

Passionate Educations John Locke, Aphra Behn, and Jane Austen

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Abstract This article connects John Locke's concept of uneasiness to Aphra Behn's poem "On Desire: A Pindarick" and Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*. Behn and Austen offer a corrected reading of Locke's overtly rationalist ideas. This comparison suggests the importance of passionate engagement as related to knowledge. This article uses a contemporary understanding of the long eighteenth-century passions to argue for how passionate experience and knowing might have occurred through the literary examples of Aphra Behn and Jane Austen.

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1 Introduction

In his recently published book *Knowing Emotions*, philosopher Rick Anthony Furtak states that "affective experience provides a distinct mode of perceptual knowledge and recognition – one that is unavailable to us *except* through our emotions" (2018, 1-2). His monograph is built upon the concept that, through affective experiences, we come to recognise truth, i.e. we come to know. As a professor of moral psychology in the tradition of existential thought, Furtak leaps between ancient theories of emotional integrity (Aristotle) and the morality of emotions in the nineteenth-century philosopher, Søren Kierkegaard. Yet his statement that emotions are a way of knowing was part of a crucial discussion that emerged in the long-eighteenth century. John Locke (1632-1704) was perhaps the most significant philosopher in the seventeenth century for theorising how we know what we know. In short, primary and secondary qualities create accrued experience and the "white paper void of all characters" fills with knowledge and results in action (Locke 1824, 2.1.§2). When this theory manifests in the works of Aphra Behn (1640?-1689) and Jane Austen (1775-1817), the two

writers emphasise that experience cannot be divorced from affect: a mind feels as much as it perceives. In other words, affective experience creates a distinct way of knowing; the passions provide the potential for an education. The truth of any resultant action, Furtak's "perceptual knowledge and recognition" (2018, 1-2) is in the knowing. What Behn and Austen point out is that a passionate education does not always manifest in right action if it is ignored.

The passions were the system of emotional, physical, and moral well-being that explained how people respond to outward phenomena. Rather than a simple analogy to our current understanding of feelings or affect, the passions encompassed all of these concepts, and also described any kind of feeling, whether it was strictly emotional or not. One could feel the passion of joy or hunger. One could experience hate or curiosity. All of these were operations of the passions. At the turn of the seventeenth century in Britain, the passions were undergoing a change. They were moving from the body to the mind; from public to private. Slowly, and with digressions, the passions were becoming personal: they were becoming emotions (see Elster 1999; Gross 2006; Rorty 1982). Nevertheless, when scholars try to articulate feeling in the eighteenth century, as critics we are more likely to turn to the unhistorical vocabulary of emotions or affects. This article uses a contemporary understanding of the long eighteenth-century passions to argue for how passionate experience and knowing might have occurred through the literary examples of John Locke, Aphra Behn, and Jane Austen. When I use the terms 'passions' or 'passionate' I am referring to this system of feeling rather than the emotion of sexual longing; my terminology alternates between emotions, feelings, and sometimes affect to denote internal feeling.

There have been few sustained inquiries into the connections between Locke and Behn or Locke and Austen or Behn and Austen, and none of all three in conversation. This is curious because all three were interested in how the accrual of passionate experience was a method of education – of knowing more than one did previous to the passionate experience. It is important to examine Locke, Behn, and Austen as they mark the beginning and end point of the change from passions to emotions. Despite that transformation they are all grounded in similar ideas, which ideas are very different from our own concepts of emotion. It is important to compare them precisely because they are nearly one hundred fifty years apart: Behn may have drunk the philosophy that was in the air in the 1680s; Austen did so after digesting Locke, whose theories were popularized from *The Spectator* through *Rasselas*. In the end, I think all would agree that knowledge and ethics benefit from passionate learning, and there are detriments to ignoring feelings which prevent knowing and right action.

2 Locke and Passionate Education: *An Essay* (1690)

As early modern philosophers go, John Locke does not immediately come to mind when theorising the passions – we are more likely to consider René Descartes or David Hume first. However, there has been critical energy between Locke’s theories and the passions in eighteenth-century literary criticism. For instance, Joseph Drury, Jonathan Kramnick, Helen Thompson, and Rebecca Tierney-Hynes are interested in the ways in which novelists and Locke can be used to understand one another in terms of action, will, and to a lesser extent, passionate language. But these theories relate predominantly to divesting the characters of their emotions and instead focusing on the importance of ideas and tacit consent (Drury 2008-09; Kramnick 2010; Thompson 2005; Tierney-Hynes 2012). All of these scholars focus on Lockean ‘ideas’ to articulate eighteenth-century subjectivities as opposed to formations of the passions. My addition to their work is that a contemporary view of the emotions helps us to better consider the ways in which Behn and Austen were representing the passions and their educational value, that experience gives rise to knowing.

To say that Locke was concerned with how we know what we feel, or how we learned about our emotions would be to wilfully misinterpret *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689-90) (henceforth *An Essay*).¹ While Locke is not a theorizer of the passions *per se*, he does dedicate part of *An Essay* to how the passions give rise to experience. Primarily, critics have discussed this causation in terms of action – that Locke ‘moved’ the passions from passive/bodily to active/mindful. The relocation of the passions into the mind means that they are no longer unthinking and automatic, no longer subject to public/group/social stimuli and shared experience. Passions become active, something that the mind works upon or actively stimulates, and so get reassigned a position in the bodily economy as being subject to the will.² Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse for instance argue that Locke enabled a vocabulary for the passions, and opened a category that not only gave rise to a debate about the rational operations of the mind, but also encouraged a sustained discussion of what we now call emotions (Armstrong, Tennenhouse 2006, 131). They note how

Locke conspicuously removes the passions from the body and relocates their source in the ideas of pleasure and pain that we formulate on the basis of our sensations. (137)

1 *An Essay* contains the title page date of 1690, but was published in 1689.

2 For discussion on the relationship between passions and actions, please see James 1997.

Consequently, when Locke enables the passions to become an aspect of the will, they shift to how the mind translates the experience of pleasure or pain. More recently, Joel Sodano added that the passions' move from the body to the mind is subtler. Locke moves the passions from the body (where there is a bodily disease) to the mind, where it becomes uneasiness:

when Locke introduces a metaphorical 'uneasiness' to replace 'disease' as the fundamental component of emotional experience, the tension between passivity and activity still remains even as the balance of power shifts to the active processes of rational thought. (Sodano 2017, 452)

According to Sodano, what is active or passive about the passions is never quite resolved, even as the mind becomes the centre of the emotions, even as passionate dis-ease becomes passionate un-ease. All three critics acknowledge Locke's contributions to how the experience of feeling spurs knowing.

Chapter XX "Of Modes of Pleasure and Pain", in Book II "Of Ideas," is a small section of Locke's *Essay*, but crucial in thinking about the relationship between Locke, Behn, Austen, and the conversation of the passions. For Locke, our passions can be either positive or negative depending on how they provide pleasure or pain. Additionally, Locke claims that

pleasure or pain, delight or trouble [...are] simple ideas, [and] cannot be described, nor their names defined; the way of knowing them is, as of the simple ideas of the senses, only by experience. (Locke 1824, 2.20.§1)

As in his epistemology of ideas, he maintains that only through accrued sensation can we know what we feel, and only through experience can knowing occur. Like ideas, then, pleasure and pain (the main categories under which all passions fall) can only be known through the accumulation of passionate experience, because "[p]leasure and pain, and that which causes them, good and evil, are the hinges on which our passions turn" (2.20.§3). Moreover, Locke says that "[t]he uneasiness a man finds in himself upon the absence of any thing, whose present enjoyment carries the idea of delight with it, is that we call desire" (2.20.§6). The passion of desire is marked by dis-ease, or uneasiness, and Locke claims "the chief, if not only spur to human industry and action, is uneasiness" (2.20.§6) – we feel, therefore we act.

Jonathan Kramnick has explained this in terms of action: "In order to do something, Locke argues, one must not only have a desire to achieve some end, one must feel uneasy in the absence of this end"; Locke emphasises "the experience with which [actions] are accompanied" (Kramnick 2010,

141).³ Action therefore comes from experience, or knowing, and that knowing arises when the passions are not at ease: we feel, we know, we act to resolve unease. I posit that the special kind of knowledge that comes from this process is emotional understanding, what in current parlance is known as emotional intelligence. The slow accumulation of passionate understanding and the uneasiness of feeling then lead to knowledge – the actions that result from that knowledge, however, are contested in Behn and Austen. This process is passionate education and it recurs in the writing of the long eighteenth century.

3 Behn and Passionate Knowing: “On Desire: A Pindarick” (1688)

Behn and Locke were contemporaries on opposing sides of the political spectrum in the 1680s. Private secretary to Anthony Ashley Cooper, 1st Earl of Shaftesbury, tutor to the 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury, and fellow traveller on the ship that brought William and Mary from the Netherlands to London in the wake of the Glorious Revolution (1688), Locke was firmly (and visibly) in the Whig camp. Behn was deeply loyal to the Stuarts and is nearly always connected with a Stuart-Tory mindset; her dedications are written to Jacobite nobles and her Pindaric odes on the Stuarts are profuse (see Todd 1996; Spencer 2000; and Markley 1988). Behn’s and Locke’s writing temporally coincided. Behn’s *Love-Letters Between a Nobleman and His Sister* (1684-1687) reimagine Monmouth’s rebellion, which many believed Shaftesbury to have orchestrated; Locke fled to Holland with Shaftesbury shortly after. *Lycidas*, the collection of poetry in which “On Desire: A Pindarick” (hereafter “On Desire”) was published, and *An Essay* were published one year apart: 1688 and 1689, respectively. *An Essay* had been in draft form for many years before its publication, and it is likely that “On Desire” had as well.⁴ However, both Locke and Behn share an even deeper, and insufficiently appreciated symmetry in the way that they theorise desire: what it is and how it accrues and thus, how experience is necessary to the passions, especially in terms of passionate knowing.

The experience of Locke’s uneasiness is extended in Behn – those who have not experienced desire are devoid of passionate knowing, in Behn’s eyes. For her, as well as for Locke, the accrual of the simple experiences

3 According to Kramnick, the latter concept is prevalent in the second edition of *An Essay* (1694), written after extensive correspondence with the Irish philosopher William Molyneux.

4 Todd notes that “On Desire” was a very different kind of poem than the rest in *Lycidas* (1996, 397); I believe it is similar in theme and heightened passions to the 1684 *Poems Upon Several Occasions*, and that it may have been in draft form prior to 1684.

creates complex ideas, generates the passions, and thus enables knowing. For Locke, these are necessarily and easily cordoned off in terms of good and evil. But Behn is wiser about how knowledge actually works, that the uneasiness created by desire is precisely what is needed to actually experience and learn. For Locke, the uneasiness that creates desire is important because that lack of equilibrium makes one act to restore balance. For Behn, the actions create desire which in turn creates knowledge; desire causes knowing rather than being a spur to action. Thus, the paradoxical nature of desire is both what makes it delightful and an impetus for experience.

She investigates this paradox in "On Desire", which certainly encapsulates the notion of uneasiness, both dis-ease and disease-as-desire is a plague for Behn. The difference is that for Behn the accrual of the simple ideas that create experience is greater than Locke's uneasiness; it is a form of emotional knowing. She paints the creation of desire as paradoxical pleasure and pain, as in Locke. But for Behn the coexistence of both creates a pleasurable painful experience - there is no action to be taken, only information to be known. The uneasiness of the speaker demonstrates the delightful torture of desire and similar depictions that are extremities of uneasiness. Behn's uneasiness is a form of the passions that cannot spur on action - or rather it is a state on which to reflect. Behn's uneasiness results in frustration, for sure, but also encourages a contemplation on what that dis-ease can mean and what can be learned from it. The difference between Behn and Locke, then, is that, for the latter, the unease of desire is a temporary inessential mental state that, when it appears, works to stimulate action to remove that unease and return to a settled mental state. However, for Behn desire is fundamental. The passions figure in all experience and learning, and, when one is dis-eased by the passion of desire, this does not easily lead to an action that relieves it. Instead it creates a space of intense reflection, or passionate experience.

The poem holds a strange place in Behn's oeuvre, itself a seemingly disparate collection of plays, poems, fiction, letters, and translations. This irregular Pindaric follows the interior musings of a speaker who is caught in the web of desire and is trying to understand what has happened to her. She remembers that she never felt desire before, even when the object of that desire was worth desiring. She tries to understand what provoked the change and discovers that it is not so much the object of her love, Lysander, that she desires, but rather the experience of desire itself. As "On Desire" is not a pastoral (indeed the metaphors are particularly courtly), nor political (the subject matter is decidedly on love), it has slipped through the critical cracks of poetic analytical scholarship of her work. While much has

been said about her political poetry⁵ and while her pastoral tradition has been appropriately addressed (see Gardiner 1993; Markley, Rothenberg 1993; Munns 2006), “On Desire” does not entirely belong to either of these analytical categories, and may be the reason that it is rarely published upon.⁶ Because of this dearth of critical discourse, I would place the poem in the Pindaric tradition of the seventeenth century, which demonstrates how the paradoxical nature of the form is the perfect vehicle for the passion of uneasiness that leads to knowing.

The Pindaric style, imitated throughout the early modern period in England and Europe, maintained the stricter form of the ancient Pindaric, based upon the tri-part structure of a Greek chorus (strophe, antistrophe, epode). It was a celebratory communal form and used specifically for expressing high-wrought emotion. By the seventeenth century the Pindaric ode was still a genre of public encomium, but the form underwent a shift with the publication of Abraham Cowley’s *Pindarique Odes* (1656). Cowley is generally thought responsible for creating and popularising the irregular ode, what Christopher Loar has referred to as the neo-Pindaric, which became the standard in public poetry through the mid-eighteenth century (2015, 128).⁷ Joshua Scodel has said that the Pindaric ode was “the major later-seventeenth-century innovation in English lyric poetry” (Scodel 2001, 183). The most central interpretation of the neo-Pindaric, and particularly John Dryden’s and Behn’s odes, was that they were a vehicle for political propaganda that encode both acquiescence to, and criticism of, its subject, a kind of writing known for “grandiloquent obscurity, which makes interpretation difficult and licenses ambiguity” (Scodel, 2001, 184). Recent criticism also notes the satiric and paradoxical forms of the neo-Pindaric, especially in Behn’s writing. Stella P. Revard, for instance, argues that Behn uses sexual politics ironically in her Pindarics when it serves her purposes. When asked to write a Pindaric ode by Burnet on the ascension of William III, as loyal Jacobite she would not comply, but as an English subject she could not refuse:

So she overpraises Burnet and underpraises herself as a poor weak female, thus neatly sidestepping Burnet’s request and exposing his less than honorable purpose. (Revard 1997, 237)

5 See especially Revard (2009, chapters 4 and 5). See also, Zook who argues that Behn’s poetry “is particularly useful at illuminating her political vision” (Zook 2006, 48).

6 Todd (1996, xxx) refers to it as one of many of Behn’s competent, energetic works of the first order, and notes that its topic of fiery illness was an outlier from the rest of the poems in *Lycidas*, which tend toward playful friendliness (1996, 397).

7 The introduction of the neo-Pindaric grieved Congreve (1706), who claimed in *A Discourse on the Pindarique Ode* that the worst of these odes are “*the most confus’d Structures in Nature*” (italics in the original).

For many Restoration writers, when the neo-Pindaric praises, it performs a sleight of hand. Revard and Loar demonstrate how the genre employs ironic modes that both compliment and take away the compliment at the same time, thus finding space between the “real and ideal” (Loar 2015, 130).

That Behn’s description of desire takes place within the Pindaric form is a bit of a mystery until these ironic and paradoxical structures are understood. While the ‘public’ Pindaric ode was generally comprehended in contrast to the more personal Horatian ode, Revard notes that

the Pindaric ode was perceived as a heterogeneous medium, a poetic catch-all which could be used to address persons great and small and which was equally adaptable for subjects high and low. (Revard 2009, 257)

Behn’s deliberate titling of her ode as a ‘Pindarick’ emphasises a universal recognition of desire. It is a subject that could be high or low, personal or public. In other words, the title makes desire a public subject through neo-Pindaric constructions. “On Desire” makes use of the structure to overtly praise and to avert praise, so the addressee is personal and abstract, desire is real and ideal, and the irregularity and paradoxical praise of the form emphasise the uneasy aspects of experiencing desire.

The poem opens in this oxymoronic form, immediately addressing desire as a “new-found pain” (l. 1) and expressing it as an “enchanted” “infection” (ll. 3, 2) that contaminates the speaker’s “unguarded Heart” (l. 8). The poem continues in the same way, praising desire in the high-wrought emotional form that is so fundamental in the Pindaric encomium. As the poem goes on, it demonstrates how the experience of the passion of love is the basis for knowing. First, the speaker explains the extent of the dominion that desire has over her heart in terms of how much it has taught her – she figures herself as the best experiencer of desire; she is more knowing than those who simply pretend to understand what desire is.

The poem addresses a personified Desire, and the speaker chastises him⁸ for being impetuous, for causing her uneasiness. He will not come when called and he will not come when the opportunity best presents itself:

Where wert thou, oh, malicious spright,
When shining Honour did invite?
When interest call’d, then thou wert shy,
Nor to my aid one kind propension brought,

⁸ I gender desire here as male because Behn connects the personified desire with Lysander, a typically masculine pastoral name. But it is important to acknowledge that, for Behn, love and desire are fluid, not bound by heterosexual boundaries. *Lycidas* is filled with poems praising female cabals, for instance.

Nor wou'd'st inspire one tender thought,
When Princes at my feet did lye.
(ll. 24-9)

Desire is not present when an object worthy of the speaker's desire appears, such as when the beloved is honorable, rich, or high-ranked. The sleight of hand demonstrates desire as welcome as well as impetuous, unforgiving, and dishonorable. The speaker then points out that neither will desire come when the object is young, powerful, well-spoken, nor beautiful. Her engagement in trying to understand desire forces the speaker to better know what she feels and what she thinks.

The most important lesson that the speaker comes to know through her conflicted feelings is that she is in love *with Desire* rather than the man who inspires her desire:

Yes, yes, tormenter, I have found thee now;
And found to whom thou dost thy being owe,
'Tis thou the blushes dost impart,
For thee this languishment I wear,
'Tis thou that tremblest in my heart
When the dear Shepherd do's appear.
(ll. 67-72)

In these lines, Behn demonstrates her knowing through her feelings; that is, her experience of uneasiness at the dear shepherd's (Lysander's) arrival. Desire itself trembles in her heart, but the object of desire is less important than the all-encompassing experience of it: desire, now internalised, torments her, makes her blush, languish, and tremble. In other words, the fact of knowing desire is more significant than the object of desire. And her description of the experience of desire is described as internal suffering set off by the dear Lysander, but experienced in the speaker's body as the lover itself:

I faint, I dye with pleasing pain,
My words intruding sighing break
When e're I touch the charming swain
When e're I gaze, when er'e I speak.
(ll. 73-6)

Ecstatic, erotic pain is caused by the physical effects of desire, rather than by Lysander. Her experience of desire is tactile as well as internally moving. The passion floods, invades, and makes her physically burn with discomfort, a discomfort so intense that she cannot understand how those who claim to have known love can conceal their experience.

Like Locke, then, Behn's discourse of the passions results in uneasiness, though her description points to something far more intense than mere unease: it is a welcome plague, a pleasing pain, a wanted torture. The experience of a passion (here desire) is painful, as Locke would say. But it does not function as a kind of temporary or inessential emotional response that must be resolved by action. Instead, the passionate experience that generates desire is a prompt for more passionate experience, more learning. In this case it comes from a second-order experience of reflecting on the passion itself and coming to know more about the passion and the real-world experience that generated the passion. So there is knowledge gained about the nature of desire as passion, as well as knowledge about what is and is not Lysander's role. By these lights, desire is a welcome plague because it generates a deeper knowledge as well as a richer, more passionate experience.

Physical descriptions of the consuming nature of desire are explained as a disease, arising from the dis-ease of her soul, causing "burning feverish fits" (l. 86), a "fierce Calenture [to] remove" (l. 88). The calenture is a purposeful choice that connects physical passion and illness. Originally it was a disease that sailors got, which made them burn with fever, see mirages of land on the sea, and then drown themselves when they attempted to walk on the non-existent land. Eventually, it came to refer to the physical effects of any hallucinatory illness; to remove a calenture was to end burning, fever, and glowing heat. Finally, by means of these kinds of figurative usage, the word also came to refer to passion, ardour, or zeal – the sorts of emotion that could cause intense feelings of dis-ease and which one must remove from the soul in order to be cured of them.⁹ The triple meaning of calenture expresses the speaker's painful struggles with desire: madness, illness, ardor, unease, disease. Like an illness, desire is experienced and cured, and leaves the sufferer with knowledge of the thing itself. Rather than spurring action, the uneasiness of the passion spurs knowledge.

The importance of the experience of desire as knowledge is heightened in the final third of the poem in which the focus shifts from the speaker's feelings to the actions of those around her. The speaker questions those who do not show the effects of desire. She asks those who have experienced desire: "How tis you hid the kindling fire?" (l. 90). For the speaker, desire causes fever, fire "rising sighs" (l. 99), and manifests physically in parts of the body that can be seen, like the eyes (l. 100). In the 1697 publication of the poem, two extra lines are interpolated that underscore the question of the speaker's confusion over how lovers can hide desire. She asks how "not the Passion to the throng make known, | Which *Cupid*

9 See "calenture, n." and "calenture, v." *OED Online* (2018). URL http://www.oed.com/search?searchType=dictionary&q=calenture&_searchBtn=Search (2019-02-26).

in revenge has now confin'd to one" (Behn in Todd 1992, 472; italic in the original); in other words, how can those hit by desire hide it effectively? The speaker lights on what she sees as the only answer: one cannot prevent desire from manifesting physically – it must mean that those who do not display the feverish symptoms of desire have never had that disease in the first place. Those who claim to control the manifestation of desire in their bodies are liars:

Oh! wou'd you but confess the truth,
It is not real virtue makes you nice:
But when you do resist the pressing youth,
'Tis want of dear desire, to thaw the Virgin Ice.
(ll. 91-4)

The modesty, the very virtue, of the women who will not bow to desire is false modesty: they do not bow because they have not actually known what it is to desire so intensely. Therefore their 'want' of, their lack of (and perhaps their craving for), desire makes them virtuous, not their heroic resistance. Their "virtu's but a cheat, | And Honour but a false disguise" (ll. 103-4). They can remain as cool as ice because they are not fired. They can remain virtuous and healthy because they have not been fully tempted by the illness of passion. In short, they have never had the uneasiness that desire requires to understand or know; thus, their actions are false. And their lack of passionate experience has limited their stock of knowledge and circumscribed the scope of their understanding. In short, they have not had the opportunity for a passionate education.

The speaker finishes the poem by praising experience. She better knows herself now that she has had practice with arbitrary, all-encompassing, pressing desire. She tells those unaffected by desire to

Deceive the foolish World- deceive it on,
And veil your passions in your pride;
But now I've found your feebleness by my own,
From me the needful fraud you cannot hide.
(ll. 107-10)

Because the speaker has experienced desire, she knows what it is, what it can do, and that it cannot truly be hidden. Those who can "veil [their] passions in [their] pride" have a weakness, but their weakness is not that of succumbing to desire, but rather having had no experience of it in the first place – therefore acting a lie. Early in the poem, the speaker has fashioned herself as resistant to all forms of desire: money, rank, cleverness, beauty. She invokes this resistance in the last lines and acknowledges that her guard has come down, that Lysander has found the weakness of her sex, though

the rest of the world is perplexed by her previous virtue. The mighty power of desire educates her through experience. The affective experience of a passion like desire creates a paradoxical knowledge, an uneasiness that provokes learning. The actions are false in those who are not educated in the passions. And the entire system of the passions is engaged in this discovery: the speaker's mind, heart, body, personal ideas, and public engagement.

Behn claims that to know a passion is to be educated. The experience, the acknowledgement, and the understanding of a passion is crucial: it creates knowledge about personal feelings and the feelings of others. This experience creates a clear path to knowing; it is a passionate education. Similarly, Austen underscores the passions' ability to create knowledge in *Mansfield Park*. Yet Austen argues that if passions are disregarded, that ignorance has the potential to create disastrous consequences. If Behn argues that those who deny their feelings are liars, Austen takes it a step further, and calls them adulterers.

4 Austen and Passionate Unknowing: *Mansfield Park* (1815)

We have no evidence that Austen read Locke directly, though she would have been familiar with his concepts through popular works, such as Samuel Johnson's Lockean gestures in *The History of Rasselas* (1759) or the *Idler* (1758-1760), both of which are alluded to in *Mansfield Park* (see Halsey 2005; De Rose 1983). Likewise, there is no direct evidence that Austen read Behn, though the two are sometimes set together as links in a feminised genealogy of literature (Spencer 1986; Todd 2012). However, all three are connected in their understanding of how the passions give rise to knowledge, especially in terms of the experience of desire. As it is for Behn so it is for Austen: passionate experience is crucial to one's education. But while for Behn there is a pleasurable pain in the uneasiness of the passions, Austen demonstrates that once uneasiness is ascertained, if it is not properly grappled with, it can have disastrous effects. In both authors' work the importance of the passions is in knowing them; and both of them believe that the action that comes from not acknowledging that knowing is false action.

The scholarship on *Mansfield Park* is copious, but in terms of critical readings it grows out of three classic critical examinations: Marilyn Butler's, who argues for the theme of mis-education and thus the defunct morality of *Mansfield Park*'s inhabitants; Claudia Johnson's, who reads the domestic space of the novel as political, especially in terms of gender's constitutive aspects of politics; and Edward Said's orientalist argument, which has in turn made Fanny a moral keeper of the Empire (Butler 1975; Johnson 1998, 95; Said 1993). Some aspects of the criticism have touched on Austen's relationship to Lockean empiricism and some on the passions.

Very few scholars have examined the Austen-Locke connection, especially in terms of the vocabulary of the passions. Those that echo the vocabulary of Locke do so through the concept of ideas or actions rather than the experience of passionate knowing. For instance, Peter L. De Rose (1983) argues that Austen was likely most familiar with Locke through Johnson's writing – while we cannot be sure she read the former, we know she read the latter. He claims that a close reading of Locke clarifies the notion of imagination in *Northanger Abbey*, that one cannot truly understand “imagination” until one understands the “direct experience of sensory reality” (Johnson's *Rasselas* quoted in De Rose 1983, 63). Only then can *Northanger Abbey* be properly understood as a parody of the dangerousness of imagination or a comedy of moral lessons. Claudia J. Martin (2008) argues that Austen makes more sense when compared directly to Locke than through the intermediary of Johnson. She makes use of Locke's term ‘happiness’ to articulate the significance of emotion in character development in the Chawton novels:

Locke, like Austen, is quick to distinguish between temporary or expedient pleasures and real happiness; [...] those characters who achieve the happiness of a suitable marital union in Austen's novels follow a course of consideration, evaluation, and restraint as predicate to their making those morally correct choices that will further their pursuit—a plot that suggests Austen's familiarity with Locke's theoretical constructions regarding happiness.

Martin's connection between Austen's happily married characters and the Lockean concepts of consideration, evaluation, and restraint echo the vocabulary of Locke on ideas, rather than Locke on feeling. Neither scholar deals directly with Locke, Austen, and the passions.

Additionally, Austen is rarely associated with the passions. Until recently, the concepts for passion (as in Maria Bertram Rushworth's sexual desire for Henry Crawford) and the passions (an emotional system with which Austen and her readers were familiar) have been conflated in modern criticism.¹⁰ This is intriguing as a number of the articles on *Mansfield Park* use feelings as a method of analysis, though rarely making them the centre of the conversation, or taking the historical viewpoint of the passions into consideration.¹¹

¹⁰ See for instance Grandi 2008; Sandock 1988; Raw, Dryden 2013. There are exceptions that use the term ‘passions’ in its eighteenth-century contexts, as for instance Nagle 2005.

¹¹ See for instance Judith Burden (2002), who reads the moral failings of the characters as evidence of the inherent irony in *Mansfield Park*. Similarly, a crucial part of Jacquelin M. Erwin's (1995) argument depends on the Ward sisters' ignorance of their emotions, but her analysis settles on the kinds of domestic space that lead to moral erosion rather than emotional ignorance.

Exceptions exist; both Summer J. Star and Stephanie M. Eddleman make eloquent arguments regarding Fanny's repressed anger (Star 2008; Eddleman 2008).¹² Nevertheless the discourse of emotions in Austen's critical reception is often limited to Fanny's sensibility and morality, the two most notable being Butler (1975), who reads Fanny's sentimentalism against Maria's self-indulgence, and Johnson (1998), who claims that *Mansfield Park* is in fact an ironic reading of the conservative ideas of Edmund Burke, of emotion, and women. Read through Locke's and Behn's importance of experience and uneasiness, Maria's passionate education is more at fault than her moral one. The actions she takes to marry Rushworth and elope with Crawford are poor choices because she fails to acknowledge her passionate knowing. Sir Thomas realises, much too late, that he has not understood his daughters' "inclinations and tempers" and blames himself for failing to provide "active principle" in their moral education (Austen 2003, 430); he never understands that he has neglected their passionate education as well.

Maria's falling in love with Henry Crawford offers an opportunity for both father and daughter to be educated through the uneasiness of their passions. Her feelings for Crawford when her father returns from Antigua are "in a good deal of agitation" (178), her uneasiness abounds. When Sir Thomas and Crawford first meet, "Maria saw with delight and agitation the introduction of the man she loved to her father. Her sensations were indefinable" (179). Maria's uneasiness about Crawford is set against her clearer feelings on the departure of her fiancé; she reflects that if Crawford will now speak up, he might "save [Mr. Rushworth] the trouble of ever coming back again" (178). For Crawford she is all agitated feeling; for Rushworth she is indifferent. The acuity of this uneasiness peaks when she finds Crawford will not speak, that "[h]e was going" despite "[t]he hand which had so pressed hers to his heart!" (179-80). Her pleasure in her recollection of her love for him and the realisation that his love will not be returned create an unease described by Austen as acute distress. Austen tells us that Maria's "spirit supported her, but the agony of her mind was severe" (180). Her conflicting passions - love for Crawford, disappointment in his not returning her love, and pride - create the agony of Lockean uneasiness rather than Behn's paradoxical pleasurable pain. As in Behn, uneasiness does not at first create action. She sits still as her passions become clear in their conflict, but "she had not long [...] to bury the tumult of her feelings;" for "[h]e was gone", leaving her in a Lockean condition of uneasiness (180). The accrual of passionate experience should educate her to her feelings, but it does not.

Maria's uneasy passions are so strong that even the staid and stoic Sir Thomas picks up on them, although he too fails to learn - to know - about

12 See also Trigg 2015 on the importance of emotional communication through facial expressions in all of Austen's novels.

the significance of her feelings. He recognises Maria's hostility towards Mr. Rushworth and "trie[s] to understand *her* feelings" (186; italic in the original). When he says he will act to release her from the engagement, "Maria ha[s] a moment's struggle as she listened, and only a moment's"; she is soon able to give her answer "immediately, decidedly, and with no apparent agitation" (186). She will marry Mr. Rushworth. This meeting results in her pledging "herself anew to Sotherton" (187). She realises that both her dislike for Mr. Rushworth and her disappointed feelings about Crawford's love must better be concealed – a conclusion that denies her (and Sir Thomas's) uneasiness and prevents the chance for emotional knowing. Austen implies that paying closer attention to their passionate uneasiness might have saved the family from the devastation of her eventual adultery:

Had Sir Thomas applied to his daughter within the first three or four days after Henry Crawford's leaving Mansfield, before her feelings were at all tranquillized, before she had given up every hope of him [...] her answer might have been different. (187)

This "different" answer would have been based on her 'un-tranquillized' feelings for Crawford and provided the passionate experience that could lead to a better marriage choice – or no marriage at all. Austen uses dramatic irony to explain that Sir Thomas is "too glad to be satisfied perhaps", deciding that "[Maria's] feelings probably were not acute; he had never supposed them to be so" (186). Despite the uneasiness that prompts him to talk with her on this important decision, despite an uneasiness that should lead to right action, despite saying earlier in the scene that he will "act for her and release her" (186), Sir Thomas ignores his feelings and decides that Maria probably is not upset by hers – a dire misreading in the world of the novel. In the end, he acts by not acting to end a marriage he knows will be emotionally mismanaged.

According to Austen,

"[i]n all the important preparations of the mind [Maria] was complete; being prepared for matrimony by an hatred of home, restraint, and tranquillity; by the misery of disappointed affection and contempt of the man she was to marry. The rest might wait. (188)

Austen highlights the *emotional* aspects of Maria's miseducation, not the moral ones: "*hatred* of home", "*misery* of disappointed affection", "*contempt* of the man she is to marry" (188; emphasis added). In this reading, Maria's denying her passions is the destructive beginning of her doomed marriage. Crucially, Maria ignores the potential of self-knowledge because of her mismanagement of passionate experience. Sir Thomas misses an educational opportunity because he is blinded by his wish to expand the family's wealth

and social status. Yet, had Maria considered her passions, acknowledged uneasiness, harmonised the resulting action with those passions, the tale must have ended differently, Austen implies. This episode is a strong example of how unacknowledged uneasiness causes problems. Maria feels the Lockean desire in her intense feelings for Crawford but, unlike Behn's speaker, does not learn from her uneasiness. Sir Thomas also feels Lockean unease but does not act on the feeling in a profitable way. Both characters do not do what they are supposed to do when desire arises; they neither act, nor learn.

Nearly all of the characters involved in the adultery are unable to be educated through their passions, especially Crawford's self-centred passions: pride, curiosity, and vanity. When Crawford again meets Maria and flirts with her - trying to make "Mrs. Rushworth, Maria Bertram again" (434) - he does not value the negative effects of indulging in uneasy passions. Austen specifically notes that had he been able to acknowledge his anger at Fanny, he "might have saved them both" (434). Crawford's inability to read both Fanny's and Maria's feelings places him and Maria in a condition of social danger that upsets both families. He is tripped up by his own vanity and "he had put himself in the power of feelings on [Maria's] side, more strong than he had supposed. - She loved him; there was no withdrawing attentions, avowedly dear to her" (434). His inability to properly understand strong emotion prevents passionate knowing, and he is compelled to commit adultery with Maria through emotional ignorance: "he [goes] off with her at last because he [can]not help it" (434-5). Crawford does not acknowledge Locke's uneasiness until he cannot save them both. Austen presumes to understand Crawford's unease after the fact: "vexation [...] must rise sometimes to self-reproach, and regret to wretchedness". Yet his unease comes too late (435) - he misses his lesson and the resulting action is a product of not attending to the potential of passionate knowledge. Without the ability to recognise his own unease, or the unease that he creates in others, he loses respectability, friends, and Fanny, "the woman whom he had rationally, as well as passionately loved" (435).

Austen's narrator accords all of this disruption to a lack of a moral compass in Maria and Crawford. The latter's education is "ruined by early independence and bad domestic example" (433); his money and his uncle, who lives openly with his mistress, are the root of his lack of principle. However, the text also underscores that his ignorance of his own feelings, and the fact that he toys with the feelings of others, is also at fault. Throughout the novel Crawford is aloof and careless of others' emotions. When he arrives at Mansfield, early in the book, he decides to please the Miss Bertrams by "making them like him. He did not want them to die of love; but...he allowed himself great latitude on such points" (43). Careless at best and viciously selfish at worst, he misses the potential education he could get out of recognising his negative passions.

Maria's moral compass, too, is faulted. Fixed in the mismanagement of her "anxious and expensive education" (430), effected by the opposing rationales of Sir Thomas and Mrs. Norris, her learning is defective. Sir Thomas certainly repines at his method of educating his daughter - her accrued knowledge has not had the moral effect he thought it would. Yet he misses the fact that he should have never allowed her to marry a man that she does not love. Underlying all of this is the fact that the passions - the conflicting feelings, the uneasiness inspired by love and pride - have not been fully experienced or understood by Maria, her father, and her lover. Maria Rushworth is not a victim of her immorality, but rather a poor student of her own emotional intelligence; she fails in her passionate education. The novel may therefore be as much a demonstration of the dangers of denying the passions as it is a triumph of morals.

5 Conclusion

Locke argues that passionate uneasiness leads to action, and Behn and Austen sophisticatedly re-deploy Locke's uneasiness. Where Locke talks about passion as pleasure or pain, which then is a prompt to action, Behn and Austen argue that emotional knowing must come first and right action can only be taken if affective knowing is acknowledged. For the latter authors, the importance of emotional experience is not necessarily action, but learning. Behn's speaker is able to recognise that the uneasy experience of desire provides an education about her passions; she knows more than those who pretend to have desire. Austen's characters experience emotional sensations, have the potential to acknowledge the lessons of those passions but fail to know - or at least fail to act rightly on that passionate knowledge. The attendant misunderstanding manifests itself in chaos rather than equilibrium. Such characters, while often read as passionately impetuous and morally corrupt, are also ignorant of what their passions can teach. Their passionate education is as much at fault as their moral one. The affective experience of Behn's speaker and Austen's characters provide them with knowledge and recognition. But while "On Desire" demonstrates the possible success of passionate education, *Mansfield Park* demonstrates its failure. I began this article with Furtak's statement that affective experience provides a knowledge only available through our emotions. This twenty-first century statement is possible because it is at the receiving end of 300 years of literary exploration of the passions. Locke, Behn, and Austen all demonstrate that we need passions to know. All three describe the necessity of a passionate education.

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