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„The Portrayal and Evaluation of Sensibility by Women Novelists of the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries“

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# PREFACE

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# 1. Introduction

The eighteenth and early nineteenth century concept of sensibility, which denoted a person's being easily touched emotionally, prizing feeling over thinking and passion over reason, was highly regarded in both men and women. However, it was often also strongly associated with women and interpreted as a sign of weakness and an inability to assert themselves in the world. In this thesis I want to compare and analyse the different portrayals of sensibility in order to find out how sensibility was realised and evaluated by different women writers at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, in contrast to how sensibility was regarded in general at that time.

I chose three primary texts for this thesis. The first one is a novel by Frances Burney called *Evelina or the History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World* (1778). I chose this particular novel because it is a wonderful example of a 'novel of sensibility' because of its main character Evelina Anville. It obviously satirises the society in which it is set, just like Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), the second novel I selected for further analysis. It is important to note that in this novel the distrust of emotionality, which was so highly valued in the eighteenth century, becomes particularly apparent. Jane Austen rejected especially the idea of female weakness and the link between women and emotionality and therefore criticised it. The third and last text is a gothic novel by Ann Radcliffe called *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794). I decided to choose another genre primarily in order to show that it works with the same character traits, and secondly in order to find out in what way it is different. In this text, the heroine's sensibility is described in a rather exaggerated way. But it becomes obvious that the reason of this is to criticise the excess of sensibility.

The main research question of this thesis thus is as follows: How is sensibility realised and evaluated in the novels? The methods used for the analysis are close reading and a comparison of the novels to the historical and cultural context of the time. It is therefore important to consider further questions as well: How was sensibility defined in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries? What was regarded as ideal female behaviour? Which behaviour was permitted, and which was not, and why? How was female behaviour

evaluated and especially female sensibility? In what manner is sensibility realised in the three novels? In what situations does the heroine show stability? How is sensibility evaluated in these novels? Additionally, I decided also to include the question how male sensibility is portrayed in the novels in order to see in which way it is different from female sensibility.

For these purposes I will first give a broad view of the definitions of the terms ‘sensibility’ and ‘sentimental’ in regard to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, because already at that time they were highly controversial terms. This background information is important in order to portray the meaning of the movement and the cult of sensibility and sentimentalism in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Due to the fact that this literary and cultural movement was especially related to women, I will also explain what was considered to be appropriate female behaviour at that time, particularly in regard to women’s sensibility and how it was evaluated.

The main part of this thesis will concentrate on the portrayal of sensibility. Therefore, a list of typical characteristics of sensibility will be compared to typical types of behaviour described in the novels in order to see if there is congruity or a difference. The list of characteristics will be narrowed down to those categories also appearing in all three novels. It will be illustrated in what way the characters of the novels show their sensibility. The questions to be answered in this part are: What is characteristic of sensibility? How often does the heroine show her sensibility and in which context? How does the heroine’s sensibility become visible? Furthermore, it seems to be interesting not only to analyse the heroines’ indulgence in sensibility, but also to show when they demonstrate strength and stability. It is especially interesting to note that even though the heroines of sensibility are highly emotional, there are situations in which they are capable to control their feelings.

After analysing female sensibility it appears logical to look at male sensibility in order to see how it is portrayed and whether the categories applied to women can also be related to men.

As a conclusion of this thesis I will concentrate on the evaluation of sensibility. It will be analysed whether a person’s sensibility is evaluated positively or negatively in the three novels and if sensibility really is a desirable character trait in the three texts discussed.

# 2. Background: Definition and Explanation of Sensibility and Sentimentalism

## 2.1 Definition of Sensibility

The following definitions of ‘sensibility’ have been chosen from a far wider range of definitions provided over the last centuries and concentrate especially on those aspects relevant for analysing the three novels *Sense and Sensibility, Evelina or The History of a Young Lady’s Entrance into the World* and *The Mysteries of Udolpho.*

In the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the term ‘sensibility’ is defined as follows:

> b. Philos. Power or faculty of feeling, capacity of sensation and emotion distinguished from cognition and will
>
> […]
>
> 5. a. Quickness and acuteness of apprehension or feeling; the quality of being easily and strongly affected by emotional influences; sensitiveness. Also, with const., sensitiveness to, keen sense of something.
>
> […]
>
> 6. In the 18th and early 19th c. (afterwards somewhat rarely): Capacity for refined emotion; delicate sensitiveness of taste; also, readiness to feel compassion for suffering, and to be moved by the pathetic in literature or art. (Simpson and Weiner 982)

In the *Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English*, ‘sensibility’ is understood as “the ability to experience and understand deep feelings, especially in art and literature: a man of impeccable manners, charm and sensibility <> artistic sensibility” (Hornby 1382).

In *English Feminists and their Opponents in the 1790s: Unsex’d and Proper Females,* William Stafford defines

> [s]ensibility in eighteenth-century culture [as] […] sympathetic feeling, a readiness to shed a tear over the suffering of humans or animals. The person of sensibility may be especially sensitive to the feelings of others, may exhibit ‘delicacy’. It may be aesthetic feeling, aroused by works of

> art, especially poetry, or by contemplation of the beauties or sublimities of nature. It may simply be susceptibility to emotions of all kinds, including terror and despair. It may be romantic or sexual feeling. Sensibility may be active; as sympathy it will then be the cause of benevolence and beneficence. Or it may be passive; the person of extreme sensibility may be immobilized, rendered helpless by an excess of feeling. Sensibility may be a marker of superior humanity, refinement, cultivation, taste and genius. Or it may indicate a lack of self-control and judgement [sic!]. Sensibility may be admirable when combined with reason and moral principle, deplorable when cut loose from those moorings. Sensibility may lead to melancholy, despair and the crime of suicide. Sensibility may be a mere fashion accessory, a show of modish feeling with no roots in the heart. (Stafford 61-62)

People have always been struggling with defining sensibility. According to Ann Jessie Van Sant, “[t]he complexities of definition arise in part because *sensibility* is both a psychological and a physiological term” (xi). She declares that “[t]he three principal contexts in which *sensibility* was a key idea in the eighteenth century are physiology, epistemology, and psychology” (1). Therefore, “[t]he project of definition is not, in other words, just a modern critical problem. It is almost coextensive with the idea itself” (Van Sant 2). It is important to consider the fact that the term ‘delicacy’ has preceded ‘sensibility’ and has often been used synonymously (Van Sant 3). In contrast to what ‘delicacy’ had defined before, “sensibility in its various uses seems to have taken over the meanings of delicacy, further defining them through the contemporary physiology of the nervous system” (Van Sant 3). Van Sant points out furthermore that “many of the cultural associations identified with the idea of sensibility already existed in the idea of *delicacy*” (4). A further word “that requires examination in order to clarify the meaning of *sensibility* is *sentimental*. This term was also, and for some of the same reasons, said to be undefinable” (Van Sant 4).

A great number of writers have attempted to describe the concept of sensibility. Gary Kelly describes it as a “reaction against certain Enlightenment views, values, and ideas; in other respects it was a continuation, development, and further expression of them, especially the ideas of the autonomous subjective self and sympathy as the social bond” (12).

Mary Waldron argues that “[b]oth ‘sense’ and ‘sensibility’ were extremely slippery concepts throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries” (65). She continues stating that

> [t]he term ‘sensibility’ was also used very flexibly; basically it denoted a humane and compassionate attitude to life, but its French provenance had tended to give it a bad name, associating it with all kinds of excess and fashionable affectation. It was quite possible not to know which of its many meanings was being used on any particular occasion. (65)

G.J. Barker-Benfield declares that sensibility

> signified revolution, promised freedom, threatened subversion, and became convention. The word denoted the receptivity of the senses and referred to the psychoperceptual scheme explained and systematized by Newton and Locke. It connoted the operation of the nervous system, the material basis for consciousness. (xvii)

In his study *Sexuality and the Culture of Sensibility in the British Romantic Era*, Christopher C. Nagle attempts to explore “the so-called cult of Sensibility” (2). Historically, this “influential literary and cultural phenomenon” (Nagle 2) was predominant after 1750 and contrary to various scholars, the author argues that this cult did indeed persist as it found “newly significant expression, especially in literary texts around the turn of the century” (Nagle 2). Furthermore, he points out sensibility’s high influence on texts that have been regarded as Romantic (Nagle 2): “In the moments of contact between the two traditions, we can see the discursive process of Romantic incorporation – of the embedding and redeployment of generic, stylistic, tropological, and ideological elements of literary texts of Sensibility” (Nagle 3). Thus, Nagle continues and defines Romanticism “as nothing more – and certainly nothing less – than a later stage within a Long Age of Sensibility extending from the late seventeenth century through the nineteenth century.” (4)

Nagle identifies three categories related to sensibility: “excess, mixture, and mobility” (6) among which the first is of high interest for this thesis and will be explained in more detail in the chapter on the portrayal of sensibility.

## 2.2 Definition of Sentimentalism

In the *Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English,* the noun ‘sentimentality’ is defined as “the quality of being too sentimental” (Hornby 1383). Its adjective ‘sentimental’ is understood to be “connected with your emotions, rather than reason […] [and] producing emotions such as pity,

romantic love or sadness, which may be too strong or not appropriate; feeling these emotions too much" (Hornby 1383).

In his study *Virtue in Distress: Studies in the Novel of Sentiment from Richardson to Sade,* Robert Francis Brissenden defines sentimentalism as

> a genuinely meaningful term although a quite unusually complex and slippery one. And if it is properly understood, and if its application is intelligently directed it can be validly and usefully employed to describe a constellation of related ideas and ideals – beliefs about and attitudes towards man and society. Moreover the distinctiveness and interconnectedness of this group of ideas was acknowledged – tacitly, perhaps, more often than consciously – during the eighteenth century itself. (12)

Basically, "sentimental ideas are complex and to some extent contradictory, and their development in England and on the Continent, […] thought generally similar and often intimately related, did not always follow exactly the same path" (Brissenden 22). However, it is important to be aware of the fact that "they all derive from one basic notion. This is that the source of all knowledge and all values is the individual human experience" (Brissenden 22). Robert Francis Brissenden explains that "Locke established firmly and clearly that all successive speculation about the nature of man would have to be grounded on basic empirical principles – although the way in which these principles were to be interpreted was to very extensively over the next hundred years". (22)

Janet Todd states that "the centrality of sentiment and pathos" (*Sensibility* 3) can be regarded as something new in the eighteenth century. She continues arguing that

> [s]entimentalism entered all literary genres – the novel, essay, poetry and drama. But the cult of sensibility was largely defined by fiction from the 1740s to the 1770s. This fiction initially showed people how to behave, how to express themselves in friendship and how to respond decently to life's experiences. Later, it prided itself more on making its readers weep and in teaching them when and how much to weep. In addition, it delivered the great archetypical victims: the chaste suffering woman, happily rewarded in marriage or elevated into redemptive death, and the sensitive, benevolent man whose feelings are too exquisite for the acquisitiveness, vulgarity and selfishness of his world. (*Sensibility* 4)

John Mullan points out that one did not exclusively refer the adjective ‘sentimental’ to novels, but it could also be used for describing a great number of other things like parties or walks (*Sentimental* 237). Furthermore,

> [s]entimental texts appealed to the benevolent instincts of a virtuous reader, who might be expected to suffer with those of whom he or she read. Such a reader, alone with his or her better nature, might share some tears with a novel’s suffering characters. It is important that, while there were other words for the characteristics that the virtuous characters and readers of these novels were supposed to share […], “sentimental” was usually a description of a *representation:* a person possessed “sensibility”; a text was “sentimental”. […] “Sensibility” had originally referred to bodily sensitivities, began to stand for emotional responsiveness in the early eighteenth century, and came to designate a laudable delicacy in the second half of the century. It was a natural human resource or faculty often displayed by characters in sentimental fiction. “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. (Mullan, *Sentimental* 238)

Obviously, the term ‘sentimental’ can be traced back to “two Latin words: the verb ‘sentire’ and the noun ‘sensus’” (Brissenden 14). Although providing a rather large number of meanings, the Latin verb,

> in its most general signification, means simply ‘to be aware’. According to Lewis and Short in their *Latin Dictionary*, it is used primarily in reference to physical awareness: it means ‘to discern by the senses; to feel, hear, see, etc.; be sensible of’. But it can also refer to ‘mental’ awareness: it means (with a ‘mental) connotation) ‘to feel, perceive, observe, notice’; and thus, by transference ‘(in consequence of mental perception) to think, deem, judge, opine, imagine, suppose’. ‘*Sensus’*, the primary meaning of which is given as ‘the faculty or power of perceiving, perception, feeling, sensation, sense, etc.’ can also be used with either a corporeal or mental connotation. Thus it can refer to a simple physical sensation or perception, or it can refer to a mental feeling. (Brissenden 14-15)

It can be noticed that already at this time there is an ambiguity concerning the meanings of the two words since they “can refer either to feeling (in the emotional rather than the sensory meaning of the word), or to thinking or to states of consciousness in which both partake. They can refer to the process or

power of thinking and feeling, and also to its result – to activities and also to states" (Brissenden 15).

Brissenden focuses on sentimental vocabulary since he considers the "appearance and growth of an identifiably 'sentimental' vocabulary during the period […] one of the most substantial pieces of evidence both for the existence of a sentimental tradition and for its dynamic character." (Brissenden 13). He identifies 'sentiment', 'sentimental' and 'sensibility' as its key terms (Brissenden 13), followed by terms like 'sense', 'sentimentality', 'sentimentalism', 'sentimentalist', 'sensible', 'sensitive' and the phrase 'man of sentiment' (Brissenden 13). The most important interconnected terms with the "language of sentimentalism" (Brissenden 13) were 'feeling' and 'sympathy', as they appeared in phrases like 'feeling heart' and 'man of feeling' (Brissenden 13). Brissenden point out that "[s]ome of these words, e.g. 'sentiment', existed long before the eighteenth century; others, e.g. 'sentimental', were coined during the period. But in many cases some of the meanings they carried, the connotations with which they were charged, were unique to the period" (Brissenden 13-14).

Erik Erämetsä describes the semantic development of the term 'sentimental', which appeared in literature as well as dictionaries during the eighteenth century (Erämetsä 18). He states that the very first appearance of the term 'sentimental' was in a letter in 1749 "according to the N.E.D." (Erämetsä 18), but apparently, Horace Walpole had already used the adverb 'sentimentally' in 1746 and the adjective 'unsentimental' in 1752 (Erämetsä 18). It can be assumed that "'sentimental' was a coinage of Sterne's. […] [T]he word appears in an undated letter addressed to […] [his] future wife" (Erämetsä 18). Erämetsä highlights the importance of "Richardson's and Fielding's attitude towards the new word, as far as it is manifest in their works" (19). However, the process of the word reaching wider usage was rather slow. "Thus at the same time as the sentimental outlook on life became generally accepted as one of the main forces of the time, and the trend of sensibility was reaching its maturity in sentimental novels, the fashionable word itself remained glaringly absent" (Erämetsä 19-20). However, later on the term 'sentimental' enjoyed high popularity because in "the first place, it became fashionable in book-titles. […] Secondly, eighteenth-century people do not seem to have been satisfied with

sentimental books and essays only. Even sentimental periodicals were started" (Erämetsä 20).

The term 'sentimental' was understood as "'excessively emotional', 'idealistically or insincerely emotional'" (Erämetsä 22). However, in "the 1740s […] a good deal of uncertainty about its use prevailed even among people who were generally accustomed to literary activities and polite conversation" (Erämetsä 22). A further problem was the discussion about "whether sentimentalism was of French or of English origin" (Erämetsä 22). It has been described "as an English formation, which was introduced into French with the translation of Sterne's *Sentimental* Journey" (Erämetsä 22). One concluded that "the term was an adjectival derivation of the English word 'sentiment'. Originally, therefore, 'sentimental' would have denoted 'of sentiment', 'of the nature of sentiment'" (Erämetsä 23). It is important to note that

> the Age of Enlightenment made a point of laying down rules and prescriptions in order to regulate people's lives and, in particular, to inculcate moral principles by way of relevant examples. The task of instruction was undertaken by the early eighteenth century moral periodicals. The writers of these magazines proposed to illustrate the right way of living, moral living and, consequently, had to pass judgment on the problems and difficulties of conduct arising in their daily journalism. It is, therefore, natural that the word that came to be frequently employed in the *Spectator, Tatler,* and other periodicals, was *sentiment* […,] [which] often implied a moral evaluation, an attitude of approval or disapproval from a moral point of view. (Erämetsä 23)

Consequently, there are two possible original meanings of the English term 'sentimental', first, "'of the nature of thought, opinion, notion'" (Erämetsä 25) and second, acquiring "that new implication of morality" (Erämetsä 25).

If one refers back to the first appearance of 'sentimental' in a letter to Richardson, one finds "four examples of [it]: a sentimental man, a sentimental party, a sentimental walk, and a sentimental letter" (Erämetsä 27). In conclusion it can be said that after 1746, especially until 1759, "[t]he meaning of 'sentimental' […] had developed from the significations of 'of thought', 'sensible', 'highly moral', 'engaged in moral reflections', to 'possessing elevated and refined intellectual feeling', 'sympathetic'" (Erämetsä 54). No one can deny its popularity during the late eighteenth century (Erämetsä 57).

It seems essential to deal with the meaning of ‘sentimental’ during the period from 1760 to 1767 as well since ‘thought’ and ‘feeling’ were considered to be very similar in meaning (Erämetsä 32). In the course of the time it “was the Heart, and not the Head, that was looked upon as the principle guide to man’s virtuous conduct” (Erämetsä 33) and contrary to one’s expectations, “no mention of ‘feeling’ or ‘emotion’ is made under *sentiment* in any of the eighteenth-century dictionaries consulted for this purpose” (Erämetsä 33). However, the “fact remains […] that the Cult of Feeling was fast growing” (Erämetsä 34). Therefore, the “meaning of ‘sentimental’ […] became [eventually] emotionalized. The words of definition remained the same, but the source of virtue and moral conduct was being transferred from the Head to the Heart” (Erämetsä 37). During this period, the “meaning of ‘sentimental’ was undergoing a change from ‘highly moral’, ‘sententious’, implying a refined action of *thought*, to ‘sympathetic’, ‘elevated’, with the implication of refined action of *both thought and feeling*, possibly with the preponderance of the latter” (Erämetsä 39).

The “literary school of sentimentalism degenerated towards the end of the eighteenth century. Quantitatively it flourished as much as before, but the authors of genius had been succeeded by imitators well versed in the tricks of the trend but without the necessary talent to produce great literature” (Erämetsä 57). Erämetsä explains that

> [o]ne of the reasons for this degeneration wast he [sic!] fact that sentimentalism, or sensibility, had become the fashion. Sensibility, originating in that hybrid mixture of thought and feeling, was characterized by extreme innate sensitiveness, which responded to external stimuli with utmost quickness. In consequence, certain outward manifestations developed, such as weeping (»a sympathetic pitying tear»), kneeling, swooning, as spontaneous signs of a feeling heart and delicate disposition. (57-58)

Not everyone was fortunate to possess “such a faculty of responsiveness as was expected from a man of sensibility” (Erämetsä 58). Sensibility “became the fashion, that is, […] sensibility came to be regarded as ‘good manners’” (Erämetsä 58). As a consequence, “a very natural expedient was adopted. The external signs were imitated irrespective of whether the corresponding innate promptings were there or not” (Erämetsä 58).

In summary it can be said that during

> the eighteenth century the word ‘sentimental’ underwent the principal changes in the general outlook. In the early part of the century, ‘thought’ und ‘moral reflection’ had constituted the main qualities of the man of sense and virtue. The midcentury man had to display ‘moral feelings’, later on ‘refined, elevated intellectual feelings’, in order to be regarded as a moral, feeling man of fashion. Towards the end of the century, the philosophic doctrine or moral sentiments had lost its main importance. Feelings were no more cultivated for the sake of morality and virtuous refinement but for their own sake. (Erämetsä 58-59)

## 2.3 Sensibility vs. Sentimentality/Sentimentalism

Apparently, the two terms ‘sensibility’ and ‘sentimental’ have always been the cause of some confusion since they “denote a complex field of meanings and connotations in the late eighteenth century, overlapping and coinciding to such an extent as to offer no obvious distinction” (Ellis 7). The reason for this “is not because they share a single unitary meaning, but rather, they amalgamate and mix freely a large number of varied discourses. Sensibility operates within a variety of fields of knowledge, beyond the strict confines of the history of literature” (Ellis 8). These are the following:

> (1) the history of ideas (moral sense philosophy); (2) the history of aesthetics (taste); (3) the history of religion (latitudinarians and the rise of philanthropy); (4) the history of political economy (civic humanism and *le doux commerce*); (5) the history of science (physiology and optics); (6) the history of sexuality (conduct books and the rise of the domestic woman); and (7) the history of popular culture (periodicals and popular writing). (Ellis 8)

As far as the various terms belonging to the literature of sensibility are concerned, Janet Todd states that “‘sentiment’, ‘sensibility’, ‘sentimentality’, and ‘sentimentalism’ are counters in eighteenth-century literature and philosophy, sometimes representing precise formulations and sometimes vaguely suggesting emotional qualities. […] Often such terms were used interchangeably” (*Sensibility* 6). Only ‘sentimentalism’ may stand alone since “[m]ore recently the word has come to denote the movement discerned in philosophy, politics and art, based on the belief in or hope of the natural goodness of humanity and manifested in a humanitarian concern for the

unfortunate and helpless" (Todd, *Sensibility* 7). Whilst many critics use the words 'sentiment' and 'sensibility' synonymously, there is "a useful distinction to be made in historical usage and reference" (Todd, *Sensibility* 7). Janet Todd therefore defines 'sentiment' as

> a moral reflection, a rational opinion usually about the rights and wrongs of human conduct; the early eighteenth-century novel of sentiment is characterized by such generalized reflections. But a 'sentiment' is also a thought, often an elevated one, influenced by emotion, a combining of heart with head or an emotional impulse leading to an opinion or a principle. (*Sensibility* 7)

In contrast, the term 'sensibility'

> also presupposes an emotional susceptibility. After Sterne's novels, it frequently takes the meaning of refined and tender emotion, although the denotation of moral reflection also continues.
> 'Sensibility' is perhaps the key term of the period. […] [I]t came to denote the faculty of feeling, the capacity for extremely refined emotion and a quickness to display compassion for suffering. (Todd, *Sensibility* 7)

An additional meaning of "'[s]entimentality' came in as a pejorative term in the 1770s when the idea of sensibility was losing ground. It suggested and still suggests debased and affected feeling, an indulgence in and display of emotion for its own sake beyond the stimulus and beyond propriety" (Todd, *Sensibility* 8).

It can be said that it was "[t]he adjective 'sentimental' [which] is the cause of much of the confusion of terms […] since the term appeared to imply all that was elevated and aesthetically pleasing in feeling, all that appealed to and expressed the finder emotions, and all that was morally refined" (Todd, *Sensibility* 9).

Christopher C. Nagle also stresses the importance of distinguishing between "Sensibility" and "Sentimentalism" (4-5). Sensibility, in his opinion, is

> a multivalent and shifting discourse practice […], the shorthand for a dominant cultural belief in feeling as the glue that holds society together. The literature of Sensibility exploits this belief and develops discursive strategies for embodying Sensibility textually, and pedagogically; it is meant, in other words, to please, instruct, and come alive contagiously for its readers […]. It is, perhaps, the eighteenth-century version of what in the early twenty-first century we call virtual reality. (5)

Despite these distinctions, “eighteenth-century writers and speakers were neither precise nor consistent. Their usage frequently implies that *sentiment, sensibility,* and their variants are interchangeable” (Van Sant 7). Ann Jessie Van Sant points towards the fact that

> *sensibility* could mean *delicacy of mind* and therefore seem[s] to belong to the context of *sentiment.* In the same way, *sentimental* as an adjective used by or about Sterne can certainly refer to feeling occurring through organic function. Such mixed usage often suggests that sentiment as *heart-felt thought* causes quasi-organic *sensations*. (7)

Furthermore, the author argues that “[t]he two terms – and the imprecision with which they were used – are part of the evidence for the eighteenth-century realignment of categories for mental and emotional experience” (Van Sant 8) and that “[d]espite the inconsistencies of usage, the association of sensibility with the body and sentiment with thought or a particularly refined feeling provides a useful distinction” (Van Sant 8). As far as the physiological language of sensibility is concerned it can be said that it “derives from terms for sensory processes and neural responsiveness, since sensibility absorbs various terms that feature the heart. That is, in common usage, the long-standing literal and metaphorical language of the heart easily coexists with the language of the nervous system” (Van Sant 9). Van Sant claims that “the traditional language of the heart could be combined with or translated into the language of sensibility, which concerns both the literally understood processes of sensation and related or corresponding psychological experiences” (11).

# 3. Attitudes Towards Ideal Female Behaviour in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

## 3.1 Ideal Female Behaviour

Due to the fact that the number of female readers and writers was growing steadily in Great Britain during the eighteenth century, the education of a woman, her nature, role and function in society became the main focus of attention (Mergenthal 3).

At that time, women were “brought up prudishly” (Bloom viii) in order “to respect the virtues of discretion and correct conduct” (Bloom viii). For this reason, conduct books were published which “were aimed primarily at young women (and their mothers) in the middle station of life. They were designed to educate this audience in the behaviour ‘proper’ for a young lady, although they paradoxically argued that this taught behaviour ought to be natural” (Ellis 28). According to these conduct books, one had to value women (Ellis 28) “whose virtues were to be found not in display but in inner virtue. They value a woman who has emotional and moral depth rather than a splendid show of surface. The conduct book’s aim and focus is the married state” (Ellis 28).

During the eighteenth century, conduct books became very fashionable in Britain (Sutherland 25). Kathryn Sutherland points out that “the public focus in the conduct book on the private and the insignificant – its devising of a special kind of educational programme for those who are not to be educated (women) – performs massive ideological work across the gender divide” (26). The typical eighteenth-century conduct book

> absorbed aspects of socially and generically diverse earlier forms – devotional writings, the marriage manual, works on household economy and recipe books – to create a composite character-kit, incorporating practical advice on the duties of womanhood, on reading, dress, and desirable accomplishments, with moral instruction on less palatable issues, like the regulation of the affections and the control of moods, and with categories of virtuous identity, as daughter, wife, mother, widow. (Sutherland 26)

Furthermore, “[i]n confounding assumptions of ‘natural’ gender difference with definitions of ‘proper’ or ‘suitable’ behaviour, the conduct book sought to conceptualise and interpret female behaviour as predictor of social behaviour more generally” (Sutherland 26). Consequently, when constructing “the domestic, middle-class female” (Sutherland 27), the conduct book brought along the “fiction of the rational economic male” (Sutherland 27). According to a model by Jane Collier concerning the “approved female qualities” (Sutherland 28) it can be said that these were “[t]he unobtrusive arrangement of the household and care of children, needlework, a taste for canonical literature, an even temper, a ready accommodation of her husband’s moods, and an intelligent interest in and praise of his pastimes” (Sutherland 27-28).

Joyce Marjorie Tompkins states that “[c]onduct, the definition and application of the general moral laws that should govern the behaviour of man in society, was the prevailing intellectual interest of the age, and naturally enough this interest was reflected in the novel” (70-71). Furthermore, the author claims that the “cult of passion […] was triumphantly established during the last years of the century and culminated in the glorification of defiance” (Tompkins 92). Tears were regarded as showing one’s sensibility and therefore highly valued in the eighteenth century (Tompkins 96) and “[t]he sensible heart seeks an occasion to indulge itself in a shower of tears, since tears are, axiomatically, purifying, and a very small occasion can be made to serve” (Tompkins 100). During the eighteenth century “[s]ensibility was the mark of a valuable mind, and the achievement of a long process of civilization; but each sensible heart, exposed to the roughening contact of daily life, felt it necessary constantly to test its own reactions, to make sure that it was still humane, that it had not lost ground” (Tompkins 105). Additionally, people began to reflect whether sense and sensibility were compatible ideologies. This thought was debated in the *conduct books* of the century as well as in novels (Mergenthal 224-225).

In conclusion it can be said that according to conduct books of the eighteenth century a woman had to “be taught above all to be accommodating, docile, and submissive” (Bergen Brophy 61).

During the eighteenth century [i]t was quite unthinkable for young ladies, and therefore young heroines, to wander about the countryside having bawdy adventures, or, indeed, adventures of any kind” (Figes 11). At this particular

time in history “propriety demands that young ladies should not travel about unchaperoned, exposing themselves to danger” (Figes 72).

It is important to note that at the time of Jane Austen

> proper young girls grew up in a certain social seclusion, before they ‘came out’ around the age of fifteen or sixteen. […] Some exposure to good company and knowledge of the world between seven and fourteen […] was crucial to the formation of a gracious manner and a discriminating approach to pleasure; punctilious parents often allowed their adolescents to attend only private balls and school balls, leaving public assemblies and the resorts till the first assault on the marriage market, yet others let their offspring join the romantic fray from as young as thirteen. Contemporaries relentlessly associated urban congregations with the making of matches. (Vickery 267)

Ruth Bernard Yeazell argues that during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, people “devoted so much writing to the anxious remaking of woman’s “nature” and to codifying rules for her proper behavior” (ix) and that

> [w]riters of popular conduct books and philosophers alike long insisted on the importance of female modesty, even as they contradicted one another – and themselves – on the nature of the virtue. It is a commonplace of the advice literature that women’s modesty is instinctive, but the very existence of the literature testifies to the belief that the “instinct” must be elaborately codified and endlessly discussed […]. (5)

Eighteenth-century magazines claimed that “[t]he modest woman can be recognized by her downcast eyes, her head turned aside, and above all by the blush that suffuses her cheek […]. Such a woman never puts herself forward, and female modesty restrains and controls the violence of masculine love” (Yeazell 5). However, the “tendency by the end of the eighteenth century to find modesty natural, and especially natural to women, owed much to Rousseau’s influence – for all that Hannah More and a wide spectrum of English writers would wish to deny it” (Yeazell 16). In contrast to some people’s perception that women’s modesty was natural, Mandeville argued that “[p]eople only mistake custom for nature […] because they fail to measure the power of early training – forgetting how constant instruction in bodily exposure and concealment turns little children into properly different men and women” (Yeazell 18).

As far as blushing is concerned “there was scarcely a tribute to the modest woman that did not mention blushing, or that failed to identify both her virtue

and her attractiveness with a certain transient coloring of her face" (Yeazell 65). However, "[b]lood rushes to the human face for many reasons – excitement or anger, for example, as well as shame or embarrassment – and merely to know that someone is blushing is scarcely to know what signals she is sending" (Yeazell 67). Literature "sought to imagine all possible suffusions in her face as forms of blushing, and all blushes, even, as testifying to her modesty and "innocence"" (Yeazell 67).

In *Mothers of the Novel: 100 Good Women Writers before Jane* Austen, Dale Spender points out that

> [b]y the second half of the eighteenth century most of the women writers of serious fiction were concerned with ethical questions. They wanted to explore the human predicament and to understand human nature, and threaded through their novels are the issues of what is right and what is wrong, what can be improved and what cannot. They asked why human beings behaved in certain ways and whether they could behave differently. (2)

Moreover, Jane Spencer claims in *The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen* that

> [i]t was in the novel that the ideal of pure femininity was most memorably expressed and popularly disseminated. The heroines who most caught the eighteenth-century imagination – Richardson's Pamela and Clarissa, Burney's Evelina, Radcliffe's Emily St Aubert […] – were pure women resisting assaults on their virginity or on its psychological equivalent, their delicacy of mind. (110)

It is important to note that "women novelists developed the fallible, but unfallen heroine, who learned from her mistakes and reformed her ways" (Spencer 142). Furthermore, Spencer points out that

> [n]ovels with reformed heroines were about learning to repudiate faults seen as specially feminine, and accepting male authority instead of challenging it. This was a tradition of conformity and, significantly, it had a more continuous history during the eighteenth century than the tradition of protest, and led to greater achievements in the novel: Fanny Burney, Maria Edgeworth and Jane Austen all drew more or less extensively on this tradition. (143)

An important question which arises out of this context is why "the central women's tradition in eighteenth-century fiction [was] built on the character of the coquette – surely a male-created image of unstable femininity – and a narrative

framework that seems to depend on anti-feminist assumptions" (Spencer 143). According to Spencer there are two reasons for this, firstly because "women who spoke in support of masculine authority found it easier to have their work accepted than those who protested against it" (143) and secondly "[t]he more conformist the woman writer's message, the more acceptable her novel and the more likelihood of a tradition developing from her work" (143).

Jane Austen, for instance, focuses in her novels on "the belief in women's capacity for intellectual and moral growth that underlies most novels of the reformed coquette tradition" (Spencer 169). Furthermore, her works "give a new view of women, because within them, the picture of the learning heroine, sketched in earlier reformed coquette novels, is most fully and convincingly developed" (Spencer 169).

In Gothic novels, the novelists

> took the heroine out of the constricting world of the realistic novel in to an imaginary world of adventure, and widened the fantasy of female power offered by romance by exploring other kinds of power than that of heroine over adoring lover. They also combined fantasies of power with expressions of fear about women's vulnerability in the real world. (Spencer 192-193)

## 3.2 Evaluation of Female Behaviour/Sensibility

According to *conduct books*, it is above all the female readership that is prone to identifying with characters of novels. Critics of sensibility have argued that this is the reason for the construction of gender-characters, in which *sensibility* becomes a more and more female- defined characteristic (Mergenthal 226-227).

Silvia Mergenthal states that around 1780 the term 'sensibility', which was at first connoted positively, underwent a reevaluation, and especially between 1790 and 1800 it was criticised heavily (89). Syndy McMillen Conger states that Edmund Burke and Mary Wollstonecraft were among the critics of sensibility (*Transformation* 13). The latter "expresses the suspicion that sensibility is a seductive and manipulative doctrine designed to keep women silly and subjugated" (Conger, *Transformation* 13).

Ros Ballaster argues that “[s]ensibility is perhaps best understood as a psychological trait induced by the encounter with human suffering” (210). She finds it “unsurprising that this semi-public, non-verbal form of human interaction should come to be seen as particularly demonstrated by women. In the novel of sensibility the female body itself becomes a text to be interpreted by men and children” (Ballaster 210). She continues by claiming that “[d]aughters, in fictions of sensibility, must learn to negotiate their way between the scylla of maternal sensibility and the charybdis of paternal severity” (211). As an example she mentions Evelina Anville, who “struggles against being interpreted as a copy of her mother and falling victim to the latter’s apparent fate of seduction and betrayal; Evelina pursues recognition by and reconciliation with her father, Sir John Belmont, and a suitably paternal partner in Lord Orville” (211).

Turning towards Ann Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho* it can be said that

> Emily’s two aunts, Madam Cheron (later Montoni) and the dead Marchioness de Villeroi offer models of the two poles which she must struggle to avoid imitating, the one allowing her passions to rule her to the point where she expires due to their excessive effect upon her, and the other silently resigning herself to being poisoned by her husband at the instigation of his mistress. (Ballaster 211)

Jane Austen’s Elinor, Ann Radcliffe’s Emily and Frances Burney’s Evelina “are vulnerable to sensibility but their ability to ‘govern’ it properly pays off in that they are finally restored to favour, rewarded with their lovers and often also their paternal estates” (Ballaster 211).

A further highly interesting aspect is that

> with the exception of Evelina, these daughters come to marry men who are themselves inclined to succumb to the passions. Elinor marries Edward Ferrars after he is miraculously extricated from an unfortunate early engagement to the unsuitable Lucy Steele; Emily is reunited with the weak-willed Valancourt who is imprisoned as a result of his fatal attraction to the excitements of gambling […]. (Ballaster 211)

In *The Sign of Angellica: Women, Writing, and Fiction 1660*-1800, Janet Todd points out that

> [t]o some extent the construction of the fantasy and the signs of femininity that went with it broke down when they were intellectually battered by such writers as Mary Wollstonecraft (in her later years), Fanny Burney and Jane Austen. But by the time these women came to write they were inevitably heiress of the centrality which the sentimental

> modes and signs had given to women. And even they, with all their mockery, could not entirely escape the fantasy. (191)

She furthermore argues that

> [s]entiment has burgeoned in the presence of the father, but it is not his language that expresses it. Opposing the feminine language of sensibility, both bombastic and colloquial, is the rotund Johnsonian male discourse of common sense and morality used by fathers, guardians and proper lovers. In *Evelina,* the grandfatherly figure gives advice so aptly, generally and often that his letters could be removed from the novel to form a conduct book for young ladies […]. (*Sign* 285)

# 4. The Portrayal of Female Sensibility

There are numerous examples of how sensibility is realised in novels. In order to find out what is characteristic of the heroine's sensibility in the three novels analysed, a list of typical characteristics of sensibility has been compared with the behaviour described in the novels.

The qualities of the sentimental heroine can be described as follows: "loving, suffering, weeping, fainting, cherishing the worthy things of life, and hating the sham and tinsel of the world; protecting her virtue from men who would sully it by stratagem or buy it with gold" (Foster 276). A large number of writers have tried to categorise the various symptoms of sensibility. Christopher Nagle argues that "nearly all texts in which Sensibility is central exhibit obvious affective excesses. Excessive weeping, blushing, fainting, and the throbbing of a frantic pulse all testify to this mode and in most cases connect to prevailing concerns about sexuality and the body, especially for women" (Nagle 6). Syndy McMillen Conger states that the "term "sensibility" [is] a sign referring *either* to body *or* to mind, an ambiguity that persists in modern usage for the term "sens" from which "sensibility" derives" (*Language* xiv). She furthermore claims that the "professors of sensibility cultivate a backup body language system – now more familiar to many than the primary system – consisting in silence, significant looks and other facial expressions, inarticulate sounds, gestures, postures, and unconsciousness" (*Language* xiv). Conger points out that

> [m]en and women of sensibility (actual or fictional) frequently drive themselves to emotional extremes (or chronic states) like hysteria or melancholy, only to be temporarily stopped by mental or physical exhaustion. The literature of sensibility, which begins with moderate poetic expressions of grief and compassion midcentury, reaches sensational Gothic heights by the century's end […]. Clearly, in both of these instances the use of the language of sensibility does much more than simply express emotion – it creates it as well. (Conger, *Language* xv-xvi)

John Mullan explains that the "articulacy of sentiment is produced via a special kind of inward attention: a concern with feeling as articulated by the body – by

its postures and gestures, its involuntary palpitations and collapses" (*Sociability* 16). Sensibility has a "fixation upon tears, sighs, and meanings beyond words" (Mullan, *Sociability* 16). According to Janet Todd, Richardson's fiction serves as example for other writers of sensibility. In the foreground and highly valued is a feeling heart (Todd, *Sensibility* 77), and

> tears indicate correct response; they denote tenderness, sympathy and a feeling heart. The good characters react to suffering with subtle gradations from weeping hysterically to dropping a single tear. Such physical manifestations constitute a language of the heart, a code of sincere and true expression far beyond words which have the ability to lie and conceal. (Todd, *Sensibility* 77)

Heroines of sensibility "convey their virtue through their meaningful bodies, and the most authentic emotions are signalled not by words but by tears, blushes, palpitations and fainting fits" (Todd, *Sensibility* 120).

It is interesting to note that

> [t]he depiction in the fictive world of sensibility of deferential gestures was derived from the romantic or feudal past. Most apparent are the kneeling and other postures of super- and subordination, expressing a range of meanings: supplication, gratitude, and distress, for example. Such postures permitted the extravagant expression of emotions because of their subordination to form. To these must be added the myriad of subtler signs […]: from a single brimming tear to torrents of weeping, sighings, blushes, trembling, eye lowerings, silences, and degrees of swoonings. They encoded a specific system of emotions along the very border of the most private-public split imaginable, that is, the body. (Barker-Benfield 295)

Juliet McMaster states that "[f]or eighteenth-century novelists it was the mind as manifest in the body, rather than the body as it inhabits the mind, that was the topic of impelling interest" (xi). Pinch argues that "[f]eelings often seem to have lives of their own in eighteenth-century writing" (1). Furthermore, "[t]here were persistent murmurings, in the second half of the eighteenth century, that feelings were getting out of hand" (1). On the one hand, "[e]xtravagant feelings could cause the greatest acts of benevolence; [but] they could also lead women to their ruin" (Pinch 2).

The term 'woman of feeling' existed in fiction as well (Todd, *Sensibility* 110). The famous novelist "Richardson wrote that he favoured the image of the good woman over that of the good man" (Todd, *Sensibility* 110), since "[t]he cult of

sensibility stressed those qualities considered feminine in the sexual psychology of the time: intuitive sympathy, susceptibility, emotionalism and passivity" (Todd, *Sensibility* 110). Women were highly regarded in fiction because of their "unique sexual suffering, along with their bodily authenticity – their ready use of tears, blushes, palpitations, hysteria and even death" (Todd, *Sensibility* 110). The typical woman in eighteenth-century fiction could have been the faithful wife, the mother, the benevolent and sensitive virgin, or the chaste, susceptible and unwilling wife (Todd, *Sensibility* 111). Unfortunately, women were considered the inferior sex at that time. Men had ultimate power over them when they got married (Todd, *Sensibility* 111-112) and this "probably urged women writers in particular to turn eulogies of wifeliness towards the glorification of the mother, to whom they gave a wonderful potency, especially over men" (Todd, *Sensibility* 112). Only "[i]n the later eighteenth century, the plots of virgin and unhappy wife predominate and can best exemplify the woman of feeling" (Todd, *Sensibility* 114). It was "in the late 1780s and 1790s when the sentimental style was firmly established and sensibility as extreme emotionalism and refinement was opening itself most completely to attack" (Todd, *Sensibility* 114).

For the analysis of the three novels *Sense and Sensibility, Evelina or the History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World* and *The Mysteries of Udolpho,* the categorisation of several authors has been used, among whom are Christopher Nagle, Syndy McMillen Conger, John Mullan, Janet Todd, Markman Ellis, Barker-Benfield and Claudia Johnson. These writers have all attempted to describe what is characteristic of sensibility by providing the reader with categories. By them, twenty-two categories were established which seemed relevant for further analysis, among which were (excessive) weeping, blushing, fainting (Nagle 6), silence, significant looks, inarticulate sounds, gestures, postures (Conger, *Language* xiv), hysteria, melancholy, compassion (Conger, *Language* xv), palpitations, tears (Mullan, *Sociability* 16), convulsion, irresolution, involuntary movement (Mullan, *Sociability* 112), sighing, handholding, the beat of the pulse (Ellis 19), trembling, eye lowerings (Barker-Benfield 295) and being overpowered by feeling (Johnson 14).

After analysing the novels in detail it seemed appropriate only to use those signs which appear in all three books. The main question to be answered is how

sensibility becomes visible in order to reveal the female characters as heroines of sensibility. According to their frequency, these eleven categories are the following: tears and (excessive) weeping, being overpowered by feeling, blushing, fainting, trembling, melancholy, silence, hysteria, compassion, handholding and involuntary movement. Due to the fact that sensibility becomes visible through bodily symptoms as well as through psychological reactions, it appears relevant to divide the categories into these two parts. The signs belonging to the first, somatic category are tears and (excessive weeping), blushing, fainting, trembling, silence, hysteria and involuntary movement. Those relating to the second, psychological group are melancholy, compassion and handholding. The category “being overpowered by feeling” (Johnson 14) has to be dealt with as a borderline case since it may either refer to a bodily or to a psychological reaction and is therefore dealt with separately.

**Being Overpowered by Feeling**

Being overpowered by feeling can belong either to bodily/somatic symptoms or to psychological reactions. Actually one could argue that each category analysed might be classified as involving a state of being overpowered by feeling since each bodily or psychological reaction implies a particular indulgence in feeling or emotion. However, one has to look carefully whether a certain incident overwhelms the heroines of sensibility in terms of showing spontaneous bodily reactions, or if it causes a psychological reaction in which they simply behave emotionally.

One could argue that all heroines of sensibility are to a certain degree overpowered by feeling, some more and some less. As far as Mrs. Dashwood and Marianne in *Sense and Sensibility* are concerned,

> Elinor saw, with concern, the excess of her sister’s sensibility; but by Mrs. Dashwood it was valued and cherished. They encouraged each other now in the violence of their affliction. The agony of grief which overpowered them at first, was voluntarily renewed, was sought for, was created again and again. They gave themselves up wholly to their sorrow, seeking increase of wretchedness in every reflection that could afford it, and resolved against ever admitting consolation in future. Elinor, too, was deeply afflicted; but still she could struggle, she could exert herself. (8-9)

When Elinor bids her mother to ask Marianne whether she is engaged to Willoughby or not, she refuses to do so since “common sense, common care, common prudence, were all sunk in Mrs. Dashwood’s romantic delicacy” (84-85).

In fact, Elinor possesses great feelings, just like the other heroines of sensibility, but apparently she is capable of not showing them as much as the others do. However, when she realises that Edward Ferrars is engaged to Lucy Steele, “for a few moments, she was almost overcome – her heart sunk within her, and she could hardly stand; but exertion was indispensably necessary, and she struggled so resolutely against the oppression of her feelings, that her success was speedy, and for the time complete” (128-129). In this situation it becomes evident that she is almost overpowered by her feelings which she attempts to repress. Only after finding out that Edward is no longer engaged to Lucy Steele is she overpowered by joy, a reaction which can be considered absolutely understandable in a situation like this:

> From the moment of learning that Lucy was married to another, that Edward was free, to the moment of his justifying the hopes which had so instantly followed, she was everything by turns but tranquil. But when the second moment had passed, when she found every doubt, every solicitude removed, […] she was oppressed, she was overcome by her own felicity; - and happily disposed as is the human mind to be easily familiarized with any change for the better, it required several hours to give sedateness to her spirits, or any degree of tranquility to her heart. (338)

Her sister Marianne Dashwood’s “abilities were, in many respects, quite equal to Elinor’s. She was sensible and clever; but eager in every thing; her sorrows, her joys, could have no moderation. She was generous, amiable, interesting: she was every thing but prudent. The resemblance between her and her mother was strikingly great” (8). Unlike her sister Elinor, who conceals her feelings, Marianne openly shows them without any intention of hiding them. One morning, when Elinor and Marianne are out for a walk,

> Marianne told her, with the greatest delight, that Willoughby had given her a horse, one that he had bred himself on his estate in Somersetshire, and which was exactly calculated to carry a woman. Without considering that it was not in her mother’s plan to keep any horse, that if she were to alter her resolution in favour of this gift, she must buy another for the servant, and keep a servant to ride it, and after all, build a stable to

> receive them, she had accepted the present without hesitation, and told her sister of it in raptures. (59)

In the last lines of the quotation it becomes evident how passionate and unreasonable Marianne is. Without thinking about the propriety of accepting such a gift, she does not hesitate at all, simply because it is from Willoughby. The young woman lets herself be carried away by her emotions, which becomes again apparent when Marianne sees Willoughby for the first time after his departure and she is overpowered by feeling, which are portrayed by her saying,

> “Good heavens!” […], “he is there – he is there. – Oh! why does he not look at me? why cannot I speak to him?” “Pray, pray be composed,” cried Elinor, “and do not betray what you feel to every body present. Perhaps he has not observed you yet.”
> This however was more than she could believe herself, and to be composed at such a moment was not only beyond the reach of Marianne, it was beyond her wish. She sat in an agony of impatience, which affected every feature. (167)

The young woman wants Willoughby to reveal the truth about his behaviour and therefore does not hesitate from directly asking him what she desires to know: “‘But have you not received my notes?’ cried Marianne in the wildest anxiety. ‘Here is some mistake I am sure – some dreadful mistake. What can be the meaning of it? Tell me, Willoughby; for heaven’s sake tell me, what is the matter?’” (168). This outburst of emotion seems quite understandable considering the fact that Willoughby obviously appeared to be interested in Marianne. The reader can sympathise with the young woman and her despair.

In her deep sadness Marianne cannot even stand the company of other people: “[S]he could stay no longer. With an hasty exclamation of Misery, and a sign to her sister not to follow her, she directly got up and hurried out of the room” (183). This quotation shows Marianne’s excessive indulgence in feeling quite obviously. She tells Elinor that she is now only liked by Mrs. Jennings because she gives her reason to gossip because of Willoughby. Her sister

> Elinor had not needed this to be assured of the injustice to which her sister was often led in her opinion of others, by the irritable refinement of her own mind, and the too great importance placed by her on the delicacies of a strong sensibility, and the graces of a polished manner. Like half the rest of the world, if more than half there be that are clever

> and good, Marianne, with excellent abilities, and an excellent disposition, was neither reasonable nor candid. She expected from other people the same opinions and feelings as her own, and she judged of their motives by the immediate effect of their actions on herself. (190-191)

Marianne cannot bear Mrs. Ferrars' cold behaviour towards Elinor as far as the screens Elinor has painted are concerned. When she is informed that they are Elinor's, Mrs. Ferrars instantly starts admiring another woman's paintings and entirely disregards Elinor's work. This is too much for Marianne. Her

> feelings did not stop here. The cold insolence of Mrs. Ferrars's general behaviour to her sister, seemed, to her, to foretell such difficulties and distresses to Elinor, as her own wounded heart taught her to think of with horror; and urged by a strong impulse of affectionate sensibility, she moved, after a moment, to her sister's chair, and putting one arm round her neck, and one cheek close to her's, said in a low, but eager, voice, "Dear, dear Elinor, don't mind them. Don't let them make *you* unhappy." (222)

In this particular context Marianne's "affectionate heart which could not bear to see a sister slighted in the smallest point" (222) becomes highly evident. She cares about her sister so much that she cannot bear to see people treating her improperly.

Frances Burney's heroine Evelina is also a heroine of sensibility greatly affected by feelings. Jane Spencer calls Burney's *Evelina or the History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World* "part of the feminine tradition of expressing the heroine's sensibilities" (96). The author "displays the construction of female sensibility in her heroines, with their overpowering anxiety to conform to the codes of behaviour sanctioned by fathers, husbands, and society" (Jones 69). This becomes apparent due to the fact that only when knowing her natural father and therefore the man who can dispose of her can the protagonist Evelina accept Lord Orville's marriage proposal (Jones 70) and she "subsides into tears and a proper reverence and obedience towards the man who now occupies the position that entitles him to this homage of affection" (Jones 70). This huge anxiety about proper behaviour, which causes the heroine to be overpowered by feeling quite often in terms of blushing, silence, tears, etc., clearly reveals Evelina as a heroine of sensibility, which will be explained in the respective categories in more detail.

It can be noticed that Evelina is rather reserved when being in company, however, when she is writing to her guardian Arthur Villars she openly displays her feelings and thoughts; for instance after her first night in London she is overwhelmed by what she has seen:

> O my dear Sir, in what raptures am I returned! Well may Mr. Garrick be so celebrated, so universally admired – I had not any idea of so great a performer.
> Such ease! such vivacity in his manner! such grace in his motions! such fire and meaning in his eyes! – I could hardly believe he had studied a written part, for every word seemed spoke from the impulse of the moment.
> […]
> I would have given the world to have had the whole play acted over again. And when he danced – O how I envied Clarinda. I almost wished to have jumped on the stage and joined them.
> I am afraid you will think me mad, so I won't say any more […]. (27-28)

It is interesting what Evelina thinks about the opera. She writes to Arthur Villars that "[she] wish[es] the opera was every night. It is, of all entertainments, the sweetest, and most delightful. Some of the songs seemed to melt [her] very soul" (38). These quotations show that Evelina's excess of emotion is obviously expressed by excess in language. She uses superlatives, for instance, in order to describe the opera. What is also striking is the constant repetition of words. One cannot ignore the fact that she is overpowered by feeling because of what she experiences at the opera.

Evelina's happiness and well-being seem to be dependent on her guardian to a high degree, which becomes apparent in a letter to him in which she writes that "[her] only hope, is to get safe to Berry Hill; where, counselled and sheltered by [him], [she] shall have nothing more to fear […] [and] [she] shall have no happiness till [she] [is] again with [him]!" (55). Here, it becomes especially obvious how much Evelina indulges in her feelings. She writes that she will not be able to be happy until she finds herself again at Berry Hill. This excess of her emotion is expressed by her exaggerated language. Furthermore, when Madame Duval wants to take Evelina away with her, she is extremely distressed, which she expresses in a letter to Mr. Villars:

> Should she put this threat in execution, nothing could give me greater uneasiness, for her violence and volubility would almost distract you.

> Unable as I am to act for myself, or to judge what conduct I ought to pursue, how grateful do I feel myself, that I have such a guide and director to counsel and instruct me as yourself! (162)

Obviously, Evelina is entirely dependent on her guardian and constantly worries about what he might think of her or other people. She claims that she would be distressed if Madame Duval really took her away because of HIM, because she fears that he would not consider her grandmother an appropriate company her. Therefore, her sensibility is expressed by her ability to sympathise with another person and her indulgence in feeling, which, in this particular context, is her constant anxiety of what her beloved guardian might think of her.

A situation which quite obviously shows that Evelina quite often lacks self-command in moments of distress is when the Branghtons are talking loudly about the fact that Evelina has never seen her father:

> This was quite too much for [her]; [She] rose hastily, and ran out of the room: but [she] soon regretted [she] had so little command of [herself], for the two sisters both followed, and insisted upon comforting [her], notwithstanding [her] earnest entreaties to be left alone.
> As soon as [she] returned to the company, Madame Duval said, 'Why, my dear, what was the matter with you? why did you run away so?'
> This question almost made [her] run again, for [she] knew not how to answer it. But is it not very extraordinary, that she can put [her] in situations so shocking, and then wonder to find [her] sensible of any concern? (71)

The Branghtons' insensibility and unfeeling hearts are too much for Evelina, and not even her grandmother is able to sympathise with her. These contrasting characters, especially the obtrusiveness displayed by her cousins, makes the young heroine's soft heart all the more obvious.

Evelina is constantly worrying about how she appears in the eyes of Lord Orville and longs to make a good impression on him. However, she again and again finds herself in situations which threaten her good reputation, and therefore

> [she] was inexpressibly distressed; to suffer Lord Orville to think [her] satisfied with the single protection of Sir Clement Willoughby, [she] could not bear; yet [she] was more than ever averse to returning to a party which [she] dreaded his seeing: [She] stood some moments in suspense, and could not help exclaiming, 'Good Heaven, what can I do!' (97)

Moments like this clearly show that Evelina is not able to remain calm and reasonable in situations distressing to her. She is overpowered by her anxiety, which is revealed by her lack of taking decisions. She seems to be quite lost here. One could argue that her anxiety about her appearance in other people's eyes is understandable due to the fact that at the time the novel is set, a woman's reputation was extremely important. However, it has to be noted as well that it sometimes appears rather exaggerated.

The young woman is not only worrying about the impression she makes on Lord Orville, but also about the impression he makes on her guardian. Consequently, she writes most delightedly and emotionally about him:

> I was sure you would be displeased with Sir Clement Willoughby, and therefore I am by no means surprised at what you say of him: but for Lord Orville – I must own I had greatly feared, that my weak and imperfect account would not have procured him the good opinion which he so well deserves, and which I am delighted to find you seem to have of him. O Sir, could I have done justice to the merit of which I believe him possessed, - could I have painted him to *you* such as he appeared to *me* - then, indeed, you would have had some idea of the claim which he has to your approbation! (118)

Here, Evelina's sensibility becomes visible again through the excess in language described by the usage of conditionals, which shows Evelina's excess of emotion.

Evelina does not know how to behave appropriately in situations disagreeable to her, for instance when Sir Clement Willoughby starts kissing her hand: "Never, in my whole life, have I been so terrified. I broke forcibly from him, and, putting my head out of the window, called aloud to the man to stop" (100). The young woman is extremely scared and she is therefore overpowered by feeling, which is shown by her reaction to Sir Clement's advances. One has to argue that her reaction in this particular situation seems a little exaggerated, especially declaring a man's kissing her hand the most terrifying moment in her life. However, since women at that time were not allowed to be alone with men, it is very difficult for Evelina to remain calm and reasonable in a situation like this.

It is interesting to observe Evelina's conduct when she learns that her birthright will be proved. As one could have imagined, she is overpowered by her emotions, which is revealed in her letter to Mr. Villars. She tells him, "My

emotion was too painful for concealment, and every body enquired into the cause. I would fain have waved the subject, but Madame Duval was determined to make it public" (122). Furthermore, she writes to her guardian:

> Deeply interested as I now am in the event, most sincerely do I regret that the plan was ever proposed: methinks it *cannot* end to my satisfaction; for either I must be torn from the arms of my *more* than father, - or I must have the misery of being finally convinced, that I am cruelly rejected by him who has the natural claim to that dear title; a title, which to write, mention, or think of, fills my whole soul with filial tenderness. (131)

The words in the letter to Arthur Villars show Evelina's soft heart, which becomes especially obvious when being contrasted to her grandmother's obtrusiveness. The old woman is unconscious of her granddaughter's feelings.

When Evelina is rejected by her real father, in a letter "[she] endeavour[s] to bear this stroke with composure, and in such a manner as if [she] had already received [her guardian's] counsel and consolation. Yet, at times, [her] emotions are almost too much for [her]" (160). Here, it is interesting to note that Evelina herself considers her emotionality too excessive and she struggles to cope with it.

Any situation concerning Lord Orville excites Evelina's spirits. One day, he appears when Evelina is all alone, and,

> [i]ndeed, […], [she] must own [she] was greatly agitated; the idea of receiving Lord Orville by [her]self, - the knowledge that his visit was entirely to *[her]*, - the wish of explaining the unfortunate adventure of yesterday, - and the mortification of [her] present circumstances, - all these thoughts, occurring to [her] nearly at the same time, occasioned [her] more anxiety, confusion, and perplexity, than [she] can possibly express. (240)

In this extract, it becomes apparent by the high number of different thoughts that come to Evelina's mind when thinking about Lord Orville, how great her emotion is as far as he is concerned. She is obviously not able to cope with this situation due to her insecurity. Then she writes a note to Lord Orville explaining the matter, but she is again unsure about the propriety of doing so. Evelina "applied to the maid of the house to get this note conveyed to Berkeley-square; but scarce had [she] parted with it, ere [she] regretted having written at all, and [she] was flying down stairs to recover it, when the voice of Sir Clement

Willoughby stopped [her]" (250). Her thoughts are entirely occupied by Lord Orville. Even after receiving a note by Sir Clement Willoughby in Orville's name, which makes her disappointed in him, she cannot stop thinking about him and finally reveals her thoughts to Maria Mirvan. She declares that

> [a]s a sister [she] loved him, - [she] could have entrusted him with every thought of [her] heart, had he deigned to wish [her] confidence; so steady did [she] think his honour, so *feminine* his delicacy, and so amiable his nature! [She] ha[s] a thousand times imagined that the whole study of his life, and whole purport of his reflections, tended solely to the good and happiness of others: -but [she] will talk, - write, - think of him no more! (262)

In this letter it is especially interesting to observe the fact that Evelina almost seems to melt when describing Lord Orville. She is certainly overpowered by feeling when thinking about him.

As far as Ann Radliffe's heroine Emily St. Aubert is concerned, it can be said that during the last hours of her mother she is aware of her strong feelings and

> [n]ever had [she] felt the importance of the lessons, which had taught her to restrain her sensibility, so much as in these moments, and never had she practised them with a triumph so complete. But when the last was over, she sunk at once under the pressure of her sorrow, and then perceived that it was hope, as well as fortitude, which had hitherto supported her. St. Aubert was for a time too devoid of comfort himself to bestow any on his daughter. (Wright 19)

In this particular context, Emily's indulgence in feelings, though she tries to repress them, is absolutely comprehensible considering the loss she experiences. After her parents' death, she often hears strange noises which make her uneasy, probably due to the fact that she feels alone, which raises her anxiety and intensifies her fears:

> The silence, which again reigned, made her ashamed of her late fears, and she believed, that her imagination had deluded her, or that she had heard one of those unaccountable noises, which sometimes occur in old houses. The same sound, however, returned; and, distinguishing something moving towards her, and in the next instant press beside her into the chair, she shrieked; but her fleeting senses were instantly recalled, on perceiving that it was Manchon who sat by her, and who now licked her hands affectionately. (96)

Furthermore, Emily behaves highly emotionally in situations concerning her great love Valancourt. When Madame Cheron is talking with Emily and him about Valancourt and what she thinks about him and about a marriage between the two, “Emily’s countenance, during this coarse speech, varied every instant, and, towards its conclusion, her distress had so much increased, that she was on the point of leaving the room” (138). Finally, when Madame Cheron informs Emily that she has decided that her niece is not going to marry Valancourt,

> Emily was, at this time, too much affected to employ either remonstrance, or entreaty on this topic; and when, at length, she attempted the latter, her emotion overcame her speech, and she retired to her apartment, to think, if in the present state of her mind to think was possible, upon this sudden and overwhelming subject. (144-145)

This situation clearly shows that Emily is not able to think or act reasonably in situations distressing to her. Instead, she is overwhelmed by feeling and can only overcome her emotionality when she is alone again.

After Emily has learned that Valancourt had been to prison, she is deeply distressed and reflects about how to behave towards him in future, “[b]ut, when she attempted to think, her mind refused controul, and she could only feel that she was miserable” (509). This example shows that the fact that Valancourt had been to prison overwhelms Emily so much that she is incapable of thinking reasonably about it. When she is thinking about Valancourt and the happy time they passed together, “[t]his recollection was too much for her heart, and she sunk back in the carriage, nor once looked up, till it stopped at the gates of what was now her own mansion” (581). The fact that only thinking about Valancourt overwhelms Emily emotionally clearly shows her soft heart, but also her excessive indulgence in feeling since she apparently remains motionless during the whole journey due to her sadness**.** When hearing Valancourt’s voice,

> [a]t the sound, never heard by Emily, without emotion, she started, in terror, astonishment and doubtful pleasure, and had scarcely beheld him at her feet, when she sunk into a seat, overcome by the various emotions, that contended at her heart, and almost insensible to that voice, whose earnest and trembling calls seemed as if endeavouring to save her. (667)

This reaction clearly shows Emily’s sensibility. Only hearing Valancourt’s voice lets her be carried away emotionally. One could consider this behaviour rather exaggerated since she is even unable to remain standing, which could also be regarded as a bodily symptom of sensibility.

Sometimes Emily is so much overpowered by her anxiety that she is unable to think reasonably. Consequently, when arriving at the Castle of Udolpho,

> [a]s the carriage-wheels rolled heavily under the portcullis, Emily's heart sunk, and she seemed, as if she was going into her prison; the gloomy court, into which she passed, served to confirm the idea, and her imagination, ever awake to circumstance, suggested even more terrors, than her reason could justify" (227-228).

When passing a second gate, "long-suffering and murder came to her thoughts" (228). By these descriptions the reader is almost invited to laugh at Emily's excessive sensibility. She imagines the most horrible things that could happen to her and the fact that the surroundings of the castle allow her to think about imprisonment and other terrors clearly shows how much she is overpowered by her feelings. Her inability to remain reasonable becomes even more apparent when she finds herself alone in her room at the Castle of Udolpho, when

> Emily shudders in the eerie apartments assigned to her, is mystified by midnight music, trembles on the nocturnal excursions she takes accompanied only by her superstitious maid Annette, and faints dead away in the double chamber over the south rampart when she lifts the veil and sees the horrible wax figure of the cadaver. (Foster 286)

Especially at night,

> [h]er mind, long harassed by distress, now yielded to imaginary terrors; she trembled to look into the obscurity of her spacious chamber, and feared she knew not what; a state of mind, which continued so long, that she would have called up Annette, her aunt's woman, had her fears permitted her to rise from her chair, and to cross the apartment. (221)

It is interesting to observe that Emily's emotions are so excessive that she not even dares to move. Furthermore, "[t]he extent and darkness of these tall woods awakened terrific images in her mind, and she almost expected to see banditti start up from under the trees. […], the deep tone of the portal bell, which was struck upon to give notice of their arrival, increased the fearful emotions, that had assailed Emily" (227). In this particular context the implied author clearly wants to stress the heroine's exaggerated sensibility. Her fears are not really understandable because nothing really terrifying is happening around her; they are described as excessive, which the example of the banditti beautifully shows. Emily is anxious to go to sleep in the castle. Above all, the door of the room does not close. Therefore, "[b]y placing a heavy chair against it, she in some measure remedied the defect; yet she was still alarmed at the thought of

sleeping in this remote room alone" (235). She has "gloomy reflections" (236) and "[s]ometimes she wished to entreat of Madame Montoni, that Annette might have leave to remain with her all night, but was deterred by an apprehension of betraying what would be thought childish fears, and by an unwillingness to increase the apt terrors of Annette" (235-236). The fact that Emily does not dare to ask her aunt this question leads to the assumption that the young woman seems to know herself how exaggerated her fears are. However, she is incapable of overcoming them. Emily laughs in order to conceal her insecurity, for instance when she and Annette are speaking about ghosts, Emily was "trying to laugh away the fears, that began to steal upon her" (239). When Evelina is alone in her room "[s]he now retired to her bed, leaving the lamp burning on the table; but its gloomy light, instead of dispelling her fear, assisted it; for, by its uncertain rays, she almost fancied she saw shapes flit past her curtains and glide into the remote obscurity of her chamber" (241). All these thoughts and imaginations can be considered highly exaggerated in order to stress the heroine's sensibility.

After having examined the veil and fainted away, "Emily's pale and affrighted countenance alarmed even Madame Montoni" (249). While she is waiting for Annette, "[g]loomy and fantastic images came to her mind. She looked fearfully towards the door of the stair-case" (253). Furthermore, Emily is extremely terrified by Count Morano. When supposing that he is approaching, she "lift[ed] her eyes towards heaven and support[ed] herself by Annette's arm" (256).

Emily lets herself be carried away by her fears, but also because her imagination runs riot. Assuming to see instruments of torture, "[s]he was chilled by the thought; but, what was her agony, when, in the next moment, it occurred to her, that her aunt might have been one of these victims, and that she herself might be the next!" (348). Emily "now did not doubt, that Madame Montoni had been murdered, perhaps in this very chamber; or that she herself was brought hither for the same purpose" (347). When she is again alone in her room "[s]he even feared they were about to commit some barbarous deed" (357). When talking to Montoni, thinking that her aunt is dead, "[s]he sat down on a bench to support herself" (362). Emily does not manage to clear her mind, "her imagination was inflamed, while her judgment was not enlightened, and the terrors of superstition again pervaded her mind" (371).

When she is informed by Monsieur Du Pont that he was the reason of her distress, for instance when assuming to see an apparition when in reality it was just this man wandering around, Emily defends herself by claiming that “[her] spirits were, at that time, so much weakened by long suffering, that they took alarm at every hint” (458).

## 4.1 Somatic Symptoms

John Mullan argues that in

> the novels of the mid-eighteenth century, it is the body which acts out the powers of sentiment. These powers, in a prevailing model of sensibility, are represented as greater than those of words. Tears, blushes, and sighs – and a range of postures and gestures – reveal conditions of feeling which can connote exceptional virtue or allow for intensified forms of communication. Feeling is above all observable, and the body through which it throbs is peculiarly excitable and responsive. The construction of a body attuned to the influences of sensibility is not, however, uniquely a project of the novelists. We find the same kind of body, and the same concentration on the gestural force of feeling, in the writings of many eighteenth-century physicians. (*Sociability* 201)

Markman Ellis points out that it has been noted by a great number of critics (18) that “the metaphors of sensibility and its key terms of value (‘sentiment’, ‘sympathy’, ‘delicacy’, ‘sensibility’) are also present in accounts of nerve function, models of the nervous system, accounts of the ‘circulation’ of the blood and theories of the physiological organisation of the body as a whole” (18-19). It was also during this period that “medical writers developed sophisticated schemes of nervous organisation, offering a model of the sensitised body. To these physicians, the concept of ‘sensibility’ was the co-ordinating principle of bodily integrity, providing the basis for the overall integration of body function” (Ellis 19). Writers

> adopted the vocabulary of the scientists’ model of the workings of the nerves to communicate a deepened range of emotions and feelings. On these foundations is built the repertoire of conventions associated with the sentimental rhetoric of the body: fainting, weeping, sighing, handholding, mute gestures, the beat of the pulse, blushing – and so on. (Ellis 19)

However, it has to be said additionally to Markman Ellis's classification of 'handholding' as a bodily symptom of sensibility that in the three novels analysed it appears more frequently as a psychological reaction and therefore belongs to this section in this thesis, in which further explanation will be provided.

**Tears and (Excessive) Weeping**

Due to the fact that the two categories tears and (excessive) weeping are highly similar, they will be treated as one. Among the three novels analysed, Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* is the one in which the heroine Emily St. Aubert shows tears or weeps the most often. She cries, for instance when she is happy or grateful, like she does when her father talks about how much he loves the woods and poetry: "'O my dear father,' said Emily, while a sudden tear started to her eye, 'how exactly you describe what I have felt so often, and which I thought nobody had ever felt but myself! […]" (15). The indulgence in feeling by showing tears clearly shows Emily's soft heart, but it can be considered rather exaggerated. She also expresses her gratitude when Monsieur St. Aubert tries to teach her to value reason over passion. In this particular situation, she lets her tears speak for her:

> Emily smiled through her tears upon her father: 'Dear sir,' said she, and her voice trembled; she would have added, 'I will shew myself worthy of being your daughter;' but a mingled emotion of gratitude, affection, and grief overcame her. St. Aubert suffered her to weep without interruption, and then began to talk on common topics. (21)

Furthermore, she cries due to sadness after her father's death when being with Valancourt:

> He pressed her hand to his lips, it was cold and trembling; and, raising his eyes, he saw the paleness of her countenance. Tears came to her relief, and Valancourt watched in anxious silence over her. In a few moments, she recovered herself, and smiling faintly through her tears, said, 'Can you excuse this weakness? My spirits have not yet, I believe, recovered from the shock they lately received.' (108)

In this situation, Emily's emotion is understandable considering her loss. However, it is interesting that she apologises for crying here, but not in situations in which it really appears strange to do so. This clearly shows that

Emily does not know how to behave properly and in what situation her sensibility becomes too excessive.

Emily St. Aubert's heart is easily touched, which becomes apparent when she stays at a convent. She looks out of the window on the beautiful landscape and "[h]er eyes were filled with tears of awful love and admiration; and she felt that pure devotion, superior to all the distinctions of human system, which lifts the soul above this world, and seems to expand it into a nobler nature" (48). Just admiring the beauty of the country leads Emily to this indulgence of tears: "How deep, how beautiful was the tranquility that wrapped the scene! All nature seemed to repose; the finest emotions of the soul were alone awake. Emily's eyes filled with tears of admiration and sublime devotion" (175). Moreover, even simply listening to an oboe "affected Emily's spirits; she paused a moment in attention; the tender tones, as they swelled along the wind, till they were lost again in the ruder gust, came with a plaintiveness, that touched her heart and she melted into tears" (623). One could argue that this indulgence in tears can be regarded as rather exaggerated and reveals the fact that Emily is easily touched emotionally.

She thinks about her great love Valancourt all the time and she "read again and again the letters she had received from him; weighed, with intense anxiety, the force of every word, that spoke of his attachment; and dried her tears, as she trusted in his truth" (295). She seems to be highly sensible in regard to him, which becomes apparent when she finds out that some wine she is drinking is from Valancourt: "Emily set the wine upon the table, and burst into tears, while Theresa, disappointed and alarmed, tried to comfort her; but she only waved her hand, entreated she might be left alone, and wept the more" (623). Emily cries so heavily in this particular situation due to her sadness. She thinks that there will be no future for her and Valancourt and this is why she is overpowered by her feelings.

Even though Emily very often shows tears or weeping, she is aware of the fact that an excessive indulgence in feelings is not appropriate, which her father constantly tried to teach her. The young woman is desperate at the Castle of Udolpho and when she is with Montoni and Morano, she feels very uncomfortable and often weeps in her room. However, she manages to think about her father's words and stops crying.

Besides Emily, there is also her mother who cries due to happiness or gratitude:

> Madame St. Aubert, reanimated by the cheerfulness and recovery of her husband, was no longer sensible of the indisposition which had lately oppressed her; and, as she sauntered along the wood-walks of this romantic glen, and conversed with him, and with her daughter, she often looked at them alternately with a degree of tenderness, that filled her eyes with tears. St. Aubert observed this more than once, and gently reproved her for the emotion; but she could only smile, clasp his hand, and that of Emily, and weep the more. (8)

Her family seems to be highly important to her and when she is thinking about it and her home “Madame St. Aubert, looking on her family, felt, as a tear stole to her eye, that though splendour may grace happiness, virtue only can bestow it” (12). This clearly shows that just like her daughter, Madame St. Aubert possesses a soft heart and is easily touched emotionally. However, the characters cry as well due to despair, like Annette who was “terrified for the safety of Ludovico, [and] employed tears and entreaties to dissuade him from his purpose” (544).

In Frances Burney’s *Evelina,* the main character Evelina shows her sensibility through tears for instance when she is distressed because of her lack of knowledge how to behave at a dance. When she makes a faux-pas by rejecting one gentleman who asks her to dance, but accepts another, Mrs. Mirvan does not understand Evelina’s sudden distress and wants to know if she was already pre-engaged, when Evelina replies,

> ‘No, Madam, cried I, - only – only I did not know that gentleman, - and so, - and so I thought – I intended – I –’
> Overpowered by all that had passed, I had not strength to make my mortifying explanation; - my spirits quite failed me, and I burst into tears.
> They all seemed shocked and amazed.
> ‘What is the matter, my dearest love?’ cried Mrs. Mirvan, with the kindest concern.
> ‘What have I done?’ exclaimed my evil genius, and ran officiously for a glass of water. (49)

Due to the fact that Evelina is easily touched emotionally, she easily cries or weeps. When finding herself in moments of utmost distress to her, she bursts into tears, like she does when Sir Clement Willoughby asks her why she is

alone and “[she] could not bear this strange manner of speaking; it made [her] very soul shudder, - and [she] burst into tears” (199). Her outburst of emotion is not only the result of a strong sensibility, but also of her lack of knowledge how to behave properly. Since she is not used to talking to men, she cannot handle the situation and due to her high emotionality she cannot help but cry.

Evelina Anville, however, shows her sensibility as well due to gratitude, for instance when she is talking to her beloved guardian Mr. Villars:

> I burst into tears; with difficulty had I so long restrained them; for my heart, while it glowed with tenderness and gratitude, was oppressed with a sense of its own unworthiness. ‘You are all, all goodness!’ cried I, in a voice scarce audible, ‘little as I deserve, - unable as I am to repay, such kindness, - yet my whole soul feels, - thanks you for it!’ (266)

In this example, Evelina’s soft heart becomes visible through her tears and her language. When she finds out that she has a brother, she is overcome by happiness and shock at the same time “and [she] burst into tears” (320-321).

Furthermore, the young woman very often cries due to embarrassment, which is mostly in situations relating to Lord Orville. Evelina is constantly worrying about the impression she makes on him, and when Madame Duval behaves rather impertinently by telling Lord Orville’s coachman that Evelina wants his coach, which Orville gladly offers to her, Evelina “was so much affected by this politeness, and chagrined at the whole affair, that [she] could scarce refrain from tears” (247). This matter seems to preoccupy her mind for a long time, since

> [s]eldom ha[s] [she] passed a night in greater uneasiness: - so lately to have cleared [herself] in the good opinion of Lord Orville, - so soon to forfeit it! – to give him reason to suppose [she] presumed to boast of his acquaintance, - to publish his having danced with [her]! – to take with him a liberty [she] should have blushed to have taken with the most intimate of [her] friends! – to treat with such impertinent freedom one who has honoured *[her]* with such distinguished respect! – indeed, […], [she] could have met with no accident that would so cruelly have tormented [her]! (247)

It becomes obvious by the fact that Evelina cannot stop thinking about the whole affair that Lord Orville’s opinion is highly important to her. She seems to care about him very much. During conversations with him, Evelina is often overpowered by the man’s good heart, which appears highly exaggerated:

> My heart was too full to bear this kindness, and I could only answer by my tears. […]
> 'Oh, my Lord,' cried I, 'your generosity overpowers me!' And I wept like an infant. […]
> He seemed greatly shocked, and in terms the most flattering, the most respectfully tender, he at once soothed my distress, and urged me to tell him its cause. (367)

When Lord Orville does not seem to be as civil to her as he had been all the time before, Evelina expresses her sadness through tears, since

> [t]his little circumstance affected [her] more than [she] can express: yet [she] endeavoured to *rejoice* at it, since neglect and indifference from him may be [her] best friends. – But, alas! – so suddenly, so abruptly to forfeit his attention! – to lose his friendship! – […], these thoughts pierced [her] soul! – scarce could [she] keep [her] seat; for not all [her] efforts could restrain the tears from trickling down [her] cheeks […]. (335

Finally, when Evelina receives a letter from Lord Orville which reveals his true affection for her, she is overpowered by happiness and

> [finds] [herself] unable to proceed, and blinded by the tears of gratitude and delight which started into [her] eyes, [she] gave over the attempt of reading, till [she] retired to [her] own room: and, having no voice to answer the enquiries of Lord Orville, [she] put the letter into his hands, and left it to speak both for [her] and itself. (404)

In Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* the two sisters Marianne and Elinor Dashwood express their sensibility by tears and weeping quite differently. In order to portray this expression of emotion, it is interesting to note in what context they show tears. Marianne is the heroine who cries or weeps the most often in the novel. Apparently, she has a highly sensible heart and shows this quite openly. However, considering the situations in which she displays her feelings in a rather excessive way, one has to doubt the propriety of this kind of expression of feelings. After Willoughby has left her, Marianne "was without any power, because she was without any desire of command over herself. The slightest mention of any thing relative to Willoughby overpowered her in an instant" (82). During his first night away "[s]he was awake the whole night, and she wept the greatest part of it. She got up with an head-ache, was unable to talk, and unwilling to take any nourishment; giving pain every moment to her mother and sisters, and forbidding all attempt at consolation from either. Her sensibility was potent enough!" (83). Furthermore,

> [t]he evening passed off in the equal indulgence of feeling. She played over every favourite song that she had been used to play to Willoughby, every air in which their voices had been oftenest joined, and sat at the instrument gazing on every line of music that he had written out for her, till her heart was so heavy that no farther sadness could be gained; and this nourishment of grief was every day applied. She spent whole hours at the piano-forté alternately singing and crying; her voice often totally suspended by her tears. […] (83)

In this context one can see that she indulges in her feelings because of her great sadness. Also later, when there seems to be no hope for her and Willoughby, she is in a desperate state:

> Before the house-maid had lit their fire the next day, or the sun gained any power over a cold, gloomy morning in January, Marianne, only half dressed, was kneeling against one of the window-seats for the sake of all the little light she could command from it, and writing as fast as a continual flow of tears would permit her. In this situation, Elinor, roused from sleep by her agitation and sobs, first perceived her;
> […]
> The sort of desperate calmness with which this was said, lasted no longer than while she spoke, and was immediately followed by a return of the same excessive affliction. It was some minutes before she could go on with her letter, and the frequent bursts of grief which still obliged her, at intervals, to withhold her pen, were proofs enough of her feeling how more than probable it was that she was writing for the last time to Willoughby. (171)

Her sadness becomes again apparent during a conversation with Edward Ferrars: “”Oh! don’t think of me!” she replied, with spirited earnestness, though her eyes were filled with tears as she spoke, “don’t think of *my* health. Elinor is well, you see. That must be enough for us both.”” (228). Even in moments of despair, Marianne cares and thinks about her sister Elinor, which shows her good heart. However, this example also clearly reveals Marianne’s exaggerated sensibility. A reaction like this seems rather awkward and points at her excessive emotionality.

It has been shown that Marianne rather excessively indulges in her feelings, which becomes especially obvious when Elinor finally tells her the truth about Willoughby’s behaviour, when Marianne not only cries, but shows several symptoms of sensibility at the same time: trembling, involuntary movement and handholding:

> Marianne said not a word. – She trembled, her eyes were fixed on the ground, and her lips became whiter than even sickness had left them. A thousand enquiries sprung up from her heart, but she dared not urge one. She caught every syllable with panting eagerness; her hand, unknowingly to herself, closely pressed her sister's, and tears covered her cheeks.
> […]
> As soon as they entered the house, Marianne with a kiss of gratitude and these two words just articulate through her tears, "Tell Mama," withdrew from her sister and walked slowly up stairs. Elinor would not attempt to disturb a solitude so reasonable as what she now sought […]. (324)

It is interesting to note that Marianne is even distressed by bad news that are of no direct consequence to her, but rather to her sister's, for instance when Elinor finally tells Marianne about Edward's engagement, which she has kept as a secret for so long:

> Her narration was clear and simple; and though it could not be given without emotion, it was not accompanied by violent agitation, nor impetuous grief. – *That* belonged rather to the hearer, for Marianne listened with horror, and cried excessively. Elinor was to be the comforter of others in her own distresses, no less than in theirs; and all the comfort that could be given by assurances of her own composure of mind, and a very earnest vindication of Edward from every charge but of imprudence, was readily offered. (244-245)

Marianne does not only show tears when being sad, but also when she is happy, for instance when she hears the truth about Edward Ferrars' engagement she "could speak *her* happiness only by tears" (338). Obviously, Marianne's indulgence in feeling is so great that she cannot help but cry in situations in which she is overwhelmed by her emotionality.

As far as Elinor Dashwood in concerned, there is only one characteristic moment in which she bursts into tears after having repressed her feelings for a long time. It is when she finally learns from Edward himself that it was not him but his brother Robert who has got married: "Elinor could sit it no longer. She almost ran out of the room, and as soon as the door was closed, burst into tears of joy, which at first she thought would never cease. Edward, who had till then looked anywhere rather than at her, saw her hurry away, and perhaps saw – or even heard, her emotion". (335) This reaction is absolutely understandable considering how long Elinor has been repressing her feelings. It shows that

even though she is usually capable of controlling her emotions, there are situations in which even she cannot hide her emotions because they are too strong.

**Blushing**

As far as blushing is concerned “there was scarcely a tribute to the modest woman that did not mention blushing, or that failed to identify both her virtue and her attractiveness with a certain transient coloring of her face” (Yeazell 65). However, “[b]lood rushes to the human face for many reasons – excitement or anger, for example, as well as shame or embarrassment – and merely to know that someone is blushing is scarcely to know what signals she is sending” (Yeazell 67). Literature “sought to imagine all possible suffusions in her face as forms of blushing, and all blushes, even, as testifying to her modesty and “innocence”” (Yeazell 67).

In this context, it is Frances Burney’s heroine Evelina who blushes the most. She blushes for instance due to uncertainty. When a gentleman asks her to dance “[she] bowed, and [she] [is] sure [she] coloured; for indeed [she] was frightened at the thoughts of dancing before so many people, all strangers, and, which was worse, *with* a stranger” (31). These thoughts and her blushing clearly reveal her as a heroine of sensibility. Due to the fact that Evelina blushes, the implied author wants to stress her innocence. She blushes as well because of embarrassment, for instance when she is ashamed of her company, the Branghtons, especially in front of Lord Orville since “the continual wrangling and ill-breeding of Captain Mirvan and Madame Duval, made [her] blush that [she] belonged to them” (60). There are further situations in which Evelina is highly embarrassed since she does not want Lord Orville to have a wrong impression of her. She is constantly worried about what he might think of her, for instance when talking to someone he does not know:

> ‘No, believe me,’ said he, with a forced smile, ‘I could never believe Miss Anville would take an appointment with a stranger.’
> ‘An appointment, my Lord!’ repeated [she], colouring violently. ‘Pardon me, Madam,’ answered he, ‘but I thought I had heard one.’ (299)

Here again, Evelina blushes due to embarrassment because she knows that it is quite improper for a lady to meet a man without company.

When Sir Clement Willoughby asks Evelina if Lord Orville will marry her, “[her] cheeks glowed with indignation, and [she] felt too proud to make any answer” (358).

There is also another character in the novel who mentions blushes in order to indicate her modesty and embarrassment. It is Lady Howard when she is writing to Arthur Villars: “And now, my good Sir, I almost blush to proceed; -but, tell me, may I ask – will you permit – that your child may accompany them?” (24). The implied author reveals her as a heroine of sensibility by stressing her modesty. Madame Duval blushes sometimes as well, but this is mostly due to anger, for instance during a conversation with Captain Mirvan, in which “[she] changed colour, and listened with the utmost attention” (139). Lady Louisa, Lord Orville’s sister, blushes when being shocked or embarrassed.

As far as Ann Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho* is concerned, the character predominant in blushing is obviously Emily St. Aubert. She blushes mostly due to embarrassment. This does not only happen when being in company, but as well when she finds herself alone, for instance, missing her bracelet highly agitates her:

> When Emily was convinced that the bracelet was really gone, she blushed, and became thoughtful. That some stranger had been in the fishing-house, during her absence, her lute, and the additional lines of a pencil, had already informed her […]. But though the music she had heard, the written lines she had seen, and the disappearance of the picture, formed a combination of circumstances very remarkable, she was irresistibly retrained from mentioning them; secretly determining, however, never again to visit the fishing-house without Monsieur or Madame St. Aubert. (10)

In this situation, the implied author quite obviously wants to stress Emily’s innocence. When Madame Cheron talks about Emily’s supposedly ill conduct “[a] faint blush passed over Emily’s countenance; pride and anxiety struggled in her breast” (111). When Madame Cheron forbids Emily any correspondence at all with Valancourt, she is overpowered by sadness. However,

> she heard footsteps approaching, and then the door of the pavilion open, and, on turning, she saw – Valancourt. An emotion of mingled pleasure, surprise and apprehension pressed so suddenly upon her heart as almost to overcome her spirits; the colour left her cheeks, then returned brighter than before, and she was for a moment unable to speak, or to rise from her chair. (127)

Valancourt is quite obviously the cause of her blushing, which shows her intense feelings for him. Her aunt is dissatisfied with this unison. Therefore, she "told her niece, that she had been indulging in fanciful sorrows, and begged she would have more regard for decorum, than to let the world see that she could not renounce an improper attachment; at which Emily's pale cheek became flushed with crimson, but it was the blush of pride, and she made no answer" (161). Emily blushes as well when being related to Valancourt during a conversation with Count Morano. When he learns that Emily already knows the young man "Emily blushed and smiled, and Madame Cheron spared her the difficulty of replying" (132). She is of course highly embarrassed in this particular situation since being related to a man hints at a woman's improper behaviour. Emily's blushing does not only stress her embarrassment, but also her innocence. At the Castle of Udolpho, Emily is afraid of the porter and when he wants to deliver a message to her, she assumes she might be in danger, but when rethinking about this "she blushed at her weak fears" (333), which is again a sign of her embarrassment.

Finally one has to take a closer look at the reasons for blushing in Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility.* Elinor Dashwood hardly blushes, she only does so when Lucy Steele begs Elinor to give her advice concerning her engagement with Edward Ferrars when "Elinor blushed for the insincerity of Edward's future wife" (144). In this particular situation, the implied author wants to stress by the fact that Elinor blushes how improper it was for a woman to be secretly engaged. Elinor is obviously revealed as a heroine of sensibility by her blushing in order to stress her innocence and the fact that she feels embarrassed for Lucy.

As far as Marianne is concerned, she mostly blushes when the subject of discussion is Willoughby, which is probably due to embarrassment. One day,

> Willoughby took his usual place between the two elder Miss Dashwoods. Mrs. Jennings sat on Elinor's right hand; and they had not been long seated, before she leant behind her and Willoughby, and said to Marianne, loud enough for them both to hear, "I have found you out in spite of all your tricks. I know where you spent the morning." Marianne coloured, and replied very hastily, "Where, pray?" […] (68)

Additionally, when Sir John mentions Willoughby's name, Marianne blushes. However, she does not only blush because of the name. Her blushing also hints

at her bad conscience in terms of her meetings with a man. Even after all the trouble she has gone through because of him, “[i]n the evening, when they were all there together, Marianne began voluntarily to speak of him again; - but that it was not without an effort, the restless, unquiet thoughtfulness in which she had been for some time previously sitting – her rising colour, as she spoke – and her unsteady voice, plainly shewed” (325).

Finally, Marianne also seems to blush due to embarrassment, which becomes apparent in one particular situation in which she reveals to Edward and Elinor how she imagines her future: ““Hunters!” repeated Edward – “But why must you have hunters? Every body does not hunt.“ Marianne coloured as she replied, “But most people do.”” (90). Here, the implied author shows that Marianne feels slightly embarrassed about her indulgence in feeling and imagination as far as her future is concerned, which is revealed by her blushing.

**Fainting**

As far as fainting is concerned it can be said that the heroine most prone to this particular portrayal of sensibility is Emily St. Aubert. When she has to stay at the Castle of Udolpho, she faints when lifting the veil, which can be considered rather exaggerated since nothing terrifying is behind it. The implied author wants to stress Emily’s excessive sensibility by letting her imagination run riot. However, her inclination towards fainting already begins at her home in La Vallée, when she thinks that she hears some indefinable music, but

> [h]er lute lay on the table; every thing seemed undisturbed, and she began to believe it was another instrument she had heard, till she remembered, that, when she followed M. and Madame St. Aubert from this spot, her lute was left on a window seat. She felt alarmed, yet knew not wherefore; the melancholy gloom of evening, and the profound stillness of the place, interrupted only by the light trembling of leaves, heightened her fanciful apprehensions, and she was desirous of quitting the building, but perceived herself grow faint, and sat down. (9)

Here again it is her imagination which lets her be carried away emotionally and even almost leads her to fainting. Later in the novel, during the journey together with her father, they are attacked by some robbers: “Michael being now gone in pursuit of the horse, which, on being disengaged from his rider, had galloped off, he called Emily to his assistance. Receiving no answer, he went to the carriage, and found her sunk on the seat in a fainting fit” (38). The young lady’s

excessive sensibility is again stressed since she does not manage to remain calm.

Apparently, Emily St. Aubert faints due to anxiety and distress, which she does very often in situations concerning Valancourt. When he declares his love for her, she is so much overwhelmed that “Emily’s emotion would not suffer her to reply; and Valancourt, who now ventured to look up, observing her countenance change, expected to see her faint, and made an involuntary effort to support her, which recalled Emily to a sense of her situation, and to an exertion of her spirits” (106). This example clearly shows the implied author’s intention to point out how excessive sensibility can become. Emily’s reaction to Valancourt’s declaration of love by fainting seems highly exaggerated and almost ridiculous. There are also further situations in which her exaggerated sensibility is stressed. At a fancy ball, when she sees Valancourt dancing with another lady,

> [a] faintness suddenly came over Emily, and, unable to support herself, she sat down on a turf bank beneath the trees, where several other persons were seated. One of these, observing the extreme paleness of her countenance, enquired if she was ill, and begged she would allow him to fetch her a glass of water, for which politeness she thanked him, but did not accept it. Her apprehension lest Valancourt should observe her emotion made her anxious to overcome it, and she succeeded so far as to re-compose her countenance. (130)

Furthermore, when “[h]er mind was, at length, so much agitated by the consideration of her state, and the belief, that she had seen Valancourt for the last time, that she suddenly became very faint” (151). On finding out that Valancourt had been to prison Emily’s “countenance change[d], and […] she was falling from the seat; […] she had fainted, […]” (507). One day, Annette tells her that Jean shot a stranger, but did not kill him. Emily, supposing that he must have been Valancourt “would have fallen to the ground, if the girl had not caught her, and supported her to a bench, close to them” (588). Actually, Emily intends to reproach Valancourt for his bad conduct as far as his imprisonment is concerned, “but, when she again saw him, who so long had been the constant object of her thoughts and affections, resentment yielded to love; her resolution failed; she trembled with the conflict of emotions, that assailed her heart, and fainted away” (657). These examples clearly show how much Emily is

overwhelmed by her emotions, which leads to their excessive display in terms of fainting.

At the Castle of Udolpho, her excessive indulgence in feeling becomes even the more apparent when Emily is most terrified due to her superstition. However, when she finally has the courage to find out what is behind the veil

> [s]he paused again, and then, with a timid hand, lifted the veil; but instantly let it fall – perceiving that what it had concealed was no picture, and, before she could leave the chamber, she dropped senseless on the floor.
>
> When she recovered her recollection, the remembrance of what she had seen had nearly deprived her of it a second time. She had scarcely strength to remove from the room, and regain her own; and, when arrived there, wanted courage to remain alone. Horror occupied her mind […]. (248-249)

When she supposes that her aunt has been murdered she "grew very faint; could support herself no longer, and had scarcely presence of mind to set down the lamp, and place herself on a step" (324).

Annette, who infects Emily with her superstition, is a girl who lets herself be carried away very easily by her emotions, and "[s]he affirmed, and with a solemnity of conviction, that almost staggered the incredulity of Emily, that she had seen an apparition, as she was passing to her bedroom, through the corridor" (300). Annette "remained senseless on the floor" (300).

Frances Burney's heroine Evelina Anville also faints for various reasons, for instance when meeting her grandmother Madame Duval for the very first time "[she] heard no more: amazed, frightened, and unspeakably shocked, an involuntary exclamation of *Gracious Heaven!* escaped [her], and, more dead than alive, [she] sunk into Mrs. Mirvan's arms" (53). Evelina "almost fainted in her arms" (54), so greatly is she overwhelmed by meeting her vulgar grandmother. The implied author wants to show how easily the young woman is touched emotionally. However, in this particular situation, fainting seems rather exaggerated. Furthermore, Evelina nearly faints due to embarrassment, for instance when she meets Lord Orville while being in the company of prostitutes: "[she] thought [she] should have fainted, so great was [her] emotion from shame, vexation, and a thousand other feelings, for which [she] ha[s] no expressions" (236). When Evelina finally meets her father for the very first time,

“an involuntary scream escaped [her], and covering [her] face with [her] hands, [she] sunk on the floor”. (372)

A further interesting situation in which Evelina is about to faint is when Madame Duval speaks to her quite rudely. Evelina “was in such extreme terror, at being addressed and threatened in a manner to which [she] [is] so wholly unused, that [she] almost thought [she] should have fainted” (87). All these incidents, though highly exaggerated, show Evelina’s great indulgence in feeling and stress her innocence.

In Jane Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility,* fainting does not seem to belong to the list of predominant portrayals of sensibility. However, Marianne nearly faints when she meets Willoughby again and he is not willing to talk to her properly. She, “now looking dreadfully white, and unable to stand, sunk into her chair, and Elinor, expecting every moment to see her faint, tried to screen her from the observation of others, while reviving her with lavender water” (168). Here, the implied author wants to show how much Marianne is overwhelmed by her feelings.

**Trembling**

Trembling is another frequent sign of sensibility occurring in all three novels. Emily St. Aubert trembles due to sadness, embarrassment and fear. Trembling because of sadness is often portrayed in combination with shedding tears, for instance when Valancourt kisses Emily’s trembling hand. She apologises for her indulgence in feelings by claiming that she is still suffering because of her parents’ death.

Embarrassment may also be the cause of trembling, for example when the characters are highly excited because of a particular incident. Therefore, when Emily sees Madame Cheron “[s]he felt a blush steal upon her cheek, and her frame trembled with the emotion of her mind” (109). In this particular situation Emily is agitated because her aunt finds her in the company of Valancourt and she knows that Madame Cheron does not approve of it, and this excitement is portrayed by her trembling.

Emily is often overwhelmed by her fears. Especially at night when she is at the Castle of Udolpho, she frequently trembles when she is alone in her room. Her fears induce her to get carried away emotionally and she imagines the most horrible things which could be done to her aunt. When thinking about it, “and,

shuddering with grief and horror, the suggestions of imagination seized her mind with all the force of truth, and she believed, that the form she had seen was supernatural. She trembled, breathed with difficulty, an icy coldness touched her cheeks, and her fears for a while overcame her judgment" (360). She very often "passed the night in ineffectual struggles between affection and reason, and she rose, in the morning, with a mind, weakened and irresolute, and a frame, trembling with illness" (518).

Frances Burney's Evelina trembles as well due to fear or great excitement. When she saves Mr. Macartney from committing suicide "[she] started from the chair, but trembled so excessively, that [she] almost instantly sunk again into it" (184). The implied author wants to show that even though the young woman somehow manages to save the man from committing suicide, she is so much overpowered by her emotionality that she cannot help but tremble. Her excessive sensibility is portrayed by the excess of emotion. Another situation in which trembling because of fear becomes apparent is when she sees her father for the first time: "'Come forth, then, my dear,' cried [Mrs. Selwyn], opening the door, 'come forth, and see your father!' Then, taking [her] trembling hand, she led [her] forward. [She] would have withdrawn it, and retreated, but as he advanced instantly towards [her], [she] found [her]self already before him" (372).

As far as the heroines in *Sense and Sensibility* are concerned, Marianne is the only one relevant for further analysis. She trembles when receiving some shocking news which make her sad and agitated. It is when Elinor tells Marianne how Willoughby had explained his behaviour that "Marianne said not a word. – She trembled, her eyes were fixed on the ground, and her lips became whiter than even sickness had left them" (324). Marianne's excessive feelings are shown by her trembling.

**Silence**

Silence is another type of bodily reaction of sensibility, but it has to be noted that it may also refer to a psychological reaction. In the three novels analysed, it appears most frequently as a somatic sign, like in Frances Burney's novel. When Evelina is asked to dance, the gentleman "seemed very desirous of entering into conversation with [her]; but [she] was seized with such a panic, that [she] could hardly speak a word, and nothing but the shame of so soon

changing [her] mind, prevented [her] returning to [her] seat, and declining to dance at all" (31). It can be argued that Evelina's silence is a bodily reaction because she is incapable of speaking due to her fear of talking to a stranger.

Furthermore, she is again overpowered by fear when Madame Duval reveals to Evelina her intention to "to prove [her] birthright" (122), she seems greatly distressed, since "[i]t would be impossible for [her] to express [her] extreme consternation, when she thus unfolded her scheme. [Her] surprise and terror were equally great. [She] could say nothing; [She] heard her with a silence which [she] had not the power to break" (122). Moreover, Evelina Anville is unable to speak in situations embarrassing to her. When she intends to meet Mr. Macartney, but suddenly runs into Lord Orville

> [she] was scarce able to stand, so greatly did [she] feel [herself] shocked; but, upon [her] saying, almost involuntarily, 'Oh my Lord!' – he turned back, and, after a short pause, said, 'Did you speak to *me*, Madam?'
> [She] could not immediately answer; [she] seemed *choaked*, and was even forced to support [herself] by the garden-gate. (302-303)

However, also in moments of great joy, Evelina is not able to speak, for instance when she returns home to Arthur Villars to Berry Hill "[she] sprung forward, and with a pleasure that bordered upon agony, [she] embraced his knees, [she] kissed his hands, [she] wept over them, but could not speak" (255), or when she receives a kind letter from Lord Orville she, "having no voice to answer the enquiries of [him], [she] put the letter into his hands, and left it to speak both for [her] and itself" (404). The implied author wants to show that in moments involving great emotionality, the heroine is unable to speak, which is a bodily symptom of her sensibility.

Emily St. Aubert is a further character highly prone to be silent when distressed, sad or happy. Sometimes she is not capable of saying what she has in mind, just because a situation is too distressing for her, for instance when her father tries to teach her to value reason over passion, Emily is so overwhelmed by her emotions that she not only starts crying, but she is also incapable of saying what she has in mind. Apparently, she expresses through her silence what she is not capable of saying with words, just like her father does when they cry together and remain silent in order to indulge in this "language of the heart" (60). Furthermore, Valancourt's declaration of his love for her highly agitates her, since her "emotion would not suffer her to reply" (106). Particularly

during an agitated conversation with Madame Cheron, in which she is defending Valancourt but cannot counter her aunt's arguments any more, Emily's "mind, weakened by her terrors, would no longer suffer her to view him as she had formerly done; she feared the error of her own judgment, not that of Madame Cheron, and feared also, that, in her former conversation with him, at La Vallée, she had not conducted herself with sufficient reserve" (125). Also when Madame Cheron forbids her any correspondence with him at all, she falls to a deep reverie and when she finally sees Valancourt approaching, "she was for a moment unable to speak, or to rise from her chair" (127) due to her excess of emotion.

After knowing that she will have to leave Valancourt, he "supported her in his arms! For some moments their emotion would not suffer either to speak" (152). And finally, after her refusal of his proposal to her, Valancourt "pressed her hand to his heart. Emily sunk almost lifeless on his bosom, and neither wept, nor spoke. Valancourt […] tried to comfort and re-assure her, but she appeared totally unaffected by what he said, and a sigh, which she uttered, now and then, was all that proved she had not fainted" (159).

There are also situations of great fear in which she is unable to speak. Count Montani appears to be the cause of regular anxiety for her and on seeing him "Emily trembled, and was confused, while he almost started with surprise, and all the terrors of his countenance unfolded themselves. She forgot all she would have said, and neither enquired for her aunt, or entreated for Annette, but stood silent and embarrassed" (326).

Elinor Dashwood also finds herself unable to speak sometimes, for instance when she and her sister finally meet Willoughby again after a long time and she is shocked by his cold behaviour towards Marianne. "Elinor was robbed of all presence of mind by such an address, and was unable to say a word" (167). Another characteristic moment in which she is unable to speak is when Edward Ferrars, after his alleged marriage, is visiting the Dashwoods. Elinor is highly agitated and

> [i]n a moment she perceived that the others were likewise aware of the mistake. She saw her mother and Marianne change colour; saw them look at herself, and whisper a few sentences to each other. She would have given the world to be able to speak – and to make them understand that she hoped no coolness, no slight, would appear in their behaviour to

> him; - but she had no utterance, and was obliged to leave all to their own discretion. (333)

It has already been mentioned that silence may also refer to a psychological reaction. It is most predominant in Frances Burney's *Evelina.* Very regularly, Evelina is distressed or anxious, which is expressed through her silence. Evelina is so highly distressed because of her behaviour towards the gentlemen who asked her to dance, that she even finds herself unable to speak to Lord Orville, whose

> remarks upon the company in general were so apt, so just, so lively, I am almost surprised myself that they did not re-animate me; but indeed I was too well convinced of the ridiculous part I had myself played before so nice an observer, to be able to enjoy his pleasantry: so self-compassion gave me feelings for others. Yet I had not the courage to attempt either to defend them, or to rally in my turn, but listened to him in silent embarrassment. (34)

In contrast to silence as a bodily symptom, it has to be noted that here Evelina consciously decides not to speak because of embarrassment, and this is obviously a psychological reaction.

A further embarrassing moment for Evelina which causes her to remain silent is when Sir Clement Willoughby asks her if Lord Orville intends to marry her. In addition to her colouring she "felt too proud to make any answer" (358) and here again, it is Evelina herself who decides to remain silent, and not her body which causes her to do so.

As far as Marianne is concerned, she remains silent due to her great unhappiness concerning Willoughby's departure. Her family

> saw nothing of Marianne till dinner time, when she entered the room and took her place at the table without saying a word. Her eyes were red and swollen; and it seemed as if her tears were even then restrained with difficulty. She avoided the looks of them all, could neither eat nor speak, and after some time, on her mother's silently pressing her hand with tender compassion, her small degree of fortitude was quite overcome, she burst into tears and left the room. (82)

This is also a psychological reaction since Marianne consciously does not talk for a long time due to her sadness.

**Hysteria**

Emily St. Aubert indulges in hysteria when she is extremely frightened. This anxiety is either caused by men or superstition, for instance when Count Morano "followed her to the door, through which he had entered, and caught her hand, as she reached the top of the staircase, but not before she had discovered, by the gleam of a lamp, another man half-way down the steps. She now screamed in despair" (261). Her screaming, a sign of excessive emotionality, obviously shows Emily's exaggerated sensibility. Furthermore, together with Annette,

> […] as she gazed within the curtains, the pall moved again, and, in the next moment, the apparition of a human countenance rose above it.
> Screaming with terror, they both fled, and got out of the chamber as fast as their trembling limbs would bear them, leaving open the doors of all the rooms, through which they passed. When they reached the stair-case, Dorothée threw open a chamber door, where some of the female servants slept, and sunk breathless on the bed; while Emily, deprived of all presence of mind, made only a feeble attempt to conceal the occasion of her terror from the astonished servants; […]. (536)

The two young women are obviously entirely overpowered by their emotions. They are unable to remain controlled and rational and indulge in their excessive feelings. This reaction can be considered rather exaggerated, since their hysteria is only caused by their imagination and not by real terrors.

Evelina Anville becomes hysterical as well when she is frightened by men. When she is out with the Miss Brangthons and the party is stopped by a group of young men,

> [t]he Miss Branghtons screamed aloud, and [she] was frightened exceedingly: [their] screams were answered with bursts of laughter, and, for some time minutes, [they] were kept prisoners, till, at last, one of them, rudely, seizing hold of [her], said [she] was a pretty little creature.
> Terrified to death, [she] struggled with such vehemence to disengage [herself] from him, that [she] succeeded, in spite of his efforts to detain [her]; and immediately, and with a swiftness which fear only could have given [her], [she] flew rather than ran up the walk, hoping to secure [her] safety by returning to the lights and company [they] had so foolishly left […]. (197)

The young ladies' indulging in hysteria becomes obvious due to their loud screaming. Moreover, Evelina shows hysteria not only by screaming, but also

by the fact that she violently struggles to get away from the man and is not able to remain calm. Evelina's great terror in this situation becomes especially evident when she meets Sir Clement Willoughby, whom she begs for assistance, "or [she] shall die with terror!" (198). When Evelina finds herself again in a situation in which she loses her company,

> [she] started, and then, to [her] great terror, perceived that [she] had outrun all [her]companions, and saw not one human being [she] knew! with all the speed in [her] power, and forgetful of [her] first fright, [she] hastened back to the place [she] had left; - but found the form occupied by a new set of people.
> […]
> At last, a young officer, marching fiercely up to [her], said, 'You are a sweet pretty creature, and I enlist you in my service;' and then, with great violence, he seized [her] hand. [She] screamed aloud with fear, and, forcibly snatching it away, [she] ran hastily up to two ladies, and cried, 'For Heaven's sake, dear ladies, afford me some protection!' (234)

Here again, it becomes obvious in the last three lines how much Evelina is distressed by the situation that she appears very hysterical and cannot help but scream. By this excess of emotion, the implied author wants to stress how frightful and dangerous it was for a woman of that time to be without company and this is why Evelina's sensibility is portrayed so excessively.

Quite differently to Emily and Evelina, Marianne Dashwood is hysterical because of great pain, for instance when she cannot stand to remain at Mrs. Jennings' house any longer after what had happened with Willoughby: "Elinor advised her to lie down again, and for a moment she did so; but no attitude could give her ease; and in restless pain of mind and body she moved from one posture to another, till growing more and more hysterical, her sister could with difficulty keep her on the bed at all" (181). Furthermore, when learning about Edward Ferrars' marriage "Marianne gave a violent start, fixed her eyes upon Elinor, saw her turning pale, and fell back in her chair in hysterics" (329). These are two further examples of excessive indulgence in feeling portrayed by hysteria. It is understandable that Marianne is unhappy because of Willoughby. However, the implied author's intention is to show how exaggerated her sensibility appears by her lack of self-control.

**Involuntary Movement**

The cause most predominant of involuntary movement is fear. When Evelina saves Mr. Macartney from committing suicide “[she] looked fearfully at the pistols, and, impelled by an emotion [she] could not repress, [she] hastily stepped back, with an intention of carrying them away” […] (184). Moreover, involuntary movement is much likely to be caused by men, for instance by a rake like Sir Clement Willoughby. Evelina finds herself in a situation with him and, “[s]tarting at the sight of him, in rising hastily, [she] let drop the letter which [she] had brought for Lord Orville’s inspection, and, before [she] could recover it, Sir Clement, springing forward, had it in his hand. […]” (356-357). It becomes obvious that Sir Clement’s presence agitates Evelina so much that her excessive emotion is shown by this particular bodily reaction. A further situation, which clearly describes the young woman’s indulgence in feeling, is when Evelina’s father is really upset when meeting his daughter and therefore begs her to leave him: “‘I will, I will’ cried [she], greatly terrified; and [she] moved hastily towards the door: yet stopping when [she] reached it, and, almost involuntarily, dropping on [her] knees, ‘Vouchsafe,’ cried [she], ‘oh, Sir, vouchsafe but once to bless your daughter, and her sight shall never more offend you!’” (383).

Marianne Dashwood’s sensibility becomes apparent through involuntary movement one day, for instance, when a visitor is coming and she immediately supposes that it must be Willoughby, when instead it is Colonel Brandon and “in the extasy of her feelings at that instant she could not help exclaiming, ”Oh! Elinor, it is Willoughby, indeed it is!” and seemed almost ready to throw herself into his arms, when Colonel Brandon appeared. It was too great a shock to be borne with calmness, and she immediately left the room” (154). In this context it is revealed that Marianne is directed by her passion. Again, when she perceives Willoughby for the first time after his departure, “she would have moved towards him instantly, had not her sister caught hold of her” (167).

Just like Evelina Anville, Emily St. Aubert moves involuntarily because of fear, for instance when seeing a corpse and supposing it is her aunt’s, she, “bending over the body, gazed, for a moment, with an eager, frenzied eye; but, in the next, the lamp dropped from her hand […]” (348).

## 4.2 Psychological Reactions

It has already been noted that sensibility is portrayed as well through psychological reactions. In this context the three categories melancholy, compassion and handholding will be discussed as descriptions of a particular long-term reaction or signs of a specific feeling.

### Melancholy

Emily St. Aubert's quality as a heroine of sensibility becomes especially apparent due to her melancholy, which is often combined with the indulgence in tears. When she overhears her relatives talking about her parents and their, in their opinion, improper conduct,

> Emily checked the tears, that trembled in her eyes, while she said, '[…]. Let me not lament more than ever the loss of such parents.' The last words were almost stifled by her emotions, and she burst into tears. Remembering the delicacy and the tenderness of St. Aubert, the happy, happy days she had passed in these scenes, and contrasting them with the coarse and unfeeling behaviour of Madame Cheron, and with the future hours of mortification she must submit to in her presence – a degree of grief seized her, that almost reached despair. (112)

Her melancholy is often induced by nature, poetry or music. She falls into deep melancholy simply due to "[t]he pensive hour and the scene, the evening light on the Garonne, that flowed at no great distance, and whose waves, as they passed towards La Vallée, she often viewed with a sigh" (123). Furthermore, she highly admires nature. One day, "[a]s she listened to the measured sound of the oars, and to the remote warbling that came in the breeze, her softened mind returned to the memory of St. Aubert and to Valancourt, and tears stole to her eyes" (184). When she is playing the lute

> [s]he sung a melancholy little air, one of the popular songs of her native province, with a simplicity and pathos that made it enchanting. […], her voice trembled and ceased – and the strings of the lute were struck with a disordered hand; till, ashamed of the emotion she had betrayed, she suddenly passed on to a song so gay and airy, that the steps of the dance seemed almost to echo to the notes. (185)

Also later in the novel, when again playing her lute, she "lull[ed] her mind into a state of gentle sadness, and she sung the mournful songs of past times, till the

remembrances they awakened were too powerful for her heart, her tears fell upon the lute, over which she dropped, and her voice trembled, and was unable to proceed" (666).

Emily is often "[l]ost in this melancholy reverie, and shedding frequent tears" (209). Then, "[s]he remembered her many happy evenings, when with St. Aubert she had observed the shades of twilight steal over a scene as beautiful as this, from the gardens of La Vallée, and a tear fell to the memory of her father" (209). She is again and again indulging in "melancholy reflections" (367): "[T]he lonely murmur of these woods, and the view of this sleeping landscape, gradually soothed her emotions and softened her to tears. She continued to weep, for some time, lost to every thing, but to a gentle sense of her misfortunes" (367). Just hearing a familiar sound induces her to get carried away. She, "as the sounds drew nearer, knew them to be the same she had formerly heard at the time of her father's death, and, whether it was the remembrance they now revived of that melancholy event, or that she was struck with superstitious awe, it is certain she was so much affected, that she had nearly fainted" (525). By all these examples, the implied author wants to stress Emily's soft heart, which is a typical characteristic of a heroine of sensibility. However, it has to be noted that sometimes her melancholy seems a bit exaggerated, especially when combined with frequent crying or with wild imaginations as described in the last quotation.

Another interesting situation is when she cannot stop thinking about Valancourt's misbehavior. Lost in reverie,

> [c]heerful objects rather added to, than removed this depression; but, perhaps, she yielded too much to her melancholy inclination, and imprudently lamented the misfortune, which no virtue of her own could have taught her to avoid, through no effort of reason could make her look unmoved upon the self-degradation of him, whom she had once esteemed and loved. (529)

About her home La Vallée Emily cannot help exclaiming, "'O my father, - my mother! And there, too, is the Garonne!' she added, drying the tears, that obscured her sight, - 'and Tholouse, and my aunt's mansion – and the groves in her garden! – O my friends! are ye all lost to me – must I never, never see ye more!' Tears rushed again to her eyes, and she continued to weep" (580). Here, Emily's excess of emotion is clearly described by the excess in language.

Marianne Dashwood can also be considered a highly melancholy person. She displays this expression of sensibility with frequent shedding of tears. When her family has to leave their home in Norland,

> [m]any were the tears shed by them in their last adieus to a place so much beloved. “Dear, dear Norland!” said Marianne, as she wandered alone before the house, on the last evening of their being there, “when shall I cease to regret you! – when learn to feel a home elsewhere! – Oh! happy house, could you know what I suffer in now viewing you from this spot, from whence perhaps I may view you no more! – And you, ye well-known trees! – but you will continue the same. […] (29)

Also in this quotation, the heroine’s excess of emotion becomes obvious by the excess in language. However, not only thinking about her lost home incites her to indulge in melancholy reflections, but also thinking about the time she passed together with Willoughby, when

> [s]he played over every favourite song that she had been used to play to Willoughby, every air in which their voices had been oftenest joined, and sat at the instrument gazing on every line of music that he had written out for her, till her heart was so heavy that no farther sadness could be gained; and this nourishment of grief was every day applied. She spent whole hours at the piano-forté alternately singing and crying; her voice often totally suspended by her tears. […] (83)

It can be argued that Marianne’s melancholy appears rather exaggerated since she indulges in her emotions by spending her time doing everything she used to do with Willoughby. This behaviour will not help her to overcome her unhappiness, but will lead her into it even the more. Also when she has to leave London,

> Marianne, few as had been her hours of comfort [there], and eager as she had long been to quit it, could not, when it came to the point, bid adieu to the house in which she had for the last time enjoyed those hopes, and that confidence, in Willoughby, which were now extinguished for ever, without great pain. Nor could she leave the place in which Willoughby remained, busy in new engagements, and new schemes, in which *she* could have no share, without shedding many tears. (282-283)

Evelina Anville is another character prone to melancholy. When she has left the Mirvans with Madame Duval, she is writing a letter to her friend Miss Mirvan, telling her how much she will miss her company and that of Lord Orville:

> Tell me, my dear Maria, do you never re-trace in your memory the time we past here when together? to mine, it recurs for ever! And yet, I think I rather recollect a dream, or some visionary fancy, than a reality. – That I should ever have been known to Lord Orville, - that I should have spoken to – have danced with him, - seems now a romantic illusion: and that elegant politeness, that flattering attention, that high-bred delicacy, which so much distinguished him above all other men, and which struck us with such admiration, I now re-trace the remembrance of, rather as belonging to an object of ideal perfection, formed by my own imagination, than to a being of the same race and nature as those with whom I at present converse. (174)

Her melancholy becomes especially evident by the fact how much she admires the people she met, which she describes in a highly praising and exaggerated language. Her guardian Arthur Villars is also aware of the difficulty of leaving beloved people, which he expresses in a letter to Evelina:

> ‘Well then, my love, I think I was speaking of the regret it was natural you should feel upon quitting those from whom you had received civility and kindness, with so little certainty of ever seeing them again, or being able to return their good offices? These are circumstances that afford but melancholy reflections to young minds; and the affectionate disposition of my Evelina, open to all social feelings, must be hurt more than usual by such considerations. […] (267)

In this letter, Arthur Villars seems to justify Evelina’s melancholy and points towards her soft heart which cannot help but suffer.

**Compassion**

A further expression of the heroine’s sensibility analysed in this thesis is compassion, which is quite typical of a woman of feeling who possesses a great heart. Emily St. Aubert

> had discovered in her early years uncommon delicacy of mind, warm affections, and ready benevolence; but with these was observable a degree of susceptibility too exquisite to admit of lasting peace. As she advanced in youth, this sensibility gave a pensive tone to her spirits, and a softness to her manner, which added grace to beauty, and rendered her a very interesting object to persons of a congenial disposition. (5)

Emily is always conscious of the feelings of others, especially of those of her father. When observing him lost in reverie and realising that he is not well,

> she immediately began to sing one of those simple and lively airs he was so fond of, and which she knew how to give with the most captivating sweetness. St. Aubert smiled on her through his tears, took her hand and pressed it affectionately, and then tried to dissipate the melancholy reflections that lingered in his mind. (51)

Furthermore, when she notices her father reading letters that highly distress him,

> Emily was alarmed, and pressed him, as far as her delicacy would permit, to disclose the occasion of his concern; but he answered her only by tears, and immediately began to talk on other topics. Emily, though she forbore to press the one most interesting to her, was greatly affected by her father's manner, and passed a night of sleepless solicitude. (58-59)

Even though Emily's aunt Madame Cheron or later Montoni behaves in a rather cruel manner towards her, "Emily observed, that her aunt had been weeping, and her heart softened towards her, with an affection, that shewed itself in her manner, rather than in words, while she carefully avoided the appearance of having noticed, that she was unhappy" (243). When Emily has the impression that her aunt has been murdered, but finds out that she is alive because she finally finds her, "Emily meanwhile watched over her with the most tender solicitude, no longer seeing her imperious aunt in the poor object before her, but the sister of her late beloved father, in a situation that called for all her compassion and kindness" (366).

Like Emily St. Aubert, Evelina Anville has compassion for others as well. This expression of sensibility becomes apparent for instance when Madame Duval cannot find a free seat in a coach and Evelina "instantly begged permission to offer Madame Duval [her] own place, and made a motion to get out" (64). She is very grateful to Mrs. Mirvan and sympathises with her, which she expresses in a letter to her guardian Arthur Villars, in which she describes

> [h]ow great […] [her] obligation to Mrs. Mirvan [is], for bestowing her time in a manner so disagreeable to herself, merely to promote [her] happiness! every dispute in which her undeserving husband engages, is productive of pain, and uneasiness to herself; of this [Evelina] [is] so sensible, that [she] even besought her not to send to Madame Duval, but she declared she could not bear to have [her] pass all [her] time, while in town, with her only. Indeed she is so infinitely kind to [her], that one would think she was [Mr. Villar's] daughter. (74)

After meeting Mr. Macartney, Evelina's soft heart becomes entirely obvious when she finds herself deeply in thoughts about him:

> The rashness and the misery of this ill-fated young man, engross all my thoughts. If, indeed, he is bent upon destroying himself, all efforts to save him will be fruitless. How much do I wish it were in my power to discover the nature of the malady which thus maddens him, and to offer or to procure alleviation to his sufferings! I am sure, my dearest Sir, you will be much concerned for this poor man, and, were you here, I doubt not but you would find some method of awakening him from the error which blinds him, and of pouring the balm of peace and comfort into his afflicted soul! (186)

The good-hearted Evelina even has sympathy for Sir Clement Willoughby, even though he does not hesitate to embarrass her again and again, for instance by enquiring if she is going to marry Lord Orville. Although she would not have to speak to him anymore, "[she] had not the courage to leave him: for his evident distress excited all [her] compassion. And this was [their] situation, when Lady Louisa, Mr. Coverley, and Mrs. Beaumont, entered the room. […] And with him went [her] sincerest pity, though [she] earnestly hope[s] [she] shall see him no more" (358). It is interesting to observe that even though Evelina dislikes Sir Clement, she is incapable of not sympathising with him to a certain degree. This behaviour points towards the fact that as a heroine of sensibility, she cannot help but feel.

Mrs. Mirvan is a very good-hearted woman as well, which becomes obvious through her tender behaviour towards Evelina and her compassion for other people, for instance when she assists Monsiour Du Bois, who does not understand Captain Mirvan. She

> then advanced to him, and said, in French, that she was sure the Captain had not any intention to affront him, and begged he would desist from a dispute which could only be productive of mutual understanding, as neither of them knew the language of the other.
> This sensible remonstrance had the desired effect, and M. Du Bois, making a bow to every one, except the Captain, very wisely gave up the point, and took leave. (120)

As a heroine of sensibility, Elinor Dashwood certainly possesses compassion for other people. Elinor thinks about "[w]hat Mrs. Ferrars would say and do, though there could not be a doubt of its nature, she was anxious to hear; and still more anxious to know how Edward would conduct himself. – For *him* she

felt much compassion; - for Lucy very little – and it cost her some pains to procure that little; - for the rest of the party none at all" (244).

As far as Mrs. Jennings is concerned, Peter Knox-Shaw argues that Jane Austen chose to create the character "of Mrs Jennings to illustrate the fine workings of sympathy; her feelings are brought into focus as she tends the once-contemptuous Marianne at the crisis of her fever" (145).

**Handholding**

Handholding, the last psychological portrayal of sensibility analysed here, occurs most often together with tears and when the characters are in a melancholy state. Emily St. Aubert

> sat by her father, holding his hand, and, while she listened to the old man, her heart swelled with the affectionate sympathy he described, and her tears fell to the mournful consideration, that death would probably soon deprive her of the dearest blessing she then possessed. The soft moon-light of an autumnal evening, and the distant music, which now sounded a plaintive strain, aided the melancholy of her mind. (67)

When her father is very ill and nearly dying,

> he desired that Emily, who was then weeping in her own room, might be called; and, as she came, he waved his hand for every other person to quit the apartment. When they were alone, he held out his hand to her, and fixed his eyes upon her countenance, with an expression so full of tenderness and grief, that all her fortitude forsook her, and she burst into an agony of tears. St. Aubert seemed struggling to acquire firmness, but was still unable to speak; he could only press her hand, and check the tears that stood trembling in his eyes. (75)

Thus, they express their thoughts through these signs of sensibility. When St. Aubert has finally died, Emily looks at the corpse and

> [s]he continued to gaze wildly; took up the cold hand; spoke; still gazed, and then burst into a transport of grief. La Voisin, hearing her sobs, came into the room to lead her away, but she heard nothing, and only begged that he would leave her.
>
> Again alone, she indulged her tears, and, when the gloom of evening obscured the chamber, and almost veiled from her eyes the object of her distress, she still hung over the body; till her spirits, at length, were exhausted, and she became tranquil. (83)

In these examples, handholding seems to be an expression of deep feeling, a conscious reaction in order to comfort another person or a sign of support, and is therefore a psychological reaction. Valancourt does not know that Monsieur St. Aubert has died and

> meanwhile, having enquired anxiously after her health, and expressed his hopes, that M. St. Aubert had found benefit from travelling, learned from the flood of tears, which she could no longer repress, the fatal truth. He led her to a seat, and sat down by her, while Emily continued to weep, and Valancourt to hold the hand, which she was unconscious he had taken, till it was wet with the tears, which grief for St. Aubert and sympathy for herself had called forth. (101)

A similar expression of deep understanding and feeling is found in Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*. After Willoughby's departure, Marianne is in a very bad state "and after some time, on her mother's silently pressing her hand with tender compassion, her small degree of fortitude was quite overcome, she burst into tears and left the room" (82). Not only Mrs. Dashwood tries to comfort her daughter by holding her hand, but also Elinor. After she had talked to Mrs. Jennings about Marianne and Willoughby, she returned home. She was

> eager at all events to know what Willoughby had written, hurried away to their room, where, on opening the door, she saw Marianne stretched on the bed, almost choaked by grief, one letter in her hand, and two or three others lying by her. Elinor drew near, but without saying a word; and seating herself on the bed, took her hand, kissed her affectionately several times […]" [173).

In Frances Burney's *Evelina*, Mrs. Selwyn tries to support Evelina in situations most distressing to her by "taking [her] trembling hand" (372).

# 5. Moments of Female Stability

The heroines of sensibility do not constantly indulge themselves in feelings. There are also moments in which they show that they possess a certain stability and strength. Despite their great sensibility, they attempt to control their feelings as well, for example by considering the advice of a father or guardian. Most importantly, one has "to govern [one's feelings]" (8) like Elinor Dashwood in *Sense and Sensibility* does. In contrast to her mother and her sister Marianne, who "gave themselves up wholly to their sorrow, seeking increase of wretchedness in every reflection that could afford it" (8-9), Elinor is described as a young woman who "too, was deeply afflicted; but still she could struggle, she could exert herself" (9).

Elinor's strength becomes especially apparent when taking decisions like choosing a new home for her family: "Her judgment rejected several houses as too large for their income, which her mother would have approved" (16).

Furthermore, she does not suppose in the first place that Edward Ferrars must be in love with her. On the contrary, Elinor attempts to see things as they are and remain reasonable and therefore does not let herself be governed by her feelings. She tells Marianne that "[she] [is] by no means assured of his regard for [her]. There are moments when the extent of it seems doubtful; and till his sentiments are fully known, [Marianne] cannot wonder at [her] wishing to avoid any encouragement of [her] own partiality, by believing or calling it more than it is" (23). Sometimes Marianne wonders about her sister's countenance in everything, like: "And Elinor, in quitting Norland and Edward, cried not as I did. Even now her self-command is invariable" (41).

Even Marianne Dashwood, after many days of weakness because of Willoughby, finally shows some strength:

> The next morning produced no abatement in these happy symptoms. On the contrary, with a mind and body alike strengthened by rest, she looked and spoke with more genuine spirit, anticipating the pleasure of Margaret's return, and talking of the dear family party which would then be restored, of their mutual pursuits and cheerful society as the only happiness worth a wish. (319)

Most surprisingly, the passionate Marianne finally comes to the conclusion that her self-indulgence in her feelings for Willoughby has almost destroyed her. She gives a rather reasonable speech to Elinor, which she finishes by claiming that Willoughby's "remembrance can be overcome by no change of circumstances or opinions. But it shall be regulated, it shall be checked by religion, by reason, by constant employment" (323).

After Elinor has told her the truth about Willoughby, it is easier for Marianne to cope with the fact that he has left her. She claims that "[she] [is] now perfectly satisfied. [She] wish[es] for no change. [She] never could have been happy with him, after knowing, as sooner or later [she] must have known, all this. – [She] should have had no confidence, no esteem. – Nothing could have done it away to [her] feelings" (326).

As far as Frances Burney's main character Evelina is concerned, one finds a young woman who constantly indulges in her feelings and openly shows them. However, in the course of the novel Evelina manages also to show stability and strength when necessary, which is essential for her development. Therefore, it seems appropriate to take a deeper look at the moments in which she shows stability in order to find out how she matures. Sir Clement Willoughby, for instance, is constantly trying to be alone with Evelina and he talks to her about his feelings. However, she is capable of rejecting his advances and her "vehemence" (116) is praised by Arthur Villars.

Evelina appears to be extremely self-reflecting. On the one hand, the meeting with her grandmother overwhelms her emotionally. However, she tells her guardian that she "will not afflict [him] with the melancholy phantasms of [her] brain. [She] will endeavour to compose [her] mind to a more tranquil state, and forbear to write again, till [she] ha[s], in some measure, succeeded" (131). Consequently, the young woman seems to be aware of the propriety of governing one's feelings. She even manages not to think about the subject of distress all the time. She claims, for instance, that "[her] thoughts are not so totally, so very anxiously occupied by one only subject, as they lately were" (137).

A further decisive moment in which Evelina displays her strength is when Mr. Smith wishes her to accompany him to an assembly and therefore offers her a ticket. However, she manages to assert herself when he, "in a manner both

vehement and free, pressed and urged his offer till [she] was wearied to death: but, when he found [her] resolute, he seemed thunderstruck with amazement, and thought proper to desire [she] would tell him [her] reasons" (181).

The moment in which Evelina saves Mr. Macartney from committing suicide can be probably regarded as the most difficult one in her whole life. Even though she is frightened to death and overcome by emotions, she manages to "[reach] again the room [she] had so fearfully left, [and] [she] threw away the pistols" (184).

When Evelina learns from her grandmother that she would like her to marry the young Mr. Branghton, "[she] scrupled not, warmly and freely to declare [her] aversion to this proposal; but it was to no effect, as she concluded, just as she had begun, by saying, that [she] should not *have him, if [she] could do better*" (243) and adds that "[n]othing, however, shall persuade [her] to listen to any other person concerning this odious affair" (243). And when her grandmother blackmails her and urges her to marry this young man, Evelina, "[f]rightened as [she] had been at her vehemence, this proposal restored all [her] courage; and [she] frankly told her that in this point [she] never could obey her" (253).

Even when Evelina finds out that her father denies her, she remains composed and just utters, "with tolerable calmness, 'let the chaise, then, be ordered again, - I will go to Berry Hill, - and there, I trust, I shall still find one!'" (365).

Despite the fact that Ann Radliffe's heroine in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* is highly prone to indulging in her sensibility, she also tries to follow her father's advice not to give herself up to emotions, even in moments of utmost distress:

> This was an object, which called for fortitude, not for tears; Emily dried hers, and prepared to meet with calmness the trying moment of her return to that home, where there was no longer a parent to welcome her. 'Yes,' said she, 'let me not forget the lessons he has taught me! How often he has pointed out the necessity of resisting even virtuous sorrow; how often we have admired together the greatness of a mind, that can at once suffer and reason! […] (92)

Emily is devastated because of her father's bad state of health. However, "[r]ecalled, at length, to a sense of duty, she tried to spare her father from farther view of her suffering; and, quitting his embrace, dried her tears, and said something, which she meant for consolation" (76). She even manages to

remain reasonable when Valancourt proposes to her and begs her to run away with him in order to escape from Madame Cheron, who wants to take her away with her and her future husband, Count Montoni. Even though Emily loves Valancourt, “she acted, perhaps, with somewhat more than female fortitude” (155) and her “duty, and good sense, however hard the conflict, at length, triumphed over affection and mournful presentiment” (155). Not even Valancourt’s constant questioning why they should part can persuade her and she tells him that “[he] tear[s] [her] heart, but [she] never can consent to this hasty, imprudent proposal” (159).

At first, Emily does not seem to be frightened when Annette tells her about the strange happenings at the Castle of Udolpho and she curiously enquires why nobody spoke to Signora Laurentini when she was seen there. Annette replies, most terrified, that no one would have wanted to talk to a ghost, to which Emily calmly replies, “‘But what reason had they to conclude it was a spirit, unless they had approached, and spoken to it?’” (238). However, afterwards, until the end of the novel, Emily is infected by Annette’s terror and superstition, which she finally only overcomes when realising that she let herself get carried away by her feelings.

It is important to note that “Emily copes better with real disasters, when forced to do so, than with illusory terrors. Nightfall always brings fears, together with romantic sensibility” (Figes 71). Since

> Radcliffe loves describing night scenes, […] [Emily] is alarmed at nights by mysterious sights and sounds, which always, in the end, have a rational explanation. Having learnt to master her first fears, she is exposed to bigger night terrors. Her father’s death, in particular, and a somewhat unnecessary visit to his grave at midnight, exposes Emily to mysterious night frights which she tries to conquer, telling herself that melancholy has heightened her susceptibility. (Figes 71)

# 6. Men of Sensibility

After dealing in detail with the various occasions at which the heroines of the novels analysed show signs of sensibility, it is interesting to compare these symptoms with those of the male heroes in order to see in which way they resemble the female symptoms and in how far they are different. Even though these men all possess sensibility to a certain degree, each of them shows it differently. This is not surprising considering the various definitions provided for sensibility and the diverse possibilities of portraying it. In this chapter it is also interesting to compare the heroes of sensibility to the other male characters appearing in the novels, especially to those who show no sensibility at all.

Primarily, one has to consider that "[i]t is natural to suppose that sensibility was thought of as feminine: feminine feelings by contrast with masculine reason" (Stafford 62). However, sensibility "was not thought of as exclusively female: in literature men of feeling – Sir Charles Grandison, […] – were as prominent as Clarissa or Camilla" (Stafford 62).

Janet Todd states that "[t]he sentimental novel is often said to be the vehicle of a sentimental philosophy positing innate virtue or goodness in all humanity" (*Sensibility* 94). An important characteristic of the man of feeling is that he "cries easily and other benevolent characters share his tears. […] [T]he body, now of the weakened or ageing man, becomes a true communicator beyond rational speech" (Todd, *Sensibility* 99). Claudia Johnson argues that

> during the period in question, sentimentality entailed instead the "masculinization" of formerly feminine gender traits, and that the affective practices associated with it are valued *not* because they are understood as feminine, but precisely and only insofar as they have been recoded as masculine. Sentimentality may seem to promise a socially productive parity between the sexes because it makes it not only acceptable but also prestigious for men to engage in and display behaviors classically associated with women: fainting, weeping, blushing, being overpowered by feeling, and even […] overcome by prejudice. (14)

G. J. Barker-Benfield points out that "[s]entimental heroes opposed gambling, oaths, drinking, idleness, cruelty to animals, and other elements of popular male

culture" (247-248). A further essential description of the man of feeling is that he "always found nature a sovereign remedy and an unfailing source of consolation" (Foster 10). In Frances Burney's *Evelina,* the heroine very often draws a distinction between Sir Clement Willoughby and "Lord Orville, the man of feeling" (Barker-Benfield 249). Willoughby's behaviour towards Evelina, a "forced, pointed behaviour […] to a woman in public was now no longer acceptable. […] Not only had men to give up their physical harassment of women, they also were asked to be extraordinarily careful not to give women psychological pain" (Barker-Benfield 249). Ann Radcliffe's Valancourt in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* clearly shows "the masculine ideal […] taking women's feelings into account and deferring to their importance" (Barker-Benfield 249). When seeing Emily grieving "he weeps silently with her. It was as if women exaggerated their sensibility to try to get men to be this careful. The culture of sensibility wished to reform men, to make them conscious of women's minds, wishes, interests, and feelings, in sum, their sensibility" (Barker-Benfield 249). However, it is important also to note

> one final general characteristic of the male ideal which sharply distinguished the hero from the heroine of feeling, and reflected the reality of the legal and economic disabilities of women. […] Married or unmarried, sentimental heroes were shown free to enter or leave "the world" with an ease in sharp contrast to the experience of sentimental heroines. This was […] true of Valancourt […]. (Barker-Benfield 249-250)

Finally it can be said that "the man of feeling remains an awkward figure with his chosen female helplessness" (Todd, *Sensibility* 109).

## 6.1 Austen's Diverse Men of Sensibility: Colonel Brandon, John Willoughby and Edward Ferrars

As far as Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* is concerned, there are three male characters which can be identified as men of sensibility, however different this sensibility may be shown. Colonel Brandon can be easily defined as a man of sensibility due to his melancholy and his compassion for others. He is a man who did not leave England for economic, but for emotional reasons. These feelings seem to renew when he meets Marianne (Stewart 97), whom he compares to Eliza with his "melancholy eye" (Stewart 80). The Colonel "was on

every occasion mindful of the feelings of others" (62), his "own qualifications as a hero of sensibility – which include a temperament both warm and sympathetic […] – easily outweigh those of his rival, but they do not displace them. Jane Austen is truthful in charting the motions of the heart, ruthless in witnessing the forces that lead to its betrayal" (Knox-Shaw 142). Furthermore, Colonel Brandon can be regarded as a man of sensibility, for instance, because of "[h]is pleasure in music, though it amounted not to that extatic delight which alone could sympathize with [Marianne's] own, [but] was estimable when contrasted against the horrible insensibility of the others" (37).

A further sign of the Colonel's sensibility is his reflecting and thinking, for instance when he "remain[s] the whole evening more serious and thoughtful than usual" (189). He cares so much about Marianne that he is constantly worrying about her well-being and does not approve of her being in company with Willoughby since he knows too well what he did in the past. It is very difficult for him to tell Elinor the truth about Willoughby, which becomes apparent when "[h]e stopt a moment for recollection, and then, with another sigh, went on" (193). The Colonel does not only care about Marianne's feelings, but those of other people are important to him as well. His compassion for others becomes evident at various occasions, for instance when talking about Edward Ferrars: "'The cruelty, the impolitic cruelty,' – he replied, with great feeling – 'of dividing, or attempting to divide, two young people long attached to each other, is terrible […]" (264).

Elinor greatly appreciates the Colonel's feeling heart and says about him that "[she] feel[s] the goodness of Colonel Brandon most sensibly. There are not many men who would act as he has done. Few people have so compassionate an heart! [She] never was more astonished in [her] life" (267).

In contrast to Colonel Brandon, John Willoughby is a man of "impressive but uncontrolled feelings" (Jones 68). He can be considered a man of sensibility since "of music and dancing he was passionately fond" (48). Together with Marianne he "read, they talked, they sang together; his musical talents were considerable; and he read with all the sensibility and spirit which Edward had unfortunately wanted" (50). To Marianne, he appears to be the perfect husband, but in reality the feelings he shows are not those of a good-hearted and compassionate man. When talking to Elinor, Willoughby himself admits that he

was overpowered by feeling, since “giving way to feelings which [he] had always been too much in the habit of indulging, [he] endeavoured, by every means in [his] power, to make [himself] pleasing to [Marianne], without any design of returning her affection” (298-299). However, what he has in common with the Colonel and the other heroines of sensibility is blushing, which he does, for instance, when telling Mrs. Dashwood that he is leaving or when the subject of discussion comes to what he did a long time ago. John Willoughby, who is

> characterized by an aristocratic charm as well as by a libertine carelessness, has wasted his property and also women. As a result, he has become, ironically, chronically dependent on women, controlled initially by the expected inheritance from Mrs. Smith and eventually by his marriage for money. He relies on women for his emotional economy as well, remaining in the end tormented by his dream of the Dashwood women and their cottage that he himself has discarded. (Stewart 84)

Edward Ferrars is the last man of sensibility appearing in this novel. He is a rather dull and reserved character, showing his sensibility by remaining silent or only talking when absolutely necessary. Knox-Shaw claims that he “is deficient only in the parade of sensibility” (148). In the novel he is described as “not handsome, and his manners required intimacy to make them pleasing. He was too diffident to do justice to himself; but when his natural shyness was overcome, his behaviour gave every indication of an open affectionate heart” (17). He shows emotions when Marianne reproaches him of being too reserved: “‘I do not understand you,’ replied he, colouring” (93). He blushes at various occasions, mostly due to embarrassment, and also when Elinor thinks that he is married “[h]e coloured, seemed perplexed” (334). However, he seems to have a good and feeling heart, which becomes apparent considering his behavior when not simply breaking the promise to Lucy Steele. A further aspect which reveals him as a man of sensibility is his capability of self-reflection. He seems to take very much to his heart what Marianne and Elinor say about his reserved conduct: “His gravity and thoughtfulness returned on him in their fullest extent – and he sat for some time silent and dull” (93). Edward is a man of feeling since he is very reserved in his conduct towards the woman he is secretly in love with – Elinor. The reader is invited to sympathise with the shy Edward. It becomes obvious at the end of the novel that he never intended to marry Lucy Steele, but nevertheless, as a man of honour and good manners, he could not simply break

his engagement. Only when the truth is revealed, Edward seems to become more open towards Elinor and reveals his thoughts about this whole affair to her: “[H]ow I have blushed over the pages of her writing!” (340). This shows that the secret engagement to Lucy was highly embarrassing for him.

## 6.2 Mr. Villars and Lord Orville: A Picture of Perfect Male Sensibility

In *Evelina,* Frances Burney depicts two male heroes of sensibility. Both Mr. Villars and Lord Orville have a feeling heart and constantly worry about Evelina’s well-being. Mr. Villars’ “melancholy eye” (Stewart 80) looks at Evelina, thinking that her mother’s fate might as well occur to her. This man “is nervously aware of the possible reversal of this proposition: the daughter will be what the mother has been – similarly seduced and abandoned, or similarly patiently unhappy in a forced marriage. These two possibilities encompass woman’s fate in the perspective of the melancholy eye” (Stewart 80).

Arthur Villars can be regarded as a man of great sensibility. He is always conscious of Evelina’s feelings, which becomes apparent in his letters to her as well as in those to Lady Howard. He is constantly worrying about the young woman and he declares that he “yield[s], therefore, to the necessity which compels [his] reluctant acquiescence, and shall now turn all [his] thoughts upon considering of such methods for the conducting this enterprize, as may be most conducive to the happiness of [his] child, and least liable to wound her sensibility” (128). His welfare for the young woman is so great that he seems to suffer himself whenever he thinks that Evelina is in distress, for instance when her birthright is going to be claimed. Villars writes to her:

> HOW sincerely do I sympathise in the uneasiness and concern which my beloved Evelina has so much reason to feel! The cruel scheme in agitation is equally repugnant to my judgment and my inclination, - yet to oppose it, seems impractible. To follow the dictates of my own heart, I should instantly recall you to myself, and never more consent to your being separated from me; but the manners and opinion of the world demand a different conduct. Hope, however, for the best, and be satisfied you shall meet with no indignity […]. (130)

In his writing it becomes apparent how much he thinks and cares about Evelina. Even though he would like her to be home with him where she is safe, he tries to advice her to do what is proper in this situation and therefore helps her even more as far as her reputation in society is concerned.

Mr. Villars approves of Evelina's being in company with Lord Orville. Due to her frequent letters, he is able to judge Lord Orville "to be a man of sense and of feeling" (117) without knowing him. He compares "[h]is spirited conduct" (117) to Mr. Lovel and appreciates "his anxiety for [Evelina] after the opera" (117). It is because of these letters that the reader is invited to sympathise with a particular character.

Mr. Villars seems to be highly distressed when he is informed that his beloved ward is in the company of Madame Duval, whom he considers "by no means a proper companion or guardian for a young woman: she is uneducated and unprincipled; ungentle in her temper, and unamiable in her manners" (15). His concern for Evelina becomes especially apparent when he is informed about the improper behaviour of Sir Clement Willoughby. In order to secure her safety, he frequently gives Evelina advice, for instance that "[i]t is not sufficient for [her] to be reserved; his conduct even calls for [her] resentment" (163). He furthermore informs her about the necessity to "learn not only to *judge* but to *act* for [herself] […] [since] nothing is so delicate as the reputation of a woman" (166).

Another person of whom Arthur Villars obviously does not approve either is Mr. Smith, and neither does Evelina. In contrast to Villars and Orville, he is intrusive und unconscious of what a woman desires, which becomes evident when he urges Evelina to take two tickets for an assembly and does not stop offering them even though her distress is quite obvious. His insensibility also becomes apparent when laughing about poor Madame Duval while she is dancing: "Mr. Smith was so ill-bred as to laugh at her very openly, and to speak of her with as much ridicule as was in his power" (223-224). No man of sensibility would ever speak so impertinently about a woman. It would be quite unthinkable for Lord Orville and Mr. Villars. Furthermore, he does not reflect about his conduct towards women and therefore does not hesitate to make them uncomfortable like he does with Evelina. He "teazed [her] till [she] was weary of resistance" (224) as far as dancing is concerned and "he contrived to

draw [her] attention to himself, by his extreme impertinence; for he chose to express what he called his *admiration* of [her], in terms so open and familiar, that he forced [her] to express [her] displeasure with equal plainness" (225). It is quite obvious that Evelina does not approve of this conduct and that she rather enjoys being surrounded by men of sensibility who appreciate and respect a woman's virtue.

Lord Orville has a lot of compassion and feeling for other people, which becomes especially obvious when considering his behaviour towards Evelina. When she is mortified by Sir Clement Willoughby and entirely upset, "a hint was sufficient for Lord Orville, who comprehended all [she] would have explained" (49), in contrast to Sir Clement, who is ignorant of what Evelina thinks and desires. Sir Clement has no scruples to torture Evelina with questions, for instance when she tells him that she is already engaged to dance with another gentleman. He does not refrain from questioning her again and again about who this gentleman is, whereas a man of sensibility would respect a lady's feelings and not ask questions like that. Fortunately, Lord Orville is the contrary of Sir Clement and supports Evelina without hesitation. This shows his respect of a woman's virtue and exactly describes his kindness and compassion for others.

Furthermore, Lord Orville remains polite towards the impertinent Madame Duval. He even offers her his coach when she desires it in Evelina's name. This behaviour clearly shows his respect for Evelina, his ability to sympathise with other people as well as his good manners.

His sensibility is shown by the way he treats and speaks of women. In contrast to Sir Clement and Mr. Smith, who openly show their interest in Evelina, Orville behaves like a gentleman and enquires after her health and talks about the weather when meeting her. Furthermore, he talks most respectfully about other women, for instance about Mrs. Mirvan whom he defines as "gentle and amiable, […] a true feminine character" (289).

Another character in the novel, Captain Mirvan, is also the straight opposite of a man of feeling. He does not care about the feelings of others at all and has a lot of pleasure in playing tricks on Madame Duval. He does not appreciate what women think, whilst Lord Orville behaves quite differently in treating ladies. This becomes especially apparent when he asks Evelina and Miss Mirvan what they think about the opera. Captain Mirvan is unable to understand the reason

of asking the young ladies what they think and reacts rather angrily. He tells his daughter “never again [to] be so impertinent as to have a taste of [her] own before [his] face” (110). Captain Mirvan seems to be delighted whenever he can torture Madame Duval and Sir Clement participates in this cruel transaction. His unfeeling heart and disrespect become especially evident when pretending that Monsieur Du Bois, a very good friend of Madame Duval’s, has been imprisoned. He is amused because of the old lady’s distress. It can be argued that he behaves even worse when he pretends to rob Madame Duval’s chariot. In contrast to the Captain and Sir Clement, Lord Orville does not consider this to be amusing.

It is quite interesting to note a conversation between Captain Mirvan, Sir Clement Willoughby and Lord Orville, during which they talk about the various reasons for blushing. Whilst the first two gentleman talk rather degradingly about women’s blushing, Orville praises it by claiming that “the difference of natural and of artificial colour, seems to me very easily discerned; that of Nature, is mottled, and varying; that of art, *set,* and *too* smooth; it wants that animation, that glow, that *indescribable something* which, even now that I see it, wholly surpasses all my powers of expression” (81). Lord Orville tries to explain that he finds himself unable to describe the beauty of a lady’s blushing, in contrast to the Captain and Sir Clement, who do not appreciate this sign of sensibility. These unfeeling and rather undesirable male characters make the reader appreciate the two heroes of sensibility even the more.

Another minor character of sensibility worth mentioning might be “[t]he melancholy and suicidal Mr Macartney, the desperate man of sentiment” (Baker 163) whom Evelina saves from committing suicide. His sensibility is shown by his appearance and bodily symptoms. After saving his life, Evelina meets him again in a shop when he is reading a book. She tells her guardian that “[h]e cast his melancholy eyes up, as we came in, and, [she] believes, immediately recollected [her] face, for he started and changed colour” (190). He blushes again, for instance when Evelina asks him if he “kn[e]w the young lady who came into the pump-room yesterday morning” (320). “‘Know her!’ repeated he, changing colour, ‘Oh, but too well!’” (320). This clearly reveals him as a man of sensibility since he is modest and reserved and his melancholy shows that he is capable of reflecting, in contrast to men like Sir Clement, the Captain and Mr.

Smith. However, one does not find out that much about him. He wants to commit suicide because of a woman, which can be regarded as another sign of his emotionality. He is so much in love with a lady, but apparently unable to be with her, that he rather wants to end his life than continue it without her. Another decisive aspect that shows his sensibility is how he expresses his gratitude for what Evelina did for him. He writes her a letter in which he expresses his deep appreciation:

> To talk to you, Madam, of paying my debt, would be vain; I never can! the service you have done me exceeds all power of return; you have restored me to my senses, you have taught me to curb those passions which bereft me of them, and, since I cannot avoid calamity, to bear it as a man! An interposition so wonderfully circumstanced can never be recollected without benefit. Yet allow me to say, the pecuniary part of my obligation must be settled by my first ability.
> I am, Madam, with the most profound respect, and heart-felt gratitude, […]. (232)

Especially in the last line of his letter his sensibility is obviously expressed. He respects women and does not regard them as inferior, which is shown due to his huge gratitude.

Additionally, there is her real father, Mr. Belmont, who shows a bodily sign of sensibility just like the female character. Evelina tells about her father “that the certainty [she] carried in [her] countenance, of [her] real birth, made him, the moment he had recovered from a surprise which had almost deprived him of reason, suspect, himself, the imposition she mentioned” (374). When Mr. Belmont is sure that Evelina is his daughter, he thinks about her mother Caroline and “he burst[s] into tears” (383). Thus, he appears to possess a feeling heart and shows signs of melancholy, despite the fact that he seems to have repressed the past quite successfully. One could argue that his conduct towards Evelina’s mother cannot be considered that of a man of sensibility. However, he seems to deeply regret his misbehavior in the past, which is shown by the fact that he is finally overpowered by feeling.

## 6.3 True Men of Sensibility: Valancourt and Monsieur St. Aubert

Ann Radcliffe's "masculine characters […] are almost feminine in their accomplishments" (Wright 89), with the exception of the villains (Wright 89). The hero who can be considered the most sentimental is obviously Valancourt since he enjoys writing verses, playing music and knows a lot about art. Furthermore, his knowledge about history and literature is great, just like the knowledge of Emily's father and Emily herself, who received a refined education in art, music and literature as well (Wright 90).

Valancourt shows several signs of sensibility like tears, weeping, blushing, sighing and melancholy, just like his female counterpart. He blushes, for instance, when speaking to Emily "while a blush passed over his cheek" (105) due to his modesty and excitement. Furthermore, he frequently finds himself lost in his indulgence in tears. When he promises Emily not to take any action against Montoni, who wants to separate them, "his eyes [filled] with tears of tenderness and grief" (146). Also later, "[t]ears again interrupted his voice, and Emily, wept with him" (159).

Valancourt is also highly melancholy, which becomes apparent by the fact that he misses Emily: "O Emily! the remembrance of those moments overcomes me – I sit lost in reverie – I endeavour to see you dimly through my tears […]" (193). When seeing Emily again, they talk, but then he leaves and "[w]hen he returned, she perceived, that he had been weeping, and tenderly begged, that he would compose himself" (503). After Emily has heard that Valancourt had been to prison, she tells him about her opinion of him and "he burst into tears, and uttered only deep and broken sighs" (514). When Emily wants to leave him, "Valancourt, resigning her hand and throwing himself into a chair, where he covered his face with his hands and was overcome, for some moments, by convulsive sighs" (520). He sighs as well when he finds out from Emily that she still cares for him: He "sighed deeply, and was unable to reply" (668). The implied author wants to show by his excessive emotionality that his indulgence in feeling seems rather exaggerated, which becomes even the more obvious when comparing his behaviour to male characters in the novel who show no sensibility at all.

A further sign of Valancourt's sensibility is his admiration of literature. "St. Aubert was somewhat surprised to find in his room volumes of Homer, Horace, and Petrarch" (35). Furthermore, just like St. Aubert and Emily, he adores nature which becomes especially obvious during their journey together:

> The serenity and clearness of the air in these high regions were particularly delightful to the travellers; it seemed to inspire them with a finer spirit, and diffused an indescribable complacency over their minds. They had no words to express the sublime emotions they felt. A solemn expression characterized the feelings of St. Aubert; tears often came to his eyes, and he frequently walked away from his companions. Valancourt now and then spoke, to point to Emily's notice some feature of the scene. […] (43)

Valancourt is sometimes overwhelmed by the beauty of the landscape:

> 'These scenes,' said Valancourt, at length, 'soften the heart, like the notes of sweet music, and inspire that delicious melanchonly which no person, who had felt it once, would resign for the gayest pleasures. They waken our best and purest feelings, disposing us to benevolence, pity, and friendship. Those whom I love – I always seem to love more in such an hour as this.' His voice trembled, and he paused. (46)

In this respect, Valancourt and St. Aubert are very similar to each other. It is also especially interesting that Valancourt links nature to his love for Emily. "[H]e entreated she would always think of him at sunset" (163).

Valancourt has a good, feeling heart and a lot of sympathy for other people, which clearly shows the following extract:

> Valancourt had seldom felt his heart so light as at this moment; his gay spirits danced with pleasure; every object around him appeared more interesting, or beautiful, than before. St. Aubert observed the uncommon vivacity of his countenance: 'What has pleased you so much?' said he. 'O what a lovely day,' replied Valancourt, 'how brightly the sun shines, how pure is this air, what enchanting scenery! […] (53)

This example obviously reveals Valancourt as a man of sensibility since he rather feels pleased when he is able to help others and does not boast of it, but speaks about the weather instead. He is very modest. However, St. Aubert seems to know that Valancourt has helped a poor family without really being sure if he could have afforded to do so and highly praises him because of it.

A further crucial aspect about Valancourt is that he is conscious of Emily's feelings, a typical characteristic of a man of sensibility. This ability is shown, for

instance, when Valancourt asks her about her father. Due to the fact that he immediately reacts to Emily's emotions by leading her to a seat and holding her hand, he can be considered a man of great sensibility since he is conscious of what the young woman needs in this particular moment. Another situation which shows quite beautifully how much he respects her feelings is when he is admiring the beauty of a landscape and this immediately reminds Emily of her father. "Valancourt understood her feelings, and was silent; had she raised her eyes from the ground she would have seen tears in his" (106).

It has to be noted that while Emily is away in Italy, she constantly thinks that Valancourt is coming to save her, when in reality he has gone to Paris where he has been imprisoned because of gambling. This behaviour is of course unworthy of a man of good manners, but one could defend Valancourt and argue that he was so overpowered by his sadness of Emily's leaving him that he has forgotten his proper conduct. The implied author wants to show how excessive his sensibility can become. His distress and even despair about her departure already become evident when he is talking to Emily about it:

> 'You are going from me,' said he, 'to a distant country, O how distant! – to new society, new friends, new admirers, with people too, who will try to make you forget me, and to promote new connections! How can I know this, and not know, that you will never return for me – never can be mine.' His voice was stifled by sighs. (153)

Due to his desperation he proposes to Emily to marry him secretly. When she reacts reasonably and declines his offer, he is highly upset. "Convulsive sobs again interrupted his words, and they wept together in silence" (155). Briefly after Emily's departure, Valancourt writes a letter to her, which clearly shows his melancholy and his great emotionality:

> […] O Emily! the remembrance of those moments overcomes me – I sit lost in reverie – I endeavour to see you dimly through my tears, in all the heaven of peace and innocence, such as you then appeared to me; […] To write was, indeed, the only employment that withdrew me from my own melancholy, and rendered your absence supportable, or rather, it seemed to destroy absence; for, when I was conversing with you on paper, and telling you every sentiment and affection of my heart, you almost appeared to be present. […] (192-193)

Emily's absence completely upsets the young man:

> Emily's image, indeed, still lived there; but it was no longer the friend, the monitor, that saved him from himself, and to which he retired to weep the

> sweet, yet melancholy, tears of tenderness. When he had recourse to it, it assumed a countenance of mild reproach, that wrung his soul, and called forth tears of unmixed misery; his only escape from which was to forget the object of it, and he endeavoured, therefore, to think of Emily as seldom as he could. (295)

Valancourt's sensibility is also shown by his ability of self-reflection and self-critique. When he finally meets Emily again, he is, in his opinion, "unworthy of [her]" (503). He is obviously referring to his behaviour and imprisonment in Paris, of which Emily has no idea. When he finally tells her everything about it, she is extremely shocked and openly tells him about what she thinks of him.

> He was silent for a moment, as if overwhelmed by the consciousness of no longer deserving this esteem, as well as the certainty of having lost it, and then, with impassioned grief, lamented the criminality of his late conduct and the misery to which it had reduced him, till, overcome by a recollection of the past and a conviction of the future, he burst into tears, and uttered only deep and broken sighs. (514)

As far as his conduct shows, he seems to deeply regret what he has done and criticises himself highly because of it. Valancourt tells Emily how much he reproaches himself for it and thinks back to their happy days together. "The recollection seemed to melt his heart, and the frenzy of despair yielded to tears" (516).

Monsieur St. Aubert can be considered a man of very high sensibility, which becomes evident at various occasions. He sheds tears, holds hands and shows a general melancholy. Like Valancourt, he appreciates sublime and picturesque landscapes. He seems to be very proud of his home, the chateau. Anyone speaking disrespectfully about his home, like M. Quesnel, is frowned upon, because "[e]ven the calm St. Aubert blushed at these words, but his anger soon yielded to contempt" (13). St. Aubert highly admires the landscape surrounding his home:

> There were two old larches that shaded the building, and interrupted the prospect; St. Aubert had sometimes declared that he believed he should have been weak enough to have wept at their fall. […] Here, too, he loved to read, and to converse with Madame St. Aubert; or to play with his children, resigning himself to the influence of those sweet affections, which are ever attendant on simplicity and nature. He has often said, while tears of pleasure trembled in his eyes, that these were moments

> infinitely more delightful than any passed amid the brilliant and tumultuous scenes that are courted by the world. (4)

He loves spending his time in nature so much that not even "[t]he deepest shade of twilight […] [could] send him from his favourite plane-tree. He loved the soothing hour, when the last tints of light die away; when the stars, one by one, tremble through æther, and are reflected on the dark mirror of the waters" (4). Furthermore, he adores literature, which is another sign of his sensibility. According to him,

> [t]hought, and cultivation, are necessary equally to the happiness of a country and a city life; in the first they prevent the uneasy sensations of indolence, and afford a sublime pleasure in the taste they create for the beautiful, and the grand; in the latter, they make dissipation less an object of necessity, and consequently of interest. (6)

He is a man of great feeling and often he has to "[recollect] that he was speaking to a man who could neither comprehend, nor allow for his feelings" (13). His melancholy becomes apparent "when he had talked awhile he suddenly became silent, thoughtful, and tears often swelled to his eyes" (29), only because some landscape reminds him of his late wife. His emotions are shown, for instance, by holding hands, when he "smiled on [Emily] through his tears, took her hand and pressed it affectionately, and then tried to dissipate the melancholy reflections that lingered in his mind" (51). Sometimes "he answered her only by tears" (59) when Emily asks him why he is distressed. When La Voisin talks about the marchioness, "[t]ears stood in St. Aubert's eyes" (70).

As a man of sensibility, he does not approve of unfeeling people, for instance the Quesnels, who invite people to dine at the chateau immediately after the death of Madame St. Aubert. Therefore, "when he was told that company were expected, [he] felt a mixed emotion of disgust and indignation against the insensibility of Quesnel, which prompted him to return home immediately" (23).

Monsieur St. Aubert is very similar to Arthur Villars as far as his concern for his daughter is concerned. Like Mr. Villars, he constantly offers Emily advice how to behave properly in order to secure her safety and happiness, which is a very typical characteristic of a man of sensibility.

It has already been noted that Valancourt and Monsieur St. Aubert's sensibility becomes especially apparent if one compares them to some contrasting characters, for instance the cold-hearted Count Montoni. He can be

described as the exact opposite of the two men of feeling since he is unfeeling, does not respect women and only has his own advantage in mind. This becomes evident due to the fact that he marries Madame Cheron just because of her estate, and for instance, when he urges Emily to marry Count Morano, “for, secretly flattered by the prospect of a connection with a nobleman, whose title he had affected to forget, he was incapable of feeling pity for whatever sufferings of his niece might stand in the way of his ambition” (214). In contrast to the men of sensibility portrayed in the novel, he has a quite different opinion about the proper conduct of a woman: “[…], before you undertake to regulate the morals of other persons, you should learn and practise the virtues, which are indispensable to a woman – sincerity, uniformity of conduct and obedience” (270). His insensibility can be observed when treating his own wife and nice cruelly only in order to increase his wealth by their properties. Furthermore, he even scares Emily excessively. Emily is that much frightened because she believes that Montoni has murdered her aunt. As far as Montoni is concerned, “[h]e observed her emotion, with apparent indifference, and interrupted the silence by telling her, he must be gone” (361).

The contrasting characters appearing in the novels analysed lead to the assumption that the implied author wants to point out that even though their sensibility might appear exaggerated at times, the reader should rather sympathise with the men of feeling. Despite their excessive emotions, they are more likable in contrast to unfeeling and cruel persons.

# 7. The Evaluation of Sensibility in the Three Novels

In order to find out how the heroines' conduct and their sensibility in particular are evaluated in the novels, one has to look closely at how the characters are portrayed, how and if they develop in the course of the story, how the other characters react to their sensibility, and also consider some contrasting characters that show no sensibility at all, or even too much of it.

At first, one has to note that ideal female behaviour of the eighteenth century went hand in hand with possessing sensibility. Janet Todd argues that "[s]ensibility was also of course associated with women, who, denied the classical education of the universities, were reading and writing sentimental novels and poems in ever-increasing numbers" (*Sensibility* 133). A high number of people in Britain claimed that "the cult of sensibility seemed to have feminized the nation, given women undue prominence, and emasculated men. The archetypical man of feeling created by Mackenzie, Sterne and Goethe came to seem effete and sexually enervated or dishonest" (Todd, *Sensibility* 133-134). In addition to people's anxiety of sensibility's power to emasculate men (Todd, *Sensibility* 134),

> there continued widespread anxiety at the social result of fictional sensibility on women. Presumably because of their vapid lives, their weak heads and their greater susceptibility, which allowed them to be both more virtuous and more vulnerable, women, it was surmised, might start to live through fantasy and so avoid becoming devoted wives and practical mothers. […] Women were regarded as far more at risk from fantasy than men […]. (Todd, *Sensibility* 134)

It appears interesting to consider Mary Wollstonecraft's attitudes towards sensibility since she was a contemporary of the novelists analysed in this paper. In *Mary Wollstonecraft and the Language of Sensibility*, Syndy Conger traces Wollstonecraft's changing "attitudes towards sensibility [which] undergo the paradigmatic shifts of a disciple during her lifetime: naïve acceptance, critical rejection, mature return" (179). First, "she demonstrates a willingness to believe many of its myths" (Conger, *Language* 197), whereas in her "[m]idcareer

Wollstonecraft turns a new critical, feminist eye on sensibility" (Conger, *Language* 197) and insists "that the cultivation of sensibility creates women who are intellectual, psychological, and physical cripples. In attitudes that align her closely with satirists of sensibility like Austen […], she recommends its rejection to all thinking women and repudiates its metonyms and myths" (Conger, *Language* 179). However, in the end she returns "to the creed of sensibility" (Conger, *Language* 179). Furthermore, Conger points out that in "her ever-more-subtle understanding of the implications of the notion of sensibility for women, Wollstonecraft has no rivals but Austen" (*Language* 180). She is constantly worrying "about its misuses, its effects on women's minds and bodies, its seductive literature, its counterfeits, and its anti-social behaviors" (Conger, *Language* 180). She is remembered mostly "for her resistance to [sensibility] in her middle years; but, despite that resistance, like many of her contemporaries, she never finds an alternate language to use for the affective part of her experience that demands, as the turn of the century approaches, ever-increasing attention" (Conger, *Language* 180-181). This is primarily due to the fact that the

> discourses of sensibility at least seem to offer new secular, scientifically verifiable descriptions of the mysterious workings of the mind, the connections between mind and body, and the warfare between reason and the lower faculties. They also offer the lower faculties new stature: senses, imagination, passions, sympathy, all contribute to knowledge, even genius, and virtue. Even the tough-minded in the century occasionally succumb to sensibility's seductive metaphors and myths, and Wollstonecraft is only sometimes to be counted among the tough-minded. (Conger, *Language* 181)

Stephen Cox points towards Mary Wollstonecraft's attack on sentimental literature in *A Vindication of the Rights of Women***,** in which she describes "women as fragile angels of sensibility who are too innocent and delicate to assume an active equality with men and who must therefore remain in their sheltered and benighted place" (63). According to the author, "[s]ensibility appears, in short, as an insidious form of political argument, an artificial rhetoric designed to manipulate its audience into conforming to traditional social structures" (Cox 63).

Similarly to Ann Radcliffe, "Mary Wollstonecraft was interested in the relationship of sense and sensibility, in the interplay of reason and emotion,

particularly as it applied to women" (Spender 249). Moreover, this woman was "forever fascinated with the extent to which sensibility – and perception, knowledge, understanding, will – modified the influence of social conditions" (Spender 249). In her time, "according to the prevailing wisdom, women were weak because it was their nature to be so. While she could not accept this explanation she was not able to satisfactorily account for the 'weakness' she could so readily observe" (Spender 252). What she did was to prove that "'female sensibility' […] while it had its advantages for women, […] was not without its costs. Sensitive women could suffer even more at the hands of coarse men!" (Spender 261).

Mary Wollstonecraft argued in her *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* "that the categorisation of women as creatures of feeling rather than reason was the product of a faulty education and environment and had nothing to do with supposedly innate characteristics" (Skinner 104).

Janet Todd points out that "[o]ne of the most sustained attacks on the female sentimental novel came from Jane Austen (*Sensibility* 144). *Sense and Sensibility* "mocks and stifles the agony of the female victim; ultimately it socializes the near scream of Marianne into sensible rational discourse" (Todd, *Sensibility* 145). Furthermore, "[t]he sentimental style and methods are equally ridiculed in Austen's pages, especially in the juvenilia. She parodies the ecstatic tone of sensibility, which finds the world either amazingly horrid or infinitely superior, and she mocks characters who are overwhelmed by their sensitive and palpitating bodies" (Todd, *Sensibility* 145). Mrs. Dashwood and her daughter Marianne serve as good examples of this parody. Due to the fact that Elinor constantly begs her sister to compose herself in situations in which she is overwhelmed emotionally, it becomes clear that the implied author wants the reader to side with Elinor**.** A further example of this advice to be reasonable is when Elinor stresses the importance of clarifying the relationship between Marianne and Willoughby, which her mother does not consider necessary. Due to her inability to judge and her emotionality, she assumes that Willoughby will marry her daughter anyway. LeRoy Smith argues that "[i]n the traditional view *Sense and Sensibility* juxtaposes ethical or moral opposites and satirises the novel of sensibility by showing that feeling is a dangerous guide to conduct" (69). This becomes especially apparent in regard to Marianne's fate. She lets

herself be carried away by her admiration of Willoughby, which is dangerous because things do not turn out the way she expected. Marianne's strong feelings let her become weak and highly vulnerable. She is incapable of eating, talking, or being in company with other people and indulges in her sorrow until she becomes very ill. It is only then that she realises what her sister Elinor has been trying to tell her all her time: she has to learn 'sense'! In this respect, Jane Austen "stresses [her heroines'] vulnerability and need for prudence. She warns against a foolish and dangerous indulgence of feeling and a marriage of convenience, showing an understanding of the temptations of each; and she explores the common source of prudential and hypocritical self-cloaking" (L. Smith 73). Austen

> was from the start weighing up the possibilities of fiction as much as the possibilities of life. Sensing the contradictions involved in a women's fiction which, while preaching prudence and propriety, was struggling to widen imaginative and affective horizons, she came down firmly on the side of prudence and propriety, aligned herself, like most of her female contemporaries, on the side of English sense as opposed to foreign sensibility, but at the same time made her texts apparently coherent and consistent by excluding such elements as death or sexual passion. (Figes 78)

She can be described as a woman who "disapproves of sensibility" (Figes 79). According to Merryn Williams, Jane Austen was of the opinion

> that 'sense' was a more valuable quality than 'sensibility'. […] She did not believe that a girl who had been 'disappointed' would die or be damaged for life. Marianne Dashwood blames herself severely for having fretted herself into a dangerous illness; Elinor, who does not forget the claims of others when she is unhappy, is a finer character. It is unwise, and also morally wrong, to be besotted with any man. (Williams 46).

Furthermore, as far as Jane Austen is concerned, Williams points out that "[t]he word 'rational', like the word 'delicacy', is always used by her as a term of high praise" (52). This becomes especially obvious considering the character of Elinor Dashwood. Unlike her sister Marianne, she does not let herself be governed by her emotions, but she manages to control them by keeping her thoughts to herself and hiding them successfully. She therefore acts rationally, even when she finds out that the man she loves is already engaged. Elinor waits how things develop and does not dare to talk about it with anyone.

In the popular novel *Sense and Sensibility,* it becomes quite obvious by the choice of characters what the implied author's opinion about sensibility is. The difference between the two protagonists Elinor and Marianne soon becomes apparent: "Elinor and Marianne Dashwood, the novel's earnest and self-conscious heroines, register the failings of their neighbours with more pain than pleasure, scornful Marianne usually averting her eyes while Elinor struggles civilly to keep her countenance" (Brownstein 42). However, the fact that there is as well a third Dashwood sister called Margaret "hints at Austen's intention to diverge from" (Brownstein 43) the pattern of regarding one type of conduct as right and the other as wrong. Therefore, the novel "corrects the typical didactic emphasis by refusing to choose between Marianne and Elinor" (Brownstein 43). It is interesting to note that Jane Austen, a high critic of sensibility as has already been noted, does not seem to reject sensibility entirely. The choice of characters makes it clear that the implied author wants us to empathise with both characters and appears to reject everything that is excessive. The plot makes it clear that it is good to learn sense, however, it is not prudent either to be too reasonable and reserved all the time, which Elinor's case shows. She does not reveal her feelings to anyone and does not know for a long time what is really happening between Edward and Lucy. At the end of the novel one can observe how she is overwhelmed emotionally when she finally realises that it has never been Edward's intention to marry Lucy Steele. She bursts into tears and finally shows her feelings. Even though it has been argued that neither of the characters' conduct is to be aspired to, the facts that the narrative concentrates more on Elinor's thoughts and Marianne's conduct is revealed to be more painful and dangerous, lead to the assumption that 'sense' is to be favoured over 'sensibility'.

However different they may appear, the two sisters are "more interestingly alike than they are different" (Brownstein 43) since "Marianne has sense as well as sensibility" (Brownstein 43) and "Elinor has […] strong feelings as well as prudence" (Brownstein 43). James Thompson claims that "Elinor's sense and Marianne's sensibility are not finally reducible to restraint and excess nor to prudence and folly, nor does Austen offer any easy Horatian mean between the two" (161).

Another essential aspect is that “female passion [is being studied] in both Marianne and Elinor – Marianne expressing her feeling for the *gallant* and impulsive Willoughby to dangerous excess, Elinor concealing her love for the erring but virtuous Edward Ferrars” (Kelly 124). Due to the narrator’s focus

> on Elinor’s consciousness, right-minded as it usually is, the preferred female character is made clear; but through Elinor’s sympathetic concern for her sister’s misperceptions and misjudgments we have a distanced representation of the errors of a ‘woman of feeling’, a ‘romantic’ and ‘enthusiastic’ young woman, in the late eighteenth-century senses of those words. (Kelly 124)

The crucial difference between them lies in the fact that

> Marianne loves the poetry of Cowper and Scott, and picturesque landscapes; she believes in first and passionate love, a meeting of tastes and minds; she trusts her feelings to guide her conduct. Elinor is more circumspect, more aware of how the self interacts with others; in her view, conventions are necessary and even useful. […] Each exaggerates and observes and indeed seems deliberately to fashion herself as her sister’s opposite. Marianne depends for her identity on Elinor’s watchful judgments of her; Elinor fears the force of Marianne’s sympathy. (Brownstein 43)

The distinctive difference between them is shown as well in the way how they handle their sorrow. In contrast to Marianne, her sister Elinor “prudently refrains from any correspondence at all, repressing her sensibility into the private” (Watson 90). While Elinor is trying to be active and “busies herself” (Knox-Shaw 147), Marianne is staying at home, grieving (Knox-Shaw 147), which can be regarded as dangerous since what Marianne does is to “[pride] herself on the intensities of her distress” (Knox-Shaw 150), and fall into “self-absorption” (Knox-Shaw 150). It is not only Marianne who is desperate, but also the people who love and care about her. Her mother and Elinor try to help and console her in vain. It is especially Elinor who feels with her sister and who is worried because of her intense unhappiness. In her deep sadness and indulgence in feeling, Marianne does not realise that her behaviour is not only bad for herself, but it also hurts the people surrounding her. Her

> doctrine is associated with wealth and a face-saving materialism, and found wanting when pitted against a classical account of the social virtues, conspicuously grounded in the Enlightenment. That Marianne is made vulnerable by her studied indifference to matters of contract

> (witness her disregard of engagement) tallies closely, at the same time, with Wollstonecraft's warnings to women on the blinkering of sensibility. But, for Austen, neither the amiable virtue nor its counterfeits are by any means specific to gender. (Knox-Shaw 152)

The contrast between Marianne and Elinor becomes even more apparent on their way to London when "Elinor assumes the job of being sociable" (Stewart 102), whilst Marianne is losing herself in self-absorption (Stewart 102). Her "tendency to move inward" (Stewart 102) is judged, and "her final movement inward in the form of nearly fatal illness reinforces the moral judgment explicit in the title of the novel" (Stewart 102).

In this novel, "Austen named her male exploiter of excessive female sensibility "Willoughby". This was in tribute to Burney, but it indicates the persistence of the danger sentimental fiction warned that men posed, especially to the women of "excessive" sensibility Marianne Dashwood and her mother exemplified" (Barker-Benfield 334). What Austen does is to "[catalog] the extreme language and aesthetic conventions of exaggerated sensibility" (Barker-Benfield 334-335). She describes "Marianne and Willoughby's first impressions of each other [as] literally physical" (Barker-Benfield 335), which is her "version of the sexual expression of uncontrolled sensibility" (Barker-Benfield 335). Furthermore, she points out in her novel "that Marianne's feelings, transcending legal covenant […], made her the ideal target of a male exploiter of women" (Barker-Benfield 336). It can be argued that the implied author intentionally describes Marianne and Willoughby's admiration for each other in such an exaggerated way in order to show the dangers of excessive sensibility. It is almost unreal how compatible they seem to be and how easy it appears to be to find someone just like one expects to do. The implied author evaluates this conduct by creating the contrastive sister. Elinor does not approve of her sister Marianne's frank and passionate conduct towards Willoughby. In her opinion, Marianne shows her regard for him too openly. She claims ironically that her sister "ha[s] already ascertained Mr. Willoughby's opinion in almost every matter of importance" (49) and teasingly asks her "how […] [their] acquaintance [is] to be long supported, under such extraordinary dispatch of every subject for discourse? [They] will soon have exhausted each favourite topic" (49).

Elinor does not approve of Willoughby's behaviour either. In her opinion, he, too, lets himself be carried away by his feelings too strongly. She

> saw nothing to censure in him but a propensity, in which he strongly resembled and peculiarly delighted her sister, of saying too much what he thought on every occasion, without attention to persons or circumstances. In hastily forming and giving his opinion of other people, in sacrificing general politeness to the enjoyment of undivided attention where his heart was engaged, and in slighting too easily the forms of worldly propriety, he displayed a want to caution which Elinor could not approve, in spite of all that he and Marianne could say in its support. (50)

As far as Marianne and Willoughby's admiration for each other is concerned, "Elinor could not be surprised at their attachment. She only wished that it were less openly shewn; and once or twice did venture to suggest the propriety of some self-command to Marianne" (54). Even for other people "[s]uch conduct made them of course most exceedingly laughed at" (55). However, their mother "Mrs. Dashwood entered into all their feelings with a warmth which left her no inclination for checking this excessive display of them. To her it was but the natural consequence of a strong affection in a young and ardent mind" (55). Due to the fact that there is as well Mrs. Dashwood, who evaluates her daughter's sensibility quite positively, it becomes apparent that the implied author wants the reader to consider that Marianne's sensibility might be so distinctive because of her youth and also because her mother seems to be ignorant of it. Therefore, the character of Elinor Dashwood is essential. Elinor cannot believe that her sister has accepted a horse from Willoughby without hesitation. She "ventured to doubt the propriety of her receiving such a present from a man so little, or at least so lately known to her. This was too much" (59). Elinor constantly tries to convince Marianne of her improper behavior: "'But, my dear Marianne, as it has already exposed you to some very impertinent remarks, do you not now begin to doubt the discretion of your own conduct?'" (69). During one particular incident in the novel "the social and psychological dangers of showing feeling are excruciatingly dramatized as Marianne insists on claiming intimacy with Willoughby in a crowded ballroom" (Brownstein 44). Elinor asks her sister not to let herself be carried away by her feelings. She begs her to "be composed […] and […] not betray what [she] feel[s] to every body present" (167). Eventually, Austen reveals that "despite Willoughby's

earnest and convincing display of the sensibility on which she based her belief, at the very time of their passionate and tasteful mutuality he had kept hard-nosed, financial considerations in mind" (Barker-Benfield 336) and therefore had only pretended to be the man of feeling he seemed to be (Barker-Benfield 336).

In contrast to her sister, "prudent Elinor painfully hears out Lucy Steele's story of Edward Ferrars' secret engagement to her under cover of the noise and music in Lady Middleton's drawing room" (Brownstein 44) and never reveals this secret to anyone. Elinor has so much self-command that she even hides her feelings in situations of utmost distress. After being informed that Edward Ferrars has been engaged for years, she,

> [s]upported by the conviction of having done nothing to merit her present unhappiness, and consoled by the belief that Edward had done nothing to forfeit her esteem, she thought she could even now, under first smart of the heavy blow, command herself enough to guard every suspicion of the truth from her mother and sisters. […] She was stronger alone, and her own good sense so well supported her, that her firmness was as unshaken, her appearance of cheerfulness as invariable, as with regrets so poignant and so fresh, it was possible for them to be. (134-135)

Daniela Straka argues that despite the great difference between the two protagonists, "the one thing the sisters have to come to terms with is that they have to balance the quality each of them displays in excess, viz. sense and sensibility" (42). Throughout the novel they have to apprehend "that both, too much passion and too much reason, can have dire consequences" (Straka 42). Therefore, it is advisable to choose "a feasible middle ground" (Straka 42). The main problem is their Mother Mrs. Dashwood. This woman "should regulate her middle daughter's excessive feelings, yet she is not able to do so since Marianne is too much like herself to allow the thought that her daughter's behaviour might be imprudent at times" (Straka 42-43). Straka points out that Marianne "lets her feelings direct her conduct while Elinor relies on reason to be her guide" (43). At the end of the novel Marianne "realises that indulging in one's emotions can lead to self-destruction, an insight which causes her to reconsider her opinion" (Straka 44). In contrast to her sister, "Elinor shows how much she is influenced by the views of society that it would be quite improper for a woman to declare her love as long as her lover has not made his

intentions known" (Straka 44). Straka states that "Elinor makes mistakes just like her sister, yet it is not so easy to detect hers or to trace them back" (48). In *Sense and Sensibility* the two sisters "learn from each other rather than from a lover-mentor as does Evelina" (Straka 49). Marianne obviously learns about the importance of sense from her sister due to her constant comments on her improper conduct and the experience of their consequences for her life and health. Elinor, on the other hand, learns from her sister as well when she observes how painful it is for Marianne when she has to find out that Edward has been engaged to another woman for a very long time. In contrast to Marianne, Elinor keeps her feelings to herself. Consequently, Marianne is most deeply shocked when Elinor tells her how long she has known about Edward's engagement and not said anything about it. Elinor defends her conduct by claiming that she

> did not love only him; - and while the comfort of others was dear to [her], [she] was glad to spare them from knowing how much [she] felt. Now, [she] can think and speak of it with little emotion. – [She] would not have [her] suffer on [her] account; for [she] assure[s] [her] [she] no longer suffer[s] materially [her]self. [She] has many things to support [her]. [She] is not conscious of having provoked the disappointment by any imprudence of [her] own, and [she] ha[s] borne it as much as possible without spreading it farther. […] (246)

However, the elder sister realises that her silence has in fact caused her great pain for a very long time, which could have been avoided if she had talked to Edward. However, due to the fact that she is stuck in society's conventions in which it is considered highly improper for a young lady to talk about love to a man, she refrains from it and decides not to say anything, even though she cannot stop thinking about it. Elinor's example shows that it is not always the best way to act like society expects one to. Sometimes one has to follow one's heart and own judgment in order to be happy, but it is important not to indulge into one's feelings too much, like Marianne does. The sisters have to learn how to act with head and heart, which they do when they encounter different people in the course of the story. It is interesting to note the characters appearing in the novel besides Elinor who show hardly any or no sensibility at all. It is especially striking that "[w]hile the cultivated Dashwood sisters argue about right conduct and the picturesque, instead of hunting for men, contrasting pairs of sisters

underscore or undercut their superiority and gentility, and perhaps even the importance of the contrast between them" (Brownstein 45). There are, for instance,

> big-mouthed Nancy and small-eyed Lucy Steele, who mean to marry as well as possible, and polite Lady Middleton and inappropriate Mrs. Palmer, who already have. Lucy's calculating approach to life and her prohibited love affair with Edward caricature Elinor's, and the passionate love that nearly destroys Marianne is elaborately parodied by the story of the two Elizas that Colonel Brandon tells. (Brownstein 45)

Lucy Steele serves as an example of anti-sensibility just like her sister Fanny Dashwood. These two women can be considered highly selfish and manipulative. The fact that Lucy tells Elinor everything about her secret engagement to Edward Ferrars reveals her as a rather disagreeable character. It has to be noted additionally that Lucy offends against the desirable conduct of that time not only by revealing her secret to Elinor, but also by her secret engagement, which can be regarded as a highly improper conduct as far as women are concerned. In contrast to Elinor, Lucy talks about her feelings quite openly, which she probably does because she has noticed Elinor's attachment to Edward. Therefore, she is not only the complete opposite of Elinor, who keeps her feelings to herself, but also that of Marianne, because in contrast to Lucy, Marianne possesses a soft and good heart and would not hurt anyone intentionally. Fanny Dashwood, who is married to John Dashwood, manipulates her husband by insisting on not giving too much money to his sisters. After Henry Daswhood's death, she does not hesitate to instantly install herself in his house in Norland and she cannot wait for the Dashwood ladies to be gone. She is an unfeeling person who only cares about herself without considering the misery of others. A further unfeeling person is quite obviously Mrs. Ferrars, who disinherits her son because he does not want to marry his secret fiancée. These characters are essential for Elinor and Marianne in order to learn how to behave properly. For Marianne, it is rather thanks to Willoughby that she eventually learns about the importance of 'sense'. The implied author intentionally tells the story about the girl who has been put into trouble by Willoughby in order to evaluate Marianne's passionate love for him by showing what might happen to a girl who lets herself be carried away by her emotions too easily.

As an ending, Jane Austen chose “a thoroughly unromantic solution, coupling Marianne with the colonel in the flannel waistcoat, and Elinor – who does not, as we might, count his history and family against him – with the familiar, hapless Edward” (Brownstein 48). Furthermore, Austen also

> distinguishes between the social virtue and the reigning cult, which she observes, with relish, to have evolved into something like its antithesis, as the case of the two Ferrars brothers shows. Edward, who is deficient only in the parade of sensibility, has an ‘open affectionate heart’ (where Willoughby has ‘open affectionate manners’ […]. (Knox-Shaw 148)

Maaja A. Stewart argues that “[i]n Marianne Dashwood, then, Austen presents her first version of a time-bound, changing heroine” (103). She “learns to accept the temporal dimension of human life that changes even the personal configuration of that which constitutes the self” (Stewart 103). It can be said that “[b]oth Marianne and Elinor can be seen to be acting in a way which is comfortable for themselves, while persuading themselves that they act according to principle” (Waldron 75). They act like this because they both think that their behaviour is correct and do not care to think about it more properly. Only in the course of the novel do they find out that there is not just one way how to act and think. Elinor Dashwood can be considered “the repository of Austen’s message – no one can ever be wholly right or wholly wrong” (Waldron 77-78). As far as Marianne is concerned, it is important to consider that “[t]he faults of Marianne Dashwood […] are attributable to youth and inexperience rather than books or a faulty education” (Figes 91). It can be said that Marianne’s “meeting with Willoughby involved a good deal of self-deception and deception from the start. […] Marianne Dashwood will grow up, and in the process learn to distinguish between illusion and reality” (Figes 96). Figes points out that Marianne’s fate is similar to that of other young women who “settle down to marriage founded on something less than passion” (96). Finally, “[r]eceived opinion has been that [she] is reformed […], she is persuaded to marry a dull but reliable husband who will keep her on the straight and narrow path” (Waldron 81-82), which is obviously the most appropriate solution.

*Sense and Sensibility* “‘really is about the relations between Sense and Sensibility’: about the relations, that is, ‘between Head and Heart, Thought and Feeling, Judgment and Emotion, or Sensibleness and Sensitiveness’” (Ryle qtd. in Knox-Shaw 132). Jane Austen, “[t]rue to the two-tiered morality of the

skeptical Enlightenment, […] believed in fine-feeling nonetheless, and in Marianne's special capacity for it" (Knox-Shaw 138). Despite the novel's "overt mockery of sensibility" (Knox-Shaw 138), it also celebrates "the 'natural virtues'. It explores a crux at the heart of empiricist philosophy – how sociability is to be explained on the materialist premiss of a self-serving ego; and it develops in the process a comedy that has a constructive as well as a satiric dimension" (Knox-Shaw 138).

As far as Frances Burney is concerned, "her books make an open assault on sensibility and feminine romance in much the same way as […] Jane Austen's novels would later do" (Todd, *Sign* 273-274). Richetti describes Evelina as "mature and sophisticated well beyond her years" (228). He points out that "Evelina is much more than an impressionable, fanciful sentimental heroine (although she is also that). Evelina quickly develops the ability to deliver a sharply observed world, full of comic variety and satiric complexity" (*English* 219). This becomes especially apparent in her letters to Mr. Villars in which she describes the new world she encounters as well as the people she meets there. It is especially interesting to observe how society is parodied if one considers the heroine's reserved conduct in society in contrast to what she writes to her guardian. When she is surrounded by people, Evelina tries to act how society expects a woman to, but when she writes to Mr. Villars, her comments on the people she encounters are quite judgmental and she does not hesitate to give her opinion about them. Furthermore, Richetti claims that "*Evelina* explores a paradoxical balance worked out in late eighteenth-century culture between submission to patriarchal ideology and the acquisitive, aggressive upward social movement of exceptional young women" (220). The novel "balances narrative power with the sentimental heroine's weakness and diffidence and thereby expands female possibilities, locating varieties of female speaking and acting in the space between those two extreme positions of strength and weakness" (Richetti 220). It is interesting to note that "[i]n spite of her feminine qualities, Evelina as narrator articulates an intelligence and identity beyond gender roles, deliberating on the significance of complicated social and moral relationships rather than dramatizing her own self-expressive location within them" (Richetti 221). It can be argued that the implied author intentionally chooses Evelina as narrator in order to show what she really thinks in contrast to her behaviour in

society. Furthermore, as has already been noted, “[t]he novel has, in fact, a tension between the values it proposes as proper for young women and the tone of Evelina’s letters. The events of the plot, however, stress the need for prudence and attention to society’s conventions” (Bergen Brophy 262). Yeazell argues that Evelina’s story cannot only be regarded as the “story of her being exposed to the gaze, and possibly the ridicule, of others: it is also the story of her desire to look, and even to laugh, herself” (136). The protagonist “gives us a heroine whose exuberant, gossipy, and sometimes pointedly judgmental writing contrasts markedly with her quiet restraint in public” (Yeazell 139). One has to say additionally that it is true that the plot suggests that a young lady has to learn to act according to principle, however, it can be argued that it is not always so clear that Evelina is expected to internalise everything that society desires. She has to learn that not all conventions are entirely positive. The fact that Evelina saves Mr. Macartney from committing suicide, even though she acts against society’s convention which forbids a lady’s to be alone with a man, shows that she has to learn to strike a balance. Even though her sensibility is evaluated quite positively by the people she encounters, she has to learn ‘sense’ as well.

Elizabeth Bergen Brophy states that “Burney’s novels exhibit a curious ambivalence toward the proper role of women, especially in considering the natural capacity of women, and, consequently, their relationship to men” (257). In *Evelina*, “women are depicted as needing the help and guidance of men to correct their feminine impulsiveness and lack of judgment” (Bergen Brophy 257). This is exactly how society portrays women in this novel. They are not supposed to have an opinion of their own and are dependent on men. It is interesting to note some of the men’s attitudes towards women. During a conversation Mr. Lovel claims that “[he] ha[s] an insuperable aversion to strength, either of body or mind, in a female” (361). According to Lord Merton, “a woman wants nothing to recommend her but beauty and good-nature; in every thing else she is either impertinent or unnatural. For [his] part, deuce take [him] if ever [he] wish[es] to hear a word of sense from a woman as long as [he] live[s]!” (361). In the course of the novel the young woman

> recognizes that these people have imperfections which she cannot always escape and which she must, therefore, endure, transcend, and in the case of her father forgive. But in this same world, so dynamic after

> Berry Hill, is Orville, who by loving example teaches her that virtue may flourish in sophistication as well as in rustic simplicity. (Bloom xxii)

As far as Evelina and Lord Orville are concerned, Bloom describes "how passionless the attraction between them [is]. Evelina, indeed, thinks of him as brother and father" (xxii). This man "is the ideal companion for Evelina while she learns the rules of discretion. For her he is as much mentor as lover, a sentimental guide who gladly assumes the task of ordering her 'feeling heart' with wisdom, of refining the lessons of prudence which Villars had begun years before in Berry Hill" (Bloom xxiii).

Lord Orville and Arthur Villars are crucial for Evelina's development. Straka states that "Evelina always tries to behave as the people most important in her life, viz. Mr. Villars and later on Lord Orville, expect her to. Nevertheless, she makes many mistakes and needs men like Orville to make her aware of her misbehavior and to assist her in correcting her faults" (35). In Berry Hill it is her guardian Mr. Villars "who tries to instruct his ward in what a woman should be and how she should behave" (Straka 36). Apparently, "[t]he perfectly feminine woman had to be like Evelina" (Straka 36). He is determined to make her "aware of the importance of prudence and virtue, to which she must adhere at all costs" (Straka 37). This becomes especially apparent when the misunderstanding between Evelina and Lord Orville has been cleared up and Evelina tells her guardian that she is "the happiest of human beings" (307). Villars reacts in a rather alarmed way and tries to point out to his ward the necessity of being aware that "every chance for [her] future happiness may depend upon the conduct of the present moment" (307). He continues:

> Long, and with the deepest regret, have I perceived the ascendancy which Lord Orville has gained upon your mind. […] Young, animated, entirely off your guard, and thoughtless of consequences, *imagination* took the reins, and *reason*, slow-peaced, though sure-footed, was unequal to a race with so eccentric and flighty a companion. […] You flattered yourself, that your partiality was the effect of esteem, founded upon a general love of merit, and a principle of justice: and your heart, which fell the sacrifice of your error, was totally gone ere you suspected it was in danger. […] (307-309)

Here it becomes highly evident how important a woman's reputation is. Therefore, young women like Evelina have to rely on the guidance of men. Because of the fact that

> Burney recognised that women's situation was not God-given and immutable but part of the social order, an order which the individual could not afford to challenge[,] [s]he […] gained a modicum of control by distancing herself from her heroine and placing her firmly within a framework of social convention. We see her moving as a novice through the world of balls, supper parties and assemblies, learning the correct behaviour; it is her reactions to these events which matter, not the secret beatings of her heart. (Figes 34)

Frances Burney was a woman who knew that it was not God who judged women's conduct, but men themselves and therefore she had to convey to all women the message of paying attention to their reputation (Figes 34), which she did through her novels by warning "young women, either explicitly or by example, to have no social intercourse with women whose conduct is not beyond reproach. Burney's world is not one of moral values, but a struggle for social survival" (Figes 34).

The heroine Evelina Anville seems to have the same function in Burney's as the heroine in Radcliffe's novels (Kelly 53). They both are "more inward, more subjective, more passive than men – in short, better subjects, in several senses, for the novelist" (Kelly 53). It is interesting to note about Evelina's behaviour that "more than two volumes will have to pass before [she] becomes formally acquainted with the state of her feelings" (Yeazell 124) concerning Lord Orville. Furthermore, "[s]o long as she remained unconscious, it seems, she could be trusted to remain in Orville's company, but once her feelings have been made known to her, she must return home immediately" (Yeazell 125). In fact, this slow process of finding out about her feelings is good for the story because if "this heroine's consciousness [had] thus kept pace with her feelings, there would have been no period of gradual friendship with the hero, no time for him to learn her merits – and very little narrative. A young woman who entered the world only to beat such a hasty retreat could scarcely have a story" (Yeazell 126). Yeazell points out that "[t]he taboo on woman's speaking her love – even to herself – comes, of course, straight out of the conduct books" (128).

The novel focuses on "[a]ll the anxious eyework of Evelina's narrative, all the accompanying blushing, wordlessness and confusions" (Yeazell 130). This young lady "stands out from the crowd precisely because of her attempts to efface herself. The tags that serve to identify her – the blushing cheek,

downcast eyes, and timid air – derive from an anonymous set of verses that has been circulating in the pump room" (Yeazell 133). It is interesting to note that "the fantasy that shapes *Evelina* is not merely that the young woman will be loved despite her perpetual embarrassments but that she will be loved because of them – that the more she blushes before the Other, the more she intensifies her beauty in his eyes" (Yeazell 135). This positive evaluation of her sensibility, for instance by Lord Orville, becomes especially apparent by the fact that he always tries to help her and appreciates her. He defends her, for instance, when she is in distress because of her faux-pas at the dance, he gladly offers her his coach even though she has not asked for it, but her obnoxious grandmother, and he also saves her when she is entirely upset because she has lost her company. The fact that Lord Orville asks her if she has ever been in the company of prostitutes before makes it clear that he cares about her reputation, but that he also tries to guide her and ensure that she acts properly.

Another important aspect of this novel is that the young woman

> learns "delicacy" in the adventures that follow this introduction to the polite world, for she is confronted by several aggressive suitors whose overt pursuit enables her to perfect her manners, that is, to master the steps of those ritualized public rejections or deferrals of pleasure that signify leisure-class power and self-possessed privilege, both male and female. (Richetti 223)

Arlene Young states that "Evelina […] must demonstrate her ability to differentiate between the bravado of Sir Clement Willoughby and the unobtrusive moral depth of Lord Orville" (31). The choice of characters and the plot suggest that the reader should side with men of sensibility like Lord Orville. This becomes especially evident through Evelina's and Villars' judgmental letters. They reveal quite clearly which character is favoured. It is not difficult for Evelina to realise which male character is more desirable since Lord Orville behaves in a reserved and respective manner towards her, unlike Sir Clement, who is constantly the source of distress to her. There are also other male characters she encounters when she loses her company during a walk, who extremely terrify her by making open advances. It is because of these particular incidents that Evelina learns how to react properly. It is highly important for her to learn how to act, since at this particular time in history "Evelina Anville, disowned by her father, in fact has no identity except as she appears in the

eyes of others, and this is essentially the position of all young women when they ‘come out’ in to the social world. Without the status conferred by men, they have and are nothing” (Figes 36). Later Evelina behaves mostly like a proper young lady and therefore “[t]he admiration she met with in town, though merely the effect of her external attractions, was such, that […] she would have had the most splendid offers, had there not seemed to be some mystery in regard to her birth, which, she was well informed, was assiduously, though vainly, endeavoured to be discovered” (125). Frances Burney’s “heroines are seen as very vulnerable in the world, which is dominated by men. […] Evelina is vulnerable through youth, beauty and inexperience” (Figes 42). Bloom claims that

> [p]roportionately her vulnerability and dependence diminish; her capacity for sound judgment grows. Throughout the dramatic story of Evelina’s evolving education, there runs a moralistic leitmotive which never alters: judicious conduct offers safety and sound reputation; intemperance only uncertainty and sorry consequences. (xx)

Mr. Villars constantly reminds his ward to judge “not by the promptings of the heart but by the discipline of the mind” (Bloom xxii). In order to learn, Evelina “is introduced to varieties of imprudence: the ill temper of Madame Duval, the vulgarity of the Branghtons and Smith, the crudity of Captain Mirvan, the passion of Willoughby, the foppishness of Lovel, the ‘villainy’ of Belmont” (Bloom xxii). The plot suggests that the implied author wants us to side with Evelina against these who behave unpleasantly. The genre of the sentimental novel presupposes that the heroine develops positively and all these people in some way or another help her to find the right path because by observing them, she learns which conduct is desirable. As far as Madame Duval is concerned, it can be said that she is

> the most willful woman in the book, the one who is most determined to have all her wishes satisfied, and outside the realm of consumption such willfulness appears not feminine but profoundly masculine. It is for this reason that Madame Duval appears at times to be almost manly, and Burney paints her as a comic monster of mixed gender attributes. (Henderson 68)

This woman “functions as a constant reminder of what her granddaughter could become. Evelina must finish her female education by learning to desire, but she must also be careful not to take that learning too far” (Henderson 69). Madame

Duval's conduct is criticised and therefore the reader is expected to reject her as well. Due to the fact that Madame Duval is ridiculed by Captain Mirvan, her passions rise even more. As far as the Branghtons are concerned, Richetti explains that "[i]n their hilarious vulgarity, the Branghtons project the unabashed, expansive materialist-consumerist energy of modern personality that virtuous women (especially) in the female eighteenth-century novel must reject or, perhaps, simply evade or disguise" (226). Evelina is highly embarrassed by these relatives throughout the novel (Richetti 227). Her "differentiation between the vulgar and the genteel spheres of life points out the direction towards which Evelina develops: away from the lower social scale upwards to the aristocracy" (Straka 39). These lower class relatives are also crucial in Evelina's development since they behave quite improperly, especially her female cousins**,** who do not act according to society's conventions, for instance when they talk quite frankly about men they are seeing. Furthermore, they are unfeeling, which becomes especially apparent when they talk about the fact that Evelina has never seen her real father. Therefore, Evelina learns in the course of the novel that it is good to possess a feeling heart, but it is also desirable to learn 'sense'. The importance lies in the fact not to give oneself up wholly, neither to sense, nor to sensibility.

As far as Ann Radcliffe's heroine Emily St. Aubert is concerned, Johnson describes her as "a woman of few words: the secrets of a man's household are safe with her. She never violates that decorum which forbids a good woman from detailing her hardships" (95). However, she points out that at the end of the novel the reader has to find out that her silence "has been for nothing" (Johnson 96). It is highly important to note that

> [t]he "mysteries" narrated […] are presented finally *not* as cumulative evidence of male oppression, but as misrecognitions borne of excess of the wrong, pathological, female sort, and accordingly are demoted to "superstitious" tales […] believed only by credulous servants, paranoid maidens, and (for a time) spellbound readers. (Johnson 97)

Johnson claims that "Radcliffe's wronged heroine here is finally obliged to deny that there have been any wrongs at all" (98). She continues arguing that even "[t]hough sensitivity is the prerogative of men in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, it is not the only prerogative of men. If the novel is animated by a man of feeling (St. Aubert), it is also haunted by man of none (Montoni). As such, *The Mysteries of*

*Udolpho* dramatizes the polarization within masculinity characteristic of the 1790s" (98). It is not easy for Emily St. Aubert to choose "between the strenuous female decorum enjoined by St. Aubert's sentimentality and the brutal silencing of female protest compelled by Montoni's authority [since] both maneuvers erase female subjectivity" (Johnson 99).

The "Gothic novel […] [was] a variant within the sentimental genre" (Barker-Benfield 318)**,** to which belongs Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, which "pays lip service to antiromantic, antisentimental values. All of the Gothic apparitions and mysteries are carefully given rational explanations" (Barker-Benfield 318). What is most decisive about this novel is "Radcliffe's apparent wish to teach women of her era to check their outflow of sensibility with the firmness of reason" (Barker-Benfield 318), exactly like Frances Burney, Jane Austen and Mary Wollstonecraft did (Barker-Benfield 318). Ann Radcliffe

> warns against the sensibility that is the salient characteristic of her heroine; she does so in a dying speech from a father who has first wiped away his single tear. By the 1790s almost all serious novelists noted the selfishness, irrationality and amorality of the cult of sensibility. Novel after novel claimed it was not a novel and showed characters (usually female) ruined by too much sentiment […]. (Todd, *Sensibility* 144)

The implied author's evaluation of sensibility becomes especially apparent by Monsieur St. Aubert's advice for his daughter. He

> endeavoured […] to strengthen her mind; to enure her to habits of self-command; to teach her to reject the first impulse of her feelings, and to look, with cool examination, upon the disappointments he sometimes threw in her way. While he instructed her to resist first impressions, and to acquire that steady dignity of mind, that can alone counterbalance the passions, and bear us, as far as is compatible with our nature, above the reach of circumstances, he taught himself a lesson of fortitude; for he was often obliged to witness, with seeming indifference, the tears and struggles which his caution occasioned her. (5)

However, it has to be said additionally that this is only partly true since Emily's sensibility in regard to nature, people and her soft heart in general are all evaluated quite positively. By creating this male character, the implied author simply wants to point out that Emily has to be careful about excessive sensibility. Furthermore, St. Aubert "cultivated her understanding with the most scrupulous care. […] The vacant mind is ever on the watch for relief, and ready

to plunge into error, to escape from the languor of idleness. Store it with ideas, teach it the pleasure of thinking […]" (6). It is obvious that 'sense' is a desirable quality in this novel. However, as a reaction to Madame St. Aubert's frequent crying when looking at her family, "St. Aubert observed this more than once, and gently reproved her for the emotion" (8). Even though St. Aubert constantly tries to teach his daughter 'sense', he also seems to evaluate a woman's sensibility quite positively. It can be argued that he is of the opinion that sensibility is good to a certain degree, but everything that leads to its excess has to be rejected. It is highly interesting to note the advice Monsieur St. Aubert gives to his daughter after the funeral of his wife:

> I have endeavoured to teach you, from your earliest youth, the duty of self-command; […] All excess is vicious; even that sorrow, which is amiable in its origin, becomes a selfish and unjust passion, if indulged at the expence of our duties […]. The indulgence of excessive grief enervates the mind, and almost incapacitates it for again partaking of those various innocent enjoyments which a benevolent God designed to be the sun-shine of our lives. […]
> Your sorrow is useless. Do not receive this as merely a common-place remark, but let reason *therefore* restrain sorrow. I would not annihilate your feelings, my child, I would only teach you to command them; for whatever may be the evils resulting from a too susceptible heart, nothing can be hoped from an insensible one; […] I cannot bear to see you wasting in useless sorrow, for want of that resistance which is due from mind; and I have not said it till now, because there is a period when all reasoning must yield to nature; […] (20-21)

In this quotation it becomes obvious how valuable reason is. St. Aubert does by no means entirely reject a sensible, feeling heart, which he makes clear in his speech. However, he attempts to clarify that indulging in one's feelings may lead to self-destruction. Before he dies, Monsieur St. Aubert gives one last speech to his daughter Emily:

> 'Above all, my dear Emily,' said he, 'do not indulge in the pride of fine feeling, the romantic error of amiable minds. Those, who really possess sensibility, ought early to be taught, that it is a dangerous quality, which is continually extracting the excess of misery, or delight, from every surrounding circumstance. […], we become the victims of our feelings, unless we can in some degree command them. […] You see, my dear, that, though I would guard you against the dangers of sensibility, I am not an advocate for apathy. At your age I should have said *that* is a vice

> more hateful than all the errors of sensibility, and I say so still. […] (79-80)

Emily listens to him with utmost attention and promises always to think about his advice. Her father continues: "'I repeat it,' said he, 'I would not teach you to become insensible, if I could; I would only warn you of the evils of susceptibility, and point out how you may avoid them. […]; beware of priding yourself on the gracefulness of sensibility; […] Always remember how much more valuable is the strength of fortitude, than the grace of sensibility […]" (80). Monsieur St. Aubert therefore is an essential character in the story as far as the evaluation of sensibility is concerned. He repeats again and again that it is partly a quite positive quality, but he also ensures that his daughter is informed about its dangers. Emily St. Aubert's education therefore consists of training "independence and rational self-control" (Johnson 100) as taught by her father. When Emily finds herself again deep in thoughts about her father and starts indulging herself in tears, she suddenly "remembered how often he had blamed her for indulging useless sorrow; how often he had pointed out to her the necessity of fortitude and patience, assuring her, that the faculties of the mind strengthen by exertion, till they finally unnerve affliction, and triumph over it" (119). Emily always tries to think about her father's words. Again in another situation, when Emily is desperate and crying, she remembers her father's advice and is conscious that "[she] do[es] indeed perceive how much more valuable is the strength of fortitude than the grace of sensibility, and [she] will also endeavour to fulfil the promise [she] then made; [she] will not indulge in unavailing lamentation, but will try to endure, with firmness, the oppression [she] cannot elude" (214). It is interesting to note that "soothed by the consciousness of performing a part of St. Aubert's last request, and of endeavouring to pursue the conduct which he would have approved, she overcame her tears, and, when the company met at dinner, had recovered her usual serenity of countenance" (214). However, "St. Aubert cannot attain the "philosophy" he recommends, and this inability is hardly satirized" (Johnson 101). It is, however, satirised occasionally by describing moments in which St. Aubert himself is overpowered by his feelings and does not manage to let himself be guided by reason. Emily often observes her father in these situations and is deeply hurt seeing him like that. Johnson claims that "[i]n this reiteration of St. Aubert's affective overflow

followed by paternal prohibitions of the same in his daughter, [she] detect[s] none of the irony one might find in a novel, say, by Austen. We may be enabled to critique this recurrent discrepancy, but we are not encouraged to do so" (101). This is a very interesting point of view which needs further analysis. In contrast to Jane Austen, in whose novel it becomes evident, for instance, by Elinor's obvious criticism of her sister's sensibility, that the implied author suggests that the reader, too, should reject this excessive emotionality. However, in Ann Radcliffe's novel, this does not always seem to be so clear since St. Aubert, who preaches sense to his daughter, also possesses sensibility. The implied author therefore wants to show where the borderline of these two contrasts is, for instance by introducing the reader to rather disagreeable characters. In this respect, it seems interesting to consider a character who is rather the opposite of Emily's father: Monsieur Montoni. Claudia Johnson describes him as "a gothic villain, [who] must be cruel, but as an exemplar of nonsentimental manhood, he must champion the values of reason and moderation. The manliness he espouses partakes of an older, classical tradition of masculinity which represents emotionality as a deviation from rational self-control, as feminine and shameful" (103). He considers "chivalric love […] emasculating, inverting the hierarchy that dictates the submission of women to men" (Johnson 103). When a sudden journey is announced and Emily would like to know the reason for it, Count Montoni just answers her that he would "recommend it to [her] to retire to [her] chamber, and to endeavour to adopt a more rational conduct, than that of yielding to fancies, and to a sensibility, which, to call it by the gentlest name, is only a weakness" (230). In contrast to Valancourt and Monsieur St. Aubert Signor Montoni "was totally and alike insensible to the distress of his wife, and to the pleading looks of Emily" (315). This man tells Emily more drastically what her father has been trying to teach her his whole life. However, in contrast to St. Aubert, he evaluates sensibility entirely negatively. He is a very unfeeling and cold-hearted man and therefore the exact opposite of men of sensibility like Valancourt and St. Aubert. It can be argued that by this choice of character the implied author wants to show that neither excessive sensibility nor not possessing any sensibility at all is a desirable quality.

Ann Radcliffe's "works show the beauty which sensibility combined with imagination can discover and create, but they show, too, the excesses which lead to decay" (Wright 79). Just like "other sentimental authors, [she was] delighted in the idyllic […] [and] she felt that nature sympathized with human beings and lent intensity to their feelings" (Wright 81). In the course of the novel, Emily has to learn what is acceptable and what is excess. Radcliffe's characters are frightened by a number of incidents which she "revealed as natural phenomena as soon as she had analyzed the fears which they awakened" (Wright 104). The two protagonists Emily and Valancourt could, "[e]ven when things were at the worst, […] dismiss the thought of danger, and indulge their private sensibilities" (Baker 199). In general, all "[h]er stories are […] sentimental dramas; the heroines – and her heroes are all heroines – are cast in one mould, sensitive, devoted, virtuous beings, of the well-known stamp" (Baker 204). Another decisive aspect is the "[p]oetic natural description […] most associated with the heroines. In this Radcliffe is stressing their sensibility and virtue, both almost seen as products of landscape, but she may also be asserting a kind of female response to the growing Romantic conception of nature and the artist" (Todd, *Sign* 269). Radcliffe's "heroines are delicate to an extreme. They are easily frightened and at times engagingly helpless. […] Emily [is] addicted almost as much to fainting as to the composing of verses" (Wright 92). Her admiration of landscape and literature is shared and valued by Valancourt and her father. These men of sensibility are themselves overwhelmed by the beauty of nature. Emily's sensibility is stressed by her excessive writing of poems, and her fainting shows how overwhelming her sensibility can become. Wright claims that the reason why Ann Radcliffe chose the natural instead of the supernatural is simply to awake "terror for its own sake. Having aroused it, she sustained it as long as she found it diverting, and then cheerfully and airily dismissed it by revealing the unimportance of its source" (105). Radcliffe thought

> that a special susceptibility to terror was […] a manifestation of delicate sensibility, [and therefore] she caused her heroines to experience innumerable apprehensions and to become thoroughly frightened almost daily. Nevertheless, not merely the devices she employed, but he inconsistency with which she represented her heroine's reactions to them indicated that she herself often did not intensely experience the fear she described. (Wright 105-106)

As has already been noted in the chapter on female stability, it is interesting to observe that Emily is much more touched emotionally in situations which are in reality not dangerous or frightening at all, than in situations in which emotionality is understandable (Figes 71). This is a highly interesting aspect which needs further analysis. It can be argued that by describing her heroine terrified of mere illusions, the implied author's intention is to emphasise the need for prudence. In the course of the novel, Emily has to learn how to handle her fears; she has to learn 'sense', which becomes clear due to the choice of other characters who possess too much sensibility, like Annette. This young woman is easily frightened and therefore influences Emily's judgment. The fact that Annette's sensibility is described in a rather exaggerated way suggests that the reader is expected to assume that 'sense' is the preferred quality. The plot makes it clear that Emily's excessive sensibility resulting in her constant fainting is no desirable quality. Since

> Radcliffe loves describing night scenes, […] [Emily] is alarmed at nights by mysterious sights and sounds, which always, in the end, have a rational explanation. Having learnt to master her first fears, she is exposed to bigger night terrors. Her father's death, in particular, and a somewhat unnecessary visit to his grave at midnight, exposes Emily to mysterious night frights which she tries to conquer, telling herself that melancholy has heightened her susceptibility. (Figes 71)

In the end it can be said that "Emily, in spite of all the real and illusory horrors which beset her, overcomes her difficulties and remains sane and controlled; of course, since the whole purpose of the novel, the didactic purpose at least, is to show the necessity of rational self-control. All the weird apparitions she sees have a rational explanation" (Figes 74-75). It is quite interesting to note that when Annette tells Emily about apparitions she swears having seen, Emily answers her that this is "[r]idiculous […] [and] [she] must not indulge such fancies" (231). Furthermore, she tells Annette not to "suffer Signor Montoni to hear of these weak fears; they would highly displease him" (232). This clearly shows that Emily seems to know that one has to favour sense over sensibility**.** However, she herself is occasionally terrified and only learns eventually to really put into practice what she thinks and to remain controlled.

As already mentioned before, in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* it becomes apparent by the choice of characters that Ann Radliffe, "like Austen herself, at

all times preaches the importance of rational common sense in dealing with both the real and imagined terrors of the world" (Figes 21). Figes calls Ann Radcliffe's novel "a carefully contrived exposition of eighteenth-century rationalism. The heroine is led through a series of adventures which call on her developing capacity to conquer both her rational and irrational fears. […] and it is only by conquering her irrational fears that she is able to cope with the very real dangers that beset her" (68). Therefore, it can be argued that "the didactic message of the book is that one should learn to distinguish illusion from reality" (Figes 69). Figes continues stating that "[n]ovels of the period were constantly warning young women of the dangers of sensibility. Yet how could they ever learn to overcome this female frailty in real-life conditions which did everything to foster this weakness?" (69-70). In Ann Radcliffe's novels we find "the archetypical sentimental story of fatherly male menacing a weak but virtuous female who in the end triumphs over him or neutralizes his power" (Todd, *Sign* 255). Furthermore,

> [u]nlike so many writers at the end of the decade, she seems not to want to abandon sentimental values altogether, but she clearly does wish to stiffen them. Principle is added to feelings as a guide to action, and fortitude is stressed to combat self-indulgence. Unregulated sensibility creates victims of feeling, sensualists like Laurentini of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* who acts like 'a fiend'. Without regulation sensibility can degenerate into sexuality in an individual and anarchy within a community, but without sensibility at all there can be only selfishness, coldness and cruelty. (Todd, *Sign* 256)

According to Spender, Ann Radcliffe "helped to found the romantic movement. She was one of its first and most articulate spokeswomen. She reacted against the separation of intellect and emotion, against the glorification of reason, and she sanely suggested that life was a matter of head *and* heart" (238). Even though the reader is expected to suppose that Emily has to learn to control her emotions, Todd and Spender are right in arguing that Radcliffe did not entirely value reason over sensibility, which becomes apparent by the choice of unfeeling characters. Furthermore, most of the women writers who came after her followed "her synthesis of reason and feeling. […] [W]ith her emphasis on a balance of 'sense' and 'sensibility' one wonders whether Ann Radcliffe did not exert an influence on the writing of Jane Austen. *Udolpho* was admired by Jane

Austen, even if she could playfully mock some of its Gothic features" (Spender 239). It is important to note that

> [t]here is an underlying philosophy in her writing, a conviction that reason alone is not enough and that there must be sensibility as well, but this thesis is not presented in didactic form or as explicit authorial comment. It is a thesis which is realised in her characters and setting, and is given shape and substance throughout her novels. It is in the descriptions of her characters, their lives, their feelings, their experiences that Ann Radcliffe makes her point: it is no coincidence that her upper class villains are immune to the beauties of nature. (Spender 240)

Ann Radcliffe's novel *The Mysteries of Udolpho*

> "is a special development of the sentimental novel and retains its main features – the ground pattern consisting of a sequence of distressing situations, the sensitive, emotional heroine and hero, and the rest – but makes more room for and gives greater prominence to situations calculated to create anxiety, nervous apprehension, dread, fear, or terror. (Foster 262)

The author "was influenced by deistic thought and attitudes, especially as transmitted by Rousseau and the sentimentalists" (Foster 264). Foster argues that "the great question of the eighteenth century is answered in the dying speech of Emily St. Aubert's father. Are the gratifications of sensibility worth the pains it brings? St. Aubert thinks they are, provided that sensibility is kept under control" (264).

What Ann Radcliffe does is that "she takes the typical heroine of sentimental novels and, using the techniques of the Gothic novel, reveals how such a state of mind brings about many of the terrors which the heroine faces. The cure for such an attitude, Mrs. Radcliffe makes clear, lies in a return to common sense" (N. Smith 580). Ann Radcliffe's character Madame Montoni "functions in the novel not only as an object of satire, but also as someone who criticizes the excesses of sensibility" (N. Smith 582). Madame Montoni has no compassion for others, not even for her own niece. She, just like her husband, only follows the path which leads to her advantage, for instance by forbidding Emily to marry, but marrying herself, and insisting that she should marry Count Morano. "[H]er ambition was not to be overcome, and her present object was to be the aunt of a Countess" (217). She is unconscious of what Emily feels or desires "and reproache[s] her niece with folly in being miserable, concerning a marriage, which ought only to make her happy" (220). When Emily is extremely

sad about her father's death, her aunt Madame Montoni "believ[ed], that the sorrow, which her niece still expressed for the loss of St. Aubert, proceeded partly from an affectation of sensibility, endeavoured to make it appear ridiculous to her, that such deep regret should continue to be felt so long after the period usually allowed for grief" (117). Johnson states that "Madame Montoni's crassness, like that of Burney's Madame Duval (of whom she is a gothic permutation), enables her to mount a compelling critique of sensibility" (106-107). However, Johnson's point of view needs further comment. One could argue that the implied author wants to show by Madame Montoni's crassness that the reader should not accept her critique of sensibility because it comes from such a disagreeable character. She is by no means the positive role model. The reader is expected to accept the advice of a good-hearted character like St. Aubert. This becomes more evident if one looks at further situations in which Emily's aunt reveals her opinion on her niece's conduct, for instance when Emily finds herself helpless to object to her aunt's intention of taking her to Italy. Madame Montoni, during a talk with Emily, is

> pleased to observe, that [her niece] submit[s] to reason and necessity without indulging useless complaint. [She] applaud[s] this conduct exceedingly, the more, perhaps, since it discovers a strength of mind seldom observable in [her] sex. When [she] is older [she] will look back with gratitude to the friends who assisted in rescuing [her] from the romantic illusions of sentiment, and will perceive, that they are only the snares of childhood, and should be vanquished the moment you escape from the nursery. (196)

Madame Montoni does not approve of Emily's still thinking about Valancourt and tells her to "get rid of all those fantastic notions about love, and this ridiculous pride, and be something like a reasonable creature" (221). Very strangely, when Madame Montoni is desperate because of her husband's conduct towards her and Emily is trying to console her, she calls her niece an "[u]nfeeling, cruel girl" (283), probably because Emily also takes separation into consideration. Furthermore, she tells her that "[she] thought [she] was opening [her] heart to a person, who could sympathize in [her] distress, but [she] find[s], that [her] people of sensibility can feel for nobody but themselves" (283). This sudden change of opinion seems rather weird and it becomes clear for the reader that Madame Montoni cannot be trusted since she always seems to

recommend or censure what is most convenient in a particular situation without having a principled opinion. This makes her a disagreeable character and it becomes evident that sense alone is no desirable quality. The implied author invites the reader to ask himself if it was really reasonable that Emily went to Italy and did not marry Valancourt immediately. This is part of Emily's learning process. Even though she tries to control her emotions and act like it is expected from her, this incident clearly shows that in this situation it would have been better for her if she had listened to her heart. Emily has to learn when it is appropriate to think with her head and when to think with her heart. Most importantly, she has to learn to avoid excess.

The novel's "major theme […] [seems to be] an attempt to temper Emily's excess of sensibility" (N. Smith 583). This does not only happen by choosing characters like St. Aubert, Signor Montoni, Madame Montoni and Annette, but also by the fact that Valancourt's excessive sensibility has bad consequences for him. Emily has to learn that her beloved Valancourt has been imprisoned because of gambling. In his deep sadness because of Emily's departure he let himself be carried away by his feelings. Therefore, Emily has to learn that excessive sensibility can lead to self-destruction. Nelson C. Smith argues that "only by the actual end of the novel […] does Emily become properly chastised and sensible, for Mrs. Radcliffe has her most effective tricks left for the tempering of Emily's mind: she has all the conventions of the Gothic novel to bring to bear as examples of the results of a mind made too susceptible by sensibility" (583). The protagonist's "sensibility, imagination and self-delusion combine, throughout the book, to produce the mysteries and terrors that confront her" (N. Smith 583). However, "nothing very terrifying really happens there […]. All that happens, indeed, results from Emily's being a high-strung heroine susceptible to the dangers of sensibility. The excess of grief, which she had been warned about earlier, for example, causes her to see visions" (N. Smith 583). Emily is criticized because of her "self-indulgence, excess of sensibility, [and] untempered imagination" (N. Smith 590). Ann Radcliffe argues that "[e]xcesses of any kind, including sensibility and romanticism, must be tempered by common sense" (N. Smith 590).

In *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Ann Radcliffe "teaches a lesson about both the fallibility of individual senses and the need to discipline the emotions. The

narrator affirms that experience can indeed instruct one how to feel" (Pinch 113). Pinch states that "Emily's progress through the novel is thus a search for her origins, a search that repeatedly casts before her horrifying bedroom images" (131).

The overall aim of this thesis was to analyse how sensibility is portrayed and evaluated by three different women writers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Even though sensibility was a character trait highly regarded at that time, it becomes clear by the plot and the choice of characters in the three novels that the heroines' sensibility is by no means to be evaluated only positively. Sensibility is related to proper female behaviour in a strong way. It has been revealed in all three novels that it is desirable to a certain degree, but it is also highly important for a young woman to learn 'sense'. Elinor, Marianne, Evelina and Emily have to strike a balance between thinking with their heads and their hearts.

# 8. Bibliography


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# 9. Index

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# 10. Abstract

Die vorliegende wissenschaftliche Arbeit beschäftigt sich mit der Fragestellung, wie *Sensibility* von Autorinnen des achtzehnten und neunzehnten Jahrhunderts in ihren Romanen dargestellt und evaluiert wird. *Sensibility* beschreibt Ende des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts eine kulturelle und literarische Bewegung, die zu diesem Zeitpunkt auch als eine sehr positive Charaktereigenschaft galt. Man verstand darunter, dass eine Person sehr leicht dem Gefühl nachgebend handelte, was rationalem Denken gegenüber favorisiert wurde. Diese Eigenschaft wurde zwar sowohl bei Männern als auch bei Frauen hoch geschätzt, jedoch wurde es im Laufe der Zeit eher mit Frauen in Verbindung gebracht, um ihre Schwäche und Inferiorität im Gegensatz zu Männern aufzuzeigen. Daher entwickelten sich schon bald heftige Kritiken.

Ziel dieser Arbeit ist es nun aufzuzeigen, ob *Sensibility* in den einzelnen Romanen eine wünschenswerte Charaktereigenschaft ist. Um diese Frage zu beantworten ist es essentiell, historische Fakten mit den Werken in Verbindung zu bringen. Daher wird besonders darauf eingegangen, was Ende des achtzehnten und Anfang des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts als ideales weibliches Benehmen galt. Darunter verstand man, dass eine Frau sich demütig und gehorsam verhielt. Es war ihr nicht erlaubt, ohne Begleitung Unternehmungen zu machen und sie sollte stets auf zurückhaltendes Benehmen achtgeben. Darüber hinaus wurde die *Sensibility* einer Frau hoch geschätzt, worunter man ihr weiches Herz und Mitgefühl für andere verstand. Im Gegensatz zum Mann wurde eine Frau niemals in Verbindung mit *Sense* gebracht, was rationales Denken impliziert.

Es scheint genau diese Tatsache zu sein, die Jane Austen, Frances Burney und Ann Radcliffe schon zu jener Zeit zu denken gab. In ihren Romanen finden sich nun die Gegensätze *Sense* und *Sensibility* wieder. Diese Arbeit beschäftigt sich vorerst mit den weiblichen Charakteren und es wird aufgezeigt, dass sich *Sensibility* sowohl in körperlichen als auch in psychologischen Symptomen manifestiert. Darüber hinaus werden die verschiedenen Reaktionen der weiblichen *Sensibility* mit denen der männlichen Figuren verglichen. Die

Protagonistinnen werden nicht nur als emotionale Wesen beschrieben, sondern es wird darauf hingewiesen, dass sie in bestimmten Momenten sehr wohl Stärke und Stabilität beweisen können. Es stellt sich heraus, dass die Autorinnen sehr kontrastierende Personen beschreiben. Aufgrund der Entwicklung der Protagonistinnen und im Vergleich zu anderen Charakteren, die entweder zu emotional oder zu gefühlskalt sind, lässt sich feststellen, dass eine zu exzessive und übertriebene *Sensibility* von den Autorinnen stark kritisiert wird. Es wird angenommen, dass es gut ist, *Sense* zu lernen. Unter Betrachtung der Erlebnisse und der Entwicklung der Hauptfiguren kommt man schließlich zu der Erkenntnis, dass die Protagonistinnen lernen müssen, einen Mittelweg zwischen *Sense* und *Sensibility* zu finden.

# 11. Curriculum Vitae

## Persönliche Daten

| | |
|---|---|
| Geburtsdatum: | 28. Oktober 1985 |
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## Schulbildung

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## Studienverlauf

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## Auslandsaufenthalte

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| 09/2008 – 02/2009 | ERASMUS Auslandssemester an der Université Catholique de l'Ouest in Angers, Frankreich |
| Sommer 2006 | Sprachkurs in Nizza |
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