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## Chapter Twelve

# "I was anxious to counteract the unpleasant intelligence": Recovering Eliza Hayley[1]

Francesca Blanch-Serrat

> Tho not so permanently settled as I could wish I already feel very happy in being mistress of my own time which ~~xx~~ I doubt not I shall fill up very chearfully [sic] if I am blessed with health, & upon this article I am told by all my acquaintance here I have reason to be sanguine since my improved looks already do credit to the Derby air.[2]

With these uplifting reflections, the philosopher, essayist, translator, and correspondent Eliza Ball Hayley (b.1750-1797) informed her estranged husband William of her being safely and happily settled in Derby. Hayley's letters are a testimonial of the ways in which she navigated a forcibly changing identity during a critical moment in her life. From the time of her separation and until her death, Hayley existed in a social marginal space. She was exiled from her family and from her home, both married and without a husband, childless and with no chance to remarry, without a home to manage, and financially dependent on her estranged husband. If she was not a wife, mother, or housekeeper, how was she to be defined by society and by herself?

In this chapter, unlike elsewhere in this volume, I will refer to Eliza Hayley by her surname, and to William by his given name. In doing so, I aim to course-correct the marginalisation and infantilisation of her character in contemporary and modern scholarship, where she has been either "Eliza" or "Mrs Hayley". With the purpose to restore her personal and authorial agency and vindicate her identity aside from her husband's, referring to her by her surname is the first step. Hayley, then, was born in Chichester (West Sussex) to Thomas Ball (1698-1770), archdeacon and dean of Chichester (1736, 1754) and Margaret Mill (1712-

[1] This research is part of a project that has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No.805436).

[2] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 9 July 1789. *OSB,* MSS FILE 6908.

1783). She was educated at a school in Chelsea until she was fourteen,[3] and became fluent in French, an avid reader, and an able pianist. In 1769, she married her childhood friend William Hayley (1745-1820), and in 1774, with William's mother, they settled in the Hayleys' villa at Eartham, remodelling it into their family home. There, she became part of the literary and intellectual coterie formed by, amongst others, George Romney, Charlotte Smith, James Hurdis, and Anna Seward. The Hayleys separated in 1789 presumably on account of the latter's mental illness, at which point in time William sent her to Derby. In the years following the couple's separation, Hayley visited the literary hubs of Bath (in 1780 and 1781) and London, settling in the latter in 1794. In that time, Hayley became a published author, translating and introducing *Essays on Friendship and Old-Age by the Marchioness de Lambert* (1780),[4] and penning a philosophical essay, *The Triumph of Acquaintance over Friendship: An Essay for the Times* (1796) [5]. Aside from these two works, her unpublished corpus includes the epistolary record that is the focus of this analysis.

At the time of this publication, scholarly references to Hayley are largely limited to biographical footnotes and always in relation to her husband, hardly ever recognising her own intellectual merit.[6] Only recently has her writing career begun to be acknowledged and approached critically,[7] and part of her manuscript correspondence has been brought to the

[3] William Hayley, 1823. *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of William Hayley, Esq. The Friend and Biographer of Cowper*.(London: S. And R. Bentley, Vol I) 33.
[4] By the French *salonnière* Anne-Thérèse de Lambert.
[5] Eliza Hayley contacted George Steevens, the Shakespeare commentator, while she was living in London. According to the Folger Shakespeare Library database, on February 1, 1796 she sent Steevens a letter, written in the third person, referring to a manuscript essay. (Folger call number: C.b.10 (85), which could be either *The Triumph* or an unknown essay. This is very significant because it reveals that Hayley produced more texts than the ones we previously knew of. Interestingly, at that point William and Steevens had fallen out in 1784 (*Memoirs* I,322-29), something Hayley would have been aware of.
[6] See Judith Phillips Stanton, 2003. *The Collected Letters of Charlotte Smith*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press); Lisa L. Moore, 2015. *The Collected Poems of Anna Seward*. (Abingdon: Routledge); Paula R. Backscheider, and Catherine E. Ingrassia, 2009. *British Women Poets of the Long Eighteenth Century: An Anthology* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press).
[7] See Francesca Blanch-Serrat, 2023. "Women Translating Women: Resisting the Male Intellectual Canon in Eliza Hayley's Essays on Friendship and Old-Age, by the Marchioness De Lambert (1780)". *ENTHYMEMA*, 31:78-90.

fore by *A Museum of Relationships: The correspondence of William Hayley (1745-1820) (AMoR),* a pilot project led by Lisa Gee and based at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge University that has transcribed, edited, and contextualised part of William Hayley's correspondence. In spite of her published works and her epistolary record, what we know about Hayley is largely based on, and limited to, her estranged husband's biased portrayal of her in his *Memoirs*, the image that has – where this has happened at all – permeated the public consciousness to this day. This is hardly an isolated instance. Our understanding of the lives and *oeuvre* of eighteenth-century English women writers is largely conditioned by the biographical texts that established their posthumous authorial image, texts that were often authored or edited by men in their role as critics and cultural agents, and that in many cases, such as Hayley's, informed the writers' reputation for years to come. By rewriting their life stories with an androcentric and often misogynistic bias, male commentators effectively took away women writers' agency over their public portrayal. Furthermore, the fact that men's biographical texts of women writers took precedence over their own life writing displays the bias of critics, readers, and scholars alike in conferring authority to male voices, to the detriment of the female authors, which at the same time illustrates the androcentric practices in the reception and the transmission of knowledge. Indeed, in his *Memoirs*, William makes invisible Hayley's intellectual output and infantilises her, portraying her as fragile and submissive.

This chapter highlights the critical role of life writing as a tool to assert women's agency over their own self-presentation. It argues that the close-reading analysis of Hayley's correspondence enables us to recover her self-portrait and, consequently, to restore her personal and authorial agency. Further, it considers self-presentation as an exercise of resistance to the implicit androcentric and misogynistic bias of male intervention in the posthumous record of women writers' lives and careers. Often, as is the case with Hayley,

this male intervention resulted in the public disappearance of female authors and their intellectual contributions. This chapter will analyse Hayley's manuscript letters comprising the partially reconstructed record of her correspondence from the mid-1770s to the 1790s and compare the image of Hayley that emerges from her own writing to the biographical representation of her by William. Doing so will shed light on the gendered dynamics that underpin the differences between each portrayal. This analysis uses the theoretical framework of life writing, which comprehends not only texts by "certain (male, white, exceptional) people and certain (realist, unified, developmental) forms" of life writing but also, a wide range of material, including diaries and journals, essays, and correspondence, as well as works of fiction.[8] Expanding the canon of what we recognise as life writing to include marginalised voices and forms sheds light on all the texts written by women who did not necessarily follow the forms of life writing men standardised. It also broadens our understanding of life writing as a genre and recovers women's testimonies, acknowledging the benefit of valuing contributions that fall outside the limits of traditional forms and genres. Doing so redresses "the exclusion and marginalisation of women within studies of auto/biography and the neglect of their writings in its theorization".[9] As Felicity Nussbaum argued in *The Autobiographical Subject*, autobiography provided a space where patriarchal ideology could be inscribed and resisted. This is what the analysis of Hayley's correspondence as an example of self-presentation will accomplish. While Hayley could not resist the patriarchal portrayal of herself constructed by her husband after her passing, approaching both texts in parallel does not only recover Hayley's own image and her agency. It is, in effect, an exercise of resistance and revaluation. Hayley's letters were never intended

[8] Susan Civale, 2019. *Romantic women's life writing: Reputation and afterlife*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press).
[9] Daniel Cook and Amy Culley, 2012. *Women's Life Writing 1700-1850 Gender, Gender and Authorship*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan) 1.

for public consumption, and are an often clumsy and contradictory, honest, and multi-faceted, faithful portrayal of its author. In juxtaposition, William's *Memoirs*, as with the great majority of published self-writing and "private" letters, were either edited or written with the purpose of portraying himself in a specific light, in order to present a public persona suited to his needs or wishes.

As Nussbaum declared, "autobiographical writing, published and private, serves as a location where residual and emergent notions of gender and class clash to replace and challenge reigning notions of identity".[10] I understand "identity" as defined by Helen Yallop: a concept that "incorporates all the aspects that help construct a person's sense of who they are, collectively or individually (...), the various concepts on offer that may help a person make sense of themselves".[11] Relatedly, Yallop has argued that in the eighteenth century the notion of personhood was indivisible from the body. In addition, Gullette contends that selfhood is a set of narratives formed by an overlapping of identities that have evolved with age, and describes it as "an achievement of storytelling about whatever has come to us through aging (...), a subset of autobiography (...) a narrative that anyone can tell about one's self, to self and others".[12] While this analysis is not concerned with age and ageing, it is an inherent factor in the formation of selfhood and in life writing. Besides, a woman's marital status in the eighteenth century conditioned the way they perceived themselves as well as the way they were perceived and treated by others.[13] At a time where women went from maidens to either wives or old maids, Hayley, in her middle age, was forced to redefine herself in

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[10] Felicity Nussbaum, 1995. *The Autobiographical Subject: Gender and Ideology in Eighteenth-Century England*. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press) xiv.
[11] Helen Yallop, 2015. *Age and Identity in Eighteenth-Century England*. (Abingdon: Routledge) 122.
[12] Margaret M. Gullette, 2004. *Aged by Culture*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) 124.
[13] See Susannah Ottaway, 2004. *The Decline of Life: Old Age in Eighteenth-Century England*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).; Amy Froide, 2005. *Never Married: Singlewomen in Early Modern England*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press); Devoney Looser, 2008. *Women Writers and Old Age in Great Britain, 1750-1850*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press).; Alice Crossley, 2017. "Introduction", in *Nineteenth Century Gender Studies Special Issue: Age and Gender: Aging in the Nineteenth Century*, 13.2. ; Yallop..

singlehood: she refers to herself as "a chearful old maid",[14] talking about coming to terms with her new situation, as with her new identity, saying that at thirty-nine, compliments on her improved looks "could not but reconcile me to single blessedness & Derby".[15] Once a young maiden, then a wife, in her new life she reimagines herself as an old maid for the freedom it affords her: she does not have the obligation or need to find a husband, and she is free from being accosted by prospective ones. Only occasionally do Hayley's letters from this period dwell on feelings of anguish or alienation, which are frequent in the paratext to *The Triumph*. Rather, they seem to reveal a process of opening to new people, experiences, and circles of acquaintance that extended beyond those she had frequented as William's wife. This openness is precisely what I contend conveys the textual reinvention of the self that informed her epistolary record. However, if that is a sincere depiction of her feelings or an exercise in self-portraying as content with the situation for the consumption of others at Eartham is unclear. The limits of the factual accuracy of Hayley's self-presentation are not clear-cut.

*Recovering Hayley's self-portrayal: Self-presentation in the correspondence*

A selection of sixteen of Hayley's letters to her husband are included in his *Memoirs.* These are mostly from the 1780s, faithful to the original, but in many cases redacted. However, the vast majority of her epistolary record remains unpublished, and is currently held at various archives. The West Sussex Record Office (WSRO) holds eight letters from 1777-78 and

[14] Fitzwilliam, Hayley-XXI-67.
[15] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 4 October 1789. *OSB*, MSS FILE 6912. "single blessedness" to refer to old-maidism is of Shakespearean origin. In *Midsummer Night's Dream,* we find "But earthlier happy is the rose distilled / Than that which, withering on the virgin thorn, / Grows, lives, and dies in single blessedness". William Shakespeare. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Barbara Mowat, Paul Werstine, Michael Poston, Rebecca Niles, eds (Washington, DC: Folger Shakespeare Library, n.d.), accessed 1 December 2023. ll.78–80.

1794,[16] Yale University's Beinecke library holds thirty-four letters from 1789, while thirteen more letters from 1792 – a subset of a much bigger holding – can be found at the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge. These thirteen letters have been collected, transcribed, edited, and digitised by the *A Museum of Relationships* project at the Fitzwilliam Museum. The epistolary record held at the Beinecke library are available in digitised form, and the ones in WSRO are only catalogued. I have transcribed the 42 letters from the Beinecke library and WSRO for the purposes of this analysis. With the intention of offering a transcription that is as close as possible to the original, I have maintained Hayley's spelling, emphasis (underlined words and phrases), and editing. Any illegible words have been reproduced as "???". Recovering these manuscripts allows for a partial reconstruction of Hayley's recorded memoirs between the period 1776-1794 through fifty letters, before her separation from William and only a few years before her death.[17] The analysis of the corpus of manuscript letters is organised according to theme, instead of chronologically or grouped according to their repository. This choice seeks to showcase how, through the most salient thematic aspects of Hayley's correspondence, we can trace the author's self-presentation as a complex, nuanced person, her relationship with her estranged husband and her adjustment to her new reality.

In the summer of 1789, Hayley had recently settled in Derby. She writes that she is starting "to recover my senses, & cease to be what I have for these last four months fancied myself, a wandering hero"[18] and making it "my endeavour to grow reconciled to my

[16] These letters are all part of the bundle "Add Mss 2816-2817 - Letters of the Hayley Family" and do not have distinct call numbers. In order to identify them separately, I will refer to their date.
[17] All but five of the letters analysed are addressed to William. These five are part of the bundle Add Mss 2816-2817, written between 1777-78 to John Thornton, William's fellow at Trinity College and close friend. These are excluded from this analysis as they were written prior to the Hayleys' separation.
[18] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 7 July 1789. *OSB*, MSS FILE 6912.

destiny"[19] in what she unambiguously declares is "my new life".[20] While she admits that she is not yet "so permanently settled as I could wish", she writes that she finds the situation agreeable: "I already feel very happy in being mistress of my own time which ~~xx~~ I doubt not I shall fill up very chearfully [sic]" adding, tellingly, a conditional "if I am blessed with health".[21] Soon Hayley starts painting a colourful picture of the amiable and close-knit community she found in Derby and Bath. She writes warmly to William of her friends and neighbours, portraying herself as engaged, sociable, and in high spirits. She says she finds Derby "very gay with balls & concerts" [22], keeping her busy with its amusements: "I went to the ball last night but it was so late /the minuets not beginning till near eleven/ that I resisted all persuasions to encounter the same fatigue to night; especially as I feel myself in duty bund [sic] to go to the play tomorrow in compliment to the steward Mr Biscoe"[23], although she admits that "it is better for me to be forced into society, to act a part like others, yet I earnestly wish for my lodgings to doze away my time alone;".[24] Her new friends are caring and welcoming: she celebrates Mrs. Pigott's "affectionate sisterly attention to me has made me truly indebted for her"[25], and tells William that "Mr Coke loves society & conducts his parties better than any man I ever met with & M[rs] Heathcote is so extremely to my taste & so interesting from that tender melancholy which will never leave her that she is quite a rival to my dear Miss Willis".[26] Hayley's letters fit with other examples of women's life writing in that they "frequently acknowledge the communal aspects of self-presentation", sharing a focus on "personal relationships, communal identities, collective memories, and collaborations" that contrasts with "the idea of autobiography as an individualistic practice,

[19] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 5 July 1792. Fitzwilliam, Hayley-XXI-64.
[20] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 1 November 1789. *OSB*, MSS FILE 6915.
[21] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 9 July 1789. *OSB,* MSS FILE 6908.
[22] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 23 December 1789. *OSB*, MSS FILE 6916.
[23] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 19 August 1789. *OSB*, MSS FILE 6910.
[24] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 14 May 1789. *OSB*, MSS FILE 6906.
[25] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 23 December 1789. *OSB*, MSS FILE 6916.
[26] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 1 November 1789. *OSB*, MSS FILE 6915.

or an assertion of unique difference and solitary genius".[27] Indeed, a salient aspect of the correspondence is that Hayley finds comfort and a renewed self-confidence in the company of other women: "We are generally only women a sisterhood of M^rs^ Beridge's friends elegant & well informed".[28] This is especially evident in the letters in *AMoR*, which showcase Hayley's new-found self-confidence in the ways in which she challenges William, as we shall see.

Hayley's new life and community are apparently seamlessly blending with the old life she leaves behind at Eartham. She expresses not only acceptance but gratitude at her new situation "I need not attempt to express the satisfaction which your family arrangement gives me",[29] but she acknowledges the emotional strain attached to it "To have got over the parting at Eartham is a satisfaction I cannot describe & compared to this every other event appears light to me."[30] Hayley always has the home and family she left behind in her mind, and constantly asks after them, especially after her husband's son, Thomas Alphonso. Her letters reveal that she not only relies on her husband for financial support but also to maintain her ties to her roots and her family, a condition of the utmost importance to her, as her sister had died in 1785 and she was estranged from her brother-in-law: "while I continue to [page break] receive pleasing accounts of you & your dear little companion. I trust we shall go on rationally."[31] In her first letter, written during Christmas, she subtly expresses her sadness at not being with her family in their home "if I am so happy as to continue to receive good accounts from Eartham I trust that my time will pass smoothly at this supposed joyous season".[32] Learning about the events at home gives her a bittersweet feeling, a "melancholy

[27] Amy Culley, 2014. *British Women's Life Writing, 1760-1840: Friendship, Community, and Collaboration.* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan) 2.2.
[28] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 24 May 1789. *OSB*, MSS FILE 6906.
[29] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 21 May 1789. *OSB*, MSS FILE 6906.
[30] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 26 May 1789. *OSB*, MSS FILE 6905.
[31] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 21 May 1789. *OSB*, MSS FILE 6906.
[32] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 12 December 1789. *OSB*, MSS FILE 6916.

satisfaction": "Your kind letter which I received yesterday afforded me as you will believe melancholy satisfaction. The first object of my ??? is to hear of your & the dear Boy's health, & with this assurance I ???? repose in a gentle tranquility [sic]. I am nevertheless sincerely affected for poor Mary".[33]

Hayley left behind William and Thomas Alphonso, the son of William and Mary Cockerell. While the particularities of the Hayleys' familiar arrangements are beyond the scope of this chapter, it is interesting to see how Hayley portrays all four of them as a family unit—though not in equal hierarchical terms, as Cockerell is always referred to in accordance with her class and status—, a family that she accepts being away from but nonetheless misses. These few excerpts bring to the fore the family dynamic at Eartham. For instance, in one of the letters, Thomas Alphonso writes in his own hand a postscript calling Hayley "mama" and Mary "Mary"[34] (Hayley always kindly remembers Cockerell when writing to Eartham: "My kind respects to Mary who will rejoice with me that this [teeth extraction] operation is over". In the eighteenth century, such arrangements were not unheard of: "the familiar bond existed regardless of actual kinship status", which allows for "broader definitions of family [...] and in turn open up new and richer readings of representations of marriage and family".[35] Bailey points out that it was common for "separated husbands with some means" to "reconstruct their household with female servants or relations as 'surrogate' wives, in terms of household manager, child-carer and, sometimes, sexual partner" (2003: 179), as it was the case with William and Mary Cockerell, although there is evidence that Cockerell had occupied that position before the separation, as did Catan, friend and companion to Hayley, in 1776-7, which proves that the role of sexual partner had been

[33] Ibid.
[34] 12 January 1794 *Letters of the Hayley Family, 1776-1797.* WSRO Add Mss 2816-2817.
[35] Jenny DiPlacidi and Karl Leydecker, 2017. *After Marriage in the Long Eighteenth Century: Literature, Law and Society*. (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan) 7.

fulfilled by other women throughout their marriage, on account of Hayley's refusal to engage in sexual relations with her husband.[36] The letters also portray Hayley as a mother, when she recounts to William Thomas Alphonso's visit to her in Derby, showing the child to be very happy in her company "He has been in excellent spirits the whole day & very happy with his friend",[37] enjoying the social activities they partook in "I write at a late hour after having got over a Fairy? Concert which has long been in agitation, & as Tom tho extremely well is too much fatigued" and paying dutiful attention to his studies "on his next visit to Derby we shall find more time for various studies"[38], and anxiously communicating to William the details of his tooth extraction surgery.[39]

Hayley's correspondence also evinces that she was not always quietly satisfied, and that while she had to submit to her estranged husband's demands, she did not avoid confrontation when needed. This is especially evident in a set of letters from 1792 concerning William's insistence that she does not travel south for the summer, as she wishes to:

> I certainly shall not drive you to France. I would rather go thither myself. You may therefore return to Eartham as soon as you please, but I will request you to inform me when you return, that I may not run the risque of meeting you in town. When you say that you will not remain at Eartham if I am in Sussex I cannot suppose that you wish to prevent my visiting the eastern end of the county; I should feel myself as remote

[36] Allegedly, Hayley was unable to produce a child, which Cockerell did (Lisa Gee, 2020. "A Task enough to make one frantic': William Hayley's Memorialising." *European Journal of Life Writing* 9: 35-55.48 and Stephen Leach, 2022. *Joseph Wright and the Final Farewell*. (United Kingdom: Cambridge Scholars Publishing) 185. There is evidence that she wished to avoid sexual relations with her husband (Seward 1811: 5: 22). William described her as "a person to whom nature not only refused the privilege of producing a child, but even those natural desires which she has wisely and tenderly given to modesty herself for the preservation of the human race" (quoted in Evelyn Morchand Bishop, 1951. *Blake's Hayley: the Life, Works, and Friendships of William Hayley*. (London: Gollancz). 65. Giving further clues into Hayley's sexuality from his point of view, William also wrote "she ne'er can feel what all her sex have felt, the glowing impulse of impassion'd fire! stranger to genial warmth, she ne'er can melt, in the sweet trance of satisfied desire" (quoted in Gee).
[37] Undated letter to William. WSRO Add Mss 2816-2817.
[38] 12 January 1794 WSRO Add Mss 2816-2817.
[39] 26 January 1794 WSRO Add Mss 2816-2817.

> from Eartham as I should at Southampton: & in the very secluded life you lead I could suppose it possible for you to be unconscious of my residence at Felpham - but I am no judge of poetical influencies & affections.[40]

She finally resolves to go to Parkgate, in South Yorkshire, after William vetoes her going to Hastings too, confessing that in her initial plan she wished to "to enjoy a few conversations, for a few hours at a time with you", adding, very tellingly, that:

> Tho I have during the last twenty two years been harassed by a series of domestic vexation & perplexity which I conceive would have worn the patience of a greater stoic than I profess to be, yet I cannot believe that even in the most trying moments, I could ever have been so far transported by passion as to wish to renounce a country, altogether the most beautiful, the most healthy, & the most desirable to reside in that I have yet seen. I have nevertheless long ceased to wish to spend more than a day at a time with you, feeling perfectly convinced by your conduct as well as your assurances that it is most for our comfort & credit to live separate: & your two last letters have entirely cured me of the wish of conversing with you in any other manner than by letter. You may therefore depend upon my never surprising or distressing you by a visit in sickness or in health without your invitation.[41]

In the letters following this event there is an explicit feeling of anger, that Hayley clearly articulates "I therefore lose no time in satisfying your poetical feelings by the soothing reflexion of having driven me from my old friends & the southern coast this summer".[42] Although I do not claim this reflection displays a sincere portrayal of Hayley's enduring feelings about her exile, and I consider that she might have portrayed herself as content with the situation to her husband when she was not, I suggest this portrayal is key in our

[40] Fitzwilliam, Hayley-XXI-57.
[41] Fitzwilliam, Hayley-XXI-62.
[42] Fitzwilliam, Hayley-XXI-63.

understanding of Hayley's character, her relationship to William and their arrangement, all three of which were more nuanced than they appear in William's *Memoirs*. Hayley's correspondence showcases the self-portrayal of her inner mind in its complexity, depicts how her feelings fluctuated over time, and shows that anger and resentment coexisted with admiration, love, and the joy at her new community and social life with the grief of never being able to go back home.

Domestic economy is another recurrent theme in Hayley's letters from that period, especially her difficulties finding suitable accommodation and service. While she presents herself as feeling financially and emotionally safe in her new environment, the letters evince the relationship that is established between the Hayleys after their separation. In spite of their distance, William continues to be solely responsible for Hayley's social status and financial survival. In this sense, Probert questions whether women would "embrace an arrangement that left them vulnerable to the possibility of desertion without legal redress".[43] This is telling of Hayley's forced reliance on her estranged husband's kindness. She constantly asks William for advice and for permission on a variety of issues, especially on financial and logistic matters: "You will settle my lodging in town exactly as you find it most convenient",[44] asserting her independence by challenging William's authority "I will therefore request you to engage my former apartments for me these said months of July & August".[45] In juxtaposition, she uses apologetic terms to refer to money matters, which could suggest her discomfort dealing with money, her deference to William's authority as her husband, or her intelligence in mirroring William's rhetoric around pecuniary matters, being aware as she was of William's anxiety around the topic: "You will excuse my taking the

[43] Rebeca Probert, 2009. *Marriage Law and Practice in the Long Eighteenth Century: A Reassessment*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 123.
[44] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 26 March 1789. *OSB*, MSS FILE 6905.
[45] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 28 April 1789. Fitzwilliam Hayley XXI 58.

liberty of speaking upon this very unpleasant subject".[46] She dutifully keeps William informed of her movements regarding her domestic economy, carefully noting all her expenses for his supervision. For this reason, the letters can also be read as a rich historical document on both domestic finances and the domestic life of a separated woman: "I was obliged to buy two pair[s] of candle sticks [...] They cost me 2 guineas—therefore when you have that soon to spare I will request you to pay it to Beyer (for the Piano Forte) who I daresay will readily give us credit & I will in the mean time esteem the candlesticks as your Gift."[47] Hayley is also mindful of her expenses: "by this plan I must owe a great deal which I am convinced is very bad economy & befor [sic] a short time possessed of more money than I wish to keep in a lodging."[48] "I give her /washing & tea included/ but eight guineas which is certainly very moderate indeed",[49] "I rejoice when any part of my conduct affords you satisfaction, & it is my intention to adhere to the plan of not drinking wine were it merely from motives of economy".[50] In addition, William acts as the necessary link between Hayley's past material life and her present as an exile "I will now trouble you also to send the box of linen ?? which it has been inconvenient for me not to have".[51]

Finally, Hayley's correspondence at this time provides insight into the intellectual dimension of her identity.[52] In them, Hayley showcases her education and her philosophical skills, quoting with ease from writers and thinkers of renown like Pope, Shakespeare, de Sévigné, Voltaire, de Lambert, Fielding, and Chesterfield. She is well versed in the classics,

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[46] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 4 October 1789. *OSB*, MSS FILE 6912.
[47] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 8 October 1789. *OSB*, MSS FILE 6913.
[48] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 7 July 1789. *OSB*, MSS FILE 6908.
[49] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 12 December 1789. *OSB*, MSS FILE 6916.
[50] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 14 May 1789. *OSB*, MSS FILE 6908.
[51] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 12 December 1789. *OSB*, MSS FILE 6916.
[52] In addition, Hayley's published works *Essays on Friendship and Old-Age* (1780) and *The Triumph of Acquaintance over Friendship* (1796)—especially their paratext—are incomparable sources of information on the author's intellectual and authorial self and a great example of self-presentation, which, when read in parallel to the letters, uncover Hayley's self-identification as a philosopher. See Blanch-Serratfor an analysis of her authorial self-presentation and her self-insertion into the philosophical canon in her *Essays*.

and she keeps up with the latest releases. She tells William about the books she reads, her critical opinions and thoughts on the book market, and she keeps him apprised of the success of his publications within her community, acting as William's correspondent (in the modern sense of the word) in the effervescent and culturally active north of England. She is also up to date with politics, and freely expresses her reflections on the burning issues of the day. Hayley briefly discusses politics, always in relation to literature and philosophy. Referring to the French Revolution, she laments "the destruction of two names so illustrious as that of Monsir Rochefaucoult [sp?] & ??? Madame de Lambert",[53] authors she is well familiar with, adding her wish to become better acquainted with the literature surrounding the current political events "I must read Burke again to refresh my politics",[54] "Even I am going to read Payne after reading the Rights of Woman [...] All the Evanses & Strutts who are great Revolutionists admire it with enthusiasm & I confess I so highly approve of the general design that I wish the Work more perfect, or rather less defective".[55] Speaking of Mary Wollstonecraft, there is a change in Hayley's manners towards William after reading her work, when she attemps to assert her independence more forcefully. She writes to William in the following terms "I must however thank you in the name of all the Partizans of M.rs Wollstoncraft [sic] for the liberality with which you speak of this Champion of one [sic] Sex".[56] Further, she acknowledges in passing the effect of the political turmoil the continent is experiencing in the book trade "D.r Darwin's Bookseller is of my opinion: since he declines publishing the first part of the Botanic Garden (which he purchases) till politics are become more settled & consequently less interesting".[57]

[53] According to Gee's editorial comments in the transcription, "Eliza was probably referring to Marie Thérèse Louise of Savoy, Princesse de Lamballe, who was killed on September 3rd".
[54] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 16 April 1792. Fitzwilliam, Hayley-XXI-59.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 28 April 1792. Fitzwilliam, Hayley-XXI-58.
[57] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 16 April 1792. Fitzwilliam, Hayley-XXI-59.

Hayley is an avid reader, who, like many others, is dependent on the town's circulating library and book society to provide her with reading material: "One of the pleasantest divines I have ever seen who spent the last week with us speaks of her [Charlotte Smith's] new publication with such delight that I quite long to read it, but I fear I must wait till I return to Derby as we have no circulating library & I am told I shall hardly be able to get it".[58] "Aikins Life of Howard which M.r Coke kindly lends me from the book society".[59] Another source of reading material are Hayley's own friends, such as the writers Charlotte Smith, Anna Seward and Erasmus Darwin, who routinely either visit or correspond with her, and often send her their publications: "I will however trouble you if you write to Mrs [Charlotte] Smith to tell her that [illegible: Ethelinde?] [page break] arrived ??? two days ago [...] I am reading with great ??? to oblige some of my kind Friends with the perusal of this most interesting novel. If M[rs] Smith is coming to town I will beg you to tell me".[60] "Mr Darwin [...] offered me books & has lent me Miss Seward's volume of criticisms on the Loves of the Plants which I shall study with the Poem itself when I am settled."[61] This portrays Hayley, although not as an active participant, certainly as part of the literary community she first met at Eartham. Their relationship with the circle is not only intellectual but also friendly. She calls on Erasmus Darwin at Derby, visits Anna Seward at Lichfield,[62] sees William Melmoth (to whom she dedicates *Essays on Friendship and Old Age*) and participates in Lady Miller's assemblies at Bath-Easton (where she submits a poem William wrote expressly after she asked him to)

Hayley also discusses William's writing with him. It is particularly telling of how Hayley viewed William's work and her part in it that she refers to William's corpus as "our

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[58] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 7 Setember 1792. Fitzwilliam, Hayley-XXI-67.
[59] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 16 April 1792. Fitzwilliam, Hayley-XXI-59.
[60] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 29 November 1789. *OSB*, MSS FILE 6915.
[61] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 9 July 1789. *OSB*, MSS FILE 6908.
[62] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 2 October 1792. Fitzwilliam, Hayley-XXI-69.

children" in one of her letters: "D[r] Darwin told me he had lately ??? the Essay on Painting & the Triumphs of Temper. Serena he called it—I said I hoped he liked Serena that she was my favourite of all our children".[63] It speaks of Hayley's involvement (emotional for certain, but also manual and intellectual) in his work. As was common in artistic couples, Hayley not only admired William's writing, but she also helped her husband in his work, copying his poetry for him when they lived together.[64] When apart, this collaboration continues in other ways. Regrettably, the letters do not provide abundant evidence to the details of this collaboration, but they hint at it. For instance, Hayley contributes to his new works, recommending additions to his *Essay on Old Maids* "the fair Theodora is entitled to a place in the Essay on Old Maids".[65] She gives notes to actors performing in William's play *Lord Russel* while he's away in London[66] and she reports back to him on their performances "my capital criticism was upon Ld Russel's speech to Spencer in speaking of Bedford".[67] Hayley also reports back to William her community's opinions on his works "Dg Downes has just read Cornelia Sedley with great pleasure & expresses an high reverence for your talents which you will imagine, I ??? give credit to" [68], and she comments on their reception, offering support in his disappointments "…you are likely to be repaid for your late theatrical vexation (for vexation it must have been to you in spite of all your philosophy & near twelve years of seasoning as an author/ which ~~xxx~~ [has] in some degree I doubt not prepared you for the uncertainty of public favour".[69] Hayley celebrates his successes, which she also considers hers: "I think the very high applause of Cornelia Sedley must be very animating to you. Mr Coke says [...] that every body is reading it with delight at Buxton, & his sister Mrs

[63] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 21 July 1789. *OSB*, MSS FILE 6909.
[64] Hayley, *Memoirs* I, 285.
[65] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 14 October 1792. Fitzwilliam, Hayley-XXI-70.
[66] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley. Fitzwilliam Hayley-XIII-45.
[67] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley. Fitzwilliam Hayley-XIII-49.
[68] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 1 November 1789. *OSB,* MSS FILE 6915, "Cornelia Sedley" refers to Hayley's only novel.
[69] Ibid.

Heathcote tho she trembles at the [sic] glomy? [...] lamented when she had finished it & talks of reading it again",[70] and gives advice based on her own critical knowledge "I think it of great advantage to your reputation to have one of your past works called forth to public view. Marcella is you know my favorite tragedy", acknowledging that she has observed "that ladies in general prefer Lord Russel & I doubt with you a little its general popularity with one ??? they follow the opinions of yours which I believe is all matters of taste."[71] She also comments on the literary market, lamenting William's struggles to sell his books "I bought the Poem [*The Loves of the Plants*] for that purpose & Room ??? me by saying he sells them as fast as he gets them from London. How different this from the sale of your works in Chichester!"[72]

*Male intervention in Hayley's presentation: Eliza through William*

William Hayley died in 1820, and his autobiographical work, blending correspondence and memoir, was published three years later. According to the preface to the work, the *Memoirs* were written in the twelve years prior to his death "in consequence of an arrangement with his publisher, a condition of which was that this Work should be delivered for the Press on the Author's decease, a very considerable annuity was secured to him during the last twelve years of his life". It assures the reader that, with the exception of some additions and omissions made by the editor, "the copy is printed, verbatim, from the copy left by Mr. Hayley in his own hand-writing".[73] This section is concerned with William's portrayal of Hayley in contrast with the author's own self-presentation. In his *Memoirs*, William constructs a version of his estranged wife that fits his narrative, choosing carefully excerpts

[70] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 21 October 1789. *OSB* MSS FILE 6914.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Eliza Hayley to William Hayley, 9 July 1789. *OSB*, MSS FILE 6908.
[73] Hayley, *Memoirs*, 1:v and vi.

from her letters and prefacing them with introductory remarks that inevitably condition the reader to read them through his lens. William depicts Hayley as fragile and fickle, and he, as model, long-suffering, and understanding husband whose main interest was her well-being. The negotiation, or renegotiation, of identity towards a curated public portrayal is a key element in the autobiographical works of the period. In this sense, Treadwell has argued that "the mere act of writing autobiographically was contentious [...] in a way that could reflect (even posthumously) on the character of the author".[74] And this is even more evident when the portrayal is a gendered one. As Gee argues, "[William] Hayley's attitude to the relationship between public good and posthumous reputation is highly gendered: the former only trumps the latter in the case of men; the reputations of dead women still both require and deserve protection".[75] According to Gee's argument, by portraying Hayley in terms that fit the archetypal feminine ideal of the time, William is attempting to protect Hayley's reputation as well as his own.

William narrates his relationship with his wife from their initial friendship to her death, paying special attention to the details surrounding her mental illness[76] and the arrangements for their separation, in an act of posthumous public justification. He recounts that "she considered Eartham as a dungeon", and that he "endeavoured to promote an amicable plan of separation and sends Eliza to Derby under the protection of the physician Beridge [...] absolutely necessary to preserve the life of a husband, whose destiny had involved him in scenes of anguish and affliction, with which no human powers appeared strong enough incessantly to contend".[77] William repeatedly ascertains that separation was

[74] James Treadwell, 2005. *Autobiographical Writing and British Literature 1783-1834*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 7.
[75] Gee 49.
[76] Even though Hayley's psychological profile could be construed as a neurodivergence by the modern reader, because of the lack a conclusive diagnosis, throughout this chapter I shall refer to her profile as "mental illness", which is consistent with William's terminology.
[77] Hayley, *Memoirs,* I, 339.

the only viable option in their circumstances: "the mental infirmity of his poor Eliza, and his own impaired health, had rendered it more and more necessary for him to accomplish at last, that plan of amicable separation", a plan he describes as "the painful but necessary measure of removing his piteous Eliza to the north".[78] Hayley's illness is the guiding thread of the narrative, described as both cause of the failure of their marriage, and as a strong argument for William's self-presentation as a model husband and gentleman. According to William, Hayley may have inherited her mother's psychological disorder (having been conceived through rape[79]): "the state of mind, to which she has long been subject, is to all who tenderly regard her, an evil much more distressing than madness itself; it is a state not easily described. At times suspicion and pride, (the most two frequent forerunners of absolute insanity), appear its chief characteristics; at other times, depression and melancholy."[80] The way William refers to Hayley's affliction matches with the late eighteenth-century's articulation of mental illness being "less a physical disease than a mental or emotional disorder [which regarded] the nerves as the source of health or disease".[81] William informs the reader that he was aware of the possibility that Hayley may develop her mother's mental issues and that he charitably chose to marry her in spite of them, saying he should "bless God for having given the courage sufficient to make myself the legal guardian of the most amiable and most pitiable woman on earth" after which his mother praises him "your heart is very pure, your feelings are quick and strong, [and] your intentions are always kind".[82] Perhaps not incidentally, William surrounded himself with people whose mental health issues have been recorded, such as Cowper, Wright, Romney and Cockerell, all of whom experienced depression. After their separation, he writes that "perhaps no man, on the point of removing

[78] Ibid. 373 and 377.
[79] Gee 47.
[80] Hayley, *Memoirs,* I, 342.
[81] Amanda Gilroy, 2005. *Jane West: A Tale of the Times (1799). Vol 7 of Anti-Jacobin Novels.* (Abingdon: Routledge) 360.
[82] Hayley, *Memoirs*, I, 88.

from him a wife, with whom he felt it impossible to live, ever shewed more tender or more sincere anxiety, to promote her ease, comfort, and welfare, to the utmost of his power".[83] After spending a few days in Derby helping Hayley settle down, William's attendant is recorded saying he was "afraid that I should see you drop down dead, in the midst of it", making a point of William's distress. In a letter from September 1789, William declines Hayley's offer to come back to Eartham to assist him when he is unable to work because of an eye inflammation. He writes "let me first speak of yourself, the most important personage in the world, for my consideration!" Once again, he presents himself as solicitous and devoted to his estranged wife's needs: "nothing could make me so wretched as the having suffered my infirmities to lead you into a situation to very ill-suited to your delicate health and spirits", adding that "Never, I believe, did two persons wish more sincerely to be serviceable to each other; but trust me, we can never obtain this end by living together".[84] In an attempt to justify his actions, he describes himself as bereft at Hayley's removal to Derby, saying that "he had found it impossible to live [with her], and equally impossible to be indifferent to her welfare".[85] Conversely, according to him, Hayley "looked forward with some satisfaction to this prospect" because "she had many highly esteemed friends in that part of the world" and because he "had a plan of passing a few years abroad with his son", a period of time during which she would have been alone at Eartham.[86] This seems to suggest that the arrangement was thought to be, initially, relatively brief, and by no means permanent, which could not be farther from the truth, as Hayley "reluctantly", in her own words, signed a separation agreement on the "25th of February of 1788".[87] To further that idea, he quotes a line of thanks from her "I thank you for your kind attention, which increases the comfort, and

[83] Ibid. I, 382.
[84] Ibid. I, 393.
[85] Ibid. I, 385.
[86] Ibid. 374.
[87] Eliza Hayley to ? 25 February 1788. Fitzwilliam Hayley-XIII-50.

quiet of mind I at present enjoy".[88] Throughout the text, but especially when he writes about his estranged wife, William presents himself as a "man of feeling", a middle-class gentleman of heightened moral and poetical sensibility, passionate, pious, and tender, an example of "Christian piety and goodness".[89] William's narrative is embedded in the culture of sensibility, and it belongs to the "trend of emotional upheaval, a cult of sympathy and compassion".[90]

In her article on William as a memorialist, Gee discusses the relationship between emotion and production within the culture of sensibility William belongs to and participates in. Gee declares that in his memorialising William he showcases the "extent, generosity and productivity of his sensibility, and his piety".[91] I contend that the same can be argued of his memorialising of Hayley in his *Memoirs*. The portrayal of Hayley through William in the text, then, is a product of its time, of the culture of sensibility as well as of the book market. Through the role of memorialist of his wife, William embodies the man of feeling, and, inevitably, the portrayal of his wife is embedded within the dynamics of the novel of sensibility, herself presented as a heroine of sensibility. From 1781 onwards, Hayley begins to be described in pitiful terms. She is no longer only his beloved, sisterly Eliza, but also "the fair and gentle, yet hapless, Eliza", that "most pitiable sufferer" of "nervous infirmities", end eventually "my dear though half-crazed companion".[92] William refers to this period as one of

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[88] Hayley, *Memoirs*, I, 377. In her historicist study of early modern married life and life after marriage in the labouring and middle classes, Bailey addresses the "profound repercussions for people's" emotional and material lives "after marital breakdown" Joanne Bailey, 2003. *Unquiet Lives: Marriage and Marriage Breakdown in England, 1660–1800*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 29. The scholar highlights that "quietness" was considered a preeminent quality in an enduring marriage "more than tranquility, quiet evoked peace of mind and body, undisturbed by rage of passion" Bailey 1.

[89] G. J Barker-Benfield, 1992. *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) 247.

[90] Ildiko Csengei, 2011. *Sympathy, Sensibility and the Literature of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan) 1.

[91] Gee 39.

[92] Hayley, *Memoirs*, I, 210, 342 and 483.

restlessness and turmoil, her mental state is "irregular", "the fluctuation of her spirits was rapid to an alarming degree". William writes that, in spite of his "slender finances", he "most willingly took on himself the expense of providing in the most comfortable manner" for her.[93] He recurrently refers to his heroic efforts towards Hayley "incessant tenderness and solicitude he endeavoured to counteract the infelicity of her constitution", and this portrait strikes the modern reader as fanciful precisely because of that.[94] These excerpts exemplify that the man of feeling always tried to elicit strong feelings in the reader, exploiting to the utmost the emotional aspect of the narrative.[95] I regard William's portrayal of Hayley in light of Wollstonecraft's critique of sensibility as an "institutionalised culture of weakness made fashionable"[96] in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, which identified the patriarchy at the root of the language of sensibility and sought to subvert, in her later works, the "conventional artistic representations of female suffering rooted in the language of sensibility that rendered women objects of helplessness and pity."[97] At the hands of William, Hayley is presented as a one-dimensional character, a woman twice robbed of her agency and entirely dependent on her estranged husband both literally—for her survival while alive—and metaphorically—for her posthumous image—. Hayley's identity is reduced to those traits that William can exploit through the language of sensibility: her upbringing and circumstances (especially her mother's mental illness), her own mental illness, and her devotedness to him. Even though he refers to her "cultur'd mind" and wit on numerous occasions, he does so in contrast to her unfavourable upbringing.[98] In contrast, those aspects of Hayley's persona which are not of use to him (her community in Derby, her literary career, her intellectual life away from

[93] Ibid. I, 211.
[94] Ibid. I, 210.
[95] Csengei 138.
[96] Ibid. 3.
[97] Daniel I, O'Neill, 2010. *The Burke-Wollstonecraft Debate: Savagery, Civilization, and Democracy*. (Philadelphia: Penn State Press108 and 112.
[98] Hayley, *Anecdotes*, Book 6, 31-32

Eartham) are entirely overlooked. Further, the Hayley portrayed in William's memoirs is infantilised, and every merit of hers a result of his own doing, which is reminiscent of Rousseau's theories of education. Before their marriage, she is always referred to in possessive and fraternal terms: "his amiable confidant", "his generous Eliza", "whose mind and heart the young scholar began to cultivate", "her mind had been cultivated by her fraternal poet, and her heart, that had really suffered in seeing him treated, as she thought, unworthily, was full of a most sincere and disinterested desire, to see him regain a prospect of connubial happiness", "had taken a pleasure in cultivating [her heart and mind] with the purest fraternal regard", "a beautiful and accomplished girl, whose spirit and imagination appeared to harmonize with his own". [99]

Hayley died of an epidemic fever the 8 of November 1797 in London.[100] She was buried in St Margaret's, Eartham, on the seventeenth of the same month. In the *Memoirs*, she is remembered in high terms, designed, as Gee has suggested, to protect her reputation, as well as his. He refers to her as "distinguished by an innocent cheerfulness and infantine sensibility, improperly increased by the want of an intelligent and considerate guardian of her own sex", possessor of both a "very admirable and very singular mind" and "inscrutable sources of suffering" and while subject to "incurable sensations, that approached agony", she had a "most lively and unclouded enjoyment of literature and friendship. Her perception of mental excellence was rapid and strong, and the generosity of her spirit was unbounded".[101] In addition to these words, her husband wrote an epitaph intended for her funeral monument. In it, he contrasts her "lovely features and a lofty mind/Tender as charity as bounty kind" with her "deep nervous woes of wondrous weight" that "Love could not heal nor sympathy

[99] Hayley, *Memoirs,* I, 33 86-7, 93, and 102.
[100] Anna Seward, 1811. *Letters of Anna Seward, Written between the Years 1784 and 1807*. (Archibald Constable (ed.), Edinburgh: A. Constable) Vol 5, 25.
[101] Hayley, *Memoirs*, I, 482.

relate" and wishes "Peace to thy ashes to thy memory love" and "to thy spirit in the realms above/ All that from blameless sufferings below"[102] . On the other hand, her obituary, published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, described her as "Mrs Hayley, wife of Wm. H. esq. of Eartham, Sussex, the celebrated poet, and daughter of the late Rev. Thomas Ball, dean of Chichester", making no reference to her two publications, despite the fact they had been reviewed by *The Monthly Mirror, The Critical Review*, and *The Analytical Review*.

In conclusion, the analysis of Eliza Hayley's manuscript correspondence allows for the recovery of her self-presentation, and, in turn, of her agency. It aims to correct the critical neglect of her character due to, in part, her estranged husband's William's portrayal of her in his *Memoirs*. While this chapter is not concerned with Hayley's rich and compelling intellectual corpus (including her translation of de Lambert's *Essays* and the original philosophical treatise *The Triumph)*, which is due scholarly attention, it seeks to analyse the self-portrayal of Hayley that emerges from her own writing and contrast it with the version of her that her husband depicts. Using the theoretical framework of life writing, the collection, transcription, and analysis of Hayley's correspondence held in three different archives evinces the usefulness of the discipline in recovering a historical subject's self-portrayal from their own subjectivity.

Analysing Hayley's epistolary record reveals a complex, nuanced self-portrayal of a woman in exile, redefining her identity in her maturity and singleness, away from the constraints of marriage and reproduction, albeit still financially and socially dependent on her estranged husband; finding joy and purpose in a female community that welcomes her and struggling with the reality of not being able to ever return to the familiarity of her native Chichester, her home, and her family. Hayley appears grateful, satisfied, frustrated, angry, and disappointed at her husband's management of their separation. In this sense, the letters

[102] Hayley, *Memoirs*, I, 484.

are the only link between Hayley's new and old realities and are a testament to her navigating the breach between the two. They also detail Hayley's domestic economy and logistic needs as well as her emotional need to maintain a tie to the familiar spaces and people she leaves behind, highlighting her dependence on her husband and on their correspondence. Further, the correspondence portrays the Hayleys' particular familiar arrangement and how Hayley was situated within it in her status as estranged wife and non-biological mother of Thomas Alphonso. Finally, they provide an insight into Hayley's intellectual life, her learning and ease quoting from philosophers and literati, her continual relationship with some members of their literary circle, as well as to her role in William's writing career, first as amanuensis and later suggesting additions and commenting on reception and sales, always critical and supportive. In contrast, William's *Memoirs* portray Hayley as a one-dimensional character, robbing her of her agency by reducing her to the idea of infirm woman entirely dependent on her husband's goodness. In his autobiography, William employs tropes and language of sensibility to portray himself through a heroic lens as a model man of feeling and her as embodying the patriarchal ideal of female helplessness, exploiting Hayley's mental illness for both purposes.