocles had influenced her 'In the delineation of the great primitive emotions',⁴ confirming his previous impressions. It is an emphasis which must be remembered when we attend to the context of scientific psychology and physiology with which she was well acquainted. Before twentieth-century scholars had drawn attention to Sophocles' primitivism, she felt it. Like Jebb, she must also have felt the combination of primitive emotion with what P.E. Easterling, in her edition of *The Trachiniae*, calls 'subtle and highly sophisticated' forms and language. When Jebb observed the influence he may have been directed by George Eliot's clear comparison of primitive passions on the Floss and in *Middlemarch* to those in Sophoclean Corinth and Thebes. Sophocles shows civilized people driven out of their minds and their societies: by pain and revenge in *Electra* and *Philoctetes*, by jealousy, desire, and pain in *The Trachiniae*, by anger and revenge in *Ajax*, and by dread and pity in the two Oedipus plays. The same passions ravage characters and institutions in the novels of George Eliot. (And also in the Brontës, Dickens, and Hardy.) Sophocles shows transformations of emotion, when the self-pity and guilt of Oedipus change into dignified self-defence and holy dread. George Eliot also shows passions interacting and developing. Maggie Tulliver's intelligence is overpowered by passion, and Tom's less susceptible response is registered with a measure of sympathy. Like *Electra* and *Antigone*, Dorothea has a less subversive and less passionate sister. Sometimes direct comparisons are made mock-heroically, as when the anger of Maggie and her father is amplified by a context of Greek drama, but the irony is deceptive, bracketing and not belittling. Sometimes the reference is cunningly tangential, as when Philip Wakem consoles the wounded hero Tom by telling him the story of *Philoctetes*, which has a deeper, more secret, reference to his own wound and bow.

An obvious technical link between George Eliot and Sophocles, in their representation of emotions, is their flexible narrative, which both intensifies and distances the impassioned conflicts and outcries of the *dramatis personae*. What is more profoundly important is their ritualizing of feeling. Sophocles takes us to the primitive origins of passion by rites and ceremonies which enlarge and deepen human experience, placing particulars of passion in the context of religious vision and belief. George Eliot generalizes emotional experience, through her anonymous but impassioned choric voices which make resonant allusion to other cultures and other literature.

All the great Victorian novelists perform something like this act of emotional deepening. Whether through analysis, allusion, imagery or direct address, they do more than dramatize emotional conflict and crisis. Movements from the particular to the general can create intensification; such acts of emotional enlargement are tests of imagination. They are, however, not always easy to achieve. Dickens and Hardy succeed in defamiliarizing the act of reading, and refamiliarizing the act of sympathy, as they show the deaths of Jo and Henchard. Dickens, however, falls into a stock request for a stock response when he shows the rituals of Nell's holy dying. Even the great artist has lapses, especially in this dangerous area. If I have emphasized success, it has not been because I have taken sentimental courage for granted.

NOTES

- 1 Lawrence's essay, reprinted in *Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D.H. Lawrence* (London, 1936), is a discussion of emotion, rather than of the representation of emotion in fiction. He mentions the subject frequently in many essays, and the famous defence of the novel in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (London, 1960) is relevant:

It is the way our sympathy flows and recoils that really determines our lives. And here lies the vast importance of the novel, properly handled. It can inform and lead into new places the flow of our sympathetic consciousness, and it can lead our sympathy away in recoil from things gone dead. Therefore, the novel, properly handled, can reveal the most secret places of life: for it is in the *passional* secret places of life, above all, that the tide of sensitive awareness needs to ebb and flow, cleansing and freshening. (Chapter 9)

- 2 Mill's 'Essay on Poetry' (1833) makes a provocative comparison between what he

judges to be the immature and extrovert genre of narrative, and the emotionally expressive and analytic one of poetry.

- 3 See Gillian Beer, *Darwin's Plots* (London, 1983), Chapter 7, for an excellent discussion of *Daniel Deronda* and Darwin.
- 4 See Gordon S. Haight, *George Eliot: A Biography* (Oxford, 1968), pp. 463-4, for a full account of the occasion.

1

FEELING IN FICTION

Some Pre-Victorian Models

The novel is an affective form. Not wholly so, or simply so. While it expresses, shapes, and analyses feelings and passions, it also expresses, shapes, and analyses ideas and arguments. In *Daniel Deronda* Gwendolen Harleth wonders at Daniel's caring for feelings as well as 'ideas, knowledge, wisdom, and all that', and he replies, 'But to care about them is a sort of affection' (Chapter 35). From Bunyan to Beckett, the novel delineates the feelings of fictitious characters, but in many different ways - mimetic, stylized, symbolic, analytic, and reflexive. Fiction draws on the conscious and unconscious affective life of its author, and seeks in various direct and indirect ways to move the reader. If the author loses control of his feelings, as Dickens and Lawrence sometimes do, the result is unbalanced or self-indulgent. If the author takes his eye off the subject of feeling, to solicit the reader boldly and crudely, the result is didactic, pornographic, or sentimental. At its best, the novel uses emotion to investigate emotion, in many forms.

The great English novelists move our feelings not through gross stimulus or the sentimental offer of blanks for us to fill, but through impassioned particulars. They have no simple or single commitment to psychological realism. Victorian novelists use complex and dynamic units of character, together with functional stylization, mixing the modes. The Victorian novel is less conspicuously reflexive than its eighteenth-century ancestors or its twentieth-century descendants; it does not offer illusions of a closed fictitious world of persons and events, but a characteristic multiplication of narrative, which has room for direct as well as indirect appeal, for emotionally charged generalizations as well as for particulars. It is hard to find flawless works; control

neighbours excess, profound analysis lapses into superficial fantasy. Novelists are particularly alive to the dangers of affective form: Sterne and Richardson, for instance, recognize and articulate problems of emotional distance and generality, even though both novelists are often uncontrolled and mawkish. The novel's formal mixture of dramatic, narrative, and discursive forms equips it to reflect on its own analysis and emotion. One of its great subjects has been the affective life.

John Stuart Mill's 'Essay on Poetry', written in 1833, before the rise of the Victorian novel, proposes poetry, not fiction, as the medium for the delineation of feeling. But fiction had already refined forms and conventions for the representation and analysis of feeling. Bunyan initiated the mixed medium, which is narrative and discursive, typological and particularized. Though his invented characters are types, and his invented action is an allegory, *A Pilgrim's Progress* already offers a variety of emotional experience. Its main mode of characterization is that of personified attributes, but the central figure, Christian, has emotional and moral complexity. Like Everyman and Faustus, he is an illustrative figure; he stands at the centre of an imagined population whose members relate to him as characters and personifications of his faculties and moods. In expressing emotion through realism and symbolism, Bunyan is a model for the novelists who were to succeed him. The tradition of allegory and personification which he inherits is as old as literature and drama; he uses it to create forms that were to be developed and made subtle by the Victorian novelists.

Bunyan can combine and relate different modes of character. Christian is a complex being, both faithful and wayward, Faithful is only faithful, Evangelist and Giant Despair are magnified images of vision and mood. The characters are set in an action which enlivens and substantiates illustrativeness with emotional detail and nuance. Such detail is most common in the complex characters, but even the simple ones are endowed with emotions and passions. The allegorical landscape and journey, too, express and generalize the feelings of despair, depression, inertia, sloth, fear, rest and joys. The representation works through scenes and objects, as well as people. Just as Spenser - another model for the mixed mode of representing emotion - uses emblems, personifications, and allegories of action and event which are warmed and enlivened by feelings, so Bunyan develops a form which is clearly schematic, yet affectively particularized. At the beginning of *A Pilgrim's Progress*, the author's verse 'Apology' acknowledges the

devious techniques of fictional persuasion. It promises that the reader shall be 'diverted from melancholy', 'be pleasant', 'laugh and weep together', 'read' himself, 'read thou know'st not what,' and lay 'heart and head together'. The formula applies to many succeeding entertainments and persuasions in the genre of prose fiction. Within the convoluted structure of the story, the dreamer imagines the allegory and its persons. These are set in motion to behave as type determines, but with some measure of naturalism; the characters are endowed with emotions and passions, which may be demonstrated and explicated, as Passion and Patience are. Moral analysis and dramatic versatility go hand in hand. Bunyan creates an emotional continuity which becomes the norm in most later prose fiction. *A Pilgrim's Progress* begins with passion, as Christian asks his great agonized question, 'What shall I do?' It will be echoed passionately, especially by women, in the Victorian novel. Christian's distress is described, uttered, and set in active relationship with the feelings of other characters:

and as he read, he wept and trembled: and not being able longer to contain, he brake out with a lamentable cry; saying, *What shall I do?*

In this plight therefore he went home, and refrained himself as long as he could, that his Wife and Children should not perceive his distress; but he could not be silent long, because that his trouble increased: wherefore at length he brake his mind to his Wife and Children; and thus he began to talk to them, *O my dear Wife, said he, and you the Children of my bowels, I your dear friend am in my self undone, by reason of a burden that lieth hard upon me: moreover, I am for certain informed, that this our City will be burned with fire from Heaven, in which fearful overthrow, both my self, with thee, my Wife, and you my sweet babes, shall miserably come to ruine; except (the which, yet I see not) some way of escape can be found, whereby we may be delivered.* At this his Relations they were sore amazed; not for that they believed, that what he said to them was true, but because they thought, that some frenzy distemper had got into his head: therefore, it drawing towards night, and they hoping that sleep might settle his brains, with all hast they got him to bed; but the night was as troublesome to him as the day: wherefore instead of sleeping, he spent it in sighs and tears. So when the morning was come, they would know how he did; and he told them worse and worse. He also set to talking to them again, but they began to be hardened. They also thought to drive away his distemper by harsh and surly carriages to him: Sometimes they would deride, sometimes they would chide, and sometimes they would quite neglect him: wherefore he began to retire himself to his Chamber to pray for, and pity them; and also to condole his own misery.

Passion sets the action in motion, and animates the whole story. Though the characters are personifications, they are roused and activated in a fluent and unpredictable track of feeling. Experiences develop, change, stimulate and generate fresh emotions. Even undeveloping types like Evangelist respond with intensity. Evangelist shows 'a severe and dreadful countenance' when Christian is diverted from the Strait Gate by Mr Worldly Wiseman, but after delivering a homily, 'Evangelist, after he had kissed him, gave him one smile'. Forgiveness is there, physical and warm. When Faithful tells Christian about his meeting with Shame (aptly and not predictably 'bold-faced'), he says that Shame fetched up the blood in his face. In the stinking prison of Giant Despair, Hopeful argues (hopefully) against suicide, but a touch of nature makes him feel 'sad and doleful', almost hopeless. The lesson is animated by particularities of emotion. The allegory moves about, leaving its moorings from time to time.

This tradition is the inheritance of the novelists. Daniel Defoe's voyages, storms, shipwrecks and desert island are allegorical, and his *Robinson Crusoe* is a more complicated Christian. The emotional action of the novel shows the mark of Bunyan's personifications, though Defoe's story projects an elaborate emotional continuity, linking external action with internal, and retarding events to take us into the mind and heart of the character. It is both mind and heart we see, for Defoe not only creates intense emotional episodes, but draws attention to the complex nature of emotional experience. One of his favourite figures for representing strong feeling is the topos of inexpressibility:

It is impossible to express here the Flutterings of my very Heart, when I look'd over these Letters, and especially when I found all my Wealth about me; for as the *Brasil* Ships come all in Fleets, the same Ships which brought my Letters, brought my Goods; and the Effects were safe in the River before the Letters came to my Hand. In a Word, I turned pale, and grew sick; and had not the old Man run and fetch'd me a Cordial, I believe the sudden Surprise of Joy had overset nature, and I had Dy'd upon the Spot. (Vol. 2)

This characteristic episode marks cause and effect: *Robinson Crusoe* is overcome by wealth and goods. It is concerned with physical response, using the image 'Flutterings', a favourite of Defoe's, to blend emotion with sensation and to suggest feeling which cannot be named.

The explicit 'it is impossible to express' articulates intensity of experience and the naivety of character. Other instances are more complex:

I cannot explain by any possible Energy of Words what a strange longing or hankering of Desires I felt in my Soul upon this Sight; breaking out sometimes thus: O that there had been but one or two; nay, or but one Soul sav'd out of this Ship, to have escap'd to me, that I might but have had one Companion, one Fellow-Creature to have spoken to me, and to have convers'd with! In all the Time of my solitary Life, I never felt so earnest, so strong a Desire after the Society of my Fellow-Creatures, or so deep a Regret at the want of it.

There are some secret moving Springs in the Affections, which when they are set a going by some Object in view, or be it some Object, though not in view, yet rendred present to the Mind by the Power of Imagination, that Motion carries out the Soul by its Impetuosity to such violent eager embracings of the Object, that the Absence of it is insupportable.

Such were these earnest Wishing, That but one man had been sav'd! *O that it had been but One!* I believe I repeated the words, *O that it had been but One!* a thousand Times; and the Desires were so mov'd by it, that when I spoke the Words, my Hands would clinch together, and my Fingers press the Palms of my Hands, that if I had had any soft Thing in my hand, it would have crusht it involuntarily; and my Teeth in my head wou'd strike together, and set against one another so strong, that for some time I could not part them again.

Let the Naturalists explain these Things, and the Reason and Manner of them; all I can say to them is, to describe the Fact, which was even surprising to me when I found it; though I knew not from what it should proceed; it was doubtless the effect of ardent Wishes, and of strong Ideas form'd in my Mind, realizing the Comfort which the Conversation of one of my Fellow-Christians would have been to me. (Vol. 1)

The use of two tenses, the doubling of expressive language, the quoted apostrophes from the past, and the articulation of inexpressibility, marked by the epithet 'strange', denote the strength and mysteriousness of emotion and perhaps also its supernatural prompting. The observation about energy of language underlines the figures of exclamation and repetition; such generalization marks the religious interpretation typical of this Providence novel, but draws attention to the need for a style appropriate to 'violent embracings of the object'. There is an acute observation about language as cause, as well as effect,

of feeling, 'the Desires were so mov'd'. Defoe blends his expression of feeling with an analysis alive to the relation between feeling and language, and to the generative power of language. The accompanying details about gesture and body-language speak for themselves.

In the famous incident where Robinson Crusoe finds the single footprint in the sand, the novelist uses an objective detail which excites through its simplicity and oddity. Both character and reader are 'exceedingly surprised':

It happen'd one Day about Noon going towards my boat, I was exceedingly surpriz'd with the Print of a Man's naked Foot on the Shore, which was very plain to be seen in the Sand. I stood like one Thunder-struck, or as if I had seen an Apparition; I listen'd, I look'd round me, I could hear nothing, nor see any Thing; I went up to a rising Ground to look farther; I went up the Shore and down the Shore, but it was all one, I could see no other Impression but that one. I went to it again to see if there were any more, and to observe if it might not be my Fancy; but there was no Room for that for there was exactly the very Print of a Foot, Toes, Heel, and every Part of a Foot; how it came thither I knew not, nor could in the least imagine. But after innumerable fluttering Thoughts, like a Man perfectly confus'd and out of my self, I came Home to my Fortification, not feeling, as we say, the Ground I went on, but terrify'd to the last Degree, looking behind me at every two or three Steps, mistaking every Bush and Tree, and fancying every Stump at a Distance to be a Man; nor is it possible to describe how many various Shapes affrighted Imagination represented Things to me in, how many wild ideas were found every Moment in my Fancy, and what strange unaccountable Whimsies came into my thoughts by the way. (Vol. 1)

The image of fluttering is intensified by 'innumerable', and the detail, 'like a Man perfectly confus'd and out of my self', fixes the sense of strangeness through a naive and careful comparison. The movements of Robinson's puzzled search also intensify feeling through repetition. There is conscious generalization about words, 'not feeling, as we say, the Ground I went on', and the excitement of discovery is blended with a conscious record of imagination and its creative fantasies, which are strange, wild, and fearful, like their cause. Once again, what seems at first sight a naive and bewildered effort of language is complex and analytic, characteristic of the sustained dramatization of fear, surprise, joy, sadness, and longing which generates inner and outer action in *Robinson Crusoe*.

Richardson's *Clarissa* is one of the great novels of passion. It is subtle when compared with *Pamela*, whose appeal is both pornographic and loftily moral, though occasionally showing an analytic depth when Pamela is surprised by love. It is complex compared with *Sir Charles Grandison*, which evades all problems of feeling in its treatment of Charles's love for Harriet and Clementina, and falls into monotonous raptures of high-toned, didactic congratulation. But in *Clarissa* there is a depth and continuity in Richardson's inspection of passion, sustained over the longest narrative stretch in English fiction. He finds a form for episodes of strong feeling, and for development and growth.

Lovelace abuses passion. He constantly refers to the oscillation of 'REVENGE' and 'LOVE', and the upper case marks his emotional simplification and confidence. He stereotypes the passions, in a style both crude and corrupt. His poetic diction ('my charmer' and 'frostpiece') and his selected quotations from the poets are both over-excited and conventional:

But couldst thou have believed that I, who think it possible for me to favour as much as I can be favoured; that I, who for this charming creature think of foregoing the *life of honour* for the *life of shackles*; could adopt those over-tender lines of Otway?

I check myself, and leaving the three first Lines of the following of Dryden to the family of the whiners, find the workings of the passion in my stormy soul better expressed by the three last:

*Love various minds does variously inspire:
He stirs in gentle natures gentle fire;
Like that of incense on the altar laid.
But raging flames tempestuous souls invade:
A fire, which ev'ry windy passion blows;
With Pride it mounts, and with Revenge it glows.*

And with REVENGE it shall glow! - For, dost thou think, that if it were not from the hope, that this stupid family are all combined to do my work for me, I would bear their insults? - Is it possible to imagine that I would be braved as I am braved, threatened as I am threatened, by those who are afraid to see me; and by this brutal Brother too, to whom I gave a life (A life, indeed, not worth my taking!); had I not a greater pride in knowing, that by means of his very Spy upon me, I am playing him off as I please; cooling or inflaming his violent passions as may best suit my purposes. (Vol. 1, Letter 31)

In the first three lines, which Lovelace significantly rejects, Dryden refers to gentle loving, and to the variousness of love, subjects close to Richardson's heart and far from Lovelace's. (Lovelace rapes, and is blind to complexities of love.) He talks about playing on the brother's passions and this is his special talent. He also plays on Clarissa's feelings, even though he grossly simplifies them. In Letter 35 (Vol. 1.) he writes to Belford that he will assume humility 'To dissipate her fears, and engage her reliance upon my honour'. The next letter (36), from Clarissa to Anna, begins with fear: 'I have been frightened out of my wits - Still am in a manner out of breath'. She describes her fear at an unexpected appearance of Lovelace, then tells how 'his respectful behaviour soon dissipated these fears'. Her words are a frightening echo of his, and confirm his success.

His simplifications trap her complexities. He did not notice Dryden's complex analysis. However, Clarissa is fully alive to the variety of emotion. Her analysis, like Crusoe's, tries to understand and admits the difficulty of understanding. Her heart-searchings are serious and urgent investigations, matters of life and death. *Clarissa* is the first novel of heart-searching in English: its epistolary form makes a passionate analysis of the passions. Crusoe looked back to relive past emotion, but Clarissa speaks in and for the present. Her questioning is not solitary, but collaborative, worked out in the long correspondence with her bosom-friend, Anna Howe. The conventional question-and-answer of personal letter-writing creates a new form for feeling. Clarissa's niceties are juxtaposed with Lovelace's stereotypes, but also contrasted with Anna's lively probing. Anna's letters extend and contemplate Clarissa's meditation, provoking and encouraging renewals and revisions. Clarissa sets the pattern for many later heroines who mistake their feelings, and who are misled or corrupted by the dominant masculine language of feeling. Clarissa's errors are different from those of Emma, Emma Bovary, Maggie Tulliver, and Eustacia Vye; she is not limited, as they are, by fantasy, literature, and ignorance. Hers is the error of fine intelligence, which plays persistently and scrupulously on experience; she feels and narrates with immediacy. Richardson locates error in the experience of a woman capable of understanding herself, but arriving at understanding slowly and painfully. We see her step-by-step pondering, as she writes from sequestration. Her imprisonment, first by family and then by seducer, is an environment from which the only release is language, though language constricted, thwarted, and almost destroyed. The

desperate woman, shut in by patriarchy, is intent on making out the meanings of the emotional life. At first she is helped by Anna, a sister-victim also vigorously aware of the language of feeling. Anna picks up, considers, and concentrates Clarissa's words, such as the 'throbs and glows' of agitation, and the phrase 'a conditional sort of liking' which crystallizes the subject of many of the letters. 'Nothing less than the knowledge of the inmost recesses of your heart', writes Anna in Letter 37 (Vol. 1), 'can satisfy my Love and my Friendship.' Clarissa probes those recesses, which cannot simply be plumbed for her friend, since they are not wholly accessible even to herself. But as her name tells us, she is clear and candid as she reflects on what she feels.

In Letter 40 (Vol. 1) she writes both from a sense of the fluidity of emotion, and from a sense of the conventional language which denies such fluidity: 'I never was in *Love* as it is called; and whether This be *it*, or not, I must submit to *you*.' They discuss the phrase 'conditional liking', which Anna 'humorously raillies' but takes seriously. Clarissa conducts her analysis by imaginatively recapitulating and revising her own and Anna's words, inventing dialogue in order to elucidate and question:

From these considerations; from these *over-balances*; it was, that I said in a former, that I would not be in *Love* with this man for the world: And it was going further than prudence would warrant, when I was for compounding with you, by the words *conditional liking*; which you so humorously railly.

Well but, methinks you say, what is all this to the purpose? This is still but reasoning: But, if you *are* in *Love*, you *are*: And *Love*, like the vapours, is the deeper rooted for having no sufficient cause assignable for its hold. And so you call upon me again, to have no reserves, and so forth.

Why then, my dear, if you will have it, I think, that, with all his preponderating faults, I like him better than I ever thought I should like him; and, those faults considered, better perhaps than I *ought* to like him. And I believe, it is possible for the persecution I labour under, to induce me to like him still more - Especially while I can recollect to his advantage our last Interview, and as every day produces stronger instances of *tyranny*, I will call it, on the other side. - In a word, I will frankly own (since you cannot think anything I say too explicit) that were he *now* but a moral man, I would prefer him to all the men I ever saw.

So that This is but *conditional liking* still, you'll say. - Nor, I hope, is it more. I never was in *Love* as it is called; and whether This be *it*, or not, I must submit to *you*. But will venture to think it, if it be, no such *mighty* monarch, no such unconquerable power, as I have heard it represented; and it must have

met with greater encouragement than I think I have given it, to be so *absolutely* unconquerable - Since I am persuaded that I could yet, without a *throb*, most willingly give up the *one* man to get rid of the *other*. (Vol. 1, Letter 40)

Uncertainties, scruples, and development are products of a familiar, intimate, and impersonalizing discourse. It questions, admits, and sets the experience of feeling against tradition, knowledge and usage. Its frequent italics are scrupulous and precise, not simply emphatic. Clarissa refuses to use the conventional hyperboles and personifications of Lovelace, saying that if what she feels is what is called love, it is 'no such *mighty* monarch, no such unconquerable power, as I have heard it represented'. After the rape, when letter-writing and self-scrutiny have been broken, like her virginity, the forms of feeling become agitated and fragmented; the analytic mode is ruptured, rationality disturbed, continuity undermined, and straight speaking replaced by the innuendo of metaphor and allegory. Language is polluted, losing its openness and power to examine passion.

Clarissa's letters are suspended during Lovelace's hour-by-hour narration of the day's events leading to the rape (Vol. 3, Letter 28). Her topos of inexpressibility, in a torn letter, is a travesty of her normally earnest language of rational effort. She whose periodic style was elegant and controlled writes in exclamations, repetitions, and disjointed words like 'dreadful' and 'vile, vile', and fails to narrate events or emotions:

I sat down to say a great deal - My heart was full - I did not know what to say first - And thought, and grief, and confusion, and (O my poor head!) I cannot tell what - And thought, and grief, and confusion, came crowding so thick upon me; *one* would be first, *another* would be first, *all* would be first; so I can write nothing at all. (Vol. 5, Letter 36)

The failure to tell is articulated as a failure to order, to discriminate, to make priorities, to take those formal decisions she has formerly managed so logically and sensitively. (At the beginning of the novel her style is ironically contrasted with the uneducated or falsely educated styles of masculine oppressors, including that of her university-educated brother.) The figures of metaphor and personification which she uses after the rape are new and uncharacteristic. They begin, here, to figure incoherence. In Paper 3 she re-invents a beast

fable in which she hesitates between a choice of figure: 'Lion, or a Bear, I forget which - But a Bear, or a Tyger, I believe, it was.' In Paper 7, where there is a partial return to the ordering of periodic style, she shifts between images of caterpillar, moth, and canker-worm. Paper 10 lapses into poetry, and is textually disordered; it has typographical confusions of format, its verses are fragmentarily disposed in the margins, and it adopts Lovelace's habit of pastiche and collage. What is called her 'divided Soul' is expressed through disjunctions of form and style. The communications are called 'Papers', in a significant refusal to call such scraps letters. There is a refusal to order the fragments, on the part of author and character. Before transcribing the papers, Lovelace mentions what he receives first but the reader sees last: an 'odd letter', which he is not immediately capable of copying, 'tis so extravagant'. It bears the marks of stylistic confusion, syntactical repetition, interruption, breaks, and colloquialism like 'good, now, Lovelace'. There are suggestive, clandestine metaphors of locks and keys: 'But when all my doors are fast, and nothing but the key-hole open, and the key of late put into that, to be where you were, in a manner without opening any of them'. Incoherence is a vehicle for agitation and an exact image for rape and loss of self-possession. Towards the end of the letter there is a space, marking what Clarissa calls 'a little interval' which 'seems' to have been lent her, after which she speaks of an act of partial reperusal. As usual in the novel, every physical detail of these letters is expressive; some of the papers are torn, and the long letter has its paper blistered and ink blurred by 'the tears even of the harden'd transcriber'.

A little later in Letter 36, which encloses these fragments, Lovelace discusses her failure to conform to his expectations of passionate response: 'My Charmer has no passions; that is to say, none of the passions that I want her to have.' The significant discrimination of 'that is to say' marks his apprehension of failure, loss of assurance, and an awareness of the arbitrary and authoritarian take-over of language. In Letter 38 his discomfiture is expressed in terms of expectation and frustration. He anticipates a convenient and conventional response, of the kind he has known, which he could meet with a matched violence, but what he meets is a recovered composure of feeling. He reads it correctly as inexpressible grief, which defeats him, putting his emotions and style in disorder:

As I told thee, I had prepared myself for high passions, raving, flying, tearing execration: These transient violences, the workings of sudden grief, and shame, and vengeance, would have set us upon a par with each other, and quitted scores. These have I been accustomed to; and, as nothing violent is lasting, with these I could have wished to encounter. But such a majestic composure - Seeking me - whom yet, it is plain, by her attempt to get away, she would have avoided seeing - no Lucretia-like vengeance upon herself in her thought - Yet swallowed up, her whole mind swallowed up, as I may say, by a grief so heavy, as, in her own words, to be beyond the power of speech to express - and to be able, discomposed as she was, to the very morning, to put such a home-question to me, as if she had penetrated my future view - how could I avoid looking like a fool, and answering, as before, in broken sentences, and confusion?

What - What-a - What has been done - I, I, I - cannot but say - Must own - Must confess - Hem - Hem—Is not right - Is not what should have been - But-a - But - But - I am truly - truly - sorry for it - Upon my soul I am - And - And - will do all - do everything - Do what - What-ever is incumbent upon me - all that you - that you - that you shall require, to make you amends! (Vol. 5, Letter 38)

Clarissa cannot always defeat his style with hers; the language of his passion invades and contaminates hers. In the final episodes of slow dying, she resorts to the equivocal allegory of her father's houses, excused by Belford as innocent artifice, and attacked by Lovelace as a lie. Clarissa feels it to be a significant failure of candour, and her judgement is a sign of sincerity and of a scrupulous self-examination. Before the rape, she criticizes her own self-scrutiny, looking back to the ignorance and pride of the discussion with Anna, to blame her 'own inclination'. What Clarissa sees, as Richardson insists, is not only the simplifications of Lovelace, but the limits of her own rational analysis of feeling. It was less composed and detached than it seemed. Character and author share an awareness of the difficulty of controlling passion by well-intentioned intelligence. The novel voices a suspicion of emotional language, perhaps most clearly articulated in feminist terms in Vol. 8, Letter 49, where Anna attacks the affective language of men. Anticipating Mary Wollstonecraft's rejection of a periodic style and flowering diction in *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), Anna attacks many aspects of men's language, including a style 'spangled' with metaphor, a sublime 'lying in words and not in sentiment' whose authors 'sit . . . fully satisfied with their own performances, and call them MASCULINE'. Clarissa's own periodic style is conventionally

masculine, but here praised as a correlative for the 'discriminating faculty', and earlier attacked by her sister Arabella as 'affected' (Vol. 4, Letter 58). It represents an educated ideal which the heroine succeeds in reaching. Exact punctuation and orthography are defended by Clarissa (as quoted in Anna's analytic letter) as 'a proof that a woman understood the derivation as well as sense of the words she used', and the pen is said to be 'next to the Needle, of all employments, the most proper, and best adapted to their genius's'. The woman's genius is explicated in terms of affective superiority: 'The gentleness of their minds, the delicacy of their sentiments (improved by the manner of their education) and the liveliness of their imaginations.' The defence is conventional and limited, but the novel's differentiations and developments are not. Clarissa is not praised for gentleness and delicacy, but for order, candour, and the ability to discriminate her own defects.

Richardson's suspicion of allegory is not shared by Fielding, who uses it as a dominant comic figure. In Book 4, Chapter 12 of *Tom Jones*, he describes Sophia's love for Tom through personification, 'a secret Affection for Mr Jones had insensibly stolen into the Bosom of this young Lady', where it had 'grown to a pretty great Height before she herself had discovered it'. This gives way to a medical metaphor, 'When she first began to perceive its Symptoms', which develops into psychological analysis in 'the Sensations were so sweet and pleasing, that she had not Resolution sufficient to check or repel them; and thus she went on cherishing a Passion of which she never once considered the Consequences'. Fielding continues the metaphor of disease, in comic anecdote and generalization which deflect us from the passions of the central characters:

The Diseases of the Mind do in almost every Particular imitate those of the Body. For which Reason, we hope, That learned Faculty, for whom we have so profound a Respect, will pardon us the violent Hands we have been necessitated to lay on several Words and Phrases, which of Right belong to them, and without which our Descriptions must have been often unintelligible.

Now there is no one Circumstance in which the Distempers of the Mind bear a more exact Analogy to those which are called Bodily, than that Aptness which both have to a Relapse. This is plain, in the violent Diseases of Ambition and Avarice. I have known Ambition, when cured at Court by frequent Disappointments, (which are the only Physic for it) to break out again in a Contest for Foreman of the Grand Jury at an Assizes; and have

heard of a Man who had so far conquered Avarice, as to give away many a Sixpence, that comforted himself, at last, on his Death-bed, by making a crafty and advantageous Bargain concerning his ensuing Funeral, with an Undertaker who had married his only Child. (Book 4, Chapter 12)

After this mock-apology, with its serious awareness of metaphor, we return to Sophia, in a new metaphor: 'That Passion which had formerly been so exquisitely delicious, became now a Scorpion in her Bosom.' This preserves a grotesque continuity with the earlier images through the common indeterminacy of metaphor and personification in 'stealing into and growing'. The 'secret affection' is a technical but punning term linking the verbal acts of metaphor. We return to the medical image, by a neat transition from the scorpion to implied malady:

She resisted it, therefore, with her utmost Force, and summoned every Argument her Reason (which was surprizingly strong for her Age) could suggest, to subdue and expel it. In this she so far succeeded, that she began to hope from Time and Absence a perfect Cure. (Ibid.)

This mixed mode is characteristic of Fielding's comic representation of the passions. His chapter titles speak of them with ironic irreverence, as in Book 5, Chapter 2, which is advertised as including 'some fine Touches of the Passion of Love, scarce visible to the naked Eye', a joke about the passions and the language of passion, which plays on the convenient ambiguity of 'fine Touches'. As Sophia plays the harpsichord to the convalescent Tom, the narrator observes, 'Love may again be likened to a Disease in this, that when it is denied a Vent in one Part, it will certainly break out in another' (Book 5, Chapter 2). Tom becomes alive to the disturbance 'in the tender Bosom of *Sophia*', insight cures his diffidence, effects 'a Perturbation in his Mind' and reveals that 'he had a much stronger Passion for her than he himself was acquainted with' (Ibid.). The analysis is serious and comic; the very continuity of metaphor is punctuated by self-conscious references and makes a cool commentary. There is discontinuity as well as continuity, as Fielding mixes the medical with the legal metaphor, in mocking collisions of language. Tom's growing passion for Sophia is distracted by compassion for Molly Seagrim: 'his own Heart would not suffer him to destroy a human Creature who, he thought, loved him, and had to

that Love sacrificed her Innocence. His own good Heart pleaded her Cause; not as a cold venal Advocate . . .' (Book 5, Chapter 3). Fielding's comic analysis insists on the complexity of the passions, as 'His own good Heart' artfully calls in the assistance of another passion, and desire comes to compassion's help. The observations of affective activity, through logic and fancy, are sardonically comic. Fielding likes to hold the passions at an ironic distance, while scrupulously insisting on their powers. His comic refusal to simplify is made in the interests of psychological and moral accuracy. It is a refusal to simplify or flatter. Sophia's filial love is seen as pious and self-sacrificing, and piety and sacrifice are coolly inspected:

The Idea, therefore, of the immense Happiness she should convey to her Father by her Consent to this Match, made a strong Impression on her Mind. Again, the extreme Piety of such an Act of Obedience, worked very forcibly, as she had a very deep Sense of Religion. Lastly, when she reflected how much she herself was to suffer, being indeed to become little less than a Sacrifice, or a Martyr, to filial Love and Duty, she felt an agreeable Tickling in a certain little Passion, which tho' it bears no immediate Affinity either to Religion or Virtue, is often so kind as to lend great Assistance in executing the Purposes of both.

Sophia was charmed with the Contemplation of so heroic an Action, and began to compliment herself with much premature Flattery, when *Cupid*, who lay hid in her Muff, suddenly crept out, and like *Punchinello* in a Puppet-shew, kicked all out before him. (Book 7, Chapter 9)

Here the action of personification is aptly complicated. The comic action of *Cupid* cunningly judges Sophia's self-love and mimes the action of emotional surprise. At times the personification is subdued, suggested through metaphor rather than acted out in full-scale action, as in Book 6, Chapter 12, when the debate between reason and passion which runs through the novel is described through comic gesture and straightforward inventory: 'he presently fell into the most violent Agonies, tearing his Hair from his Head, and using other Actions which generally accompany Fits of Madness, Rage, and Despair.' Tom then cools down to reason with his passion:

And now the great Doubt was how to act with regard to *Sophia*. The Thoughts of leaving her almost rent his Heart asunder; but the Consideration of reducing her to Ruin and Beggary still racked him, if possible, more; and if the violent Desire of possessing her Person could have induced him to