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**DISINTERESTED BENEVOLENT SENSIBILITY IN HENRY
MACKENZIE'S *THE MAN OF FEELING*:
RECONSIDERING THE ROLE OF SHAFTESBURY'S SENTIMENTAL
PHILOSOPHY IN THE RISE OF THE SENTIMENTAL NOVEL**

by

MATT MINTER, B.A.

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
Department of English Literature

Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
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submitted by Matt Minter, B.A.
In partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Masters of Arts

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Abstract

The topic of this paper centres on the role which feeling played in the popular British sentimental literature of the late eighteenth-century. The representative text chosen for this discussion is Henry Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling*. The first chapter is intended to counter R. S. Crane's 1934 thesis which argued that the sentimental movement was influenced primarily by the Latitudinarian divines. In opposition to Crane's thesis, this opening chapter offers an explanation which stresses the influence of Lord Shaftesbury's moral philosophy on the movement. The second chapter begins with a review of the scholarship on Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling* and is followed by a review of the work done by John Dwyer on the Scottish moral context. In the third chapter I offer a reading of Mackenzie's text in order to determine to what extent a Shaftesburian moral philosophy operates within the sentimental novel.

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Introduction – Sentimental Moral Philosophy and the Eighteenth-Century Age of Feeling

This paper is concerned with the role which feeling played in popular British literature during the period between approximately 1740 and the end of the eighteenth century. It is commonly known that the stress upon reason as a moral and aesthetic guide which dominated in the first half of the eighteenth century was eventually displaced by a belief that feelings or affections were also to be seen as valid moral and aesthetic guides. Since this change was concomitant with the growth of the novel as a literary form, a general topic of literary study for this period centres on the rise of the novel of feeling—the *sentimental novel*. In his article entitled “Sentimental Novels” (1996), John Mullan offers a recent assessment of the genre by considering Samuel Richardson’s *Clarissa*, Laurence Sterne’s *A Sentimental Journey*, and Henry Mackenzie’s *The Man of Feeling* as his representative sentimental texts. In this article Mullan stresses the importance of *sensibility* as it relates to the sentimental novel:

‘Sensibility’ began to stand for emotional responsiveness . . . and came to designate a laudable delicacy in the second half of the century.

“‘Sentimental,’ by becoming a word for a type of text, promised an *occasion* for fine feeling. This fine feeling could be experienced by both the characters in a narrative and the reader of that narrative. A sentimental text depicted ‘sensibility,’ and appealed to it” (238).

Mullan also notes more specifically that these “fine feelings” experienced by the reader of the late eighteenth-century sentimental novel were to be seen as benevolent, since the text “appealed to the benevolent instincts of a virtuous reader, who might be expected to suffer with those of whom he or she read” (238). Mullan, however, ends up dismissing the crucial component of benevolent sensibility associated with the sentimental novel and states instead that “sentimentalism in eighteenth-century novels seems much more like the consequence of an anxiety about the sociability of individuals, than the assertion of a faith in human benevolence” (250). In the following paper I will attempt to demonstrate that Mullan’s dismissal of the relevance of benevolence constitutes a significant error in the assessment of the late eighteenth-century age of feeling. In opposition to Mullan’s argument, I will attempt to demonstrate that the literature of the age was highly indebted to a moral philosophy based on benevolent feelings.

Chapter 1 – Shaftesbury’s Sentimental Philosophy and the Rise of Sentimental Literature

1.1 The Crane Thesis—An Argument for the Importance of the Latitudinarian Variety of Sentimental Benevolism

In order to both understand the precise nature of the “sensibility” or feeling which was being valorized during the late eighteenth century, as well to account for the rise and growth in popularity of the literature of sensibility during this period, many scholars have argued over the possible intellectual heritage of the movement in an attempt to determine the ideological influences which gave credence to the “cult of sensibility” and helped spur the movement forward. One of the most celebrated examples of this attempt is R. S. Crane’s “Suggestions Toward a Genealogy of the ‘Man of Feeling’” (1934). This essay has had an overwhelming influence on twentieth-century discussions of the rise of sensibility and is still often mentioned in recent literary studies on the eighteenth-century “age of sensibility” in England. A good indication of just how influential Crane’s article has been throughout this century can be seen in the following remarks made by G. S. Rousseau in a 1978 *SEL* article:

In 1934 Crane published an essay that became a “classic”. . . . Crane’s essay has been required reading for four decades; when I was in graduate

school we called it “the Gospel according to Crane.” . . . No one dared to take qualifying exams without memorizing Crane’s key points. For years every essay about sentimental literature began by acknowledging Crane: not to do so was heresy. (591)

Crane’s article discusses the possible influence of what he considers to be the four principal distinguishing elements of the “moral doctrine” underlying the eighteenth-century “cult of the ‘man of feeling’” (206): “1. *Virtue as universal benevolence*,” “2. *Benevolence as feeling*,” “3. *Benevolent feelings as ‘natural’ to man*,” and “4. *The ‘Self-approving Joy’*.” More succinctly, Crane describes the eighteenth century “cult of the ‘man of feeling’” as a “moral doctrine” which stresses not only the “identification of virtue with acts of benevolence” (206), but also the identification of virtue with the “feelings of universal good-will which inspire and accompany these acts [of benevolence]” (206). The third element identified by Crane is that these feelings or “‘good Affections’” are to be seen as natural to mankind (206). Finally, this moral doctrine also emphasizes “the ‘pleasing Anguish, that . . . terminates in a Self-approving Joy’”(Crane 206). Crane labels this doctrine “sentimental benevolism” (207) since, as his first three elements indicate, there is a strong focus on benevolence as feeling and benevolent feelings, both as natural to mankind and as appropriate moral guides leading towards the attainment of virtue. Furthermore, Crane’s final feature of this sentimental benevolism ensures pleasure or happiness since, by acting in accordance with these benevolent feelings, one experiences the “self-approving joy.”

Crane's thesis, which is concerned with the genealogy of this sentimental benevolism, argues that it was most directly influenced by the sermons of Latitudinarian preachers such as Isaac Barrow and John Tillotson. Crane's thesis explicitly challenges the earlier work done by Cecil Moore (1916) and William Alderman (1931) who had argued that Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third earl of Shaftesbury, should be seen as the dominant influence in the mid to late eighteenth-century rise of sentiment. Although Crane agrees with Moore and Alderman that many, perhaps all, "of the distinctive elements of the sentimental benevolism of the mid-eighteenth century already existed at the beginning of the century in the writings of . . . Shaftesbury" (207), for Crane, a more prominent influence can be traced back to the beginnings of the Latitudinarian movement. As Crane puts it, the sentimental movement of this period owes a great deal to

the combined influence of numerous Anglican divines of the Latitudinarian tradition who from the Restoration onward into the eighteenth century had preached to their congregations and, through their books, to the larger public essentially the same ethics of benevolence, "good nature," and "tender sentimental feeling" [as did the writers of the age of sensibility]. (207-208)

An often cited problem in critical discussions surrounding the doctrine of the man of feeling is the fact that the doctrine's fourth element, the self-approving Joy, has the

effect of promoting a form of hedonism or egoistic pleasure associated with acts of benevolence and benevolent feelings. According to Crane, by 1681 it became common for Latitudinarian divines to depict during their sermons “the exquisite pleasure which the good man feels in contemplating his own benevolent deeds” (228). Crane also cites one divine, Charles Brent, who, in 1704 preached to his congregation of the “Divine and Heavenly Pleasure in doing Good” (229). This specifically religious interpretation of the “Self-approving joy” which stresses the divine and heavenly rewards associated with acts of benevolence offers what Crane considers to be “a clear foreshadowing of that curious type of hedonism—the often frankly avowed pursuit of altruistic emotions for egoistic ends” which, Crane argues “was to characterize most of the representative ‘men of feeling’ of the next two generations” (229).

Although Crane’s thesis has not gone unchallenged in the last 65 years, its perpetual presence in the footnotes and indexes of most discussions of the age of sensibility has definitely served to downplay the influence of Lord Shaftesbury on the period, an influence once considered important by Moore and Alderman. Moreover, in recent years, G. S. Rousseau’s work on this period has proven to be highly influential, and has consequently further diminished scholarly interest in discussions concerning the significance of Shaftesbury. Like Crane, Rousseau considers the roots of eighteenth-century sensibility to lie in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. However, unlike Crane who considers sensibility to have developed within a context which is specifically religious, Rousseau argues that the contextual roots of sensibility are more closely allied with late seventeenth century scientific advancements in the field of physiology. As

Rousseau writes in a 1976 article:

Sensibility was not a mid eighteenth-century phenomenon, certainly not in philosophy or the natural sciences. It was a late seventeenth-century development, owing its superlative paradigmatic debt to . . . books like Thomas Willis's *Pathology of the Brain*, and also to one unprecedented, integrative work, Locke's *Essay* (1694). (142)

Rousseau explains that Willis's revolutionizing theory was that the soul was entirely located within the brain and through this organ controlled all of the other organs by means of the nerves. Thus, according to Rousseau, "no novel of sensibility could appear until a revolution in knowledge concerning the brain, and consequently its slaves, the nerves, had occurred" (153). It is clear then that Rousseau's thesis, like that of Crane's, negates the importance of Shaftesbury's moral doctrine of benevolent sensibility in favor of a less proximate (late seventeenth century) influence—for Rousseau the scientific work of Willis, and for Crane, the sermons of the Latitudinarian divines. However, unlike Crane, Rousseau presents a type of sensibility entirely grounded in the physiological functioning of the body, a type of sensibility clearly different from the religious type described by Crane. This raises an important point within the context of recent investigations of the literature of sensibility, which has been noted by Susan Bourgeois (1986). According to Bourgeois it would be false to assume that there existed a monolithic understanding of sensibility during this period (for example, one confined to a

moral, a religious, or a physiological context). Bourgeois argues that certain writers—she specifically focuses on Tobias Smollett—had a growing and changing understanding of sensibility and, therefore, employed it in both a physiological and a moral sense. As Bourgeois puts it, “just as Smollett created a vast world of satire in his five novels, he also created a vast world of sensibility” (165). Thus, not only is it probably false to assume, as Rousseau does, that all types of sensibility in the eighteenth century stem from a physiological source, but it is also improper to assume that literary proponents of eighteenth-century sensibility were unaware of the distinction between the various types of sensibility—i.e.: moral, religious or physiological. As a result of the influence of scholars such as Crane and Rousseau, who have placed the focus on the religious and physiological types of sensibility respectively, not only has Shaftesbury’s contribution to the age of sensibility in Britain been denied, but, furthermore, other varieties of sensibility such as, as we shall soon discover, moral sensibility, have consequently been marginalized. In the remainder of this opening chapter I will, therefore, attempt to demonstrate that the moral philosophy of Lord Shaftesbury not only constitutes a major contribution to the movement which saw a valorization of moral sensibility in Britain, but in Enlightenment Europe as well.

* * *

1.2 Shaftesbury's Disinterested Variety of Sentimental Benevolism

Prior to Crane's article, the two major literary critics to have argued that Shaftesbury had a profound influence on the eighteenth-century literature of sensibility were Cecil Moore (1916) and William Alderman (1931). A more recent defense of Moore's and Alderman's position on the influence of Shaftesbury in late eighteenth-century Britain has been provided by Chester Chapin, who, in his 1983 article, "Shaftesbury and the Classical view of Human Nature," writes that "Crane admits that the influence of Shaftesbury (which he does not discuss) was very real and very important" (34). Similarly, in another article of the same year, "Shaftesbury and the Man of Feeling," Chapin states that although Crane acknowledges Moore's article, he argues "that the influence of Shaftesbury began too late to have been an important factor in 'the popular triumph of "sentimentalism" toward 1750'" (47). Chapin points out, however, that Crane nevertheless "admits that the influence of Shaftesbury in this 'popular triumph' was very real and very important" (47).

Prior to the work done by Moore, the prevailing assumption had been that the obvious shift which had occurred in eighteenth-century literature around mid-century—a shift, according to Moore, characterized by a "growth in altruism" as a literary theme—was due mainly to the influence of "French philosophy" (Moore 264). In his 1916 article, "Shaftesbury and the Ethical Poets in England, 1700-1760," however, Moore argued that this mid-eighteenth-century shift in English literature should be properly traced "to the *Characteristics* (1711) of Lord Shaftesbury, whose importance as a literary influence in

England has never been duly recognized” (264). Although Moore limited his scope to the English poets writing between 1700 and 1760, such as James Thomson (*Seasons* (1726)); William Melmoth (1735); Mark Akenside (*The Pleasures of the Imagination* (1744)); John Gilbert Cooper (*The Power of Harmony* (1744)); Edward Young (*Night Thoughts* (1745)); William Shenstone (*Verses Written towards the close of 1748*); and James Harris (*Concord* (1751)), he, nevertheless, states in more general terms that the adoption of Shaftesbury’s ideas “by popular writers in England was . . . widespread, and that . . . the *Characteristics* had a large part in determining the content of English literature” (265).

According to Moore, the specific aspect of Shaftesbury’s moral philosophy which most notably influenced these poets of the period was its focus on benevolence. As Moore states, “Various writers reproduced most of Shaftesbury’s tenets, but collectively they were indebted to him chiefly for a new standard of morals. Their response . . . was due primarily to his virtuoso theory of benevolence” (265). Thus, although Moore’s article was the impetus for Crane’s opposing thoughts on the subject 18 years later, both Crane and Moore agree that the influential doctrine is a type of sentimental benevolism—albeit, for Crane one inspired by the sermons of the Latitudinarians, whereas for Moore, by the writings of Lord Shaftesbury.

Moore explains that Shaftesbury’s theory of benevolence (benevolism), was formed in direct opposition to the “egoistic philosophy of Hobbes” as well as the “strict orthodoxy of the Church” (266).¹ As William Alderman explains, Shaftesbury objected

¹ According to Moore, Shaftesbury’s philosophy of benevolism understood God as the “Spirit of Benevolence” (268).

to these two schools of thought since he saw no indication of “virtue” in doctrines which taught “to refrain from viciousness for fear of punishment, or to practice charity from a hope of reward” (137). Quoting Shaftesbury, Alderman explains that the problem with this “‘rod and sweetmeat’ method” for Shaftesbury was that it “‘presupposed some disadvantage or benefit to accrue’” and this conflicted with his belief that there can be “‘no virtue or goodness in acting from hope or fear’” (137). Moreover, since Shaftesbury considered that to be human was to be a “naturally virtuous being . . . endowed with a ‘moral sense’ which distinguishes good from evil as spontaneously as the ear distinguishes between harmony and discord” (Moore 269), the idea of reward and punishment was seen as, not only contradictory, but also superfluous in regard to the attainment of virtue. Thus, unlike the Hobbesian belief in the self-interested motivation of humankind, and contrary to the orthodox Christian practice of playing into such a belief by promising reward or punishment in Heaven, Shaftesbury believed that through the use and cultivation of the ‘moral sense,’ an individual becomes encouraged to seek out and acquire Virtue, not for a selfish end, but rather, “for its own intrinsic beauty . . . regardless of all considerations of future reward and punishment” (Moore 269). As Shaftesbury states in his *Characteristics*, “If the love of doing good be not, of itself, a good and right inclination, I know not how there can possibly be such a thing as goodness or virtue” (1: 66).

This aspect of Shaftesbury’s sentimental moral philosophy which stresses humanity’s natural affection (as opposed to one coerced by reward) toward “goodness” and “doing good,” has been termed moral disinterestedness. Taken in this moral sense

(as opposed to its aesthetic sense which will be discussed later) disinterestedness implies that the motivation of good acts such as acts of benevolence is not to be seen as fear or hope of punishment or reward, or any similar type of selfish motivation, but rather, as a natural affection toward the good. Jerome Stolnitz (1961), in his article on Shaftesbury and disinterestedness explains that, quoting Shaftesbury,

a man cannot be virtuous if he "[aims] at it through love of the reward.

But," Shaftesbury goes on to say, "as soon as he is come to have any affection towards what is morally good, and can like or affect such good for its own sake, as good and amiable in itself, then he is in some degree good and virtuous . . ." [*Characteristics* 1: 274]. (Stolnitz 132)

More recently, Emily Brady, in "Don't Eat the Daisies: Disinterestedness and the Situated Aesthetic"(1998), has pointed out that Shaftesbury opposed this disinterested moral action based on affection, to action based on desire and utility. According to Brady, for Shaftesbury, moral disinterestedness indicates that "moral action is motivated by affection for something for its own sake, and it is therefore contrasted with desiring an object as a means to an end for one's own pleasure, or for any other use" (103). Not only, therefore, is Shaftesbury's moral doctrine of disinterestedness opposed to Hobbes's doctrine of self-interest on the question of motivation for benevolent action, but, by extension, both philosophies also conflict concerning the reality of benevolent feelings and affections, such as compassion. As Moore puts it, Shaftesbury's moral philosophy

stands “in opposition to Hobbes’s view that . . . compassion is a sign of weakness,” since it follows that, for Shaftesbury, “compassion or benevolence, is not only instinctive in man, but is the highest virtue to which he attains” (270).²

Another important characteristic of Shaftesbury’s sentimental philosophy is its strong aesthetic dimension,³ necessitated by the fact that he equates the Good with the Beautiful.⁴ Shaftesbury states in his *Characteristics* that “beauty . . . and good . . . are . . . one and the same” (2: 128) and that “there is no real good beside the enjoyment of beauty. . . . [and] no real enjoyment of beauty beside what is good” (2: 141). According to Moore, Shaftesbury’s “identification of the Good and the Beautiful” furthered his belief that “virtue meant merely a perfect development of aesthetic sensibility” (270). It is crucial to understand, then, that Shaftesbury’s sentimental philosophy must be seen as both moral and aesthetic since it stresses both beauty, whose virtue is naturally appreciated by the ‘moral sense,’ and the beauty of virtue, appreciated by a developed, or cultivated, aesthetic sensibility. Furthermore, this sentimental philosophy is said to be totally non-selfish, or disinterested in the moral sense, since virtue is sought for its own intrinsic beauty and worth, regardless of “divine” or “heavenly” pleasures and rewards.

² Elsewhere Moore states that Shaftesbury continually depicted “the compassionate man as the perfection of human nature, and the selfish man as an unnatural monster” (271).

³ Chester Chapin (“Human Nature”) notes that “Shaftesbury, as Ernst Cassirer said long ago, ‘is the first great aesthete that England produced’ (33); and Stolnitz states that “Shaftesbury’s ethical theory . . . turns out to be very nearly indistinguishable from an aesthetic theory” (133).

⁴ See Bernstein, “Shaftesbury’s Identification of the Good with the Beautiful.” (1977).

When considered in light of Moore's distinct separation between Shaftesbury's moral disinterestedness and the egoistic ethics of Hobbes, Crane's understanding of the fourth criterion of the Latitudinarian variety of *benevolism*—the *self-approving joy* which focuses on “heavenly pleasures” and results in a “strange form of hedonism”—is not congruent with the moral philosophy of Shaftesbury. Thus, although both Crane and Moore posit the importance of benevolent feelings in understanding the age of sensibility, they each have a different understanding of the role played by the *self-approving joy* associated with the doctrine of sentimental benevolism. According to Crane, the Latitudinarian variety of benevolism allows for selfish motivation whereas, as Moore, Stolnitz and Brady point out, the Shaftesburian variety, with its focus on moral disinterestedness, does not. Thus Shaftesbury's sentimental philosophy, with its insistence on moral disinterestedness, can be seen in opposition to the ideas conveyed in the sermons of the Latitudinarian divines, as well as in the ethical doctrine of Hobbes.

Since Shaftesbury's sentimental philosophy is both moral and aesthetic, it is important to understand that the concept of disinterestedness is not to be confined to morality, but must also be seen in its analogous aesthetic meaning. As Stolnitz explains, Shaftesbury's use of the term “disinterestedness” only begins with his “polemic against egoism in ethics and instrumentalism in religion” but necessarily extends into the realm of aesthetics where the term takes on a “distinctly aesthetic meaning” (132). According to Stolnitz, unlike its moral meaning where disinterestedness refers to “actions and the motives to actions” (133), in its aesthetic meaning (for example, Shaftesbury's description of “the virtuous man as a spectator” of the beauty and art of nature (Stolnitz

133)), disinterestedness is something which is to be seen in opposition “to the desire to possess or use the object” (134). As Stolnitz puts it, for Shaftesbury,

disregard for possession or use is . . . an inference from . . . the broader proposition that the aesthetic spectator does not relate the object to any purpose that outrun the act of perception itself. . . . [To quote an example of Shaftesbury’s taken from nature] The enjoyment which would arise from “possessing” the ocean is “very different from that which should naturally follow from the contemplation of the ocean’s beauty” [*Characteristics* 2:126]. (Stolnitz 134)

Stolnitz goes on to explain how this conception of a “disinterested” relationship between the aesthetic object and the spectator was to become extremely influential in Enlightenment aesthetic theory since it transferred the “emphasis away from the objective features of the situation to the attitude of the percipient” (136). Stolnitz declares that “we cannot understand modern aesthetic theory unless we understand the concept of “disinterestedness” (131). Confirmation for Stolnitz’s assertion can be seen in Brady’s more recent article (1998), in which, prior to her discussion of Shaftesbury, she describes the concept of aesthetic disinterestedness, or “disinterested aesthetic appreciation” (103), as “a way of appreciating an object apart from any ‘interest’” (100).

As R. L. Brett (1951) has noted, Shaftesbury’s notion of aesthetic appreciation, or aesthetic sensibility, is most aptly delineated in his discussion of the role of taste versus

the role of reason in the field of art criticism. According to Brett, although Shaftesbury's conception of the "moral sense . . . partake[s] of both the reason and the feelings" (131), the field of art criticism "for Shaftesbury was not a matter of philosophical speculation" but rather "demanded sensibility" (130). Thus, Shaftesbury "upheld taste [and] recognized that aesthetic pleasure is a feeling" (Brett 131). According to Brett, Shaftesbury therefore felt that the critic should be more like a "*virtuoso* rather than a systematic thinker" (Brett 130). Quoting Shaftesbury, Brett explains that the "*virtuoso* are the 'real fine gentleman, the lovers of art and ingenuity . . .'" (130). In his *Characteristics*, Shaftesbury states that this "fine gentlemen [or] man of sense" have a cultivated, refined, and, therefore, "just taste" which allows them "to learn whatever is decent in company or beautiful in arts" (2: 255). Thus, for Shaftesbury,

the taste of beauty and the relish of what is decent, just, and amiable perfects the character of the gentleman And the study of such a taste or relish will . . . be ever the great employment and concern of him who covets as well to be wise and good as agreeable and polite.
(*Characteristics* 2: 256).

Shaftesbury's philosophy, therefore, can be seen as attempting to consistently integrate an aesthetic morality with a moral aesthetics, the former being a moral doctrine which stresses the role of moral sensibility in the discernment of the good as beautiful—the latter being an aesthetic theory which stresses the importance of the

cultivation of taste, or aesthetic sensibility, in the discernment of the beautiful as good. Furthermore, aesthetic morality, unlike utilitarian morality, employs a moral disinterestedness whereby the good is admired only for its own intrinsic beauty and not its utility. Similarly, according to the moral aesthetic approach, unlike an amoral aesthetics, aesthetic disinterestedness implies that the beautiful is admired for its own intrinsic goodness and is not merely appreciated for the pleasure which it provides.

* * *

1.3 Shaftesbury's Legacy in the European Enlightenment

One way of gauging the impact of Shaftesbury's writings is to consider the intellectual rebuttals which they inspired. Just as Shaftesbury's *Characteristics* was meant to counter the egoism of Hobbes, so too Bernard Mandeville, in his second edition of the *Fable of the Bees*, revised the self-centered moral philosophy of Hobbes in an attempt to refute the benevolent moral philosophy of Shaftesbury. Although it is true that Mandeville's work can also be seen as a direct attempt to reprove the doctrines of the Latitudinarian divines, Phillip Harth (1970) notes that Mandeville's chief intellectual opponent, especially after 1714, is undoubtedly Lord Shaftesbury. In his investigation of Mandeville, Harth, while acknowledging Crane's thesis, has noted how the Dutch

physician's view of humanity as eternally subject to selfish appetites and passions which cannot be controlled by reason, stands in stark contrast to the view of natural benevolent emotions preached by the Latitudinarian divines. As Harth points out, however, following his reading of Shaftesbury sometime after the first publication of *The Fable of the Bees* in 1714, it becomes clear that Mandeville is specifically writing against the benevolism of Shaftesbury. As Harth states,

Mandeville did not respond to benevolism at first. His attention in 1714 was wholly taken up by his crusade against rigorism for exalting reason and emphasizing the conquest of the passions. A few years later, however, he read Shaftesbury's *Characteristics*, and when he added new essays and remarks to the *Fable* in 1723 it was clear that he had found a new target.

(32)

On the topic of benevolism, therefore, Mandeville was not solely concerned with countering the Latitudinarian version of benevolism, but was equally interested in debunking the disinterested benevolism of Lord Shaftesbury.

By mid-century, the writings of Shaftesbury continued to be highly influential in promoting a specifically disinterested type of moral sensibility. In France, for example, as Linda Walsh (1994) has recently pointed out, the French writer, art critique, and defender of moral sensibility, Diderot, relied heavily on the aesthetic theory of Shaftesbury, whose *Essay on Merit and Virtue* he translated in 1745. Similarly, in

Germany, the influence of Shaftesbury had a profound influence on many major aesthetic theorists, such as Johann Georg Sulzer. As will be shown, Diderot and Sulzer defended a moral and aesthetic theory based on feeling which was both similar to and influenced by Shaftesbury's sentimental moral and aesthetic theory. Furthermore, all three of these theorists differentiated between types of feeling and stressed the primacy of moral, non-selfish, *benevolent sensibility* over those feelings which were more strictly associated with physiological processes.

As in England, France in the second half of the century also experienced a valorization of feeling—what Linda Walsh terms France's "Eighteenth-century cult of moral sensibility" (171). As Walsh points out, in French society during this period it "became fashionable for both men and women to exhibit the keenness of their emotions and the readiness of their tears in public" (165-66). According to Walsh, however, the mere display of feeling by means of a physiological process was, on its own, in no way a true indicator of moral or benevolent sensibility. As Walsh explains, critics like Diderot upheld a sharp distinction between those feelings which were closely aligned with physiological functions, and those of a higher nature—more refined and innately moral. Walsh points out that Diderot uses the French word *sensation* to indicate the former kind of feeling, and *sentiment* to indicate the later. As Walsh states,

The competing demands of licentiousness and moral feeling are those of *sensation* on the one hand and *sentiment* on the other. In accordance with contemporary usage the term *sensation* is often used by Diderot in

reference to cruder modes of feeling, more closely related to the impulses of the senses, including lust, an agent of physical gratification. Like the term *passion*, *sensation* evoked notions of an immediate and powerful physiological experience, an experience of pain or pleasure automatically triggered by the stimulation of the senses. (166-67)

Walsh further explains that unlike these *sensations*, which were considered to be grounded in physiological stimulation, the term “*sentiment*, on the other hand, was often used in reference to the more refined and noble kind of feeling,” which, for Diderot, operated in accordance with the functioning of reason (167). As Walsh puts it, moral feeling for Diderot,

would not often find itself in conflict with the workings of reason. Its linguistic contexts often underline its close semantic relationship with notions of moral beauty, honour, probity, justice, equity, noble love, heroism, friendship, modesty, respect, tenderness, virtue, generosity, filial and paternal love, sincerity and gentleness. . . . This is the kind of feeling which Diderot encountered in his early reading of Shaftesbury. (167)

According to Walsh, as a result of the influence of Shaftesbury, Diderot held “contempt for emotion which does not rise above the level of physiological riot” and he developed “ideas which differentiate carefully between the basic physical impulses inherent in

feeling and more refined kinds of feeling which admit the controlling influence of reason or thought" (178). Thus, in his art criticism, Diderot downplayed the importance of what he considered to be lower forms of aesthetic expression such as Rococo art—a lower form of expression since it concentrated on physiological responses such as sexual desire. As Walsh puts it, Diderot developed a "hierarchy of feeling in which mere physical sensation (such as lust) achieves a low rating" (178). Walsh further points out that this hierarchy of feeling is also in accordance with the moral aesthetics Diderot had encountered in Shaftesbury: "Gratification of the senses did not rate very highly in Shaftesbury's view of happiness: temperance and moral sentiment were advocated as a more reliable means to that end" (Walsh 167).

In a more recent article "The Expressive Face: Manifestations of Sensibility in Eighteenth-century French Art" (1996), Walsh furthers her investigation of sensibility in eighteenth-century France by looking at how the French artists of the age of sensibility were able to confront the problem of distinguishing between higher and lower types of feeling in their visual representation of feeling in general. According to Walsh, during this period,

The view that painting could and should inspire us all to lead a better life and to experience a higher sensibility was prevalent in the eighteenth century. But how was virtuous emotion to be expressed in the faces of figures? This was, I believe, a significant dilemma for eighteenth-century artists. Faced with a different social code, that of moral sensibility, they

had no easy or obvious precedent to follow. . . . Few explicit facial schemata could serve as appropriate models (535-36)

Walsh argues that sentiments such as benevolence were differentiated from sensations or passions and this made them even more difficult to convey through the visual subjects' facial expressions. As Walsh puts it, "moral sensibility involved the experience of *sentiments*," feelings which, unlike "either *sensations* or *passions* . . . lent themselves less easily to physiological expression, even within the conventionally expressive site of the face (536). As a result, artists interested in representing more virtuous forms of *sentiment* would often depict their subjects in a contemplative or absorptive state, a technique which, according to Walsh, was "entirely suited to the representation of *sentiment*, or the thinking person's kind of feeling, with all that it implied about the moral stature of the figure concerned" (536-37).

The important role which Shaftesbury played in shaping eighteenth-century European Enlightenment aesthetics is also evident through his prominent influence in Germany during the eighteenth-century, most notably on the aesthetic and moral philosophies of Mendelssohn, Winckelmann, Wieland, as well as those of Sulzer, who will be looked at here in more detail. In his 1988 article, "Feeling in Enlightenment Aesthetics," Jeffrey Barnouw notes that Sulzer's philosophy, with its stress on subjective feelings, has its roots in the writings of the Abbé Dubos⁵ who, in his *Critical Reflections*

⁵ Surprisingly, although Barnouw discusses Shaftesbury in this article, he downplays the fact that the roots of this moral-aesthetic theory may also be said to lie in the writings of

on *Poetry, Painting and Music* (1719), argued “that only feeling can judge of the extent to which we are touched and moved by a work” (Barnouw 329). Barnouw also notes how the aesthetic theories of Shaftesbury, Dubos, Diderot, and Sulzer are all linked by their stress on feeling in their aesthetic and moral theories. According to Barnouw, Sulzer, one of the first theorists of the “fine arts,” falls into this tradition since he was concerned both with the “moral role of feeling,” and with the ability of works of art to “stimulate feelings” (337). Furthermore, Sulzer was also concerned with examining the role played by the fine arts in “forming or educating sensibility” (Barnouw 337). As Johan van der Zande (1995) has pointed out, this distinguishing characteristic of Sulzer’s aesthetic philosophy (his moral aesthetics), and one which again he shares with Shaftesbury, results from the belief that the fine arts serve a civilizing function through their ability to (in Barnouw’s words) “form” or “educate sensibility.” As Zande puts it, Sulzer understood the “proper function of art as a cultural force” (206). Furthermore, Amy Simowitz (1983) has noted that this particular feature of Sulzer’s aesthetic philosophy stood in stark contrast with the contemporary philosophy of Jean Jacques Rousseau, since Sulzer’s understanding of the “civilizing function” of “the arts” openly opposed “Rousseau’s wish for a return to basic nature” (61).

As mentioned previously Sulzer is most often celebrated for being one of the first of the early aesthetic theorists to attempt an inclusive theory of what he called “*der schönen Künste*” or “the fine arts” (175). Sulzer adopted Shaftesbury’s concept of the

Shaftesbury.

moral sense, and, according to Zande, “absorbed” his aesthetic theory, especially his “close relationship between the good and the beautiful” (179). Furthermore, Sulzer’s general theory of the “fine arts” was based on the fact that each one of these arts had the unique capacity for inspiring feelings or sentiments.⁶ Sulzer’s theory of the “fine arts,” therefore, is similar to the sentimental morality of Shaftesbury in as much as it stresses the role of feeling in morality while simultaneously advocating the positive role of art in refining those moral feelings. Thus, although he was first of all concerned with inspiring agreeable feelings—“The first goal of the polite [fine] arts was to present and generate sensations [feelings] insofar as they have an agreeable effect”(Zande 198)—Sulzer was adamant that the final goal of the “fine arts” be understood as moral: The “highest goal [of the fine arts] was to dispose man to moral conduct” (Zande 198). Sulzer, therefore, with his Shaftesburian equation of the beautiful and the good, understood “Aesthetic pleasure” as “the feeling for beauty” and “moral sense” as “the affection for the good” (Zande 198). With this understanding, Sulzer could argue, in opposition to the rational philosophy of Kant, that aesthetic pleasure and morality were not to be seen as in opposition but, rather, as complementary. As Zande states, Sulzer took a stance which argued “against those who,” like Kant, “thought that . . . moral duty and [aesthetic] pleasure, were opposites” and instead, “argued for their essential union” (202). In light of this ideological conflict between the sentimental moral philosophy of Sulzer and the rational moral philosophy of Kant, it is not surprising to learn that Kant was also opposed

⁶ Sulzer’s writings on the fine arts appear in the French *Encyclopédie* where he uses the term *sentiment*.

to the increasingly popular sentimental novel of the period. As David Hensley points out in a recent article (1995), Kant, in his *Critique of Judgement*, argues against the “sentimental novel” using the specific example of Richardson’s *Clarissa* which Kant dismissed “as both theory and art” (127) and, therefore, something which “cannot be an object of aesthetic judgement” (130).

Chapter 2 – Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling* as Sentimental Novel

2.1 *Criticism of The Man of Feeling: Pathetic Hero or Pathetic Fool?*

It has long been acknowledged by critics of literary history that Henry Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling* (1771) can be seen as the epitomization of the period's novel of sensibility. As one recent critic (1995) has stated, "Mackenzie's novel, immediately popular, has become the literary historian's representative sentimental text" (Skinner 2). Likewise, the novel's hero, Harley, has also been said to represent the standard traits and characteristics of the novel of sensibility's protagonist: the man of sensibility. As was discussed in chapter one, however, confusion prevails in twentieth-century scholarly discussions of late-eighteenth century sensibility. Not only has this confusion spread into recent discussions of the period's literature of sensibility, but, as Timothy Dykstal (1994) points out, there is also confusion surrounding the very relationship between sentimental moral philosophy and literature. As a result, therefore, there is not only a lack of consensus concerning what type of moral philosophy, if any, is to be seen as operating within the various novels of sensibility, but there is also a lack of consensus concerning the nature of the relationship between the moral philosophy of sentimental benevolism and the literature of sensibility.

In light of this confusion it is not surprising to discover that there is also much confusion within the scholarship centering on Mackenzie's representative text. Scholars

interested in Mackenzie's *Man of Feeling* tend to disagree over the most basic of interpretive assumptions: is Harley, the man of sensibility, to be interpreted as an heroic and exemplary character or foolish and naive parody? This disagreement has resulted in a further controversy which centres on whether or not Mackenzie considered the role of literature to be moral or amoral, and if he did endorse a moral approach to literature, was it compatible with or opposed to the moral doctrine of sentimental benevolism?

Furthermore, if Mackenzie's novel does actually endorse a doctrine of sentimental benevolism, was it the Latitudinarian variety, or the disinterested Shaftesburian variety? The result of this lack of consensus among scholars concerning such questions has been put most aptly by William J. Burling, who in his 1988 article on *The Man of Feeling* points out that "outright contradiction now pervades critical discussion of the novel, with interpretation splitting on two central questions: Is Harley, the hero, an ideal man or a fool? And is the novel sympathetic to sentimentalism or opposed to it?" (136). Eleven years later, not only is there still no consensus among scholars concerning how Mackenzie might have regarded his own man of feeling, there is also still no agreement on the question of how Mackenzie viewed the relationship between literature and morality, or the moral role played by sentimental benevolism in his novel.

The traditional critical interpretation of Harley is that he is to be seen as a pathetic hero, and the novel itself a showcase for the moral and aesthetic triumph of literary sensibility which was intended to inspire feelings of sympathy and compassion in the reader. Since the mid-1960's, this once standard interpretation has been superseded by scholarly attempts to investigate both the alleged difficulties or contradictions suggested

by the novel's protagonist, as well as what those problems might reveal about Mackenzie's understanding of the function of literature in relation to a morality involving benevolent sensibility. Such critical attempts often end up imposing ironic readings on the novel which, as Jenkins (1971) argues, is not a productive approach to Mackenzie's novel. According to Jenkins, many modern readers have been unable to deal with the novel's lack of irony which they have become used to (5), and this explains not only the critical tendency to treat the novel as an inferior piece of work, but also the current tendency to offer an ironic interpretation of Mackenzie's use of literary sensibility at the expense of allowing for an understanding of the manner in which the novel was intended to serve a moral purpose specifically through its use of a disinterested type of literary sentimental benevolism. As Jenkins states,

the book should not be considered primarily as a feeble novel, but as a theoretical description of the man of feeling, enlivened by narrative but designed primarily to educate the public in the virtues of sentiment and to hold up Harley as a model for emulation. . . . His original audience was easily won over, but modern readers, with a preference for irony, have not been persuaded. (5)

This modern dismissal, or, at least, misconstrual of the moral focus of the novel—exhibited by a misunderstanding of its intended moral effect on the reader—has resulted in the fact that the novel is now studied mostly for its “historical importance”

(Jenkins 3). Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, when scholars do focus on the sensibility operating within the novel they often interpret Mackenzie's intention as being ironic; or, if they believe Mackenzie is being sincere, they usually end up attempting to expose various flaws in Mackenzie's sentimental philosophy by revealing its negative implications in relation to the actual world. Suffice it to say, therefore, that Mackenzie's novel is no longer persuasively interpreted as a *tour de force* presentation of how the role of literature in the late eighteenth-century was intricately connected to its ability to cultivate a moral sensibility (benevolent feelings) within the reader.

By the mid-seventies, the more popular of the two critical approaches described above by Burling was, clearly, to view both the novel and its hero, Harley, as Mackenzie's condemnation or, at least, his questioning of both the "man of feeling" and the moral doctrine underlying the literature of sensibility. Burling himself in that same article reasserts an ironic reading of the text, and explicitly criticizes Jenkins for interpreting both Harley and his doctrine of sentimental benevolism at face value. As Burling puts it, "whereas Jenkins believes that Harley is a model for the reader to admire, I contend that the reader is being asked to differentiate the 'usable' components of Harley's sensibility from the faulty ones . . ." (143). Burling is not the only scholar to oppose Jenkins's positive, exemplary, and non-ironic understanding of the function of Harley. Similarly, in 1975, Dereck Rymer argued that Harley's refined sensibility is not to be seen as a positive trait, but rather, as a flaw in his character which impedes his activities in the everyday world. According to Rymer's interpretation, "[Harley's] delicacy of feeling preys upon him like some baleful vulture, incapacitating him for the

most ordinary processes of life. . . . Such principles as he has are of little use to him because he lacks the hardness of resolution to carry them into action" (62).³ Rymer further argues that Mackenzie's explicit intention is to guard the reader against a humourless (non-ironic) reading of the text; he warns us against "taking Mackenzie's sentimentalism at its face value," since he interprets Harley to be "more of a fool than Henry Brooke's Harry Moreland [from *The Fool of Quality*] and there is much humour in the way Mackenzie signals this to us" (68). By interpreting Harley in such a way, critics like Rymer assume that Mackenzie is offering an all-out assault on the entire literature of sensibility, especially a type of literature based on disinterested benevolence, since, as Rymer concludes, Mackenzie is actually criticizing Harley's selfish motivation, as well as that of the reader who delights in getting fooled into tears:

There is very little altruism in his nature, for there is a melancholy pleasure in pity to which he returns again and again, deliberately seeking out situations which will evoke delicious tears and this is a criticism which can equally be applied to the weeping reader of the novel. (67)

Not all readings of Mackenzie's novel overtly conclude, in the fashion of Rymer,

³ This argument has more recently been made by Timothy Dykstal in his article "The sentimental Novel as Moral Philosophy: The Case of Henry Mackenzie" (1994). In this article Dykstal argues that Mackenzie's novel denies the inevitable moral issues of "action and choice" (72), and this "finally explains the inadequacy of the sentimental novel" (76).

that the novel represents Mackenzie's condemnation of the self-serving function of a type of literature grounded in sentimental benevolism. Many critics have concluded more subtly that, while Mackenzie probably saw some positive implications in creating a literary philosophy based on the doctrine of sentimental benevolism, he, nevertheless, was aware that it had an extremely negative potential. An indication of just how popular this type of critical approach is within Mackenzie scholarship can be seen in Gerrard A. Barker's 1975 Twayne edition on Henry Mackenzie. In his chapter on *The Man of Feeling* Barker argues that, although Mackenzie may have enjoyed writing sentimental literature for an audience which "had learned to prize sensibility as a sign of refinement" (49), he did not necessarily whole-heartedly endorse sensibility as a moral philosophy. According to Barker, Mackenzie was merely himself "temperamentally inclined toward pathetic literature" and he, therefore, consequently, "exposed his readers to an array of tender scenes that exercised and taxed their sensibility" (49). Nevertheless, Barker states that, while Mackenzie's presentation of Harley to "an audience that reads novels in order to cultivate and give testimony of their own emotional susceptibility" (52) is most definitely his attempt at presenting "an idealized characterization" worthy of emulation (39), Mackenzie in no way saw that ideal as being attainable. According to Barker, by consistently "adhering to his own principles, [and] refusing to compromise with an egotistical world," Harley, without question "represents for Mackenzie a highly attractive way of life" (39)– way of life which, as Barker argues, Mackenzie considered to be tragically and forever in conflict with a selfish and corrupt world. As Barker puts it,

Harley represents for him the ideal self, unfettered by worldly or selfish considerations and free to follow and perfect his own nature. But while Mackenzie could admire and even envy such a figure, he was at the same time enough of a pragmatist to recognize its unfitness for life. . . . He could revere his hero's sensibility, pity his excessive humanity in an unfeeling world, but also sense a comic element in his quixotic nature.

(39)

Thus the subtlety of Barker's argument is that he is not attempting to "deny Harley's intense sensibility" but, rather, that he is attempting, as he puts it, "to see it in its proper perspective" (28). A perspective which, for Barker, indicates the ways in which the literature of sensibility serves to indulge both the author for his ability to elicit emotions within the reader, and the reader for his ability to experience the appropriate emotion. As Barker puts it, "viewed from such a perspective, the novelist and his reader form a relationship . . . in which the reader's emotional response flatters both the author's artistic skill and the reader's own sensibility" (50). According to Barker, therefore, although Mackenzie may have believed that "sensibility can become a beneficial and moral quality," he nevertheless understood that "it can also be perverted for egotistical ends" (28). What Barker is describing, then, is an amoral type of sensibility, which, in his words, is based on the "reader's emotional response" and the novelist's ability to elicit such a response. In describing what he considers to be "The Dangers of Sensibility," Barker states that

The risk always exists . . . that a reader will confuse the idealized world of such novels with reality and that pride in his own emotional responsiveness will make him as vulnerable to manipulation by the designing individual as by the novelist. In this case, sensibility, the basis for human sympathy and goodness, becomes a liability rather than an asset. . . . (52)

If we recall from chapter one the concept of a “hierarchy of feeling” endorsed by late eighteenth-century European Enlightenment thinkers which placed moral sensibility at the highest extreme and passion or desire at the lowest, Barker’s term “emotional responsiveness” is, clearly, too general. This generalization on the part of Barker is indicative of the general failure of scholars to take into account the late eighteenth-century distinction between moral feelings and those emotions based on passion and desire. As a result, there has been a general misunderstanding as to where sensibility (Crane’s second feature of the doctrine of sentimental benevolism: “benevolence as feeling”), as understood by authors like Mackenzie, fits into this hierarchy of feeling. This misunderstanding is made evident by the fact that certain scholars actually consider Mackenzie to be critical of sensibility, when, in effect, he may be only making the same moral demands of literature that Diderot was making of painting, and, thereby being critical of a type of literature which merely focuses on the lower emotions at the expense of the higher, moral feelings.

Barker's influence has been significant in the scholarship on Mackenzie in general, as well as *The Man of Feeling* in particular. A similar view of Mackenzie's understanding of the role of sensibility in his fiction, as described by Barker, can be seen in many of the critical examinations of *The Man of Feeling*. For example, Peter Burnham, in "The Social Ethos of Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling* (1983), argues that "Mackenzie does not wholeheartedly identify with or agree with his man of feeling" (123-24) since the novel actually stresses the inevitable conflict between idealistic benevolence and pragmatic prudence. According to Burnham, in Harley's world, "cold logic interferes with one's true duty to humanity. Prudence . . . likewise interferes with true benevolence" (Burnham 125). Burnham also argues that it is important to understand that while Mackenzie does not identify with his "man of feeling," he also does not identify with *The Man of the World*, the protagonist of his second novel. According to Burnham, "in contrast to the man of feeling . . . the characteristic pose of the man of the world is selfish calculation: even in charity we see that it is by such devices . . . that worldly men rationalize their selfishness" (Burnham 125). Thus, like Burling, Burnham sees Mackenzie as advocating a kind of golden mean between the sensitive Man of Feeling and the calculating Man of the World. These critics, therefore, share with Rymer the belief that Harley's sensibility is, at least in part, a negative characteristic. Similarly, in *Virtue in Distress* (1974), R. F. Brissenden describes Harley in terms which reiterate this idea: that the sentimental benevolence of Harley is, actually, incapacitating since it somehow inhibits his ability to function in society:

The Man of Feeling . . . is essentially a mannered, artificial piece of work.

And its artificialities, like the pathetic figure of Harley himself, constitute a retreat from reality. They are an admission of despair on the part of the author, a way of escaping from what he clearly felt to be the apparently insoluble moral problems posed by the nature of the society in which he had to live. (255)

Thus Brissenden's criticism of Harley is that he is "an epicene, impotent, passive, almost completely ineffectual character—a set of tender susceptibilities and conventional moral attitudes rather than a living individual" (251). What is more, for Brissenden, Mackenzie is intentionally parodying, through the character of Harley, the hero of sensibility, as well as the novel of sensibility itself. According to Brissenden, Mackenzie's message is that,

to be a man of feeling is to invite disaster; and in the sphere of ordinary human activity it is a distinct disadvantage to possess the sentimental virtues. . . . The only consolation is to know that one is capable of being moved to tears by the pity of it all, for this means that although one may be powerless to alter an evil situation one at least knows that it is evil: one has a 'feeling heart' and 'a mind of sensibility'. (258)

Brissenden thus offers a mixed assessment of the sentimental virtues, such as benevolence, arguing that in one sense they provide an obvious disadvantage, while

simultaneously providing a “consolation” in the form of an increase in self-approval.

Brissenden’s description of a refined sensibility in terms of such a “consolation” recalls the “curious form of hedonism” associated with the doctrine of sentimental benevolism as understood by Crane. Brissenden’s understanding of Mackenzie’s intention is, therefore, obviously not congruent with a Shaftesburian type of disinterested sentimental benevolism, but an attempt to assure the reader of the self-interested rewards provided by a “feeling heart” or a “mind of sensibility.”

In his book on Henry Fielding, *The Good-Natured Man* (1982), John Sheriff’s chapter which deals with Henry Mackenzie reinforces the assertions made by Brissenden. Sheriff compares Mackenzie’s hero with Fielding’s concept of the “Good-Natured Man” and argues that, unlike Mackenzie’s Man of Feeling, Fielding’s Good-Natured Man presents a hero with a more prudential and rational understanding of morality, as opposed to a morality solely understood as sentimental benevolism. According to Sheriff, in *Tom Jones* Fielding attempts “to teach prudence to the Good-Natured Man,” partially through stressing “the impulsive goodness versus prudential goodness theme” (93). To Sheriff, therefore, Harley, whom he labels the “Man of Sensibility,” is seen as a degenerate “Good-Natured Man,” since he is the victim of a false sense of what good nature is. His lack of prudence reduces him to a “humour character whose obsession or hobbyhorse is his conception of benevolent good nature” (Sheriff 73). For Sheriff, not only does Harley lack the value of prudence prized in the Good-Natured Man, but his attempt to cultivate his “responsiveness to sensibility” is said to be motivated by “his own egocentricity, self-concerns, and self-love” As Sheriff puts it,

The Man of Sensibility has little in common with genuinely good-natured characters. He consciously aspires to discover good nature in himself and others, but his conception of good nature is false. He craves feelings of benevolence and sympathy both for the pleasure that arises from them and the assurance of his own good nature that he gets by testing his emotional responsiveness. (73)

Another similar approach to Brissenden's work on Mackenzie can be seen in John Mullan's investigation into the connection between sentiment and an elitist or limited type of sociability in Enlightenment Scotland. In "The Language of Sentiment: Hume, Smith, and Henry Mackenzie" (1987), Mullan, like Brissenden, provides a mixed assessment of the virtue associated with benevolent sensibility; in this case "both the protagonist and the narrator of Mackenzie's novel lament the rarity of virtue, which is made a matter of visceral, specialized sensation—unappreciated in a world of misanthropy and self-interest" (Mullan 274). However, what is of interest for Mullan is not the fact that Mackenzie in *The Man of Feeling* "equates virtue with an exemplary susceptibility to 'feeling'" (Mullan 274), but the fact that this susceptibility is supposedly intricately tied to the concept of sociability. Sociability, which according to Mullan "remained a problem" despite the "apparent complacencies of polite society in the urban Scotland of the Enlightenment," was intricately connected to the sentimental movement (275). According to Mullan, Mackenzie's use of sensibility in his novels clearly demonstrates the point that sociability was a very real problem during this period since "it is just this

elusive capacity [sociability] which they attempted to describe. Their men and women of virtue are typically victims, and most of all victims of sympathetic faculties which cannot be practised in the world" (275). Thus Mullan's argument is that the "social instinct, justified in tearful acts of benevolence, is what is celebrated and worried over in the novel of sentiment: 'feeling' is discovered to be the raw expression of this instinct" (275). In *The Man of Feeling*, Mullan equates "sensibility" with "the submission to the power of sentiment," and states that it is this submission which "produces sociability" (277). According to Mullan, therefore, "the Man of Feeling is he who can enjoy sympathetic relations with others" through submission to the power of feeling (277).

Mullan points out that this notion of a sociability based on sensibility can be seen as a reaction against "Hume's scepticism," which "isolates him from the benefits of feeling, [and consequently] the privileges of sociability" (277). Mullan goes on to note, however, much like the critics before him, that although "Mackenzie's novels attempt to imagine a virtue experienced in sociability [and based on sensibility], they perversely demonstrate such sociability at odds with 'the world'" (280). Thus, according to Mullan "the idea of sociability may be what the paragon of feeling aspires to in the fiction of the period, but unusually this capacity of the individual is shown to be incompatible with the larger society to which this character belongs" (Mullan 280). A sociability at odds with the practical considerations of the world, therefore, indicates for Mullan, an elitist system adopted by the Scottish *literati* of the period, that locates "the essential experience of society in the particular, exclusive contacts of 'select companions'— in a limited exercise of sensibility" (283). Furthermore, this also indicates, for Mullan, an exposure of the

obvious contradiction between this elitist form of sociability, and the actual demands of society. According to Mullan, “if the literati of the Scottish Enlightenment were self-consciously committed to the explication of a kind of virtue practicable in a commercially progressive, politically dependent province, . . . the novel of sentiment fails to fit the model (283).

If we recall the concept of “moral disinterestedness” discussed in chapter one, this type of reading provided by Brissenden, Sherriff, and Mullan, which stresses the ineffectiveness or impracticality of moral sensibility, seems dubious, since moral disinterestedness in the context of moral sensibility stresses the intrinsic value of moral feeling for having value in and of itself, regardless of its consequential practicality or utility. When seen in this light, the recurring charges of egoism and hedonism against Harley are also disputable. The assertion of Harley’s egoism or hedonism can be seen to be, at least in part, the result of the influence of Crane’s presentation of a specifically Latitudinarian type of sensibility since Crane’s thesis allows scholars the occasion to criticize Harley for the alleged hedonism associated with the fourth element of sentimental benevolism—the *self-approving joy*. The prominence of such an assertion on Harley’s character can be seen in the work of Kenneth Simpson, who in “The Limits of Sentiment: The Works of Henry Mackenzie,” in *The Protean Scot* (1988), highlights the distinction associated with the acquisition of sensibility and its alleged inseparability from sources of self-interested or egotistical motivation. According to Simpson, “sensibility is a distinction, and its possessor can relish it, but it seems to be inseparable from a dangerously heightened and egotistical self-consciousness” (153). Immediately

following a description of Crane's notion of the "distinctly hedonistic and egotistical element" associated with the notion of the *self-approving joy*. Simpson goes on to state that, in certain episodes "the egotistical and self-conscious aspects of Harley's behaviour are evident" and that "Mackenzie is detached from his creation" (148).² Simpson ends up arguing, therefore, that Mackenzie is actually questioning the merits of sensibility as well as the belief that humanity has the potential to be properly guided by a benevolent sensibility or benevolent feelings. As Simpson puts it, "Mackenzie is realistic in recognising the limitations of sensibility. Complete empathy can never be achieved, just as pure and absolute altruism is beyond the accomplishment of human nature" (152).

From the scholarship discussed so far on *The Man of Feeling*, I contend that the two main critical problems are: a) a failure to take into consideration the late eighteenth century notion of a hierarchy of feeling which stresses the primacy of moral feeling, and b) the failure to allow for the possible conceptual inclusion of moral disinterestedness. While both of these problems stem from a failure to fully acknowledge the moral dimension of what Crane describes as a general theory of sentimental benevolism, the first of these two contentions specifically applies to the doctrine's second element, sensibility, or what Crane calls *benevolence as feeling*—and has resulted in the critical tendency to interpret Mackenzie as presenting an amoral type of sensibility. Furthermore, the latter critical problem reflects the failure to adequately understand the fourth element associated with the doctrine of sentimental benevolism—what Crane calls *the self-*

² Simpson also finds evidence of this "egotistical aspect of . . . sensibility" in Mackenzie's other two novels (173).

approving joy—in terms which take into account the concept of a disinterested benevolence or a disinterested moral sensibility. It is this failure that has led scholars to provide a fallacious description of Mackenzie as having a critical view of sensibility for either being inevitably in perpetual conflict with pragmatic or worldly interests, or a source of self-interested or egoistic motivation.

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2.2 *John Dwyer on the Scottish Moralists of Refinement: Henry Mackenzie, Hugh Blair, and James Macpherson*

Despite the general contentions with the Mackenzie scholarship outlined in the previous section, there are a few Mackenzie scholars who do indeed recognize the importance of taking into consideration the moral dimension necessitated by discussions of Mackenzie and sensibility. For example, Elaine Ware (1987) in reaction to a critic³ who had argued “that Henry Mackenzie supported the ideals of his age in order to suit audience taste rather than out of fervor of belief,” states that “I believe that he wrote out of a sincere concern for man’s moral duty towards man. Mackenzie’s treatment of benevolence is not superficial” (132). Although Ware does not go into detail on the role

³ David Spencer, “Henry Mackenzie, a Practical Sentimentalist,” *Papers on Language and Literature* 3 (1967): 314-26.

of moral feeling, she, nevertheless, stresses the importance of recognizing that “the eighteenth century’s moral philosophy was based on the innate benevolence of man” and that “one of the most important tenets of the ethics of the period was the notion of charity, or benevolence” (133).

More importantly, John Dwyer in *Virtuous Discourse: Sensibility and Community in Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (1987) states, in a manner similar to the argument presented in this paper, that, although recent scholarly investigations of Mackenzie’s novels have “rightly pointed to the importance which this popular author attached to the concept of sensibility,” they have, nevertheless, misconstrued what sensibility actually meant for Mackenzie, and have, thus, “not only obscured Mackenzie’s message in the novels,” but have also created “a misleading dichotomy between Mackenzie as novelist and as moralist” (142). Dwyer, therefore, states that his purpose in this chapter, which is on Mackenzie and entitled “The Novel as Moral Preceptor,” is to “affirm the essential unity of Mackenzie’s writings and to underline their moral message” (142). Dwyer places Mackenzie within the context of other Scottish moralists of the period, especially his “colleagues in the Mirror Club,” and argues that, although members of the Scottish *literati* may have often condemned certain novels as being morally damaging, they, nevertheless, felt that the novel could serve a moral purpose. According to Dwyer, although Mackenzie’s essays in the periodicals *The Mirror* and *The Lounger* indicate that “Mackenzie bemoaned the fact that novel writing had become the occupation of the ‘narrow’ and the ‘vain,’” who, “without any genius or knowledge, had set themselves up as dictators of the public taste” (144), he, as well as “the Scottish moralists,” nevertheless

“recognized the potential of the [novel], especially as a tool for the inculcation of sensibility” (142). According to Dwyer, when Mackenzie and the Mirror Club are properly understood as “promoters of the novel as a vehicle for the cultivation of the moral sentiments” (141), Mackenzie’s critical comments in *The Mirror* and *The Lounger* concerning certain novels of sensibility should not be misconstrued as a general condemnation of the literature of sensibility, but rather to be a critique of only those novels which, while they may succeed in eliciting certain types of feelings or emotions, ultimately work against the cultivation of a moral sensibility by obscuring the distinction between vice and virtue. As Dwyer puts it, while

Mackenzie’s criticism of these works was subtle and carefully considered, the major problem with writings of the ‘sentimental sort’ was their inability to distinguish vice from virtue. While Mackenzie thought that the novel should reflect the more extensive and polite feelings of a refined age . . . he disapproved of the tendency of many of these works to bring into play a ‘rivalry of virtues and duties’ and thereby to obscure moral distinctions. (144)

According to Dwyer, therefore, the fact that Mackenzie in his *Mirror* and *Lounger* essays was “concerned about the negative effects of the novel . . . especially in connection with the moral cultivation of the young” should not be taken “to mean that he did not appreciate their utility and necessity in a corrupt age” (147). Similar to the way in

which Linda Walsh describes moral feeling for Diderot as operating harmoniously with the function of reason. Dwyer explains that the type of moral sensibility promoted in Mackenzie's works was one in which "Reason was never brought into conflict with feeling," since "Mackenzie's virtuous characters were clearly worthy of the spectatorial sympathy which the author attempted to elicit" (147). As Dwyer puts it, Harley's ability to "discriminate between genuine and undeserving objects of fellow-feeling grows during the novel" (152). Furthermore, Dwyer argues that there is no conflict "between sense and sensibility," since although "emotion is given priority over syllogism . . . reason is demonstrably not thrown out the window" (152). Thus, according to Dwyer "the virtuous characters' tears most certainly flow, but they are strictly rationed in terms of the merit of the sympathetic object" (152). Unlike Mullan and Brissenden, therefore, as well as other critics who adopt a defeatist position which pessimistically interprets Harley's moral sensibility as being in perpetual conflict with the alleged prudence demanded by the real world, Dwyer argues that "Mackenzie's novels allowed the author to delineate and advertize the proper cultivation of sensibility in a hostile and corrupting social arena" (142). Rather than seeing virtuous sensibility as something which was at odds with the "social arena," Mackenzie felt that it was imperative to promote and enhance such a sensibility through literature to combat existing vices: "This moral function [of literature] was imperative in the present age in which the primary 'virtues' were 'indifference' and 'selfishness'" (Dwyer 147). Thus, according to Dwyer, in contrast to the novelists he criticized in his essays, Mackenzie as a novelist was careful to ensure that "setting, plot and characterization all contributed to one very focused end—the careful cultivation of the

moral sentiments” (Dwyer 147).

Mackenzie’s comments on the novel, as Dwyer also points out, are congruent with his similar comments on the function of drama in *The Mirror* and *The Lounger*.

According to Dwyer, although “Mackenzie was worried about the effect of drama upon the moral sentiments of the spectator” (146), he, nevertheless, optimistically states in one essay on dramatic comedy that “people would always prefer those comedies which were ‘true to virtue, and open to the impressions of virtuous sentiment’” (145). As Dwyer puts it, Mackenzie, as “an accomplished playwright himself” (146) inevitably saw the potential of the ability of drama to achieve “the transportation of the spectator to ‘a region of exalted virtue and dignified sentiment’ which might act as an antidote to the ‘unfeeling temperament of worldly minds’” (147). It is likely that Mackenzie saw the extension of this idea in all of the arts, for, as Dwyer states, “Mackenzie’s comments on comic drama and the novel were equally applicable to other literary forms” (145).

With such an understanding of the importance of the moral dimension within Mackenzie’s writings, Dwyer provides a reading of *The Man of Feeling* which consistently stresses the fact that “the reader is constantly reminded of the moral, rather than mimetic, purpose of the work” (147). Rather than considering Mackenzie’s text in terms of a representation of an objective reality, Dwyer’s reading of the text focuses on its intended moral effect on the reader, since, as Dwyer states, Harley is to be seen as “the embodiment of Mackenzie’s ideal of virtuous sensibility” and “not a realistic human being” (148). According to Dwyer’s reading of the text, therefore, Mackenzie successfully elicits within his late eighteenth-century readers, not just any type of feeling

or emotion (as many critics have wrongly argued), but only those moral and disinterested feelings associated with sentimental benevolism:

[Mackenzie's] particular talent lies in forcing his readers to participate actively in the 'symphony of sympathy'. . . . But Mackenzie did not want to extract from his readers an extreme emotion that was temporary or narcissistic; instead, he skillfully teased out that 'gentle tear' which was conducive to moral reformation and active virtue. (i48)

Furthermore, unlike those critics who interpret *The Man of Feeling* as indicating Mackenzie's call for a more prudential or utilitarian type of morality which is clearly removed from the sensibility of Harley, Dwyer's reading of the novel concludes that "For Mackenzie, it was the world that was wrong in its judgement, not the man who trusted to his gentler feelings" (149). Dwyer further states that the novel "attempts to illustrate the operation of the moral and social feelings in the ordinary affairs of life" since we "witness Harley's affections developing and being refined through intimate encounters dependent upon his genuine and sympathetic character" (148). Dwyer, therefore, concludes that Harley "was demonstrably not the inactive creature of feeling that some literary scholars have caricatured him as being. He did all that he could to alleviate the distresses of others" (154).

More recently, in "Clio and Ethics: Practical Morality in Enlightened Scotland" (1989) Dwyer investigates the "moral discourse" of "sensibility," which he defines as

“that polite and controlled fellow feeling” in the writings of “ignored yet influential” Scottish writers such as Hugh Blair, as well as “Henry Mackenzie and his colleagues in the *Mirror* and the *Lounger*” (45). Dwyer stresses the importance of properly understanding how the sermons of Moderate preachers such as Hugh Blair, as well as the novels and essays produced by Henry Mackenzie and his Mirror Club asserted the popular conception of a “refined system of identification with one’s fellow man” (47). According to Dwyer, “enlightened moderns” such as Hugh Blair “understood the true nature of man, in his solitary state, as a gentle and sociable animal” (55) and, they also believed that “manners should be firmly grounded in a basic human sensibility” (58). Quoting Blair from one of his most popular sermons, “On Gentleness,” Dwyer explains that Blair

defined sensibility as ‘that unaffected civility which springs from a gentle mind’ and which was very different from the ‘studied manners of the most finished courtier.’ Indeed, he argued, it was ‘native feeling heightened and improved by principle. It is the heart which easily relents; which feels for every thing that is human.’ (58)

According to Dwyer, although Scottish moralists such as Blair and Mackenzie considered this sensibility to be “based upon native sentiment,” they also considered it to be “capable of a considerable degree of cultivation” (58). Dwyer further explains that Blair felt that this native moral sensibility was also to be seen as a natural social affection.

and he thus criticized the popular notion that human society at large depends upon a system of unfeeling legalism which stood in opposition to a moral philosophy of sentiment. As Dwyer, again quoting Blair, puts it, Blair's sermons made a "distinction between a *mechanical* and an *organic* society. 'Mere law, among men,' he wrote, 'is rigid and inflexible.' Not only did it fail to take into account the subtle feelings and intentions of men, but it made no allowance for particular situations. . . ." (59). Dwyer further explains that Blair distinguished these rigid and inflexible laws from those "manners" which were "reflective of the 'humane and generous liberality of sentiment.' They [manners], not the laws, were the real cement of British society. On sensibility itself, Blair asserted that 'whatever is amiable in manners or useful in society naturally and easily engrafts itself upon it'" (59). According to Dwyer, therefore, "Blair and his fellow Moderates" consistently continued to place "considerable emphasis upon refined sensibility as the foundation of ethics in modern life" (59).

Not only does Blair share with Mackenzie this belief in the promulgation of moral sensibility, but also, they both detected the "popular propagandization" of another type of sensibility within their present culture which "could be, and often was, carried too far" (Dwyer 60). According to Dwyer, Blair articulated this concern most effectively in his sermon entitled "On Sensibility." As Dwyer points out, it is in this sermon that Blair

outlined the common theory of the passions derived from Scottish moral philosophy. Since man was too inclined to self-love, he argued, the temper of mind known as "sensibility" was given to him as a social

creature. It was this temper of mind that “interests us in the concerns of our brethren; which disposes us to feel along with them, to take part in their joys, and in their sorrows.” Such a temperament, he maintained, was the “chief improvement” of which “modern times” could rightfully boast. At the same time, “excessive softness” and “sentimental language” often covered an unfeeling and calculating heart. It was important, therefore, always to distinguish “native affection” from “exterior manner” and truly feeling individuals from those who professed their sensibility “on every trifling occasion.” (60)

Thus, according to Dwyer, one of the main concerns of Blair, as well as of “many Scottish writers on ethical subjects” such as Mackenzie, was that “politeness, courtesy, ease and gentleness—the supposed characteristics of a modern refined society—were being transformed into an artificial system which hid a designing, rather than a reflected and engaging, heart” (60). As Dwyer explains, the main worry for writers such as Blair and Mackenzie was that this system “could result in the unwary individual’s moral destruction” (60). Furthermore, for Blair and Mackenzie, this “refined or *gentle* sensibility was no crude outpouring of fellow feeling,” but, rather, was required “to be carefully cultivated by those who best understood man’s nature and his history” (Dwyer 61). Thus, as Mackenzie writes in one essay, “the creed of Custom is not always that of Right” and he, therefore, considered it to be the purpose of the “moralistic periodical” to consistently attack “the entrenchments of Fashion, wherever she is at war with Modesty

or Virtue” (Dwyer 61).

With this understanding of how Scottish moralists such as Blair and Mackenzie viewed the function of moral sensibility, Dwyer concludes that the “novels of Henry Mackenzie. . . should be read primarily as moralistic tracts outlining a ‘gentle sensibility’ productive of an active benevolence and concomitant social harmony and yet consistent with the more traditional distinctions between virtue and vice” (65). For Dwyer, therefore, “Scottish moralists” such as Blair and Mackenzie, should not “be dismissed as provincial reactionaries” but should be seen as active contributors “to the rise of sentimentalism in the essay, sermon, and novel,” as well as successful developers of “ethical strategies based upon their appreciation of the smooth functioning of the moral sentiments in a refined society” (66).

Another important writer among the Scottish literati of the period, who, along with Blair and Mackenzie, helped to advocate through literature a refined moral sensibility was James Macpherson. As Dwyer points out in an article from 1991, “The Melancholy Savage: Text and Context in the *Poems of Ossian*,” Macpherson’s poetic “translations” of the third century bard, Ossian in the texts *Fingal* (1762) and *Temora* (1763), were also influential in promoting the popularity of specifically moral feelings.⁴

⁴ Controversy has surrounded the issue concerning the authenticity of Macpherson’s supposed translations since the time of their publication, and it is commonly held that Macpherson most likely created the epic poems himself. Indeed, a Highland Society investigation on the very issue of the poems authenticity, initiated in 1797 and headed by none other than Macpherson’s good friend Henry Mackenzie, concluded that, or as Dwyer puts it, “gently suggested that a fair portion of the poetry of Ossian stemmed from Macpherson’s fertile imagination rather than documentary evidence or a living oral tradition” (164). Despite this conclusion, Mackenzie and the Highland Society refused to

Macpherson's *Fingal* and *Temora*, as well as his earlier *Fragments of Ancient Poetry* (1760) proved to be immensely popular throughout Europe at the time of their publication. According to Dwyer, "one of the fundamental reasons for their popularity was their relation and contribution to the sentimental discourse so characteristic of late eighteenth-century culture" (166). More specifically, Dwyer argues that what "Scottish readers of Ossian [such] as Lord Kames, Hugh Blair, [and] Henry Mackenzie" found especially fascinating in these poems "was that the Scottish society of the remote past should have evidenced such an acute and subtle understanding of emotion" (167). Not long after the publication of *Fingal* and *Temora* Blair published what was to become the standard critical companion to Macpherson's translations, the *Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian* (1763). Dwyer, quoting Blair from this work, states that what "particularly intrigues Blair about the ancient Caledonians is not their 'fire and enthusiasm' but their 'tenderness, and even delicacy of sentiment'" (178). According to Dwyer, Blair felt that "the poetry of Ossian melts the heart with 'the softest feelings'" and that "Ossian's characters are sensitive, refined, and humane to an astonishing degree" (178). Furthermore, Blair also praised Ossian's heroes for exhibiting "all of the delicacy, and none of the artificiality, of a refined age" (179).

According to Dwyer, Blair was also interested in the manner in which Macpherson's translations effectively portrayed pathos in such a way as to elicit these

dismiss Macpherson's work as a "simple fabrication" and concluded instead in the *Highland Society Report* that "their 'eloquent, tender, and sublime' qualities were meritorious and not uncharacteristic of genuine ancient Caledonian poetry" (qut. in Dwyer 164).

moral feelings:

The reader's sympathy is further obtained, remarks Blair, by Ossian's talent for pathetic description. Not only are most of his characters humane and sentimental but the art of Ossian lies particularly in the 'pathetick.' He is capable of wringing up the emotions of his readers into a 'sympathetic sorrow' which is at once pleasant and moral. . . . Indeed, Ossian demonstrates a particularly acute understanding of human sympathetic equipment in his treatment of what he calls the 'joy of grief' (180).

Furthermore, Dwyer states that Blair was most impressed with the fact that Macpherson's Ossianic poems successfully sought to inspire these moral feelings within the reader:

What particularly impressed Blair was the very precise sort of emotion that the Ossianic poetry sought to elicit. Ossian, Blair argues, does not seek to inculcate an overpowering grief which could be not only socially destructive but also personally incapacitating. Instead, he stimulates a soft and peaceful melancholic identification, one which inclines the spectator towards serious moral reflection. (181)

In light of some of the critical remarks concerning Mackenzie's text in the

opening section of this chapter, it is worth praising the achievement of Dwyer for establishing a productive description of the Scottish moral context during the eighteenth-century age of sensibility. Thanks to the work of Dwyer we are in a better position to properly understand how Scottish moralists and writers developed a moral theory based on benevolent feelings, and were inspired to develop those feelings within their readers through their pathetic writings. Although Dwyer does not note the importance of Shaftesbury on the movement, nor does he discuss the notion of disinterestedness, his work has helped to underscore the importance of sentimental philosophy in late eighteenth-century Scotland.

Chapter 3: Disinterested Benevolence and *The Man of Feeling*

3.1 *Disinterestedness*

In light of the argument made in the previous chapters concerning the significance of Shaftesbury's notion of a disinterested and benevolent moral sensibility in Enlightenment aesthetics, the question which remains to be answered is whether or not the philosophy which Mackenzie promotes in *The Man of Feeling* can be seen as a disinterested sentimental moral philosophy. More succinctly, does Mackenzie's text delineate a morality based on disinterested feelings?

The theme of disinterestedness is especially relevant during the action of the first half of the novel which involves Harley's reluctant sojourn in London. Although Harley is opposed to the idea, the purpose of his trip is to gain the favour of a baronet in an attempt to secure a lease on some neighbouring property. In this section of the book, Mackenzie, through the voice of the Ghost narrator, provides a general criticism of the self-interested motivation being encouraged in Harley by his ambitious friends, in favour of a disinterested type of motivation which Harley ultimately exhibits. The opening passage of the novel's second chapter, "Of Worldly Interests," begins with the Ghost narrator's critical remarks concerning the assumption that the attainment of selfish, worldly interests constitutes happiness and that the lack thereof is inevitably a sign of misery:

There are certain interests which the world supposes every man to have, and which therefore are properly enough termed worldly; but the world is apt to make an erroneous estimate: ignorant of the dispositions which constitute our happiness or misery, they bring to an undistinguished scale the means of the one, as connected with power, wealth or grandeur, and of the other with their contraries. (9).

Following this declamatory opening on the topic of happiness, the narrator states that for a young gentlemen such as Harley, who is curiously content with his meager paternal estate, there is usually an ample supply of “grave and prudent friends to set him right in this particular” (9). Harley’s friends, through their frequent tales “of men, whose fortunes enabled them to command all the luxuries of life,” encourage him to seek out worldly interests as a source of happiness (9). It is conceded by the narrator that, overwhelmed by the admonitions of these “monitors,” Harley’s “envy was invited” by a description of the “happiness” which these rich and powerful men had allegedly achieved by means of their fortunes, “and his emulation” was also encouraged “by a recital of the means which had produced it (9-10). Thus, despite the fact that Harley was usually “apt to hear those lectures” which clearly promoted a self-interested type of motivation “with indifference,” they, nevertheless, “sometimes . . . got the better of his temper; and . . . provoked, on his part, some reflections, which,” according to the narrator “his good-nature would else have avoided” (10). When his friends hear that Harley has been offered a letter of introduction to an influential baronet in London who is capable of ensuring that Harley obtains a lease

on the property adjacent to his estate, they press “him with the utmost earnestness to accept of it” (13). In this attempt to influence Harley, the Ghost narrator notes, in terms critical of the motivation being promoted, that Harley’s friends

did not fail to enumerate the many advantages which a certain degree of spirit and assurance gives a man who would make a figure in the world . . . and made so copious a recital of the disadvantages which attend the opposite weakness, that a stranger, who had heard them, would have been led to imagine, that in the British code there was some disqualifying statute against any citizen who should be convicted of—modesty (13).

The Ghost narrator continually notes Harley’s lack of enthusiasm and motivation in this self-interested endeavor which his friends encourage. Harley never seems convinced that he can obtain happiness by gaining the favour of the baronet and securing the lease on his neighbouring lands.⁵ In his second attempt to meet with the baronet the narrator notes how Harley becomes critical of the fact that he is actually acting on the selfish motivation encouraged by his ambitious friends. On his way to meet with the baronet he begins to “ruminate on the folly of mankind, who affixed those ideas of superiority to riches, [and] reduced the minds of men, by nature equal with the more

⁵ In opposition to this view of the alleged happiness extrinsically associated with worldly interests, the narrator lightly suggests a different type of happiness, necessitated by “one ingredient . . . which people of feeling would do well to acquire: a certain respect for the follies of mankind” (10).

fortunate, to that sort of servility which he felt in his own" (26). It is not surprising, therefore, that when Harley later receives a letter from the baronet informing him that his application for the lease had been denied in favour of "a gentleman who had long served his majesty in another capacity, and whose merit had entitled him to the first lucrative thing that should be vacant" (86), he is described as not being able to grant such a disappointment the seriousness which his friends in the country surely would have expected. Instead, Harley's immediate response is one which is more properly characterized as a disinterested and benevolent moral reflection. Harley speculates that perhaps the baronet's favour has been directed towards

'some war-worn officer, who . . . had been neglected from reasons which merited the highest advancement; whose honour could not stoop to solicit the preferment he deserved; perhaps, with a family, taught the principles of delicacy, without the means of supporting it; a wife and children—gracious heaven! whom my wishes would have deprived of bread.' (86)

Thus, although Harley is encouraged by his ambitious friends to selfishly seek happiness through worldly possessions, he, nevertheless, consistently feels benevolently and disinterestedly towards humanity. This benevolent and disinterested feeling is also to be understood as a type of sensibility. The philosophy of disinterested sentimental benevolism is first alluded to early on in a passage describing the character ideal of

Harley's love interest, Miss Walton:

Her conversation was always cheerful . . . and without the smallest affectation of learning, had . . . much sentiment in it. . . . Her beneficence was unbounded . . . for her humanity was a feeling, not a principle: but minds like Harley's are not very apt to make this distinction, and generally give our virtue credit for all that benevolence which is instinctive in our nature" (16).

The narrator further notes that Harley experienced the feelings of esteem and love in the presence of Miss Walton, and looked upon her with the "respect and admiration which her appearance seemed to demand, and the opinion of others conferred upon her" (16). We are told that because of Harley's "extreme sensibility," he often became "remarkably silent in her presence" yet "heard her sentiments with peculiar attention" (16). Moreover, near the end of the novel, when Harley hears that Miss Walton is to be married, although he is both shocked and upset, his main concern is for the happiness which she merits: "'May she be happy! her virtues deserve it: to me her marriage is otherwise indifferent:—I had romantic dreams! they are fled!—it is perfectly indifferent'" (129).

This philosophy of disinterested sentimental benevolism is further illustrated in several of the novel's secondary characters. Harley's relations and household servant, unlike his ambitious friends who continually influence him towards establishing an interest in worldly pursuits for the happiness which they allegedly provide, advise him

against the corrupt and worldly interests represented by London. His aunt warns him that London is “so replete with temptations, that it need the whole armour of her friendly cautions to repel their attacks” (19). Similarly, Peter, a servant whom Harley’s father had benevolently taken in as an orphan “and saved him from being cast on the parish” (19), echoes the concern of Harley’s aunt as he says goodbye to Harley in a typically sentimental fashion: “‘My dear master . . . I have been told as how London is a sad place.’ –He was choaked with the thought, and his benediction could not be heard:–but it shall be heard, honest Peter!–where these tears will add to its energy” (20).

Not only does Mackenzie contrast selfish motives and actions with benevolent actions based on disinterested benevolent feelings, but he also, in the chapter entitled “The Misanthropist,” anticipates the charge that those acts of benevolence are only seemingly disinterested, and are actually indicative of selfish motivation. Mackenzie, therefore, in this chapter, can be seen as anticipating the charge against the alleged “frankly avowed pursuit of altruistic emotions for egoistic ends” which constitutes the fourth criterion of the doctrine of sentimental benevolism–the *self-approving joy*–as understood by Crane (Crane 229). Through the voice of the misanthropist, Mackenzie theoretically explores the possibility of a benevolent act which is not disinterested but is actually self-interested. In fact, according to the misanthropist’s perspective, all benevolent acts are ultimately self-interested. The misanthropist’s views are ascribed to his corrupted view of human nature, which he considers to be innately self-interested. The misanthropist states that “‘man is an animal equally selfish and vain” and that vanity “is but a modification of selfishness” (46). According to the misanthropist’s view of

human nature. “there are some who pretend to be free” from the charge of selfishness, yet “they are generally such as declaim against the lust of wealth and power, because they have never been able to attain any high degree in either” and instead choose to “boast of generosity and feeling” (47). In this segment, the misanthropist derides those who say they are unselfish and also claim to actually benefit from the happiness which accompanies their benevolent feelings. The misanthropist criticizes those who “tell us . . . that the sensations of an honest heart, of a mind universally benevolent, make up the quiet bliss which they enjoy; but they will not, by this, be exempted from the charge of selfishness” (46-7). This chapter involving the misanthropist anticipates, not only the charge of egotism but also anticipates the related charge of hedonism since, through the voice of the misanthropist, Mackenzie presents a case in terms which anticipate Crane’s understanding of the allegedly hedonistic function of the *self-approving joy*:

“With vanity your best virtues are grossly tainted: your benevolence, which ye deduce immediately from the natural impulse of the heart, squints to it for its reward. There are some, indeed, who tell us of the satisfaction which flows from a secret consciousness of good actions: this secret satisfaction is truly excellent—when we have some friend to whom we may discover its excellence.” (47)

3.2 *Benevolent Sensibility*

Throughout the text Mackenzie presents pathetic episodes in which he intricately combines descriptions of benevolent feelings with descriptions of benevolent acts. This combination results in a literary pattern in which benevolent feelings and benevolent acts invariably inspire or incite corresponding benevolent feelings or acts. This literary pattern of benevolence not only implies a causal relationship between benevolent feelings and benevolent acts, but also implies the disinterested or non-selfish motivation of Harley's altruistic acts since they are based on benevolent feelings. One of the earliest examples of this literary pattern is the episode in which Harley visits Bedlam. While in London, several of Harley's acquaintances encourage him to join them on a visit to the famous asylum. At first, Harley objects to this proposal in terms which highlight the frustration involved in witnessing the distress of another without the means of alleviating that distress. Harley's main point of protest against the proposed tour is that he thought it to be "an inhuman practice to expose the greatest misery with which our nature is afflicted . . . especially as it is a distress which the humane must see with the painful reflection, that it is not in their power to alleviate it" (32). Despite his protest, Harley is nevertheless "overpowered by the solicitations . . . of the party" (32), and it is here that Harley, and the reader, are first introduced to a series of pathetic tableaux which serve to inspire benevolent and pathetic feelings.

At one point during the tour Harley notices a female inmate who stood "separate from the rest" and "whose appearance had something of superior dignity" (35-36).

Harley is immediately struck by her countenance, which is void of any sublime qualities, and instead shows a pathetic beauty: a “dejection of that decent kind, which moves our pity unmixed with horror” (36). The guide then informs Harley that this woman had lost her true love to a fever in the West Indies. We are then told that the news of her love’s death reduced “the poor young lady . . . to the condition you see her in” (36). The pathetic tale which he hears during this scenario causes a response within Harley which is expressive of his natural compassion. We are told that “this story” was one which “particularly attracted Harley’s notice,” and as a result, he is said to have “given it the tribute of some tears” (37). This indication of Harley’s benevolent feeling of compassion is also displayed by the entire party of spectators. According to the Ghost narrator’s description, “except the keeper’s, there was not an unmoistened eye around her” (37). However, unlike the rest of the spectators of this pathetic scene, Harley’s benevolent feeling leads him to perform a benevolent act. Immediately following his outburst of tears, “[Harley] put a couple of guineas into the man’s hand,” stating, “be kind to that unfortunate” (38).

Another good example of how Mackenzie’s literary pattern of sentimental benevolence operates is the Emily Atkins episode—an episode which has been curiously ignored by the majority of Mackenzie scholars in favour of the Old Edwards episode. This episode begins in a typically pathetic and sentimental fashion, with Harley walking “amidst a crowd of those wretches who wait the uncertain wages of prostitution” while experiencing “ideas of pity suitable to the scene around him, and the feelings he possessed” (55). He soon meets a prostitute and is described as immediately recognizing

within her a level of humility which he feels to be rare and unusual in practitioners of her profession: "one of the [the prostitutes] laid hold of his arm . . . in a manner more supplicatory than is usual with those whom the infamy of their profession has deprived of shame" (55). The prostitute, who, as Harley finds out later had not eaten in two days, faints soon after entering a room in the tavern. The incident of Emily's fainting immediately incites within Harley a benevolent feeling and he thus becomes motivated to help her. Harley, in this chapter, acts altruistically by helping her revive, providing her with a meal, and securing lodgings for her for the evening. Immediately following the incident of her fainting, when he first reaches for the bell with the intention of ordering a meal for her, she protests in the most humble fashion that he not give himself any "more trouble about a wretch who does not wish to live" (57). Despite her protestations, Harley draws out a half-guinea stating, "I am sorry . . . that at present I should be able to make you an offer of no more than this paltry sum" (58). Again the benevolent pattern is presented as Harley's altruistic act prompts a corresponding benevolent feeling of gratitude within Miss Atkins:

She burst into tears: 'Your generosity, Sir, is abused; to bestow it on me is to take it from the virtuous: I have no title but misery to plead; misery of my own procuring.' 'No more of that, answered Harley; there is virtue in these tears; let the fruit of them be virtue. (58)

The next day, recalling his promise to help her, as well as the "raillery of his

companions" against the matter the evening before, the narrator states that, for Harley, "the colder homilies of prudence began to suggest some things which were nowise favourable for a performance of his promise to the unfortunate female" (62). Despite these reservations, Harley is soon spurred back into action as he immediately recalls "the languid form of the fainting wretch in his mind" and again "wept at the recollection of her tears" (62). Frustrated with his friends' discouraging remarks from the previous evening on the subject of those who perform benevolent acts for strangers, Harley cries out, "'Powers of mercy that surround me! . . . do ye not smile upon deeds like these?' to calculate the chances of deception is too tedious a business for the life of man!" (62). Although Miss Atkins is sensitive to Harley's wish to help alleviate her distress, she, nevertheless, is filled with such humility that she cannot easily accept that his benevolence should be directed towards herself. Despite her humility, however, Miss Atkins, as one who truly understands Harley's benevolent motivation in helping to alleviate her distress, states, "'I am ashamed, Sir . . . that you should have taken this fresh piece of trouble about one so little worthy of it; but, to the humane, I know there is a pleasure in goodness for its own sake" (63). Thus, in opposition to the misanthropist's selfish view of human nature, Miss Atkins voices a more humane view of human nature as disinterested and benevolent. Furthermore, Miss Atkins recognizes a sensibility within Harley which she also sees within herself and understands as disinterested. Miss Atkins's understanding of this disinterested sensibility or feeling is, in part, accounted for through a description of her childhood in which her "reading was principally confined to plays, novels, and those poetical descriptions of the beauty of virtue and honour" (64).

Emily's tragic tale involves an illegitimate pregnancy following her involvement with a dubious gentleman and her subsequent enslavement in London by an evil landlady who forces her into prostitution. Tragically aware of the harshness of an apparently unfeeling world, Emily whole-heartedly appreciates Harley's impulse to help her: "'Last night, but for an exertion of benevolence which the infection of our infamy prevents even in the humane, had I been thrust out from this miserable place which misfortune has yet left me. . . . From that Mr. Harley, your goodness has relieved me.'" (76). Harley's benevolence ultimately leads to a reconciliation between Miss Atkins and her estranged father, to whom Harley pleads, "think, Sir, of what once she was! Would you abandon her to the insults of an unfeeling world, deny her opportunity of penitence, and cut off the little comfort that still remains for your afflictions and her own!" (78). Emily's father, a colonel, is naturally swayed by Harley's words, as well as by the pathetic distress of his daughter: "the pride of a soldier's honour checked for a while the yearnings of his heart: but nature at last prevailed, he fell on her neck, and mingled his tears with hers" (79). Here again we see the sentimental pattern operate as Emily's father compassionately weeps for the distress of his daughter and benevolently reconciles himself to her. The cycle continues as Emily relates to her father "what she owed to [Harley's] benevolence," since upon hearing of Harley's altruism, Colonel Atkins expresses his gratitude towards Harley: "her distresses you have heard, you have pitied as they deserve . . . you have a feeling heart, Mr Harley; I bless it that it has saved my child" (80).

The theme of benevolent feelings and actions can also be seen in the much critically discussed Old Edwards episode. On his way back from London, Harley meets

an elderly soldier who he later recognizes as the beloved acquaintance of his childhood.

Old Edwards. After having heard Old Edwards' long and tragic tale in which he performs several benevolent acts, Mackenzie describes Harley's commiseration with Edwards in terms which highlight Harley's wish to alleviate Edwards' distress:

"Edwards, . . . let me hold thee to my bosom: let me imprint the virtue of thy sufferings on my soul. Come, my honoured veteran! let me endeavour to soften the last days of a life, worn out in the service of humanity" (110). For Harley, Edwards, as one who has lived his life in the "service of humanity," is obviously worthy of his benevolence. The issue of happiness in relation to benevolence is again introduced as they return to Edwards's village and Harley sees that his childhood schoolhouse has been plowed over by orders of the village squire "'because it stood in the way of his prospects'" (112). Harley interprets the squire's malevolent act as resulting from his lack of benevolent feelings and therefore cries out, "'Curses on his narrow heart . . . that could violate a right so sacred!'" (112). Harley immediately reproves himself by saying to Edwards that because of the squire's unfeeling heart, he "is cursed enough already" because, "to him the noblest source of happiness is denied" (113). Harley also realizes at this point that, unlike the squire who is denied true happiness because he himself denies his benevolent nature, Old Edwards, because of his benevolent feelings, is truly happy even with his meager "brown crust [of bread], smiling on those mangled limbs that have saved thy son and his children" (113).

In one of the more touching pathetic scenes associated with the Old Edwards episode, Harley finds Edwards weeping while gazing at his sleeping grandson, and offers

him a small vacant farm in the neighbourhood. Here, again, the sentimental pattern is to be seen since, upon hearing of this benevolent offer, the narrator notes that Edwards's "tears gushed afresh" (118). Harley's altruism does not stop with this benevolent action, for, as we soon learn, Edwards is "assisted by the beneficence of Harley" in the task of improving the farm (118). Harley himself diverts a stream through the grounds and builds a miniature mill for the amusement of Edwards's grandson and the Ghost narrator takes this opportunity to provide a tableau depicting both the happiness associated with Harley's benevolent feelings and actions as well as the benevolent feeling of gratitude which it inspires in Old Edwards: "I have seen him stand . . . with his eyes fixed on the boy, and the smile of conscious satisfaction on his cheek; while the old man, with a look half turned to Harley, and half to Heaven, breathed an ejaculation of gratitude and piety" (119). In concluding this section on the happiness associated with benevolent feelings and actions, the Ghost narrator declares, "Father of mercies! I also would thank thee! That not only hast thou assigned eternal rewards to virtue, but that, even in this bad world, the lines of our duty, and our happiness, are so frequently woven together" (119). Thus again, unlike the misanthropist, the optimistic and philanthropic Harley, using his moral voice, declares that "'however the general current of opinion may point, the feelings are not yet lost that applaud benevolence, and censure inhumanity. Let us endeavour to strengthen them in ourselves . . . [by] listening undisturbed to their voice'" (122).

Concurrent with this philosophy of disinterested sentimental benevolence throughout the text is the theme of refinement. Following the introduction, the novel

opens with a chapter entitled "Of Bashfulness," which immediately sets up this theme.

The chapter begins with the Ghost narrator recalling a conversation he had once had with his good friend Ben Silton on the metaphor of rust:

There is some rust about every man at the beginning; though in some nations (among the French, for instance) the ideas of the inhabitants . . . are so vivacious, so eternally on the wing, that they must, even in small societies, have a frequent collision; the rust therefore will wear off sooner: but in Britain, it often goes with a man to his grave (5).

The narrator recalls that Ben Silton, described as a man whose remarks "were such as the world might have heard with veneration" and whose "heart, uncorrupted by its ways, was ever warm in the cause of virtue and his friends" had replied to these opening remarks by stating, "'Let them rub it off by travel'" (6). The Ghost narrator recalls that he had replied to Silton that while it is true that travel may help, there is also the fear that "it will often happen, that in the velocity of a modern tour, and amidst the materials through which it is commonly made, the friction is so violent, that not only the rust, but the metal too, is lost in the progress" (7). Thus, in this passage the reader is introduced to a cultural view of refinement which lauds the French and criticizes the British for their inferior level of national cultural refinement. This passage is also critical of the European "modern tour" and the dangerous cultural "materials" which such a tour highlights.

Later on in the novel, Harley engages in conversation with this elderly gentleman

on the topic of the modern poets of the age. During this conversation the theme of moral refinement through art in helping to develop benevolent feelings seems especially relevant in the following statement made by Silton:

‘There is at least . . . one advantage in the poetical inclination, that it is an incentive to philanthropy. There is a certain poetic ground, on which a man cannot tread without feelings that enlarge the heart: the causes of human depravity vanish before the romantic enthusiasm he professes, and many who are not able to reach the Parnassian heights, may yet approach so near as to be bettered by the air of the climate’ (95).

The Ghost narrator concludes this section by again praising Ben Silton, this time for exhibiting a disinterested type of happiness: “Once more, my honoured friend farewell!—Born to be happy without the world, to that peaceful happiness which the world has not to bestow! Envy never scowled on thy life, not hatred smile on thy grave” (97).

The novel ends with Harley’s death of a fever acquired in his care of Old Edwards. Prior to his death, the Ghost narrator provides the reader with some of Harley’s concluding remarks on the disappointing fate of benevolent feelings in this corrupt world as opposed to their virtuous status which he anticipates in heaven:

‘there are some feelings which perhaps are too tender to be suffered by the world. The world is in general selfish, interested, and unthinking, and

throws the imputation of romance or melancholy on every temper more susceptible than its own. I cannot think but in those regions which I contemplate, if there is anything of mortality left about us, that these feelings will subsist;—they are called,—perhaps they are—weaknesses here;—but there may be some better modifications of them in heaven, which may deserve the name of virtues.’ (150)

It is interesting to note that Harley’s conviction that Heaven is a place where these “feelings” are not weaknesses but, rather, are virtues, is worded in remarkably similar terms to the way in which Ben Silton describes that “certain poetic ground” which enlarges the feelings of the heart. Thus, it is suggested that Harley’s assessment of his “feelings” in this world as weakness is, most likely, a gross underestimate since art (or poetry more specifically) is offered, through the character of Ben Silton, as a means of strengthening and refining the virtuous feelings. This idea of art inciting and refining the moral feelings of the reader is further suggested in the final lines of the novel in which the tone is not tragic, but, rather, remains optimistically pathetic as the Ghost narrator describes his ability to experience virtuous benevolent feelings through his recollection of Harley’s character: “I sometimes visit his grave; I sit in the hollow of the tree. It is worth a thousand homilies; every noble feeling rises within me! every beat of my heart awakens a virtue!” (155-56). Likewise, the reader is encouraged to experience similar benevolent feelings throughout the novel—feelings which are described as strengths, not weaknesses.

Based on this discussion of the theme of disinterestedness within *The Man of*

Feeling it may be concluded that Mackenzie successfully anticipates and avoids the charge of egoistic or selfish motivation against his sentimental hero, Harley. This being the case, I find myself in opposition with those critics discussed in the second chapter, such as Burling, Burnham, Jenkins, Rymer and Simpson, who interpret Harley in a manner which assumes that Mackenzie is being critical of a sentimental moral philosophy of disinterested benevolence (altruism). By failing to take into consideration the late eighteenth-century distinction between disinterested moral feelings and those emotions based on passion and desire, these critics have erroneously concluded that Mackenzie offers a critical portrayal of Harley for selfishly seeking pleasure through benevolent acts. Furthermore, these critics are also wrong in their estimate that this criticism can be applied equally to the weeping reader of the novel who merely delights in getting fooled into tears. For all the talk about tears in this novel, what is missed is the fact that these tears are merely a way of indicating the benevolent feeling. Mackenzie, the moralist interested in promoting those higher moral feelings, should not be seen as one who was interested in the egoistic pleasure derived from the knowledge that one is emotionally susceptible to tears, but rather, as one pointing towards the happiness associated with virtuous benevolent feelings. Furthermore, Mackenzie should also not be seen as one who was critical of the ineffectiveness or impracticality of moral sensibility, as critics such as Barker, Brissenden, Mullan, Sherriff and Simpson have claimed, but rather as one who continually stressed the intrinsic value of moral feelings regardless of their instrumental value in the pursuit of pleasure.

Considering the fact that Mackenzie's text is said to be representative of the sentimental novel,⁶ one might expect that a similar type of disinterested benevolent moral philosophy could also be operating in some of the period's other sentimental novels. It is not surprising, therefore, that Michael Bell, in a chapter on Lawrence Sterne entitled "Sterne: Sentiment as Feeling" (1983), notes that, in *A Sentimental Journey*, Sterne "is able to accommodate in a quite positive way" a "benevolent impulse" while, at the same time, "subtly neutralizing or evading the indulgence and complacency that seem inescapable" (49). What Bell detects in Sterne, therefore, can be seen as a disinterested (i.e.: non self-indulgent) morality based on benevolence which remarkably resembles the morality apparent in Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling*. In fact, Bell also argues that Sterne is able to literally depict this morality in a manner similar to my interpretation of how Mackenzie achieves the same end: by depicting a benevolent feeling as the motivation for benevolent action. According to Bell, "Sterne is able to effect a testing separation of the possible phases of the response [to the pathetic situation]: the sympathetic emotion and the charitable action" (50). Bell argues that in the novel the benevolent "feeling" which is "aroused . . . is given a fruition in charitable action" and, therefore, "the overall effect is to articulate the two phases of feeling and action" (50). Similarly, Scott Paul Gordon in his recent article on Richardson, "Disinterested Selves: *Clarissa* and the Tactics of Sentiment" (1997) states that Richardson presents his text in

⁶ See Skinner (1965) and Mullan (1996).

such a way as to ensure that “readers could not . . . dispute the disinterestedness of their own passions” (494). Gordon also argues that “the increasingly common practice of solitary reading may have strengthened the belief in the reality of disinterested sensibility . . .” and Richardson’s audience was, therefore, “led . . . to accept the disinterestedness of *Clarissa*’s” (494). Furthermore, as mentioned in the first chapter of this paper, Susan Bourgeois (1986) argues for the importance of recognizing the moral, or “benevolent sensibility,” which operates in several novels by Tobias Smollett (105).

In light of the work done by these scholars on the topic of disinterested benevolent sensibility in the novels of Sterne, Richardson, and Smollett, Mullan’s (1996) recent review of the sentimental novel which was discussed in the introduction of this paper seems deficient. Based on the work of such scholars as Bell, Gordon, and Bourgeois, as well as the findings of this paper, Mullan is wrong in stating that it is false to presume “that sentimentalism derives from an optimistic creed of benevolence” (350). In contrast to Mullan’s assessment of the late eighteenth-century sentimental novel which omits the presence of sentimental benevolism, it is highly possible, based on my reading of Mackenzie’s representative sentimental text, that the late eighteenth-century sentimental novel in general was informed by a sentimental philosophy of the Shaftesburian variety which was both disinterested and benevolent. Furthermore, I also find myself in opposition to Mullan’s assessment of the decline of sensibility “at the end of the eighteenth century,” which is indicated by the fact that the term “‘sentimental’ turned from the approbatory to the pejorative; from ‘exhibiting refined and elevated feelings’ to ‘addicted to indulgence in superficial emotion’” (236). Rather than tracing a

decline of sentimentalism, what Mullan is in fact noting should be properly understood as the vulgarization of the term sentiment from a meaning that includes those specifically higher moral or benevolent feelings to a meaning that implies those lower feelings associated with self-interest. Because of Mullan's inaccurate assessment of the demise of sentimentalism, he also misses the fact that a similar type of disinterested and benevolent sentimental philosophy can be seen as operating within certain nineteenth-century novels, most notably in Dickens's *The Old Curiosity Shop* and Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.⁷

⁷ See Camfield (1988) and Eaton (1989).

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