

Provision for Love: Mundane Goods and Familial Affection in Eighteenth-Century England

การจัดเตรียมให้เพราะรัก: ข้าวของในชีวิตประจำวันและความรักในครอบครัว ในอังกฤษสมัยคริสต์ศตวรรษที่ 18

Tul Israngura Na Ayudhya

ตุลย์ อิศรางกูร ณ อยุธยา

Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand

Nisarath Kunthapoke*

นิสารัตน์ ชันธโกท

Faculty of Social Sciences, Kasetsart University, Thailand

Corresponding author*

e-mail: nisarath.kun@ku.th

Received 13-05-2025

Revised 04-06-2025

Accepted 10-06-2025

Doi: 10.69598/artssu.2025.5144.

How to Cite:

Israngura Na Ayudhya, T. & Kunthapoke, N. (2025). Provision for Love: Mundane Goods and Familial Affection in Eighteenth-Century England. *Journal of Arts and Thai Studies*, 47(2), E5144 (1-23).

Keywords: family relations, familial love, mundane objects, eighteenth-century English society

คำสำคัญ:

ความสัมพันธ์ในครอบครัว, ความรักในครอบครัว, ข้าวของเครื่องใช้ในชีวิตประจำวัน, สังคมอังกฤษในคริสต์ศตวรรษที่ 18

Abstract

Background and Objectives: The provision of household consumer goods has long been a subject of study among the historians of family and gender. Previous research has focused on luxurious goods to show consumers' social status; however, research on spending practices and everyday commodities remains scarce, and studies that explore their impact on family relationships are even more limited. This research article studies the men and women in eighteenth-century English society in the context of familial relationships and explores the meanings of familial love as reflected in the activity of purchasing goods in daily life. Thus, activities, not objects, are the main focus of this article. This article aims to consider what every day purchasing activities meant to the people in eighteenth-century England and how such activities affected familial relationships. This article shows the attitudes of the English people in that period towards familial relationships and demonstrates the meaning and key characteristics of familial love.

Methods: This article considers purchasing activities as a cultural symbolic form, which the eighteenth-century English people used to convey attitudes towards family relationships. It studies the meanings of familial love appearing in interpersonal relationships. This research article studies the personal letters of four eighteenth-century English families garnered from provincial archives in the United Kingdom, and these are original handwritten letters that have not yet been officially published. These letters offer useful information to understand the family relationships in each family studied, enabling us to understand the meaning and the importance of everyday purchasing activities to their familial relationships in a clear manner.

Results: This article suggests that mundane daily activities are worth studying. Looking at how the eighteenth-century English families provided their family members with everyday household items, we cannot deny that feeding, clothing and giving gifts were conducted with affective emotions. Shopping for family members proved to be significant moments for fostering family bonds. Likewise, gift-giving played a more active role in expressing familial love, concern, and care, rather than an expression of an informal support. It was not an object, but an everyday activity which was important to understanding the meaning of familial love. Goods acquisition in daily life and the quality of attentiveness were the important factors that nurtured familial relationships and enabled intimacy. This article proposes that familial love meant attentiveness and devotion to family members. As shown in the article, family members were attentive to one another with an emphasis on expressing those emotions in family letters.

Application of this study: This article demonstrates that mundane daily activities are issues worthy of consideration, especially when historians consider the people's life experiences documented in personal letters. Such a reading method can pave a new way for studying mundane, everyday activities, and this approach enables historians to gain a more comprehensive understanding of people's lives in the past. It can be useful for studying the history of everyday life in Thai Studies as well, due to the limited amount of research conducted in this area.

Conclusions: In the eighteenth century, the provision of everyday household items for family members played a vital role in maintaining and strengthening familial bonds. Everyday activities that appeared mundane may have a far greater impact on family relationships than previously thought.

บทคัดย่อ

ที่มาและวัตถุประสงค์: การจัดหาสินค้าอุปโภคบริโภคภายในครัวเรือนเป็นหัวข้อศึกษาวิจัยของนักประวัติศาสตร์ครอบครัวและเพศสภาพมาอย่างยาวนาน งานวิจัยก่อนหน้าให้ความสำคัญกับการศึกษาสินค้าฟุ่มเฟือยเพื่อแสดงสถานภาพทางสังคมของผู้บริโภคเป็นหลัก อย่างไรก็ตาม ยังคงมีงานศึกษาเกี่ยวกับกิจกรรมการจับจ่ายใช้สอยและสินค้าในชีวิตประจำวันอยู่น้อยมาก และงานศึกษาเกี่ยวกับผลกระทบของกิจกรรมดังกล่าวต่อความสัมพันธ์ของคนในครอบครัว

ยังมีน้อยมากขึ้นไปอีก บทความวิจัยนี้ศึกษาหญิงและชายในสังคมอังกฤษสมัยคริสต์ศตวรรษที่ 18 ในบริบทความสัมพันธ์ภายในครอบครัว รวมถึงศึกษาความหมายของความรักในครอบครัวดังที่ปรากฏในกิจกรรมการซื้อหาสินค้าในชีวิตประจำวัน ดังนั้นกิจกรรมนี้จึงถูกจัดเป็นความสนใจหลักของบทความนี้ บทความนี้มุ่งพิจารณาว่ากิจกรรมการซื้อหาสินค้าในชีวิตประจำวันมีความหมายอย่างไรต่อคนอังกฤษสมัยคริสต์ศตวรรษที่ 18 และกิจกรรมดังกล่าวส่งผลอย่างไรต่อความสัมพันธ์ของคนในครอบครัว บทความนี้แสดงให้เห็นทัศนคติของคนอังกฤษในสมัยดังกล่าวที่มีต่อความสัมพันธ์ในครอบครัว และแสดงให้เห็นความหมายและลักษณะสำคัญของความรักในครอบครัว

วิธีการศึกษา: บทความนี้พิจารณากิจกรรมการจับจ่ายใช้สอยในฐานะรูปแบบสัญลักษณ์ทางวัฒนธรรมซึ่งคนอังกฤษในสมัยคริสต์ศตวรรษที่ 18 ใช้สื่อสารทัศนคติด้านความสัมพันธ์กับคนในครอบครัว บทความนี้ศึกษาความหมายของความรักในครอบครัวดังที่ปรากฏในความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างบุคคล บทความวิจัยนี้ศึกษาจดหมายส่วนบุคคลของครอบครัวอังกฤษในช่วงระยะเวลาดังกล่าวจำนวน 4 ครอบครัว ซึ่งเก็บรวบรวมจากหอจดหมายเหตุตามจังหวัดต่าง ๆ ของสหราชอาณาจักร และเป็นจดหมายต้นฉบับลายมือเขียนที่ยังไม่มีการตีพิมพ์เผยแพร่อย่างเป็นทางการ จดหมายเหล่านี้ให้ข้อมูลที่เพียงพอต่อการทำความเข้าใจความเข้าใจความสัมพันธ์ภายในครอบครัวของแต่ละครอบครัวที่เลือกมาศึกษา ทำให้เราสามารถเข้าใจความหมายและความสำคัญของกิจกรรมการจับจ่ายใช้สอยในชีวิตประจำวันที่มีต่อความสัมพันธ์ภายในครอบครัวได้อย่างชัดเจน

ผลการศึกษา: บทความนี้เสนอว่ากิจกรรมธรรมดาสามัญในชีวิตประจำวันเป็นประเด็นควรค่าแก่การศึกษา เมื่อพิจารณาการจัดหาข้าวของเครื่องใช้ในชีวิตประจำวันของครอบครัวอังกฤษในคริสต์ศตวรรษที่ 18 เราไม่อาจปฏิเสธได้ว่าจัดหาอาหาร เสื้อผ้า และการมอบของขวัญให้แก่กันล้วนมาพร้อมกับความรักทั้งสิ้น การออกไปเดินซื้อข้าวของให้แก่สมาชิกในครอบครัวนับเป็นโอกาสสำคัญในการกระชับความสัมพันธ์ภายในครอบครัว เช่นเดียวกับการมอบของขวัญก็มีความสำคัญอย่างมากในการแสดงความรัก ความห่วงใย และการดูแลซึ่งกันและกันมากไปกว่าการให้ความช่วยเหลือแก่ผู้อื่นอย่างไม่เป็นทางการเท่านั้น ดังนั้นไม่ใช่วัตถุเครื่องใช้แต่เป็นกิจกรรมในชีวิตประจำวันต่างหากที่มีความสำคัญต่อการทำความเข้าใจความหมายของความรักในครอบครัว การจัดหาสินค้าในชีวิตประจำวันและการเอาใจใส่กันและกันเป็นปัจจัยสำคัญประการหนึ่งในการธำรงความรักและความใกล้ชิดในครอบครัว บทความนี้เสนอว่าความรักในครอบครัวมีความหมายถึงการดูแลเอาใจใส่และการอุทิศตนให้แก่สมาชิกในครอบครัว ดังที่ปรากฏในบทความ สมาชิกในครอบครัวมักแสดงความเอาใจใส่และห่วงหาอาทรแก่กัน และพร้อมเน้นย้ำอารมณ์ดังกล่าวลงในจดหมายครอบครัว

การประยุกต์ใช้: บทความนี้แสดงให้เห็นว่ากิจกรรมในชีวิตประจำวันที่แสนธรรมดาสามัญกลับเป็นประเด็นควรค่าแก่การพิจารณา โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งเมื่อนักประวัติศาสตร์พิจารณาประสบการณ์ชีวิตของผู้คนที่บันทึกผ่านจดหมายส่วนบุคคล การอ่านเอกสารดังกล่าวช่วยขยายประเด็นการวิจัยไปสู่เรื่องราวที่แลดูธรรมดาสามัญในชีวิตประจำวันของผู้คนได้ วิธีการดังกล่าวนี้จะช่วยให้นักประวัติศาสตร์สามารถเข้าใจชีวิตของผู้คนในอดีตได้อย่างรอบด้านมากขึ้น วิธีการเช่นนี้ยังเป็นประโยชน์แก่การศึกษาประวัติศาสตร์ชีวิตประจำวันสำหรับวงวิชาการไทยศึกษาอีกด้วย เพราะงานวิจัยทางด้านนี้ยังมีอยู่อย่างจำกัด

บทสรุป: ในคริสต์ศตวรรษที่ 18 การจัดหาข้าวของเครื่องใช้ในชีวิตประจำวันให้กับสมาชิกในครอบครัวมีส่วนสำคัญในการธำรงรักษาและสานสายใยความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างสมาชิกในครอบครัวให้แน่นแฟ้นยิ่งขึ้น กิจกรรมในชีวิตประจำวันที่สุดประหนึ่งเป็นเรื่องธรรมดาสามัญอาจส่งผลกระทบอย่างกว้างขวางต่อความสัมพันธ์ในครอบครัวมากกว่าที่เราเคยคิดกันมา

Introduction

The Hastings solicitor John Collier (1685–1760) regularly travelled to London in the 1730s and 1740s to conduct business. His London journeys offered him the opportunity to perform and perfect the role of the household provider. Tea, coffee, cheese, sugar, vinegar, candles, baskets, salt and corks, salmon and trout, and silk and stockings were among the items on the shopping list, even though grocery shopping was traditionally associated with women (ESRO, SAY 1679, 27 Nov. 1735). While such a shopping list may sound a mundane terrain, it was a terrain that contained a meaningful feature of familial love widely practiced among the middling and elite Georgians. This article explores hundreds of unpublished family correspondence from the eighteenth century to demonstrate how familial love was practiced, expressed, and embodied in the acquisition of mundane goods and everyday objects. It was precisely, we argue, in mundane activities that a significant facet of familial love was incorporated and reified.

Grocery shopping may appear trifling and trivial, yet it was not meaningless. Historians should not dismiss it out of hand as its significance was situational. Consider one of Collier's letters to his wife in February 1733, when the ink was barely dry on the Hastings parish record announcing their twelve-year-old son's death:

What you would have bought I desire you will send me directions and I will take all imaginable care of it. With the greatest sincerity I wish and long for your dear company, and cannot avoid having some heavy anxious thoughts of our great inestimable losse; but I know it is our duty humbly to submit to the dispensations of God, and strive at it with all manner of resolution. (ESRO, SAY 1625, 10 Feb. 1733)

This should not be treated as shopping therapy. In fact, Collier emphasized his shopping commitment to communicate to his beloved wife that he would not let her down or leave her alone at that terrible time. The primary messages that mundane shopping conveyed were love, care, affection and attentiveness, which formed the core value of what this article is looking for: the familial love.

The nature of the English family in the eighteenth century has long been a subject of historical research, for it was the Georgian period that gave birth to the cult of sensibility (Mullan, 1990). As Barker-Benfield (1996 : 249) indicated, the culture of sensibility wished to reform men, making them sensitive to women's and children's minds, wishes, interests, and feelings, or in short, their sensibility. Like some sociologists (Giddens, 1992; Zeldin, 1994), historians viewed sentimentalism as a factor of the collapsing patriarchal power and a midwife of the modern egalitarian family. In *The Family, Sex, and Marriage*, Stone (1977) pointed out that absolute patriarchal power gave way to affective individualism in the eighteenth century. In place of the cold aloof husband and father of the seventeenth century, now stood the caring, affectionate, and companionate Georgian father figure. However, feminist historians Amussen (1988) and Okin (1981) demonstrated that despite the acknowledgement of affective sentiments in the family, women never claimed equality with their husbands, let alone asked to govern the household. Yet no other historian has contributed to demolishing the marriage between the familial love and collapsing patriarchy more effectively than Vickery (1998 : 60). She proclaims that:

Certainly, love sometimes empowered a woman to lead her husband by the nose, but it might just as easily encourage her to swoon submissively in his masterful arms. ... So even if Lawrence Stone's dubious assertion that love in marriage was on the increase could be proved, the impact of love on marital power relations would still be wildly unpredictable.

Whatever the effect of affective sentiments might have been, historians agree that love had become an integral part of family relationships by the eighteenth century.

A body of research has demonstrated, therefore, a vast array of emotions and emotional expectations in family relationships and household management. In their classic work, *Family Fortunes*, Davidoff & Hall (1987) argued that by the late eighteenth century, domesticity was perceived as feminized, moral, and an affective sphere as opposed to the masculine, amoral world of capitalist business, which was enacted by the Evangelical revival movement and bourgeois Calvinist ethics of hard work at the dawn of the industrialization. Although *Family Fortunes* can be crowned for its achievement in using gender relations as, to use Scott's words, "a useful category of historical analysis" to explain the Victorian middle-class formation (Scott, 1986), its argument formed the bedrock of the theory of separate spheres, which underestimated the sheer quality of men's engagement with household management. Contrarily, the cult of Victorian domesticity has been reassessed by subsequent historians. Tosh (1999) convincingly showed that for Victorian middle-class men, the family was necessary to their masculine self-esteem, which drove them to invest more emotional depth in

the interactions with their family members than ever before, especially when the roles of breadwinner and father tested their masculinity.

More recent research on the eighteenth century confirming the presence of emotions behind closed doors includes Barker (2008; 2009) and Harvey (2009; 2012), who discovered the deep, emotional meanings of housekeeping embodied in the male householder. Historians have also examined emotions, such as affection, fondness, even distress and erotic charge, invested in consumer goods used in the Georgians' daily lives. While Holloway (2019) explored love tokens exchanged by courting couples to negotiate the path to matrimony, Vickery (2009) traced emotional remnants embedded in the needlework of distressed spinsters and lone women. Stobart (2025) has shrewdly reconstructed the household goods of clerical families and challenged the conventional idea that goods were unproblematic markers of wealth, status, and taste. In her examination of the lives of the Georgian poor, Bailey (2010a; 2010b; 2010c; 2012), more than anyone, exemplifies how fathers and mothers adopted the emotional figures of loving arms, nurturing bosoms, laboring bodies, and provisioning needs as parental identities. Like their Victorian descendants (Humphries, 2012; Griffin, 2020), children of the Georgian poor families singled out their parents' strenuous attempts at securing and bringing home a loaf of bread for commendation in their life-writings. It is, therefore, not an exaggeration that emotions have been incorporated in the examination of family relationships and household management of the eighteenth century.

This body of research has widely accepted that affective sentimentalism formed the essence of family relationships, consumption, and household management. These scholars have been interested in consumer goods and the meanings invested in them, revolving around wealth and status, love and affection, distress and grief. In other words, they are primarily concerned with consumption, rather than the acquisition of goods itself. Besides, we are frustratingly left with little knowledge of what it meant to the Georgians by something that historians call love. What was precisely love in the familial context of the eighteenth century? Like the Loch Ness monster, love and affection are notoriously hard to define. Spousal love differs from parental love, surely. Although this article agrees with precedent research that love and affection defined the features of eighteenth-century households, it disagrees with them in taking their meanings for granted and aims to figure out the meanings of familial love. This article, therefore, aims to look at the acquisition of goods and familial relationships in tandem. Only then can we understand the nature of eighteenth-century affective familial relationships and what lay beneath the sentimental bedrock of Georgian family life.

Research Objectives

This research article places Georgian middling-sort and elite men and women in the context of familial relationships and explores the meanings and characteristics of familial love as embedded in acquisitive activities. Thus, actions, not objects, are the prime concern. This paper asks: What did the acquisition of goods mean to eighteenth-century people? And how did it affect and fashion their familial relationships? This article will shed light on the Georgian attitudes towards familial relationships and unveil the meaningful features of affective sentiments in the Georgian family lives.

Research Methods

As the late American anthropologist Geertz (1973 : 89) pointed out, culture is "a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life." This article takes acquisitive activities as a symbolic form which the Georgians used to convey

attitudes towards their relationships. Although we are in search of familial love, we do not pretend to be historians of emotions. However, we draw some useful notions from them. As Boddice (2018 : 53–58, 183–89) suggests, emotions are mediated by experiences, that is, by social interactions. Emotions are aroused by how we encounter our parents, siblings, children, and peers at the key moments. Therefore, emotions are not personal but social and situational. This paper will figure out the meanings of familial love as situated in the interpersonal relationships of eighteenth-century men and women.

Looking at the individuals' sentiments, historians tend to prize diaries over letters. As a primary source genre, diary was originally designed in the light of the Reformation with the prospect of self-inspection on the diarist's sins, relations to the family, and divinely ordained order of the world (Dawson, 2000; Thompson, 1972; Macfarlane, 1970; Roper, 2010). As Thompson (1972 : 42) remarked, "[W]e have evidence not of a spontaneous unmediated attitude but of this transcribed into an approved self-image (perhaps with approved doctrinal after-thoughts), like someone arranging his face in a looking-glass." Unfortunately, diaries are not always useful for answering the questions this article sets. Those that happen to be exceptional in revealing the diarists' views have been exhaustively studied by the historians of consumption (Finn, 2000 : 135). New findings are hard to obtain. While unpublished diaries are tempting, they are often either too laconic or irrelevant. The Baptist minister John Needham (d.1787) from Bristol jotted only what he bought, with no comments whatsoever: "Paid Pardon for a new Peruke £1.11.6d and paid for 2 India Handkerchiefs – 10s" (WAS, EHC/60, 16 Mar. 1785). Although genteel women's diaries are renowned for their elaborate comments and self-scrutiny (Vickery, 2021; Brewer, 1997 : 107–110), most of them fell short of their details when it came to acquisitive activities. Witness an unpublished diary of a Hertfordshire young girl kept between 1769–76. "Mama[,] brother[,] sister & I drank tea at Dr Foxcell's" was a typical entry for this diarist. Nevertheless, she recorded, in separate sections, brief details of new clothes under dates when first worn: "I put on my new pair of everlasting shoes August y^e 20th." Yet there were no further comments, as usual (ERO, D/Dru F10, 9 Jul. 1769 & 20 Aug. 1771).

On the contrary, personal correspondence offers insightful information on the relationship between acquisitive activities and family relations. Like diaries, family letters never reveal the correspondents' spontaneous personal experiences, but rather their thoughtful self-presentation, transmitting an approved self-image of the writer to the reader (Stanley, 2004; Lyons, 1999; Whyman, 1999). Consider a letter of the strict father John Buxton of Norfolk (1654–1731). In 1729 the landowner Buxton penned a line to Robert, his dutiful son. Before he sealed the letter, Buxton asked him to tell his younger wayward brother to "[g]ive Georgy my love and blessing. My present will be bestowed if it makes him industrious" (Mackley, 2005 : 79). A present from a father to his son carried with it parental love; a delay thereof alerted a dissolute son to reform his behavior. In tandem, letter writing and gift-giving shaped and re-shaped the interpersonal relationships of this father and son. In light of this, this article will examine the practices of everyday life, no matter how trivial they may sound. As Roper (2005 : 62) put it, those experiences involved "a perpetual process of managing emotional impulses, both conscious and unconscious, within the self and in relation to others." We can therefore understand the thought world of the Georgians as embodied in their thoughtful acquisitive activities.

This research article is built around the unpublished personal correspondence of four eighteenth-century English families garnered from provincial archives in the United Kingdom. Our collection embraces a variety of professions (lawyer, clergyman, merchant, landowner, and earl) and social stations (middling-sorts and aristocrat), spanning the 1730s to the 1800s. They spent their lives in both rural England and the vibrant city of London where goods were mostly procured. Our samples include the solicitor John Collier's family of Hastings (*fl.*1731–1746), the Bedfordshire landowner Talbot Williamson's family and his rector brother Edmund of Millbrook (*fl.*1748–1765), the Hampshire aristocratic family of the Knollys' (*fl.*1763–1834), and the young bachelor merchant John Fuller's family of Hyde Heath in Buckinghamshire (*fl.*1805–

1806). They were part of the wealthiest ten per cent of the population (Vickery, 2009 : 56), and were drawn as representatives of the elite and burgeoning middling classes of Georgian England. Unlike the working poor, these two social echelons were extensively engaged in the two Georgian cultural pillars: the ever-expanding consumer market and the sentimental movements of the cult of sensibility, which valorized the expression of familial love in words and objects (Langford, 1989 : 61–71, 463–467). However, these four collections of family letters spanning seven decades cannot be claimed an every-family typicality. Nor do they present the totality of family life in the eighteenth century. Yet significant similarities emerge in the routine details of their accounts, entailing the relationships between familial love and materiality. Together, they produce broad records of goods-acquisition related activities and cover a wide array of consumer goods used in their daily lives—from mundane oysters to decent tea and chocolate powder, and from basic stockings to luxurious flannel waistcoats.

It is noteworthy that, as is familiar to family historians of early modern England, it is exceptionally hard to reconstruct the entire context of each family studied, since surrounding evidence rarely survives. Thus, family historians are obliged to speculate about what their specimens may signify when evidence is unavailable. One might recall the classic in microhistory, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (1983), by Natalie Z. Davis, the grandmom of cultural historians, in which words like ‘perhaps’, ‘possibly’, ‘might have’ or ‘would have’ loomed large in her interpretations of the thought world of the impostor Arnaud du Tilh, the genuine Martin Guerre, and the wife Bertrande in sixteenth-century France. Our samples used in this article are no exception. We only have scattered family letters. Yet they share a preoccupation with the embodiment of love and care in goods-acquisition related activities. These are the issues that prompted our specimens to put pen to paper, which are relevant in addressing the questions posed in this article. Their letters provide a window into the thoughtful relations of each family, allowing us to glimpse and gauge how acquisitive activities played a vital role in their familial relationships.

Research Results

Welcome to the Englishman’s Castle

The eighteenth century witnessed a watershed in the family relationship. For better or worse, the Georgian family gradually evolved into the nuclear family during the century. According to Laslett (1969 : 200, 210–11), the average Georgian household contained 4.75 people. That figure was a little lower than that of the previous century (approximately 5 people), and it remained “fairly constant” until as late as 1931 (approximately 3.72 people). Indeed, the word ‘family’ as defined in Dr. Samuel Johnson’s *Dictionary* (1755) referred to “[t]hose who live in the same house; household,” embracing a ground of people who lived under the same roof and were subordinate to the same patriarch: husband, wife, children, servants, apprentices, journeymen and the like (Tadmor, 1996). Like other European societies since the sixteenth century, most Georgian households consisted of a couple and their children with the husband/father as head of the family (Corfield, 2022 : 75). As the century wore on, the Georgians were cultivating the concept of affectionate domesticity, in which family members were more conscious of one another’s desires and intensively used material goods to create the ambience of *Gemütlichkeit* (warmth and comfort) in their household. Both the sense of authority and safety nest that the Georgians could expect from home were consolidated in the classic idiom ‘an Englishman’s home is his castle.’ For princes and paupers alike, the cult of domesticity became “a collection of treasures and a consoling dream” (Vickery, 2009 : 24). As Corfield (2022 : 74) has put it succinctly, “[T]he ideal ‘home’ was gaining allure.”

Political, legal and sentimental conventions were also important. Amidst the political turbulence of the seventeenth century, social order was highly valued, and the family was crucial in this respect. The family/household was considered

the primary unit of social control. As Amussen (1988) argued, in the seventeenth century, the quality of manhood was measured by the patriarch's ability to control his household subordinates' behavior, for a lack thereof proved an inferior patriarch among his male fellows. Fletcher (1999 : 174) put it even more outright: "Men wanted their wives to be both subordinate and competent." This patriarchal model of family remained meaningful throughout the eighteenth century. Yet a new emphasis on the skills and virtues of the benevolent citizen was added to the catalogue of manly qualities. The patriarch's managerial engagement with the domestic environment had become a new yardstick for masculinity by the mid-eighteenth century (Harvey, 2012 : 24–63). The household management gradually evolved into a joint activity between the couple. Although power was bestowed upon the patriarch under common law, a married couple was legally deemed to constitute one person at law. The common laws of coverture and necessities allowed women to make contracts and purchase items on credit in their husband's name, as it subsumed a married woman's legal identity under that of her husband (Finn, 1996). The share of the couple's possessions and liabilities between husband and wife was generally expected. Moreover, sentimental movements contributed to the celebration—not the sudden birth—of affectionate relationships between husbands and wives. This said, happy marriages did not necessarily anticipate gender equality and equal power relations between husbands and wives. What mattered was rather a flexible, ongoing, mutual agreement by the couple about a division of roles and responsibilities they saw fit. Equal relationship, as propagated by scholars (Stone, 1977; Trumbach, 1978), was anathema to the Georgians. The key to successful matrimony was the fact that "a wife observed the general proprieties and a husband tempered his authority" (Vickery, 1998 : 72), whereby we might add the role of a benevolent provider, moral leader, kind protector, and great comforter to the venerated husband/father figure (Israngura Na Ayudhya, 2014 : 70–101; Harvey, 2012; Bailey, 2012). Thus, the status of Georgian wives was far from enslavement or being mere property of their husbands, as is often claimed (Corfield, 2022 : 81).

The changing idea of social order after the Restoration also affected attitudes to child-rearing, which was further enhanced by the Enlightenment thinkers of the later decades. Contemporaries cherished liberal attitudes towards child-rearing and praised attentive, devoted parents. Severe discipline and excess physical punishment were denounced, while gentle, liberal styles of child-rearing were applauded (Pollock, 1983). Parents were expected to be watchful of their children's welfare, manners and education. Special accoutrements for child development (toys, games, literature, and apparel) were available in the expanding consumer market more than ever before, awaiting indulgent parents to buy for their doting offspring (Plumb, 1985; Jackson, 2025 : 32–69). The intimacy between parents and children was also esteemed. This was embodied, *inter alia*, in the changing styles of address. In the previous centuries, a son would address his father as 'Sir'. Yet the eighteenth century witnessed a more intimate and affectionate style. In letters home, children increasingly addressed their fathers as 'My Dear Father' (Corfield, 2022 : 88). Moreover, the image of a loving, playful father started to loom large in family letters, underlining the value of parental intimacy and a sentimental patriarch. Visiting London in 1817 for business, the Hampshire Rev. Charles Powlett (1764–1834) wrote a letter to his daughters, asking them to tell their six-year-old brother Frederick that: "[M]y dear sweet little Fred, ... I cannot tell you how much I long to see you & kiss your dear little face & scrab you with my beard & whiskers. ... I am, my sweet little Fellow, yr aff[ectiona]te Papa" (Israngura Na Ayudhya, 2014 : 131). Of course, it would be unwise to claim that parents from the earlier period did not kiss, hug, or caress their children. Rather, it was in the eighteenth century that tactile sense started to gain the special meanings of intimacy, fondness and tenderness (Jütte, 2005 : 177–79). In light of this, the loving relationship between parents and children was increasingly encoded in physical touch, highlighting the importance of intimacy and affection within the family in place of the remote, strict paterfamilias of the earlier centuries.

Yet, all these were rather social expectations. They reflected contemporary cultural trends and attitudes to the ideal family relationships. Undoubtedly, actual implementation in each family varied widely and unpredictably.

Nevertheless, mutual affection was undeniably a monovalent force driving spouses, parents and children along the road to familial bliss they yearned for. As the philosopher Adam Smith put it in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759):

With what pleasure do we look upon a family, through the whole of which reign mutual love and esteem, where the parents and children are companions for one another, without any other difference than what is made by respectful affection on the one side, and kind indulgence on the other; ... where every thing presents us with the idea of peace, cheerfulness, harmony, and contentment? (Smith, 2002 : 48)

Together with love and esteem, affection and indulgence ensured the Georgians' domestic paradise. But what did familial love look like? How was it performed? How did the Georgians express it in their daily lives? We will examine one of the less explored facets of eighteenth-century family history. It is the relationship between mundane activities and the manifestation of familial love, as well as the meanings hidden therein, which we shall see now.

Provision for Love

Georgian household provision has fascinated a generation of scholars of gender and family histories. Wrestling with male and female account books, Vickery (2006a; 2009 : 106–128) argues that the daily household consumption fell to women's prerogatives yet within a framework of male superintendence and surveillance. Hunt (1996), Finn (2000), and Hussey (2008) have re-quantified the male engagement with the world of goods in the second half of the eighteenth century, and united in the conclusion that middling-sort men had the lion's share of household provision with women. Bailey (2012) and Harvey (2009; 2012) have developed the subject further by making it clear that prudent and successful household provision became a marker of Georgian masculinity. Hitherto, the issues of power relations and gendered practices have dominated this body of research. Still, we are left with little knowledge of what family provision meant to family members in practice.

It is necessary to briefly introduce the background of each family studied here before the analysis. First, a solicitor and town clerk who also served as mayor of Hastings five times during the 1720s and 1730s, John Collier (1685–1760), together with his wife Mary, closely parented two sons and five daughters who survived infancy. Collier was under the Duke of Newcastle's patronage during his mayoralty. The Collier boys, John (1720–1732) and James (1721–1747), were first sent to a boarding school at Hastings, and later Westminster school in London in 1731. The choice of Westminster school was calculated, for it ranked very closely after Eton, and the Duke had been there as a boy. The Colliers' family letters testified to their affectionate matrimony and attentive parenthood, recording mostly shopping activities, home gardening and farming, needlework, educational progress of their offspring, and illness. Second, the Williamsons' sibling correspondence consisted of the writings of Talbot (1711–1765), Edmund (1713–1775), and Christian (Tidy) Russell (1715–1803). Talbot possessed a landed estate in Essex in addition to his Bedfordshire living at Husborne Crawley, but mainly lived his life as a childless gentleman in London. As Talbot had no direct heir out of his marriage, he left to Edmund the oversight of the Bedfordshire estate, which rendered the bond between them significantly closer. Edmund, educated at Cambridge and appointed the rector of Millbrook in 1740, became a widower after his first wife died in 1757. Tidy gave succor to her brother in housekeeping and childcare, although she lived in London with her husband. Their surviving letters mostly spanned the years between 1757 and 1761 when Edmund was left forlorn. Commodities animate their correspondence, which serves as a chronicle of the siblings' constant expressions of devotion and tenderness. Third, Thomas Knollys (1727–1793) married a Winchester girl Mary, daughter of the attorney William Porter, and became the

seventh Earl of Banbury in 1776. The Knollys family owned various properties in Hampshire and Yorkshire. Living in Winchester, Thomas was involved in county business and served as Chairman of Quarter Sessions. His eldest son (of eight children) William (1763–1834) pursued a military career and went on a campaign in Flanders during the French Revolutionary Wars. He later became Comptroller of the Household of the Prince of Wales and Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod. The Knollys family members were prolific correspondents, meticulously recording their political networks as well as news and gossip from London's sociable world. They were also keen shoppers and took part in the *beau monde* of both London and Hampshire. Spending most of his life in London and Flanders, William, in particular, was preoccupied with detailing the minutiae of his many goods-acquisition related activities. He was conversant with new fashionable goods and served as a proxy shopper for his mother and sisters. His letters, in particular, were testimonies of the conflated expressions of familial love and materiality. Fourth, the Fuller family of Chesham in Buckinghamshire was part of the mercantile Stratton family's network trading with Russia. Unfortunately, we know very little about the background of the Fullers. Rev. John Fuller (1752–1825) married Mary Stratton in 1784. They had three sons: John, Stratton, and Benjamin. Together with her sister and servants, Mary completed the household. All of the surviving letters were sent to John Fuller junior in 1805 and 1806, when he was living and working as a bachelor tradesman in London. Stratton also left home during this time to learn about agriculture in Berkshire. The letters sent to them typically reveal their mother's considerable anxiety over their health, hygiene, well-being, and morality, as found in correspondence between mothers and sons. Her letters are also significant in suggesting the reticulation of affective familial relationships and mundane activities. All four collections can similarly offer historians a rich source of information on the meanings of familial love understood by eighteenth-century middling-sort and elite men and women.

To begin with, affection was an indispensable part of Georgian family life. Prescriptive literature cherished love in performing familial obligations, out of which happiness grew thereby. As Thomas (2018 : 165) remarked, contemporary moralists envisaged that mutual respect and caring helped to keep peace in families. In 1711 Steele (1711 : 10–11) instructed the husband to “nourish and cherish” his wife, and not to love her in word and tongue only, “but in deed and in truth,” whereby “he must spare no cost, no pains to do his wife good” when “he supplies her”. The conduct-book writer Parcival (1775 : 119) alerted brothers, sisters, children, and parents to be “more concentrated [*sic*] in the kindred charities” with one another, for “mutual good offices” contributed to “the bright emanations of domestic love.” Likewise, Braidwood (1792 : 53) called for love when performing parental duties: “[A]ll the duties which parents owe to their children, must proceed from love.” By the 1800s, love had established itself as an ideal that inspired family members to perfect their obligations (Rosenwein, 2022 : 87–94). Household provision infused with love and affection demonstrably characterized the eighteenth-century family relationship.

If love loomed large in prescriptive literature, the word itself was rarely mentioned in family letters when the writers discussed their household provision. This said, it does not mean that procuring goods for one's own family was conducted without heart. In the 1730s John Collier regularly went to London, leaving his wife alone in Hastings. Upon his arrival, he usually procured daily goods for his family without delay, as she “mention[ed],” “direct[ed],” “desir[ed],” or “command[ed].” Her ordered items often included tea, coffee, chocolate, spaw water (mineral water), aprons, gowns, handkerchiefs and stockings. The grocery list appeared rather banal, but Collier finished it in a jovial and attentive manner. In a letter dated 1734 he reported to his wife that “I have sent your Gown & bespoke your Gloves & ordered an Alterations in Mollys cap & as You don't like the Chocolate [I] will find out a new Chap” (ESRO, SAY 1641, 9 Feb. 1734). As he noticed that the chocolate powder he previously purchased did not suit her taste, he set himself the task of procuring a new sort of it for her. With this promise, he could fashion himself as a committed, indulgent patriarch willing to allow his family to indulge in a fashionable beverage of the time. Likewise, in 1805 Mary Fuller, a Buckinghamshire mother, packed a bundle of

Provision for Love: Mundane Goods and Familial Affection in Eighteenth-Century England, E5144 (1-23)

household items to send to her bachelor son who then lived alone in London. The act of packing up was more important than the objects themselves, since it signified her maternal devotion: “My dearest Love we miss you everywhere, ... Your things shall go by tomorrow’s wagon – hoping this will find you well” (WAS, EHC/201, 11 Jun. 1805). Upon packing up the trunk, this mother would have thought that the things would improve her son’s living situation. The chest from home carried parental affection and helped foster familial intimacy. Collier’s and Fuller’s cases exemplified how familial love was manifested in words and objects. Although the word ‘love’ does not abound in letters home, its impression does.

Sometimes, matrimonial bliss was enacted by family members’ thoughtfulness. The aristocratic Thomas Knollys (1727–1793), the 7th earl of Banbury, was requested by his wife to purchase a feather for her hat when he went to London in 1763. “I will take care to buy you a feather,” he promised. Knollys inserted this line rightly just before sealing the letter. Its position is noteworthy. Consider the entire paragraph:

I have been put to great difficulty about linen but hope to make it out with the assistance of a Laundry. Mr. Broadbent I have seen I propose if possible to be at home the beginning of next Week. The next post I hope to inform you with greater certainty. Yesterday Capt: Bulkeley & self din’d at Mr. Pophams and every Evening we are together and I assure you make very sober absent Husbands. I will take care to buy you a feather. I have not had yet time to write to Burford. I beg my Duty to Mr Porter. Compliments to all friends and I am

Your ever Affec:[tionate]

Tho W Kno[y]llis. (HRO, 1M44/41/20, 15 Dec. 1763)

The sentence sequencing is suggestive, and psychoanalysis proves useful for historians to gauge emotional states of people in the past – at least at the particular moment of letter-writing (Pick & Roper, 2004). As Roper (2005 : 65) shrewdly remarked, slips of pen, such as transposed words, crossing out, silences, and other psychically redolent matters, are worth considering. Knollys started the paragraph with his struggle with the issue of bad linen quality at his residence in London, invoking the lack of domestic comfort in contrast to the one he received at home. Then he abruptly changed the topic to public appointments before he returned to make the promise of buying her a feather. The pledge was made immediately after he involuntarily divulged his regular nights out. It could be interpreted as part of his attempt to confirm his image as a “very sober absent Husband”, else why resort to mentioning domestic affairs amidst the public ones? Being out of sight did not necessarily imply being out of mind for the wise, thoughtful, loyal patriarch.

Going out for shopping items for family members was also an opportunity that the Georgians grasped to emphasize and convey their familial love towards their recipients. Both male and female shoppers were keen to underline their attentive shopping habits in letters home. This was, of course, not groundless. Before the emergence of general standard control, shopping required customers to exercise their skills to discern the commodity’s quality before making a decision (Walsh, 2006; Stobart & Hann, 2005; Berry, 2002). Even some calculating customers could make a slip when encountering fraudulent shopkeepers. As a prudent, well-versed shopper herself, the novelist Jane Austen was tricked by a wily haberdasher into buying a muslin veil at half a guinea, which turned out when she got it home to be “thick, dirty and ragged” (Berry, 2002 : 387). Moreover, it was not an easy task to find the right items upon visiting the first shop. As Johanna Schopenhauer (1988 : 150–52), the mother of the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, recorded in her diary when she visited London in 1803, “[Shopping] means going into at least twenty shops, a thousand things shown to us which

we do not wish to buy, in fact turning the whole shop upside down and, in the end, perhaps leaving without purchasing anything.” Therefore, we can discern the latent meanings of the Georgians’ allusions to their exhausting shopping expeditions. In 1760 Christian (Tidy) Russell (1715–1803) would have been relieved after dispatching a parcel. She wrote to her widower brother, Edmund Williamson (1713-75), who was the rector of Millbrook in Bedfordshire: “I hope you will like the worsted, *’Tis the best I can get*” (BA, M10/2/124, 22 Jul. 1760 [our emphasis]). Inexperienced in the world of textiles, male shoppers had to be even more careful had they wished to avoid female disappointment. When Mary Collier asked her husband to procure a mourning gown for her in 1733, he admitted that he had to “enquire and consult what will be most proper” (ESRO, SAY 1626, 11 Feb. 1733). The item he finally bought was “upon Enquiry” the proper color (ESRO, SAY 1628, 17 Feb. 1733). Similarly, in winter 1763 Thomas Knollys had to stroll the streets of London to hunt for fashionable items his wife desired:

I’m daily examining my Mem[oran]d[a]ms: and hope to execute them all. Silks are bought ... Gloves bespoke, Ring in hand. Buckles & Ear rings near done. I wish I knew what trimmings you would have, whether white, blue, or mixt with both. If I don’t hear, I believe it must be the latter. Ladies now wear Caps, and if so there will be no occasion for a feather. (HRO, 1M44/41/18, 10 Dec. 1763)

Knollys reported the fashion trend back home to help his wife fit in with the Hampshire *beau monde*. As a careful and observant shopper, this nobleman appeared to be the role model for astute male consumers. Like the other two individuals presented above—Russell and Collier—Knollys proved to be an attentive husband who invariably sought to please their beloved.

Perhaps it is time to reflect on the relationship between individuals and the society in which they lived. For one thing, to what extent did the attentive discourse in private writing mirror the influence of prescriptive literature that celebrated familial love? The impact of the latter on the former is only difficult to substantiate; evidence on the reception of texts is undoubtedly hard to secure (Vickery 1998 : 70–72). As noted earlier, the word ‘love’ seldom appeared in family letters concerning acquisitive activities. Besides, prescriptive literature alone could not be an omnipotent force urging anyone to follow its pathway. One need look no further than profligate or careless husbands and wives for proof of the limited power of literary ideals (Bailey, 2003 : 61-84; Phillips, 2010 : 149–178). Therefore, it would be wise to read the attentive discourse in private letters together with the attentive behavior as source materials that conduct-book writers observed and, subsequently, used to register their protestations of loving family in their works. Also, one might wonder whether men, like Collier and Knollys, clothed and fed their families to protect their masculine status as paterfamilias instead of doing it because of their genuine familial love. Such would be too cynical an interpretation, even though we must acknowledge the eighteenth-century law of coverture, which allowed married women to separate from their husbands had their patriarchs failed to provide them with necessities (Finn, 1996; Phillips, 2006 : 41–47). In those circumstances, the patriarch’s manhood might fall under public scrutiny (Israngura Na Ayudhya, 2014 : 82; Turner, 2002 : 83–115). Yet, upon cursory reading of the Colliers’ and the Knollys’ correspondence, many references were made to express their familial intimacy throughout. The image of kind and attentive husbands was reflected in their actions and projected in their letters home. It was the acquisitive activities that allowed us to glimpse and gauge the familial attentiveness they regarded in their relationships.

In addition, shopping was an activity that could help foster loving relationships among family members. This was evident when parents and children browsed shops together, as shopping *en famille* was not uncommon in the eighteenth

century. Visiting London in 1786, the German Sophie von La Roche (2018 : 261–262) recorded an adorable scene of a shoemaker's shop: “[T]here was a woman buying shoes in here for herself and her small daughter; the latter was searching amongst the dolls’ shoes in one case for some to fit the doll she had with her.” In 1803 Johanna Schopenhauer (1988 : 150) noticed a number of toyshops available in London “which sell nothing but things for children, at very high prices too,” awaiting their adorers to buy. Likewise, eighteenth-century trade cards featured husbands and wives, parents and children, browsing shops together (Walsh, 1995 : 165, 167; Vickery, 2006b : 204–208). Shopping *en famille* may have symbolized familial harmony. All these testified to the fact that the love of the family had been gradually materialized. Shopping formed a platform for family members to display their emotions. Shopping with his fifteen-year-old daughter in London in 1736, John Collier noticed that she “had fix’d her eyes and thoughts on a brocade.” As an indulgent father, he told his wife that he could “not let her be disappointed tho it’s 2 guineas more in the gown” (ESRO, SAY 1687, 10 Feb. 1737). The indulgent father’s heart melted when he saw his darling daughter’s entreating eyes. As Collier also regarded his clothing the family as part of his paternal duties, he proudly told his wife in 1738 that he ordered a long list of clothes and footwear for their seventeen-year-old son when he first enrolled at the university: “I have had the taylor, shoemaker [*sic*], etc., for Jemmy, in order for his equipment with everything we can think proper for Cambridge” (ESRO, SAY 1718, 17 Jun. 1738). Shopping *en famille*, especially performed by the poor, could stir sympathy from the beholder. This became a popular technique adopted by shoplifters to deceive unfortunate yet soft-hearted shopkeepers (Tickell, 2018 : 62–80; Hitchcock & Shoemaker, 2006 : 277–282). In 1790 a certain poor Mary Hudson, with her small child in tow, went to a mercer’s shop in Drury Lane, London, to buy some muslin for her baby. It cost three shillings a yard. She ordered the shopkeeper to cut off two nails of this muslin, which cost around two or three-pence. Seeing the mother and child “in a very deplorable situation,” the shopkeeper’s heart was filled with sorrow, and he decided to “make her a present of it.” The shoplifter got what she wanted (Hitchcock & Shoemaker, 2006 : 278, 282). That familial love and care were made manifest in shopping trips cannot be mistaken.

To prove our argument that acquisitive activities incorporated familial love and played a key role in nourishing family relationships, we need look at the reactions when family members failed to send requested items back home. The failure often caused a gloomy temperament in the waiting recipient. Historians have too long prized the intense emotions in the relationship between the breadwinner and his subordinates in the Victorian pauper family. A loaf of bread might have cheered up the entire family; a lack thereof might have caused the depths of despair (Griffin, 2020 : 193–226; Tosh, 1999 : 82–84). Although the Georgian middling-sorts’ lives were not as harsh as their Victorian descendants, intense emotions abounded in failed provision. Having forgotten to tell her eldest son to buy his brother a handkerchief in 1806, the Buckinghamshire Mary Fuller sniffed: “I am sorry I did not desire you to purchase a hand[kerchief] for Stratton as he will think I have forgotten him” (WAS, EHC/201, 8 Mar. 1806). A month later, when her eldest son forgot to secure a copy of Ovid for his youngest brother, the bookworm child was “in the disappointment” (WAS, EHC/201, 20 Apr. 1806). Shopping—even for trifling things—proved emotionally significant to both the provider and the recipient.

Consumer goods, once purchased and used in daily life, became objects that emotionally linked family members together. Interactions with everyday things sustained the relationships and enabled intimacy, no matter how trivial they appear to us now. Take cleanliness as an example. The Georgians esteemed cleanliness a virtue of character. Conduct-book writers advised parents to take care of the youth’s dress, so that they “be decently cloath’d, neat and clean” (Anon., 1730 : 13). Speckless shirts, gowns, and linens of a child reflected the quality of his parents. Upon strolling the streets of London from Charing Cross along the Strand to St Paul’s and the Royal Exchange in 1782, the German Carl Philip Moritz (1965 : 33–34) couldn’t help noticing that “many people from the highest to the lowest class neatly and cleanly dressed.” “[H]ardly a beggar can be espied who doesn’t wear a clean shirt under his tatters,” he added. Thus, children away from

home were constantly admonished by their parents to observe their sordid clothes. When John Collier visited his about twelve-year-old sons studying at Westminster school in London in 1732, he told “the boys about their shirts airing.” “Jacky [his eldest son] says they always air them but doe it themselves,” the boy boasted (ESRO, SAY 1598, 21 Nov. 1732). Paternal advice was surely a testimony of his attentive care. Similarly, the doting mother, Mary Fuller, tirelessly urged her bachelor son living alone in London to send his ragged garments home for laundering: “You did not send your flannel waistcoat last week [& I] think you are wearing it too long; remember my hint about having it air’d” (WAS, EHC/201, 26 Apr. 1806). “[S]end all your dirty clothes down & not leave any behind in your drawers” is a *leitmotif* of Fuller’s letters to her son (WAS, EHC/201, 26 Apr. 1806). With no mother and sister on hand to take care of their attire, the wardrobe of young schoolboys and bachelors would have been ramshackle (Vickery, 2009 : 63–64, 81–82, 120–22). No matter how mundane doing laundry may appear, it was a terrain that Georgian parents used to demonstrate their love and care for their devoted children.

Mundane objects themselves could also become emotive expressions of parental affection. Parental love was, of course, manifested in taking care of their children’s welfare. Prescriptive literature advised parents to be constantly watchful of their children to prevent them from external injuries (Braidwood, 1792 : 53). As sources indicate, family members expressed deep anxiety over one another’s illness and welfare. Just as Dr. Johnson believed that “there is an instinctive natural affection in parents towards their children” (Boswell, 2008 : 422), so the paternal instinct in John Collier would have sparked, when he saw his little boy walking from Westminster school to his lodging at Johnson’s Court in London in the late autumn 1734 “without hardly any sole to one of his shooes & to be sure look cold & might hasten on his feaver [*sic*] which was a pretty high one.” The worried father thus ordered “3 pair[s] of strong shooes to come home tomorrow.” “[I] shall take all the possible care to prevent a relapse,” he promised his wife (ESRO, SAY 1654, 31 Oct. 1734). Note that he bought not only new shoes for his son, but also those of “strong” ones! He ensured the clogs stayed firm (McCormack, 2025 : 41, 45–51). If this was not proof of his constantly safeguarding his family, what else could it be? Similarly, in winter 1806 Mrs. Fuller “was quite vex[e]d” that her bachelor son did not have enough proper shoes in his London apartment suitable for the weather. “[I] am fearful you get that uncomfortable feeling in your head from getting damp feet,” she alerted him. She instructed him to “have socks to put on with your boots which are so thin” (WAS, EHC/201, 19 Jan. 1806). In these two families’ narratives, objects were a medium that parents used to communicate their love and care for their children. Regardless of how trivial and mundane the interactions with everyday things may sound, they served as a channel for nourishing and strengthening familial relationships. The Georgian parents were apt to recount them in their letters home to underline their parental qualities.

Universal but less examined, objects could also act as powerful triggers for memories and remembrances, latent since Adam’s apple signaled the Fall. Everyday items reminded family members of their shared everyday life. One might be familiar with sentimentalism, which was the product of the cult of sensibility in the later eighteenth century (Barker-Benfield, 1996; Mullan, 1990). Part of it was the animation of objects. “Every object touched by the loved being’s body becomes part of that body, and the subject eagerly attaches himself to it,” Barthes (1978 : 173) remarked. Yet we need not wait for the cult of sensibility to run its course to appreciate the power that objects emanate. Expressions of grief and bereavement following the death of children were particularly intense. After his son Jacky died of smallpox at the age of twelve in 1733, John Collier came to Westminster school to pack up his personal belongings. Having come back to his lodging, he forced himself to pen a line to his wife, expressing his grief in mournful language: “I saw the room he is to lye in ... [it] revive[d] my losse and [brought] to my remembrance the dear child, that I can hardly bear it, his name is engraven on my heart in letters of blood, never to be effaced” (ESRO, SAY 1627, 13 Feb. 1733). Although Collier did not name the items that tug at his heart strings, only someone with a heart of stone could deny that upon entering “the room” Jackey

“[used] to lye in” and holding his personal belongings in his arms, the bereaved father was on the verge of tears. In January 1805 Mary Fuller expressed her loneliness in a letter to her eldest son: “[W]e miss’d you my dearest Love as we always do. I felt the loss of your not sitting by me after dinner & when I went through you room at night, how dismal did your bed look, unprepared to receive you” (WAS, EHC/201, 20 Jan. 1805). And, again when she was left alone at home in November 1805, she lamented: “[T]he bedrooms with Strattons bed turn’d up to the side very gloomy, the next even[in]g I went through the rooms ... the bed was not made up for my dear John” (WAS, EHC/201, 6 Nov. 1805). The unprepared, turned-up beds reminded her of the gruesome fact that her darling sons would not return home soon. The loneliness persisted, and she had to endure it. Beds, linens, shirts, stockings, shoes, and every single piece of mundane objects might have worn out, but they could stir a far wider range of powerful emotions than we have been apt to think.

Gift-Giving and the Embodiment of Love and Care

Gifts and gift-giving have gradually received attention from early modern historians, who draw inspiration from a burst of innovative discussion among anthropologists. While Mauss (1969) argued for the reciprocal obligations of gift-giving that build social solidarity and cohesion, Kopytoff (1986) called for more nuanced studies of the biographies and circulation process of the gifts that render them powerfully meaningful. The late Davis (2000) examined the social and cultural meanings of gift exchange in sixteenth-century France. She brilliantly showed that giving and receiving gifts were complex social affairs. A variety of cultural meanings abounded in the gift exchange. Gifts were sometimes part of pious charity, sometimes obligations, sometimes bribes. Following Davis’ seminal work, Heal (2008) surveyed the political circumstances (local patronage, power relationships, and display of deference, etc.) that turned household foodstuffs into gifts used to secure political objectives among aristocratic families in seventeenth-century England. Unfortunately, the role of gifts and gift-giving in the eighteenth century has been remarkably understudied, let alone their emotional impact on familial relationships. Exceptions are rare. While Ben-Amos (2000; 2008) articulates that parent-child nexus was sustained less by altruism but by reciprocal interactions and informal support, Finn (2000; 2006) emphasizes the role of gift exchange played by Georgian male and female consumers in building commercial credit, expanding communal networks, and making polyvalent forces that linked the entire family together. Given the scope of the present article, we will look at gift-giving and its meanings as situated in familial relationships, hoping to shed light on the bigger idea—the familial love.

What were gifts and gift-giving in the eighteenth century? In Dr. Johnson’s *Dictionary* (1755), the word ‘gift’ referred to “[a] thing given or bestowed; something conferred without price,” “[t]he act of giving,” “[a] bribe,” and “[p]ower; faculty”. The last two definitions apart, the word did not necessarily denote a thing received on special occasions or for specific purposes. Still, gift-giving entailed the importance of the act itself, as implied in the connotations of bestowing and conferring. The word ‘present’ represented “[a] gift; a donative; something *ceremoniously* given [our emphasis].” According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), the word ‘gift’ has been registered as “[s]omething of value proceeding from a specified source” since around the 1790s. It can be surmised that in the eighteenth century, gifts encompassed a broader spectrum of things given than that of presents, which were limited to specific events or purposes. In this article, gifts are understood as any objects voluntarily given or exchanged among family members for personal use in daily life, and simultaneously presupposed the importance of the act itself. As it will emerge, objects involved were not necessarily luxurious, priceless or exotic; they were decent, rather mundane. In letters home, we often find the following items as gifts: flannels, silk, linens, gowns, night gowns, waistcoats, breeches, handkerchiefs, books, wine, fish and oysters. Perhaps as mundane as these gifts appear, gift-giving has long been understudied by eighteenth-century historians. It is reminded here that no object was intrinsically gift-ascribed; it was the act of giving that transformed it into a gift. Therefore, the significance of familial gift-giving was, we argue, expressed in the act rather than the object itself.

Gifts and gift-giving gained a significant meaning in the eighteenth century. Prior to that, gifts could sometimes raise the recipient's quizzical eyebrow. Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466–1536) warned of the danger of gifts, providing his audience with examples such as “the gifts of enemies are no gifts,” “even the gods are won over by gifts,” and “in gifts it is the spirit that matters.” While anxiety was a recurrent theme about gifts and gift-giving in prescriptive literature, the focus was on managing the issue shrewdly rather than denying it (Heal, 2008 : 46). With the advent of the Protestant Reformation did the culture of giving obtain a new cultural meaning, as it obliterated the medieval theology of reciprocal interactions between good works (or Luther's ‘theology of glory’) and salvation. Protestantism celebrated the value of giving and love among men in this world, which reinforced the impulse to give (Ben-Amos, 2000 : 299–300). Furthermore, giving became a yardstick of benevolence thanks to the culture of politeness in the eighteenth century, which was developed to harmonize the social disparities and required the individual's complaisance, civility, decorum, integrity, sociability and good-breeding (Klein, 1994; Brewer, 1997). Thus, gifting with the hope of advantage was despicable. “[I]t is a Mean, and Dishonourable thing, to Give, for any other End, than for a Giving-sake. He that Gives for Gain, Profit, or any By-End, destroys the very Intent of Bounty,” so believed L'Estrange (1679 : 77–78). By 1700 gifts and gift-giving had been recognized as a social glue that harmonized disparate groups (Andrew, 2004). Given the sheer significance of giving in Protestantism and Georgian polite culture, it is fair to investigate its role in the family life, on which we shall embark now.

Unlike the informal support thesis (Ben-Amos, 2008 : 9–13, 17–44), the information gifts and gifting primarily conveyed in the context of eighteenth-century family life was loving care. Ben-Amos observed that by the early eighteenth century, the cult of sensibility, with its register of a new language of sentiments, had magnified the notion of sacrificial devotion that sustained familial obligations and relationships. However, as discussed earlier, a literary ideal might inspire the reader to refine their manners accordingly, but it could not be the exclusive force responsible for it. Letters home allow us to gauge how far the language of selfless devotion might influence the notion of familial love in lived experiences. In our samples, this is particularly evident when family members lost contact with one another or were away from home, as one party's prolonged silence would disturb the other's peace of mind. Having not heard from her widower brother Edmund for a while in 1760, Tidy's patience had run out. Consequently, she sent him fresh oysters, hoping to hear back about his news: “If this [letter] won't open your mouth, nor set your fingers to work, will a barrel of oysters do it?” she poked fun at her lukewarm brother (BA, M10/2/121, 11 Mar. 1760). Such an expression was not a testimony of sentimentalism. Familial affection may not need any linguistic repertoire to run its course, although a bit of flowery style may spice up the tone. In 1794 amidst his military campaign in Ghent during the French Revolutionary Wars, the young nobleman William Knollys eagerly informed his mother of his purchase of “some very Good Lace” for her. The Flemish lace was not intended to be “an Invention of Gaiety”, but rather “let the World see we Yet live” (HRO, 1M44/110/79, 17 Jan. 1794). Lady Knollys' reaction to opening the parcel and reading the letter would have been one of relief and joy, not so much in material terms as in knowing that her son was still alive. Both Russell's oysters and Knollys' lace confirm what anthropologists call “the spirits conveyed by the gift” (Osteen, 2002 : 3–4). One represented the sibling's concern; the other signaled the filial regards. The gift and its accompanying letter brought family members together once again.

Writing a letter may be subject to a self-conscious affectation, with the writer utilizing every possible trope available to project his sentiments (Israngura Na Ayudhya, 2014 : 51–58; Bound, 2002). Nevertheless, some recurrent tropes offer us a rarer window onto the concept of familial love. Relevant to our discussion is the mention of impulsive purchase, which the gift giver used to impart the information that the gift recipient was constantly on his mind and in his prayers. The Georgians were apt to stress an impulsive purchase, for that matter. In 1761, upon visiting a market in London, the Bedfordshire landowner Talbot Williamson espied a fish stall with an abundance of salmon, which prompted him to recall

that this sort of seafood was his widower brother's favorite, the Bedfordshire rector Edmond. In an impulsive gesture, Talbot ordered "a kit of pickled salmon" to be sent to Edmond. He pointed out his buying reason: "[A]s I know you love [it]" (BA, M10/2/246/108, 18 Jul. 1761). It is not claimed here that Talbot fabricated his narratives. On the contrary, we do believe the authenticity of his story. Instead, it is argued that for the Georgians, the impromptu purchase was a symbol of constant love and care, or else it would not feature in many family letters. In some cases, although the desired objects might not be affordable, we can find remnants of them in letters home. In 1784 William Knollys visited a goldsmith shop in London where he saw some beautiful rings. "I wish I could have afforded to have made you a Present of one," he wrote his mother (HRO, 1M44/88/7, 25 Mar. 1784). Perhaps, it was not the ring but her son's memory of her that moved her. It is equally possible that he wanted her to know precisely that. Together with the narrative of impromptu purchase, gifts transmitted the spirits of love and care which constantly accompanied the giver's heart and mind, even while he was elated on an enjoyable occasion.

In addition, the act of sending gift baskets was vital for expressing one's attentive affection, which was the centrality of familial love. As the anthropologist Douglas (1982 : 117–18) observed, "[f]ood is not feed. ... [F]ood is not necessarily what [people] want." Rather, it is the whole system of communication. So, what did a gift basket look like in the eighteenth century? In the eighteenth century, there was no cultural etiquette for the gift basket to anticipate or follow the recipient's special celebrations or illnesses. There are endless examples of gift baskets exchanged among the Georgians. However, foodstuffs usually filled the baskets, just like today bespoke (or prefabricated) get-well-soon ones, in which those regarded as something special or treats were chosen out. Sturgeons, salmon, herrings, oysters, venison, wine, brandy, tea, coffee, chocolate and spaw water were the Georgians' favorites. Let us now look at a basket with its accompanying letter, and gauge what it unveils about the essence of familial love. In 1761 Talbot Williamson dispatched his newly re-wedded brother Edmond "a hamper with a few whittings [*sic*], a few herrings, a couple of flounders, and some oysters. May they prove fit for eating!" He did not fail to add: "[B]ut be sure to give the oysters plenty of salt and water in case they appear flat and deadish; it will recover them" (BA, M10/2/246/113, 20 Oct. 1761). "[I]n using the oysters reject the beards," he instructed plainly on another occasion (BA, M10/2/246/111, 1 Sep. 1761). The brief culinary notes suggested the brother's caring concern. Consider one more basket. Perhaps we are so close to what Douglas urged scholars to discover. In 1806 William Knollys "made up a little Basket" with "a Barrel of Oyster[s]" for his sister Amelia. He noted, "the Basket will be in Winchester on Monday Morning ... with my best love to You" (HRO, 1M44/121/8, 5 Apr. 1806). It was not the contents of the basket, but the affectionate, caring spirits that counted. It is noteworthy that while sturgeon ranked above salmon and oysters, it was oysters that abounded in the culture of Georgian gift baskets (Thirsk, 2006 : 189). As Holloway (2024 : 130–132) has recently demonstrated, oysters were particularly popular because of their twofold properties: the aphrodisiac and the strength-restoring. No wonder, eighteenth-century male lovers constantly sent oysters to their sweethearts. Perhaps it was for this reason that our Talbot Williamson kept sending oysters to his forty-seven-year-old brother Edmond in 1761 and 1762, as the latter had recently re-married to a nineteen-year-old woman after three years of being alone in the cold matrimonial bed. Whatever it was, love and care, affection and attention were palpable in both the gift baskets and the accompanying letters.

It is to be noted that the Georgians not only sent foodstuffs as symbols of familial love and caring, but also consumer goods available in the ever-expanding consumer market. As new technologies of craftsmanship and factory systems brought new commodities to life, middling-sort men and women—not to mention their elite counterparts—welcomed fashionable goods to their gifting repertoires, although they did not abandon traditional ones. As the studies of Heal (2008) and Whyman (1999 : 14–37) showed, foods, especially those for the feast, such as venison, capons, apples, were preferred as gifting dietary by elite men and women in the seventeenth century to underline their local patronage

Provision for Love: Mundane Goods and Familial Affection in Eighteenth-Century England, E5144 (1-23)

and power. Thus, we learn from the famous diarist Samuel Pepys (2003 : 65) in 1660 that he gifted his mother a selection of venison meat served as part of a lavish dinner that highlighted his social status. However, we find a broader array of gifted items available in the following century: fashionable textiles, chinaware, toys and trinkets, not to mention foodstuffs, as we have seen above (Styles, 1993; Finn, 2006; Jackson, 2025 : 51–63). Whatever the gift was, the gift-giving revealed the affective use of material goods among family members. Before he left London and returned to Hastings, the thoughtful John Collier bought his little daughters “three clogs and to be all alike for the ages of 12, 10 & 5” (ESRO, SAY 1576, 20 Nov. 1731). Perhaps no other instance in our sample collections outshines the one that follows in its sweetness. While attending the boarding school, the ten-year-old Jacky Collier penned a line in 1731: “Dearest Mama ... I Desire You to send me Hennes’s *Roman Antiquities* and Erasmus’ *Colloquies* [*the rest of the letter is unfortunately torn out*]”. In contrast to his bookworm brother, the nine-year-old boy Jemmy added a naughty postscript with his childish handwriting to tease his father: “I desire to you to buy me a Watch and desire you to let my Papa read this and See whether he will laugh at this” (ESRO, SAY 1554, 29 Jan. 1731). As watches became fashionable in the eighteenth century, the boy knew what he wanted (Styles, 2007 : 97–107). Indeed, the Collier boys were gifted watches a year later in November 1732 when they became students at Westminster school in London, and this was only one month before the diligent Jacky was killed by smallpox (ESRO, SAY 1601, 28 Nov. 1732). The gift may construct a hedonistic, or even egocentric, individual, as some commentators argued (Campbell, 1987), and gift-giving might have made an indulgent parent. Be that as it may, gifts were usually of intrinsic value and could be offered in a gesture of familial fondness and affection, and the newly manufactured goods served emotional ends that linked family members together.

Finally, eighteenth-century middling-sort and elite men and women, like us today, looked forward to receiving gifts on special occasions. Family birthdays, weddings, Christmas, and New Year’s provided more possibilities for celebrations and gift exchanges within the family than other events. Let us take family birthday celebrations as example, since the rest had been ascribed with familial activities only by the mid-nineteenth century (Tosh, 1999 : 82–83). Although family birthday celebrations did not originate or become popular in the eighteenth century, they were not uncommon. Children eagerly awaited gifts on birthdays as early as the Renaissance (Rublack, 2010 : 19–21). Writing to his wife from London in February 1733, John Collier informed her that he had prepared a “straw hatt” for their son Jemmy for his twelfth birthday (ESRO, SAY 1629, 20 Feb. 1733). Four years later the teenage Jemmy specifically requested “a paduswoy wa[i]stcoat with silver lace” for his sixteenth birthday, reflecting his fashion consciousness. And the indulgent father consented to it (ESRO, SAY 1702, 24 May 1737). Although no specific birthday gifts were mentioned in letters, family birthdays also proved to be special occasions for showing familial fondness to one another. Reaching the legal age of majority on her twenty-first birthday, her uncle William Cranston and her father John Collier hosted an elaborate party for her. Collier described the event to his wife in 1743:

I assure you that Dely’s birthday has not been forgot. I invited the two Mr Greens and Mrs Nouns. ... a very good turbet [*sic*] with lobster sauce, a chine of mutton and salad, and a marrow pudding, sweet meats, etc. And my brother Cranston to shew honour to the occasion, for the first time used his silver handle knives and forks, etc., and we drank to the day, yours and all the children’s healths, and were very cheerfully merry. (ESRO, SAY 1808, 12 May 1743)

By the mid-eighteenth century, birthday parties had evolved into social and familial affairs, complete with haute cuisine and expensive tableware. Attendees were urged to drink to wish the birthday girl and her family health, happiness, and

success (WAS, EHC/201, 15 Feb. 1806). The emotional value of family birthdays was embodied in the family's inclination to make the event as impressive as their circumstances allowed. In this vein, birthday celebrations, with or without gifts, were important for nourishing familial intimacy. For proof of their emotional value, one need to look no further than the complaints about forgetting a family member's birthday. When John Fuller did not return home to join his brother's birthday party in August 1805, his mother reproached him for his absence. "I cannot but think it has the appearance of want of affection to your parents & an indifference to your old home," she bewailed (WAS, EHC/201, 13 Aug. 1805). Although we shall not know the reason of John Fuller's not returning home because his letters do not survive, we cannot deny the emotional value of birthday celebrations, at least for the middling-sort and elite families. Together, the party, the gifts and gift-giving became the material expressions of the family's affective relationships. As Adam Smith envisaged, "inanimate objects" could be "the causes of great, or frequent pleasure to us." "[W]e conceive something like a real love and affection for them" (Smith, 2002 : 110–11). The valorization of family relationships and sentimentalization of objects contributed to the embodiment of familial love and care in gifts, gift-giving, and family celebrations.

Discussion and Conclusion

This article has shown the extensive engagement of middling-sort and elite men and women with domesticity in the Georgian period. A body of excellent research has confirmed the invalidity of the theory of separate spheres ascribing women to the moral, domestic sphere and men to the amoral, business-oriented public arena (Vickery, 1993; Gordon & Nair, 2003). Some scholars have revealed the masculine role in housekeeping (Harvey, 2012); others have highlighted the centrality of home in the masculine sense of self-esteem (Bailey, 2012; Tosh, 1999). Georgian and Victorian men are no longer absent from hearth and home in historiography. In this regard, this article largely concurs with their arguments, showing how much Georgian middling-sort and elite men were active in procuring goods for their family members. However, the article's main objectives are to search for the meanings and characteristics of familial love and the role of acquisitive activities in fostering familial intimacy. Although research has hitherto asserted the existence of love in family life, we do not know concretely what familial love meant to the middling-sort and elite Georgians. Precisely that is the contribution that this article has endeavored to make.

This article has placed Georgian middling-sort and elite men and women back to their family relationships, and explored the meanings of familial love as embedded in the acquisition of goods and gift-giving in everyday life. Unlike previous research, it has given due weight to the actions, rather than the objects. This article has argued that mundane activities are worth considering. As anthropologists have shown, foodstuffs and mundane objects are not for simple consumption. They give us meanings for communicating our attitudes, values, and emotions. Looking at how the Georgians provided their family members with mundane objects, we cannot deny that feeding, clothing and giving gifts were conducted with affective emotions. Shopping for and with family proved to be significant moments for fostering family bonds. Likewise, gift-giving played a more active role in expressing familial concern, love, and care, rather than an expression of a rational, informal support system, awaiting reciprocal exchanges in the gift-giving game. Action, not object, was important to fathoming what familial love was. It was precisely the relationships between goods, goods acquisition, and the quality of attentiveness that nurtured the familial relationships and enabled the intimacy behind the closed doors of Georgian homes.

What was, after all, familial love? This article has argued that familial love was a notion that entailed attentiveness, caring, and devotion. In short, love meant attentiveness. As we have seen, family members were attentive to one another,

and they were keen to ascribe their kind attention in letters home. Failure thereof proved critical and was subject to familial scrutiny. In his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Adam Smith suggested the hierarchy of emotional attachments in human life:

[E]very man is certainly ... abler to take care of himself than of any other person. ... After himself, the members of his own family, ... his parents, his children, his brothers and sisters, are naturally the objects of his warmest affections. ... his sympathy with them is more precise and determinate, than it can be with the greater part of other people. It approaches nearer, in short, to what he feels for himself. (Smith, 2002 : 256–257)

Indeed, the importance of family bonds was not only underlined but also naturalized and inscribed in his readers' moral sentiments. It was the duty of man to have sympathy with "the objects of his warmest affections," that is, his family members. The key that unlocked the black box of familial love was the reading of acquisitive activities recounted in family letters. Only then can we understand what love meant to them. Shopping for and gifting the family might have made family members merry, but such mundane activities could have a far wider impact on the individual's familial relationships than we have allowed ourselves to fathom.

References

- Amussen, S. D. (1988). *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Andrew, E. (2004). The Senecan Moment: Patronage and Philosophy in the Eighteenth Century. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 65(2), 277-299.
- Anon. (1730). *Essays Relating to the Conduct of Life: On Various Subjects*. London: J. Stephens.
- Bailey, J. (2003). *Unquiet Lives: Marriage and Marriage Breakdown in England, 1660-1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bailey, J. (2010a). "A Very Sensible Man": Imagining Fatherhood in England c.1750-1830. *History*, 95(3), 267-292.
- Bailey, J. (2010b). The "after-life" of Parenting: Memory, Parentage, and Personal Identity in Britain c. 1760-1830. *Journal of Family History*, 35(3), 249-270.
- Bailey, J. (2010c). "Think wot a Mother must feel": Parenting in English Pauper Letters c. 1760-1834. *Family & Community History*, 13(1), 5-19.
- Bailey, J. (2012). *Parenting in England 1760-1830*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Barker-Benfield, G. J. (1996). *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Barker, H. (2008). Soul, Purse and Family: Middling and Lower-Class Masculinity in Eighteenth-Century Manchester. *Social History*, 33(4), 12-35.
- Barker, H. (2009). A Grocer's Tale: Gender, Family and Class in Early Nineteenth-Century Manchester. *Gender & History* 21(3), 340-357.
- Barthes, R. (1978). *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*. R. Howard (Trans.). New York: Hill & Wang.
- Ben-Amos, I. K. (2000). Gifts and Favors: Informal Support in Early Modern England. *Journal of Modern History*, 72(2), 295-338.

Provision for Love: Mundane Goods and Familial Affection in Eighteenth-Century England, E5144 (1-23)

- Ben-Amos, I. K. (2008). *The Culture of Giving: Informal Support and Gift-Exchange in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Berry, H. (2002). Polite Consumption: Shopping in Eighteenth-Century England. *Transaction of the Royal Historical Society*, 12(1), 375-394.
- Boddice, R. (2018). *The History of Emotions*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Boswell, J. (2008). *Life of Johnson*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bound, F. (2002). Writing the Self? Love and Letter in England, c. 1660-1760. *Literature & History*, 11(1), 1-19.
- Braidwood, W. (1792). *Parental Duties Illustrated from the Word of God, and Enforced by a Particular Account of the Salutary Influence Therein Ascribed to the Proper Government of Children*. London: J. Robertson.
- Brewer, J. (1997). *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Campbell, C. (1987). *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Corfield, P. J. (2022), *The Georgians: The Deeds and Misdeeds of 18th Century Britain*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.
- Correspondence of the Members of the Collier Family*. The Collier Family Papers (SAY 1458-2208), East Sussex Record Office (ESRO), Lewes, UK.
- Davidoff, L. & Hall, C. (1987). *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the Eighteenth Middle Class, 1780-1850*. London & New York: University of Chicago Press.
- Davis, N. Z. (1983). *The Return of Martin Guerre*. Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press.
- Davis, N. Z. (2000). *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France*. Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Dawson, M. (2000). Histories and Texts: Refiguring the Diary of Samuel Pepys. *Historical Journal*, 43(2), 407-431.
- Diary of a Young Girl (1769-76)*. The Russel Family Papers (D/Dru F10), Essex Record Office (ERO), Chelmsford, UK.
- Diary of John Needham*. The Needham Family Papers (EHC 60), Wigan Archives Service (WAS), Leigh, UK.
- Douglas, M. (1982). *In the Active Voice*. London: Routledge.
- Finn, M. (1996). Women, Consumption and Coverture in England, c.1760-1860. *Historical Journal*, 39(3), 703-722.
- Finn, M. (2000). Men's Things: Masculine Possession in the Consumer Revolution. *Social History*, 25(2), 133-154.
- Finn, M. (2006). Colonial Gifts: Family Politics and the Exchange of Goods in British India, c. 1780-1820. *Modern Asian Studies*, 40(1), 203-231.
- Fletcher, A. (1999). *Gender, Sex & Subordination in England 1500-1800*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books.
- Giddens, A. (1992). *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love & Eroticism in Modern Societies*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Gordon, E. & Nair, G. (2003). *Public Lives: Women, Family and Society in Victorian Britain*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.
- Griffin, E. (2020). *Bread Winner: An Intimate History of the Victorian Economy*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Harvey, K. (2009). Men Making Home: Masculinity and Domesticity in Eighteenth-Century Britain. *Gender & History*, 21(3), 520-540.
- Harvey, K. (2012). *The Little Republic: Masculinity and Domestic Authority in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Heal, F. (2008). Food Gifts, the Household and the Politics of Exchange in Early Modern England. *Past & Present*, 199(1), 41-70.

- Hitchcock, T. & Shoemaker, B. (2006). *Tales from the Hanging Court*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Holloway, S. (2019). *The Game of Love in Georgian England: Courtship, Emotions, and Material Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Holloway, S. (2024). The Foods of Love? Food Gifts, Courtship and Emotions in Long Eighteenth-Century England. *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 2(1), 111-134.
- Humphries, J. (2012). *Childhood and Child Labour in the British Industrial Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hunt, M. R. (1996). *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender, and the Family in England, 1680-1780*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hussey, D. (2008). Guns, Horses and Stylish Waistcoats? Male Consumer Activity and Domestic Shopping in Late-Eighteenth- and Early-Nineteenth-Century England. In *idem* & M. Ponsonby (Eds.), *Buying for the Home: Shopping for the Domestic from the Seventeenth Century to the Present* (pp.47-69). London & New York: Routledge.
- Israngura Na Ayudhya, T. (2014). *Men in the Family: Constructions and Performance of Masculinity in England, c. 1700-1820* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation] University of London, United Kingdom.
- Jackson, B. (2025). *Material Masculinities: Men and Goods in Eighteenth-Century England*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Johnson, S. (1755). *A Dictionary of the English Language*. London: J. F. & C. Rivington.
- Jütte, R. (2005). *A History of the Senses: From Antiquity to Cyberspace*. J. Lynn (Trans.). Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Klein, L. E. (1994). *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness: Moral Discourse and Cultural Politics in Early Eighteenth-Century England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kopytoff, I. (1986). The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process. In A. Appadurai (Ed.), *Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (pp.64-91). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Langford, P. (1989). *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- La Roche, S. V. (2018). *Sophie in London, 1786: Being the Diary of Sophie V. La Roche*. C. Williams (Trans.). London: Forgotten Books.
- Laslett, P. (1969). Size and Structure of the Household in England Over Three Centuries. *Population Studies*, 23(2), 199-223.
- L'Estrange, R. (1679). *Seneca's Morals by Way of Abstract*. London: Black & White.
- Letters Addressed to Edmond Williamson, Rector of Millbrook*. The Williamson Family Papers (M10/2), Bedfordshire Archives Service (BA), Bedford, UK.
- Letters of Knollys and Banbury Families*. The Knollys and Banbury Families Papers (1M44), Hampshire Record Office (HRO), Winchester, UK.
- Lyons, M. (1999). Love Letters and Writing Practices: On *Ecritures Intimes* in the Nineteenth Century. *Journal of Family History*, 24(2), 232-239.
- Macfarlane, A. (1970). *Marriage and Love in England, 1300-1840: Modes of Reproduction 1300-1840*. New York: Basic Books.
- Mackley, A. (Ed.). (2005). *John Buxton Norfolk Gentleman and Architect: Letters to His Son, 1719-1729*. King's Lynn: Norfolk Record Society.
- Mauss, M. (1969). *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*. I. Cunnison (Trans.). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- McCormack, M. (2025). *Shoes and the Georgian Man*. London: Bloomsbury.

Provision for Love: Mundane Goods and Familial Affection in Eighteenth-Century England, E5144 (1-23)

- Moritz, C. P. (1965). *Journeys of a German in England: A Walking-Tour of England in 1782*. R. Nettel (Trans.). London: Eland Books.
- Mullan, J. (1990). *Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Okin, S. M. (1981). Women and the Making of the Sentimental Family. *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 11(1), 65-88.
- Osteen, M. (2002). Introduction. In *idem* (Ed.), *The Question of the Gift: Essays Across Disciplines*, (pp.1-41). London: Routledge.
- Pepys, S. (2003). *The Diary of Samuel Pepys: A Selection*. Verginia: Indy Publish.
- Percival, T. (1775). *Father's Instructions: Consisting of Moral Tales, Fables, and Reflections*. London: Warrington.
- Phillips, N. (2006). *Women in Business, 1700-1850*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press.
- Phillips, N. (2010). Parenting the Profligate Son: Masculinity, Gentility and Juvenile Delinquency in England, 1791-1814. *Gender & History*, 22(1), 92-108.
- Pick, D. & Roper, L. (2004). Introduction. In *idem* (Eds.), *Dreams and History: The Interpretation of Dreams from Ancient Greece to Modern Psychoanalysis*, (pp.1-21). London: Routledge.
- Plumb, J. H. (1985). The New World of Children in Eighteenth-Century England. *Past & Present*, 67(1), 64-95.
- Pollock, L. A. (1983). *Forgotten Children: Parent-Child Relations from 1500 to 1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Roper, L. (2010). "To His Most Learned and Dearest Friend": Reading Luther's Letters. *German History*, 28(3), 283-295.
- Roper, M. (2005). Slipping Out of View: Subjectivity and Emotion in Gender History. *History Workshop Journal*, 59(1), 57-72.
- Rosenwein, B. H. (2022). *Love: A History in Five Fantasies*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Rublack, U. (2010). *Dressing Up: Cultural Identity in Renaissance Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Schopenhauer, J. (1988). *A Lady Travels: Journeys in England and Scotland from the Diaries of Johanna Schopenhauer*. R. Michaelis-Jena & W. Merson, (Eds. & Trans.). London: Routledge.
- Scott, J. W. (1986). Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis. *American Historical Review*, 91(5), 1053-1075.
- Smith, A. (2002). *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stanley, L. (2004). The Epistolarium: On Theorizing Letters and Correspondences. *Auto/Biography*, 12(3), 201-235.
- Steele, R. (1711). *What are the Duties of Man and Wife Towards Each Other*. London: Fos Bliss.
- Stobart, J. (2025). *Life in the Georgian Parsonage: Morals, Material Goods and the English Clergy*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Stobart, J. & Hann, A. (2005). Sites of Consumption: The Display of Goods in Provincial Shops in Eighteenth-Century England. *Journal of the Social History Society*, 2(2), 165-187.
- Stone, L. (1977). *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800*. London: Littlehampton Book Services.
- Style, J. (1993). Manufacturing, Consumption and Design in Eighteenth-Century England. In J. Brewer & R. Porter (Eds.), *Consumption and the World of Goods*, (pp.527-554). New York: Routledge.
- Styles, J. (2007). *The Dress of the People: Everyday Fashion in Eighteenth-Century England*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.
- Tadmor, N. (1996). The Concept of the Household-Family in Eighteenth-Century England. *Past & Present*, 151(1), 111-140.
- The Fuller Family Letter Collection*. The Fuller Family Papers (EHC 201), Wigan Archives Service (WAS), Leigh, UK.
- Thirsk, J. (2006). *Food in Early Modern England: Phases, Fads, Fashions 1500-1760*. London: Hambledon Continuum.
- Thomas, K. (2018). *In Pursuit of Civility: Manners and Civilization in Early Modern England*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.

Provision for Love: Mundane Goods and Familial Affection in Eighteenth-Century England, E5144 (1-23)

- Thompson, E. P. (1972). Anthropology and the Discipline of Historical Context. *Midlands History*, 1(3), 41-55.
- Tickell, S. (2018). *Shoplifting in Eighteenth-Century England*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press.
- Tosh, J. (1999). *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.
- Trumbach, R. (1978). *The Rise of the Egalitarian Family: Aristocratic Kinship and Domestic Relations in Eighteenth-Century England*. New York & London: Academic Pr.
- Turner, D. M. (2002). *Fashioning Adultery: Gender, Sex, and Civility in England, 1660-1740*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Vickery, A. (1993). Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History. *Historical Journal*, 36(2), 383-414.
- Vickery, A. (1998). *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.
- Vickery, A. (2006a). His and Hers: Gender, Consumption and Household Accounting in Eighteenth-Century England. In R. Harris et al. (Eds.), *The Art of Survival: Gender and History in Europe, 1450-2000: Essays in Honour of Olwen Hufton, Past & Present*, Supplement, 1(1), 12-38.
- Vickery, A. (2006b). "Neat and Not Too Showey": Words and Wallpaper in Regency England. In J. Style & A. Vickery (Eds.), *Gender, Taste, and Material Culture in Britain and North America, 1700-1830* (pp.201-222). New Haven & London: Yale University Press.
- Vickery, A. (2009). *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.
- Vickery, A. (2021). A Self off the Shelf: The Rise of the Pocket Diary in Eighteenth-Century England. *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 54(3), 667-686.
- Walsh, C. (1995). Shop Design and the Display of Goods in Eighteenth-Century London. *Journal of Design History*, 8(3), 157-176.
- Walsh, C. (2006). Shops, Shopping, and the Art of Decision Making in Eighteenth-Century England. In J. Style & A. Vickery (Eds.), *Gender, Taste, and Material Culture in Britain and North America, 1700-1830* (pp.151-177). New Haven & London: Yale University Press.
- Whyman, S. E. (1999). *Sociability and Power in Late-Stuart England: The Cultural Worlds of the Verneys 1660-1720*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Zeldin, Th. (1994). *An Intimate History of Humanity*. London: Sinclair-Stevenson.