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Jane of All Trades
***The Journey of Charlotte Lennox as She
Blends into Her Titular Character, Sophia***

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“Truth is not always hurt by fiction.”

Charlotte Lennox

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1. INTRODUCTION

It is hard, in this day and age, to try and imagine hearing or reading a story without picturing it in our heads, as it unfolds much like a movie. That is due to the continuous bombardment by mass media, TV, internet, even emoticons used in texts. Newspapers have vignettes, even books bear comparisons to scenes from pop culture. Indeed, it is hard to imagine a time when all of this was just not possible. A time when an actor could perform the best scene of their lives, exactly transmitting to the audience what the author had meant, and no one outside that same audience would ever know it. Nowadays if anything noteworthy – or even negligible – happens it ends up on video sharing websites, which record and lay moments out for everyone to see. Back in the days of cold baths and candlelight, a person in need of entertainment could rely only on pressed trees with ink on them, and their own imagination. Still, what is an author to do when he or she has to convey an emotion, a feeling, something so fragile that might break if handled improperly?

William Wordsworth wrote: “To me alone there came a thought of grief. A timely utterance gave the thought relief” (1807, 149). From a purely semantic standpoint the meaning is clear: he was sad, then someone said something that interrupted his train of thoughts and he was relieved of his suffering. We do not know what that thought was, but we do know, deep down, that it was truly a grievous one. He did not write why he was morose, or what had caused him so much sorrow; there was no need to. The first sentence focuses our entire attention on the speaker, and it might be assumed that he is, in fact, alone. Alone in his suffering, and trapped in a vortex of painful memories. It would be easy to imagine a scene, complete with mood lighting and sad soundtrack, only to feel the warmth that emerg-

es with the second sentence. A reader could almost *see* in his or her mind the face of the poet lighting up, although with a smile that does not quite reach his eyes. Many of these fantasies surely come from the constant barrage of TV dramas, character studies disguised as animated movies, mass media. How does an author, who lacks access to all of that, elicit a similar response in a housewife who has met a grand total of fifty people in her whole life, when she curls up with a book in her lap and wishes to dream?

It is hard to create a lexicon for emotions and feelings, especially during a time when the only way to visualize a person who was experiencing a passion was to actually witness it first-hand, and then recall it from memory at the best of one's ability. Most of the time writers adopted analogies and "overabundance" of words to express invisible emotions and to get their point across without any visual aid. The idea that feelings can be summarily described by words is grossly inadequate. Centuries of both scientific and fictional literature have proved that, be it a sentence or a thousand pages, nothing is ever enough to fully express a concept or an emotion: the author can only write what he or she feels, and hope that the message gets to the audience as intended. This seldom happens, as each reader has individual experiences that create an extremely diversified bias, not to mention the differences created by chronological closeness or distance. The mere passage of time makes texts obsolete, and the more time goes by the more out-dated concepts become; just think of any scientific or technological essay, where progress advances by leaps and bounds. In the case of philosophical or psychological writings, however, things are not so clear and cut. It is certain that the collective frame of mind *does* advance, regarding for instance human rights and, specifically, the rights of women. Any dissertation on slave trade or marriage in the Middle Ages would make most of modern society shudder at the inhumane way people were treated, or at the utter disregard for life. Nevertheless, these are huge topics, and the

steps that have been taken towards a more equal status quo for everyone find most people agreeable. In the case of something so much more minute and variable as individual emotions it is nigh impossible to fit everything or everyone in the same mould, especially regarding broad topics – happiness, love, anger, etc. Why is that?

Most people would agree that murder is deplorable, and yet when faced with extenuating circumstances – i.e. self-defence, defence of a loved one, and at times vigilante justice – they will concur that it is “good”, or at least concede that it is a necessary evil. The same occurs when people are presented with a “capital” emotion, that is, an emotion that encompasses several others; the more complex the emotion is, the less people will find themselves on the same page about it, both while trying to achieve it and when trying to deal with it. In the face of betrayal in *David Simple* (Fielding 1744) David completely shuts down, while his uncle is spurred to action; instead, in the face of anger in *The Man of Feeling* (Mackenzie 1771) Harley has a controlled – if a bit underwhelming – reaction when a grief-stricken father tries to assault his daughter.

There might never be a universal consensus about passions, not about their definitions and definitely not about the way humans should deal with them; trying to understand texts written in a time that bears so many differences on many levels is certainly a herculean task. Just the idea of a man cornering a woman in a deserted remise to hold her hand and possibly burst out crying on her neck is probably enough to cause shivers in a modern reader. Then again, it was not common behaviour back in Harley’s time either. Rather, a situation pictured as a potentially dangerous circumstance that turns out to be a perfectly innocent happenstance, a pure and genuine communion of souls between a man and a woman, or a man and another man, was something that simply did not happen. While the stigma of men as hard and unfeeling is something that was capitalized on in the last couple

of centuries rather than for the entirety of the history of humankind, men rarely did get a chance to simply let their guard down. Especially in heroic tales men were expected to cry only as a show of understanding of sorrow, while they used their grieving time to formulate a plan of action to either eliminate that sorrow, its source, or to repay a wrongdoing, and restore balance to the world. As stated earlier, man-tears were a spur to action, and a call for subsequent heroic intervention. Over the centuries the definition of heroes changed: from being the ones fighting in ancient battles to being a shoulder to cry on, from epic monster hunting to slaying the phantoms of the mind. The tears of the sentimental hero provide solace from the turmoil of the world. Even in the *Bildungsroman*¹ genre the concept of hero is redesigned to accommodate the distinct lack of mythical creatures and epic warlords in the contemporary world. In *Waverly, or 'Tis Sixty Years Since* (Scott 1814) the protagonist, a young chap with dreams of grandeur, goes through his *Bildung* and leaves his aspiration to become an ancient hero behind, in favour of being a saviour to his immediate circle of family and friends. He becomes the keeper of their memories and pledges his life to fanning the flame of other people's heroism. Once again, the sentimental hero offers respite from worldly troubles, without discounting them or diminishing their gravity, but by simply being there for people.

A pressing question befell me while writing this dissertation, a question that has been asked before and baffled many a reader: how is it possible for someone to obtain happiness, or at the very least fulfilment from being altruistic? Moreover, is there a dichotomy between happiness and being helpful, and between sadness and the impossibility to help? "Being there" for people, helping others through rough patches of life is commendable. At times the penchant of sentimental heroes to literally

¹ Novels that narrate a growing process, a spiritual growth, or the transition to a new phase in life, usually from youth to adulthood. They were common in the late XVIII century.

“give someone the shirt off their own backs” is infuriating, as, quite simply, helping others while struggling to feed yourself is arduous. However, that might just be the modern, individualistic influence of the society of the XXI century. How does the sentimental novel figure in the greater scheme of writing and reading? What is the impact that this current of fiction had on contemporary styles of literature in the XX century, and what have we learned, as writers, readers, and human beings, from novels that tried to lay emotions bare instead of simply re-purposing trite stereotypes?

The aim of this dissertation is to navigate through sentimental fiction to find the basis of its decrease in popularity, exploring Charlotte Lennox’s *Sophia* (1762) as a text that is not actually included in the sentimental tradition, written by an author that was many things, none of which was sentimental. While an analysis such as this cannot be complete without a brief *excursus* through the history of world literature – from ancient Greek philosophers through clergymen under the Roman Empire, to more recent critics such as Henry Fielding and his contemporaries, all the way up to mostly female critics who rejuvenated women authors – the focus will be mostly on the XVIII century. During that time the rational mind met the emotional heart, and the Renaissance started to shed some light on the murky greys of the spectrum of human sentimentality. Even at such a time authors, physicians, and scholars realized that this topic deserved a thorough study, considering that the analysis of emotions cannot be navigated as easily and through a fixed structure as the inner workings of a machine could be. In the XVIII century the sentimental novel was but a budding genre, which developed over the decades only to meld during the following century into other genres, such as the Gothic novel or post-modern fiction. How come has this current not developed on its own, but rather gave birth to other genres or simply disappeared? In the words of Geoffrey Sill “[t]he way forward for studies in sentimental fiction, however, may be not in un-

covering the reasons for its decline, but in discovering the ways in which the forms of sentiment have survived, and continue to have an impact on the writing of fiction.” (Sill 2016, 10)

Did Lennox, as do authors now, simply exploit a popular type of novel and rode the tide until it was not in her favour anymore? Charlotte Lennox’s works have most certainly had an incommensurable impact on her contemporaries – as her authorship has been unapologetically *female* in a world of men – and on posterity. Her Sophia, stoic yet sensitive, both adhered to and created the characteristics that would become the canon for the sentimental heroine. It is quite possible that she wrote *The History of Harriot and Sophia* (1760) to “pay lip service” to a current that had become popular, either in order to keep her name in the minds of the publishers and the audience, or to pay homage to other notable writers who had their own sentimental heroes or heroines (Richardson, Johnson, and Fielding, whose friendships and counsel she cherished her entire life). In this dissertation I will explore the likelihood that Lennox was able to employ her considerable and versatile talent to produce texts that would indeed provide financially for herself and her family, yet at the same time she respected and improved each and every literary tradition she partook in, regardless of the genre.

1.1 CONTEXT: Sentiment and Passion in the XVIII Century

From Muscle to Heart, from Blood to Tears, the Sentimental Man is the New Hero

At the end of the XVII century there was a new shift in the focus of analysis and overall frame of mind. The new form of communication, printing, allowed for the “providers” of ideas and the readers to be readily connected, hence having a wider and faster spreading of ideals, scientific theories, and knowledge. As such, the new studies on man, both from a physical and a metaphysical point of view, were shared among the cultured echelons of society, medicine men and clergymen indiscriminately.

Human nature began to be comprehended as inherently connected to the body instead of depending on morality, and the physical traits that granted such nature were the focus of the new current, the Enlightenment. Even a Latitudinarian² religion such as the Anglican faith adopted the same language as Rationalism. The Enlightenment even had tangible effects such as the American Revolution: in fact, the Founding Fathers took most of their ideals from the French movement. The quest of the American forefathers to find happiness was based on the sense of community, philanthropy, and familial bonds; according to this frame of mind happiness is within reach only within a society that functions through shared values. The idea that everyone is entitled to happiness, the accessibility or inaccessibility of it, and the “quests” to obtain it, is the foundation of the literature of the XVIII century. We have inherited from the Enlightenment most of our ways of thinking and ideals, such as democracy, financial management.

² A philosophical and religious current of the XVII and XVIII century in England. Latitudinarians purported that following the Anglican teachings and rituals too strictly was detrimental to faith, as God had already laid out a plan for the world that did not involve human infrastructure. “[...] Latitudinarianism presented a benevolent God as author of a harmonious universe in which earthly joys presaged heavenly rewards.” (Porter 2001, 260)

In this period the continuation of the species, sex, procreation, all gain a new importance; man and woman were started to be considered as separate entities, with different characteristics that are unique to their own genders. Up until that point, women were seen as “female men”, as they were truly considered as an extension of male existence, a cast-off from the masculine body. “The ancient Aristotelian idea that the female body was a botched version of the male, with her organs of reproduction inversions of the male equivalent (the vagina as an outside-in penis) was replaced, it has been argued, by the idea that male and female bodies were radically different”, writes Roy Porter in his *Enlightenment* (2001, 328). Acknowledging women and men as separate entities jumpstarted the research on the reasons why humans of the fairer sex were more sensitive, sympathetic, and generally more nurturing, which led to a “gendered reading of the nervous system” (328). Women were hence designated as the moral bulwarks of society, given their biological inclination to being more attuned to good sensibility. In this environment of rediscovery of the human and, in particular, of the human body, the basis was laid for the concept that passions were tightly connected to the body. The word “passion” has roots in the Greek *pathos*, which means “to suffer”, and in the Latin word *patio*, which means “to endure”. The Latin meaning would suggest an element of “passivity”, as in the antonym of “activity”, implying that passions are simply a by-product of being human. Empiricism also stems from the idea of a passive, receiving mind, as John Locke had stated. However, feeling a passion directed towards a situation, item, or person, implies an active role of the mind, the willingness, the act of creating the circumstances to experience that particular passion or wistfulness. The general tendency of Latitudinarian theologians and sermonists of that time was to allow passions, even to encourage them, because a person that cultivated passions in such a way so as not to be subjugated by them was a man that would not be overwhelmed by them

or, in the words of that period, would not be debauched. Because of this, the interaction between reason and passion was of paramount importance. The escape from oppression and the search for happiness were central issues in the XVIII century, far more than it had been in the previous century; it was almost urgent in its importance.

George Berkeley was an eighteenth-century philosopher, and an empiricist. According to him a concept in the mind *can* proceed from the mind itself, but first it must come from the outside through the senses (as nothing can burst from the intellect that had not been previously perceived). Locke had stated that, in our minds, the idea, the image of an object ceases to exist when the perception of it is gone – e.g. if I am looking at a bird outside the window, as soon as the bird flies away or I turn away from it, the image of it that my mind had constructed is erased. Berkeley re-introduced the concept of subjectivity to perception: the idea of the object remains, and, if it is true and correct, it relays the likeness of the object even in its absence.

What is the role of the object in the formation of the image? Locke set the foundation for the dependence of the self from the outside world; without outside stimuli our own awareness would cease to exist. Descartes had anticipated this line of thinking with his famous *cogito ergo sum* (and the later clarification *cogito ergo sum res cogitans*), which implied that the very act of thinking proved beyond doubt that any being that could think was, in fact, real. He also proposed the concept of innatism, meaning the presence of innate ideas in our minds. Locke, instead, put forward anti-innatism, stating that everything we know, every image we have, comes from outside, since we are naturally predisposed to receiving ideas. Plato was another philosopher who had proposed the pre-existence of categories in our minds, which preceded the contact with an object and the subsequent formation of its image. David Hume advised that there is no necessary con-

nection between the knowledge that comes from outside and our ability to elaborate such knowledge, which means that the image that forms in the mind can be untrue, incorrect, or share no likeness with the object that is perceived. Hume was just mildly sceptical, and brought this debate down from a purely “occasionally metaphysical” plane onto a more concrete level. He stated that man’s immanent perception does not guarantee the truthfulness of our knowledge and it is, as such, not a definite but a *probable* knowledge.

Despite the abundance of theories and talks about sense, outside stimuli *do* provide the mind with images or knowledge, which can take the form of passions or sentiments, as they come through the senses and are passive. However, ever since Aristotle’s time the existence of the passive side of passions, which comes from animal instinct, was accepted. There is also an active component, that is, the willingness to perceive. Somewhat akin to a demonic possession in exoteric lore, which states that the possessed *must* show, even subconsciously, willingness to be overtaken by a demon, passions cannot be felt if the individual does not have an inclination or openness to feeling. Throughout history of humankind passion was perceived as part passivity and part morality. Before the XVI century “morality” referred mostly to the passion of Christ, which was both a situation of passively receiving pain and of showing an active will to accept it. The majority of treatises about passion were concerned with avoiding passions altogether, especially sexual passions. The idea that passions are passive, however, clashes with the notion that one can hinder, avoid, or fall prey to them. The impact of the active component depends on social circumstances and physiology: external factors such as peer pressure or physical responses (such as blushing) might hinder one’s willingness to give into passions. This would imply that, depending on the time setting and the background of an individual, his or her stance about passions and about avoiding them

is subjected to change. The virtue “required” of a woman confronting sexual advances has greatly varied throughout the centuries, and still changes according to her appearance and social standing – a rich, attractive woman is expected to receive and reject many men, whereas a poor, ugly woman could even get told to be grateful for the attention received.

The first to imagine an explicit connection between the “outside” and the “inside” was Descartes. He did not bother with the “where”, he focussed instead on the reality that, as a person can think in a determined moment, such a person is an entity that “is thinking in that particular moment”. In addition to that he first proposed the concepts of *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, and the reality that the fact alone that humans think means that there is a thought to be had. In his collection of treatises *Passions of the Soul* (1649) he observed the correspondence between the pure thought, the pure projection, and reality. He theorized that this relation could be explained through the study of the human body, as he believed in the existence of fluids (animal spirits) that go through the body, which provides a mechanical explanation to a metaphysical question. This new kind of study is called “iatromechanics”. As such, in the XVIII century, a strictly mechanical approach was used to deal with issues that had been previously thought pertinent only to morality. George Cheyne was among the thinkers who adopted this new frame of mind: he thought that maladies were caused by a disturbance in the force either outside or inside the body. These new points of view indicate a new understanding of the mind.

How can I know that I know if I do not know *how* I know? Does knowledge cease to exist if an individual ceases to receive the empirical data for it? With regard to that Hume theorized that society and its norm are what keeps the stream of knowledge flowing, as certain empirical experiences are so widespread that they have become customs and habits. In his treatise *Of the Standard of Taste* (1757), he describes man’s ability to per-

ceive the beauty and usefulness of man's workings and he compares this "taste" to the foundation of civilization. This is not intended as something limited to sensitivity, particularly a woman's sensitivity, but rather as something shared by people, that ties them together. Thus, is knowledge an occurrence of *folié a tout le monde*? Just as passions are individual, knowledge certainly also belongs to the individual that has perceived, elaborated, and assimilated an outside stimulus.

An example of this could be a child that experiences curiosity and glee at seeing a dancing flame, only to feel fear and pain once he or she acts on the desire to touch it and gets burned. In this case, the passion (curiosity) and knowledge (fire is hot) belong entirely to the child; however, society can greatly influence a person's individual experience. It is almost a given that the mother or father has forbidden the child to touch fire, as someone surely had told them in the past. And yet, there probably is not a single child in the world that has not touched fire despite the warnings. While this example is severely limited, it lends itself well to the belief that perception and feelings can be influenced or shaped by society, yet until an individual experiences that particular feeling he or she will not truly understand the circumstances in which the sentiment presents itself. Moreover, the desires that stem from passions are not always positive, and most of the time they lead down a path of sin, or suffering. This was the main reason for writers and thinkers in the XVII century to warn people against giving into their desires, and instead spurred them to strive for purity of thought and intention.

In the late XVII century the relationship between body and mind solidified even more. Thomas Willis was a physician considered to be the "founder" of neurology. Through his numerous dissections, in particular of the brain, he made important discoveries about the nerves, the brain, and blood: he discovered and mapped out the circulatory system. Willis hy-

pothesised a different kind of relationship between brain and flesh, wondering whether it was possible to separate the “machinery” and the “essence”. In fact, he proposed that the workings of the passions were purely mechanical, and that the flame of life, or spirit, also circulated through the veins as blood does. He changed the idea of the workings of imagination, and he held a great influence on eighteenth-century physicians. Willis gave way to a new approach to the medical study of the brain, and captained the discovery of the circulatory system, which bore the concept of the body as a “circular, self-efficient” machine, of which the brain and heart were integral parts.

If the brain is the centre of the exchange between mind and matter, what the role of the heart be? Willis’s model puts matter at the centre of the explanation about passions, and provides a mechanical, material process for the creation of “passions”. He also based his theories on the existence of animal spirits and their influence on people, although he stated that not only did the humors circulated through the veins, they were actually carried by or attached to blood. According to Willis the *cerebrum* was devoted to rational thinking and voluntary motions, while the *cerebellum* dealt with involuntary impulses. In his models the lymphatic system was also an important medium through which passions travelled.

Nicholas Malebranche, a French rationalist philosopher, laid out his conception about passions in the six volumes of *De la Recherche de la Vérité. Où l’on Traite de la Nature de l’Esprit de l’Homme, et de l’Usage qu’il en Doit Faire pour Éviter l’Erreur dans les Sciences* (“The Search After Truth” 1674-75). While he shares most of the Cartesian views about the insoluble link between mind and body, he veers off into decidedly Christian territory, by stating that passions and impulses come from God, as a way to reconnect humans to their original Loving Nature through the motions of the animal spirits. The manner of travel was given a feasible explanation

later on, when Newton laid down the theory about the transference of movement from body to body through vibrations. Considering that passions were literally conceived as “motions”, this theory was much more palatable to scientists than the existence of animal spirits. The association of vibration and passion³ became paramount in the second half of the century; however, once it was discovered that electricity was the main element in “communications” within the body, the idea of passions as vibrations subsided. The notion that passions could “move” around the body, or from one body to another depending on the situation, marks a change in conception, as passions, or perturbations, had been considered passive up until then. While the inert element still remained, since a sentiment could only be evoked as a reaction, as medical knowledge progressed more and more many philosophers sought to place the emotions as a natural function of the human body.

The idea of man’s true nature being rooted in love is in stark opposition to the concept of selfishness borne of Hobbes’ idea of self-preservation (the frame of mind of one-against-the-world, which accompanies the struggle of life and is the natural state of humankind, which in itself is chaotic and violent). Others, like Rousseau, alternatively thought that man was inherently good, and society turned him into a selfish, predatory being. These optimistic thinkers, like the Earl of Shaftesbury, believed that man is made for others, born altruistic, with a “sixth sense” called the moral sense, that he uses not only to do good, but also to see the beauty in doing so. Psychology explains the base mechanisms of the mind, and tells us

³ The doctrine of Association was introduced to psychology by philosopher David Hartley in the early XVIII century. He purported that vibrations caused by the body (such as the heartbeat) are dictated by a person’s individual and collective experience and, in turn, influence that individual’s future experiences. The most famous example of Associationism is Pavlov’s experiment, in which a reaction is caused by an unrelated input, as that input had been associated to a particular (happy) result in the past. While Associationism had been explored by Plato and Aristotle in ancient times, the newfound interest in the human being brought it back under the limelight. Locke and Hume, among others, adhered to this school of thought.

to not feel guilty about our physiological desires, but rather it encourages us to avoid overindulging in them. The idea that a person has to act within a certain set of parameters – mostly of physiological nature – paradoxically increases passivity. In the XVIII century the relationship between the outer and inner workings started to be taken into consideration and studied to better understand how passion truly worked.

In ancient times Aristotle had already theorized an intimate link between mind and body; in fact he referred to passions as the physical workings of the mind, in addition to the emotional workings of the mind, meaning that passions were considered to be both psychological and physiological in nature. The philosophical current that dealt with this dichotomy the most was Stoicism; indeed, the Stoics put forward the idea of the state of *ἀταραξία* (*ataraxia*), later repurposed in Latin philosophy as *tranquillitas*. This differs from apathy, as it is not the absence of passions, but rather the “absence of perturbation”, the quietness of the mind. Stoicism tackled this issue stating that there was the need to deal with emotions, rather than ignore them. This doctrine resurfaces time and again throughout history. Henry Fielding, brother to Sarah Fielding, wrote against Stoicism, calling it self-referential and comparing *ataraxia* to apathy. The common denominator in the treatises about human passions is that they all stated that intense emotions are dangerous for people, and there is the necessity to rely on alternative ways, like religion, to tame passions and pleasures.

In the XVIII century the relationship between mind and body was considered the most important element in the expression of passions. The Aristotelian tradition helped along the discussion about this very relationship, defining it as the rapport between mind and matter. In *De Anima*, Aristotle distinguished the soul and the mind, giving them different roles and importance: the latter is independent from passions, while the former is limited by them. Aristotle also outlined different kinds of souls, and stated

that the “sensitive soul” is the most sensitive to emotions; on the other hand, the “rational soul” is dedicated to the understanding of higher matters.

In *A Natural History of the Passions* (1674), Walter Charleton wrote of two souls, one that is rational, and one that is immaterial; the first’s purpose is to study and understand, the other’s is to be the sensitive, extended soul, and it serves as a medium between mind and body. However, the function of a sensitive soul as mediator between mind and body, hence the use of passions as portrayers of reality begs a few questions: is there a guarantee that what we think, what we *see*, is actually real? Is the image that I create in my mind a correct likeness of the object with which I am interacting? Descartes believed that, as God created the world in an orderly fashion, our perceptions are part of that creation, and as such they are perfect as well. Malebranche mostly agreed with Descartes, yet he added the “limitations” that our perceptions are indeed correct, but only in contained instances and not in the complete, general framework. This is part of the Occasionalism current. Leibnitz, who had the tendency to provide a theological or deistic explanation or reasoning to the workings of both mind and body, also believed that everything was as it was meant to be, because God made it such. This kind of deistic approach was typical in England and for most Latitudinarian religions.

Nevertheless, the idea that emotions were something sacred and reserved for a chosen few changed in the XVIII century, in a period when sentimental fiction was spreading fast, as passions started to be seen as a proof of humanity, and readers craved that kind of outlet for their own, repressed feelings. The addition of souls, perception, and mechanisms to the discourse on passions lead to a new motto: *sentior ergo sum*. According to this a person could only react to outside stimuli if there was a perception of them first, because everything that is in the intellect was in the senses first,

except intellect itself. One set of passions in particular was hailed as pure and to be envied: male sensitivity, empathy, and compassion. Men had always been forced by society to have a rock-hard exterior, which was often matched to a terse inner life. That is not to say that men did not, or presently do not, have a vibrant emotional inner landscape, rather, they were not – and in many cases, still are not – allowed to show emotions that were perceived as feminine, such as tenderness, or to have demure behaviours.

One of the reasons why the XVIII century allowed more space for sentiment was the increased understanding of the body and the mind from a purely medical point of view. At the time, most of what people knew about human beings was still rooted in the Hippocratic system which was later further developed by Galen: “humorism”. Humorism was based on the belief that, in the body, there were four fluids, or *humors*, that directly influenced a person’s temperament and health.

These four humors are:

- μέλαινα χολή (*melaina chole*), black bile, which corresponds to the element of earth, is produced by the spleen, and in excess it leads to a melancholic temperament;
- ξανθή χολή (*xanthē chole*), yellow bile, which corresponds to the element of fire, is produced by the gallbladder, and in excess it leads to a choleric temperament;
- φλέγμα (*phlegma*), phlegm, that corresponds to the element of water, is produced by the brain and lungs, and in excess it leads to a phlegmatic temperament;
- αἷμα (*haima*), blood, that corresponds to the element of air, is produced in the liver, and in excess it leads to a sanguine temperament.

Galen further theorized that particular humans were associated to particular qualities: warm, cold, wet, and dry, and that each humor had a predominance of two of these traits. The theory of humors did not refer solely to psychological matters, but it was believed that an imbalance in them caused an individual to be more susceptible to certain maladies rather than others. Examples and arguments of this theory can be found throughout literature, both medical and not, such as Ben Johnson's *Every Man out of his Humor* (1599).

According to Horace in his *Ars Poetica*, the main objective of a text – especially a fictional one – should be to instruct above all, using entertainment only as a means to disburden the reader of the harshness of learning: a funny spoonful of sugar for a serious, moralistic pill. This notion was maintained throughout the centuries, as writers developed more and more varied genres ultimately they all wanted to convey moral teachings, or instructions about morality. Appeasing one's own sensibility was never intended, and nowadays it raises the question whether in novels such as *The Man of Feeling* (Mackenzie 1771) the protagonist's joy at meeting people in distress comes only from sharing pain with them and being able to help them (hence shifting the satisfaction from the mere feeling of sympathy to his "power" over others) or from something else entirely.

The 'man of feeling' became prized, as the patriarchalist dictum that matrimony was monarchy in microcosm yielded to a new ideal of the household as a sanctuary of emotional warmth and vehicle of socialization. While the 'molly' (homosexual), macaroni and fribble were vilified as sensibility taken to excess, enlightened discourse – the conquest of despotism by politeness – prized males who were neither 'foppish' nor 'licentious', and aimed to reconcile 'manly liberty' with 'the goodly order of the universe'. Shaftesbury's ideal, for instance, conjuring up a model that looked back to Baldassare Castiglione's Renaissance 'Courtier' and forward to *Sir Charles Grandison*, would possess 'a mind subordi-

nate to reason, a temper humanized and fitted to all natural affections'. (Porter 2001, 325)

The protagonist of the novel of sentiment is an emblem of sympathy, which bears closeness to empathy. The difference between the two is slight: empathy means to *feel for* someone else, sympathy means to *share* someone else's emotions.

Sentimental fiction became a sub-genre within the greater genre of the novel. Whereas the realist novels of the XIX century have traits and features of sentimental fiction "incorporated" into their structure, in the XVIII century the texts are prominently sentimental. The majority of the sentimental fictions have, at their centre, a theme of oppression, and in the case of almost all female characters a theme of abuse. An exhaustive examination of the vexed human condition in sentimental fiction can be found in *Virtue in Distress: Studies in the Novel of Sentiment from Richardson to Sade* (Brissenden 1974). Mary Wollstonecraft, who could be considered a proto-feminist, also touches on the issue in *The Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) and *Mary* (1788). Her idea is that, in order for women to disentangle themselves from man's oppression, they need to address their sensible side rather than their sensitive one. That is not to say that women were encouraged to abandon it, but Wollstonecraft urged women to not let it define them either: sensibility should be educated and corralled in reason.

What does the word "sentimental" mean, and how is it used? There are a few words that hinge on the concept of sentimentality, and some of them overlap in meaning. For example, "feeling" and "sentiment", while being etymologically different, hold the same meaning, which is "something that is perceived with one or more of the senses". A feeling, or a sentiment, is the physical interaction between a person and the outside through the senses. This can be considered as the foundation of the "literature of

tears”, as it suggests that making others happy satisfies the mind and appeases the senses, even the artistic ones. In fact, the typical sentimental hero looks for outward signs of unhappiness and wishes nothing more than to relieve people of their pain. His search for someone in distress is actually a quest to find someone of virtue, because only someone virtuous can be negatively affected by events. The literature of tears is based on the love for tragedies, which were thought to be cathartic as they allowed the spectator or the reader to live and experience a condition, or conditions, vicariously, and to purify and strengthen the mind without actually having to live through loss or suffering.

In time, as authors started to obtain a more lenient creative licence, it became harder to balance the didactic function and the artistic form: writers would indulge in their flairs, creating exceptional or absurd situations in which their characters could develop. The increase in differentiation of classes, the decline of the gentry and the rise of the working class, created a much wider spectrum of real-life counterparts to characters that, up until the XVI century, had been somewhat bidimensional. The appearance of “grey” characters, neither thoroughly good nor thoroughly evil, became the topic of several issues of *The Rambler* (Johnson 1750-52), a late eighteenth-century periodical that focussed on literature. The main concern was that, if novels are meant to instruct, characters with vague roles and morals could confuse the readers as to which was the correct teaching (if a jobless man steals because his children are hungry should he be punished for theft or rewarded for being a devoted father?). Oftentimes, the more ambiguous characters would appear in urban settings, as the rapid expansion and progress of cities attracted a great range of opposing demographics, from farmers who could count up to ten to the famous thinkers of that time. When presenting a situation to different classes of people, the reactions were varied, and one or both parties would have a response that

was not appropriate for the occurrence. Mixing “peasants” with “aristocracy”, simple yet genuine men with sophisticated gentlemen, caused a collision of worlds and episodes that would be relegated to one particular class would touch new dimensions. In this melting pot of etiquette, unwritten rules, and diversity, it was not easy to find the middle ground, and behaviours that would have been straightforward not twenty years prior, now veered towards an opaque moral sense.

It is no accident that many of the sentimental heroes find their true solace in a more rural setting, instead of in a bustling city. Wordsworth was quick to point out that “low and rustic life was generally chosen because in that situation the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they [...] speak a plainer and more emphatic language” (Wordsworth and Coleridge 2008, 174) . The correlation between human nature, innocence, and sentiment would be underlined throughout the XIX century, where a deeper connection with nature was proposed as a way to ensure an improvement of the self. It was a given that crime and maliciousness also existed out in the country, away from the larger and more corrupt cities. The horrors that befall Tess in *Tess of the d’Urbervilles: a Pure Woman Faithfully Presented* (Hardy 1891) are centred around an insular kind of society on the d’Urbervilles estate, Hetty’s heinous infanticide in *Adam Bede* (Eliot 1859) occurs in the countryside, and several other examples could be found. The rural, bucolic setting might have allowed for stronger emotions to be displayed, even negative ones; people would not be allowed to fully express their love or their hatred if they were in an urban, artificial setting.

This trend was counteracted upon the literature of sentiment, in which feelings are not bound to any one place or setting, but rather are carried by the hero and, much like small seeds of emotion, planted in a few chosen that the protagonist meets and connects with, thus creating a network of sentiment that the protagonist can fall back on to if needed. An ex-

ample of this could be David's journey in *The Adventures of David Simple* (Fielding 1744). Despite the catchy title, which in full would be *The Adventures of David Simple, Containing an Account of His Travels Through the Cities of London and Westminster, in Search of a True Friend*, it is not a typical adventure novel per se, as it lacks the elements of action, exotic places, and mystery. Even if setting an adventure in a city is possible, it should have been worded differently, as if the city were a different one, an unknown place. In this case, the author created a special quest set in ordinary places to give a sense of normalcy and a trait of morality to the adventure; indeed, the journey is not a physical one, but rather an inner one.

The rational gave way for the sentimental:

Challenging the divinely delivered Christian soul or Cartesian *cogito*, post-Lockean thinking presented consciousness as infinite potentiality, a sum of shifting sensations, reliant on an indeterminate and trembling network of nerves and fibres discharging signals between the outside world and the inner *je ne sais quoi*. (Porter 2001, 281)

It was not something that happened quickly, or smoothly: texts did not adhere to the "Addisonian decorum" shown in the *Spectator* (Addison and Steele 1711), through which its founders intended to promote "propriety, good manners and style, its lay sermons declared war on false values, foppery and folly – and low taste, like puns." (Porter 2001, 195) Literature could then truly deal in sensibility and it was aided by several concepts, either new or by reworking ideas from the past.

The new understanding of the workings of the human body and mind leaned towards modern life being the direct cause of certain individuals' inclination to linger on their own feelings and true self rather than indulge in the "social emulation" that would have been required by the people that could be commonly found throughout society. However, this surge of sentimentality also had the indirect effect of making sentimentality a

commodity to be displayed like a coat of arms, or an expensive ornament. Among the protagonists and authors of the literature of sentiment there are those that utilize emotionally-charged words as badges of honour, tears as grenades, feelings as swords to cut through the audience's or interlocutor's defences.

1.2 CONTEXT: Cry Me a River

Tears and Sentimentality

There is a sacredness in tears. They are not a mark of weakness, but of power. They speak more eloquently than ten thousand tongues. They are the messengers of overwhelming grief, of deep contrition and of unspeakable love. (Washington Irving)

Functional tears were nothing new, indeed. The study of how outwards signs of emotion could be displayed or used had been going on for centuries, ever since Hippocrates' notion of "purging". Thinkers focussed both on positive and negative outbursts, though moreso the latter. The concept was further analysed by Aristotle in his *Poetics*:

A tragedy, then, is the imitation of an action that is serious, and also as having magnitude, complete in itself; in language embellished with pleasurable accessories, each kind brought in separately in the parts of the works; in a dramatic, not in narrative form; with incidents arousing pity and fear wherewith to accomplish the catharsis of such emotions. (Lutz 1999, 117)

However, those who wish to delve in the past to uncover the secrets of "emotional etiquette" must face an obstacle, or several. As it has been repeatedly stated throughout this dissertation the rules are always changing, and what was once considered normal would now be inappropriate and vice-versa. Moreover, representation is also liable to liberal interpretation, both in the past and in the present: an artist might not have been able to fully capture an emotion on a canvas, or a writer might not have aptly described a moving scene, or the reader's or audience's own sensibility might be too susceptible or not malleable enough.

In the interest of linearly navigating a concept as fluid and ethereal as sentimentality, I will explore tears as it has been done by Tom Lutz in

his *Crying: The Natural and Cultural History of Tears* (1999), since his analysis is essential to understanding how this new sentimental hero was raised as epitome of pureness rather than being pigeon-holed as a sham. Many might not believe that tears, or crying, could be the subject of ancient writing; after all, how could such a natural function be relevant enough to be immortalized on a stone tablet? And yet even as early as the XIV century B.C. a scribe diligently reported that tears, often caused by grief, serve a double function: they are a natural response to physical pain or sentimental sorrow, but they also offer a feeling of fullness, or exhilaration. This goes in direct contrast to what was thought and stated by Aristotle later, that tears serve as “purgation” to empty the mind.

On the one hand there are tears of grief that fill the emptiness left by the happenstance that caused that same grief; on the other there are cathartic tears that are used to vacate ourselves of pain. A third option would be W.B. Stanford’s notion that, specifically in Homer’s poetry, tears balance the pain: whatever caused the painful response is mitigated by the tears, which take on an aesthetic function. The link between “tears” and “beauty”, vulgarly speaking, was further laid out by Virgil in his bucolic writings. In those texts the lovers were even more beautiful if they were “adorned” by tears, small drops gently framing their lashes and giving them an even more precious quality. Such was the impact of tears on a person’s appearance and perceived pureness, that Ovid would suggest in his writings that anyone should be able to produce tears at will, as a mean of seduction by virile men or persuasion by delicate women. Later on, a further link between pleasure and pain was established by Christian scholars, hence creating this triangular pattern between tears, pleasure, and pain.

St. Thomas Aquinas theorized that a person that cries because of pain or sorrow feels pleasure, as by crying the negative emotion is dispersed; this is not so dissimilar from the cathartic power of tears that Aris-

tole first posited. Several religions, Christianity in particular, saw a definite connection between the spiritual realm and crying. In his autobiographical work, *Confessions* (397-400 AD), St. Augustine of Hippo delineates four kinds of tears, all related to religiousness: tears of contrition, tears of sorrow, tears of gladness, and tears of grace. To fully understand how this elaborate study on tears figures into the sentimental hero's development, first there must be an understanding of each kind of crying, and what it represents. Tears caused by contrition and those caused by sorrow might appear to be closely related, but they represent two different feelings and are aimed at two different outcomes: contrition comes after a sinful act or thought, and tears are meant to prove the depth and honesty of the weeper's remorse, while sorrowful tears are the consequence of an offence, either suffered or witnessed by the one who cries to purify him or herself from a negative emotion. Tears of gladness and of grace are, instead, a pure offering to whichever deity or deities the weeper is devoted to (although, in the interest of brevity, I will only linger on the relationship between tears and the Christian God). The sheer amount of tears gifted to God in what was christened by Robert Southwell as "holy tears" in the XVI century functions as a testament of the strength and purity of one's belief. The founder of the Jesuit order, Ignatius of Loyola, accurately described the quality of this kind of weeping, indicating that it creates both an intense connection to God, and an extreme detachment from oneself and the rest of the world. This is the closest portrayal of the tears wept by the sentimental hero, as his crying is borne of and establishes a deep bond between himself and the person that instigates his weeping.

Melancholy was a recurrent theme in texts from the XVII and XVIII century, and at that time in England it was almost a binominal with the average English person. English physician George Cheyne wrote a treatise about melancholia and called it *The English Malady* (1733). The fall

from happiness to melancholy is the main undercurrent to all the stories the readers encounter within the book; also recurring the theme of “breaking expectations” given by attaching a set of values, a morality, to a status. Eighteenth-century fiction shifts the focus from the condition of aristocracy to that of the commoners. It is for this reason that *David Simple* can be viewed as an epic novel, because what once happened only to *the best of man* now is reported to be happening to the average person as well. The paramount example of the weeping sentimental hero is, certainly, Mackenzie’s Harley as giving a moving story a “tribute of some tears” it is his “go-to” reaction. Those tears, however, are not an outward sign of “the English malady”, or of any sadness whatsoever; rather, they are the natural reaction of empathy, at least for a sentimental hero. An example of such an instance is the episode in which Harley meets an old acquaintance, Edwards, who tells him of his troubles. While the retelling of his miserable story does not provoke outwards signs of distress in him, Harley’s “genuine” act of reaching out to offer him comfort and cherish him makes the old man “blubber like a boy”. The description of the “ugly” cry serves a dual purpose: to affirm the cathartic purpose of tears, and to hail the situation as a moment of true connection. Tears were not allowed in self-centred circumstances, they were only permitted as an outwards sign of mutual recognition, for the sake of others.

What the sentimental novel lacks in representations of carnal desire, it makes up in allusion: especially in religious settings crying was used as a metaphor for or implied a situation that was entirely sexual in nature. After all, a situation in which a body that is heaving with unrestrained emotion, completely overtaken by natural instinct, accompanied by laboured breathing and bodily fluids trickling out, could be misleading – even more so if the writhing bodies are two, or more.

A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy (Sterne 1768)

mixes sentimentality and comedy, it is chock-full of double-entendres, and pairs the sentiment to eroticism. In fact the notion that feelings are closely linked with the body had emerged in that period. This notion is shown most prominently in the XIX century's "Baudlerises" novels, while in the XVIII century the sentimental and the erotic merely overlap. The sentimental hero sublimates eroticism so much that "love" and "sexuality" are completely absent from the relationship with the distressed. For this reason David in *David Simple* takes notice of Cynthia's appearance only because there is a link between what happens in the mind, meaning passions, and outer appearance, as it was believed that features were more truthful and trustworthy than the people themselves. It was almost as if the roles Ovid had proposed were now reversed: the man uses tears as a means of seduction, his greatest attribute is his empathy and it is through a shared sentiment, be it his own or his interlocutor's, that the hero will forge the relationships that feed his mind and give his soul solace. This kind of seduction is not solely aimed at women, or prospective romantic partners: anyone can share the hero's emotion, and anyone can be seduced by the sheer honesty of emotional tears. It was generally recognized that women were – still are – more receptive to a bond created through feelings, as being sensitive was a female prerogative. However, the sentimental hero is able to form an honest and profound connection to people through his tears and his feelings, and such a connection is rarely one-sided; the emotion coming from the man of feeling, "feminine" as it might be, is always welcomed by a kindred spirit in distress. The tears the heroes shed work as a balm on the soul, in moments when emotions are so repressed they "[...] get stuck in the body whenever they are not expressed, and so the raised shoulders of fear, the tucked shoulders of a load of guilt, the stiff, straight back of a person who is emotionally inflexible and unyielding are the result of unshed tears." (Lutz 1999, 129)

In conclusion, tears actively grant pleasurable sensations to the person crying, which is a markedly different function in respect to tears from ancient times: a woman's crying used to signal the end of her cycle of action, the ultimate response to a stimulus, and a man's tears were just the beginning of his reaction. A true, virile man should shed tears of compassion or grief only with an undercurrent of anger, and that anger would lead the man to reacting and overcoming the negative stimulus that had caused his crying in the first place. On the contrary tears of pleasure are a purely aesthetic response, and create aesthetic pleasure. Emil Mihai Cioran, a Romanian-French philosopher, studied "the sensual pleasure of crying" in depth, and brought back the Virgilian concept of *lacrimaeque decorae*, linking it to religious euphoria. Moreover, tears as a sign of virtue are to be expected in a hero or heroine who is bravely facing his or her destiny, as if the pleasure derived not from loss, but rather from the sense of accomplishment. The actualization of a destiny, or of an archetypal role, is not the ultimate sign of virtue: the shedding of warm, grateful tears is. To emphasise the importance of tears in eighteenth-century sentimental novels the "Index to Tears" was added to the 1886 edition of *The Man of Feeling*, and can be found in *Appendix 3* with the following note from the publisher:

Morley gives no contextualizing comments on his index: it is as though the repertory of sentimental effects Walter Scott identifies in the novel in his biographical essay on Mackenzie has become a repertory of mirthful effects, perhaps to be read aloud in the Victorian parlour to an audience only needing to hear these categories of tears in order to trigger a rather different physical response. We include it because, as a kind of *index prohibitorium* of excessively sentimental effects, it demonstrates the change in reading habits and tastes in the more than a century since the novel's publication. (Mackenzie 2009, 110)

Overall, tears in literature have always been portrayed as either beautiful (tears of joy, religious ecstasy, or compassion) or beautifully crafted (like

tears of a lover's deceit). In both cases crying denotes virtue, as only a virtuous person could be moved to tears, or only an intelligent individual could cry to deceive and be successful.

1.3 CONTEXT: *Pathos, Lacrimae, and Distress*

Feelings Make us Human, Being Human Causes us to Feel

In a way, the sentimental hero struggles to live in a world so full of emotion, both his and others', both expressed and repressed. His point of view is one of beauty and compassion, of empathy and sympathy yet, more often than not, he is derided because of his "soft" heart. The typical sentimental hero looks for outward signs of unhappiness and wishes nothing more than to relieve people of their pain. However, even such a candid person can be ensnared in the stereotypes that littered society in the XVII and XVIII century – today as well, mind you –, namely the bond between social standing and morality: a noble simply *has* to be a good individual, and bad things *only* happen to poor folk. This link goes beyond a banal skin-deep likeableness or dislike. It is almost a given that a well-groomed man gives more of a sense of security and pleasure than an unkempt beggar does. The concept of physiognomy, first introduced in the treatise *De Physiognoma* attributed to Aristotle, started out as the ascription of animal-like characteristics to humans based on similar features (for example, a person with a thin, pointed face would be wily as a fox). It transformed over time into associating physical traits, especially facial features, to certain qualities. Johann Kaspar Lavater, a Swiss clergyman, devoted his life to the study of physiognomy and published several treatises on the topic, causing its reappearance and authors of the XVIII century to give greater attention to it. The scientific and technological progress of the period surely lent itself well to the more scientific approach to physiognomy, and the wider distribution of literature on it caused people – or, at least, characters – to fancy themselves as mildly experts on identifying "good" and "bad" people on sight, even though it was mostly a question of "good-looking" and "unattractive".

Nonetheless, this continuing association between “good” and “upper-class” led, through the centuries, to associate “good” to “money”. This is part of the reason why the sentimental hero, who often relies on physiognomy, ends up scorned and disappointed: after all, some of the most vile liars and cheaters are the richest men on the planet. The dichotomy between “good” and “bad” was extremely important in this new kind of society: if you had money you were automatically good, because only good people could become wealthy and reach the top. However, with the rise of the bourgeoisie, merchants and bankers became the backbone of society, and tradesmen gave way to the need for a new kind of economy. Being virtuous was not attached solely to aristocracy, because aristocracy was not the only rich class anymore.

Still, it was not enough to be affluent to get classified as “good”, one also – or rather, only – had to *appear* rich by sporting the latest trends, and by being charitable. This connection was helped along by the new humanitarianism, a refreshing philanthropic current that swept through the XVIII century. The human started to become more important as an individual: happy and wealthy individuals constituted a better society as a whole. The contrast between the belief that was is a dog-eat-dog world and the conviction that humans were prone to altruistic behaviour was well reflected by keeping the poor at the lowest tiers. The social infrastructure was composed by individuals that would dole out their hard-earned money to the plebes as a means to cater to their own self-importance and assuredness in their “goodness”. Other than charitable endeavours, the mark of a virtuous person was the ability to shed tears for the sake of others as well. Showing compassion became such a trend that, at times, situations were purposefully created to allow the nobility to commiserate the less fortunate.

One such occasion is Harley’s trip to Bedlam (Mackenzie 2009), in which the audience can experience a few opposing currents of that time.

Most of the patients at the sanatorium are mad, detached from others, and they are close to Hobbes' thoughts on passions: quoting from the book "passions are temporary madness, and sometimes they can be fatal" – not necessarily lethal." (25) Another such instance is the meeting between Harley and the prostitute, which is out of the ordinary, as it goes beyond the bounds of a prostitute-customer typical interaction. The odd, curiously-phrased sentences feel out of place, and it could be a way to create detachment between the reader and the facts. Harley is drawn to her plight, and as she recounts her story he consoles her, as the mere fact that she recognizes her sinfulness is an act of redemption. "There is virtue in these tears" (38) he tells her, and tries to guide her back on the path of the righteous, since repentance can lead to doing good again. Had this been satire, her feelings would have been dismissed, or even mocked.

Scholar Tim Parnell comments on the humour/satire of the literature on sentiment, specifically of *A Sentimental Journey*, stating in the *Introduction* that "our modern sense of the incompatibility of satire and sentiment creates an anachronistic dichotomy that did not obtain in mid-eighteenth-century fiction, where the happy cohabitation of irony, comedy, and pathos is commonplace." (Sterne 2008) Instead, the prostitute and her frailty are cherished, and she is treated as a proper lady in distress, sympathized with, and consoled. Once again, beauty is equalled to goodness; in this case, the loss of beauty implies that the virtue that had granted, or caused, that beauty, is also lost. Another indication of loss of virtue is the way she loses consciousness: usually in sentimental fiction fainting happened when a person was overwhelmed by emotions: here Miss Hatkins pitches in a dead faint because of starvation, hence a physical reaction rather than a moral outburst. Later in the story the protagonist stands up to the father, not out of courage but most likely out of naivety, as he truly believes that the enraged man will understand his reasoning even through the haze of anger. It could

be said that fury is passion going out, whereas pity is passion coming in. However this serves him well in a few instances, as his pure-heartedness proves beyond doubt that his concern is genuine. He is a bit quixotic in his endeavours: in fact his countenance has elements of Romanticism, as his romantic enthusiasm is typical for knights and proto-romantic heroes.

Harley does not want to follow society's afflictions and does not want to accept the leanings, misconceptions, and discrimination that are typical of his time. Even in a world of cunning exploitation there still are a precious few with whom having an honest conversation is possible. *David Simple* and *The Man of Feeling* both highlight the difficulty in finding such a person, or persons. Furthermore both books, as well as sentimental fiction in general, show that emotional sharing is not something to be done in any moment of everyday life by anyone or everyone, but it is strictly reserved for moments that need to be cherished, and these moments can only be shared with kindred spirits. The moral of Harley's story is to deconstruct the perception that he had formed of the world, namely that society is not possible, because modern society is made up of cheaters and aggressively individualistic people.

One's aim should be, instead, to form a society of one's own making, and the basis of that kind of society is the nuclear family. In *David Simple* family is not intended as a "biological family" (a contract between two people that are bound to eventually have children), rather a family based on mutual recognition of kinship, which is actually society at its most defensive and defensible. The ideal family for the sentimental hero is the one that reflects his "one against the world" mentality.

Following Harley's disappointment in not being able to create his own family there is the most Sterne-like fragment of the book, taken from *Hamlet*: "The world | Will smile, and smile, and be a villain" (Mackenzie 2009, 87) Harley is tired and beaten, he points out everything that he perceives as

wrong in this world, how much society has wronged him, how much he has suffered because of his disposition. However, he does not recuse his feelings: he rejects the mad and selfish society that had caused him and so many others such sorrows. “There are some feelings which perhaps are too tender to be suffered by the world.” (95)

The *Conclusion* of *The Man of Feeling* narrates the burial, and the events that transpired afterwards. When visiting his grave the narrator tells how he likes to sit where Harley sat, and how doing that gives him a sense of respite: he cannot hate the world, he can *pity the men in it*. This falls perfectly in line with Robert Burns’s concept of the man of feeling as the one who refuses to be anchored to earthly matters, preferring instead to “soar above this little scene of things”⁴. It is in stark contrast instead with the sentimental hero who does not know how to live in the world and lets himself be consumed by it. Harley and David find their solace by becoming detached from society, the former in a decidedly more drastic manner than the latter, whereas the sentimental heroine is generally more apt at navigating her surroundings without letting go of her morals. The woman of sensibility is usually swept by currents of violence and oppression, yet her virtue keeps her afloat until she can find a resolution to her woes – often in the form of marriage to a rich cad who is converted to her righteous ways.

In the early XVIII century there was a significant lack of “heroines of sensibility”, and it could be argued that the reason for this was actually the scarcity of women authors. While female writers existed, not many of them were accepted by society, as it was disreputable for a woman to carry on working in a world that made little to no distinction between helpless female characters in novels and real women. Moreover, as supported by Battersby, the ability to write well was thought to be the sole realm of men,

⁴ Adapted by Burns from James Thomson, “Winter: a Poem” (ll. 33-6). *The Seasons*. 1726

and “women were also excluded from the criteria of expertise, intellectual rigour and professionalism that came to define the modern author.” (Batchelor 2010, 90) This notwithstanding print culture allowed for more and more “hopefuls” to try their hand at writing, and that included female authors; indeed, Porter notes, most of the best sellers in the XVIII century were written by women. The principal issue with the shortage of women who could freely write and publish their work was the inequity between male and female education: boys were groomed into cultured men, while girls were primed for being decent and virtuous housewives. Many relevant names of that period advocated for a better educational system in order to improve the life of women and, in turn, enrich society as a whole. Proto-feminist Mary Astell and Bluestockings⁵ Sarah Scott proposed a ladies’ college; poets Anna Laetitia Barbaud and Mary Robinson directly appealed to their fellow women. Last but not least, poet and Bluestockings Lady Mary Chudleigh, whose razor-sharp couplet summed up the condition of the woman: “Wife and servant are the same | But only differ in the name [...]” (To the Ladies, 1705) Critic Nancy Armstrong points out that, in order to help society’s progress, women’s lives were to be cultivated since “[t]he modern individual was first and foremost a woman.” (Armstrong 2006, 8)

One of the most illustrious examples of stalwart womanhood in the literature of sentiment is certainly Charlotte Lennox’s Sophia, titular character in *The History of Harriot and Sophia* (1760-61), published in the monthly periodical *The Lady’s Museum*. She is the embodiment of the cultured woman that Lennox would have wanted to see as the norm, as her conduct reflects the poem “The Art of Coquetry” (*Poems on Several Occa-*

⁵ The Blue Stockings Society was founded around 1750 by writer and patron of the arts Elizabeth Montagu and patron Elizabeth Vesey. It started as a discussion group that would branch out to various topics that were otherwise precluded to ladies, and it evolved in a social movement that promoted a better education for women.

sions, 1747), which was most likely the first of her writing that “instructs women to attract and keep men by exercising the art of wit, since thus “their empire may improve”” (Carlile 2018, 52). Her characterization served as mould for heroines to come, for example Jane Eyre could be considered as a direct heiress to Sophia’s virtue and grace in the face of adversity.

1.4 CONTEXT: A Library of the XVIII Century

A Literary Overview of Europe in the Second Half of the XVIII Century

In the second half of the XVIII century the novel as a genre saw a shift in relevance. While it might have been a run in and tried model there was still room to expand on the possibilities it offered, and yet the 1750s marked a decrease in production. In the essay *The Novel in the 1750s* (Clery 2015) the reason for this decline is indicated as the rise of another genre: the periodical reviews. Critics were serving hatchet jobs left and right despite notorious titles having been published in the previous years, such as Richardson's *Clarissa* (1748), Smollett's *Roderick Random* (1748), and Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* (1749). Any novel that was produced in the aftermath presented a nod of tribute to the masters, yet the reviewers declared the novel as a genre to be dead in the water. During the second half of the eighteenth-century book reviews were becoming important and so popular that they could influence any step of the process involved in writing and reading, from the conception part to the reception from the readers. One of the main allegations against the sentimental novel in the second half of the century, particularly against *A Sentimental Journey* (Sterne 2008) was that it was full of obscenity, lewd. Sterne's response was that whatever physical scene or implication the book held was coated in feeling, and that made it acceptable. The novel was one of the most popular styles of writing on the late XVIII century, probably because it generally does not require the cultured background and mastery of wit that other genres might call for. Moreover, when done right, it proved to supply an acceptable income, much more than a stuffy selection of highly-specialized essays would have been. Also for this reason many authors tried their hands at the novel as a penny-maker, but the demand for it waned almost as quickly as it had risen

before. Yet, the production continued.

Travel novels were one of the main genres of that time: tourism had started in Britain borne of the tradition of the tour of France and Italy, a trip usually undertaken by the sons of nobles in a sort of coming-of-age voyage to expand one's horizons. Greece, despite its culture, was commonly left out, since the British thought of themselves as the "new Romans". It was only around the XIX century that Greece was rediscovered, and this time it was by the Germans (who had picked up the habit of taking educational trips throughout the cultural centres of Europe). Travel novels were generated by the people's own diaries, the "travelogues", a few of which got turned into proper novels. There was also a marked shift in the social and financial status of tourists, as shown by Tobias Smollett's *A Travel Through France and Italy* (1766) since Smollett was not a noble. Tourism towards Italy was not really focussed on art, churches, or artistic centres of any kind; rather, it was centred on the great places of ancient politics, with the addition of a few cities that had become recently important: Rome, Florence, Venice, and Naples. The latter was one of the largest and most thriving cities in Europe, being one of the centres of commerce and financial traffic, and the British had their eye on it. The *grand tour*, as it was called, offered an occasion for prospective thinkers and artists to bond with each other and to share their ideas and knowledge. When Sterne went to Paris he was welcomed by the intellectuals of that time, and hailed as a great writer; as a matter of fact he was an intellectual himself, and he read encyclopaedias for fun. Sterne was an Anglican vicar, and he had to stick to certain interpretations of things, and yet he had to deal with views that were almost atheistic⁶. When he went to France, and met the *intelligentia* there,

⁶ In his book he refers to the first encyclopaedia, the *cyclopaedia* of the 1740s, which was focussed on new scientific discoveries, all the while keeping the marks of the Newtonian theories, since they had influence over all the branches of knowledge. The new viewpoints favoured a "mechanical" explanation for the connection between body and mind.

he assimilated atheistic views that can be found, though mitigated and camouflaged, throughout *A Sentimental Journey*. In the book, when he uses the expression “*the great sensorium of the world*” he refers to God, in a view that is deistic rather than theistic.

Literary critics, thus critical reviews, were also on the rise: as literacy increased so did the reader base, and those who would try and influence the market did so from behind the façade – legitimate or assumed – of being authorities in the field. In fact, reviewers held a lot of sway over the audiences: Sterne probably decided to end his book on volume IX, which might not have been the actual last volume, because of unfavourable public opinion. At first, as purported by Johnson and Richardson among others, the aim of instructing the public on appropriate texts was to spread notions of virtue as much as possible. However, as it was generally understood that readers *could* become experts on what they read, soon the fear of competition might have biased some critics’ suggestions as to what to read (Gardiner, 1996). In addition to that, the printers held the copyrights of the texts they produced, which meant they often picked books that they knew – or supposed – would sell: if the public was not interested in a book that had the potential of being world-changing, then the print shop would likely ignore it in favour of lesser texts that enraptured the feeble minds of the readers. While pirated books were a real dilemma in that period (as foreign a concept it may seem to us), those were rarely printed with the intent to instruct, rather the motivation was financial. Richardson and Mackenzie themselves, considered as two of the “most of the best-known novelists of the period [...] inveighed against novel-writing” (Mullan 1990, 138-9).

Even with all of this being considered, the motives behind the persistence of the novel are not easily found: it was not due to the audience’s passion, as their interests varied greatly between the other rising genres such as the travel fiction; money was definitely not the motivator, as fic-

tions were not a steady source of revenue. When penning a novel, the most likely intention of an author would have been to explore the possibilities of writing. The genre itself offered liberties that others did not, allowing writers to paint their stories exactly as they depicted them in their mind, with minor adjustments in deference of the times or public reception. Moreover, fresh from the Enlightenment movement, the consciences of the people were starting to become more and more focussed on social issues, such as illiteracy, unemployment, and the relationship between various classes. As it was noted by Brissenden, human rights moved to the forefront of the two great movements of the XVIII century: the French Revolution, and the war for American Independence. These social upheavals were the symptoms of almost a century of increased sensitization towards the human – or rather, inhuman – condition of the lower tiers of society, and such attention and care was nurtured by several writers and philosophers: Mary Wollstonecraft, Thomas Robert Malthus, and Edmund Burke to name a few. It has to be noted that “[s]entimental fiction in the eighteenth century is rarely interested in poverty *per se* and while it sympathizes with the deserving poor, it is only lost wealth that produces a story, a loss that requires accounting.” (Binhammer 2015, 7)

As it is still common today, social issues were often intentionally obscured by bland entertainment, which could be one of the driving forces behind the rise of the romance novel. While men were actively discouraged from enjoying a book of romance, it was thought that women were thoroughly invested in such a genre, and that their fledgling demands for more and better education might be sated with a slew of light reading. It did not have the intended effect, if the intention was even to “gaslight” women into being culturally satisfied. However Lennox herself “points to eighteenth-century’s use of romance as a tool with which to exclude readers and writers from participation in the new profession of literary reviewership on the

basis of class and gender.” (Gardiner 1996, 1) Lennox’s distaste for romance as a genre, ironically, goes hand in hand with her employment of it in lieu of a “simple” fictitious novel: the fact that it lends itself well to readers of all classes and levels of schooling makes it the perfect medium through which a writer could attempt to impart some form of higher education. Whereas male authors would usually dismiss romances as a lesser kind of genre that only women would enjoy – hence making novels overly sentimentally excessive – female writers wanted to, “rather than feminizing that tradition”, mould it to their needs because they “recognized the need to kill off its female excess” (Langbauer 1990, 65).

The end of the XVII century saw the birth of the periodical. However it was the XVIII century’s flourishing literary marketplace – which fed on and was fed by the increase in literacy and interest in varied topics – which truly helped this new format bloom. Magazines included articles, essays, original stories, and touched upon extremely diverse topics, from literature to science, from the arts to politics, and they served indeed as an international salon of culture. The format allowed several liberties that other setups did not: it cost less to produce, hence more people could afford it; authors could contribute to a periodical both in order to spread their ideas and to have their name on more publications which, in turn, encouraged more readers to purchase their work; the flow of the audience was continuous and ever-changing, and the tune of the periodical changed with it. It is possible that Charlotte Lennox chose this particular format for her contribution to the sentimental tradition to “test the waters”, so to speak. She was an unquestionably versatile author, and she could adjust her work depending on how the public received each issue to avoid an abrupt halt to it (unlike what happened to Sterne later on). Moreover, the steady income gave some much-welcomed relief to her strained finances. The opportunity that a periodical could give Lennox to help her promote her stance on women’s

learning is undeniable, as “[...] women’s periodicals were actively involved in negotiating the boundary that divided proper from improper learning for women.” (Wood 2018, 27)

The following chapters will explore into Charlotte Lennox’s life and works, so as to shed some light on the impetus that spurred an author that did *not* belong to the sentimental tradition to write what is, by all intents and purposes, a sentimental novel.

2. CHARLOTTE LENNOX

Woman, Writer, Pillar of Sensibility

Charlotte Lennox née Ramsay (c.1729-1804)⁷ was the daughter of a British officer, hence she followed him to his various postings in Gibraltar, the motherland, and America. When her father died (c.1743) she was sent back to England where a relative would take her in, but by the time she arrived the unspecified relative had passed. Before even arriving to England, Lennox had already published one poem, which might indicate an instinctual ability to navigate the publishing business. Lennox was not discouraged, and she obtained the patronage of the First Lady of the Bedchamber to their Royal Highnesses, the Princesses, Lady Cecilia Isabella Finch; subsequently, Lennox also appealed to Mary, Countess of Rockingham. Through the fortuitous patronage, by the time Lennox would have had to commit to a life at court, she was instead able to choose her own path. Lennox then started her career as a writer, soon publishing her first work, *Poems on Several Occasions* (1747), dedicated to her benefactor, the Lady Finch.

About at the same time, purportedly still underage (Carlile 2018, 50) Lennox married Alexander Lennox, whose job at the printer shop Strahan probably helped increase her visibility quite a bit. The combination of two noble ladies' sponsorship and Lennox's husband's connection ensured her debut into legitimate literary circles, and allowed her to meet important figures such as Samuel Johnson, Henry Fielding, and Samuel Richardson (among others). Her marriage might or might have not been a calculated move to have access to Richardson's and Johnson's literary circles without being accused of being improper (as an unwed young woman would have been). These acquaintances proved to be pivotal in Lennox's career, as her writing skills expanded and her ability to navigate the literary field – most-

⁷ A more comprehensive timeline can be found in the Appendix, page 96.

ly dominated by men – allowed her to establish herself as a valid author. Moreover, her growing fame allowed her a certain amount of influence over social spheres that were previously reserved for men. As a female author her credibility was always precariously balanced on a razor's edge; after all, there was nothing quite so scandalous as a woman who was not wholly entwined with a man in her life and whose profession strayed from the traditionally feminine. It is likely that – it has to be noted – without Richardson's and Johnson's overt support, not even the considerable talent Lennox had would have allowed her to make headway into a literary career.

According to Gallagher, a social gathering that was hosted specifically to celebrate the publication of *The Life of Harriot Stuart, Written by Herself* (1750), as she writes in her *Nobody's Story* (1994):

The place appointed was the Devil tavern, and there, about the hour of eight, Mrs Lenox and her husband, and a lady of her acquaintance [*sic*], now living, as also the [Ivy Lane] club, and friends to the number of twenty, assembled. Our supper was elegant, and Johnson had directed that a magnificent hot apple-pye should make a part of it, and this he would have stuck with bay-leaves, because, forsooth, Mrs Lenox was an authoress, and had written verses; and further, he had prepared for her a crown of laurel, with which, but not till he had invoked the muses by some ceremonies of his own invention, he encircled her brows. The night passed, as must be imagined, in pleasant conversation, and harmless mirth, intermingled at different periods with the refreshments of coffee and tea. About five, Johnson's face shone with meridian splendour, although his drink had been only lemonade; but the far greater part of us had deserted the colours of Bacchus, and were with difficulty rallied to partake of a second refreshment of coffee, which was scarcely ended when the day began to dawn. (Gallagher 1994, 146-7)

Gallagher interprets this excerpt, originally published in *Charlotte Ramsay Lennox; an Eighteenth Century Lady of Letters* (Small 1935), as an attempt to legitimize Lennox's work and life as a female author:

[...] the analogy to a childbirth vigil, the inclusion in the company of not only the lady novelist's husband but also another lady ("now living"—as if available to testify to the wholesomeness of the proceedings), the homely and noninebriating [*sic*] refreshments (hot apple pie, lemonade, tea, and coffee), the good-natured rationality of the pastimes—attest to Mrs Lennox's utter respectability and to the perfectly honorable sentiments of the company of men gathered around to pay her tribute. (Gallagher 1994, 147)

It was of paramount importance for a “lady of letters” to maintain a fairly neutral position, both regarding matters of politics and thoughts about social issues. Lennox could not afford to slight a patron in favour of another, hence she would always try to appeal to each of her benefactors, such as the Newcastles, the Rockinghams, and the Queen by way of the Somerset House. Her work was, for the most part, carefully balanced to both showcase her independent thinking and ideas about female education, and her “devotion” to the system in place. Indeed, Lennox – just as many thinkers of that period – did not condone an uprising in the social structure, rather an adjustment to expand the “area of effect” of the configuration of hierarchy. She did not want men to renounce education in favour of women, but rather she encouraged women to partake in the education that had, up until that point (and, some might argue, up until now) been the sole purview of men. Lennox laid out her perception of the imbalance between men's and women's learning in her play *The Sister* (1769), based on the novel *Henrietta* (1758); in fact, the prologue was delivered by actress Mrs Mattocks instead of a man:

The law of custom is the law of fools –
And yet the wise are govern'd by her rules

Why should Men only prologue all our plays,
Gentlemen-Ushers to each modern Bayes?
Why are the Fair to Epilogues confin'd
Whose tongues are loud, and gen'ral as the wind?
Mark how real life each sex is class'd!
Woman has there the first word and the last. (Carlile 2018, 230)

In her play Lennox inverted the traditional roles of male-female siblings, trying to navigate the treacherous waters of public reception. Her theatre venture differed from her work as a novel author, or translator, or critic: the audience's reaction was immediate and could "make or break" a play, and a play written by a woman was already at disadvantage from the start.

Not only did Lennox publish a number of varied works belonging to different genres, she also inserted her ideology, her life, into her texts. As neither the laws nor the customs of society in that period allowed women to be fully-realized individuals, with their own jobs and properties, any young lady who could not be supported by her family was destined to live off the hand-outs of others. This situation can be witnessed both in literature and in real life: Jane Austen's heroines, Cynthia in *David Simple*, Madame Merle in *The Portrait of a Lady* (James 1880-81), and many others. These are women who do not have anything to their name and, as a result, are completely dependent on relatives or strangers. In some cases kind and just acquaintances of the woman or affluent and generous benefactors can give her a solid base from which she can start her life, in other instances the money and care given out are used as a leash to wholly subjugate the woman. As Carlile notes, "women authors were considered an important asset in the radical cause, and, whether because of her own beliefs or in the interest of the opposition, Lennox was at the forefront of this campaign." (Carlile 2018, 243-4)

Charlotte Lennox meticulously related her own experiences, afflic-

tions, and issues as a woman deprived of her support system and trying to make her way into the world. She did so by writing two novels, *The Female Quixote* (1752) and *The History of Harriet and Sophia* (1760), in which the female protagonists struggle with a society that will not allow them to pursue their own ideals or a honest career and, in turn, these women have to fully rely on men for guidance and to support themselves.

Among the few notable exceptions to that rule was Lady Isabella Finch, who served under Princess Amelia, sister to George II. The Lady Finch had inherited wealth that gave her the opportunity to be independent, and she used that independence to bolster other women such as Lennox. Lady Finch's sister, Mary, had married the Marquis of Rockingham, and offered her patronage to Lennox as well. In this privileged situation, Lennox was able to develop her skills, to make "some substantial advantages of that genius with which Heaven had so liberally blessed her" (Lennox 2008, 207). Her first novel, *The Life of Harriot Stuart, Written by Herself* (1750), presents itself as a mirror of Lennox's life, narrating the journey of a young woman with a predisposition to writing who has to travel from America to England. Meanwhile, she has to fend off the advances of many – if not all – of the men she meets, as her ironclad virtue wards her from disgracing herself by indulging in unsavoury proposals.

The success of this first book paved the way for her to write her most successful work yet, *The Female Quixote*, published in 1752. Aided by the endorsement by Henry Fielding, who wrote a most favourable review in his periodical *Covent-Garden Journal* (1752), this novel established Lennox as one of the eminent writers of the second half of the XVIII century. Between 1753 and 1754 Lennox published the three volumes of critical work *Shakespeare Illustrated*, with contributions by Samuel Johnson and the Earl of Cork and Orrey, shifting her attention to translation

work afterwards. Such was her success that the Duke of Newcastle, upon receiving the dedication of Lennox's *Translation of the Duke of Sully's Memoirs*, offered her a position with the king's court. Lennox courteously refused, opting instead to recommend her husband for such a position, and that decision shaped much of her life as a consequence.

Lennox found herself wanting for work, as the Duke could not procure a spot for her husband as quickly as he would have for her, hence she continued her career dabbling in a wide variety of genres and typologies of texts, instead of focussing solely on the novel. Between 1754 and 1760 several of her works were published, among which a number of translations, a play, and a novel. In 1760 Lennox started the project that would cement her authorship in history: the periodical *The Lady's Museum*, in which *The History of Harriot and Sophia* was presented in instalments. Most – if not all – of the dedications of her works appealed to men and women of great influence in hope of currying patronage from them. Around 1760 her attempts worked, as the Duchess of Newcastle finally secured the position at court for Lennox's husband. However, the regular income from his occupation could not alleviate their financial burden alone, and Lennox continued writing the most diverse pieces in order to support herself and her growing family.

Even though she produced several works none came close to being a masterpiece. After the separation from her husband in 1783 and the death of her firstborn, Harriot, Lennox's last novel *Euphemia* was published; it did not receive the attention that she would have hoped, and in 1792 Lennox started relying on the Royal Literary Fund to live. Charlotte Lennox died in 1804, destitute. Despite her end, which was not happy by any means and might have suited an unskilled author scraping the bottom of the barrel, Charlotte Lennox proved time and time again she was resourceful and well-rounded in her education and production.

One of the major breakthroughs that Lennox achieved in her career was certainly the creation of *The Lady's Museum*, a periodical magazine that followed the format that had become popular toward the end of the XVII century. It was not innovative in the sense that it was the first of its kind, in fact the first ever periodical was John Dunton's *The Athenian Mercury* (1690); rather, its real novelty was the content. Several magazines had been published by female editors as a "riposte" to other periodicals, and their particularity was that they were mostly female-oriented, both in authorship and in topics: *The Female Spectator* (1744-46) edited by Eliza Haywood was the clap back to *The Spectator* (1711-12) curated by Richard Steel and Joseph Anderson, and it catered to a female audience by offering articles on women's education, social issues, and literature. Other notable magazines were *The Lady's Mercury* (1693), counterpart to *The Athenian Mercury*, the *Tatler* and *The Female Tatler* both published in 1709, and *The Rambler* (1750-84).

The Lady's Museum was aimed at providing learning resources to women, as Lennox firmly believed that women's intellect was equal to – at times even greater than – man's intellect. Her reasoning was not dissimilar to the ancient Greek's take on politics: only an unencumbered mind can suitably absorb and elaborate information and knowledge; hence a woman, who was necessarily less involved in matters such as work or politics, had the freedom and agility of mind to "assess events and follow abstract trains of thought from a distanced, disinterested perspective, suggesting perhaps their ability to more radical...under the radar." (Carlile 2018, 190) David Hume described the figure of the thinker, more specifically of the historian, as a bystander to the greater events in history and not as someone who would actively take part in them: his duty was to report the facts, and not to manipulate them. As such, "since women hold a social position best described as a lack of situation, their impartiality is ensured." (Dorne 1992,

19)

Lennox had written *The Female Quixote* almost ten years prior the publication of the first issue of *The Lady's Museum*, and while her name still carried prestige she adapted wonderfully to the market's demand of the new audiences: for the first publication of the magazine Lennox commissioned three engravings (which was unusual, as the cost was not negligible). The art pieces, created by renowned designer Anthony Walker, were the frontispiece, an image representing a scene from *The History of Harriot and Sophia*, and a portrait of the Duchess of Beaufort. Having such a famous lithographer produce work for a magazine was a sure-fire way of elevating the quality of it, or at least increasing the demand and perceived value; moreover Lennox was an established author who had been endorsed by major names of that period (Johnson and Richardson among others). It is no wonder then that Lennox was able to include several articles that were strictly women-oriented: *Of the Studies Proper for Women*, the translation of *L'Ami des Femmes* (1758) by Pierre Joseph Boudier de Villemert, which deals in the proper education of women; the biography of the Duchess of Beaufort, official mistress of King Henry IV of France; the pages dedicated to the "Trifler", a mysterious female author who argues in favour of women learning as much as they can; a number of historical and cultural essays, such as anecdotes about the history of Britain and other countries or famous individuals. To fully appeal to women many of these stories and essays were centred on female figures, for example *The Trials of the Maid of Orleans* which recounts the story of Joan of Arc, or the portrayal of Boadicea. Anna K. Sagal describes the stories included in the magazine as "a distinctive vision of women's history that enmeshes itself with the genre of romance" (Batchelor and Powell 2018, 53). Surveying many of the novels of that period, the inclusion of romance to garner more attention and involvement from the audience was a regular strategy. There is an additional

reason why romance would be the preferred genre for novels at that time, as evidenced by Ellen Gardiner: as the number and accessibility of reading material increased in the XVIII century, similarly the figure of the literary critic was on the rise; with more and more readers to “instruct and delight”, the critic’s mission was to elect the most appropriate texts – novels and educational essays alike – so that the average reader could glean the best moral teachings. However, “[t]he ability to write is perceived by other members of society as giving one the legitimate right [...] to be, that is, a professional critic.” (Gardiner 1996, 2) Hence a more vast audience also meant more competition for those who wanted to – and, in fact, did – dictate the requirements of a “good”, moral reading.

As was the socio-cultural norm, the opinion on women who pursued an education or a line of work was indeed unfavourable. Philosophical and historical learning in particular were dangerous, since women were not believed to be equipped to understand the fine intricacies of thought or history. Moreover, the literary arts like writing, researching history, and translation were considered men’s field of work, and any woman that would try her hand at one or more of these professions was considered little more than a prostitute. The unique combination of a female author assembling or writing historical texts specifically aimed at a female audience garnered a sort of good-natured tolerance rather than an outright negative reception. Perhaps due to the endorsement by male authors, or the fact that Lennox was a recognized and respected name even as a woman writer, *The Lady’s Museum* was a success.

Out of the several periodicals aimed at women, Lennox’s one is the only “overly pedagogical endeavour” (Sagal 2018, 57): the author’s intention was for this magazine to provide education and instruction through entertainment, even though the “Trifler” eidolon⁸ put more emphasis on the

⁸ From the Greek εἶδωλον (phantom, spirit), the eidolon is intended as a “persona” who stands in place of

“pleasing” aspect of literature than the moral education it could supply. Lennox, in fact, believed that “personal pleasure, the joy of learning, and society as a whole should also be added to the equation [of the purpose of women’s learning].” (Batchelor and Powell 2018, 368) Such was the true pedagogical innovation, as Lennox presented history not as a stale and bleak recount of factoids but rather offered stories and characters that the audience could relate to. Lennox attempted, and in many ways succeeded in providing experience by proxy instead of simply writing a behavioural manual. This is possibly the reason why some of the works in *The Lady’s Museum* bore titles with the word “history” in them even though they fell into the romantic or biographical genre. Masquerading short novels as historical essays might have been Lennox’s way to legitimize her works, to cast a wider net for a more diverse audience, or to give value to ordinary lives by implying they were an integral part of history, or all of the above. Moreover, the choice of female figures of history allowed Lennox a leeway to criticize gendered oppression that was still common in her contemporary society: by setting her “histories” in the past or in faraway places – usually the continent – the author offered a safe way for female readers to elaborate on their own condition and, hopefully, to find inspiration in the actions of notable women.

The most relevant female-centred “historical short fictions” in *The Lady’s Museum* are certainly *The History of the Duchess of Beaufort* (n° 1-2); *An Account of the Vestal Virgins* (n° 2); *Essay on the Original Inhabitants of Great Britain* (n° 2-9); *The Tryal of the Maid of Orleans* (n° 3); *The History of Bianca Cappello* (n° 5-7); and *The History of the Princess Padmani* (n° 9). Most of the sources for these texts are not properly cited by Lennox, but the fact alone that she indicated some of them represents her

a person, in this case the “Trifler” represents Lennox, the author.

dedication to the pedagogical function of her work. However, in order to maintain the fictional element the author used a literary device that was common in the XVIII century, attributing her knowledge to “archival discoveries”. All of these stories have one common theme: women might be beautiful and have suitors, but ultimately it is their education and wit that allows them to succeed in their endeavours. Joan of Arc’s virtue made the people listen to her, Boadicea’s unbending moral sense made her kinsmen follow her, Bianca Cappello’s love is her strength rather than her undoing, and so forth. These women are not idolized but presented as human beings who had to face trials and hold on tightly to their morals in order to attain their “worthy” status. Nonetheless, this way of portraying women caused a trend to emerge, namely the fact that “bad things happen to good people”, or rather, to good women, which implied that a woman could be considered virtuous *only* if she had undergone horrible ordeals, hence suffering was a woman’s destiny. For all of Lennox’s discreet distancing from Christianity, this interconnection between femininity and misery is not dissimilar to the concept of the original sin, often blamed on women.

True virtue, meaning virtue that has been tried and remained unscathed, is the focus of *The Lady’s Museum* centrepiece: *The History of Harriot and Sophia*, which follows Lennox’s *modus operandi* of attributing importance to a commoner’s life by titling it “history”, and of interlacing romance with social criticism.

2.1 *The History of Harriot and Sophia, or Sophia*

The History of Harriot and Sophia was first published in eleven instalments in the periodical *The Lady's Museum*, and it was the first novel written specifically for publication in a magazine. The reasoning behind such a decision is not clear; periodicals had been adopted as a production form in the late XVII century, and it is possible that the continuative income they provided was the main incentive to implement this manner of publication. Moreover, the audience would have access to the various essays and works that “surrounded” the chapters of the novel, and their opinions and thoughts on the matters presented in the story could be swayed or partially influenced by the context. A woman as enterprising as Sophia might not have had such a positive reception if had there not been a veritable bombardment of positive enforcement about the education of young ladies.

The text referenced in this chapter is the 2018 Broadview edition of *Sophia*, edited by Norbert Schürer⁹.

The story starts out as many other novels of that period: the family of the protagonists is introduced, starting from the indigent father. There is a list of Mr Darnley's negative qualities, most of which are based on a weakness of character that leads him to make poor choices in financial management and marriage: he had squandered his inheritance before even meeting his future wife, whom he chose only because of her attractiveness. Other than having “no merit but beauty” (Lennox 2008, 53) Mrs Darnley is described as fancying herself a creature of elegance, and deserving the best of whatever life had to offer. In the literature of the XVIII century, women similar to Mrs Darnley, who think highly of themselves and are attentive to trends and fashion, while being unable to contribute to maintaining such a

⁹ Schürer, in his edition, maintains the original spelling.

lifestyle, are quite common; more than a few will figure in *Sophia* alone. From the second paragraph for the following two pages there is a sequence of comparisons between the sisters, the stark difference in words used and length of description shows clearly that Sophia is favoured by the author and should, in turn be favoured by the reader (29). The following extract from the text goes to show the disparity between the descriptions of the two sisters¹⁰.

Harriot, the eldest daughter of this couple, was, like her mother, a beauty, and upon that account, as well as the conformity of her temper and inclinations to hers, engrossed all her affection. Sophia she affected to despise, because she wanted in an equal degree those personal attractions, which in her opinion constituted the whole of female perfection. Mere common judges, however, allowed her person to be agreeable; people of discernment and taste pronounced her something more. There was diffused throughout the whole person of Sophia a certain secret charm, a natural grace which cannot be defined; she was not indeed so beautiful as her sister, but she was more attractive; her complexion was not so fair as Harriot's, nor her features so regular, but together they were full of charms: her eyes were particularly fine, large, and full of fire, but that fire tempered with a tenderness so bewitching, as insensibly made its way to the heart. Harriot had beauty, but Sophia had something more; she had graces. One of the most beautiful fictions of Homer, says the celebrated *Montesquieu*, is that of the girdle which gave Venus the power of pleasing. Nothing is more proper to give us an idea of the magick and force of the graces, which seem to be given to a person by some invisible power, and are distinguished from beauty itself. Harriot's charms produced at the first sight all the effect they were capable of; a second look of Sophia was more dangerous than the first, for grace is seldomer found in the face than the manners; and, as our manner is formed every moment, a new surprise is perpetually creating. A woman can be beautiful but one way, she can be graceful a thousand. Harriot was formed to be the admiration of the many; Sophia the passion of the few, the sweet sensibility of her countenance, the powerful expression of her eyes, the

¹⁰ I highlighted in dark grey the parts of the text dedicated to Harriot's description, and in light grey the parts dedicated to Sophia's description, to denote the inequity between the two.

soft elegance of her shape and motion, a melodious voice, whose varied accents enforced the sensible things she always said, were beauties not capable of striking vulgar minds; and which were sure to be eclipsed by the dazzling lustre of her sister's complexion, and the fire of two bright eyes, whose looks were as quick and unsettled as her thoughts. While Harriot was receiving the improvement of a polite education, Sophia was left to form herself as well as she could; happily for her a just and solid judgment supplied the place of teachers, precept, and example. The hours that Harriot wasted in dress, company, and gay amusements, were by Sophia devoted to reading. A good old gentleman, who was nearly related to her father, perceiving this taste in her, encouraged it by his praises, and furnished her with the means of gratifying it, by constantly supplying her with such books¹ as were best calculated to improve her morals and understanding. His admiration increasing in proportion as he had opportunities of observing her merit, he undertook to teach her the French and Italian languages, in which she soon made a surprising progress; and by the time she had reached her fifteenth year, she had read all the best authors in them, as well as in her own. By this unwearied application to reading, her mind became a beautiful store-house of ideas: hence she derived the power and habit of constant reflection, which at once enlarged her understanding, and confirmed her in the principles of piety and virtue. As she grew older the management of the family entirely devolved upon her; for her mother had no taste for any thing but pleasure, and her sister was taught to consider herself as a fine lady, whose beauty could not fail to make her fortune, and whose sole care it ought to be to dress to the greatest advantage, and make her appearance in every place where she might encrease the number of her admirers. Sophia, in acquitting herself of the duties of a house-keeper to her mother, shewed that the highest intellectual improvements were not incompatible with the humbler cares of domestic life: every thing that went through her hands received a grace and propriety from the good sense by which she was directed; nor did her attention to family-affairs break in upon her darling amusement reading. People who know how to employ their time well are good economists of it. Sophia laid out hers in such exact proportions, that she had always sufficient for the several employments she was engaged in: the business of her life, like that of nature, was performed without noise, hurry, or confusion.(53-5)

Sophia is described as being virtuous where Harriot is good-looking, curious and ingenious where Harriot's aspirations are shallow, industrious where her sister has no plan other than marry someone rich. Lennox argued several times in favour of female education, and one such instance was right in *The Lady's Museum* second issue, as cited by Dorne:

One Number of our work perhaps shall leave us admiring the stupendous fabrics of the immense extended universe; the next shall find us aiding our limited sight by help of glasses in observations on a world of unknown beings contained within a drop of fluid,...To-day we shall converse with almost our contemporaries, enquire their actions, and censure or applaud them as we please; to-morrow shall introduce us to an intercourse with the great founders of long abolished empires. (Dorne 1992, 17)

With Mr Darnley's death Mrs Darnley and Harriot are left to their own devices, and they keep conducting themselves as if they were still part of high society; Harriot's aim is to snatch a noble to marry her and provide for her, Mrs Darnley fully believes she is owed a luxurious life. Sophia instead takes charge of the household, selling what she can, setting a budget – even though she is the only one who actually adheres to a more meagre way of life –, and planning to find employment as a governess. Her plans draw nothing more than a laugh from her mother and sister, and they even resent Sophia when she presents them with a small inheritance that had been gifted to her.

In this first chapter Sophia's virtue is lauded many times as an innate quality that cannot be taught, and Sophia humbly recognizes it and tries to expand it in order to improve herself. The one who praises Sophia for her virtue the most is Mr Herbert, a relative of the late Mr Darnley; this gentleman provides several books for Sophia so as to help her develop her knowledge and sense of morality. It was typical for male authority figures

to offer educational material or insight, both in “real life”, just like Johnson and Richardson, or in novels, such as the clergyman in *The Female Quixote* who has “lived long in a public Character, and have thought it my Duty to study those whom I have undertaken to admonish or instruct.” (Lennox 1989, 379)

In the second chapter, another significant character is introduced: Sir Charles. He is a baronet, a member of the gentry and a wealthy individual. He is presented as a suitor for Harriot, and at first it appears that her wish for marriage to a rich man will be granted. However, it is soon implied by both the text and by Mr Herbert that Sir Charles intends for Harriot to be his mistress, an unbecoming position for a respectable woman. Sir Charles justifies himself by recollecting the scores of women who had betrayed him, yet it all comes to a standstill when he finally meets Sophia. He is immediately smitten, entrapped by her virtue and unassuming beauty. It is apparent that his attention has shifted from Harriot – the “easy catch” – to Sophia, the unattainable lady of virtue. Harriot, who believed that Sir Charles had fallen for her charms (as her beauty would certainly ensnare any man), grows jealous of the obvious attention her suitor pays to her sister, and endeavours to regain his full interest by means of being petty and coquettish. Her behaviour drives him away, and following visits make it clear that he is only frequenting the Darnley household to see Sophia. Harriot is not aware that Sir Charles has shifted his courting from herself to Sophia, she is too self-involved to believe it would be possible.

In the fourth chapter, the baronet showers Sophia with gifts: books, pamphlets, an array of objects that he thinks would suit her virtue well. Sophia cannot help but be touched by his care and confides in Mr Herbert, at the same time asking for advice on how to conduct herself. The theme of fake or forced virtue comes to light once again, as Mr Herbert is convinced that the baronet is trying to court Sophia by posturing as a virtuous man,

even though his final objective (taking a mistress instead of a wife) makes him anything but. Sir Charles resolves to confess to Sophia, but the outcome is not the one he had hoped: she rejects him and soon after Mr Herbert interrupts the conversation. However, something in Sophia's countenance gives Sir Charles hope that she might feel the same way as him, and he stays steadfast in his affections and desire to court Sophia.

Chapter five sees the first true breaking point for the Darnley women: Mr Herbert reveals Sir Charles's actions to Mrs Darnley and Harriot, and one of the first shades of grey are cast on Mrs Darnley's otherwise straightforward character. Up to this point there had been no hint that the mother would even favour Sophia over Harriot, yet with the prospect of a wealthy suitor courting the youngest daughter and possibly making her happy, Mrs Darnley falters in her absolute devotion to Harriot. With encouragement from Mr Herbert, who is starting to believe in Sir Charles's sincerity, Mrs Darnley urges Sophia to accept the baronet's courtship. She even goes so far as to leave her daughter and the man alone together, which was considered entirely scandalous. Sophia does not take well to this behaviour, as she feels like her mother cares so little about her that she would purposefully jeopardize her reputation¹¹. Sir Charles does not fare much better, as his indulging Mrs Darnley's indecent allowances is improper. Mr Herbert, throughout all of this, becomes Sophia's confidant, and suggests giving Sir Charles the chance to clearly state his intentions.

In chapter six Sophia demands honesty from the baronet, while giving him honesty in turn: she will let him address her romantically because she *does* have feelings for him, but only if he will properly announce it to her mother and state his intentions clearly. Sir Charles obliges, but only partially, as he starts "courting" Mrs Darnley but never admits he will mar-

¹¹ As the note in Schürer's edition states, "unmarried men and women were not supposed to be alone in each other's company" (79).

ry Sophia.

In chapter seven things come to an abrupt halt. Sir Charles bestows a house and considerable fortune upon Sophia, who doubts his true intentions more and more. She has Mr Herbert reject the gifts on her behalf, and accepts his offer to live with a clergyman in the countryside while looking for work. Mrs Darnley does not react to the news very well, but Mr Herbert tries to flatter her sense of superiority by making it appear as if the situation were Mrs Darnley's decision, taken to defend Sophia's honour in the face of Sir Charles the cad. Harriot pitches in, and wishes Sophia would leave because she was jealous of the sudden attention she was getting.

The title of chapter nine, "In which Sophia shews less of the Heroine than the Woman" (Lennox 2008, 95), could be considered a *leitmotif* for the protagonist's conduct. Sophia is not a purely sentimental heroine in the sense that she is rarely overwhelmed by her misery, unlike the eponymous Pamela or Clarissa. She also does not have a likeness to the male sentimental heroes, as her role in society would not allow her to be the "saviour" of the lady in distress, she could only be a sort of moral compass for those around her.

In chapter ten, Sophia is settling down quite nicely with the Lawson family, having found mentors in Mr and Mrs Lawson and doting sisters in their daughters, especially Dolly, the oldest. In chapters eleven to thirteen the readers learn of Dolly's story, a romantic tale of star-crossed lovers who had been denied marriage due to a perceived offence. Dolly's suitor was enamoured with her, but his affluent aunt had felt slighted by Dolly's family, all because of her own affected superiority; this led to her threatening to withhold the substantial inheritance that was destined to her nephew, should he marry Dolly. While listening to this tale Sophia thinks back on Sir Charles, and how his love appeared so different and less true than the one the two youths share. Meanwhile Sir Charles was visiting his uncle on

his deathbed, hence missing Sophia's departure. He is informed of the event by Mrs Darnley and Harriot, the latter using scolding remarks and petty jealousy to drive her point home.

In chapter fifteen, Sophia, who had been trying to move on with her life, receives a letter from her mother detailing Sir Charles's visit and his apparent poor health. Sophia starts to believe his affections were not false, and her improved mood follows her while she happens upon Dolly's suitor and his aunt. The latter, Mrs Gibbson, is immediately endeared by her.

In the following chapters, Sophia learns of the incident between Mrs Gibbson and Mrs Lawson, and resolves to mend their rapport so that Dolly and William may get married. Mrs Gibbson mistakenly sees Sophia's courtesies and William's devotion to her as a budding romantic relationship, and agrees to rekindle the relationship with the Lawsons intending to have her nephew marry Sophia. Unbeknownst to her, William and Dolly are using the more frequent visits between the houses as a means to see each other, and Sophia has started thinking about Sir Charles again.

Back home Harriot is still involved in her own ideas of grandeur, and wishes to visit her sister out of spite to tell her that the baronet has started to court her again once his mind had been cleared of Sophia's allure. Sir Charles gets wind of this visit and lends his carriage to Mrs Darnley and Harriot, but does not join them as he is still conflicted about his own feelings for Sophia and hers for him.

This marks the end of the first Volume.

The second Volume starts in chapter eighteen, with Harriot and Mrs Darnley finding Sophia in the company of William and Mrs Gibbson. Harriot postures like a peacock, drinking in the gazes of the "commoners" who surely had never seen someone as gracious and fashionable as her; she tells Sophia that she fancies the quaintness of the town, and how she would just *love* to live there. However, once Mrs Gibbson and William take their

leave, the Darnley women fall back into their old relationship dynamics: Harriot is disdainful of everything, especially her sister, Mrs Darnley is resentful, and Sophia is desperately trying to appease the other two. Harriot takes advantage of Sophia's surprise and mild distress at seeing them and announces that Sir Charles is perfectly fine and in good health, and has continued addressing her instead of Sophia.

However, in the following chapters Mr Herbert brings different news indeed: Sir Charles had charged him with a letter in which he confesses his love and his honourable intentions towards Sophia. Mr Herbert adds a detailed recount of his meeting with the baronet, as the latter had finally recognized his role as father figure to Sophia and had wanted to set things right: Sir Charles had professed his true feelings and produced his Last Will, in which it is stated that he would provide handsomely for Sophia. Fervent in his passion, Sir Charles would have wanted to visit Sophia immediately after his meeting with Mr Herbert, but he had agreed to let the man go first to explain all that had transpired.

In chapters twenty-one to twenty-three, Sophia goes from being overwhelmed and giddy with happiness to being heartbroken again: Mr Herbert had received a letter from Sir Charles, in which he accuses Sophia of being fickle just like every other woman and wishes her good luck on her impending nuptials. The heroine is confused at this sudden turn of events, as she had never given any indication of being inclined to play with people's feelings, and she was certainly not on the verge of marrying anyone. Mr Herbert instead has a pretty good idea of what had happened: he had heard rumours around the town, and he knows Harriot. Sir Charles had probably been led to believe Sophia and William Gibbson were betrothed, and soon Mrs Gibbson gives confirmation of this. She had hoped Sophia and her nephew would be sweet on each other, and had been parading their marriage as a done deal. Sophia quickly shuts the woman down, and tells

her she had “done her an irreparable damage”. Perhaps in an attempt to make amends, Mrs Gibbson sets out to rectify the rumours and gives her blessing to Dolly and William’s union. As the situation is cleared Mr Herbert goes to inform Sir Charles of the developments, only to find him gone.

Chapters twenty-four through twenty-six present a flashback from Sir Charles’s point of view: the readers witness his thought process and how he realized that Sophia truly loved him and, more importantly, that he loved her in turn. The most notable details brought to attention are once again Sophia’s virtue and good grace, which are the driving force behind the baronet’s heartfelt confession of love. Lockean empiricism could explain Sir Charles’s redemption as a case of “virtue by association”, and Thompson explores the possibility that the novel of sentiment reflects Locke more than others (such as Shaftesbury): “[...] if Shaftesbury’s conscience [...] motivates a person’s moralized response to his own thoughts and actions, then what compels that person’s concern for the thoughts and actions of others?” (Thompson 2018, 132-3) In Sir Charles’s case impatience had caused him to follow Mr Herbert to visit Sophia earlier than he had announced, and by doing so he saw her with William, mistaking them for a couple. The rumours around the town drove him deeper into despair, which was why he resolved to send the last odious letter to Sophia and leave England altogether.

In chapter twenty-seven, the story continues in a straightforward way, and a heartbroken Sophia writes to Mr Herbert in hopes of finding work as a governess. She then discovers he has fallen gravely ill and immediately departs to assist him, accompanied by a chivalrous William. Once they get to Mr Herbert’s lodgings they find out that the situation is grave indeed, but resolvable: the man will travel to Bath to recover, and Sophia escorts him partway.

In chapter twenty-eight, Dolly and William finally get married, after

having waited for Sophia's return. In this occasion the heroine learns of a widow who would benefit from her help around the house, Mrs Howard. The woman at first appears generous, but it is soon apparent – both to the reader and to Sophia – that it is only a farce, as Mrs Howard only does the bare minimum of what could be considered charitable in order to be praised by the community, consistently with the trend of charity as a way to demonstrate one's virtue, which Markley calls "the paradoxical impasse of sentimental morality" (Binhammer 2015, 8). When a Mrs Barton visits Mrs Howard with her son in tow, the latter starts plotting to make Sophia and the young squire get married, because Sophia's virtue had kindled a measure of affection in the widow and she wanted her to be happy.

In chapters twenty-nine, and thirty Sophia's virtue plays an even greater role in her life, as the protagonist has been ensnared between duelling plots. Mr Barton declares his passion for Sophia to his mother, who is enraged at Mrs Howard for trying to subjugate her son. She insists that the widow should marry her own son off to Sophia, if she liked her that much, at which point Mrs Howard's young son also states he is indeed in love with Sophia. Mrs Howard's true colours come to light, and she and Mrs Barton come together to plan Sophia's ruin. Mrs Howards writes to Mrs Gibbson, recounting Sophia's seduction of her son, and how she wishes the youth to be immediately removed from her service lest she corrupts any other respectable young man. Dolly, William, and his aunt promptly spring to action, suggesting that Mr Lawson should be the one to go and collect Sophia from the widow's house in order to confront Mrs Howard. His profession as a clergyman afforded him reputability and, had the accusation been false, Mrs Howards and Mrs Barton would hardly lie to his face. During the confrontation Sophia's goodness once again shines through, allowing her to prove her innocence solely by virtue of, well...virtue. With the young woman's reputation saved, Mr Lawson affectionately scolds her for

accepting the job without consulting him first, as he would have advised her against trusting Mrs Gibbson's judgement completely.

Chapter thirty-one again presents a change of scenery: Sophia receives a letter from her mother, who does not have a penny to her name anymore after the death of her benefactor (who had been put in place by Sir Charles) and Harriot had deserted her. Sophia, ever the dutiful daughter, immediately sets out to visit her at their old house, only to encounter in it only a single servant. She inquires about her sister's whereabouts and is shocked to discover that she is living in the house that Sir Charles had once bestowed upon her. Heartbreak grasps the heroine once again, for she thinks the baronet had finally married her sister. Harriot receives Sophia in a manner unbecoming of a sibling, yet for once it is not clear whether her unpleasant behaviour is borne of jealousy towards Sophia or shame towards herself. More than once Sophia asks the nature of her situation, but Harriot refuses to give her an outright answer, veering the conversation towards their mother instead. The oldest sister is vexed that Mrs Darnley would refuse her financial help, and displeased that Sophia still retains her innocent attitude as if she were better than her. After the tense reunion Sophia makes her way to her mother and she finds her ill and destitute. She wonders about Harriot and Sir Charles and her mother informs her that the house she had seen did not belong to the baronet anymore, but rather to a rich noble whose relationship with Harriot is obvious and scandalous. Both Sophia and Mrs Darnley hope that Harriot and Lord L. had actually married in secret, but the apparent shame she shows tells them that she is being kept as a mistress. The supposition saddens Sophia, then her mother delivers the "killing blow": Sir Charles had accepted a proposal of marriage. For the second time in the story Mrs Darnley shows affection and tenderness towards her youngest daughter, who indulges her grief for but a moment. Sophia then draws on her virtue to start helping her mother, first by settling her

debts. In contrast to the overall sentimental tradition “*Sophia* exposes the limitations of the sentimental form (which it simultaneously employs) as well as the difficulties women faced in trying to support themselves independently in eighteenth-century Britain.” (42) Sophia and Mrs Darnley sell everything they can to assuage debt collectors, and they use the leftover money to rent a small cottage in the countryside. Harriot learns of this, and since her unorthodox situation is causing her to be ousted by the socialite she writes to Mrs Darnley in order to visit her and, ideally, to restore some of her social status – and probably to appease her sense of self-importance.

Once again, in chapter thirty-five, the difference between Harriot and Sophia is emphasised: Sophia is working hard creating drawings and embroidery that had charmed the hearts of buyers with elegance, while Harriot is depicted parading around garbed in luxuries that were given to her due to her lack of virtue. Mrs Darnley has had a lesson in humility, and while she does receive Harriot warmly she also shows shame on her behalf about her baubles and wealth, more precisely about how those had been obtained. Sophia tries to reason with her sister, noting that she cannot expect her scandalous situation to not have consequences, at which point Harriot tries to appeal to their mother’s affection by crying. Sophia is hardly moved, and in the true sentimental way she refuses to bend her will or to abandon her morals to level with a world that accepts corruption. Harriot immediately reverts back to the haughty daughter of a socialite, almost accusing their mother that she would allow one daughter to pit her against the other. That is not the case, because Mrs Darnley cherishes Harriot far too much to abandon her so she reassures her oldest daughter, while Sophia makes herself scarce. After more reassurance from their mother and a standing invitation to visit from Sophia, Harriot starts calling on them more frequently, using the trips as a means to legitimize her conduct: Sophia surely would not associate with someone unbecoming. Mr Herbert sends

word that he has fully recovered and the he would be moving closer to Sophia and Mrs Darnley, which leads Sophia to wait by the road and catch a glimpse of someone resembling Sir Charles. She thinks her eyes were playing tricks on her, but when a servant bearing the baronet's colour rides by she knows it had truly been him she saw. All of her feelings resurface and she indulges in a bout of melancholy, but her steadfast will brings her back to work in order to distract herself.

Chapters thirty-six to thirty-eight shed light on Sir Charles's journey: first, his stay in Paris, during which he was consumed by passions so great that he fell ill because he could not put Sophia out of his mind. Then there was his meeting with Mr Howards and his governor, who had also been Sir Charles's in the past; as soon as the baronet learns that they are acquainted with Sophia he listens to their stories in rapt fascination. Mr Howard still burns with passion for Sophia, but he informs Sir Charles that she had refused his advances time and time again, probably because she has favoured another man with her affections. The baronet feels conflicted about the situation: on the one hand he still harbours passion for Sophia, on the other hand he wants her to be happy with the lover of her choice. However, he thinks that the lad in question does not have the means to provide for her, which is why he decides to pay Mr Herbert a visit. Sir Charles learns of his illness and his lodging in Bath, and resolves to contact Mrs Darnley, who has also relocated. Left with one last option, he travels to Mr Lawson's abode in order to see Sophia again.

In chapter thirty-eight, Sir Charles is welcomed politely by Mr Lawson, who updates him on Mr Herbert's improved condition and, just as they get to talking about Sophia, William interrupts the conversation. The baronet is almost overcome by jealousy, but keeps his wits about him long enough to inquire about the young man. When Mr Lawson sees the relief on Sir Charles's face from learning that William is his son-in-law he im-

mediately understands that the man before him is the one who had so enraptured Sophia, and proceeds to tell him most of what had transpired since she had taken lodgings with his family. The tale of Sophia's virtue in facing adversity brings Sir Charles to tears. He sets out to visit his beloved at last, and he is even more awed by her when he encounters an elderly woman who agrees to lead him to the cottage, all the while heaping praises upon Sophia's character.

In chapter thirty-nine, the two lovers are finally reunited, but whereas Sir Charles is overjoyed, Sophia still harbours ill-will towards him following his poor treatment of her. Mrs Darnley is appalled at her bad manners and indulges the baronet on her behalf, pleased when he does not try to impose his presence and proclaims his devotion to her daughter. Sir Charles takes his leave, and promptly runs into Mr Herbert.

Chapter forty presents Mr Herbert as the bridge between Sir Charles and Sophia, as he settles the unrest in the baronet's heart and then relates what he had been told to Mrs Darnley and her daughter. He reassures the both of them that the spiteful letter that Sir Charles had written was borne of a misunderstanding, namely the misinterpretation of Sophia and William's first meeting. He then announces that the lad would return the following day to "offer his hand" to Sophia, and such bit of news was received with great joy by mother and daughter alike.

Chapter forty-one, the last chapter in the novel, wraps every story up in a nice bow. Mr Herbert goes to fetch Sir Charles and finds him as anxious and eager as was appropriate for a suitor; when they get to the cottage Mrs Darnley receives them with proper enthusiasm, whereas Sophia greets them with blushing poise. Sir Charles presents the marriage contract which he had already drawn up and insists on getting married as soon as possible. Mr Lawson officiates the union, after which the newlyweds depart for several days to bask in each other's presence. The lives of everyone

of relevance in the novel are touched by Sophia and Sir Charles: the latter arranges a profitable job for William and a good match for Dolly's younger sister, in addition to assigning a dowry to Harriot. The young woman over-stays her welcome with Lord L. by announcing that they were married, at which point he cuts her loose and she has no choice but accept the first advantageous offer presented to her. When such an offer is given by a jovial captain, Sir Charles procures him a commission in one of the colonies, insisting he takes his wife away with him. Harriot grows despondent and soon her marriage goes sour. Mrs Darnley falls gravely ill soon after Harriot is forced to leave, and dies with her least favourite daughter beside her. Sir Charles adores his wife and his passion never dwindles, even after years, and Sophia is reaping the rewards of having been virtuous and steadfast through even the most trying of times. Marriage as the end of the road, in the happiest sense possible, was a milestone for heroines in the XVIII century, Shaffer notes: "[...] novels in this period teach through consensus that marriage is both the best goal and only imaginable reward for good women [...]" (Shaffer 1992, 52).

The concluding paragraph of the novel is, once again, a tribute to Sophia and her virtue, and how ultimately her qualities allowed her a good life:

Sir Charles's tenderness for her seemed to increase every day; and when Mr Herbert some years after this marriage took occasion to compliment him upon the delicacy, the ardor, and the constancy of his affection, he replied, "You attribute to me a virtue, which, in this case, I cannot be said to possess; had my passion for my Sophia been founded only on the charms of her person, I might probably ere now have become a mere fashionable husband; but her virtue and wit supply her with graces ever varied, and ever new. Thus the steadiness of my affection for her," pursued he, smiling, "is but a constant inconstancy, which attaches me successively to one or other of those shining qualities, of which her charming mind is an inexhaustible source." (Lennox 2008, 199)

2.2 Sophia as Sentimental Heroine and Woman of Sensibility

Sophia as a Representative of the Sentimental Tradition

From the very start of the novel Sophia is portrayed as both a sentimental heroine, who is too tender for this world, and a resourceful woman, who is typical of the middle sorts. Many a time it is underlined that the kind of virtue she possesses cannot be learned, rather she was born with it already ingrained in her values. Her name itself, which means “wisdom”, represents her characteristics, in an age in which the use of anthropomorphization of qualities could embody wisdom, by definition. While a good conduct is always presented as a choice and not an obligation, Sophia’s virtue is shown to be too strong to be swayed even in dire circumstances. It is so strong that it can sway others’ choices: it is due to the pureness of her heart that Sophia managed to persuade Mrs Gibbson to let go of her grudges and allow her nephew and Dolly to marry, and to prove her innocence in the face of Mrs Howard and Mrs Barton’s accusations.

Sophia’s wholesome character allows her take full advantage of her education, and Lennox emphasises that a woman’s intelligence is equal to, or even superior to a man’s intelligence by paraphrasing Milton’s *Paradise Lost*: “How beauty is excelled by modest grace, / And wisdom, which alone is truly fair” (Lennox 2008, 63) In case it had not been made clear enough in earlier chapters, virtue (modest grace, wisdom) is hailed as the best seductive quality, in stark opposition to the coquettish arts and any appealing physical features.

Poor Sophia used to answer no otherwise than by tears: but this was sure to aggravate her fault; for it was supposed that she wept and appeared afflicted only to shew people what ungrateful returns she met with for her goodness. Thus did the unhappy Sophia, with the softest sensibility of heart, and tenderest affections, see

herself excluded from the endearing testimonies of a mother's fondness, only by being too worthy of them, and exposed to shocking suspicions of undutifulness, for an action that shewed the highest filial affection: so true is it, that great virtues cannot be understood by mean and little minds, and with such, not only lose all their lustre, but are too often mistaken for the contrary vices. (59-60)

Sir Charles, who had been attracted to Harriot's looks and was quickly growing weary of her character was immediately drawn to Sophia's unassuming dignity and poise. Harriot's virtue is described as "assumed" and "fancied", indeed she fancies herself not only a handsome creature of great wit and virtue, but also a master manipulator. Her petty jealousy brings her to try and make Sir Charles jealous in turn, and she believes she succeeds because "[v]anity is extremely ingenious in procuring gratification for itself." (65) When it becomes clear that the young suitor has set his sights on Sophia and has no intention of marrying her, the heroine is faced with a choice: risk scandal by allowing him to make her his mistress or deny herself and reject his advances despite her feelings for him. It is the same choice that Harriot will have to make in a later chapter, but contrary to her sister "Sophia's good sense, modesty, and virtue, placed her out of the reach of temptation." (70) This musing by Mr Herbert can be interpreted in more than one way, as it means both that Sophia's countenance warded off men who would put her virtue at risk and she herself would not even consider such offers, whereas Harriot's lack of virtue invited several unsavoury proposals that she would entertain.

Sophia's iron will is shown again when her mother foregoes the rules of etiquette by leaving her in the company of Sir Charles, who in turn does not take his leave, thus putting Sophia's reputation in jeopardy. She refuses to allow such an improper conduct to continue and, the next time Sir Charles visits, lays down her own terms: she will entertain his courtship only if it is aimed at marriage – that is, a reputable arrangement.

Sir Charles, who had been trying to court her by pretending to be virtuous and educated but actually lacks the deep-seated morality Sophia has, is torn between his own morals and his passions. He is another character who, when faced with a choice between pure virtue and baser instincts, reverts to a less virtuous behaviour rather than holding steady in his path. In fact, the baronet tries to buy Mrs Darnley's love without making a commitment, "[...] Yet all this produced no alteration in Sophia; the same modesty and humility, the same sweetness of temper, and attention to oblige, distinguished her now as in her days of oppression." (83) Sophia refuses the gifts and decides to leave in order to earn an honest living, even though she does not know with certainty that Sir Charles's intentions had not been honourable.

Once in the countryside, outside the clutches of society, Sophia can indulge her purely sentimental side. After hearing Dolly's story and witnessing her sorrow "Sophia, who was greatly affected at this sight, could not help accompanying her tears with some of her own [...]" (101) In true sentimental fashion the heroine feels empathy for Dolly and cries *for* her and *with* her, and endeavours to help her much like David in *David Simple* would help those with whom he felt a connection. However, contrary to how most of the sentimental men were portrayed, Sophia has the skills and wit to deal with society, all the while keeping her morals intact as portrayed in her first meeting with Mrs Gibbson:

Sophia, who saw an old woman, apparently oppressed with the infirmities of years, dressed in all the ridiculous foppery of the last age, was so little pleased with her, that she would have answered this compliment with great coldness, had not the desire and hope of being serviceable to her friend made her conquer her growing disgust; she therefore resolved to improve this opportunity of commencing an acquaintance with the aunt of young William, and met her advances with her usual sweetness and affability, so that the old woman was quite charmed with her; and being very desirous to gain her good opinion, and to shew her breeding,

of which she was extremely vain, overwhelmed her with troublesome ceremony; and, to display her understanding, of which she was equally proud, murdered so many hard words, that her discourse was scarcely intelligible. (117)

When the time comes for Mrs Darnley and Harriot's first visit to Sophia the novel focuses less on Sophia's virtue and more on the lack thereof of the other two. The mother is portrayed much like Mrs Gibbson, dabbling in discourses much too intelligent for her, and Harriot capitalises on how her looks and grace ensnared Sir Charles once again when Sophia was not there to distract him. Furthermore, the elder sister immediately contradicts her mother when she tells Sophia that the countryside had done wonders for her complexion. While the younger sister does not take Harriot's remark to heart she is affected by her mother's accusation that she had pushed Sir Charles away for no reason, treating him poorly and almost costing them his attentions. After they leave for London Sophia indulges in her melancholy, trying to reassure herself that, had Sir Charles been honest with his affections, he would already have proposed marriage, and that she was in the right to trust in her good sense. However, Mr Herbert soon counters what her heart had been telling her by revealing the baronet's pure intentions:

"When Sir Charles visits you next, Miss Sophia, he comes to offer you his hand; he has asked my consent as your guardian and your friend; and I, presuming on my influence over you in both these characters, have given it freely; and how indeed, having your interest and happiness sincerely at heart, could I do otherwise? but if you think his former behaviour, in which however there were only suspicions against him, deserves to be resented, at a time when those suspicions are absolutely destroyed, you must go through with your heroism, and see him no more [...]" (138)

The fact that the baronet would offer *his* hand instead of asking for *her* hand follows the tradition of the woman of sensibility, as her role often in-

cludes the reformation of a marriage prospect. Sophia is so touched by Sir Charles's passionate declarations and his care that "tears filled her eyes" (139), and her own passions burst forth in "an ardent ejaculation" (140) once her heart had settled. Her joy is so great that her dear friend Dolly is moved to tears herself, even without knowing the full extent of Sophia's cheer. When Mr Herbert delivers the news that the baronet had changed his mind Sophia almost faints, but contrary to other women whose virtue is less unwavering she holds onto consciousness with grace, as she "shall bear this strange insult with proper fortitude." (144) Sir Charles's letter gives Sophia some sort of closure, yet as soon as Mrs Gibbson confirms she had been talking about marriage between her and her nephew Sophia is agitated once more. Her good sense prevails though, as her sympathy for Dolly's plight makes her attempt to endear Mrs Gibbson to the prospect of marriage between her nephew and Miss Lawson. Mrs Gibbson acquiesces, entering the ranks of those who had been positively influenced by Sophia's virtue. Meanwhile, Mr Herbert investigates on Sophia's behalf, fully believing that Harriot had a hand in turning Sir Charles's disposition so sour. Whereas Sophia would not allow herself to believe in her sister's maliciousness, Harriot has no qualms in recognizing Sophia's goodness, even when trying to twist it into a negative quality.

Mr Herbert, who was struck with this incident, endeavoured to make some discoveries concerning their conversation, and Harriot's malice made this no difficult matter: for she could not forbear throwing out some sarcasms against her sister, whose extreme sensibility, she insinuated, had already found out a new object. (148)

When the focus shifts to Sir Charles and his quest to forget Sophia, it is clear that such a feat is not easily achieved. He sees the proof of her virtue in her house and room by way of her choice of reading and works of art: books that Mr Herbert or himself had given her, and her poems and draw-

ings. Such is the magnitude of her grace and dignity that he feels shame, probably for the first time in his life, for he fears that her acceptance of his feelings might be spurred solely from gratitude. Even he can see the disparity between them, and her decency could have driven her to consent to his courtship out of duty to her family in order to secure their future social position. He immediately dismisses the idea, as Sophia's virtue was so great that she would not compromise herself in such a manner:

An overstrained delicacy likewise proved another source of disquietude to him. The inequality of their circumstances gave rise to a thousand tormenting doubts: he was afraid, that dazzled with the splendor of his fortune, she would sacrifice her inclinations to her interest, and give him her hand without her heart; and when doing justice to the greatness of her mind, and the real delicacy of her sentiments, he rejected this supposition as injurious to her, his busy imagination conjured up new forms of distrust: he trembled lest, mistaking gratitude for love, she should be deceived by her own generosity and nice sense of obligation, and imagine it was the lover she preferred, when the benefactor only touched her heart. (150)

These doubts are soon quelled once Sir Charles sees a portrait of himself drawn in her hand; the watercolour rekindles the flames of his passion at once, and "the softest gratitude, the tenderest compassion, filled his soul" (151) He sets out to meet Mr Herbert at once, in order to send him ahead and explain the situation to Sophia. However he cannot rein in his excitement to see his beloved, and after Harriot had planted another seed of doubt in his mind Sir Charles rides to the village so that he could see for himself whether Sophia still held him dear in her heart or if she had moved on. He sees a beautiful youth, and immediately compares himself to him; he concedes, in his thoughts, that a man whose virtue was apparent in his looks would be indeed a good match for his Sophia, for she had had reason to doubt his motives whereas this young man appeared honest and true. Sir Charles resolves to rest at an inn before calling on Mr Lawson, but he can-

not resist asking the hostess about that man; her answers do not extinguish his jealousy, rather they add more questions. The following morning he misinterprets the meeting between William and Sophia and he is on the verge of fainting, an action usually reserved for women. Moreover, instead of taking action and confronting the rival or Sophia, he retreats to mull over his thoughts. The belief that she had forsaken his affections, maybe for want of straightforward virtue, stays his hand when writing the letter to Mr Herbert: he “takes the blame” and allows himself to be seen as fickle, instead of revealing the extent of his grief.

Curiously, the moment in which Sophia *does* faint is further proof of her virtue: she does not cling to romantic values, rather she is deeply affected by the perceived loss of the most important friend and mentor in her life, Mr Herbert. When she is misled and believes him dead she collapses, recovering only when the misunderstanding is cleared; the relief she feels does not stop her from bursting into tears at his bedside, and her presence and transport bring comfort to Mr Herbert. He warns her again that a life without virtue is not worth living, and those who lack grace and dignity are doomed to conduct themselves in accordance to the whims of society, instead of pursuing greater accomplishments:

Mr Herbert employed the little remaining strength he had in endeavours to comfort her, and in pious exhortations. “Weep not for me, my dear child,” would he say, “but rather rejoice that the innocence of my life has divested death of his terrors, and enabled me to meet him with calm resignation, and with humble hope. At this awful hour, how little would it avail me, that I had been rich, that I had been great and powerful? but what comforts do I not feel from an unrepenting conscience? these comforts every one has it in his power to procure: live virtuous then, my dear Sophia, that you may die in peace: how small is the difference between the longest and the shortest life! if its pleasures be few, its miseries are so likewise; how little do they enjoy whom the world calls happy! how little do they suffer whom it pronounces wretched! one point of fleeting time past, and death

reduces all to an equality. But the distinction between virtue and vice, and future happiness and misery are eternal.” (160)

Mr Herbert however recovers, and when Sophia gets back to the Lawson’s she finds out that her altruistic efforts had succeeded in securing marriage for Dolly and William. Her own happiness is pushed to the background as she inquires about employment, and Mrs Gibbson aids her by mentioning Sophia’s circumstances to one Mrs Howard, who is a self-appointed champion of charity: “[...] I must see this young lady, Mrs Gibbons, and I must do something for her. You have obliged me infinitely by putting it in my power to gratify the unbounded benevolence of my heart upon a deserving object.” (161-2) Her statement falls in line with the general aptitude of the upper class of that period, as it was trendy to be charitable towards the less fortunate. Sophia, however, is easily charmed by this apparent virtue and, overwhelmed by distress, accepts a posting with Mrs Howard. The pretended quality that the latter sports pushes her so far as to announce that she would gladly allow a marriage between Sophia and her son due to the real virtue of the young woman, but when the remark becomes a real possibility Mrs Howard shows her true colours. Along with Mrs Barton they spread false rumours about Sophia, who had not noticed anything amiss because of her candour. Mr Lawson paraphrases Cicero to tell Sophia that she could not rely on people less virtuous than her to make her way into the world, much like David Simple was led astray several times by characters of dubious integrity: “It is a maxim [...] of one of the wisest of the antients, that in forming new connections of every sort, it is of great importance in what manner the first approaches are made and by whose hands the avenues of friendship are laid open.” (169)

The chapter in which Sophia returns to town and learns of her mother’s affliction portrays the protagonist as an “archetypal” female hero-

ine in distress: she is in tears, trembling, and pale for the entire duration of the journey to London, not even able to entertain conversation with a lady whose esteem she had gained. The discovery of Harriot's ambiguous situation only serves as a *coup de grace* for Sophia's countenance and, unlike lesser heroines whose world revolved around their own misery, Sophia's pure empathy focuses on the "real" problem:

"The misfortune for which she had grieved so much, seemed light, compared with that she apprehended: she wept no longer for the inconstancy of her lover; she trembled for the honour of her sister; and her greatest fear now was, that Sir Charles was not married." (173)

Harriot's evasiveness in answering her sister's questions only makes the issue of her dignity stand out even more starkly. Once again the readers are presented with the contraposition between Sophia's virtue and Harriot's "pretend virtue"; it is no surprise that Sophia's unwavering will and candour outshine her sister's sordid existence. Sophia's visit to her mother fares markedly better, as Mrs Darnley has had a dose of reality and is now more understanding towards her daughter and more open to her way of life, which avoids frivolity and excess. When Sophia hears of her mother's troubles she cries, and yet her weeping is considered beautiful in its compassion:

Sophia, ore softened by this tenderness, suffered her tears to flow a few moments unrestrained; then suddenly wiping her charming eyes, "Pardon this weakness, madam," said she, "this indeed is not a time to weep for myself, your sorrows claim all my tears." (177)

The fact that Mrs Darnley is now "reformed" or, at least, in the process of becoming a less shallow person, allows the two women to share this moment, rather than just having Sophia shed tears for someone else's sake. Afterwards, true to herself, Sophia applies her ingenuity and industry in or-

der to improve her mother's situation instead of lingering in their distress. Mother and daughter roll their metaphorical sleeves up and set out to solve the problem. The only man that figures in a helpful way, the man of the law who aided the debt settlements, is portrayed as merely a medium rather than the ultimate salvation.

Now living in the countryside with Mrs Darnley, Sophia starts to support both of them and, similarly to how Mr Herbert chose instructive readings for her in the past and – to the general eighteenth-century consensus about how the novel should “instruct and delight” – her works show how she “always chose such subjects as conveyed some moral lesson to the mind, while they pleased the imagination.” (180) In the meantime Harriot, whose disreputable situation as a mistress was being suspected more and more, solicited her mother to live with her hoping that it would imply that there was nothing scandalous happening as Mrs Darnley approved of her conduct – she would not live with an immoral woman, after all. Sophia, in a manner suitable for a sentimental heroine – who is always in the right owing to her steadfast dignity –, invited her sister to visit the cottage “with a hope that her example and arguments might one day influence her to change her conduct.” (180) The opposition between Sophia and Harriot is even more emphasised in this latter meeting, and the author's condemnation of the older sister even more blatant. Lennox describes her as depraved, wretched, and fallen, dedicating to her a verse adapted from John Flavel's *The Method of Grace* (1681): “*The pride of human nature (says an eminent writer) takes its rise from its corruption, as worms are produced by putrefaction.*” (180) After Mrs Darnley's unusual restraint towards her oldest daughter – which Harriot correctly interprets as disapproval of her conduct – Sophia drives the final nail in the coffin:

“You call me cruel, Harriot,” said she, “for estranging myself from your company; but consider a little, whether it is not you that are both cruel and unjust. Why

would you deprive me of the only reward the world bestows on me, for a life of voluntary poverty; you have exchanged a good name for dress and equipage; and I, to preserve one, subject myself to labour and indigence: you enjoy your purchase; but should I lose mine, were I to have that complaisance for you which you require. Leave me my reputation then, since it is the sole recompence of those hardships to which I willingly submit; and if you wish to recover yours, be contented to be poor like me.” (182)

Sophia proves to be a sentimental heroine in this instance more than ever: rather than culling her amoral sister from her life, or asking her mother to refuse her company, she is determined to bring her into the light by way of her continued presence in Harriot’s life. She differs from the man of feeling in that she does not merely partake in emotion with those who are virtuous or already on the road to redemption, or tries to help only by crying with them or giving them money – like Yorick with his Madam, Harley with the prostitute or Edwards, or David with most of those he meets. Instead she offers concrete solutions and has the wit and intelligence to pursue her selfless goals, just as she had done to help Dolly and her paramour. Harriot does not grow out of her selfishness and pettiness, and attempts to validate her behaviour by consistently visiting Sophia and their mother, reasoning that “the world would cease to suspect her, since Sophia approved her conduct” (182).

Just when the overall situation seems to be improving for Sophia, she thinks she sees Sir Charles, and her heart is thrown once again in disarray. Sir Charles, on his part, has been set on the path to redemption by Sophia’s virtue, and he confirms both that forgetting such a “treasure” is not an easy endeavour, and that his life would be that much better with her in it:

When he reflected on her exalted virtues, her wit, her elegance, the attractive graces of her person, and the irresistible sweetness of her manners, he lamented

his hard fate that had put such a treasure out of his reach; but when his conscience told him that it had once been in his power to have become possessor of this treasure, that he had trifled with that innocent affection till he had alienated it from himself to another object; his anguish became insupportable, and he sought to relieve it by rousing his indignation against her, for her preference of so unworthy a rival. (184)

As was usual for characters in sentimental novels, his overwhelming emotions cause a physical reaction in the way of a violent fever. It leads Sir Charles to recuperate at a countryside where he runs into the man who will – ironically enough – give him the key to his happiness. Young Mr Howard lays to rest all the suspicions about Sophia's involvement with various suitors, except with the strapping lad Sir Charles had seen with her.

As most of the baronet's doubts have been quelled, he resolves to visit her if only to get closure; he hurries in search of word of her, and finally reaches the abode of Mr Lawson. He is pleasantly received by the pastor and he is kind to him in turn, yet his jealousy flares when he sees William and he surreptitiously inquires about him. Sir Charles is absolutely rejoicing when he learns that not only the young man is Mr Lawson's son-in-law, but also that his darling Sophia was still untethered by marriage or engagement, and was currently living with her mother and earning her own way in life. Such a display of industry and compassion greatly affects Sir Charles, who had "his eyes swimming in tears" (189), and he immediately takes his leave to go to her and confess his passions. Unknowingly, he rides right past her cottage, but once again he is faced with his beloved's tenderness and heart as an old woman offers him to lead him to her house, stating that "old and weak as I am, I would walk ten miles to do her service." (190) More than that, she sings Sophia's praises by relating "many instances of tenderness and charity towards the poor of the village, and filled him with admiration of that true benevolence, which even in the midst of indigence,

could administer to the greater wants of her fellow creatures.” (190)

When Sophia and Charles are finally reunited it is clear that their minds are very much different from one another, as it is repeated several times that he is filled with tenderness while she is cold and detached. In this chapter Sophia is described as reacting more as a woman, albeit a dignified and virtuous one, rather than a righteous heroine. She is, indeed, deeply affected by his presence and his infirm appearance, and her womanly sensibilities will not allow her to be firm in her rejection of him. Sophia rebuffs him more harshly than her heart demanded of her “for there was something in the baronet’s looks and words that seemed to merit a hearing at least; but she dreaded the weakness of her own heart, and was fully persuaded that any condescension on her side would give him too great an advantage over her.” (192) Sir Charles is baffled by her brusque demeanour, but indulges Mrs Darnley who is thrilled at seeing him again. They talk, and the reason behind Sophia’s terseness is revealed as her mother informs the baronet that they had believed him engaged to be married. He proves once again that he is on the path of redemption by not retreating into his aloof persona, but instead understanding that Sophia had good reason to believe the rumours and think of him as fickle, and he says as much:

“[...] if they have been able to persuade miss Sophia, that after having aspired to the possession of her, I could descend to love any other woman. I came to implore her pardon, madam,” pursued he, “for all the extravagancies of my past conduct, and for that unreasonable jealousy which was the source of them, could I have been so happy to have prevailed upon her to have heard me.” (193)

Sir Charles takes the blame for Sophia’s actions, recognizing her superior virtue. Torn by grief, he runs into Mr Herbert, another man whose sensibility surpasses his own and, “with a candor and sincerity becoming the rectitude of his intentions” (194), the baronet convinces him of his earnest dedication to Sophia and his will to marry her. Meanwhile Mrs Darn-

ley is having her own outburst of emotion, although it is of a far less virtuous and more materialistic nature – she even cites “being able to out-shine her sister” (195) as a valid reason for entertaining Sir Charles’s addresses. Sophia, unmoved by her mother’s displeasure but adrift in her own, is slowly becoming more open to the idea that the man has been honest, fact that is supported by Mr Herbert passionate defence of him. Just as he has been the one who used to “dictate” what was appropriate to read, under the benevolent guise of helping her education along, he now chides Sophia as he had hence deemed Sir Charles an appropriate suitor for her. Even Mrs Darnley recognizes his influence and begs him to “exert [his] power over her upon this occasion” (196). Mr Herbert, in turn, recognizes Sophia’s virtue as the sole executant of her good fortune, and urges her to do the same: “[...] in a marriage so far beyond your hopes and expectations, acknowledge the hand of Providence, which thinks fit to reward you, even in the world, for your steady adherence to virtue.” (196) As the matter of the baronet’s honesty is settled, Sophia does indeed thank the Heavens for the favourable resolution, yet she does not shed tears for it, almost as if she considered her marriage to Sir Charles as a just reward for her pious conduct instead of a momentous, joyful occasion.

She is, somehow, the anti-Arabella¹², for she does not blindly believe in romance and happy endings, as she is “educated to be a virtuous and analytic reader. [...] and reforms her would-be seducer, a baronet-rake, through the force of her exemplary presence.” (Dorne 1992, 23) Whether Sophia wanted it, or even believed in it, or not, the happy ending she never dared to hope for arrived: she married Sir Charles, and his adoration for her allowed them to spread their good fortune to their friends and family. The

¹² Arabella is the protagonist of *The Female Quixote* (1752). She is a dreamy youth, who wishes that real life mirrored the workings of the romance novels she constantly reads. Owing to this, she is ill-suited to society, as she believes everyone is under the same delusion as her.

fate of the unworthy befell poor Harriot, as her false claims of marriage to Lord L. and the ensuing end of their arrangement “threw her into a distemper very fatal to beauty.” (Lennox 2008, 198) Her illness, the forced departure to the colonies with her husband, and the subsequent death of Mrs Darnley are laid out as terms of comparisons in respect to Sir Charles, as their paths had a similar point of origin in their shared love of luxury and appearances, but whereas the two Darnley women carried their shallowness ‘til death, the baronet accepted Sophia’s virtue in his life and was re-deemed.

As Charlotte Lennox cannot be defined as a sentimental writer, the novel *Sophia* cannot be exclusively defined within the “rules” of the literature of sensibility. The plot has a clear start instead of being a recovered manuscript or personal journal with a non-descript timeframe; the story proceeds linearly enough, save for a few select parallel storylines that are set necessarily apart in time and place (i.e. the baronet’s journeys). It is nothing like the abrupt start *in ovo* of *A Sentimental Journey* or *The Man of Feeling*. Horace suggested to write *ab ovo* or, on the contrary, to start the story *in medias res*, and the novel of sentiment brought those rules to the extreme. Like in Mackenzie’s and Fielding’s books, however, the story stems from a loss experienced by the protagonist – first Mr Darnley, then wealth and status – and money becomes both the ultimate goal and the ultimate antagonist. The prosperity that Sir Charles offers the Darnley women can be seen as a way to “bribe” either of the sisters into a relationship at first, and then as the means to elevate himself enough to be worthy of Sophia. The connection between them goes beyond that of mere lovers, and it falls in line with the idea of family as the nucleus of society as described by Porter: “[t]he ideal marriage should be one based on neither sexual attraction nor romantic passion, but on mutual respect, affection and compatibility.” (Porter 2001, 329)

Sophia, Schürer notes, *does* embody the current of sentimentalism, as she has all the qualities expected of a champion of sensibility, even though she differs from other heroines in that her virtue is ingrained in her moral sense rather than taught: it is cultivated by Mr Herbert but not increased or transformed. Her presence and morality cause others to change their “wicked” conduct. There is no growth in her character as is the approach of the sentimental tradition for the hero, who is “[a]ffected yet not changed, he may become sadder, but he cannot grow wiser.” (Starr 1994, 190): Sophia does not *need* to grow wiser.

The woman of feeling is steadfast and unchanging, which might be her strength yet might also be her downfall. Where the man of feeling usually perishes in a society that overwhelms him, the sentimental heroine strives to change society instead. In fiction it is expected for the heroes to succeed in their endeavours: Sophia *does* indeed bring about change for those closest to her, her belief in her values improves the lives of those who yield to her. Yet she is imprisoned by a cage of her own making, virtue will not permit her to stray: society will allow her existence as long as she abides by its definition of “good woman”. Charlotte Lennox, unlike her heroine, falls on her sword: her unbending conviction in her own morals creates distance between her and society, which might have halted an otherwise flourishing – and financially rewarding – career.

CONCLUSION

We no longer live in a world of chivalry, of etiquette, or class division – at least, in theory. With the exception of the higher tiers of society, our surnames do not dictate how we must act, or define our future; we have the possibility to expand our horizons and virtually engage in any behaviour. And yet, especially when interacting with others, we still adhere to a strict conduct. Why? Why is a woman supposed to be frail, or her most important quality to be beauty, often in spite of her being clever? Why cannot she carry herself the way she likes? Why must a man be sturdy, both physically and emotionally? Why is a man's value defined by the size of his muscles, of his bank account, or both?

Centuries upon centuries of images provided by paintings and literature first, and television later, have created a clear-cut idea of how society is formed, proposing stereotypes that, even when challenged, still manage to make up the vast majority of fictional characters. The fair but educated lady and the brave yet brawny knight have become the cheerleader and the jock, and the superhero that manages to save a kingdom and then goes back to his tower has become the nerd. Throughout “young adult” novels (the modern counterpart to *Bildungsroman*), adult fiction and literature in general tropes run rampant.

The scheme is always the same: the protagonist or protagonists possess a characteristic that sets them apart from everyone else, and often it is a trait that is in direct opposition to their overall demeanour. That one characteristic, combined with the congeniality of the character, will serve as linchpin for their success in whichever endeavour they set out to accomplish.

How can these kinds of stories captivate the audiences so much? It is *not*, indeed, how “special” the characters are that makes them resonate

with our minds, rather, how they can be so *normal* yet extraordinary at the same time that makes audiences relate to them. After all, “nothing is so common, as the wish to be remarkable.” (Wendell Holmes 1906, 291) The idea that any of us could become the “hero” of the story, or even in real life, tickles the mind with indefinable allure; it is only right that we would model ourselves after the characters we admire. It is hence essential that any outlet that has such an influence over the world at large proposes “good” examples, but that is not always the case. Especially on television, the presence of violence has been normalized more and more over the last few decades, which begs the question: what kind of impact has the literature of sentiment had, if we are almost back to the times of bidimensional characters that were plotted out and acted within well-defined black-and-white contours? Where have over two centuries of development of literature of emotion gone, if people who have watched all of the Marvel Cinematic Universe superhero movies are “cool” and people who have read all of Nicholas Sparks’s incredibly sentimental novels are “bleeding hearts”?

The change is slight, and it is not rooted as much as the deeply ingrained “good vs. evil” trope is, but in recent years there has been a constant shift in both the demand and the offer of content. The most glaringly obvious yet simplistic example would be the hit TV series *Once Upon a Time* (2011-2018), a modern-day adaptation of fairy tales in which the line separating “the good guys” and “the bad guys” gets blurred at every turn. Instead of going outward with their exploration, the directors decided to point the cameras inward, trying to understand and explain the emotions that drove the characters to act a certain way, or do a certain thing that might otherwise be chalked up to their role – i.e. the Evil queen does evil things because she is evil vs. a woman torn apart by grief reacts to a world that only sees her as a villain.

This shift, however, has manifested itself for a while in modern

times and, surprisingly enough, the (partial) return of the man as a “sentimental hero” was largely owed to the on-going battle for the emancipation of women. As feminism was demanding women to be less objectified and to be recognised as individuals and not just alluring female bodies (or besotted lovers, or devoted wives and mothers), more and more authors, both male and female, started to give their female characters more depth and less dependence on their male co-protagonists. This, in turn, allowed male characters to expand their role, not being tied down as the staunch protector, or the ardent suitor: men could now be as devoted or as emotional as their female counterparts instead. It is true that a man with tears streaking down his face is not a welcome sight in literature or television, let alone in ordinary life. However, the idea of a man that is always and unerringly dominant, or even aggressive, does not appeal to women anymore – at least, to the majority of them –, especially when that would mean that their role would be diminished to that of angel of the hearth.

The delicate balance that indicates which kinds of behaviour are “allowed” of those usually allotted to the opposite sex, and in which intensity, still clips the wings of any author that might wish to truly develop a character to its fullest potential. A woman *can* be muscular, but in turn she has to have an exceedingly feminine hobby, or a man *can* be good at cooking or keeping house, but he has to be a ruthless CEO, and so on. Even large scale profitable books fall under this stereotype: the famous (or infamous) saga *A Song of Ice and Fire* (1996-?) stars Khal Drogo, an unmerciful warlord whose entire existence revolves around pillaging, marauding, violating women, and slaughtering enemies, and yet three-quarters of the female population was trembling at the knees at the scene in which he is tenderly holding a tiny baby, and the later casting choice of Jason Momoa for the TV adaptation had even more of an impact. A caring father and loving husband cannot just *be*, it has to be an alpha male protecting his off-

spring and mate.

On the other hand a recent novel, *The Princess Bride* (Goldman 1973), presents itself much like a piece of sentimental literature: a third party narrator offers the story as recovered parts of a larger *opus*, and the voice of the author himself is present throughout the book. Moreover, other than the stereotypical “bad guys” (Dread Pirate Roberts, Prince Humperdinck), the most recurring criminals in the novel are three men whose current course of action was determined by loss in the past – loss of innocence, of a parent –, and the one who has more evil leanings dies not through violence, but through a “Battle of Wits”, of the kind David Simple might have wished to witness, together with Mr Spatter. The protagonists, Buttercup and Westley, most definitely are not a true “sentimental couple”, as she is fiery and vindictive and he is, at times, arrogant and violent. Nevertheless, their connection first, and later the bonds Westley forges throughout the story, are based on shared sentiment. The quiet, unassuming love he harbours for her leads Buttercup to revel in it and, ultimately, to return his feelings; the understanding Westley shows to the three ruffians give them an opening to “re-humanize” themselves and to prioritise feelings and friendship rather than their original objective (revenge). Hence, the literature of sentiment nowadays could be considered a fad, explored to provide easy romance to the public without much thought. Could that have happened back in the XVIII century as well?

Charlotte Lennox has been a prolific writer, a historian, critic, and thinker. Unlike other women authors in the XVIII century, her profession was not an afterthought, nor did she “stumble” upon it by accident. Another Charlotte, Charlotte Smith in fact, prompted Sir Walter Scott to pen an observation on her authorship, which he considered “forced”:

Nothing saddens the heart so much as that sort of literary labour which depends on the imagination, when it is undertaken unwillingly, and from a sense of com-

pulsion. The galley-slave may sing when he is unchained, but it would be uncommon equanimity which could induce him to do so when he is actually bound to his oar. If there is a mental drudgery which lowers the spirits and lacerates the nerves, like the toil of the slave, it is that which is exacted by literary composition when the heart is not in unison with the work upon which the head is employed. Add to the unhappy author's task, sickness, sorrow, or the pressure of unfavourable circumstances, and the labour of the bondsman becomes light in comparison. (Scott 1821)

By comparison, Lennox's career started as a passion rather than an obligation, and from an extremely young age if an anecdote about her life is to be believed: "Charlotte Lennox the Novel Writer began to compose in Poetry so early, that She wrote the Word Zephyr with an S – Because She had not yet learn'd to make a Z." (Carlile 2018, 31) It can be evinced by her writings that, while her desire for a higher education was borne of her own bosom, transporting her wit onto paper was a way to ward herself from her mother's disapproval of her conduct, whereas her father and brother wholly supported her quest for knowledge. It can be evinced by her writings that, while her desire for a higher education was borne of her own bosom, transporting her wit onto paper was a way to ward herself from her mother's disapproval of her conduct, whereas her father and brother wholly supported her quest for knowledge. Lennox's own combative attitude towards society was received with enthusiasm by the audience, as people were starting to lean more and more towards a less restrictive culture – both on financial and emotional terms. Lennox's own combative attitude towards society was received with enthusiasm by the audience, as people were starting to lean more and more towards a less restrictive culture – both on financial and emotional terms. The extensive correspondence that Lennox entertained with Richardson, Johnson, Fielding, Boswell, and others, shows that she oft sought counsel in regards to how to present her works to the

printers, and that she was considered as a darling of the writers' community as she rarely got rebuked by any of her colleagues. In fact, it was Richardson who helped her convince the publisher Millar to give a second chance to *The Female Quixote*, which had been (metaphorically) ripped apart by Millar's readers (Schürer 2012, 8-12). Similarly, Johnson handled on her behalf the arrangements to publish her *Original Works*, although he reprimanded her on her manners and reminded her that she should always be presentable and agreeable to society (160-7).

Lennox's "prickly" side estranged her from prospective readers and patrons both, although a modern individual might have to wonder *how* disagreeable she was exactly, and why. Olympe de Gouges, a French woman who was Lennox's quasi-contemporary and quasi-mirror image¹³, argued in favour of women's rights as well and was guillotined for her "crime"; Lennox might just have had been graced. Yet, "Lennox's success, in part, was the result of her remarkable skill at negotiating, reconciling her own desires with those of others." (Carlile 2018, 168) Ever since a young age she demonstrated an incredible aptitude for publishing the right text at the right time; she was capable of deft flattery, and it is likely that none of such flattery was empty, rather borne of sincerity. Lennox navigated her life while always remaining true to her ideals, fearlessly pushing on even when others tried to restrain her. The only constraints which actually bent her will were those of the financial order (and, later in her life, her health issues). The 1775 resolution of the *Donald vs. Beckett* case could have been a godsend for her, as it returned the ownership of her work to her, yet she did not succeed in capitalizing on her – admittedly – exceptional work, not even by

¹³ Olympe de Gouges (1748-1793) was possibly the illegitimate child of an aristocrat; she had an extensive education and produced a variety of texts that spanned across many genres. She is often named as the first French feminist. A plethora of rumours were spread about her in order to discredit her, yet she continued to broadcast her innovative ideas until her death. (Mousset, 2014).

reprinting edited versions of her works or by publishing them through subscription. Luck had never been on her side, she only had her wits and the friends she made by virtue of it.

Lennox was indeed a pioneer. She expertly manoeuvred through the literary marketplace, and, in part because of her American experience, she produced the perspective of a sceptic. In a wide range of genres, Lennox used her outsider status to illustrate the constraints of cultural construction for a growing literate class. Lennox's career as a novelist yields important contributions to literary history. Her characters show how women can resist, remake, and rewrite their lives, even in the face of seemingly insurmountable pressures. However, Lennox was a far more versatile author, and her multivocal poetry, plays, translations, essay, criticism, and periodicals also reveal an ambitious vision for her society.

Lennox's life resonates with anyone who questions the traditional path of family and society and who pursues an internal drive for a more fulfilling life. She succeeded because she stood up for herself first in her personal life. Occasionally difficult, Lennox understood that her tough-mindedness was also her ally. She is an early example of an author with limited means, both in terms of status and wealth, who not only successfully maintained her personal reputation but also earned respect in her society. Indeed, she was for much of her life near poverty, yet she was also a professional celebrity. A learned, cosmopolitan author, she flourished in such impressive ways that she was given a place of national, and even international, importance. Even though Lennox never gained financial security she did succeed in the struggle to maintain an independence of mind. For this remarkable accomplishment, and for her ability to strike a balance between highly engaging writing and publications that managed to be accepted within the bounds of female propriety, her career was not only self-determined and enlightened, but a success. (Carlile 2018, 358)

Who knows what kind of works we could have read, had Charlotte Lennox not been so severely crippled by a society that would not reward her talent she deserved. Conversely, had she not been so smothered by the customs of her times, would she have written with such poignancy and

headstrong conviction? Charlotte Lennox, one of the Nine Muses of England, daughter of two countries yet mother to generations of heroines, is being recognized for her literary mind and hand at last. It is the hope of this thesis that, by bringing attention to her less-known work, her quest to enrich and raise women's lives through education and reading can continue in all generations, contemporary ones included, because the modern individual is still a woman who has to suffer in order to be recognized.

Appendix: Charlotte Lennox, a Timeline

*The Life and Dates*¹⁴ of Charlotte Lennox Née Ramsay

1729-30 Charlotte Ramsay is born, probably in Gibraltar, daughter of James and Catherine Ramsay.

c.1739-43 James Ramsay is stationed in the New York colony; the whole family moves there.

c.1741-43 James Ramsay dies in Albany; Charlotte is sent to England to live with a relative, who dies before she arrives; Charlotte will live in London for the rest of her life.

1746-50 Works as an actress, performing in Nicholas Rowe's *The Fair Penitent* and William Congreve's *The Mourning Bride*.

1747 Publishes *Poems on Several Occasions* with a dedication to Lady Isabella Finch signed "Charlotte Ramsay"; marries Alexander Lennox, an employee of the London printer William Strahan.

c.1748-50 Meets Samuel Johnson and Samuel Richardson; she will forge a lasting friendship and kinship with the former.

1750 Publishes her first novel, *The Life of Harriot Stuart, Written by Herself*; reprints "The Art of Coquetry" from *Poems on Several Occasions*, and "The Birthday Ode to the Princess of Wales" as "Mrs Lennox".

1751-55 Translation from the French of *The Memoirs of Maximilian de Bethune, Duke of Sully* vols. 1-3 published in London.

1752 Novel *The Female Quixote* published in London; Lennox attempts subscription publication of *Poems on Several Occasions*.

¹⁴ As mapped out by Norbert Schürer and Susan Carlile. Some publication dates are reported differently, however the aim of this timeline is not to give a play-by-play of the life of Charlotte Lennox but rather to ensure a general understanding of her life and career path.

1753 Critical work *Shakespear Illustrated* (vols. 1 and 2) published in London; Johnson and the Earl of Cork and Orrery contributed in sections of book.

1754 *Shakespear Illustrated* (vol. 3) published in London.

1756 Translation from the French of *The Memoirs of the Countess of Berci* published in London; translation from the French of *The History of Count de Comminge* published in London.

1757-58 Translation from the French of *The Memoirs for the History of Madam de Maintenon* published in London; pastoral drama *Philander* published in London, never performed after Garrick rejects it for production at Drury Lane Theatre.

1758 Novel *Henrietta* published in London.

1760 Translation from the French *The Greek Theatre of Father Brumoy* published in London.

1760 The monthly periodical *The Lady's Museum* (including the serialized novel "The History of Harriot and Sophia") begins publication. The magazine includes new publications of *The History of the Count de Comminge* and "History of the Dutchess of Beaufort".

c.1760–82 Alexander Lennox works for the Customs service, giving the family a regular income

1761 *The Lady's Museum* ceases publication after eleven instalments; Sir Joshua Reynolds paints a portrait of Lennox which gets later engraved by Cooke and Bortolozzi.

1762 "The History of Harriot and Sophia" published in London as *Sophia*.

1764 Reworking of *The History of the Count de Comminge* with altered names and ending: *The History of the Marquis of Lussan and Isabella*.

1765 Daughter Harriot Holles¹⁵ Lennox is born.

1766 Novel *The History of Eliza* published in London.

1769 Drama *The Sister* (based on *Henrietta*) staged by George Colman performed once at Covent Garden Theatre, immediately withdrawn, and then published in two editions.

c.1770-71 Son George Louis Lennox born.

1774 Translation from the French *Meditations and Penitential Prayers*, written by the celebrated Dutchess de la Vallière published in London.

1775 Drama *Old City Manners* (based on George Chapman, Ben Jonson, and John Marston's collaboration *Eastward Ho!*) successfully performed at Drury Lane Theatre and published;

1775 After the conclusive copyright decision of *Donaldson v. Becket* (which strengthens the rights of authors), Lennox produces a proposal, written by Johnson and dedicated to the Queen, for subscription publication of her works.

1778 After negotiation in the wake of *Donaldson v. Becket*, Lennox convinces her publisher to release a new edition of the *Memoirs of Sully* in order to financially support herself, her husband, and her children.

c.1779 Lennox appears in Richard Samuel's painting *The Nine Living Mus-
es of Great Britain*, with includes poet and critic Anna Barbauld, translator Elizabeth Carter, actress Elizabeth Griffith, painter Angelica Kauffman, singer Elizabeth Linley, historian Catharine Macaulay, patron and "Queen of the Bluestockings" Elizabeth Montagu, and educator and moralist Hannah More.

c.1782-84 Death of Harriot Holles Lennox of unknown causes.

¹⁵ The full name of Lennox's daughter is reported in an inconsistent manner in Carlile and Schürer, and throughout various texts; Schürer writes "Harriot Holles", whereas Carlile writes "Harriet" and "Henrietta Hollis".

1783-84 Poems supposedly by George Louis Lennox start being published in the *British Magazine* and the *Edinburgh Weekly Magazine*; the first titles are “Elegy, in Imitation of Shenstone, on Mrs Yates”, “Laura”, “Sylvana”, “On Miss Lennox”, , “Verses Written in the Character of an Unfortunate Young Lady”, “Verses on a Beautiful Young Lady”, “Verses to a Young Married Lady”, “Verses Addressed to the Prime Minister”, “Verses, Occasioned by Repeatedly Seeing the Astonishing Poetical Productions of Master George Louis Lennox”, and “The Fate of Sophia”; around this time, Lennox and her husband separate.

1787 Lennox’s poem “On the Death of Miss Henrietta Hollis Lennox” is published in the *World and Fashionable Advertiser* and other magazines through 1820; George Lennox’s novel, “The Duke of Milan”, is printed in *New Novelist’s Magazine* and in *Weekly Entertainer*.

1790 Novel *Euphemia* published in London.

1792 Lennox begins to receive subsidy from the newly founded Royal Literary Fund; she will be assisted until death.

1793 Lennox attempts to produce a subscription publication of the revised edition of *Shakespear Illustrated*.

1793 George Lennox emigrates to Maryland.

1804 On January 4th Lennox dies, destitute. She is buried in St John’s Gardens, close to Westminster Abbey.

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