# INTERSECTING DISCOURSES: THE INTERACTION OF THE LIBERTINE AND THE SENTIMENTAL DISCOURSE IN MID-EIGHTEENTH CENTURY FRENCH AND ENGLISH NOVELS

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## Abstract

French and English literature in the eighteenth century are generally held to have a symbiotic relationship and the links between the two sentimental traditions, in particular, have been well documented by scholars. However the connections between the sentimental and the libertine discourse have tended to be obliterated. The main assumption underlying this project is the existence of an intimate interplay between sentimentalism and libertinism. Its main aim is to trace the strong attraction existing between the two and to question the genre and national dimensions which have been perpetuated by previous critical discourses through close textual analyses of mid-century French and English novels (Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey* and Crébillon's *Les Egarements du cœur et de l'esprit* and *Les Heureux Orphelins*, Haywood's *The Fortunate Foundlings*, Riccoboni's *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby*, Burney's *Evelina*, and Cleland's *Fanny Hill*). The focus will be on the moment when the libertine is tempted to behave sentimentally or when the sentimental (wo)man is tempted to act as a libertine. The relationships between these core texts being very rich, they will be approached from different perspectives in each of the issue-based chapters which will centre on questions of language, non-linguistic communication, sociability, epistolarity and difference.

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# Introduction

## The Philosophical Context: The Senses in the Feeling-Reason Debate.

Literary historians, in France and England, have for a long time divided the eighteenth century into two seemingly irreconcilable entities: a rationalist and philosophical age and a sentimental one. In 'The Current State of Research on Sensibility and Sentimentalism in Late Eighteenth-Century France', David J. Denby reviews the attempts at challenging this dichotomy which marked the beginning of modern research on sensibility in France.[1] Roland Mortier, Robert Mauzi, Marc Régaldo, Frank Baasner, to cite only a few critics, saw the dividing of the century into an age of reason and an age of sensibility as at the same time contrived and distorting because it obliterated their partially common origin and failed to show how the language and moral dimension of sensibility fitted, in a way, into the ideas of the enlightenment.

Before modern critics ever discussed it, this dichotomy was the subject of a continuous debate throughout the century which was central to philosophical and moral enquiry in England and France. The assumption which was at the origin of this debate was that the source of all knowledge and all values was in individual human experience, in what the senses registered. Henri Coulet remarks, in *Le Roman jusqu'à la Révolution*, that 'tout le XVIIIème siècle a reconnu et proclamé le

[1] David J. Denby, 'The Current State of Research on Sensibility and Sentimentalism in Late Eighteenth-Century France', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 304 (1992), 1344-7.

rôle des sens, la détermination du moral par le physique' [throughout the eighteenth century the role of the senses, the ruling of the moral by the physical has been acknowledged and proclaimed].[2] At the centre of the controversy was the question of whether reason or feeling was the dominant element in man. This question was in a way resolved in the course of the century since the emphasis was shifted from reason to the feelings. Reason lost some of the absolute authority it had enjoyed in the previous century, and feeling or passion superseded reason in the process of making judgements, moral judgements in particular. In England, the works of the Moral Sense philosophers (Hutcheson, Smith) and Hume's theories in particular no doubt played a crucial part in this evolution. Reason itself did not have only purely rational qualities. Reason and feeling were not in fact two completely opposite and independent faculties: sentiment always concurred with reason in moral decisions, but it was feeling, and not reason, which was necessarily the primary and initial source of all moral judgements. Consequently, a typical human moral sentiment (a virtuous sentiment like pity for instance) was necessarily a reasonable feeling. Prompted by the heart, moral feelings had to pass through the head to be filtered by reason (principles of justice) before they could be considered as acceptable guides by the virtuous man. The fact that 'at a less metaphysical level the power and value of feeling, in all senses of the term, came to be more and more widely accepted' certainly also holds true for what happened in France.[3] The cult of feeling developed similarly on the continent and, by the last quarter of the century, feelings had come

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[2] Henri Coulet, *Le Roman jusqu'à la Révolution*, 2 vols (Paris: Colin, 1967), I, p. 386.
[3] R.F. Brissenden, *Virtue in Distress: Studies in the Novel of Sentiment from Richardson to Sade* (London: Macmillan, 1974), p. 51.

to be absolutely revered: 'jamais le sentiment n'avait été autant prôné'[never had feelings been so extolled].[4]

With the domination of feeling in the head-heart compound, the later part of the century became one of prevailing sensualism.[5] The role of the senses was central to the way sentimentalism and libertinism explored, even though somewhat differently, what living in society entailed for a human being. The (generous) heart, informed by the senses of sight and touch was the guiding principle of the sentimental man. The observation of suffering was what triggered sympathy for the distressed and this emotional response was physicalized as a form of touch as the beholder experienced the distress in his own body.[6] The libertine, on the contrary, subscribed to the principle of the immediate satisfaction of the senses and mind, held that happiness rested on sensation and was therefore guided by his head and his senses in his actions. Since sentimentalism advocated universal benevolence and sympathy the sentimental man was an eminently sociable being, an expert in sociality - at least in essence if not always in practice and, by contrast, the libertine was an expert at seducing, dominating and destroying.

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[4] Ferdinand Brunot, *Histoire de la langue française*, 6 vols (Paris, 1930), I, p. 749. Quoted by Eric Erämetsä in 'A Study of the Word 'Sentimental' and of Other Linguistic Characteristics of Eighteenth-Century Sentimentalism in England', *Suomalaisen Tiedeakatemian Toimituksia. Annales Academiæ Scientiarum Fennicæ*, 74, 1, Series B (Helsinki: Helsingin Liikekirjapaino Oy, 1951), pp. 3-169 (p. 53).

[5] Michel Delon, 'Valeurs sensibles, valeurs libertines de l'énergie', *Romantisme*, 14:16 (1984), 3-13 (p. 4).

[6] Ann Jessie Van Sant, *Eighteenth-Century Sensibility and the Novel: The Senses in Social Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. xi.

**An Almost Parallel Evolution.**

The development of sentimentalism and libertinism both in England and France was, despite some precise points of divergence, nevertheless closely related. If *libertin* and libertine were perfect synonyms throughout the three centuries of their evolution, the fate of the libertine in literature seems to have varied from one tradition to the other. And the numerous shifts in the meaning of sentiment or sentimental, which were so central to the debate already outlined, also illustrate this, for the most part, parallel evolution.

The word libertine has a similar semantic evolution in both countries. A religious freethinker in the sixteenth century ('qui ne s'assujettit ni aux croyances ni aux pratiques de la religion' [not submitting oneself to religious beliefs or religious practices] (Littré)), by the late-sixteenth early-seventeenth century he was 'a man who is not restrained by moral law, especially in his relations with the female sex' (*OED*), 'déréglé par rapport à la moralité entre les deux sexes' [upsetting the moral relationships between the sexes] (Littré).[7] The word then entered the moral lexis. Later in the century libertinism came to be firmly identified with philosophical scepticism and irreligion as well as with sexual freedom. Irreligion was identified as being the cause of immorality and licentious behaviour. At that time, 'the word', Jean Sgard comments in *Prévost Romancier*, 'was in a state of confusion (or

[7] Emile Littré, *Dictionnaire de la langue française* (Paris: Gallimard/Hachette, 1962).
*OED*, ed. by J.A. Simpson and E.S.C. Weiner, 2nd edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

collusion) between philosophy and debauchery'.[8] In the eighteenth century, this confusion or collusion was resolved when philosophical scepticism and dissoluteness ceased to coincide exactly in libertinism. In French, the term 'philosophe' took on the meaning of 'esprit fort' [freethinker] which applied to the libertine until then. Libertinism was still equated - although to a lesser degree - with dangerous ideological licentiousness, but the most salient feature in the definition was now the 'disregard of moral restraint' (*OED*) and a dissolute conduct of self-indulgence, unbridled sensuality and constant pleasure-seeking. This was however, in France at least, true only to a certain extent. As a matter of fact, novels, in which obscene or pornographic elements were used as a vehicle for philosophical critique, started to flourish in the 1740s. Raymond Trousson, in his preface to *Romans libertins du XVIII^e siècle*, remarks that this particular type of libertinism aspired to a philosophical dimension and to questioning social issues like moral and religious prejudices: 's'élevant sous des dehors triviaux, à la prétention philosophique, [le libertinage] accueille la réflexion matérialiste et la contestation sociale comme la condamnation des préjugés moraux et religieux' [libertinism is not limited to the moral realm. Under an innocuous guise it has pretensions to philosophy. It embraces materialist thinking and social protest such as the condemnation of moral and religious prejudices].[9]

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[8] Jean Sgard, *Prévost Romancier* (Paris: Corti, 1968), p. 348-76. Quoted and translated by Thomas O. Beebee, *Clarissa on the Continent: Translation and Seduction* (University Park and London: Pennsylvania State University, 1990), p. 113.

[9] Raymond Trousson, *Romans libertins du XVIII^e siècle* (Paris: Laffont, 1993), p. xv.
One example is *Thérèse Philosophe* (1748) attributed to Boyer d'Argens. A satire of religious prejudices, it uses eroticism to present the basic tenets of deistic thought.

The resurgence in the popularity of pornographic literature might only have been a mid-century phenomenon, but the libertine novel, in a broad sense, is a constant literary feature of the century in France. The English novel has its libertines as well (Mr B. in *Pamela*, Lovelace and Belford in *Clarissa*, Mr Hintman in one of the interpolated stories of Sarah Scott's *Millenium Hall*). But the libertine also appeared in magazines like *The Rambler's Magazine* which projected an image of the libertine close to the French tradition. This popular erotic periodical, which appeared between 1783 and 1791, published many adapted translations of French texts and was subtitled

> the annals of gallantry, glee, pleasure, and the bon ton; calculated for the entertainment of the polite world; and to furnish the man of pleasure with a most delicious banquet of amorous, bacchanalian, whimsical, humorous, theatrical and polite entertainment.[10]

The family of sentimental words is a complex one especially when one considers the interplay between the French and the English meanings. The semantic evolution in both countries gives a fairly accurate idea of the way in which sentimental ideals changed throughout the century and of what the interactions were despite national differences. Sentimentalism is generally held to have appeared earlier in France than in England and to have evolved, as early as 1700, from tragic narratives of the seventeenth century like those of Madame de Scudéry or Madame de La Fayette. Sentiment was at first, and in both countries, understood to refer to a

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Barry Ivker devotes several pages to such novels in 'Towards a Definition of Libertinism in 18th-Century French Fiction', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth-Century*, 73 (1970), 221-39.

mental attitude. It was a 'thought, notion, opinion' in the 1755 edition of Johnson's *Dictionary* and an 'avis, opinion' in the bilingual Boyer-Prieur dictionary (1773)[11], 'un jugement fondé sur une appréciation subjective' [an opinion based on a subjective appreciation].[12] A second meaning is that of 'an amatory feeling or inclination' (*OED*), and in French it applies to 'les affections bonnes, bienveillantes et tendres, les mouvements de l'âme, les passions, la passion de l'amour' [good, benevolent and tender affections, the movements of the soul, the passions, the passion of love] (Littré). A first and crucial difference is that the French word had a stronger emotional connotation: it came before moral considerations and determined the direction the literary production took. From the beginning the French sentimental novel was about the life of the emotions and, in particular, about love. 'Sous cette dénomination [de roman sentimental] nous rangeons assez arbitrairement des romans qui diffèrent par le sujet et par la forme, mais qui ont pour objet la peinture et l'analyse des sentiments plutôt que la description des mœurs et de la société' [Under this denomination [of sentimental novel] we rather arbitrarily classify novels which differ in form and subject matter but which deal with the depiction and analysis of feelings rather than the description of mores and society].[13] This remark by Coulet seems to imply that the category of the sentimental novel is a construction of the twentieth century, but the fact remains that all these novels have the amatory dimension in common. Because of the thematic importance of love, sentiment tended to imply a combination of emotional delicacy and of erotic

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[10] Viktor Link, 'The reception of Crébillon's *Le Sopha* in England: An Unnoticed Edition and some Imitations', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 132 (1975), 199-203 (p. 200).
[11] Erämetsä, p. 25 and p. 33.
[12] *Le Robert électronique*, (1992).

vivacity. In the English usage, moral preoccupations were much more to the fore in the literary production; English sentimentalism was primarily concerned with moral questions like that of the essential goodness of man. A sentiment was thus a 'mental attitude of approval or disapproval', 'an opinion of what is right or agreeable' (*OED*), a rational view about the rights or wrongs of human conduct; it was a thought with a moral evaluation. This meaning of the word, which is the first modern one in the *OED,* comes before the amatory meaning whereas in French, the meaning of 'manière de percevoir les impressions morales' [way of perceiving moral impressions] is only in thirteenth position and comes well after the amatory one. In the English usage sentiment could denote moral reflection and a sentimental novel could be a thoughtful, instructive, moral work. At that time sentimental was still the adjectival derivative of sentiment, and, as such, had rational and intellectual connotations and it meant being capable of refined and highly moral thought. Later, and in a context of increasing emotionalism, sentiment came to designate an elevated thought influenced by emotion. The head and the heart were combined in the formation of opinions or principles. A sentiment was then a refined combination of thought and feeling in which, however, feeling was the predominant element. Sentimental was consequently associated with the capacity for refined feeling. By the second half of the century sentiment, in English, was thus semantically much closer to *sentiment* in French.

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[13] Coulet, p. 378.

**Sterne's Sentimental Legacy.**

With Sterne the two vocabularies became even more obviously involved and the words underwent important semantic changes. Using sentiment in the sense of refined and tender emotion, Sterne, as Eric Erämetsä demonstrates, gave 'sentimental a new significance that was current in French *sentiment*'.[14] We find in the *OED* a quotation from *A Sentimental Journey* as a first occurrence of that meaning.[15] The French meaning clearly permeates the English one in *A Sentimental Journey*, but *Tristram Shandy* also provides, in volume I, a fine example of contamination by the French context in which the word appears:

> —Nor is there any thing unnatural or extravagant in the supposition, that my dear *Jenny* may be my friend. ——Friend!—My friend. Surely, Madam, a friendship between the two sexes may subsist, and be supported without——Fy! Mr. *Shandy*:—Without any thing, Madam, but that tender and delicious sentiment, which ever mixes in friendship, where there is a difference of sex. Let me intreat you to study the pure and sentimental parts of the best *French* Romances;—it will, Madam, astonish you to see what a variety of chaste expression this delicious sentiment, which I have the honour to speak of, is dress'd out. (I, xviii, 42). [16]

Sterne's use reinforced the stress on the emotions, the affections, the passions present in French. According to its grammatical use, sentimental either

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[14] Erämetsä, p. 54.
[15] Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy by Mr. Yorick*, ed. by Tom Keymer (London: Everyman, 1994).
All subsequent references will be to this edition and will be given in the text.
[16] Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, ed. by Ian Campbell Ross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983; repr. 1991).
All subsequent references (by volume, chapter and page) will be to this edition and will be given in the text.

meant 'giving rise to delicate sensations' or 'being emotionally susceptible to experiences likely to create a high degree of sensual pleasure'.[17] In any case, since the French implications were more explicit and the word was semantically closer to sensibility, which presupposed an emotional and a physical susceptibility, sentimental acquired a definite sensual/sexual colouring in Sterne's texts.

Although sentimental first appeared in 1749 in the famous letter addressed by Lady Bradshaigh to Richardson:

> What, in your opinion, is the meaning of the word sentimental, so much in vogue amongst the polite[?] Every thing clever and agreeable is comprehended in that word; but I am convinced a wrong interpretation is given, because it is impossible every thing clever and agreeable can be so common as this word. I am frequently astonished to hear such a one is a *sentimental* man; we were a *sentimental* party; I have been taking a *sentimental* walk. And that I might be reckoned a little in the fashion, and, as I thought, show them the proper use of the word, about six weeks ago, I declared I had just received a *sentimental* letter. [18]

it is Sterne's use that transformed sentimental into a 'fashionable [...] expression' as Jeremiah Newman remarked in 1796.[19] With Sterne, sentimental ceased to be

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[17] Erämetsä, p. 43.

[18] *The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson*, ed. by Anna Laetitia Barbauld, 6 vols (London, 1804), iv (p. 282). Quoted in the *OED*.

[19] Author of the *Lounger's Common-Place Book* (1st volume of the series, 1792) and one of the young critics who reacted positively to *A Sentimental Journey*, but condemned the indecency of *Tristram Shandy*. Quoted by Alan B. Howes in *Yorick and the Critics: Sterne's Reputation in England, 1760-1868* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958; repr. Hamden: Archon Books, 1971), pp. 297-8.

the adjectival form of sentiment as the connotations he introduced bore little or no relation to the original meaning.

R.F. Brissenden argues that when Sterne used sentiment he had in mind the meaning given to it by Marivaux or Crébillon; it is probably justified to add, when he used sentimental as well. We can find traces of that in his letters. In a letter written from Paris to John Hall-Stevenson, he says:

> [...] I have been for eight weeks smitten with the tenderest passion that ever tender wit underwent. [...] the last three weeks we were every hour upon the doleful ditty of parting — and thou mayest conceive, dear cosin, how it alter'd my gaite and air — for I went and came like any louden'd carl, and did nothing but mix tears, and *Jouer des sentiments* with her from sun-rising even to the setting of the same [...],[20]

and in one to [? John Wodehouse] he uses the adverbial form of the word in a French context:

> [...] I myself must ever have some dulcinea in my head—it harmonises the soul—and in those cases I first endeavour to make the lady believe so, or rather I begin first to make myself believe that I am in love—but I carry my affairs quite in the French way, sentimentally [...].[21]

In fact, sentimentally, and, for that matter, sentimental did not exist in French until Frénais, the first translator of *A Sentimental Journey* in 1769, decided to transpose

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[20] *Letters of Laurence Sterne*, ed. by Lewis Perry Curtis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935, repr. 1965), p. 213 (19 May 1764).
[21] *Letters*, p. 256 (23 [?August] 1765).

it directly into French. He gives his reasons for doing so in the foreword to his translation: 'le mot anglois *Sentimental* n'a pu se rendre en François par aucune expression qui pût y répondre, & on l'a laissé subsister. Peut-être trouvera-t-on en lisant qu'il mériteroit de passer dans notre langue'.[22]

After Sterne, that is, during the 1770s and increasingly during the 1780s, sentimental was more consistently associated with sensibility and both words started, in fact, to become less and less fashionable. Sentimentalism was degenerating into sentimentality, defined by Johnson as the 'affectation of fine feeling or exquisite sensibility' (*Dictionary*, abridged version (1843, repr. 1994)). Sterne was, at the time, and has been since, generally held responsible for bringing sentimental 'into discredit' and making it 'the standard epithet for feelings that are sickly and superficial' (Rev. Whitwell Elwin in *Quarterly Review* (1854)).[23] That Sterne's novel constituted a watershed is not to be doubted mostly because it spurred a whole generations of authors to write poor sentimental fiction which in turn greatly contributed to bring about the decline of sensibility. Sentimental and sentimentalism were by the later part of the century used pejoratively and indicated shallow, excessive, debased, affected feeling. Feeling was indulged in, cultivated only for the sake of it and not for that of morality anymore. As the word sensibility started to have negative connotations, sensitivity, a more neutral

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[22] 'The English word *Sentimental* cannot be rendered equally in French by any word and so I have let it remain. Perhaps the reader will find it deserves to pass into our language'. Quoted and translated by Madeleine Descargues in 'French Reflections: on a Few Reflections of the French in Sterne's Letters and *A Sentimental Journey'*, *Bulletin de la société d'études anglo-américaines des XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles*, 38 (1994), 255-269 (pp. 264-5).

medical term, started to be associated with emotional and physical susceptibility and the capacity to display compassion.

In France, however, the term *sensibilité* met with a very different fate thanks to the creation of the word *sensiblerie* which was endowed with all the negative connotations now given to sentimentality.

**The French Connection.**

Erämetsä and Brissenden agree in observing that Sterne's use of sentimental terms owes a lot to his contacts with French literature and to his travelling twice to France first in 1762-64 and then in 1765-66. Sterne himself confessed to having widely read in French and, in his *Nouvelle bibliographie générale*, Fournel reports him saying 'avant d'écrire, j'avais lu Rabelais et Crébillon' [before I started writing I had read Rabelais and Crébillon] (Vol XII (1856)). Martin Battestin suggests, in '*A Sentimental Journey*: Sterne's Work of Redemption', that 'Sterne's friendship with the *philosophes* - he was especially close to Baron d'Holbach and Diderot [...] - profoundly influenced the philosophical content of his final novel'.[24] The novel has undeniably a self-conscious French quality to it. It is peppered with French words, phrases or sentences. The reason for such a profusion is easily conceivable when one remembers that, although the title announces a journey through France and Italy,

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[23] Quoted by Ernest N. Dilworth in *The Unsentimental Journey of Laurence Sterne* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1948) p. xii.

[24] Martin Battestin, '*A Sentimental Journey*: Sterne's Work of Redemption', *Bulletin de la société d'études anglo-américaines des XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles*, 38 (1994), 189-204 (p. 196).

the reader never actually sees Yorick crossing the Alps and the narrative, in typical Sternean style, abruptly ends only after two volumes (four were promised by the author). Secondly, since the story is that of Yorick's sentimental encounters and '*as an English man does not travel to see English men*', Yorick meets French beggars, grissets or soldiers and reports the sentimental conversations he has with them and others. But, as Jean Viviès remarks, French words are not used profusely simply for the sake of giving plenty of local colour: the text mimes in fact Yorick's sentimental opening to fellow human beings by opening itself to their language.[25] And the bilingualism of the text, which, Frédéric Ogée says, maintains the reader in 'un état de francophonie obligé' [a forced French-speaking context], goes beyond the obvious borrowing of non English terms.[26] There is the sense that English is permeated by French when phrases are literally transposed from one language into the other ( 'pour l'amour de Dieu', for instance, becomes '*for the love of God'* (p. 6)). In a fashion reminiscent of Tristram Shandy's narrative manner, particular encounters are often followed by general comments concerning the French (their use of figures of speech (p. 41), the character of their shopkeepers (p. 44), their gallantry (p. 70), etc.). Such elements together with details like the reproduction of the letter in French, partly copied and adapted by Yorick for Madame de L***, or the mention of Crébillon's novel *Les Egarements du coeur et de l'esprit* (1736-38) as a book purchased by a fair 'fille de chambre',

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[25] Jean Viviès, '*A Sentimental Journey*, or Reading Rewarded', *Bulletin de la société d'études anglo-américaines des XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles*, 38 (1994), 243-253 (p. 245).

[26] Frédéric Ogée, 'This Matter? Better in France? Laurence Sterne et le voyage sentimental', in *Le Continent européen et le monde anglo-américain aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles* (Reims: Presses Universitaires de Reims, 1987), pp. 5-14 (p.12).

contribute to give to the text a 'frenchified' character and to create a 'French subtext within the English text'.[27]

**'Reading in Pairs'[28]: Crébillon and Sterne, the Peers' Texts.**

Both *A Sentimental Journey* and *Les Egarements du coeur et de l'esprit* appeared at key moments of their respective literary traditions and they are quoted without fail as perfect examples whenever what is usually labelled as libertine or sentimental literature is subject to critical scrutiny.[29] But in some respects they do not, in fact, fit quite as well as one would think in these traditions.

The decade in which *Les Egarements du coeur et de l'esprit* was published is a crucial moment in the development of the novel in France and Crébillon himself stands out as one of the first novelists to explore and exploit, as a novelistic theme, the tensions between libertinism and sentimentalism.

Even though sentimentalism appears to have contained from the start the seeds of its own degeneracy - John Mullan suggests, in 'Sterne's Comedy of Sentiments', that 'the humour of *A Sentimental Journey* comes from its knowledge that this change in meaning was always likely to take place' - one

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[27] Viviès, p. 245-6.

[28] Title given by Nancy K. Miller to the first chapter of *French Dressing: Women, Men, and Ancien Régime Fiction* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995).

[29] Claude Prosper Jolyot de Crébillon fils, *Les Egarements du coeur et de l'esprit*, in *Romanciers du XVIIIème siècle*, ed. by Etiemble, (Paris: Gallimard, 1965).
All subsequent references will be to this edition and will be given in the text.
All the translations of foreign quotations will be mine and will be given in the text.

cannot deny that Sterne's idiosyncratic use of sentimental terms was instrumental in the overall evolution of English sentimentalism.[30]

And yet, at the same time, the two texts significantly stand out. Thus *Les Egarements du coeur et de l'esprit* is certainly not representative of the whole libertine production. We must indeed remember that under that label literary historians have included works as different as seduction, licentious, erotic, obscene or pornographic novels. *Les Egarements du coeur et de l'esprit* would seem to belong to the first category since its subject is a particular aspect of libertinism called 'la mondanité, le libertinage mondain', which could be translated into English as 'worldliness', to use Peter Brooks' phrase.[31] It only depicts 'la bonne compagnie' [polite society] that is a very limited fraction of society.

As for Sterne, his reputation as a sentimental writer owes a lot to the reconstruction of his works into fragments epitomizing pathos by readers eager to sweep away the bawdiness, irreverence and humour they had found in *Tristram Shandy* and to laud its more sentimental scenes and *A Sentimental Journey* as a whole. Stories like that of Le Fever (*Tristram Shandy*, VI, vi, 334 - x, 342), Maria (*Tristram Shandy*, IX, xxiv, 522-3 and *A Sentimental Journey*, pp. 95-8) or the monk (*A Sentimental Journey*, pp. 16-8) were selected for publication for their

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[30] John Mullan, 'Sterne's Comedy of Sentiments', *Bulletin de la société d'études anglo-américaines des XVII^e^ et XVIII^e^ siècles*, 38 (1994), 233-241 (p. 234).
[31] Peter Brooks, *The Novel of Worldliness: Crébillon, Marivaux, Laclos, Stendhal* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969).

pathetic quality by the editors of *The Monthly Review* or the *Gentleman's Magazine*, among others.

> The story of Le Fevre is one of the most highly finished, and masterly examples of true pathos to be found in any language, and would have made its author immortal, though he had never written any thing else.

This judgement, typical of the critical response of the time, appeared in the aptly named *Sentimental Magazine* in January 1774.[32] Published for the first time in 1782, the extremely popular collection (its tenth edition came out in 1787) entitled *The Beauties of Sterne; including all his Pathetic Tales, and distinguished Observations on Life* and subtitled *Selected for the Heart of Sensibility* also reprinted these particular episodes and was, as a result, another important factor in the creation of Sterne the sentimentalist and in the rereading of his works.

Although they have received due critical acknowledgement, the literary links between *Les Egarements du coeur et de l'esprit* and *A Sentimental Journey* have never really been subjected to detailed analysis. The most developed and perceptive account is to be found in Brissenden's *Virtue in Distress*, in which he suggests that Sterne's sentimentalism looks back to the French sentimentalism of the first half of the century and in particular to the 'sophisticated hedonism' of writers like Marivaux and Crébillon (who, interestingly enough, thus ranks among

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[32] Quoted by John Mullan in *Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 154.

sentimental novelists).[33] Most accounts of the links between Crébillon and Sterne are however limited to the description of the two authors meeting in Parisian salons and of how, in Sterne's words, in a letter written from Paris to David Garrick:

> Crebillion [sic] has made a convention with me, which, if he is not too lazy, will be no bad *persiflage*—as soon as I get to Thoulouse he has agreed to write me an expostulat[o]ry letter upon the indecorums of T. Shandy—which is to be answered by recrimination upon the liberties in his own works—these are to be printed together—Crebillion against Sterne—Sterne against Crebillion—the copy to be sold, and the money equally divided.[34]

It is, I think, extremely reductive to bring the connection between the two novelists down to this single biographical anecdote. And it would be just as reductive to see the introduction of *Les Egarements du coeur et de l'esprit* into *A Sentimental Journey* simply as an element of the plot, as a book bought by a '*fille de chambre*' (pp. 55-6) and thus only as one of the transitional objects which facilitate Yorick's 'sentimental' encounters with women. Or to consider the title simply as an elegant turn of phrase used to sum up Yorick's journey.[35] Or, for that

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[33] Brissenden, p. 116.

[34] *Letters,* p. 162 ([19] April 1762).

[35] This phrase also seems useful for corresponding: Letter to Dr. ***** ([York], Jan. 30, 1760): '[...] reason and common sense tell me, that if the characters of past ages and men are to be drawn at all, they are to be drawn like themselves; that is with their excellencies, and with their foibles [...].—The ruleing passion *et les egarements du cœur*, are the very things which mark, and distinguish a man's character [...]'. (*Letters*, p. 88).
Letter to ? Lady Warkworth, York. [?6-13 May 1765]: '[...] do I not carry about me the golden headed pencil & pinch-beck Ruler which the truely virtuous & open hearted Princess Micomicon, put into my hands at parting—hallowed & mystick Gifts convey'd by a heavenly hand, to mark &

matter, to see the reference to *Les Egarements du coeur et de l'esprit* only as a meta-narrative element the sole function of which would be to contribute to the self-reflexive character of *A Sentimental Journey*. With the mention of *Hamlet* or *Les Egarements du coeur et de l'esprit* as books being bought or bound, the stress is put on the primarily material nature of writing; the 'preface' (pp. 8-11), 'the letter' (p. 39) or the 'fragment' (pp. 86-9) are similarly part of the process, already present in *Tristram Shandy*, by which the text makes its own materiality visible through the inclusion of other texts.

*Les Egarements du coeur et de l'esprit* is certainly more than a good phrase for describing Yorick's strayings in *A Sentimental Journey*. It is, after all, with *Hamlet* and *Much Ado About Nothing*, the only *explicit* intertextual reference. And in the same way that *Hamlet* is of crucial importance to the narrative since it allows Yorick to articulate his identity and to reflect on it (in the passport episode, Yorick discloses his name to the Count de B*** by pointing at the written sign standing for his name on one of the pages from *Hamlet*), the reference to *Les Egarements du coeur et de l'esprit* must be of some consequence to the reading of *A Sentimental Journey*.

It cannot of course be denied that certain formal and thematic aspects put the two novels at opposite ends of the novelistic spectrum. Both are first-person retrospective narratives, but *Les Egarements du coeur et de l'esprit* belongs to the genre of the memoir-novel and *A Sentimental Journey* to that of the travel-book,

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measure down my back-slidings and my fore-slidings—*les egarments de mon cœur, & mon esprit pendent mon exile!*'. (*Letters*, p. 245).

although it must be said that Yorick, like Tristram in Volume VII of *Tristram Shandy* (which is an Ur-*Sentimental Journey*), is writing a travel-narrative which is to revisit all travel-narratives.[36]

Like most male-authored memoir-novels of the period, *Les Egarements du coeur et de l'esprit* is the story of a young man's entrance into the world: the initiation of young Monsieur de Meilcour to the social codes of the enclosed and self-sufficient world of the Parisian aristocracy. This contrasts of course very much with the narrative framework of *A Sentimental Journey*, the basic motif of which is the chance encounters made by the sentimental traveller in an environment foreign to him. Yorick is certainly less static than Meilcour and meets a wider variety of people than Meilcour ever does, for, outside the salons of the Parisian aristocracy, Meilcour's world only extends as far as the courtyards of the Tuileries gardens where the aristocracy goes to be seen, and where the players taking part in this worldly game meet again and again. The list of the acquaintances Yorick makes while travelling through France is by contrast quite extensive and varied, ranging from a peasant family, a couple of *filles de chambre*, a beautiful grisset, an old soldier, a lady from Brussels and one from Piedmont, a few counts and dukes to a certain number of beggars whom Yorick helps.

What can be gathered from such a description is that we seem to have on the one hand an enclosed world of aristocratic prejudices and self-centred interests, and on the other the bourgeois ideal of generosity and diffusion of

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[36] ' "Now before I quit Calais", a travel-writer would say, "it would not be amiss to give some account of it." — Now I think it very much amiss — that a man cannot go quietly through a town, and let it alone, when it does not meddle with him, but that he must be turning about and drawing

sentiment. We appear to be faced with two distinctive conceptions of what being a social being implies, of what one's relationship with the other ought to be. From this can be infered a sketchy description of the division between sentimental morality and libertine amorality. On the one hand we are left with the picture of a sentimental man who feels part of the large family of the human race, who aims at reaching a high moral order, who is driven by elevated, refined, true moral feelings and social concerns to feel sympathy for some of his less fortunate fellow human beings, to commiserate and to exercise his benevolence (by alleviating their miseries); a generous heart always open to the other's plight and/or to passionate, true love; an expert at reading the signs of sensibility: the non-verbal language of tears, blushes, swoons and sighs. And on the other hand we are left with the picture of libertines in search of pleasure and power over the other, that is mainly over women; libertines aiming at the self-control that leads to voluptuousness and pleasure: the pleasure of controlling, dominating and bringing the other round to acknowledge it as a governing principle; irremediably hard and dry hearts vigorously refusing true love; masters in the art of convincing and deceiving with words as well as with physical manifestations.

## 'Reading in Pairs': *The Fortunate Foundlings* and *Les Heureux Orphelins*, Variations around a Theme.

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his pen at every kennel he crosses over, merely o' my conscience, for the sake of drawing it.' (*Tristram Shandy*, VII, iv, 387).

The second paired reading I am proposing is that of another of Crébillon's novels, *Les Heureux Orphelins, histoire imitée de l'anglais*, with Eliza Haywood's *The Fortunate Foundlings*.[37] The precursor is, in this case, the English writer and, contrary to an idea generally held at the time and by most modern critics, the imitator is not the female but the male writer.

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[37] Claude Prosper Jolyot de Crébillon fils, *Les Heureux Orphelins, histoire imitée de l'anglais*, ed. by Jean Dagen and Anne Feinsilber (Paris: Desjonquères, 1995).
Eliza Haywood, *The Fortunate Foundlings* (London: T. Gardner, 1744; repr. New York: Garland Publishing, 1974).
All subsequent references will be to these editions and will be given in the text.
The plot of *The Fortunate Foundlings* could be summarised as follows: On returning from visiting the main European courts Dorilaus discovers two abandoned children. He brings them up as his own: Horatio is sent to Westminster school and Louisa to Mrs Trainwell's boarding school. Horatio returns to Dorilaus to announce that he is joining the army, Louisa comes back to see her brother off as a young woman of great beauty. Dorilaus immediately falls in love with her but drives her away when he makes attempts on her virtue. From this point on the narrative alternates between Horatio's and Louisa's stories. Horatio, having been taken prisoner by the Baron de la Valiere, he finds himself in the court at S$^{t}$ Germain where he falls in love with Charlotta de Palfoy. After a series of adventures, including a masquerade scene at which female desire and jealousy are unleashed, Charlotta is removed from St Germain by her father. Despite Horatio saving her father's life Charlotta is sent to a monastery when the relationship is discovered. Horatio leaves to fight in Poland and is imprisoned in S$^{t}$ Petersburg. Having escaped to London, Louisa works for Mrs C— —ge, a court milliner, where she has to suffer the advances of Mr B——n. She escapes this time to Windsor, where she meets Melanthe, a lady of quality. Melanthe tells her the unhappy story of her marriage to Henricus. Louisa accompanies Melanthe in her travels on the continent. In Venice, they meet the Count de Bellfleur, a libertine, and Mr du Plessis. Bellfleur tries to seduce Louisa. Sent away by Melanthe who has become jealous, Louisa is again attacked by Bellfleur in Padua. She is saved by Plessis just in time. Louisa enters a convent, escapes and, disguised as a pilgrim, travels to Paris where she meets Charlotta, du Plessis, Horatio and Dorilaus, whom she discovers is her real father.
*Les Heureux Orphelins* opens like *The Fortunate Foundlings* with the relation, in the third person, of the discovery of two orphans. Rutland finds Edouard and Lucie in the grotto of his garden. When Edouard decides to embrace the military career, Lucie comes back to see her brother off and enflames Rutland's desire. Rutland's destructive passion and attempts on her virtue drive Lucie away. She escapes to London where she meets a benefactress, Mme Pikring, who finds her a place at a milliner's. The aptly named Fanny Yielding procures girls to Lord Chester who, captivated by Lucie, tries to buy her favours. Lucie escapes with Mme Pikring to Bristol where she finds a place with the Duchesse de Suffolk. Then follows the first person retrospective narrative of Madame de Suffolk's passionate and unhappy love for Chester to Lucie. Madame de Suffolk, a young widow, meets the young Lord Durham at the court and falls madly in love with him. She proposes marriage to him but he refuses, claiming that he has been promised to a cousin. Durham becomes Chester when he inherits his father's title. His letters are intercepted by the queen who reveals his treachery to Suffolk (there is no promised cousin and he has seduced other women). The concluding section is Chester's epistolary relation, in eight letters to the French duke who

Crébillon appears to have enjoyed a rather privileged relationship with England. Not only did he meet leading literary, political and philosophical figures (Chesterfield, Hume, Gray, Garrick, etc.) in the Parisian salons which he frequently visited, but he was sincerely admired by some of them. Even more significantly, he was still famous and appreciated in England long after the 1750s when his reputation had started to wane in France. His works were abundantly translated, reprinted and imitated (*Les Egarements* was translated in 1751, *Le Sopha, conte moral* (1740) was reprinted 18 times and widely imitated, the *Lettres de la marquise de M*** au comte de R**** (1732) had as many editions in English as in French).

*Les Heureux Orphelins* (which, by the way, was to be appropriated in its turn and translated into English by E. Kimber as *The Happy Orphans* in 1758) is Crébillon's adapted and expanded translation of Haywood's *The Fortunate Foundlings*. [38] It begins like the original English text as a third-person narrative and deals with what happens to the eponymous orphans, but, as Crébillon moves away from Haywood's text, it takes the form of a memoir-novel with the story of Madame de Suffolck, the victim of a libertine and then that of an epistolary narrative with the letters of Lord Chester, the libertine in question. *Les Heureux Orphelins* met with a rather lukewarm reception at the time of its publication and Grimm certainly did not view it very favourably. He wrote in the *Correspondance littéraire* (1753-73) that he found in it 'tout au plus le mouvement usé des grosses

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educated him in libertine matters, of how he planned to seduce Suffolk at the same time as two other women: Madame de Rindsey and Madame de Pembrook.

cordes du coeur' [not much more than the worn out and heavy touching of the right chord] and 'des caractères communs, des aventures et des sentiments romanesques' [run of the mill characters, story-book adventures and feelings] (interestingly enough, *Le Sopha*, an unambiguously libertine novel, was, that same year, lauded by l'abbé Raynal in another issue of the *Correspondance* (July 1754)).[39]

Grimm's criticism is instructive for us, although we must bear in mind that his criticisms were often motivated by personal concerns, because it points back to the ideas of a temptation for the other discourse and of the gendered division of literary genres. Indeed we are faced here with the reading, the appropriation by a French male writer, generally labelled as libertine, of a text written by an English female, supposedly sentimental, writer. As *The Fortunate Foundlings* is indeed what could be called a 'sentimental' text, that is, a novel relegated to a secondary position and assigned the reductive label of 'novel for the feeling heart', the motivation of Grimm's criticism becomes clearer and fits very well in the canon-formation process described by Nancy K. Miller in 'Cultural Memory and the Art of the Novel'.[40]

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[38] E. Kimber, *The Happy Orphans: an authentic history of persons in high life with a variety of uncommon events and surprizing turns of fortunes, Translated and improved from the French original*, 2 vols (London: H. Woodgate & S. Brooks, 1759).

[39] Melchior Grimm and others, *Correspondance littéraire, philosophique et critique*, 16 vols (Paris: Garnier, 1877-1882). Quoted by Ernest Sturm, *Crébillon fils et le libertinage au dix-huitième siècle* (Paris: Nizet, 1970), p. 41.

[40] Nancy K. Miller, 'Cultural Memory and the Art of the Novel: Gender and Narrative in Eighteenth-Century Fiction', in *Textuality and Sexuality: Reading Theories and Practices*, ed. by

**Arch Enemies?**

If, when reading Crébillon and Sterne together, we only take into account the question of class difference and that of diverging practices of sociability, and when reading Haywood and Crébillon we only take into account the gender division, statements like the following: libertinism is the negation of sentimentalism[41], the libertine is 'the arch enemy of all forms of sentimentality'[42], or the sentimental novel, after 1760, exemplifies the efforts of the bourgeoisie to set moral sentiments against the immorality of libertinism[43], or that female authored fiction is necessarily sentimental, statements like those certainly hold true. However, if we bear in mind what was said about the particular nature of *Les Egarements du coeur et de l'esprit* and *A Sentimental Journey* and of their relationships to the tradition, Michel Delon's qualifying statement that the opposition, between a hedonistic and libertine aristocracy and a sentimental and socially conscious bourgeoisie, may be the result of a 'sociologisme hâtif' [hasty sociological approach] seems more appropriate.[44] This I think also applies to the gendered division of writing.

The main assumption underlying this project is thus the existence of a complementarity between sentimentalism and libertinism, of an intimate interplay between those two discourses. Delon speaks of 'une certaine réversibilité du

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Judith Still and Michael Worton (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), pp. 85-99 (p. 85).

[41] Trousson, p. xlvii.

[42] Brissenden, p. 136.

[43] Coulet, p. 431.

[44] Delon, p. 4.

libertinage et du sentimentalisme' [a certain reversibility of libertinism and sentimentalism] and sees them as two responses to a single problem: that posed by the question of energy.[45]

My study is focused on the moment when the libertine behaves sentimentally or when the sentimental man is tempted to act as a libertine; when 'le libertinage est tenté par le sentiment, le sentiment par le libertinage' [when libertinism is tempted by sentimentalism and sentimentalism by libertinism], or when texts which are supposed to belong to one category could also in fact belong to the other one.[46] I aim to trace the strong attraction existing between the two through parallel readings of Crébillon, Sterne, and Haywood. Delon's remarks mainly concern the later part of the century: the texts he uses are Dorat's *Les Malheurs de l'inconstance* (1772) and Loaisel de Tréogate's *Dolbreuse ou l'homme du siècle ramené à la vérité par le sentiment et par la raison, histoire philosophique* (1783)) and he focuses particularly on the libertine temptation:

> les romanciers de la fin du XVIIIème siècle semblent accepter une énergie sensible, génératrice de violences et de frénésies, qui mène leurs héros loin des chemins de la vertu traditionnelle et leur fait croiser trop souvent les routes du libertinage. (p. 12)
>
> [the novelists of the end of the eighteenth century seem to be accepting a sensory energy which generates violence and frenzy and which leads their protagonists far

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[45] Delon, p. 10

[46] 'De la tentation libertine à la réconciliation morale, la littérature sentimentale sait ménager de subtils accomodements.' [sentimental literature manages to contrive a fine compromise between libertine temptations and moral reconciliations]. Delon, p. 10.

from the paths of traditional virtue and make them cross too often the roads of libertinism.]

But Miller reaches exactly the same conclusion for mid-century novels. Her principal aim is to contest the validity of a highly canonical eighteenth-century literary history, but in the course of her analysis of canon-formation she declares, taking novels by Marie-Jeanne Riccoboni and Charles Pinot-Duclos as examples, that 'sentimental and libertine are but two sides of the same coin' and adds, in an endnote to that chapter, that 'one could argue that all libertine texts are also sentimental'.[47]

Delon and Miller's positions will be used as starting points to determine around what the complementarity is centred in the texts of Crébillon, Sterne or Haywood.

This complementarity has been largely overlooked with the result of having confined Crébillon and Sterne to the constructed images of the libertine or the sentimental writer. I would like first to uncover, in Crébillon's novel, the sentimental elements, which are present mainly because Meilcour is, I think, a sentimental ingénu and because Crébillon is not at heart a libertine novelist but a novelist writing about libertines, and then trace their interactions with the libertine component of the text. Then, taking up Delon's observation that a libertine temptation exists in later eighteenth-century French sentimentalism and remembering that *A Sentimental Journey* is a frenchified text, I will show that

[47] Miller, p. 94 and footnote 9 p. 98.

such a temptation is present in Sterne's novel and that it is best seen when read with *Les Egarements du coeur et de l'esprit* and *Les Heureux Orphelins* in mind.

**Paired and Multiple Readings.**

The theme of comparison between Crébillon and Sterne will be pursued throughout, but the organisation of the material will be issue based. The relationships between *A Sentimental Journey*, *Les Egarements du coeur et de l'esprit*, *Les Heureux Orphelins*, and *The Fortunate Foundlings* being very rich will be approached and reapproached from different perspectives in each of the issue-based chapters which will centre on questions of language, non-linguistic communication, sociability, epistolarity and difference. They will also be read in relation to two other sentimental texts Burney's *Evelina*, Riccoboni's *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby* and one other libertine text Cleland's *Fanny Hill*.[48]

Chapter 1 throws light on existing traces of sentimental discourse in novels of 'worldliness' and on libertine components in sentimental discourse through a close analysis of the language of *A Sentimental Journey* and *Les Egarements du cœur et de l'esprit*.

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[48] Fanny Burney, *Evelina; or the History of a Young Lady's entrance into the World*, ed. by Edward A. Bloom (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).
Marie-Jeanne Riccoboni, *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby*, ed. by Sylvain Menant (Paris: Desjonquères, 1997).
John Cleland, *Fanny Hill; or Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, ed. by Peter Wagner (London: Penguin, 1985).
All subsequent references will be to these editions and will be given in the text.

Chapter 2 focuses on the presence of the body in fiction and examines the way in which it is represented in *A Sentimental Journey*, *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby*, *Evelina*, *Fanny Hill* and *Les Heureux Orphelins* more particularly.

Chapter 3 focuses on the practices of sociability which are associated with the sentimental and the libertine discourse and examines how they are represented in *A Sentimental Journey*, *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby*, *Evelina*, *Les Egarements du cœur et de l'esprit* and *Les Heureux Orphelins*.

Chapter 4 pursues this theme through the study, in *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby* and *Les Heureux Orphelins*, of the use by the libertine and the woman of feeling of the epistolary form in the negotiation of power relations.

Chapter 5 centres on the question of national and sexual difference and examines the representations of the other in *A Sentimental Journey*, *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby*, *Evelina*, *The Fortunate Foundlings* and *Les Heureux Orphelins*.

## Chapter 1- A Reading of *A Sentimental Journey* in the Light of *Les Egarements du cœur et de l'esprit*: Literary and Linguistic Wanderings.

The aim of this chapter is to examine in what ways *A Sentimental Journey* looks back to Crébillon's novel and to show its significance in relation to Sterne's own version of sentimentalism.

When reading *Les Egarements du cœur et de l'esprit*, its connections with *A Sentimental Journey* do not immediately spring to mind. It cannot be denied that certain stylistic and thematic aspects put the two novels at opposite ends of the novelistic spectrum. Yet, these aspects do not in the end outnumber existing affinities. The closeness of the two titles is quite striking. There is indeed an almost word for word correspondence between the spatial and the emotional elements in both titles. 'Journey' echoes 'égarements' and 'sentimental' echoes the combination of 'cœur' and 'esprit'. *Les Egarements du cœur et de l'esprit* clearly belongs to the genre of the memoir-novel which flourished at the time, and it could be said that there are elements of the confessional narrative in *A Sentimental Journey*, even though it is in a facetious way. Apart from 'the preface in the desobligeant' (p. 8) which is written, so to speak, to the moment, the rest of the narrative is retrospective. The 'I write not to apologize for the weaknesses of my heart in this tour, – but to give an account of them' of Yorick (p. 13) reminds

us of the 'faiblesses' that Madame de Lursay tries successively to combat and to hide. Both texts are also in a way education stories. *Les Egarements du cœur et de l'esprit* charts the initiation of the young Meilcour into the social codes of the enclosed and self-sufficient world of the Parisian aristocracy in which love and gallantry are the main preoccupations. This is clearly stated at the end of the preface: 'Il s'en faut de beaucoup qu'on ait prétendu montrer l'homme dans tous les désordres où le plongent les passions, l'amour seul préside ici' ['I am far from claiming to have shown man in all the disorders to which the passions may bring him. Love alone rules here] (p. 11). *A Sentimental Journey* follows Yorick's discovery of the customs of a foreign country as well as his sentimental - benevolent and amorous - adventures.

Brissenden suggests, at one point of his classic study on the novel of sentiment, that Sterne's sentimentalism looks back 'to the cool and sophisticated hedonism of Marivaux and Crébillon'.[1] Such a connection had already been made by contemporaries of Sterne. Commentators, after Sterne's death, drew parallels between Sterne and Crébillon. One of them praises both authors for their 'deep insight into human nature' but goes on singling out Sterne for 'his happy talent of exciting the tenderest and most affecting sensations from the most trifling occurrences' and for 'an eminent proportion of the qualities of the heart' in *A Sentimental Journey*.[2] John Ferriar, one of the first Sterne scholars, reviewing

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[1] Brissenden, p. 116.
[2] John Ogilvie, *Philosophical and Critical Observations on the Nature, Characters, and Various Species of Composition* (1774). Quoted by Alan B. Howes in *Sterne: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge, 1974), pp. 240-41.

Sterne's possible sources, mentions Marivaux, 'the father of the sentimental style', as one of them and suggests that 'a careful perusal of his writings, and of those of the younger Crébillon, might perhaps elucidate the serious parts of *Tristram Shandy*, and the *Sentimental Journey*'. But Ferriar holds Sterne as the best of the three writers because he manages to avoid the lengthy digressions of the former and the 'excessive refinement and ambiguity in [the] language' of the latter.[3] We can briefly remark at that point that Crébillon's novels were attacked similarly in France: 'le rafinement le conduit souvent à ne pas se faire entendre' [his refinement is often the cause of his not making himself understood] or 'il n'y a rien de plus dégoûtant, de plus entortillé, de plus précieux et de plus obscène' than a novel by Crébillon [there is nothing more disgusting, more convoluted, more precious and more obscene].[4] Ferriar's statements are quite remarkable if one just remembers *Tristram Shandy*'s innumerable digressions and very surprising for modern readers who tend to see ambiguity as central to *A Sentimental Journey*. The treatment of Crébillon in relation to Sterne by both commentators, the fact that neither of them alludes to the more humorous and erotic dimensions of some of Crébillon's oriental tales but rather emphasise his serious side, fits, it seems, quite well in the general trend of pathetic reconstruction of Sterne's works which started after Sterne's death. A double harnessing seems to be at play here. Ferriar establishes a connection with authors

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[3] John Ferriar, 'Comments on Sterne' (1793). Quoted by Howes, p. 286.

[4] Aubert de la Chesnaye des Bois, *Lettres amusantes et critiques* (1743). Quoted by Bernadette Fort in *Le Langage de l'ambiguité dans l'œuvre de Crébillon fils* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1978), p. 3. Madame du Deffand, *Lettres de la Marquise du Deffand*, ed. by M. Paget Toynbee (London, 1912). Quoted by Clifton Cherpack in *An Essay on Crébillon fils* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1962), p. ix.

he classifies as masters of sentimentalism but he is at the same time reluctant to associate Sterne too closely with the French and their refinement. As Linda Colley remarks in her study of the construction of a national sense of identity in the course of the eighteenth century: 'there was a sense at this time [...] in which the British conceived of themselves as an essentially "masculine" culture [...] caught up in an eternal rivalry with an essentially "effeminate" France'.[5] Refinement with its meaning of polish was much too close to the dreaded implications of effeminacy.

Before *A Sentimental Journey* appeared in 1768, Sterne was being increasingly criticized for his 'breaches in decorum' in *Tristram Shandy*.[6] The first two volumes having prompted positive reactions on the whole, the novelty started to wear off rapidly with the following instalments and criticisms became more and more centred on the 'obscenity' and the 'indecency' of Sterne's 'bawdy composition'.[7] The 'beautifully pathetic' story of Le Fever was for some critics one of the few redeeming features of the work because it 'exhibit[ed] the character of Toby and his corporal in such a point of view, as must endear them to every reader of sensibility'.[8] By the ninth volume most critics and readers, having grown weary of Tristram, started to demand of Sterne that he 'cultivate his talents in "the pathetic"'.[9] Ralph Griffith's was one of those:

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[5] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 252.
[6] Howes, p. 6.
[7] Howes, pp. 8-9 and p. 183.
[8] *Critical Review*, 13 (January 1762). Quoted by Howes, p. 140.
[9] Howes, p. 9.

> —I am inclined to think that, all this while, you have not sufficiently cultivated your best talents. Give up your Long Noses, your Quindlinbergs, and your Andoüillets. [...] One of your gentlemen once remarked, in *print*, Mr. Shandy—that he thought your excellence lay in the PATHETIC. I think so too. In my opinion, the little story of Le Fevre has done you more honour than every thing else you have wrote, except your Sermons. Suppose you were to strike out a new plan?[10]

In this context the new work, *A Sentimental Journey*, was received very favourably. Of course some dissenting voices were heard. Writing such a book was not 'suitable to [Sterne's] serious profession', it contained 'obscenity and ill-applied passages of Holy Scripture' and ended 'with a dash of *somewhat* bordering rather on sensuality than sentiment'.[11] But a majority of the critics praised Sterne's 'pathetic vein', his 'strokes of delicacy', his ability to touch the reader 'with the strongest sensations of pity and tenderness'.[12] This process of sentimentalization led to comments which must strike any modern reader as terribly blind to the nature of the text. What Griffith says of 'the fille de chambre episode', at the beginning of the second volume, is one good example:

> What delicacy of feeling, what tenderness of sentiment, yet what simplicity of expression are here! Is it *possible* that a man of *gross ideas* could ever *write* in a strain so pure, so refined from the dross of sensuality![13]

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[10] *Monthly Review*, 32 (February 1765). Quoted by Howes, p. 167.
[11] Howes, p. 208, p. 203, p. 201.
[12] Howes, p. 200, p. 202, p. 201.

Reactions on the continent, in France in particular, were remarkably similar. Frénais, the first French translator of *A Sentimental Journey*, found in it 'flashes of a tender and true sensibility which draw tears even while one is laughing'.[14] Yet French reviewers seemed much more inclined to accept Sterne's odd mixture of sentiment and humour than the English ones: 'Mr. Sterne's good humor does not prevent him from being touched by everything that wounds humanity and showing the most tender sensibility'.[15] For them sentiment was still the dominant feature even if it coexisted with jest.

If one conclusion can be drawn from this review of the reception of *A Sentimental Journey* it is that the text was either praised for its pathetic contents or condemned for its indecency but its ambiguous nature went totally unremarked. Sterne's attitude to his text, in some of his letters, is, interestingly, quite ambivalent. In one of these he declares to his correspondent:

> '[m]y *Sentimental Journey* will, I dare say, convince you that my feelings are from the heart, and that that heart is not of the worst of molds—praised be God for my sensibility! Though it has often made me wretched, yet I would not exchange it for all the pleasures the grossest sensualist ever felt.[16]

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[13] *Monthly Review*, 38 (March-April 1768). Quoted by Howes, p. 200.
[14] Frénais, 'Preface', *Voyage sentimental par M. Sterne, sous le nom d'Yorick* (1769). Translated and quoted by Howes, p. 386.
[15] *Journal encyclopédique* (1 July 1769). Translated and quoted by Howes, p. 388.
[16] Letter to Sir William Stanhope (27 September 1767), *Letters*, pp. 395-96.

How are we to read these protestations of extreme and genuine sensibility when in another letter he proclaims to his addressee that *A Sentimental Journey* 'shall make you cry a much as ever it made me laugh—or I'll give up the Business of sentimental writing—& write to the Body'.[17] This second letter shows Sterne with the intent of producing a text full of pathos for a certain category of readers but a text which remains open to another type of reading by another category of readers. For Tom Keymer, 'the naive may read it as pure feeling, productive simply of tears; the sophisticated may read it as pure irony, productive rather of laughter'.[18] Following this line, he identifies the Maria episode as being a parody of a poem by Marvell and concludes that it is in the nature of the text to be inclusive, to 'take in' all readers, 'by providing for the devotees of sentiment and for the aficionados of satire a text that might simultaneously be read in contrary ways'.[19] Thus the readers who wanted to read for pure feeling could do so, but, John Mullan argues they also 'were not allowed', by the text itself, 'to be blind to the possibility that a man of feeling might have ulterior inclinations'.[20]

Surprisingly, none of the reviews of the period mention Sterne's 'sympathy' for the French, foreign travel, and cosmopolitanism in *A Sentimental Journey.* Sterne's attitude on this is not typical of the cultural and political context in which his text came out and is certainly quite different from Smollett's in his anti-gallic *Travels through France and Italy*, published two years before *A*

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[17] Letter to 'Hannah' (15 November 1767), *Letters*, p. 401.
[18] Tom Keymer, 'Marvell, Thomas Hollis, and Sterne's Maria', *The Shandean*, 5 (1993), p. 11.
[19] Keymer, p. 11.
[20] Mullan, 'Sterne's Comedy of Sentiments', p. 237.

*Sentimental Journey*. Smollett is, by the way, lampooned by Sterne in *A Sentimental Journey* as 'Smelfungus', the traveller who wrote 'nothing but the account of his miserable feelings' (p. 24). Yorick does find faults with French politeness and Parisian salons, as I shall show later, but he nonetheless starts his travels because 'they order [...] this matter better in France' (p. 3). This opening sentence makes *A Sentimental Journey* stand out in the literary production of the 1760s which was assimilating the 'anti-French and anti-aristocratic' feelings of the emerging nationalistic ideology.[21] In *A Sentimental Journey*, Sterne did what the men of fashion, the ruling classes, and those aspiring to them do which is to 'mix a French word or two in their English'.[22] 'Allowing Frenchisms' in his language did not constitute for Sterne a 'cultural treason, a vicious squandering of true identity'.[23] Linda Colley locates the appearance of such 'paranoid but consistent message[s]' in the creation, from the 1730s onwards, of anti-French groups like 'The Laudable Association of Antigallicans' founded in 1745.[24]

The introduction of *Les Egarements du cœur et de l'esprit* in *A Sentimental Journey* is far from being fortuitous. The reference to Crébillon's novel at a salient point of the narrative, the first page of the second volume, functions, like the Maria episode, not on the level of parody, but as a reading clue for the knowing reader and as a reminder of 'the association of supposedly fine

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[21] Gerald Newman, *The Rise of English Nationalism: A Cultural History, 1740-1830* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987), pp. 1-159.
[22] Rosamund Bayne-Powell, *Travellers in Eighteenth-Century England* (New york, 1987). Quoted by Newman, p. 37.
[23] Colley, p. 90.
[24] Colley, pp. 88-90.

feeling with sensual delight'.[25] In terms of narrative economy, *Les Egarements du cœur et de l'esprit* is indeed an element of the story of *A Sentimental Journey*: a book bought by a *fille de chambre* under Yorick's eyes (p. 55) and one of the transitional objects which facilitate Yorick's sentimental encounters with women and which provide him with a good pretext to address the *fille de chambre* on a topic close to his heart: 'And what have you to do, my dear, said I, with *The Wanderings of the Heart*, who scarce know yet you have one?' (p. 55). And, the title of Crébillon's novel does also provide Sterne with an adequate phrase for describing Yorick's own strayings in *A Sentimental Journey*. But its significance for the reading of *A Sentimental Journey* is not limited to that.

Even if the public had not read *Les Egarements du cœur et de l'esprit* in French, or its 1751 English translation, they would most certainly have heard about Crébillon himself and about his reputation as a licentious writer which the numerous publications and imitations of a work like *Le Sopha, conte moral* (1740) had created in England.[26] Mentioning *Les Egarements du cœur et de l'esprit* seems therefore to be a deliberate move on Sterne's part, not just to 'capitalize on Crébillon's reputation for smut by basing an amusing episode in the *Sentimental Journey* on a girl's purchase of *Les Egarements du cœur et de l'esprit*', but more subtly to point his readers in a certain direction: to make them look for amorous overtones in *A Sentimental Journey*.[27] For those who did not want to identify

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[25] Mullan, p. 237.
[26] See Viktor Link, 'The reception of Crébillon's *Le Sopha* in England: An Unnoticed Edition and some Imitations', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 132 (1975), 199-203.
[27] Cherpack, p. xi.

these, *Les Egarements du cœur et de l'esprit* could just remain a book purchased by a fair *fille de chambre* and one of the details that contribute to give to the text its frenchified character.

*A Sentimental Journey* is peppered with French words, phrases, sentences for the obvious reason that the scene is set in France. Words like 'Desobligeant' (p. 7), '*fiacre*' (p. 90) or 'remise' (p. 12) enter the text because they refer to specifically French realities while others work as traces of the characters' speeches. Expressions like '*Mon dieu!*' (p. 12) are inserted in dialogues which are otherwise in English. Some of them are even immediately followed by a translation: '*C'est bien comique*, 'tis very droll, said the lady smiling' (p. 21). In these examples the words are used to give local colour to the text. But the penetration goes beyond the simple borrowing of non English terms. The text, in fact, mimes Yorick's sentimental opening to fellow human beings by opening itself to a foreign language.[28] There is a real sense that the text is permeated by French, and that there is a 'French subtext within the English text'.[29] Some phrases are literally transposed from one language into the other, 'have the goodness' (p. 21), for instance, is put into Mons. Dessein's mouth and sounds like a direct transposition of the French expression 'ayez la bonté de'. Sterne also deliberately choses the French spelling of words which do have a form in English. Sterne prefers '*debonaire*' (p. 20) and '*equivoque*' (p. 26) to 'debonair' and 'equivoke'

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[28] Viviès, p. 245.
[29] Viviès, pp. 245-46.

which are the forms given by Johnson in his dictionary.[30] Similarly when Sterne does mention polite manners he does it in French. '*Place aux dames!*' and '*politesse*' (p. 30) appear in the course of two paragraphs which are entirely in English and which do not contain any characters' speeches. Sterne is here acknowledging the French origin of the word 'politeness' as well as the prevalent English view of the French at the time. Sterne also transforms English words possibly to make them look French.[31] Thus in the following sentence: 'when can a stranger hope to have *accesse*?' (p. 66) 'accesse' is a mispelled version of the English word access which, through the use of italics, becomes imparted with a foreign origin. Among the elements that contribute to the bilingualism of the text, the letter in French, partly copied by Yorick for Madame de L*** (p. 39), is probably the one that stands out most. And it is also probably another of the important reading clues for the text. The bilingualism of the text constantly invites the reader to translate words, to transpose contexts. That the question of translation should be prominent in both *A Sentimental Journey* and *Les Egarements du cœur et de l'esprit* is not surprising since they both have a great interest in the discourse of sentiment. One of the central sections of *A Sentimental Journey* is actually entitled 'the Translation Paris' (p. 46). James Garvey remarks that 'Yorick's skill as a translator and interpreter of other's words and gestures' is heavily emphasized and it is true that Yorick goes through the text more or less

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[30] *Dictionary*, abridged version (1843, repr. 1994).
[31] See Lawrence Klein, 'The Third Earl of Shaftesbury and the Progress of Politeness', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 18 (1984-85), p. 189.

'translating all the way' (p. 47).[32] Yorick translates the body language or the manners of the people he meets, he adapts the foreign realities he is presented with, just like he adapts the title of Crébillon's novel and transforms it into '*The Wanderings of the Heart*' (p. 55), but he also adopts those foreign manners. Given the centrality of translation, the letter in French itself needs to be translated in terms of what and how much has been adapted and adopted from the French cultural and literary context set up by the text itself. When translated with that context in mind, the vocabulary and contents of the letter seem typical of Crébillon's works.

Sterne, in this short letter addressed to a corporal's wife by her lover (a drummer), uses turns of phrase which are identifiable as part of the language of the novels of the period and in particular of *Les Egarements du cœur et de l'esprit*. 'Je suis penetré [sic] de la douleur la plus vive' [I am struck with the deepest grief] echoes Versac's remark that a certain countess 'est pénétrée de la plus auguste douleur' [she is struck by the most majestic grief] (p. 74). 'Vif', 'vivement', 'vivacité' [deep, deeply, keenness] are abundantly used to testify to the intensity of the feelings and they are often combined, as it is the case four times in this letter, with the superlative 'le/la/les plus' [the most]. The husband's return makes their rendezvous 'la chose du monde la plus impossible' [the most impossible thing in the world]. The image of the two men having the favours of the lady bestowed on them '*chacun a* [sic] *son tour*' [each in turn] reminds us of

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[32] James W. Garvey, 'Translation, Equivocation and Reconciliation in Sterne's *Sentimental*

what Versac says of Madame de Lursay and of what his insinuations lead Meilcour to believe. Versac vengefully affirms that Madame de Lursay's husband 'la surprit un jour avec D..., le lendemain avec un autre, et deux jours après avec un troisième' [surprised her one day with D..., the next day with another, and two days after that with a third] (p. 75) and Meilcour reflects that he has been 'comme Pranzi et mille autres, que l'objet de son caprice. L'homme qui lui plaît aujourd'hui lui sera inconnu demain et j'aurai bientôt le plaisir de lui voir un successeur' [was only, like Pranzi and a thousand others, the object of her caprice. The man who pleases her today will be a stranger to her tomorrow, and I shall soon have the pleasure of seeing him too displaced by a successor] (p. 168). It is after all a world in which most attachments are 'une affaire de peu de jours' [a matter of a few days] (p. 28). The drummer's letter almost finishes on the word 'tendres' and although this term is associated with the idea of respect, the whole context does not make clear which signification it takes on. In *Les Egarements du cœur et de l'esprit*, the dominant meaning is clearly that of 'sentimental' which, at the time, had not yet entered the French lexis, and only in a few instances it is used euphemistically for 'sensual'. When Madame de Senanges asks Versac if 'quelque tendre engagement' [some tender engagement] prevents him from joining the rest of the company for supper, his answer: 'tendre! [...], non' (p. 135) shows that he understands 'tendre' in the sense of sentimental. Meilcour speaks of Madame de Lursay's tender and delicate heart when he acknowledges the sincerity and strength of her passion for him: 'son cœur était alors tendre et

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*Journey*', *Southern Humanities Review*, 12 (1978), p. 340.

délicat' [her heart was then tender and gentle] (p. 28). Versac, with the same image of the tender heart, implies, on the contrary, that Madame de Lursay is not virtuous. He asks, indirectly addressing his question to Meilcour: 'ne sait-on pas qu'il y a cinquante ans au moins qu'elle a le cœur fort tendre?' ['is it not common knowledge that she has had a very tender heart these fifty years?] (p. 75). The sensual meaning of the word is even more obvious when Meilcour uses it to describe Madame de Senanges, the 'coquette délabrée' [broken-down coquette] (p. 88) who is, he is well aware, 'fort tendre' [extremely tender] (p. 123). In the drummer's letter, the juxtaposition of 'amour' and 'bagatelle', in the exclamation: 'vive l'amour! et vive la bagatelle!' [long live lovers! and long live philanderers!], is an apt description of the conflation of passionate love and philandering which is discernible in *A Sentimental Journey*. This exclamation could actually serve as a motto for Yorick who adapts the letter. He concludes the episode of the letter writing by saying that he 'took the cream off gently, and whipping it up in [his] own way' he sent it to Madame de L***, but he, in fact, changes so little in it (only replacing obvious but, in the end, very minor details) that he seems to be adopting the very language and concepts contained in the letter.

This is in keeping with his apparent and rather comical aspiration to behave aristocratically and to be gallant like the French since he is a clergyman. As soon as Yorick has evoked the possibility of solacing his 'soul in converse sweet with some kind *grisset* of a barber's wife', he checks himself and exclaims: 'May I perish! if I do, said I, pulling out the letter which I had to present to Madame de R***. I'll wait upon this Lady, the very first thing I do' (p. 40).

Yorick's reaction arises from the fact that he realises what a conversation with a '*grisset*' could imply, but it also discloses his aristocratic pretensions because, when La Fleur asks to have the day '*pour faire le galant vis à vis de sa maitresse*' [to be gallant to his mistress], Yorick comments: 'now it was the very thing I intended to do myself *vis à vis* Madame de R****' and is not worried then about what such a meeting could imply (p. 84). His main resolution, following his ungenerous behaviour towards the Franciscan monk, is after all to 'learn better manners' (p. 7) not to improve his morals. Yorick does mock French politeness and aristocratic manners in a humorous way when he says he feels sorry for 'a people so civilized and courteous, and so renown'd for sentiment and fine feelings' who have the misfortune of not having decent words in their language to curse with:

> But here my heart is wrung with pity and fellow-feeling, when I reflect what miseries must have been their lot, and how bitterly so refined a people must have smarted, to have forced them upon the use of it. (p. 32)

He mocks them more virulently when he relates his days spent among the 'bonne compagnie' [polite society], a period he calls the 'most vile prostitution of myself' (p. 94). He also comments more generally on what politeness is and 'does provide a critique of the French as losing in rugged individuality what they gain in sophisticated cultivation'.[33] He does it first by resorting to the image of pebbles in

[33] K.E Smith, 'Ordering things in France: The Travels of Sterne, Tristram and Yorick', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 292 (1991), p. 22.

a bag. The butt of his critique are those men who have left too much power to their wives and who

> by a continual higgling with customers of all ranks and sizes from morning to night, like so many rough pebbles shook long together in a bag, by amicable collisions, they have worn down their asperities and sharp angles, and not only become round and smooth, but will receive, some of them, a polish like a brilliant. (p. 44)

In the second instance Yorick more clearly draws the distinction between the two nations when it comes to social commerce, polite behaviour:

> The English, like antient medals kept more apart, and passing but few peoples hands, preserve the first sharpness which the fine hand of nature has given them - they are not so pleasant to feel - but in return , the legend is so visible, that at the first look you see whose image and superscription they bear. (p. 76)

The polite person, like the pebbles or the coins that have lost their asperities or their engraved design by repeated contacts, has acquired 'polish' but has lost 'distinct variety and originality of character' (p. 76) and their sincerity. Despite these attacks on politeness Yorick does aspire to be polite, courteous, gallant. He for instance decides not to interrupt the Lady in her thoughts 'deeming it more gallant' (p. 19). He also tries to persuade himself that the proposition to travel with the Lady that he is about to make is 'a civil thing' (p. 19). And he is certainly never 'at a loss to say something handsome' to anyone (p. 75). Yorick's wanting to be polite and gallant like the French and his constant resort to the language of

politeness and gallantry are extremely telling and illuminating as to how Yorick uses language.

In a chapter entitled 'Polish, police, "*polis*"', Peter France discusses the moral implications of politeness as well as the negative aspects attached to it.[34] 'The essential notion of politeness is constant consideration for others, a desire not to shock and hurt them, but gratify and please them'. Politeness, and civility which was considered as a lesser form of politeness, are social virtues.[35] But, as France remarks, it was at the time already common-place to note the potential for deception and falsity in politeness. The notion of gallantry works in a similar way. The *Dictionnaire de Trévoux*, in 1740, defines 'galanterie' [gallantry] as 'manière polie, enjouée et agréable de faire ou de dire des choses' [polite, lively and agreeable manner of doing or saying things].[36] This definition shows well what a close relationship exists between these two notions. However, in *Les Egarements du cœur et de l'esprit*, 'galanterie' stands for more than just polite manners but love intrigues are also conducted according to strict rules which are reminiscent of the rules of etiquette.[37]

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[34] Peter France, *Politeness and its Discontents: Problems in French Classical Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 58.
[35] France, p. 57.
[36] Versini, p. 192.
[37] Fort, pp. 23-25.

These notions of gallantry and politeness are by nature ambivalent and in Crébillon's works they are conflated.[38] Bernadette Fort explains this conflation by the emergence of a new pattern of moral behaviour. The characters are guided by pleasure and their energy is employed on the satisfaction of their desires. But, since this gallant commerce has to remain polite, they also strive to preserve the appearance of decency. These constraints imposed by decency force them in turn to adopt verbal codes that are understandable to everybody and that are known by everybody to be only masks giving a nice gloss to speeches that otherwise would not be polite. They use language more to suggest than to say directly. They conduct their gallant affairs by allusions and ambiguous remarks. Indirectness is the main characteristic of these verbal strategies. Metaphors, periphrases, euphemisms are the principal elements in this code.[39]

The fact that most of the humour in *Tristram Shandy* and *A Sentimental Journey* is based on sexual double entendres has been well documented. Martin Battestin describes a double entendre as a 'word which at the level ostensibly intended by the author is perfectly straightforward, but which at another level which the reader's imagination, however reluctantly, is teased into supplying, carries a less "innocent" meaning'.[40] But the double entendre is not the only strategy at work in *A Sentimental Journey*: the verbal strategies identified in *Les*

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[38] 'Des notions contradictoires telles que la bienséance et la galanterie s'éclipsent et se chevauchent mutuellement.' [Contradictory notions such as those of decorum and gallantry overlap and overshadow each other]. Fort, p. 24.

[39] Fort, pp. 23-4, 34, 44.

[40] Martin Battestin, '*A Sentimental Journey* and the Syntax of Things', in *Augustan Worlds: Essays in Honour of A.R. Humphreys* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1978), p. 233.

*Egarements du cœur et de l'esprit* are present in *A Sentimental Journey* and contribute to the humour of the text.

From La Fleur's remark that refusing to see again the young 'grisset' sent by the inn master would be '*deroger à noblesse*' [to depart from nobility] (p. 83), we can gather that Yorick and La Fleur have adopted a verbal and behavioural code which consciously borrows elements from the politeness code. According to Fort there is in Crébillon's novels 'un code de la galanterie qui se fonde consciemment sur une équivoque avec le code des bienséances, puisqu'il leur emprunte leur apparence, leurs caractéristiques et jusqu'à leur langage' [a code of gallantry knowingly based on an equivocation with the rules of etiquette, since it borrows their appearance, their characteristics, and even their language].[41]

If Crébillon 'trouve un attrait piquant à présenter une scène de séduction en terme de rencontre polie' [finds presenting a seduction scene as a polite encounter titillating], to use Fort's words, how titillating must Sterne find it.[42] 'Rendre des bontés', 'remerciements', 'répondre aux politesses' [return favours, thanks, respond to polite remarks] have erotic connotations in *Les Egarements du cœur et de l'esprit*. 'Remerciements' must imply much more than kind words of thanks if Madame de Lursay feels the need to interrupt Meilcour and exclaim: 'je ne veux pas de remerciements [...] ils ne seraient à présent qu'une imprudence' [I do not wish for thanks [...] at this moment they would be imprudent, and that is

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[41] Fort, pp. 23-4.

what I want to avoid above all things] (pp. 58-9). Associated with Pranzi's improper and indecent behaviour, the meaning of 'rendre des bontés', in the following example, is quite obvious: 'Madame de Lursay désespérée des façons malhonnêtes de Monsieur de Pranzi qui la pressait assez haut de lui rendre des bontés qui, disait-il, lui devenaient plus nécessaires que jamais' [Madame de Lursay in despair at the ill-bred behaviour of Monsieur de Pranzi, who kept pressing her in an audible voice to restore him to the favours which he said were now become more necessary to him than ever] (p. 100). In the course of *Les Egarements du cœur et de l'esprit*, we see Meilcour learning to master this code and to take advantage of the confusion that exists between the languages of politeness and gallantry. Meilcour responds to Madame de Lursay's squeezing of his hand 'pour ne pas manquer à la politesse' [not wishing to be lacking in politeness] (p. 45) without fully realizing what this gesture really means in such circumstances. And of course when he says 'pour ne pas manquer à la politesse', he does mean it. Unaware of the code, he nonetheless uses its main element: the use of politeness as a pretext for gallantry. This is how Madame de Lursay understands Meilcour's answer: 'j'ai cru pouvoir répondre à ses politesses' [I thought I might respond to her politeness] which is triggered by a remark of hers about him being gallant to Madame de Senanges. Meilcour denies it by saying that he was not being flirtatious, that he was just being polite. But in the code that Madame de Lursay knows very well, this can be just a pretext for hiding gallantry. Madame de Lursay, for once, does not accept the code and retorts, taking

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[42] Fort, p. 99.

politeness at its face value: 'au surplus vous me permettrez de vous dire que la politesse n'exige point qu'on fasse des mines à quelqu'un' [but permit me to observe that politeness does not require anybody to ogle] (p. 111).

Sterne makes great use of the metaphors of politeness in the Marquesina di F*** episode. The concluding sentence ('the connection which arose out of that translation, gave me more pleasure than any one I had the honour to make in Italy', p. 48) makes it clear, if one had not read it like that, that this scene is more a seduction scene than the relation of a polite encounter in the corridors of an opera. As in *Les Egarements du cœur et de l'esprit*, 'reparation', 'apology', 'begg'd pardon', 'thank'd' are to be understood in an erotic way:

> I had no power to go into the room, till *I had made her so much reparation* as to wait and follow her with my eye to the end or the passage – She look'd back twice, and walk'd along it rather side-ways, as if she would make room for any one coming up stairs to pass her – No, said I – that's a vile translation: the Marquesina has a right to *the best apology* I can make her; and that opening is left for me to do it in – so I ran and *begg'd pardon* for the embarrassment I had given her, saying it was my intention to have made her way. She answered, she was guided by the same intention towards me – so *we reciprocally thank'd* each other. (my emphasis, p. 47-48).

The effect of such a passage is certainly to prompt the reader to become a translator like Yorick and to go back to other episodes and read them differently. Thus the 'grisset' appears as someone who knows the code, who realises that

buying some gloves is Yorick's pretext to prolong his commerce with her and that it masks his politeness. She cleverly remarks that his 'politeness, more than his want of gloves, has done me the honour to lay himself at my mercy' (p. 46). And we know, as probably she does, what politeness hides. On many occasions Yorick does use politeness as a pretext for close encounters with young women. The improper thing is not for Yorick to hold the hand of a Lady he has just met for longer than decency allows, but to let it go without a demonstration of his gallantry. 'I had never quitted the lady's hand all this time; and had held it so long, that it would have been indecent to have let it go, without first pressing it to my lips' (p. 18) says Yorick in justification of the kiss. As in this last example Yorick makes ample use of the conditional mode to justify himself. Negations are used to the same effect. Yorick's sitting on a bed next to a *fille de chambre*, lying on it, is the result of a series of actions which are out of his control. First, after the *fille de chambre* sewed back his stock, he 'could not for [his] soul but fasten the buckle in return'. Secondly, fastening the buckle 'unavoidably threw the fair *fille de chambre* off her center – and then –' (p. 79). It is following the rules of propriety that is putting him in those difficult situations. He is also not responsible because he is just responding to the *fille de chambre*'s goodness and her spontaneity: 'she turned about, and gave me both her hands. Closed together, into mine – it was impossible not to compress them in that situation' (p. 78). Yorick is distancing himself from what is happening by stressing his passivity in all his encounters. The women are always the active ones. 'The girl put her hand within my arm – I was just bidding her – but she did it of herself' (p. 57). 'Just', 'almost', evoke the

distance that exists between the decent and the gallant. Yorick almost does not realise the potentially embarrassing situations he is in: 'I continued holding her hand almost without knowing it' (p. 13). This is of course part of Yorick's and Sterne's humour: the mixture of self-awareness and mock outrage. The awareness that he is not always behaving according to his principles and 'in strict unison with the lesson of virtue [he] had given [the fille de chambre] the night before' (p. 78) and the awareness of his own desires and nature which, he realises, might not be as different as that of the *maitre d'hotel*: 'then I shall let him see I know he is a dirty fellow. – And what then? – What then! – I was too near myself to say it was for the sake of others' (pp. 81-2). But there is also the Yorick who blushes when he reads a text on the 'caresses' of the cock-sparrows ('stains thy face with crimson', p. 75) and who declares: 'I have something within me which cannot bear the shock of the least indecent insinuation' after the Count's suggestion that Yorick would probably not be too affected if he had to 'spy the nakedness' of some French women (p. 71).

Once the linguistic characteristics such as the metaphors of politeness, the negations, the conditional mode, have been identified, the reader can more readily identify sentences which can as easily be read in a sentimental or an erotic way.

> What a large volume of adventures may be grasped within this little span of life by him who interests his heart in every thing, and who, having eyes to see, what time and chance are perpetually holding out to him as he journeyeth on his way, misses nothing he can *fairly* lay his hands on. (p. 23)

This extract can be read as the exclamation of a sentimental man whose heart and eyes are open to the suffering of others, and who acts, 'lay his hands on', to relieve sufferers from their distress. But *'fairly'*, which stands out from the rest because of the italics, with its association with the Lady from Brussels, 'fair spirit' (p. 35) and 'fairest of women' (p. 36), and the 'fair *fille de chambre*' (p. 79), acts as a prompt for the reader to recognize the amorous overtones of this sentence.

The ambiguity of 'sentir' and its derivatives, especially 'sensible', is the central ambiguity in *Les Egarements du cœur et de l'esprit*. Depending on the context, 'sensible' can mean 'tendre' as well as 'sensual'.[43] By using such an ambiguous word, 'Crébillon laisse entendre que la distinction traditionnelle entre [sensualité et sentiment] est au fond bien illusoire' [Crébillon implies that the traditional distinction between sensuality and sentiment is in the end really illusory].[44] This distinction is demolished in *A Sentimental Journey* where nothing is univocal. Sterne makes Yorick declare that 'there is nothing unmixed in this world' (p. 74) and that 'nature has so wove her web of kindness, that some threads of love and desire are entangled with the piece' (p. 79). The central part of the letter, with which I started, 'l'amour n'est *rien* sans sentiment. / Et le sentiment est encore *moins* sans amour' [love is nothing without sentiment. / And sentiment is even less without love] (p. 39) only expresses the same idea in a different way. Love, that is physical love and high and refined feelings should not be detached. Love and pity are put on the same level: the unsentimental traveller is one who

[43] Versini, p. 459-60.
[44] Fort, p. 123.

'travell'd straight on looking neither to his right hand or his left, lest Love or Pity should seduce him out of his road' (p. 24). But Yorick is attracted to both. He exemplifies the hybrid and complex nature of man. Although Yorick speaks of his 'temptations' (p. 15), which even provide him with a chapter-title (p. 77), the message, if there is such a thing, is that there is no temptation because these apparently conflicting aspirations are both intrinsic to human nature. And there is no 'sentimental relief' as one could consider there is in *Tristram Shandy*.[45] The high feelings felt at the family supper and at the dance afterwards (pp. 99-101) and the desires felt for the Lady, the 'grissets' and the 'filles de chambre' are joined in Yorick.

Versac's speech to Meilcour, at the end of *Les Egarements du cœur et de l'esprit*, is an implicit acknowledgement of that hybrid nature. The main lesson that Versac teaches to Meilcour is that one cannot be oneself in the world if one wants to survive in it. Versac confesses that he preferred to lose himself rather than resist to the demands of the world: 'sûr que je ne pourrais, sans me perdre, vouloir résister au torrent, je le suivis' [certain that I should be unable without drowning to go against the current, I went with it] (p. 156). The 'world' does not allow individuals to follow their nature: no one can remain 'toujours vertueux et toujours naturel' [always virtuous and natural] (p. 151) because one has to be always 'du caractère que l'instant où vous vous trouvez exige de vous : tendre avec la délicate, sensuel avec la voluptueuse, galant avec la coquette' [[adopt] the

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[45] Frank Brady, '*Tristram Shandy: Sexuality, Morality, and Sensibility*', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 4 (1970-71), p. 51.

attitude which the moment requires: tender with the delicate, sensual with the voluptuous, gallant with the coquette] (p. 157). Like Chesterfield's, Versac's man of the world must 'like the Cameleon, be able to take every hue'.[46] Such demands account for meilcour's confused feelings at the end of the novel. Having given in to sensual pleasure with Madame de Lursay, Meilcour's feelings for Hortense reappear and leave him in a confused state from which he cannot extricate himself. Not resolved at the time of the events, the confusion is resolved by the older Meilcour who wishes he had had enough experience to know 'le quiétisme de l'amour' [the quietism of love]:

> j'aurais sauvé mon cœur du désordre de mes sens et, par ces distinctions délicates, que l'on pourrait appeler le quiétisme de l'amour, je me serais livré à tous les charmes de l'occasion, sans pouvoir courir le risque d'être infidèle. (p. 187)
>
> [I would have saved my heart from the disorders of my senses, and by these delicate distinctions, which might be called the quietism of love, I should have enjoyed all the delights of the moment without incurring the risk of infidelity.]

He wishes he had been able to recognise that sentiment and sensuality, sentimental love and sensual love are distinct but that one does not have to be sacrificed for the other and that they can coexist, that it is possible 'to experienc[e]

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[46] Lord Chesterfield, *Letters*, ed. by David Roberts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 106.

enduring love for one person and fleeting pleasure with another at the same time.'[47]

*Les Egarements du cœur et de l'esprit* and *A Sentimental Journey* seem to invite their readers to a 'quietism' of reading, to a practice of reading that does not dissociate meanings. The equivocations, the ambivalences leave the readers with the responsibility of projecting what they want on to the text, of reading the erotic connotations or not. They create a meaning which, like the actions interrupted in mid-air in *A Sentimental Journey*, is in suspension between the text and the reader. The conflation of 'sentiment and suggestiveness' is what leads to this suspension of meaning.[48] A succession of pathetic episodes and nothing else 'would' certainly, to borrow the Lady from Brussels's words, 'have made pity the only dangerous thing in' *A Sentimental Journey* (p. 23).

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[47] Catherine Cusset, 'The Suspended Ending or Crébillon fils's Irony', in *The Libertine Reader: Eroticism and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century France*, ed. by Michel Feher (New York: Zone Books/MIT Press, 1997), p. 761.
[48] Mullan, p. 239.

## Chapter 2 - Writing the Body: Semantisation and Somatisation

The object of this chapter is the place that the body occupies in our sentimental and our libertine texts. After having established the importance of non-linguistic productions in eighteenth-century conceptions of language the discussion will move towards an examination of the ways in which the body is represented in *A Sentimental Journey*, *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby*, *Fanny Hill* and *Les Heureux Orphelins*.

### Transparency and Eloquence.

In the novels that constitute my corpus, verbal language, be it spoken or written, is not the most efficient or valued mode of communication. With Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* we learn that most of the errors of the human understanding derive from a fundamental inadequacy between thought and language.[1] As the sensible signs of private ideas, words do indeed allow the speaker to communicate his/her interiority, but because the mind only knows its own sensations and ideas of things, words can also turn into 'tall, opake' barriers between individuals, to use Sterne's terms in *Tristram Shandy* (III, 'Preface', 158). The difficulty of communicating ideas from one mind to another mind resides in the arbitrariness of the relationship between signs. The verbal sign which identifies one idea in one mind does not necessarily identify the same idea

[1] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (London: Dent, 1947; repr. 1961).

in another. Since individuals can establish their own connections, this process can potentially lead a breakdown of communication.[2] Such breakdowns, caused by the non-univocal use of words account for much of the humour in *Tristram Shandy* which abounds in instances of misunderstandings. It is as if the Shandy brothers were not aware of the fact that words are polysemic. They do not apprehend meanings rightly because they tend to relate the contents of conversations to themselves: to their experience or to their present situation. Being from the Shandy family, they react most of the time in terms of hobby-horsical preoccupations and relate all they hear to them. When Trim announces that he is bringing in two mortars for his and Toby's bowling-green re-enactments of famous battles, the word 'mortar' does not call up a short piece of ordnance to Walter's mind, but a vessel used to pound pharmaceutical products, simply because Walter is, at the time, concerned about his child's birth (III, 22, 162). And since we are in the Shandean world none of the para-linguistic elements which would in a normal context help the speaker to clarify his statement work properly as accompaniments. Sterne's proposed alternative to (written) words is the use of 'something standing, or hanging up, which would [clear] the point at once' (III, 'Preface', 158).[3] The solution would be to use a concrete image like that of a chair with two knobs to define faculties such as wit and judgement. We touch here on the pictorial nature of Sterne's writing by which he compensates for the abstract and arbitrary nature of verbal signs without however being able, because of the

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[2] See Yves Michaud, *Locke* (Paris: Bordas, 1986).

[3] This extract echoes Rousseau's statement that: 'les discours les plus éloquents sont ceux où l'on enchâsse le plus d'images' [the most eloquent speeches are those in which one inserts the most

constraints of his medium, to attain the fantasy of a transparent language 'through which appears an image to be apprehended by the eye - inner or outer'.[4]

To these arbitrary signs, thinkers and novelists oppose the natural signs of the language of the body manifested in gestures, facial expressions, and postures. Although in his 'Essai sur l'origine des langues', Rousseau also attributes a natural origin to spoken language, he nonetheless considers the expressive qualities of gestural language as superior to those of verbal language.[5]

> Quoique la langue du geste et celle de la voix soient également naturelles, toutefois la première est plus facile et dépend moins des conventions : car plus d'objets frappent nos yeux que nos oreilles, et les figures ont plus de variété que les sons; elles sont aussi plus excessives et disent plus en moins de temps.[6]
>
> [Although the language of gestures and that of the voice are equally natural, the former is nonetheless easier and depends less on conventions because many more objects catch our eyes than they reach our ears, and images have more variety than sounds; they are also more excessive and say more in less time.]

Repeatedly, in that text, Rousseau stresses the fact that gestural language is more efficient, more expressive, more eloquent than words when the task is to convey thoughts or to convince. 'Ainsi l'on parle au yeux bien mieux qu'aux oreilles'

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images], 'Essai sur l'origine des langues où il est parlé de la mélodie et de l'imitation musicale', in *Œuvres* (Paris: Didot, 1821), XVIII, 143-221 (p. 147).

[4] William B. Holtz, *Image and Immortality: A Study of Tristram Shandy* (Providence, R.I: Brown University Press, 1970), p. 67.

[5] Rousseau, pp. 143-221.

[Thus one speaks much better to the eyes than to the ears].[7] Many episodes of ancient history are being called forth to exemplify the power of that gestural expressivity, that 'éloquence muette' [mute eloquence].[8]

> Ouvrez l'histoire ancienne, vous la trouverez pleine de ces manières d'argumenter aux yeux, et jamais elles ne manquent de produire un effet plus assuré que tous les discours qu'on auroit pu mettre à la place. (...) le langage le plus énergique est celui où le signe à tout dit avant qu'on parle.[9]
>
> [Look at ancient history, you will find it full of that way of arguing to the eyes which never fails to produce a more certain effect than all the speeches that could have been put in its place. (...) the most vigorous language is that in which everything has been said with a sign before a word has been uttered.]

The body, because of the expressive signs emanating from it, is seen as a natural signifying site, 'le corps est (...) spontanément, naturellement langage' [the body spontaneously and naturally constitutes a language].[10] This is recognized in the following extract from *Tristram Shandy* where each movement of Bridget's hands is a 'syllable' in the gestural 'sentence' with which she expresses the idea of Toby's castration:

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[6] Rousseau, p. 144.
[7] Rousseau, p. 147.
[8] Rousseau, p. 147.
[9] Rousseau, p. 145.
[10] Bernard Beugnot, 'Le Corps éloquent', in *Le Corps au dix-septième siècle*, ed. by Ronald W. Tobin, Papers on French Seventeenth Century Literature, 89 (Tübingen: PFSCL, 1995), pp. 17-30 (p. 22).

> Come—come—said Bridget—holding the palm of her left-hand parallel to the plane of the horizon, and sliding the fingers of the other over it, in a way which could not have been done, had there been the least wart or protuberance——'Tis every syllable of it false, cried the Corporal, before she had half finished the sentence—— (IX, 28, 532)

Gestural eloquence here allows a character to say what decency would normally forbid, but it also shows how, by effacing all verbal obscurity, it renders words superfluous. In an another part of *Tristram Shandy*, the precision of the description down to the minute details of the fingers position makes the whole posture look slightly ludicrous:

> My father instantly exchanged the attitude he was in, for that in which *Socrates* is so finely painted by *Raffael* in his school of *Athens*; which your connoisseurship knows is so exquisitely imagined, that even the particular manner of the reasoning of *Socrates* is expressed by it—for he holds the fore-finger of his left-hand between the fore-finger and the thumb of his right (...). (IV, 7, 222-3)

The message, if funny because of the details, is also very clear: communication of an intellectual content (thoughts, arguments, reasoning) can be better achieved by gestures alone. Thus the most effective positions of the body were detailed in treatises on the art of oratory which recommended to lawyers and preachers the careful study of their gestures and their countenance.[11] It was also believed that

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[11] See Volker Kapp, 'Le Corps éloquent et ses ambiguïtés: l'action oratoire et le débat sur la communication non-verbale à la fin du XVII[e] siècle', in *Le Corps au dix-septième siècle*, ed. by

human passions, emotions were visible and that minds revealed themselves through the expressive signs of the body. For Le Brun, the expression was the 'partie qui marque les mouvements de l'âme et rend visible les effets de la passion' [part which registers the movements of the soul and makes the effects of passion visible].[12] A close notation of these expressive signs could be used in novels to suggest the nuances of feeling. Having just heard of the accident which left his son with a crushed nose, Walter Shandy abandons himself to his grief and despair. The outward manifestations of his feelings are captured by the narrator in a series of tableaux which allows him to elaborate almost pictorially on the rendering of postures.

> The moment my father got up into his chamber, he threw himself prostrate across his bed in the wildest disorder imaginable, but at the same time, in the most lamentable attitude of a man borne down with sorrows, that ever the eye of pity dropp'd a tear for.——The palm of his right hand, as he fell upon the bed, receiving his forehead, and covering the greatest part of both his eyes gently sunk down with his head (his elbow giving way backwards) till his nose touch'd the quilt;——his left arm hung insensible over the side of the bed, his knuckles reclining upon the handle of the chamber pot, which peep'd out beyond the valance,—his right leg (his left being drawn up towards his body) hung half over the side of the bed, the edge of

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Ronald W. Tobin, Papers on French Seventeenth Century Literature, 89 (Tübingen: PFSCL, 1995), pp. 87-99.

The heritage of drama and picturial expression, through the mention of acting manuals which often drew on the conventions of statuary and painting, can be seen in many novels of the period. See the final part of the description of Trim's attitude as he is about to read the Sermon:

'—he look'd frank,—unconstrained,—something assured, but not bordering upon assurance. (...) he stood before my father, my uncle *Toby*, and Dr. *Slop*, so swayed his body, so contrasted his limbs, and with such an oratorical sweep throughout the whole figure,—a statuary might have modell'd from it' (*Tristram Shandy*, II, 17, 98).

[12] Le Brun, *L'Expression générale et particulière* (1668). Quoted by Beugnot, p. 22.

it pressing upon his shin-bone.——He felt it not. A fix'd, inflexible sorrow took possession of every line of his face. He sigh'd once,—heaved his breast often,—but utter'd not a word. (III, 29, 171)

Here again Sterne piles so many details that one cannot help but smile at the minuteness of the description and at the mention of the 'knuckles reclining upon the handle of the chamber pot'. This detail constitutes a parodic element in a description which sets out to capture all the nuances of feeling. What Sterne does with this parodic remark is to acknowledge the existence of such a language and play with the conventions of sentimental fiction.[13] Part of the convention was that an individual's nature could be known by his expressions.

Thus Toby's 'philanthropy of heart' is made visible by the changes which occur on his face and which are described by Sterne in almost anatomical detail:

Now whether the compression shortened my uncle *Toby*'s face into a more pleasurable oval,—or that the philanthropy of his heart, in seeing his brother beginning to emerge out of the sea of his afflictions, had braced up his muscles,—so that the compression upon his chin only doubled the benignity which was there before, is not hard to decide.—My father, in turning his eyes, was struck with such a

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[13] The parodic temptation is such that Sterne cannot help but pursue the description in two other tableaux: 'My father lay stretched across the bed as still as if the hand of death had pushed him down, for a full hour and a half, before he began to play upon the floor with the toe of that foot which hung over the bed-side; my uncle Toby's heart was a pound lighter for it.—In a few moments, his left-hand, the knuckles of which had all the time reclined upon the handle of the chamber pot, came to its feeling—he thrust it a little more within the valance—drew up his hand, when he had done, into his bosom—gave a hem!' (*Tristram Shandy*, IV, 2, 219).
'For which reason my father played the same jig over again with his toe upon the floor—pushed the chamber-pot still a little farther within the valance—gave a hem—raised himself up upon his elbow—' (*Tristram Shandy*, IV, 6, 222).

> gleam of sun-shine in his face, as melted down the sullenness of his grief in a moment. (IV, 2, 219)

This extract also shows another attribute of body language as it is found in the novels of the period. What triggers the change in the face, which has to be read as a visible sign of Toby's benevolent disposition, is seeing 'his brother beginning to emerge out of the sea of his afflictions'.

In the chapter of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* entitled 'of Sympathy', Smith establishes that there is a natural propensity in man, 'to feel for the misery of others, when we either see it, or are made to conceive it in a very lively manner'.[14] Even 'the greatest ruffian, the most hardened violator of the laws of society is not altogether without' compassion.[15] In the example quoted above, it is the joy felt by Toby on seeing his brother starting to recover which is described. Fellow feeling is not, for Smith, only called forth by the pains or sorrows witnessed.

> Our joy for the deliverance of those heroes of tragedy or romance who interest us, is as sincere as our grief for their distress, and our fellow-feeling with their misery is not more real than that with their happiness.[16]

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[14] Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 11th edn, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1808), I, pp. 1-2.
[15] Smith, p. 2.
[16] Smith, p. 5.

The outward signs of the passions, 'grief and joy, for example, strongly expressed in the look and gestures of any person', generate sympathy by prompting a reaction in the beholder, by exciting feelings in a very immediate way: they 'at once affect the spectator with the same degree of a painful or agreeable emotion'.[17]

To the seemingly exclusively visual stimulation described by Smith, Rousseau adds the voice. For him 'les passions ont leurs gestes, mais elles ont aussi leurs accents' [the passions have their gestures, but they also have their accents].[18] Rousseau establishes a clear distinction between eloquence and the arousal of the emotions: 'il est donc à croire que les premiers besoins dictèrent les premiers gestes, et que les passions arrachèrent les premières voix' [thus it must be believed that the first needs imposed the first gestures, and that the first passions wrung the first voices].[19] When it comes to exciting feelings of compassion, only the voice, the accents of distress, manage to deeply touch the heart.

> Supposez une situation de douleur parfaitement connue; en voyant la personne affligée vous serez difficilement ému jusqu'à pleurer : mais laissez-lui le temps de vous dire tout ce qu'elle sent, et bientôt vous allez fondre en larmes.[20]

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[17] Smith, p. 6.
[18] Rousseau, p. 147.
[19] Rousseau, p. 150.
[20] Rousseau, pp. 147-8.

[Take a very well known painful situation; seeing the distressed person will not move you to the point of tears: but give this person the time to tell you all he feels, and soon you shall burst into tears.]

Rousseau does not, in the 'Essai sur l'origine des langues', question the truthfulness of gestural language but he nonetheless relegates it to being a simple adjunct to the voice.

As will be seen in the following sections, our novels depart from Rousseau's view on that point in that they do assert the centrality of body language in communication they do question its truthfulness.

**The Physicality of the Novel.**

The accounts of the eighteenth-century preoccupation with corporeality given by Aileen Douglas, Anne Deneys-Tunney, Jean-Marie Goulemot are all built on slightly different philosophical backgrounds but they all converge to state that the eighteenth-century novel is far from being 'disembodied'.[21] As Barbara Korte says, the age 'employs the expressive potential of the body in a quantity and quality not heretofore recognised'.[22] The period's emphasis on the physical and the related conspicuous novelistic presence of the body are viewed by these critics

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[21] Aileen Douglas, *Uneasy Sensations: Smollett and the Body* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995), Anne Deneys-Tunney, *Ecritures du corps de Descartes à Laclos* (Paris: PUF, 1992) and Jean-Marie Goulemot, *La Littérature des Lumières en toutes lettres* (Paris: Bordas, 1989).

[22] Barbara Korte, '"Silent Eloquence": Notes on the Evolution of Body Language in the English Sentimental Novel', in *Semantics of Silences in Linguistics and Literature*, ed. by Gudrun Grabher and Ulrike Jessner (Heidelberg: Winter, 1996), pp. 113-26 (p. 113).

as a reaction to the uncertainty as regards the definition of the body caused by seventeenth-century philosophical thinking. Douglas presents the novelists' enterprise of reclamation of the body and exploration of the question of the 'legibility, and control of the body' in a post-Lockean context.[23] Deneys-Tunney traces the emergence of a new discourse on the body in the eighteenth century and describes the metamorphosis of the Cartesian body - subordinated to the soul - into a 'corps-sujet' which is eloquent and autonomous.[24] This liberation of the body into a body that is a central site of meaning and has a social meaning is the result of the 'travail de décentrement de la philosophie des Lumières' [decentering work of the Enlightenment].[25] Goulemot reminds us that the writers' interest in veracity echoes the *philosophes*' constant preoccupation with the question of truth. The massive presence of the body in the novel can therefore also be attributed to a drive to authenticate narratives.[26] The period's increasing demand for verisimilitude in fiction is evinced in the minute recording of the manifestations of a strictly corporeal activity which is both instinctive and physiological. And the increased attention to the minutiae of physical signs shows writers attempting to give a social dimension to corporeal experience, to show the moral determinations and implications of physical appearance. Thus one of the key tenets of sensibility is that sympathy is a 'function of the human constitution,

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[23] Douglas, p. xvii.
[24] Deneys-Tunney, p. 23.
[25] Deneys-Tunney, p. 33.
[26] Goulemot, pp. 144-6.
We could also mention a renewed interest in physiognomy. See Roy Porter, 'Making Faces: Physiognomy and Fashion in Eighteenth-Century England', *Etudes anglaises, Grande-Bretagne, Etats-Unis*, 38 (Oct-Dec 1985), 385-96.

the human nervous system (...)'.[27] The fact that sentiment has its origin in a body dominated by sensation is repeatedly stressed in *A Sentimental Journey*. Yorick's retelling of his sentimental encounters is punctuated by the detailed, almost medical, recording of the workings of his body: the circulation of his blood, the vibrations of his nerves, 'the pulsations of [his] arteries (16), 'the rotation of all the movements within [him]' (p. 13). Feelings, emotions which have been awakened by sensory perception are strongly felt by Yorick's 'blissfully responsive body'.[28] This is exemplified in the following description of his blushing.

> There is a sort of a pleasing half guilty blush, where the blood is more at fault than the man—'tis sent impetuous from the heart, and virtue flies after it—not to call it back, but to make the sensation of it more delicious to the nerves—'tis associated. (p. 77)

Although this self-analysis does not appear in an episode where Yorick experiences benevolence but in a highly sexualised context - he blushes at the sight of the *fille de chambre*'s face bathed in the light of the setting sun - it nonetheless exemplifies the way in which Yorick describes the physiological origin of the visible signs of his emotions throughout the text.[29]

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[27] Douglas, p. 13.
[28] Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability*, p. 193.
[29] This close attention to the minute details of the workings of the body permeates the text beyond the simple description of emotions. The physiological vocabulary which is so present is also used metaphorically. For instance Sterne describes the workings of flattery in the following words: 'how sweetly dost thou mix with the blood, and help it through the most difficult and tortuous passages to the heart!' (p. 92).

In *Fanny Hill*, Cleland's abstract language of sexual metaphors also borrows heavily from this physiological discourse. Whilst hiding the male member behind a series of euphemisms, such as 'weapon of pleasure' (p. 68) or 'engine of love-assaults' (p. 77), Fanny bares her emotional state by describing the most minute of her sensations or 'symptoms' (p. 218). Her body, and the bodies of the other women in the text are as responsive as Yorick's in terms of the 'vibrations', the 'irritations' they register.[30] Just as Yorick records feeling 'every vessel in [his] frame dilate—the arteries beat all chearily together (...)' (p. 4) at the realisation that he has had a generous thought, Fanny records how the 'luscious talk' of Mrs Brown's girls 'highly provoked an itch of florid warm-spirited blood through every vein' (p. 61) or how observing the amorous encounter between Mrs Brown and the horse-grenadier 'made every vein of [her] body circulate liquid fires' (p. 62-3). These two early episodes show Fanny's body awakening to the reality of sexual desire while, in the rest of the text, we see her running the whole gamut of possible sexual pleasures in her dealings with men. And yet Fanny's body is not just a machine geared towards providing or getting sexual satisfaction. For the message that emerges from a text that at first sight seems to extol the merits of mere carnality is that true and full contentment only comes from the perfect conjunction of two bodies under the auspices of true love. Fanny's passion for Charles is a true one because it is a passion in which 'soul and body [are] concentered' (p. 90). It is in the idea of the 'enjoyments of a mutual love-passion'

[30] As her ceremony of initiation into the 'sisterhood' of Mrs Cole' house draws to a close Fanny says: 'Now all the impressions of burning desire (...) throbbed and agitated me with insupportable irritations (...)' (p. 161), and at the end of the episode with Dick the flower-boy, Louisa is said to

(p. 101) that underlies the morality of *Fanny Hill*. Fanny's story climaxes with the felicity of matrimony and the forceful proclamation of the union they have attained: 'in a delicious enthusiasm I imagined a transfusion of heart and spirit as that, coaliting and making one body and soul with him, I was him, and he, me.' (p. 221)). The body as mere provider of animal pleasures has been transcended and an almost mystical union of the lovers' bodies has been created by the successful marriage of the sensual and the moral. The body which, early in the text bore the marks of Fanny's struggle to reconcile her sense of virtue and her sexual desire ('My pulses beat fears, amidst a flush of the warmest desires: this struggle of the passions, however this conflict betwixt modesty and love-sick longings, made me burst again into tears, (...)' (p. 76)) has disappeared. The conflict has been resolved and what has emerged at the end of the text is a highly responsive body in total communion, that is to say in a situation of ultimate communication, with another body.

**The Metaphor of the Body as Text.**

The body as a site of communication is a recurrent motif in both the libertine and the sentimental texts that form our corpus. From *Fanny Hill* ('his eyes eloquently expressed at once his grief for hurting me' (p. 111)), to *Evelina* ('Lord Orville (...) not only read my sentiments, but, by his countenance, communicated to me his own' (p. 288)) the body is posited has having the

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be 'without other sensation of life than in those exquisite vibrations that trembled yet on the strings of delight (...)' (p. 202).

capacity to express feelings. Inscribed in our texts as a priviledged site of communication the body is semiotised. The body is represented as a surface which can be read as one reads a book. It is exactly in those terms that Villars considers Evelina:

> I saw that Mr. Villars, who had parted with his book, was wholly engrossed in attending to me. I started from my reverie, and, hardly knowing what I said, asked if he had been reading? He paused a moment, and then said, "Yes, my child;—a book that both afflicts and perplexes me!" He means *me*, thought I; and therefore I made no answer. (p. 263)

What is implied by the body's textualisation is the belief in the fact that 'characters *are* their bodies'.[31] Although it has to be recognised that such a belief is postulated seriously and consistently probably only in Richardson's novels, it cannot be doubted that our texts also express it.[32] Thus in *A Sentimental Journey* there are no doubts about the genuinely generous nature of the French peasant family that Yorick meets in the Bourbonnois as he sees 'a testimony in every eye, not only of an honest welcome, but of a welcome mix'd with thanks (...)' (p. 100).[33]

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[31] Douglas, p. xv.

[32] For Richardson's belief in a 'sincere expression of feeling' in body language see Jeffrey Smitten, 'Gesture and Expression in Eighteenth-Century Fiction: *A Sentimental Journey*', *Modern Language Studies*, 9 (1979), 85-97 (p. 86).

[33] '[Mrs Brown] could take my very looks for a sufficient character' (*Fanny Hill*, p. 45), 'He had the appearance of infinite worthiness, and you supposed his character accorded with his appearance' (*Evelina,* p. 267), 'Son âme toute entière est dans ses yeux' [her very soul is contained in her eyes] (*Les Heureux Orphelins,* p. 159).
For the ideas of consonance and correspondence see: Juliet McMaster, '"Uncrystalized Flesh and Blood": The Body in *Tristram Shandy*', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 2:3 (1990), 197-214 (p. 197) and Jean-Jacques Courtine, 'Le Corps désenchanté: lectures et langages du corps dans les physiognomonies de l'âge classique', in *Le Corps au dix-septième siècle*, ed. by Ronald W. Tobin, Papers on French Seventeenth Century Literature, 89 (Tübingen: PFSCL, 1995), pp. 49-52 (p. 49).

The question that needs to be asked is therefore to what extent is the body legible? Douglas identifies that as being the major issue facing eighteenth-century writers when she asks: 'with how much assurance can one move from outward bodily signs to the inner disposition of the individual?'.[34] In the case of our novels the question could be reformulated in the following terms: what is the viability of a conception which reduces the body to a surface providing perfect projections of the soul, a 'surface for the play of invisible yearnings and visible emotions'?[35] All our texts provide, in a way, an answer to that question. The existence of a consonance between body and character is in a simultaneous movement accepted and undermined. The idea that the nature of the individual manifests itself by involuntary signs, that sentiment can be incarnated in corporeal signs is not rejected so much as the assumption (presumption?) that one can trust and rely on one's capacity to read those signs accurately.

Doubts about the capacity to read the body accurately are expressed in the Calais episode of *A Sentimental Journey*. Yorick, the self-proclaimed educated reader and translator of bodies, master at interpreting attitudes, 'tones and manners' (p. 42) or the 'turns of looks and limbs, with all their inflections and delineations' (p. 47), is shown to be prone to misreadings. Yorick misreads bodies not for want of skills but because he reads too much into them. In the case of the lady from Brussels Yorick himself admits that his reading of her is a fanciful one.

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[34] Douglas, p. xvii.

> Having, on first sight of the lady, settled the affair in my fancy, "that she was of the better order of beings" – and then laid it down as a second axiom, as indisputable as the first, That she was a widow, and wore a character of distress – I went no further. (p. 19)

Despite his protestations that it is 'indisputable' there is no tangible evidence that she is a distressed widow, but by making the lady's body say more than it actually does Yorick constructs a scenario that validates his pursuance of her acquaintance: a distressed widow needs the help of a benevolent man.

The humorous nature of this example is typical of *A Sentimental Journey* but *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby* provides us with one of a much more sinister nature. In his interpolated narrative Ossery recalls the moment when he met Jenny, the sister of his friend Montfort:

> Montfort nous apprit que depuis la veille seulement, elle était sortie de la maison où elle avait été élevée; (...) nous assura que personne ne pouvait être plus simple ni plus aimable. Miss Jenny vint alors confirmer par sa présence les louanges que son frère donnait à l'ingénuité. Son air annonçait ce caractère; il était doux, modeste (...). Elle avait cet agrément que donne la fraîcheur de la première jeunesse (...). (pp. 146-7)

> [Montfort told us that she had left the convent where she had been educated only the day before; (...) assured us that no one could be less affected nor more loveable. Miss Jenny arrived to confirm then by her presence the praises that her brother gave

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[35] Barbara Maria Stafford's phrase in *Body Criticism: Imaging the Unseen in Enlightenment Art and Medicine* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), p. 16.

> to artlessness. Her appearance announced her temperament: it was gentle and modest (...). She possessed the charm which comes from the freshness of early youth (...).]

Jenny's body is presented as a highly legible surface. Young, innocent, just out of the convent and therefore inexperienced in the ways of the world Jenny looks every inch the part of the ideal object of the libertine's seduction. The catastrophe which is at the heart of the story - the rape - happens because Ossery cannot resist the temptation to read her as a victim. In these two examples a false image of the character is constructed by an inaccurate reading. The signs of the body here truly reflect the individual's nature, it is the reading which is at fault. But what our texts also make evident is that what makes the unconditional adherence to the belief in the existence of a code of sincere expression an untenable position is the failure to recognise that the signs of the body can be constructed.

*Les Heureux Orphelins* dramatises this failure to recognise that if bodies can be mirrors of the self, they can also be masks for the self because their instinctive manifestations can be studied, learnt, and reproduced. Madame de Suffolk fails to identify Chester's artistry at conterfeiting signs of emotion, at acting the part of the man of feeling. She mistakes a body which is highly in control of its visible signs for a body that reveals itself 'dans la surprise des réactions incontrôlées' [in the spontaneity of uncontrolled reactions].[36] She fails to see the real hypocrisy of his 'regards tendres, sa contenance embarrassée' (p. 119) [his tender looks, his embarassed countenance], his 'voix tremblante' [his

trembling voice] (p. 114), or his tears.[37] Her lack of awareness of the fact that the instinctive manifestations of her body form a code that can be read and copied is what allows Chester's deception of her. What is therefore implicitly recognised is that the woman of feeling partakes in the construction of the libertine's opaque body and penetrating gaze.[38]

**The Somatised Text**

We have established in the previous sections the pervading presence of the body in the diegesis of both our sentimental and libertine texts. We have seen that although our sentimental and our libertine texts describe bodily manifestations in a similar way and have at their heart the metaphor of the body as text, the point at which their treatment of the body diverge centres around the question of the sincerity or insincerity which is at the origin of these visible signs.

But the body is not just present in our texts as a diegetic element it also appears at the level of the utterance. And it is there, at the level of the utterance, that our sentimental and our libertine texts converge again in their treatment of the body. They all bear the marks of 'une "somatisation" de l'écriture' [a somatisation of writing] as the body pushes through to the surface and disrupts the text or

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[36] Beugnot, p. 24.

[37] 'Il saisit ma main, (...). Je la sentis bientôt inondée des ses larmes.' [he took my hand (...). I soon felt it bathed by his tears] (p. 121).

[38] For the most part, madame de Suffolk's awareness that she is deceiving herself or that she is being deceived is a retrospective one and appears in the text in the form of comments made for the benefit of Lucie to whom she tells her story. 'Son air consterné, (car quels sont les mouvements

becomes the text itself.[39] Our texts show the affective power of the body on the writing activity. Narratives give way to incursions into the present of the writing where we see narrators suddenly incapacitated by their bodies. Fanny Hill's exclamation '-My pen drops from me here in the ecstasy now present to my faithful memory' (p. 220) marks the inscription of her own body on the surface of the text.[40] Finally, it is probably in *A Sentimental Journey* that one can find the most striking example of the somatisation of writing. In the last sentence of the text ('So that when I stretch'd out my hand, I caught hold of the Fille de Chambre's

END OF VOL. II.' (p. 105)) the signifier for the *fille de chambre*'s body is erased from the narrative only to be inscribed again as a marker for the end of the text itself. With the ending of *A Sentimental Journey* we see the idea of the affective power of the body being pushed to the limit as the body literally becomes the text itself.

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que le traître ne sait pas feindre!) me rassurait (...) [his air of amazement (for what are the emotions that this traitor cannot feign!) reassured me] (p. 116).

[39] Deneys-Tunney's expression, p. 11.

[40] We can find the same inscription of the body on the surface of the text in *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby* 'Ma main tremble... ma plume s'échappe de mes doigts...' [My hand is trembling...my quill falls from my fingers...] (p. 89).

## Chapter 3 - Practices of Sociability and Power Relations

This chapter focuses on the practices of sociability which are associated with the sentimental and the libertine discourse and examines how they are represented in *A Sentimental Journey*, *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby*, *Evelina*, *Les Egarements du cœur et de l'esprit* and *Les Heureux Orphelins*.

All our novels give an important place to the representation of the social relations of the sexes. It is obvious in the libertine novel which usually charts a young man's initiation into the complications of gendered relations among the aristocratic elite.[1] Thus *Les Heureux Orphelins* is a novel of worldliness with a libertine character, Chester, whose narrative of seduction has for its main subject a sentimental character, Madame de Suffolk, the woman of feeling born for 'love or virtue', who believes in a rhetoric of harmony and exchange.[2] In this novel all the relationships are unsurprisingly contests of power. More surprising then, perhaps, is the fact that the plots of the sentimental novels are also mainly hinged on questions of power. They picture young women faced with being looked upon as sexual objects (the grisset) or with male control of the marriage market (Evelina, Juliette).[3]

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[1] Worldliness: one attaches exclusive importance to ordered social existence, to life within a public system of values and gestures, to the social techniques that further this life and to knowledge about society. See Brooks, p. 4.

[2] 'Je n'étais née que pour l'amour, ou pour la vertu' [I was born only for love or for virtue] (p. 97).

[3] I do not therefore completely agree with Joan Hinde Stewart's statement that *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby* 'is [not] really "about" seduction'. 'Sex, Text, and Exchange: *Lettres*

The 'agonistic model of sexual relations in which men conquer women' is the dominant one in all the texts.[4] An adversarial view of relations between the sexes is visible in *Les Heureux Orphelins* in the mobilisation of terms like: weapons, to attack, fighting, victory, to defeat, to conquer, to triumph, to surrender, to give in. This vocabulary is internalised by women of feeling in their discourse, thus Madame de Suffolk protests the decency of her behaviour as regards her falling in love with Chester in terms of victory and attack: '[...] Je n'ai pas honteusement cédé la victoire ; on ne m'a pas trouvée vaincue dès l'instant qu'on m'a attaquée' [I have not shamefully conceded victory. I have not been vanquished as soon as I was attacked] (p. 93), while Juliette, in Riccoboni's novel, affirms that 'entre des amants brouillés un reproche est le préliminaire d'un traité de paix' [between cross lovers a reproach is the prelude to a peace treaty] (p. 134).

The libertine's desire is integrated in a 'système proprement sensualiste [qui] se donne pour une critique des chimères sentimentales et pour une théorie des mécanismes de l'amour' [a properly sensualist system which professes itself to be a critique of sentimental chimeras and a theory of the workings of love].[5] In a way the libertine world view recognises the central truth of human nature which is its intrinsic selfishness. But where the libertine's pleasure differs from the pleasure of the sentimental (wo)man is in the fact that it aims wholly and purely at the satisfaction of the senses and of vanity: in a libertine affair 'le délire n'est pas

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*neuchâteloises* and *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby*', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 13:1 (1989), 60-68 (p. 60).

[4] Heckendorn-Cook, p. 28.

long, mais il suffit au caprice ou aux sens' [the frenzy is not long-lasting, but it is sufficient to satisfy our whims or our senses] (p. 156). All the resources of the libertine's superior rational mind are put to the 'assouvissement éphémère de désirs momentanés' [short-lived satisfaction of momentary desires] and the manipulation of the other, the subject of his fleeting desires.[6] In such a system 'une véritable passion [...] avilit' [a real passion is degrading] (p. 172) because it implies a loss of self-control whereas much of the libertine's pleasure results from the power he exercises over the other who is reduced to a reified state. Chester admits

> préfér[er] au bonheur toujours assez douteux de régner sur un cœur par le sentiment, le plaisir singulier et flatteur de régler une âme comme on le veut, [...] d'y faire naître tour à tour les mouvements les plus opposés ; et [...] de la faire mouvoir comme une machine. (p. 174)[7]

> [preferring to the always rather doubtful pleasure of ruling over a heart with sentiments, the singular and flattering pleasure of controlling a soul as one wishes to, of arousing one by one the most different movements; and of making it move like a machine.]

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[5] Jean Sgard, 'La Notion d'égarement chez Crébillon', *Dix-huitième siècle*, 1 (1969), 241-9 (p. 244).

[6] Sturm, p. 88.

[7] 'Lui prouver de l'indifférence, ou plutôt lui en faire craindre, était quelque chose ; mais cela ne me suffisait pas, et je voulais la rendre jalouse. [...] Quel plaisir n'était-ce pas pour moi de la voir machinalement épier mes regards [...] et rougir de fureur quand ils s'arrêtaient sur une femme trop longtemps!' [To show her indifference, or rather to make her fear it, was something. But it was not enough and I wanted to make her jealous. What a pleasure it was for me to see her watch closely, without thinking, the direction of my glances and flush with anger when they stopped on a woman for too long!] (p. 181).

We saw in the previous chapter that the sentimental body is a highly responsive body which works as a visible register of emotions. Body and soul are united by the impulse which is sentimental love. And they are united in the same movement of dispossession, of lost self-control. Because of the close links between body and soul the disorder ('désordre', 'trouble') caused by amorous passion affects the mind as well as the heart and the body.

> Cependant, au milieu de tant d'agitations, et de toutes les contrariétés que je me faisais, je me sentais dans une espèce de bonheur dont je n'avais pas encore eu l'idée. Ce désordre dans lequel ma raison était comme anéantie, ce mouvement singulier qui me troublait à la fois le sang et le cœur, cette sorte d'inquiétude qui me dévorait [...] même en me tourmentant avait pour moi les plus grands charmes. (p. 101)
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> [Although swamped by nervousness and anxiety, I felt a kind of happiness which I had never felt before. This disorder which had got the better of my reason, this peculiar movement which disturbed both my blood and my heart, this kind of restlessness which consumed me, although they tormented me were also most pleasant to me.]

The rational, sentimental and sensual disorientation which Suffolk attempts to put into words is all the more complete since she does not have the means to define it. She cannot get the distance necessary to observe human feelings and therefore possess the knowledge which the libertine acquires simply because, in the words of Juliette Catesby the heroine of Riccoboni's novel, his 'cœur et sens peuvent

agir séparément' [his heart and his senses can act separately] (p. 167). She manages to verbalise the disorder she feels only with the vague 'une espèce de bonheur', 'ce mouvement singulier', 'cette sorte d'inquiétude' (p. 101).

The only certainty the woman of feeling can have is the certainty of her happiness in this contradictory state. The corollary to Suffolk's reiterations of delirious happiness ('De quel bonheur ne jouit-on pas!' [what happiness does one feel!] she exclaims (p. 101)) is the expression of the puzzling 'état de contradiction' [state of contraction], the 'brûlure suave' [sweet burning] evoked by Roland Barthes in *Fragments d'un discours amoureux*, in which she finds herself.[8] The feeling of happiness which amorous passion provides is associated with a subtle mixture of pleasure and pain ('[l'] inquiétude qui me dévorait [...] même en me tourmentant avait pour moi les plus grands charmes' (p. 101) [although it tormented me the anxiety which devoured me had for me the greatest charm]). The state in which one can find charm in torment, which transforms pleasure into a torture is what Suffolk describes as a 'tendre langueur' [sweet languor].

> La douce émotion et la tendre langueur qui s'étaient emparées de mes sens, m'inquiétaient [...]. Ce plaisir tout nouveau qu'il était pour moi, tout enchanteur même que je le trouvais, loin de me satisfaire, répandait dans toutes mes veines je ne sais quelle ardeur qui m'en faisait un supplice (p. 104).

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[8] Roland Barthes, *Fragments d'un discours amoureux* (Paris: Seuil, 1977), p. 186.

[The gentle emotion and the sweet languor which had taken over my senses worried me. This pleasure although new and enchanting, far from satisfying me, spread in all my veins an unknown ardour which turned it into a torment.]

Languor is, according to Barthes, what becomes of desire in the amorous state.[9] Under the guise of 'langueur' and 'ardeur' [ardour] (violent) desire erupts in the discourse of the woman of feeling: 'Je ne savais ce que désirais ; je désirais pourtant, et avec une violence inconcevable' [I did not know what I desired, but I desired with an inconceivable violence] (p. 104). If desire erupts in Suffolk's discourse it is not a libertine desire, enslaved by the senses, or a 'désir despotique' [despotic desire] to use Dagen's phrase, but a 'volupté' that is to say a more elevated type of desire.[10] As a matter of fact 'volupté' never has sensual connotations in Crébillon's texts and as we can see in *Les Heureux Orphelins*, 'volupté' is an attribute of the soul and not one of the senses: 'les délices de ces plaisirs qui confondent les sens, et que les sens ne partagent pas' [the delights of those pleasures which confound the senses but in which the senses do not partake] (p. 122).[11] Suffolk's desire cannot be equated with libertine desire also because

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[9] 'Le désir est partout; mais, dans l'état amoureux, il devient ceci, de très spécial : la langueur.' [Desire is everywhere but in the amorous state it becomes this very special thing: languor]. Barthes, p. 185.

[10] Dagen uses the phrase despotic desire in the introduction to his edition of *Les Heureux Orphelins* (p. 9).

[11] 'Ah! qu'il est vrai pour les cœurs sensibles, qu'il y a une volupté bien supérieure à toute celle [sic] qu'ils peuvent faire éprouver! [...] Avec quel transport, quelle avidité je le regardais! Mais en même temps avec combien d'innocence!' [Oh! how true it is that sensible hearts feel voluptuous pleasures far greater than those they can create! With what transport, what eagerness did I look at him! But at the same time how innocently!] (p. 122).
The term 'transports' refers to the movements of the soul, whereas 'emportement' is associated with those of the senses.
On Crébillon's vocabulary see Versini, p. 460.

she combines it 'with care for the other'.[12] Suffolk, woman of feeling, aspires to harmony, believes in reciprocity, so that happiness is never for herself only but always for herself and the other: the aim must always be to 'faire à la fois son bonheur et le mien' [to bring happiness to him and myself] (p. 124).

Chester manipulates the audience by a calculated construction of effect, feigns passion, uses the same linguistic code as his sentimental victim to make the simulacrum pass for the real thing. Chester admits that he devises stratagems against women out of revenge and to punish them ('je n'en avais pas moins résolu de la punir de sa révolte contre moi' [I had nonetheless resolved to punish her for her revolt against me]) (p. 173) but his main motivation is pleasure.[13] Chester turns that into a maxim: 'il ne faut à l'homme sensé que des plaisirs' [a sensible man only needs pleasure]. (p. 161) Chester looks for the sole satisfaction of his senses to escape from the reciprocal dependence of sentiment and rejects the possibility of feeling anything for a woman: 'si j'étais presque sûr de ne lui pas inspirer d'amour, je l'étais bien plus encore qu'elle ne m'en inspirerait pas' [if I was almost certain of not inspiring her with love, I was even more certain that she would not inspire me with any] (p. 185). The repetitive seduction and subjection of women is how he satisfies his vanity. Every conquest, every small victory is flattering to him and reflecting on how he has made Madame de Suffolk jealous

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[12] Angelica Gooden, *The Complete Lover: Eros, Nature, and Artifice in the Eighteenth-Century French Novel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 7.

[13] Madame de Suffolk is singled out to be the recipient of Chester's revenge on women. He congratulates himself on the pain he has caused her: '[...] Je suis bien sûr de faire pleurer actuellement deux des plus beaux yeux du monde. J'aime assez, moi, à procurer des insomnies à ces fières beautés qui en donnent à tant de gens.' [I am convinced that the two of most beautiful

he exclaims: 'Ah! jamais triomphe ne m'avait si sensiblement flatté ; et jamais, aussi, je n'avais joui d'un spectacle aussi doux pour mon amour-propre que celui-là.' [Never had a triumph so markedly flattered me and never, as well, had I enjoyed a sight as satisfactory for my pride than this one] (p. 181). Anxious, almost to the point of obsession, to preserve his reputation and to keep his peers' recognition, women are made to be the victims of his vanity and it is with great relish that he sacrifices their reputation to his own ('rendre ma liaison avec elle aussi publique qu'elle avait besoin qu'elle fut cachée' [make my affair with her as public as she needed to keep it secret] (p. 243)). In a word, he enjoys 'la volupté barbare de déchirer un cœur' [the barbarous pleasure of wounding a heart] (p. 182). The elements in his rhetoric of cruelty are humiliating, frustrating, tormenting, upsetting, causing distress and pain.[14] This is perfectly summarised in one sentence: 'Que je lui causai de tourments, et qu'elle me donna de plaisir!' [What torments I put her through, what pleasure she gave me!] (p. 181).

What results from that is women's complete loss of control over their emotions, etc. Since the body is the physical surface on which emotions appear, their weakness is projected upon their body, making it visible for them and for Chester. He acknowledges this complete imbalance between the sexes - complete since even the prude and the coquette, who are the feminine version of the libertine, are not on equal terms with him.

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eyes in the world are crying for me now. I rather enjoy being the cause of sleepless nights for those proud beauties who cause them for so many.] (p. 182).

[14] As Madame de Rindsey is starting to make advances to him, Chester admits: 'j'étais plus méchant que pressé' [more spiteful than eager] to accede to her desires (p. 195).

> Elle voulait donc me conquérir, je voulais la soumettre ; elle se croyait de l'art, j'en ai; il ne m'en fallait qu'un avec elle, [...] l'art de paraître aimer ; et pour me faire croire la même chose, il fallait qu'il lui en coûtât plus qu'à moi. Les femmes sont forcées de nous en croire sur nos discours, et ne nous persuadent que par des preuves : cela ne fait pas partie égale. (pp. 166-7)
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> [She wanted to conquer me, I wanted to subject her; she thought she mastered the art, I do; I only needed one with her, the art of pretending to love; and it would have cost her more to make me believe the same thing. Women can only believe us on the basis of what we say, and only persuade us by proof: that makes it an unfair match.]

For Geof Bennington the main discrepancy is in 'a split in the nature of the proof: for whereas the subject's proof of his feelings is demonstrated verbally, the proof of the woman's feelings is sexual submission'.[15]

The imbalance is perpetuated and the other is left with no chance to prepare a defence because of the libertine's exceptional powers of penetration and interpretation and his expertise at deception which he improved by mastering, in true actor's fashion, the art of sobbing (p. 246).[16] Chester boasts the capacity to 'percer la profondeur du cœur humain' [penetrate the mysteries of the human heart] (p. 178) thanks to his 'sagacité naturelle' [innate sagacity] (p. 190) as well as extensive knowledge of women and wonders what could stop a man 'qui sait

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[15] Geof Bennington, 'From Narrative to Text: Love and Writing in Crébillon fils, Duclos, Barthes', *The Oxford Literary Review*, 4:1 (1979), 62-81 (p. 69).
[16] For Chester's mastering of the art of sobbing see p. 246.

pénétrer leur désordre et profiter de ce qu'il voit' [who penetrates their confusion and takes advantage of what he sees] (p. 185). His story is that of 'des regards discutés avec le détail le plus étendu; de simples mines devenues un sujet de spéculation, [...] ; une analyse exacte [...] du cœur, des caprices, [...] d'une femme' [looks discussed in the greatest detail; simple expressions that become an object of speculation, [...] ; an accurate analysis of the heart, of the whims of a woman] (p. 177). The characters evolve therefore in an 'empire rhétorique' [in the grip of rhetoric] in which power and speech are intimately linked, in which 'prendre la parole revient [...] à prendre le pouvoir' [speaking equals holding power].[17] In such a context conversations often turn into verbal contests and they include both men and women alike. The frank and direct exchanges of the sentimental scenario do not really figure in the novels, even in the sentimental texts, where they are more of the order of the ideal than of reality.

At stake is the acknowledgement by the other of his/her weakness which takes the form of the declaration of love. In *Les Egarements du cœur et de l'esprit* Meilcour and Madame de Lursay try, in turn, to coerce the other into admitting his/her love. In the first of these verbal jousts Madame de Lursay attempts to coax the young and inexperienced Meilcour to reveal himself by suggesting that 'l'aveu qu' [un homme] fait de sa tendresse peut seul autoriser une femme à y répondre' [only a man's admission of his feelings can prompt a woman to reciprocate them]

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[17] Jean Terrasse, 'La Rhétorique amoureuse dans *Les Egarements du cœur et de l'esprit*', in *Man And Nature: Proceedings of the Canadian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, I*, ed. by Roger L. Emerson, Gilles Girard and Roseann Runte (London, Ontario: University of Western Ontario, 1982), pp.21-29 (p. 24).

(pp. 21-22). Under the pretence of commenting on a play Madame de Lursay probes Meilcour's feelings, so as to confirm what she already suspects, without however revealing hers. Unable to avow his passion for her in her presence ('lorsque j'étais éloigné d'elle, je ne voyais plus d'obstacles qui s'opposassent au dessein que je formais de lui déclarer ma passion; et je n'étais jamais à portée de le faire, que je ne tremblasse de l'idée que j'en avais eue' [when I was not in her company I did not find any obstacles to my planned declaration and whenever I found myself in tha position of doing it I would tremble at the thought of having the idea] (p. 20)) Meilcour is an easy prey to the manipulative Madame de Lursay. She first makes him acknowledge that he does have something to declare. Embarrassed by her perspicacious and pointed remarks Meilcour remains silent thereby confirming her suspicions. But in this universe, discovering the other's feelings through non-verbal means is not the ultimate end. Making him/her say it is what is looked for. Madame de Lursay is therefore not satisfied with silence and embarrassed looks and teases him further. After the first declaration, still not satisfied, Madame de Lursay pushes Meilcour to reiterate it by pretending that she has not understood his indirect acknowledgement.[18] Meilcour realises that having disclosed himself he should push Madame de Lursay to the same confession and keep the advantage that he thinks speech has given him over her: 'j'avais parlé et je ne voulais pas en perdre le fruit' [I had spoken and I did not want to lose what I

[18] '"Dites-moi qui vous aimez. — Ah! Madame répondis-je en tremblant, je serais bientôt puni de vous l'avoir dit." Dans la situation présente, ce discours n'était point équivoque; aussi Madame de Lursay l'entendit-elle, mais ce n'était pas encore assez, et elle feignit de ne m'avoir pas compris.' [Tell me who you love. — Ah! Madam, I answered trembling, I would soon be punished if I were to tell you. In the present situation this answer was not equivocal and Madame de Lursay

had gained] (p. 25). Madame de Lursay sends visual, non-verbal signs of her affection ('les regards tendres qu'elle m'adressait' [the fond glances she sent me] (p. 27)) which do not satisfy Meilcour partly because he is unable to decipher them completely. No matter how hard he presses her Madame de Lursay does not admit to anything verbally. By her deliberate reticence she therefore keeps the real advantage over him. Meilcour takes her silence for a refusal and does not realise that Madame de Lursay is artfully deceiving him and concealing her feelings. He does not realise yet that 'elle ne pouvait pas encore se résoudre à [lui] avouer sérieusement qu'elle répondait à [ses] désirs' [she could not yet bring herself to seriously admit to him that she reciprocated his feelings] (pp. 31-2).[19]

In the second scene of verbal contest the power relation has changed: Meilcour, not as inexperienced and innocent as previously, is now directing the proceedings. Madame de Lursay cracks under the pressure and begins by conceding that ' j'ai du goût pour vous. [...] Cet aveu que je vous fais, me coûte' [I have a liking for you. This is a costly admission for me] (p. 58). But Meilcour doggedly demands a full declaration: 'je ne vous quitte pas que vous m'ayez dit que vous m'aimez' [I will not leave you before you tell me that you love me] (p. 59). When Meilcour does not relent and persists he gets a half acknowledgement: 'je vous laisse dire que vous m'aimez, et je vous dis presque que je vous aime' [I

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understood perfectly but it was not enough for her and she pretended not to have understood me] (p. 24).

[19] 'Ce n'est pas [...] qu'elle voulût retarder longtemps l'aveu de sa faiblesse' [The fact was that she did not plan to postpone the admission of her weakness for long] (p. 28).

am letting you say that you love me and I am almost telling you that I love you] (p. 67).

But Madame de Lursay only makes the full confession of her love at the end of the narrative after she has been defeated by Meilcour's 'je vous ai aimé avant que je susse si vous méritiez de l'être [...]' [I loved you before knowing if you deserved to be loved] (p.177).

John Mullan places *A Sentimental Journey* among the novels of the period which had the project of 'showing that there could be social exchange transcending self-interest'.[20] Indeed social harmony, which is brought about by the flow of feelings, is acknowledged, if not idealized, in *A Sentimental Journey* in scenes in which Yorick can put into practice his 'innate and spontaneous humanitarian benevolence'.[21] Yorick expresses his belief that man was 'made for social intercourse and gentle greetings' (p. 44) and in the desirability of sociability:

> was I in a desart, I would find out wherewith in it to call forth my affections – If I could not do better, I would fasten them upon some sweet myrtle, or seek some melancholy cypress to connect myself – (p. 23)

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[20] Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability*, p. 15.
[21] Judith Frank, '"A Man who Laughs is Never Dangerous": Character and Class in Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey*', *ELH*, 56 (1989), 97-124 (p. 98).

The image of the individual lost in the desert echoes Yorick's famous apostrophe to his 'dear Sensibility' and the 'great SENSORIUM of the world' which allows individuals to be in harmony with each other:

> I feel some generous joys and generous cares beyond myself – all comes from thee, great – great SENSORIUM of the world! which vibrates, if a hair of our heads but falls upon the ground, in the remotest desert of thy creation. (p. 98)

Yorick displays (most of the time) the natural sympathy which is at the heart of a sociability transcending self-interest and puts in practice (again most of the time) his sense of benevolence. A notable exception arises when Yorick's benevolence is put to the test in the first pages of the text in the person of a Franciscan monk asking for charity to whom Yorick refuses to give a single sous. He soon regrets his ungenerous attitude when he realises it could compromise his chances with a Lady. 'I set myself to consider how I should undo the ill impressions which the poor monk's story, in case he had told it her, must have planted in her breast against me' (p. 16). To undo these ill impressions Yorick decides to offer tobacco to the monk. A generous gesture, one would agree, but again motivated by self-interest. Yorick however manages to overcome his bad impulses and the episode ends in sentimental apotheosis with the exchange of the snuff-boxes.

> He begg'd we might exchange boxes – in saying this, he presented his to me with one hand, as he took mine from me in the other; and having kissed it – with a stream of good nature in his eyes he put it into his bosom – and took his leave.
>
> I guard this box, as I would the instrumental parts of my religion, to help my mind on to something better. (p. 17)

Yorick is the archetypal man of feeling who experiences benevolence through the very fibres and arteries of his body. From then on the reformed Yorick develops his capacity for feeling and is engaged in straightforward situations of benevolence: he feels sympathy for the man with the dead ass or the beggars. The encounters he has with women are tainted by the fact that they take place 'within a social order based on paternal hierarchy' from which ensue political and economic hierarchies.[22] Yorick's passage near 'Moulines' allows him to show his remarkable capacity for feeling and enact his protective fantasies of power to care for a weak woman in distress: 'First I shall please myself, and next I shall give you the protection of my company as far on your way as I can' (p. 56).

Maria represents a test for the benevolent paternal hierarchy which is represented by Yorick. Her madness puts her in the position of the sentimental object, in need of a protector, who is a 'catalyst for [Yorick's] sentimental enthusiasm' (p. 43).[23] Yorick feels indescribable emotions as he wipes the tears of the woman who has become 'unto [him] as a daughter' (p. 98). Yorick is here satisfying an intertextual fantasy: that of being a guardian to the Lady from

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[22] Melinda Alliker Rabb, 'Engendering Accounts of Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey*', in *Johnson and his Age*, ed. by J. Engell (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), pp. 531-58 (p. 543).

Brussels and of 'wiping them away from off the cheeks of the first and fairest of women' (p. 36). Prompted by the reading of Tristram Shandy's account of his meeting with Maria, kept alive by his own writing, Yorick's emotions are first and foremost literary and intertextual in nature.[24] All the Moulines chapters abound in biblical allusions and Yorick does not fail to get moved by several such references in an apostrophe imagining the relief he would provide her if Maria lived close to him: 'Wast thou in my own land, where I have a cottage, I would take thee to it and shelter thee: thou shouldst eat of my own bread, and drink of my own cup [...]. Nature melted within me, as I utter'd this' (p. 97). The next declaration of intent, which by the way is also a quotation from Samuel 12:3, points to another source of intertexual reference: the *Journal to Eliza*.[25]

> Could the traces be ever worn out of her brain, and those of Eliza's out of mine, she should *not only eat of my bread and drink of my own cup*, but Maria should lay in my bosom, and be unto me as a daughter. (p. 98)

The Eliza mentioned here is the Eliza Draper of the *Journal to Eliza* which Sterne abandoned after having pursued the two projects – the writing of the *Journal* and of *A Sentimental Journey* – at the same time for several months.[26] In the entry for July 3rd Sterne writes: 'I steal something every day from my sentimental Journey –

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[23] Paul D. McGlynn, 'Sterne's Maria: Madness and Sentimentality', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 3 (1976), 39-43 (p. 43).

[24] Yorick feels the urge to fill his pages with 'the poor Maria my friend, Mr. Shandy, met with near Moulines. The story he had told of that disorder'd maid affect'd me not a little in the reading' (p. 95).

[25] Keymer identifies this quotation in his edition of *A Sentimental Journey* (footnote, p. 159).

to obey a more sentimental impulse in writing to you – and giving you the present Picture of myself' (p. 175) connecting thus the two literary enterprises and the female figures that appear in them. *The Journal to Eliza* is a long sentimental effusion which sees the triumph of pathos and pathology. It, for the most part, consists in self-pitying remarks by Sterne - under the assumed names of 'the Bramin' or 'Yorick' - about his suffering in body and mind, his illness and his loneliness. In this eulogy of Eliza, 'ever blest and blessed of all thy Sex! Blessed in thyself and in thy Virtues – and blessed and endearing to all who know thee' (p. 144), Sterne/Yorick declares his love for her - he is 'her Yorick – who loves her more than ever' (p. 182) - using most of the time images stressing their belonging to the large family of human beings. For the benevolist, social ties become private ties, as strong as blood ones. Yorick's journey is an unremitting search for social intercourse which is mainly established through physical contact. Physical contact is 'le véhicule privilégié du sentiment qu'il fait naître et dont il est en même temps le signe' [priviledged vehicle of the sentiment it arouses and of which it is the sign].[27] 'There is no secret so aiding to the progress of sociability, as to get master of this *short hand*, and be quick in rendering the several turns of looks and limbs, with all their inflections and delineations, into plain words' (p. 47).

The generosity of feeling resides in the body, in the blood which is 'the very signifier that marks the breeding of the aristocrat which is redefined as a

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[26] Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy by Mr. Yorick* with *The Journal to Eliza* and *A Political Romance*, ed. by Ian Jack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968; repr. 1984), pp. 135-88.
[27] Denizot, p. 161.

mark of innate and physiological responsiveness to suffering'.[28] In *A Sentimental Journey* the contact he has with the '*fille de chambre*' confirms to Yorick 'by what fine-spun threads our affections are drawn together' (p. 57):

> We set off a-fresh, and as she took her third step, the girl *put her hand within my arm* – I was just bidding her – but she did it of herself with that undeliberating simplicity, which show'd it was out of her head she had never seen me before. For my own part, *I felt the conviction of consanguinity so strongly*, that I could not help turning half round to look in her face, and see if I could trace out any thing in it of a family likeness – Tut! said I, *are we not all relations*? (p. 57, my emphasis)[29]

In *The Journal to Eliza*, Mrs James, the sympathizing friend in whom he confides his despair, is loved as a sister, while Eliza's virtue and honour are supposed to 'be safe in Yorick's hands, as in a Brothers' (p. 157). As well as establishing his virtuous intentions towards Eliza Sterne/Yorick posits himself as a guardian to her. The idealized image that he creates of Eliza makes her 'the most precious of Women' and the 'most wanting of all other Women of a kind protector' (p. 161). Eliza conveniently represents at the same time the pure woman and the heroine in distress with whom the benevolist can engage. Yorick in *A Sentimental Journey* also finds a female character on whom to project his fantasies and create a distressed character whom he can help. The face of the Lady from Brussels is a white canvas on which his imagination paints 'the characters of a

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[28] Frank, p. 98.

[29] *Tristram Shandy* contains a very similar scene of an encounter with a young woman which confirms the benevolist that he belongs to the large family of human beings: 'Tie me up this tress

widow'd look' (p. 15). Having identified a person in need he can display his generosity of feeling: 'in a word I felt benevolence for her; and resolved some way or other to throw in my mite of courtesy – if not of service' (p. 15). Yorick assigns himself the role of protector to the Lady and after having 'beheld the same unprotected look of distress' in her, declares: 'I pitied her from my soul; and though it may seem ridiculous enough to a torpid heart, – I could have taken her into my arms, and cherished her, though it was in the open street, without blushing' (p. 16). A clear pattern emerges in the treatment of women in both texts: female figures are conflated through the use of recurring images and fantasies. Thus the Lady from Brussels and Eliza are described in similar terms as 'the first and fairest of women' (p. 35) in *A Sentimental Journey* and the 'first and best of Woman kind!' (p. 186) in *The Journal to Eliza*. The plan to shelter Maria in his cottage ('Wast thou in my own land, where I have a cottage, I would take thee to it and shelter thee' (p. 97)) echoes the imagined return of Eliza to England and her installation with him:

> I have made you, a sweet Sitting Room (as I told You) already – and am projecting a good Bed-chamber adjoi[ni]ng it, with a pretty dressing room for You, which connects them together – and when they are finished, will be as sweet as a set of romantic Apartments, as You ever beheld. (pp. 171-2)

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instantly, said Nanette, putting a piece of string into my hand——It taught me to forget I was a stranger——The whole knot fell down——We had been seven years acquainted.' (VII, 43, 431).

Such a conflation of the female figures has a de-individualizing effect. They appear as interchangeable props that allow him to put on the garb of the benevolent man.

> [I have] been in love *with one princess or another* almost all my life, and I hope I shall go on so, till I die, being firmly persuaded, that if ever I do a mean action, it must be in some interval betwixt one passion and another: *whilst this interregnum lasts, I always perceive my heart locked up* – I can scarce find in it, to give Misery a sixpence; and therefore I always get out of it as fast as I can, and the moment I am rekindled, I am all generosity and good will again. (p. 28, my emphasis)

Despite his protestations of complete devotion to her in *The Journal*, Eliza, 'the *Woman of my heart*' (p. 177), is one of these anonymous 'princesses', standing in for one another, that allow Yorick to test and prove his finer feelings. In the 'Amiens' section Yorick gets enflamed by the Lady and then by the idea of joining her in Brussels. The further protestations which he addresses to the 'Eternal fountain of happiness!': '– be thou my witness – and every pure spirit which tastes it, be my witness also, That I would not travel to Brussels, unless Eliza went along with me' (p. 36), are cancelled out in the last sentence of the section which dismisses the validity of this declaration as having been produced by an overheated affectivity: 'in transports of this kind, the heart, in spite of the understanding, will always say too much' (p. 36).[30] The man of feeling is here

[30] 'My last flame happening to be blown out by a sudden whiff of jealousy on the sudden turn of a corner, I had lighted it up afresh at the pure taper of Eliza but about three months before – swearing as I did it, that it should last me the whole journey – Why should I dissemble the matter? I had sworn to her eternal fidelity – she had a right to my whole heart' (p. 36).

pointing at the shortcomings in his behaviour: he regrets the sentimental transport which leads to his missing the opportunity of making a less sentimental encounter with 'Madame de L***'.

Women are mere instruments in the sentimental paternalistic enterprise but also suffer the effects of its ineffectuality. The distresses, real (Maria) or imagined (the Lady) which characterize the women put them in a position of dependence in relation to Yorick.[31] Where women are concerned, no real help or relief comes out from his position of domination.[32] For one, Eliza is on her way to India to rejoin her husband when Sterne/Yorick pledges to protect her. Furthermore the prevalent verbal modality in *A Sentimental Journey* is the conditional mode. The proposition of help and protection he makes to Maria is not feasible because the premise on which it is based is totally hypothetical: 'wast thou in my own land, where I have a cottage, I would take thee to it and shelter thee' (p. 97). *The Journal to Eliza* whose tone is predominantly self-pitying abounds in demands for help from Yorick himself. Sterne/Yorick's body saturates the pages of *The Journal to Eliza* with its physical suffering ('parted with 12 Ounces of blood' (p. 139)) and colours the relationship since it is almost consistently expressed in medical terms: 'the only Physician, and who carries the Balm of my Life along with her, – is Eliza' (p. 139).[33]

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[31] One exception is the grisset.

[32] Those who get some kind of practical relief seem to be all males: the beggars, the monk.

[33] *A Sentimental Journey* is as concerned with illness as *The Journal to Eliza* is as the following excerpts show: 'O Eliza! how did thy Bramine mourn the want of thee to tye up his wounds, and comfort his dejected heart' (p. 140), 'Sooth me — calm me — pour thy healing Balm Eliza, into the sorest of hearts' (p. 180).

The women's 'submission in terms of money and sex' derives from the fact that Yorick's paternalistic behaviour is coloured by stereotypical male desires.[34] Women are further instrumentalized in that they are the objects of Yorick's sexual fantasies or are forced into sexualized relationships by him. His search for social intercourse is so unremitting that it always includes the possibility of promiscuity: Yorick's behaviour with women is a 'sexualized version of the sentimental traveler's project', as Judith Frank puts it.[35] This sexualized version finds its expression/illustration in the polysemic use of the word 'connection'. It acquires sentimental connotations when it appears in the pathetic context of *The Journal to Eliza*, when Yorick reminisces his meeting with Eliza and laments having to leave the 'Place [London] where my Connection with my dear dear Eliza began' (p. 155), while the connotations are clearly sexual in the Marquesina di F*** episode: 'the connection which arose out of that translation, gave me more pleasure than any one I had the honour to make in Italy' (pp. 47-8).[36] The two sets of connotations are brought together in the diatribe against un-sentimental travellers who like

> Mundungus, with an immense fortune made the whole tour [...] without one generous connection and pleasurable anecdote to tell of; but he had travell'd straight on looking neither to his right nor to his right hand of his left, lest Love or Pity should seduce him out of his road. (p. 24)

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[34] Rabb, p. 550.
[35] Frank, p. 97.
[36] 'La Fleur had a heart made for society; and, to speak the truth of him let as few occasions slip him as his master – so that some how or other; but how – heaven knows – he had connected himself with the *demoiselle* upon the landing of the stair-case' (p. 85).

These few lines perfectly encapsulate the nature of Yorick's journey and of his intrinsically mixed feelings: the sentimental traveller's encounters are motivated by love as much as pity; the two cannot be dissociated, as is confirmed by the use of 'generous' and 'pleasurable' in a parallel adjectival positioning. The lustful temptation of the man of feeling ensues from the fact that physical contact not only expresses emotions (generosity, pity) but also generates pleasurable sensations. It is the physical contact, the touching of the hands, which triggers/arouses Yorick's sexual interest in the Lady from Brussels: 'she gave me her hand [...] and as I led her on, I felt a pleasurable ductility about her' (p. 14). Yorick, giving a sentimental slant to the episode, starts by presenting his sensation of pleasure as a feeling of benevolence ('I felt benevolence for her'), but the final remark by drawing attention to a detail which would seem rather anodyne, the proximity of their faces ('was I left alone with the lady with her hand in mine, and with our faces both turned *closer to the door of the Remise than that was absolutely necessary*' (p. 15, my emphasis)), clearly gives a different colour to the whole scene. The relation with the Lady is further sexualized through the presence of a transitional object which acts as a mediation in the contact. In that scene contact is made through the gloves whose obliqueness, since they cover the flesh, eroticizes the situation.[37] In the scene with the '*fille de chambre*', the girl's purse works as a transitional object which facilitates direct contact, while in the

[37] 'She had a black pair of silk gloves open only at the thumb and two fore-fingers' (p. 13).

Moulines episode it is Yorick's handkerchief.[38] Like the Madame de L***, though 'not critically handsome' (p. 14), Maria is sexually extremely attractive.[39] In '*A Sentimental Journey* and the Syntax of Things', Martin Battestin argues that 'the episode of the *fille de chambre* has a counterpart in Yorick's quite different relationship with Maria of Moulines. Sitting close by her side, his feelings are those of compassion not desire, the purity of his affection, untainted by any baser motive'.[40] I disagree with that statement in so far as, as I have already mentioned, despite the presence of many biblical allusions and the use of filial images, Yorick's feelings towards Maria are not as religious as he or Battestin would have us to believe. I would however agree with Battestin that after the Moulines episode, when Yorick encounters the old man and his family, he experiences a genuine sentimental epiphany ('The Supper', 'The Grace') 'the instrument of his sensibilities has been more finely tuned, his sexual epicureanism transmuted into the higher delights of a general and disinterested benevolence'.[41] But Maria's portrait leaves no doubt as to how Yorick considers her:

> Maria, tho' not tall, was nevertheless of the first order of fine forms – affliction had touch'd her looks with something that was scarce earthly – still she was feminine – and so much was there about her of all the heart wishes, or the eye looks for in

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[38] Battestin remarks that 'the essentially sexual nature of their interest in each other is obliquely symbolized by the purse she has made to hold his crown' (p. 233).
'I held it [the purse] ten minutes with the back of my hand resting upon her lap' (p. 78).
[39] Yorick describes Madame de L***'s face as 'a face of about six and twenty – of a clear transparent brown, simply set off without rouge or powder – it was not critically handsome, but there was that in it, which in the frame of mind I was in, which attached me much more to it – it was interesting' (pp. 14-5).
[40] Martin Battestin, '*A Sentimental Journey* and the Syntax of Things', p. 235.
[41] Battestin, p. 235.

> woman [...] but Maria should lay in my bosom, and be unto me as a daughter. (p. 98)

We already noted that the whole Moulines episode, as the last sentence shows, is saturated with biblical allusions. Now we can see more clearly to what use they are put.

What Yorick tries to achieve is to sublimate his sexual desire by adopting, here a religious motif, or in the case of other female encounters - because this is a recurrent pattern - a medical discourse.[42] Initially guided by his lust to provoke the meeting with the grisset Yorick seems to chose the moment when the grisset becomes almost too compliant with his flirtatious behaviour, that is 'l'instant même où le marivaudage risque de ne plus être contenu dans les limites bienséantes de l'échange' [the very moment when gallantries run the risk of breaking the boundaries of proper conversation], to recoil and to abandon 'son personnage d'homme de désir pour en assumer un autre [...] celui de médecin' [his persona of desiring man and take on that of doctor].[43] Yorick's attempt to fight the temptations of the flesh takes the form of the reduction of the grisset's body to the pulse of an artery: its transformation from a desirable body to a body in need of medical attention. The moment when the grisset takes control of the interaction by detaining him in the shop ('– *Attendez!*, said she, laying her hand upon my arm to detain me' (p. 43)), is the moment he chooses to turn his covetous gaze into a

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[42] This is clearly the case where Madame de L*** and the *fille de chambre* are concerned.

[43] Denizot, p. 159.
Yorick's encounter with the grisset is reconstructed by him as a consequence of his caring nature for others: 'I had given a cast with my eye into half a dozen shops as I came along in search of a

medical one. It is not surprising to find him engaging in such a kind of activity since it also allows for a certain measure of ambiguity. From a more general perspective, the intertextual references to *The Journal to Eliza*, with its protestations of fidelity to one woman, seem to be part of a literary and sentimental sublimation: it is as if the references to this sentimental effusion were used by the anxious narrator of *A Sentimental Journey*, conscious of the impropriety of his behaviour, to confer respectability upon his narrative. But such efforts are not successful. If we consider each scene as it appears in the chronological sequence we see that each sublimation attempt is followed by another scene with a strong erotic charge. A case in point is 'The Case of Delicacy' which provides an ambiguous and possibly bawdy conclusion to the text and follows the Bourbonnois sentimental epiphany already mentioned.

To return to the grisset's episode, his attempt to sublimate his sexual interest for the young woman fails when Yorick finds another pretext to stay longer in her presence: he suddenly realises that he needs a pair of gloves. '*A propos*, said I; I want a couple of pair myself' (p. 45). Here the italics clearly indicate the bad faith of the utterance. Yorick once again transforms the terms of the relationship he has with the young woman: driven by his desires he engages both of them into a commercial intercourse. Yorick is the perfect representative of a paternalistic system which imposes social interaction governed by the imperatives of sex and money.

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face not likely to be disordered by such an interruption; till at last, this hitting my fancy, I had walked in.' (p. 42).

Robert Markley remarks that Yorick's benevolence is dramatized in his giving his money away. Yorick's relations with women are all 'cast in a language that is explicitly mercantile' and seen in terms of personal advantage.[44] His relationship with the Lady from Brussels is described in terms of gain and loss: gain and loss of her hand, of physical contact which has strong sexual implications in the scene: 'I was mortified with the loss of her hand' (p. 15).[45]

The commercial (in the financial sense) and the sexual are conflated in the *fille de chambre* episode. Like Chester who meets Lucie at Mrs Yielding's (a milliner) Yorick meets a young woman at a bookseller's. Chester's view that Lucie is a commodity that can be bought (just like the lace that Yielding sells him) is unambiguous. As Lucie refuses to appear in front of him, Chester reiterates the price he wants for her:

> Vous croyez, toi en me la faisant chercher, elle en se cachant, que je la payerai plus cher. Tu te trompes, mon cœur, j'ai fixé le prix que j'y veux mettre ; et n'en donnerai pas un shilling de plus. (p. 81)
>
> [you believe that if you make me look for her, she believes that if she hides herself, I will pay more for her. You are mistaken, my dear, I have fixed the price that I want to pay, and I won't pay a shilling more.]

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[44] Robert Markley, 'Sentimentality as Performance: Shaftesbury, Sterne, and the Theatrics of Virtue', in *The New Eighteenth-Century. Theory, Politics, English Literature*, ed. by Felicity Nussbaum and Laura Brown (London: Methuen, 1987), pp. 210-30 (p. 210).

[45] 'In a very few seconds she laid her hand upon the cuff of my coat, in order to finish her reply; so some way or other, God knows how, I regained my situation' (p. 16).

On top of a sum of money, everything that Chester promises to Lucie in exchange for herself has a monetary value.[46] Yorick's attentions to the girl are not as aggressively overt because he gives her a lesson in morals and, as is often the case, he translates the scene in terms of benevolence and sympathy: ''Tis sweet to feel by what fine-spun threads our affections are drawn together' (p. 57), but what he does boils down to paying for the girl's favours:

> If it is a good one [heart], 'tis pity it should be stolen: 'tis a little treasure to thee, and gives a better air to your face, than if it was dress'd out with pearls.
>
> The young girl listened with a submissive attention, holding her sattin purse by its ribband in her hand all the time – 'Tis a very small one, said I, taking hold of the bottom of it – she held it towards me – and there is very little in it my dear, said I; but be but as good as thou art handsome, and heaven will fill it: I had a parcel of crowns in my hand to pay for Shakespear; and as she had let go the purse entirely, I put a single one in; and tying up the ribband in a bow-knot, returned it to her.
>
> The young girl made me more a humble courtesy than a low one – 'twas one of those quiet, thankful sinkings where the spirit bows itself down – the body does no more than tell it. I never gave a girl a crown in my life that gave me half the pleasure. (pp. 55-56)

With the possible sexual innuendo of 'purse' in mind the extract takes on a whole different meaning. Yorick is here mimicking the aristocratic attitude of a Chester with a social inferior of the female sex. Yorick does not promise palaces

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[46] 'Venez prendre possession du palais que je vous ai préparé, et où avec mille guinées de rente, je ne vous laisserai ni bijoux, ni parures, ni plaisirs à désirer' [Come and take possession of the palace I have prepared for you and where, with an annuity of a thousand guineas, I shall make sure that you will not be lack jewellery, finery and pleasures] (p. 82).

like Chester but hints at the fact that if she was obedient she could get more money. The control over the other is here more subtle and more gentle, but there is nonetheless the suggestion that Yorick could bring her round to doing what he wants; and indeed the girl comes back to him in the chapters entitled 'The Temptation' and 'The Conquest'.

Like Yorick in *A Sentimental Journey*, Villars in *Evelina* embodies the shortcomings of the paternalistic and benevolent model. In Villars's case it does not transpire in lewd behaviour but in extreme possessiveness towards the women he is in charge of (the same pattern is repeated from mother to daughter, from Miss Evelyn to Evelina).

Villars's pressure on Evelina is probably the mildest type of aggression against women which is catalogued by Burney. Ranging from psychological to physical aggression, women are constantly confronted with one type of violence or another. Burney's critique of male advantage is therefore much more forceful than the one produced by Riccoboni in *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby*. Unlike Evelina, Juliette is never in any real danger and there is only one real moment of sexual violence in the narrative (Ossery's lapse). Both young women find themselves in the confined space of a coach, but Willoughby is certainly the more dangerous and predatory of the two men involved.[47]

[47] Put in parallel with *Evelina* Antoinette Sol's (ultra-feminist) reading of the coach scene and of Sir Henry's behaviour in *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby* does not appear as very valid.

Yorick and Villars, because of their lewd or possessive behaviour, repeat the libertine scenario which valorises domination and exploitation. The sentimental discourse is in a way endorsing the other discourse as is also shown in *Les Heureux Orphelins* through the depiction of the sentimental man's fault. But this is not just a one way movement and *Les Heureux Orphelins* also shows the libertine endorsing the other discourse and voicing a certain nostalgia for sentiment. Each discourse allows the eruption of the other voice.

With Rutland, the virtuous and humane man of feeling, the first section of *Les Heureux Orphelins* proposes, a model of male virtue which is momentarily endangered by a libertine impulse. It charts in great detail the transformation of Rutland's paternal and benevolent feeling based on mutuality and respect for Lucie, his ward, into a ruinous and intense amorous passion which completely dominates him. Unlike the female discourse of passion Rutland's discourse is peppered with references to violence. Although 'trop tendrement épris pour ne pas être fort délicat' (p. 56) [too tenderly in love not to be extremely delicate] he nonetheless plans to use force to reduce Lucie to his will: 'tout employer pour y [his passion] rendre Lucie sensible' (p. 56).[48] Rutland's passion reaches its paroxysm and its end in his resorting to violence and Lucie's attempted rape. The account of his fateful attempt hinges on the moment when Rutland succumbs to

[48] Delicacy or the lack of it is what distinguishes the libertine from the man of feeling. Suffolk's failure to take Chester's 'manque de délicatesse' [lack of consideration] (p. 129) as an indication of his real nature is what partly causes her downfall. Rutland expresses his desire to be loved by Lucie in agonistic terms. He mentions for instance the 'nouvelles tentatives qu'il méditait sur le cœur de Lucie' [the new attempts he plotted against Lucie's heart] (p. 59).

the impulses of his senses and unable to resist he gives in to the 'égarement de sa raison':

> '[I]l se trouva dans un de ces moments de délire où tout cède à la passion [...]. Encouragé par le silence de la nuit, emporté par ses désirs, peut-être, sans savoir bien lui-même ce qu'il voulait, il l'entraîna sous un berceau qui était au bout de son jardin, et dont l'obscurité semblait faite pour favoriser le crime que la violence de son amour et l'égarement de sa raison allait lui faire commettre. Là, transporté, et ne prenant plus de conseil que de ses désirs, il saisit Lucie avec une fureur qu'elle n'avait encore ni crainte ni éprouvée de sa part [...].' (p. 67)

> [Rutland found himself in one of those delirious moments when everything gives in to passion. Encouraged by the silence of the night, carried away by his desires, perhaps without really knowing himself what he wanted, he took her to a bower at the end of the garden where the darkness adequately facilitated the crime that his violent love and the unsettling of his reason were going to make him commit. There, carried away and only listening to his desires, he took hold of Lucie with a fury that she had never yet feared or experienced from him.]

Although the text makes it clear that the existence of male virtue is possible it thus also shows the limits of such a model of sociability by pointing at the dangers of excess. There are in the text traces of a Humean critique of the excesses of passion: an amorous passion which leads the man of feeling to act momentarily like a libertine.[49] There is no place in the libertine system for moral

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[49] 'Men of such lively passions [a certain *delicacy of* passion which makes them extremely sensible to all the accidents of life] are apt to be transported beyond all bounds of prudence and discretion , and to take false steps in the conduct of life, which are often irretrievable.' David

judgements because reason enjoys absolute authority and has purely rational qualities. The works of the Moral Sense philosophers tell us that it is feeling, and not reason, which is necessarily the primary and initial source of all moral judgements, but far from being two completely opposite and independent faculties sentiment and reason always need to concur in moral decisions: a typical human moral sentiment is necessarily a reasonable feeling. Rutland does not act in a moral way because his feelings have not passed through the filter of reason.

The momentary lapse of the sentimental man is echoed in the text by a sentimental temptation in the discourse of the libertine. Fractures in his discourse of verbal mastery are created by a resurgence of the 'biological' in the form of the passions. Chester does occasionally admit to being 'un peu déconcerté' [slightly confounded] (p. 193), but there is otherwise hardly any place in his discourse of domination for doubts, humility or surprise. The one instance when Suffolk manages to destabilise him significantly is when she proposes to him using (unwittingly) his own language and actually asks him to declare the reciprocity of sentiment that he abhors so much and which is her ideal: 'libre de faire un choix, et de me donner un maître, c'est vous que mon cœur a choisi pour régner éternellement sur moi' [free to make a choice and chose a master for myself, it is you that my heart has chosen to reign eternally over me] (p. 260).

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Hume, *Selected Essays*, ed. by Stephen Copley and Andrew Edgar (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 11.

Nancy K. Miller reminds us that the libertine paradigm of multiple pleasure only makes sense against its sentimental belief in women's singular and redemptive virtue.[50] As a consequence Chester shows his appreciation of Suffolk's virtues (her sensibility, her dignity, her honesty) and beauty (p. 160). Chester recognises that Suffolk's feelings are far superior to the emotional displays of someone like Madame de Rindsey for whom he feels only contempt. But if he admits that she has forced his respect, if he acknowledges the power of her virtue ('j'ai été forcé de l'estimer autant que je méprisais Madame de Rindsey.' [I was forced to esteem her as much as I despised Madame de Rindsey] (p. 235)) he also says that, in the end, he treated her like he treated Madame de Rindsey: 'le sort de l'une n'en a pas pas moins été le sort de l'autre' [the fate of the one has nonetheless been the fate of the other] (p. 235). He finds the same sensual pleasure with her and not more: 'si mes sens ont rendu justice aux charmes de Madame de Suffolk, mon cœur n'en a pas été moins inaccessible à ses vertus' [if my senses have done justice to Madame de Suffolk's charms, my heart has nonetheless been untouched by her virtues] (p. 235).

Even if it is just fleetingly, a Chester who is capable of being influenced by a virtuous woman can be glimpsed in this otherwise controlled and monolithic rhetoric of domination. Letter seven in particular shows us the libertine indulging in a sentimental moment: in the course of several pages Chester expresses his longing for innocence and sentiment in a nostalgic evocation of his first amorous experiences and of 'un naturel perdu par trop de conscience, par trop

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[50] Miller, p. 94.

d'expérience' [a naturalness lost to too much self-consciousness and experience].[51] Lamenting the knowledge he has acquired and which prevents him from knowing happiness he appropriates the language of the woman of feeling: the pre-knowledge state is an 'agréable désordre' [pleasant disorder] compared to the 'cruelle tranquillité' [cruel calm] in which he now is and he uses terms and phrases like 'éprouver tant de transports' [to feel so many emotions], 'bonheur d'en aimer davantage' [happiness of loving more] (pp. 233-35).

One could object that this recourse to sentimental vocabulary is only part of the libertine's usual strategic use of linguistic ambiguity and that this longing for sentiment appears in a speech framed by libertine preoccupations (preoccupation with knowledge, etc.).[52] But letter seven illustrates more the 'return of the repressed' than any rhetoric of domination and shows a genuinely profound longing for sentiment which leads him to challenge the social values of his world:

> Nous avons connu de l'amour tout, hors ses plaisirs: nous n'avons donc pas été raisonnables, et sûrement nous n'avons pas été heureux. Ne nous sommes-nous pas trompés à l'idée que nous nous sommes faite du bonheur et de la gloire? (p. 235).

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[51] Jean Dagen, 'Crébillon ou l'illusion de l'intériorité', in *Songe, illusion, égarement dans les romans de Crébillon*, ed. by Jean Sgard (Grenoble: ELLUG, 1996), pp. 135-53 (p. 149).
Chester's questioning of the value of knowledge and his critique of the 'âge des lumières' go much further than Meilcour's in *Les Egarements du cœur et de l'esprit*: 'Ce qu'on appelle l'usage du monde ne nous ren[d] plus éclairés que parce qu'il nous a plus corrompus.' [the ways of the world, as they are called, enlighten us more only in so far as they have made us more corrupted] (*Les Egarements du cœur et de l'esprit*, p. 187).

[52] Chester exploits the linguistic ambiguity of the verb 's'unir' when to Suffolk's straightforward proposal of marriage ('Il ne tenait qu'à moi de m'unir pour jamais à ce que j'aimais avec tant de passion' [it only depended on me to be joined forever with what I loved with so much passion] (p. 124)) he answers: 'Ne peut-on donc s'unir à ce que l'on trouve aimable sans l'épouser?' [Is it not possible to come together with what one finds likeable without getting married?] (p. 141).

> [We have known everything that pertains to love except its pleasures. We have therefore not been sensible and we surely have not been happy. Have we not made a mistake as to the idea we had of happiness and glory?]

When Chester attempts to qualify and dismiss this sentimental outburst his justification is made with concepts (prejudice, suspicion) which are totally opposed to the self-image he has projected throughout the text: 'le préjugé, la défiance, l'orgueil l'ont emporté sur l'évidence même' [prejudice, distrust, pride have prevailed over the obvious] (p. 235). Chester even goes as far as admitting the possibility of experiencing amorous passion: 'ce sentiment qu'elle était si digne d'inspirer, et que mon orgueil peut-être lui refusait encore plus que mon cœur' [this feeling that she was so worthy of inspiring and that my pride refused her perhaps even more than my heart] (p. 264).

Can this eruption be the sign of a more profound longing for sentiment? And is not Chester's narrative a fiction of total mastery and self-control? Chester is after all constructing himself in this narrative, and moreover doing it in a form which in the French tradition is specifically feminine: the epistolary form. He presents himself as a writer producing an exemplary story, which, of course, does not necessarily imply that it is a fiction ('C'est le cœur que je développe, son délire particulier, le manège de la vanité, [...] que j'expose à vos yeux' [I analyse the heart, its particular workings, I show you the games of vanity] (p. 179)). But he is not writing a memoir-novel: he is writing letters which he admits may never

reach their addressee: 'je vous écrirai jusqu'à ce que j'aie trouvé une occasion sûre pour vous faire remettre mes lettres, il se pourra bien que vous les receviez toutes à la fois' [I shall write to you until I have found a secure way of sending them to you. It is therefore possible that they reach all at once] (p. 165). As it happens the letters never reach the French Duke, their intended reader, but are intercepted by the Queen and read by Madame de Suffolk. Since even this possibility had been envisaged by Chester ('si quelqu'autre que vous, mon cher duc, lisait mon histoire' [If someone else, my dear Duke, were to read my story] (p. 177)), the content of the letters appears to us in another light. If the intended reader was in reality Madame de Suffolk might he not have overemphasised his cruelty, his expertise. This utterly savage and brutal persona might have been created to hide a more gentle side of Chester.

Such statements and inconsistencies well and truly show the libertine opening a space for the sentimental other in his own discourse. The text transcends its own generic categorisations by allowing the eruption of the other, in what otherwise seems to be the dominant discourse. Although the libertine voice appears, in the end, as the dominant voice, mainly for structural reasons, it is a voice which is much more hybrid than the prevalent critical discourse allows it to be. The structure of the text contributes to the domination of the male voice. Since there is no return to the narrative frame the last word is effectively left to Chester. The visible imbalance between the male and the female voice can be explained by the fact that the utterance delegated to Suffolk at the end of the second is

reappropriated. Chester's seventh letter shows us the sentimental other clearly erupting in the libertine discourse and the text certainly creates a large space for sentimental love and sociability in what is supposedly a libertine text. Through the voices of Suffolk and Rutland a strong and not too compromised sentimental voice is constructed displacing thus the readerly temptation, or at least making it unstable.

We have seen that *Les Heureux Orphelins, A Sentimental Journey, Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby* and *Evelina* all have in common the fact that they represent in a way or another the violence which is inflicted upon women in a patriarchal society. They also have in common the fact that they contain representations of feminine strategies to resist aggression.

In *A Sentimental Journey* Yorick is taken at his own game by the grisset who turns out to be a better reader of people than he is. She unravels the lustful character that Yorick is and uses her sexual power to take advantage of the commercial situation that he has instigated.[53] The grisset by playing the man at his own game is in a way an exception amongst the women represented in the texts: they side together to refuse an economy based on a solidarity between men. The texts propose images of female benefaction (Suffolk-Lucie) or female friendship (Juliette-Henriette) as an answer to the domination of male desire that treats women as interchangeable commodities, and constitutes to use Ros Ballaster's

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[53] 'I found I lost considerably in every attack [...] [the grisset looked] with such penetration, that she look'd into my very heart and reins – It may seem strange, but I could actually feel she did.' (p. 45)

words 'a series of metonymical displacements of woman for woman'.[54] The texts also show women taking or affirming their independence. Lucie stands her ground against Chester when he tries to buy her favours in the milliner's shop. Unlike Madame de Suffolk she refuses to endorse the model of social interaction imposed by the libertine. As for Burney, she presents a young woman who becomes morally independent and repudiates 'subservient fictions about males'.[55] Yet despite such positive representations the picture is not totally satisfactory because other women are still subservient to violent men: Mrs Mirvan and Madame de Suffolk are proof of that if needs be.

From such an overview one could conclude that all the texts propose the same type of resistance to the dominant patriarchal model. In fact substantial differences can be identified between the texts that only *represent* resistance strategies and those which *enact* such strategies.

On the level of representation Burney puts in place a textual strategy which is based on displacement: by turning scenes of abuse of power into scenes of broad physical comedy she deactivates the violence contained in those scenes.

Riccoboni's textual strategy is one of polite resistance: it reverses the novelistic topos of the woman as enigma, into the man as enigma (the virtuous man of feeling who is momentarily endangered by a libertine impulse) before recuperating him back into the narrative's happy ending. Juliette does not sacrifice

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[54] Ros Ballaster, *Seductive Forms: Women's Amatory Fiction from 1684 to 1740* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 175.
[55] Margaret A. Doody, *Frances Burney: The Life in the Works* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988), p. 46.

her feminine nature, does not stifle her emotions by silencing herself. She rather does the reverse in that she, and therefore Riccoboni, never allows the voice of the other to dominate hers and never allows it without having it passing through the filter of her own text.

## Chapter 4 - Epistolarity and Power Relations

The aim of this chapter is to examine the ways in which, in *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby* and *Les Heureux Orphelins*, the libertine and the woman of feeling use the epistolary form in their negotiations of power relations.

We have seen how different texts can deal with corporeality in a converging way as they stage the oscillation of the body between the option of transparency and truthfulness and that of dissimulation and acting. *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby* and *Les Heureux Orphelins* address through the narrative of their main female character the 'caractère indiscernable de la sincérité et de l'hypocrisie' [the indistinguishable nature of sincerity and hypocrisy].[1] Both texts contain retrospective denunciations, in Juliette's letters to Henriette and in Madame de Suffolk's confession to Lucie, of the deceptive nature of men.[2] We

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[1] Patrick Wald-Lasowski, 'Le Désir et la civilité dans l'œuvre de Crébillon', *Revue des Sciences Humaines*, 166 (1977), 281-94 (p. 288).

[2] 'Cet air, doux et modeste qui, de tous ses agréments, était celui qui m'avait frappée le plus, parce qu'il avait semblé me promettre plus de sensibilité et de reconnaissance de sa part, cachait l'âme la plus fourbe, la plus impénétrable au sentiment, un esprit faux, et la vanité du monde la plus puérile, et en même temps la plus dangereuse.' [This gentle and modest look which amongst all of his charms had struck me the most, because it had seemed to promise more sensibility and gratitude from him, hid the most untouchable by feelings and treacherous soul; a deceitful mind and the most puerile and at the same time the most dangerous pride in the world.] (*Les Heureux Orphelins*, p. 135).
'Je revois cette image... Combien l'âme que je croyais à cet ingrat avait embelli ces traits! Quelle parfaite créature il offrait à mes yeux! Ah pourquoi! pourquoi a-t-il déchiré ce voile aimable qui me cachait ses vices, sa fausseté?... Tant de candeur dans cette physionomie et tant de perfidie, d'ingratitude dans ce cœur!...' [I picture him again... How the soul I thought this ungrateful man possessed had embellished his face! What a perfect creature he offered to my eyes! Oh why! why has he torn this pleasant veil that used to hide his vices and his duplicity from me?... So much naïvety in this face and so much perfidy and ungratefulness in this heart!...] (*Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby*, p. 21).

realize that the two women are actually equally mistaken in their appreciation of their lovers when the story first told in a female voice is retold in the men's words. When Madame de Suffolk confides in Lucie she has not yet read the 'histoire secrète du comte de Chester' which occupies the third and fourth parts of the text, she is still to discover the full extent of Chester's perfidy. In the same way the 'histoire de mylord d'Ossery', in which he reveals the extent of his love, describes its growth and discloses the series of events that led him to abandon the woman he loved, appears as a final revelation - it precedes the last six letters which are all very brief - before the happy resolution. The revelation is that Ossery is a 'cœur sensible et vertueux' [a sensitive and virtuous man] (p. 162) who has known one moment of weakness.[3] The unstable nature of the signs emanating from the body is what establishes a connection between the two men. They produce and address the same signs to the women of feeling with whom they interact. The eyes expressing the emotions, the shed and exchanged tears, the touching and kissing of hands constitute the basic elements in the body language both display. But the connection goes further than the display of genuine or mastered, but in the end, similar signs. The attraction for the other discourse is apparent in each text. The man of feeling momentarily relinquishes all control over his senses and behaves in a way that is advocated by a libertine like Chester. Ossery abuses the young and innocent Jenny (just out of a convent) because for, one moment, his senses take control over his rational and sensible self:

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[3] In her introduction to *Lettres de Mistriss Fanni Butlerd* Joan Hinde Stewart remarks that most of Riccoboni's novels present 'sinon la perfidie du moins la faiblesse de l'homme.' [if not the treachery at least the weakness of men]. Marie-Jeanne Riccoboni, *Lettres de Mistriss Fanni Butlerd*, ed. by Joan Hinde Stewart (Genève: Droz, 1979), p. xxvi.

L'excès de son [Jenny's] enjouement me fit une impression extraordinaire; il m'enhardit: l'égarement de ma raison passa jusqu'à mon cœur. Livré tout entier à mes sens, j'oubliai mon amour, ma probité; des lois qui m'avaient toujours parues sacrées [...]. Une fille respectable ne me parut dans cet instant qu'une femme offerte à mes désirs, à cette passion grossière qu'allume le seul instinct. (p. 149)[4]

[Her excessive liveliness had an extraordinary effect on me; I felt emboldened by it: the unsettling of my mind spread to my heart. Overwhelmed by my senses, I forgot my love, my integrity and laws which had always seem sacred to me. A respectable girl appeared to me, in that moment, as no more than a woman exposed to my desires, to this base passion that is only kindled by instincts.]

This declaration echoes one of the central principles in Chester's view of human relations. He recommends men to learn 'à ne nous pas faire un objet de passion de ce que la nature [...] a voulu, sans doute, qui ne fût pour nous qu'un plaisir' [not to

[4] The first part of *Les Heureux Orphelins* provides us with a double of Ossery in the person of Rutland, the figure of the benevolent benefactor who falls madly in love with his protégée Lucie and makes an attempt on her virtue. The account of the fatal attempt and of the incapacity to resist to the senses reminds us of Ossery's fateful encounter with Jenny with the only difference that there is no passionate love on Ossery's part.
'[...] Moins [Rutland] avait de sujets d'espérer, plus il sentait croître son amour [...]' [The less [Rutland] had reasons to hope, the more he felt his love grow] (*Les Heureux Orphelins,* p. 66).
'[I]l se trouva dans un de ces moments de délire où tout cède à la passion [...]. Encouragé par le silence de la nuit, emporté par ses désirs, peut-être, sans savoir bien lui-même ce qu'il voulait, il l'entraîna sous un berceau qui était au bout de son jardin, et dont l'obscurité semblait faite pour favoriser le crime que la violence de son amour et l'égarement de sa raison allait lui faire commettre. Là, transporté, et ne prenant plus de conseil que de ses désirs, il saisit Lucie avec une fureur qu'elle n'avait encore ni crainte ni éprouvée de sa part [...].' [Rutland found himself in one of those delirious moments when everything gives in to passion. Encouraged by the silence of the night, carried away by his desires, perhaps without really knowing himself what he wanted, he took her to a bower at the end of the garden where the darkness adequately facilitated the crime that his violent love and the unsettling of his reason were going to make him commit. There, carried away and only listening to his desires, he took hold of Lucie with a fury that she had never yet feared or experienced from him.] (*Les Heureux Orphelins,* p. 67).

feel passion for an object that nature has intended only for our pleasure] (p. 178). In his system the intellectual pleasure of controlling the other and protecting one's reputation is complimented by sensual satisfaction.

Ossery's incapacity to resist the urge of his senses fits well in Riccoboni's view of men: 'un homme extrêmement pervers est aussi rare dans la société qu'un homme extrêmement vertueux' [an extremely perverse man is in society as rare as an extremely virtuous one].[5] Chester's nostalgic attraction for a prelapsarian sentimental time also fits the scenario. His seventh letter begins with a long digression in which is expressed his longing for innocence and sentiment in a melancholy evocation of his past. Recalling the time of his first innocent amorous experiences he laments its loss. He hankers for the pre-knowledge state, in which he claims, he felt happiness. He would be prepared to exchange the 'cruelle tranquillité' [cruel calm] in which he now is for the 'agréable désordre' [pleasant disorder] of his youth (p. 233).

> Crédulité précieuse, à laquelle j'ai dû tant de bonheur, êtes-vous donc à jamais perdue pour moi! [...]. [...] Loin de me rappeler avec peine ces temps d'ignorance où j'étais si crédule, je ne puis m'en souvenir sans une sorte de volupté. (p. 233)
>
> [Precious credulity which gave me so much happiness, have lost you forever? Far from remembering with sorrow these years of ignorance when I was so credulous, I cannot but remember them with a certain delight.]

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Let us not forget either that Rutland is based on Dorilaus in Haywood's *The Fortunate Foundlings*.

The longing for a return to his past is accompanied by a more profound longing for sentiment for he starts questioning the very principles directing his life.

> Nous avons connu de l'amour tout, hors ses plaisirs: nous n'avons donc pas été raisonnables, et sûrement nous n'avons pas été heureux. Ne nous sommes-nous pas trompés à l'idée que nous nous sommes faite du bonheur et de la gloire? En croyant nous venger des femmes, ne nous punissons-nous pas? (p. 235)
>
> [We have known everything that pertains to love except its pleasures. We have therefore not been sensible and we surely have not been happy. Have we not made a mistake as to the idea we had of happiness and glory? When we think that we are avenging ourselves of women, are we not punishing ourselves?]

Both texts show, at a diegetic level, the eruption of the other, be it sentimental or libertine, in what is otherwise the dominant discourse. The male discourses in these two texts appear as more hybrid than the female ones. As a matter of fact they rather seem to construct a strong and uncompromised female voice. I would however also suggest that it is even more the case in *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby* and that it is the generic and some textual differences between the two that make it so.

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[5] 1782 letter to Choderlos de Laclos. Quoted by Joan Hinde Stewart in *Gynographs: French Novels by Women of the Late Eighteenth Century* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), p. 81.

By conflating biographical elements of Riccoboni's life and the diegetic content of her texts most critics produce the image of a feminist writer 'avant la lettre'.[6] I would agree with Arlette André that there are some claims or remarks made by Juliette which allow us to talk of feminism, but to limit the text to its contents is very reductive especially when the form adopted is as important as it is in the case of *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby* but also of *Les Heureux Orphelins*.

The emergence of a strong female voice appealing to the complicity of the reader is more discrete in *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby* than it is in *L'Histoire du marquis de Cressy*. The sententious tone of the moralizing narrator of this third person narrative cannot be reproduced for formal reasons in *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby*. Letters are an integral part of the story of *L'Histoire du marquis de Cressy* (the reception or the loss of letters move the plot forward) but one of the more striking elements in this text is the presence of a non-negligible number of maxims.[7] In the epistolary novel the imposing authorial voice is replaced by a single one: Juliette's which takes on its assertive nature. Juliette inserts 'moral reflections, excoriations of men' in her letters to Henriette.[8] In one of these she copies a letter addressed to Milord Carlile in which she stands for her decision to flee from Ossery and to refuse to see him again. She rebukes his

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[6] This is the position adopted by Arlette André, Patrick Fein, Colette Piau, Colette Cazenobe, Olga B. Cragg and more recently Mireille Flaux.
Colette Piau talks of 'discours "au féminin" et "au masculin"' [feminine and masculine discourse] in 'L'Ecriture féminine? A propos de Marie-Jeanne Riccoboni', *Dix-huitième siècle*, 16 (1984), 369-386 (p. 369).

criticism of her attitude by criticizing in turn men's usurpation of power and denouncing the social inequality of the sexes:

> Quel orgueil vous persuade que vous pouvez punir quand vous croyez que je dois pardonner? Ne me donnez point des préjugés pour des lois, Milord, ni l'usurpation comme un titre; le temps et la possession affermissent le pouvoir de l'injuste, mais ne le rendent jamais légitime. (p. 46)
>
> [What pride convinces you that you may punish when you believe that I must forgive? My lord, do not pass a prejudice off as a law, nor an usurpation as the rightful possession of a title. Time and ownership may strengthen the power of those who are unjust but never make it legitimate.]

Such moments of contestation are not rare in the text but they also are counterbalanced by 'an undertone of violence'.[9] In 'Violence and Persecution in the Drawing-Room', Antoinette Sol argues that the possibility of an independent voice is compromised because Juliette is under the constant pressure of an oppressive agent, Sir Henry, to confine her physically or to stifle her voice. Sir Henry is often described invading Juliette's space and several letters even bear the marks of such invasions: 'Mais on entre... qui est-ce?... Eh qui pourrait-ce être que Sir Henry?... Mais qui m'assujettit donc aux importunités de Sir Henry?' [But someone is coming in... who is it?... Who could it be apart from Sir Henry?... But

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[7] Olga B. Cragg gives a list in her edition of *L'Histoire du marquis de Cressy*, *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 266 (1989), pp. 109-113.
[8] Stewart, p. 131.

who makes me subject thus to Sir Henry's importunities?] (p. 25). Juliette's subjection is doubly finalized when Ossery takes over the writing, for the space of a letter, to announce their union to Juliette's epistolary companion and rejoice in the possession of a wife: 'Elle est à moi, pour jamais à moi! Plus de Milady Catesby; c'est ma femme, mon amie, ma maîtresse [...]' [She is mine, forever mine! Lady Catesby is no more. She is my wife, my friend, my mistress] (p. 173). Juliette then resumes her correspondence but under a different name. Juliette's journey to understanding and forgiveness therefore ends in a rather conformist way (compared to *L'Histoire du marquis de Cressy* or *Lettres de Mistriss Fanni Butlerd*) with a happy ending in marital bliss which is also accompanied by a loss of identity and of independence. What I would add is that the autonomy which is apparently completely lost if we concentrate solely on the diegetic contents is re-established at the paratextual level. Sol's demonstration aimed at proving that no female voice emerges for the text. I would argue on the contrary that Juliette is empowered by the text because it is not framed by any editorial apparatus. The total absence of a male regulating instance who, as is the practice in most epistolary fictions, justifies the choice of letters, explains their provenance, controls the publication of these private messages, actually, liberates Juliette's voice. The message which is sent out is clearly one of feminine empowerment.

The signals sent out to the reader by *Les Heureux Orphelins* are not as clear. If the feminine voice is given some space it is also much more curtailed than

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[9] Antoinette Sol, 'Violence and Persecution in the Drawing-Room: Subversive Textual Strategies in Riccoboni's *Miss Juliette Catesby*', in *Altered Writings: Female Eighteenth-Century French*

in *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby*. Structurally the text allows sentiment to make its case: the first half is under the sign of sentiment and virtue and Chester's libertine narrative is actually embedded in the second part (our reading of Chester's story corresponds to Madame de Suffolk's reading of it). The first two parts are two sentimental mini-narratives: the story of the lapse of a benevolent benefactor told in the third person, the story of the deception of a woman of feeling by her unfeeling lover told in the first person. The woman of feeling finds a friend and an audience in the person of Lucie (the victim of male oppression in the first part). The bond between the two women is established (in a reversal of the relation of beneficence) at the end of the first part that is in the part of the narrative which is under the control of an omniscient narrator. The utterance is then delegated to Madame de Suffolk who tells her side of the story. In this confession the excoriations of men that we found in Juliette's letters appear in retrospective comments that punctuate her narrative and are aimed more particularly at Chester. But this diegetic empowerment is annulled in two ways. First the fact that we learn of the outcome of Chester's project through her cannot but be significant. Her narrative is actually triggered by her encounter with Chester in the company of Madame de Pembrook. By relating what Chester leaves in suspension in his letters Madame de Suffolk is providing a relay to the voice of the male libertine. Secondly the utterance which had been delegated to the female voice is reappropriated at the end of the second part by the third person narrator (he reappears on page 147). So that Madame de Suffolk's confession is in effect

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*Authors Reinterpreted*, ed. by Servanne Woodward (London, Ont.: Mestengo Press, 1997), p. 66.

framed by the omniscient male narrative voice.[10] The apparent independence of expression given to Madame de Suffolk is insidiously cancelled out by the narrative structure. If the woman is not given the chance of a fully independent voice the same constraints do not seem to be applied to Chester's male version of the confession.

The third and fourth part of *Les Heureux Orphelins* are made up by the eight letters Chester addresses to the French Duke who instructed him in the ways of the world.[11] In this series of letters we read Chester's version of the events told by Madame de Suffolk in the second part. Chester therefore uses an intimate form of expression which was often 'seen as limited to the sentimental epistolary plot of feminine passion' in that period.[12] Described by Montesquieu as a genre in which 'on rend compte soi-même de sa situation actuelle, ce qui fait plus sentir les passions que tous les récits qu'on en pourrait faire' [since it is one's own account of one's current situation, the passions are rendered better than in any narrative] epistolary novels tended to be associated with women.[13] The success of the epistolary form was grounded in its capacity to capture the minute movements of

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[10] The authorial voice of the 'epître dédicatoire' by claiming the paternity of the work ('il n'en est pourtant pas moins vrai que j'ai fait un livre, et même que je vous le dédie' [it is nonetheless true that I have written a book and that I dedicate it to you] (p. 39)) identifies itself, by default as it were, with the narratorial voice of the first and second parts.

[11] 'C'est à vous, mon cher duc, c'est au soin que vous avez pris de former ma jeunesse, à vos leçons, à vos exemples, que je dois ma gloire et mes succès ; et c'est aussi bien sincèrement que je vous en fait hommage.' [It is to you my dear Duke, it is to the care you have taken to form me in my youth, to your lessons and examples, that I owe my glory and my successes; and it is therefore most sincerely that I dedicate them to you.] (p. 155).

[12] Elizabeth Heckendorn-Cook, *Epistolary Bodies: Gender and Genre in the Eighteenth-Century Republic of Letters* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 24.

[13] Montesquieu in *Réflexions* for the 1754 re-edition of the *Lettres persannes*. Quoted by Laurent Versini in *Le Roman épistolaire* (Paris: PUF, 1979), p. 66.

feeling, 'l'éveil et les vibrations de la sensibilité' [the awakening and vibrations of sensibility], and to be sincere.[14] A capacity closely associated with women who were attributed the propensity to express sentiments with the most exact words. Thus we find in the *Encyclopédie* that women are more apt to register the emotions because of the short oscillations of their cerebral fibres.[15] Such a model does not of course account for male letter writers such as Lovelace or Valmont who use the form favoured by their sentimental female correspondents. If, as some critics have suggested, women are crucial in the diffusion of the epistolary novel as a sentimental genre - and the production of female single voice epistolary novels by female writers vindicates such a statement - the form is abused and misappropriated by such male characters to achieve their aims with the women of feeling they prey on.[16] If one sees the letter as an extension of the person one can say that it carries the same 'ontological ambiguity' as the body, and it can therefore be simultaneously considered as 'the most direct, sincere, and transparent form of written communication' and as 'the most playful and potentially deceptive of forms, as a stage for rhetorical trickery.'[17] Lovelace and Valmont certainly apply such a rhetorical trickery on Clarissa and Madame de Tourvel. Such a manipulation of the form is also present in *Les Heureux Orphelins* since Chester inscribes himself in the tradition of the 'unilateral exchange' as Jean Rousset calls the most common form of the love letter novel

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[14] Jean Rousset, *Forme et signification. Essais sur les structures littéraires de Corneille à Claudel* (Paris: Corti, 1962), p. 68.
[15] Article on 'Fibre' quoted by Isabelle Landy-Houillon in her introduction to *Lettres Portugaises, Lettres d'une péruvienne et autres romans d'amour par lettres* (Paris: Flammarion, 1983), p. 19.

which only contains the letters of one correspondent.[18] What distinguishes *Clarissa* or *Les Liaisons dangereuses* from *Les Heureux Orphelins* is that the narrative progression is achieved in these two novels through genuine (if not real) letters and that the alternation of letters allows the female voice to be present throughout the text. By contrast Chester actually masquerades as a letter writer and obliterates Madame de Suffolk's voice with his narrative.

If we return to *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby* as a model of the epistolary genre it becomes more than obvious that Chester's section is more akin to memoir-writing than to letter writing. Juliette's letters are very much like what Rousset calls the 'lettre-journal' in that they are predominantly written to the moment.[19] Juliette's presence is felt with great intensity because she records her emotions and refers to the present of the writing process. The 'style toujours vrai' [always truthful style] of immediacy and directness of feeling identified by Rousset in *Lettres de Mistriss Fanni Butlerd* is also an apt description for the style of *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby*.[20] Juliette's letters are not completely devoid of any narrative drive. Prompted by a letter from Milord Carlile she goes over past events and recalls the different stages of her courtship with Ossery and what she knows of the circumstances which led to his marriage to another woman. She by the way also sends Ossery's own account of the story to her friend Henriette. The

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[16] 'Aussi les femmes jouent-elles un rôle capital dans la diffusion de ce genre sentimental.' [Thus women play a crucial part in the circulation of the sentimental genre']. Versini, *Le Roman épistolaire,* p. 59.
[17] Heckendorn-Cook, p. 17 and p. 16.
[18] Rousset, p. 78.
[19] Rousset, p. 71.

bulk of the correspondence nonetheless deals mostly with Juliette's present situation, away from London and Ossery, and present frame of mind. In the 'présent d'un texte en train de se faire' [the present of a text in the writing] the letters bear the marks of what goes on around Juliette like the exterior interruptions she is subjected to.[21] She for instance mentions and comments on the disruption caused by Sir Henry's uninvited entrance into her room, recording things as they happen:

> Voilà le maussade personnage établi dans mon cabinet; insensiblement il gagne du terrain; il est près tout près de moi... il lit presque ce que j'écris... [...] *Milord, pardon, vous permettez*... Il s'incline, soupire et reste; en vérité il reste. (p. 25)
>
> [Here is this morose character settled in my closet. He is imperceptibly gaining ground. He is close, very close to me... He reads almost everything I am writing... My lord, I beg your pardon, may I... He bows to me, sighs and stays. He actually stays.]

The description of Sir Henry's behaviour is intertwined with the expression of her feelings about it. As we can see the emotions that she voices find a linguistic and a typographical expression in the text. This is the case again in another letter:

> *Mercredi... non jeudi, à six heures du matin.*

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[20] Rousset, p. 78.
[21] Landy-Houillon, p. 29.

> Oh, ma chère Henriette, quelle agitation dans mes sens!... quel trouble dans mon âme!... je l'ai vu... il m'a parlé... c'était lui... il était au bal... oui, lui! Milord d'Ossery... (p. 135)
>
> [Wednesday... no, Thursday, at six o'clock in the morning
> Oh, my dear Henriette, what trouble in my senses!... what turmoil in my soul!... I saw him... he spoke to me... it was him... he was at the ball... yes, him! Lord d'Ossery...]

Her confusion here is translated linguistically with the mistake over the date and grammatically in an extremely visual way with the use of punctuation marks and very short sentences.

This kind of immediacy of feeling can certainly not be said to be the defining feature of Chester's letters which, for the most part, are characterised by the 'regard lointain de la vision rétrospective' [the distant look of retrospective vision].[22] They mainly consist in the telling of a story conceived of as a series of past events (which can be thoughts, feelings or facts) and not in the outpourings of someone's heart addressed to a confident. Earlier we mentioned Chester's moment of nostalgic reminiscences and self-questioning but this appears as an isolated occurrence in the narrative flow of the whole section. Moreover the addressee is no more than a pretext in *Les Heureux Orphelins*: Chester's letters do not really depend on him for their existence. The selection of events, their organisation in eight (undated) letters reveal the intent of a narratorial control. The narrative mode

of the letters being retrospective, Chester arranges the story in narrative units which therefore display none of the urgency or immediacy of epistles written to the moment. The decision to end a letter and begin a new one could therefore almost seem arbitrary. Chester shows the preoccupations of a narrator eager to please his reader when he stops the first letter which he deems already too long: 'je ne m'aperçois pas qu'insensiblement je vous en fais subir un [supplice]; je vais finir une lettre déjà trop longue, et me reposer moi-même de la fatigue de l'avoir écrite.' [I have not realised that I am subjecting you to an ordeal. I am going to put an end to an already too long letter and rest from the exhaustion of having written it.] (p. 165).

The reader is the French duke, but Chester also envisages the possibility that these letters could be read by others. 'Si quelqu'autre que vous, mon cher duc, lisait mon histoire, [...] qu'y verrait-il? [...] en un mot, les mémoires d'un fat [...].' [If someone else, my dear Duke, were to read my story, what would they find? in a nutshell, the memoirs of a conceited person] (p. 177). Calling them memoirs is in effect promoting his letters to a literary status. And these are just a short version of a much more important work to come as he informs the duke in the sixth letter.[23] His authorship asserted he defends the social validity of his narrative by pointing to its exemplary value.

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[22] Rousset, p. 72.

[23] '[...] de longues réflexions que je vous épargne dans mon abrégé, et que vous retrouverez dans ma grande histoire, quand il me plaira de la donner.'[I spare you a lengthy reflection in this précis that you will find in the full story when I am inclined to write it.] (p. 228).

> Moi, c'est le cœur que je développe, son délire particulier, le manège de la vanité, de la fausseté dans la plus intéressante des passions, que j'expose à vos yeux [...]. [...] Si vous n'avez été qu'un fat, ou si, comme moi, vous en êtes un, par mon exemple je vous corrige de l'être, je vous console de l'avoir été. (p. 179)
>
> [I describe the specific frenzy of the heart. I expose the workings of vanity and the duplicity of the most interesting of passions to you. If you have only been a conceited person or if like me you are one, my example cures you of being one or consoles you of having been one.]

What transpires in such a statement is that as well as seeking an audience for his amorous exploits and his public disgracing of women, Chester seeks a public for his written account of them.[24]

Despite some self-reflexive remarks and incursions into the present of the writing the assertion of authorship is not a preoccupation which can be found in *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby*. Juliette mentions her writing activity, expresses her frustration at not being able to compose a satisfactory answer to Ossery, and in a manner reminiscent of Sterne's Tristram or Yorick in *A Sentimental Journey*, writes letters on her incapacity to write.[25]

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[24] 'Quoique je ne prisasse ce triomphe que ce qu'il valait, je n'en voulus pas moins avoir des témoins qui pussent en déposer.' [Although I valued this triumph only for what it was worth, I nonetheless wanted witnesses that could vouch for it.] (p. 236).
Chester says about madame de Rindsey: 'elle s'était fait une réputation de vertu qu'il était agréable de détruire, et que je m'étais bien promis de ne point laisser subsister.' [she had built a reputation of virtue for herself which was very pleasant to destroy and which I had promised to myself not to leave unscathed.] (p. 226).

[25] 'I begun and begun again; and though I had nothing to say, and that nothing might have been express'd in half a dozen lines, I made half a dozen different beginnings, and could no way please myself.' (*A Sentimental Journey*, p. 38).

*Toujours lundi, à minuit.*

Croiriez-vous bien, ma chère Henriette, que je ne saurais écrire à Milord d'Ossery, j'ai recommencé vingt fois une très petite lettre, sans jamais pouvoir la finir; tout ce que je ne veux pas dire vient s'offrir à mon idée; [...] .

*Toujours lundi, à deux heures.*

Jamais je ne pourrais faire cette réponse : j'écris, j'efface, je déchire... (p. 98)

[Still on Monday, Midnight.

Will you not believe my dear Henriette that I cannot write to Lord d'Ossery. I have started a very short letter twenty times without ever being able to finish it. Everything that I do not want to say to him comes to my mind.

Still on Monday, at two in the morning

I will never be able to finish this letter: I write, I cross out, I tear it up...]

She also mentions her pleasure in reading the letters sent by her friend:

Vous craignez que vos lettres ne soient *longues*, qu'elles ne me *fatiguent*, vous, ma chère Henriette, penser que vous pouvez me *fatiguer*! soyez bien sûre qu'éloignée de vous, mon unique amusement est de lire ces aimables lettres. (p. 84)

[You worry about the length of your letters and the possibility that they might tire me. You, my dear Henriette, how can you imagine that you can tire me! Be reassured that being so far away from you my only enjoyment is to read those pleasant letter.]

The interventions on the writing activity in *Les Heureux Orphelins* and *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby* are therefore not so much different in nature as in intention. That her story should get public is never envisaged by Juliette. Her communications are of an entirely private order. *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby* like many other novels suggest that female sensibility and publicity exclude each other. Mr Villars wonders, more explicitly even in Fanny Burney's *Evelina*, how Lady Howard could approve of engaging a law-suit against Sir John Belmont to prove that he is Evelina's father since the public nature of such a plan can surely only be 'totally repugnant to all female delicacy' (p. 127).

The intimate and private nature of the writing process in *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby* is evident in its close association with the physical state of the writer. The letter is here an intimate space because the body is integral to the writing process. What affects one affects the other. Thus Juliette's sickened body prevents her from writing: 'Je n'ai pu vous écrire hier; j'étais fatiguée, malade même' [I could not write to you yesterday: I was tired, ill even] (p. 77). In this intimate space Juliette bares her soul, reveals the truth about her Self. For Chester the letter cannot of course be that type of space. He on the contrary transforms it in order to use it as a medium which allows him to publicize an inflated version of himself. So rare are his admitted weaknesses or failures and so rare are the reported words of others that Chester's assertive voice dominates the last two parts of *Les Heureux Orphelins* in a way which never happens in *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby*. Although Juliette's letters form like Chester's a unilateral exchange they are actually intrinsically polyphonic. Probably one of the more

striking features of Juliette's text is its openness to the voices of others, her correspondents or her acquaintances whom she quotes by inserting their words in italics, providing thus the contents of letters we do not get to see or of the conversations we do not witness directly. Angered by Milord Carlile's letter in which he blames her for refusing contact with Ossery Juliette gives him her view of the events and concludes re-using Carlile's own words:

> A présent, Milord, croyez-vous devoir m'accuser de *dureté*, *d'inflexibilité*, pour avoir *refusé les visites* de Milord d'Ossery, pour lui avoir *renvoyé ses lettres sans daigner les ouvrir, pour ne vouloir aucune explication avec lui*? (p. 76)
>
> [Now, my Lord, do you believe yourself justified in accusing me of harshness and inflexibility for having refused to see Lord d'Ossery, for having sent his letters back without opening them, for not wanting to talk to him?]

She quotes other letters in full - several letters and billets by Ossery, her answers to them - always insisting that she is giving an exact copy: 'Lisez, lisez je vous en pris, l'exacte copie de son insolente lettre...' [Read, please read, the faithful copy of his insolent letter] (p. 92).[26] *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby* shows a woman who stands her ground but also respects others by leaving a space for their words in her text. Chester on the contrary smothers any other voice and in particular that of madame de Suffolk. Others appear as objects which he studies and are therefore not granted a space for their exact words to be reported, for their voice to be heard.

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[26] Juliette also includes the 'cahier' which contains Ossery's story and Jenny's letter (pages 139 and 151).

Apparently quoting a letter he received from madame de Rindsey Chester remarks:

> Je ne vous répondrais pas que cette lettre fût véritablement la sienne : il ne m'a pas été possible de la copier sur l'original. [...] Si je ne puis rendre son expression aussi fidèlement que je le voudrais, vous pouvez du moins être sûr que je n'ajoute rien au sens. (p. 237)
>
> [I will not vouch that this letter was really hers. I have not been able to copy it from the original. Although I cannot record her words as faithfully as I would like to, you may be assured that I am not adding anything to the meaning.]

Despite his claims to faithfulness Chester nonetheless appropriates madame de Rindsey's words as he appropriates all the others (with the exception of Buttington's). Through the absence of direct quotations the male voice is clearly given prominence in the diegesis. The structure of the text also contributes to this domination of the male voice. Indeed since there is no return to the narrative frame the last word is effectively left to Chester. The imbalance between the male and the female voice is here visible because the utterance delegated to Chester is not reappropriated when that delegated to madame de Suffolk at the end of the second part was. We could go further and say that the libertine voice is given prominence in *Les Heureux Orphelins* because the sentimental man is totally marginalised. Since there is no return to the narrative frame there is no return either to Rutland. Rutland contrary to Ossery in *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby* and Dorilaus in *The Fortunate Foundlings* is not given the chance to amend for

his faults and repair the damage he has caused. Excluded from the narrative line when Juliette and Louisa flee from them Ossery and Dorilaus are nonetheless allowed by the female characters and the female writers to come back at the end of the narrative. In Riccoboni's text Ossery manages to admit his fault and eventually reintegrates his position as Juliette's lover, before taking up that of husband. In Haywood's text Dorilaus, who having made an attempt on his ward's virtue had forfeited his role as a benefactor, is given the chance to amend and be recognized at the end of the narrative as the real father of Louisa and Horatio the eponymous foundlings.

Can the fact that Chester's voice supplants all other voices be equated to an endorsement by Crébillon of the libertine discourse? The text certainly does not give any positive signs of such an endorsement but on the other hand it possibly stages and takes to its furthest limits this discourse of domination, taking, therefore, Chester's fake epistolary section as further apart as possible from *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby.*

## Chapter 5 - From Cultural Tropism to Sexual Tropism: Difference and the Construction of the Subject

This chapter focuses on the representations of the other, the other as an individual from a different nationality or a different sex in *A Sentimental Journey*, *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby*, *Evelina*, *The Fortunate Foundlings* and *Les Heureux Orphelins*.

Such constructed images of the other relay and play on stereotypes which appear in the literature of the period but they also work in a very specific way in all the texts. I will argue, in the first section of this chapter, that they are used by Haywood to produce a sentimental and moralising text which nonetheless refuses a complete compromise and obliquely looks back to her earlier fiction. As for *Les Heureux Orphelins* the image of the other, while partaking in the diegesis of the libertine discourse of domination, is used by Crébillon in his critique of the libertine.

### Foreign Reflections: Adapting the Image of the Other.

Otherness is at the heart of both Haywood's *The Fortunate Foundlings* and Crébillon's *Les Heureux Orphelins. The Fortunate Foundlings* stands out as one of the works which herald a new departure in Haywood's career with her adoption of a new genre and *Les Heureux Orphelins* is a libertine text partly adapted from Haywood's novel.

Because of the peculiar compositional history of Crébillon's novel both texts stand in a relation of otherness and difference. *Les Heureux Orphelins* starts off as an adaptation of Eliza Haywood's *The Fortunate Foundlings*: the events related in the first four chapters of the English text provide the framework of the first two parts of Crébillon's novel. *Les Heureux Orphelins* follows the popular trend of French works which, in the reigning atmosphere of anglomania, pretended to be translations or adaptations of English works. 'Nous sommes inondés de traductions, et [...] la fureur de l'anglomanie littéraire nous tient depuis [...] longtemps' [we are inundated with translations and we have had a passion for literary anglomania for a long time], noted the abbé de Raynal.[1] The action centres around an Englishman who became a libertine in France and puts the emphasis on the masculine plot of seduction and betrayal, while Haywood sets the eponymous orphans off on a series of moral and sentimental adventures in Europe, and more particularly in France. The continent is the theatre on which the virtues of the characters are being tested. From such a brief overview we can see that the two texts combine sexual, national and generic differences: a male-authored French text labelled as libertine by most critics is adapted from a female-authored English sentimental/moralising text. The aim of this chapter is not to discuss the aesthetic merits of each text, in the way that most critics have done, but to throw light on the strategic use they make of the representations of the other.

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[1] Quoted by Bernadette Fort in '*Les Heureux Orphelins* de Crébillon: de l'adaptation à la création romanesque', *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France*, 80 (1980), 554-73 (p. 556).
On anglomania see Josephine Grieder, *Anglomania in France, 1740-1789: Fact, Fiction, and Political Discourse* (Geneva: Droz, 1985) and Harold Wade Streeter, *The Eighteenth-Century English Novel in French Translation: A Bibliographical Study* (New York: The Institute of French Studies, 1936).

The other and its image were exploited as never before in literary and philosophical terms in the eighteenth century.[2] A renewed interest in discovering and occupying virgin territory combined with technical improvements (for naval exploration) as well as political and economic interests led to a revival of voyages of exploration. The Islands of the Pacific, parts of Australia and of North America were some of the places where the Europeans exposed their consciousness to the other. Such a confrontation happened for the majority of Europeans through the numerous travel accounts published in the period. The images of the exotic other brought back from these expeditions provided material for the developing philosophical anthropology which sought to place the science of man on a sound empirical basis. Such explorations were thus part of the bigger project of furthering the enquiry on the nature of man. If the project was to record what had been observed the result did not exactly match these expectations. The image of the other was constructed and even reconstructed. It was constructed because the Europeans were working on preconceptions, even mythologies about the other. The difference of the other was seized only to be erased. Once this real difference erased the other, who is similar to '[un] espace vide' [a void space] could be assimilated into the dominant colonial discourse, could be 'investi par une conscience qui est fascinée par la question de son identité, de son histoire, de son être et de son devenir' [invested by a consciousness fascinated by the question of

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[2] On the discourse of discovery see: *A Dictionary of Eighteenth-Century World History*, ed. by Jeremy Black and Roy Porter (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), *Exoticism in the Enlightenment*, ed. by G.S. Rousseau and Roy Porter (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990) and *The Blackwell Companion to the Enlightenment*, ed. by John B. Yolton (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995).

its identity, its history, its existence and its future][3]. According to western fantasies the other represented either original purity or eroticism and savagery. The Europeans created the sensual and ferocious savage to define human, that is civilized, values and therefore perpetuate the idea of the superiority of their value system in the same way that they constructed the Noble Savage as a model of what man was like at the origin but also, throughout the genre of the exotic narrative, as a vehicle of criticism of an artificial and corrupt Europe. Exoticism became a vehicle for the critique of political systems, institutions, values, mores as part of a discourse on national identity.

What happens, however, when the other is not the exotic other, like the Tahitians encountered by Bougainville in 1768, but a neighbour, so close and similar that he/she cannot be used as an 'espace vide' for one's projections and a neighbour who has the capacity to answer back by constructing his own images of the other? With the close other the fiction of difference is one of inflation rather than one of suppression. It is as if this closeness is so uncomfortable (politically) that one has to find differences where they do not exist: 'qui rêve de différence finit par l'accentuer' [he who dreams of difference comes to emphasize it].[4]

The fashion for transposing the action of novels and for pretending to be translations, a process which has been abundantly documented, is symptomatic of the way in which national identities created themselves in the eighteenth century.

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[3] Daniel Brewer, 'Diderot et l'autre féminin', in *L'Homme des Lumières et la découverte de l'autre*, ed. by Daniel Droixhe and Pol-P. Gossiaux (Bruxelles: Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1985), pp. 81-91 (p. 91).

The eighteenth century saw the emergence of national identities and the development of nationalist ideologies. The English texts in my corpus appear in the period which sees the transformation of the attraction for all things French into a more and more vigorous francophobia from the mid 1750s in bourgeois culture and from the 1760s in intellectual circles.[5] In the same way *Les Heureux Orphelins* is published in a very specific climate: the period in which anglomania is at its peak.[6]

France and England perfectly fit this scenario. Physically linked by regular cross-Channel services (two or three times each week by the middle of the century), the two countries are also connected by colonial and political rivalries.[7] As Gerald Newman points out, the mid eighteenth century was a period of intense mutual attraction and influence and of tremendous antagonism (for instance because of the contradiction of the two political models). [8]

Nations defined themselves in terms of what they were not. What Arthur M. Wilson calls 'the comparative method' became a widespread means of 'subjecting one's own society to a critique, which the writers of the Enlightenment learned to do with great effect'.[9] Voltaire's *Lettres philosophiques* is a case in point: despite 'ironical references to faults, shortcomings or comical quirks of the

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[4] Isabel Herrero and Lydia Vasquez, 'Types nationaux européens dans des œuvres de fiction françaises (1750-1789)', *Dix-huitième siècle*, 25 (1993), 115-127 (p. 117).
[5] Newman, p. 73 and p. 111.
[6] Grieder, pp. 147-8.
[7] Louis-Sébastien Mercier, *Parallèle de Paris et de Londres*, ed. by Claude Bruneteau and Bernard Cottret, (Paris: Didier Erudition, 1982), pp. 12-13.
[8] Gerald Newman, *The Rise of English Nationalism: A Cultural History, 1740-1830* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1987), p. 17.
[9] Wilson, Arthur M., '"Treated Like Imbecile Children" (Diderot): The Enlightenment and the Status of Women', in *Woman in the 18th Century and Other Essays*, ed. by Paul Fritz and Richard Morton (Toronto: Hakkert, 1976), pp. 89-104 (p. 89).

English' (meant to minimize the possibility of alienating his readership), it is a scathing attack of the French system by holding up the English model.[10] Sterne also reacts against the tyranny of universals (like polite French taste) which were spread by the spirit of cosmopolitanism.

> Nos démêlés fréquents avec l'Angleterre, l'opposition des caractères, la rivalité des esprits, & la concurrence des intérêts ont rendu de tout temps l'histoire de cette Nation infiniment intéressante.
>
> [Our frequent problems with England, our opposite natures, the rivalry of our minds, and our competing interests have always made the history of this nation highly interesting.]

This is the abbé Expilly's explanation of the strange attraction in his *Description historique-géographique des îles britanniques* (Paris, 1759).[11] This relationship based on the combination of attraction and repulsion is perfectly illustrated in *Les Heureux Orphelins* by Madame de Pembrook who 'quoiqu'elle cherche perpétuellement à copier les Françaises, [...] ne les en aime pas davantage' [although she is always trying to imitate Frenchwomen does not like them] (p. 167). Like the exotic other the neighbour can be a mirror for the national self and an instrument in the critique of the mores of a nation. Thus Crébillon uses

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[10] Voltaire, *Letters on England*, ed. by Leonard Tancock (London: Penguin, 1980), p. 11.
[11] Quoted by Bruneteau and Cottret in the introduction to their edition of *Parallèle de Paris et de Londres* (p. 28).

Chester's voice and the English political system as a point of comparison to comment, in rather unflattering terms, on the French one:

> D'un côté, l'esprit de sédition et le fanatisme de la liberté, masqués sous les noms sacrés de patriotisme et d'une légitime défense de ses droits; de l'autre, la plus servile complaisance, la plus lâche adulation, déguisées sous les titres spécieux d'obéissance due au souverain et de respect pour les lois. (p. 154)
>
> [On the one hand, a spirit of sedition and a fanatical belief in freedom hidden under the sacred words of patriotism and of legitimate defense of one's rights; on the other hand, the most slavish servility and the most cowardly sycophancy speciously disguised as obedience owed to the monarch and respect of the laws.]

Through the use of stereotypes and exaggeration this extract exemplifies the way in which the other is represented in *Les Heureux Orphelins* and *The Fortunate Foundlings*. In both texts the neighbouring nations are more caricatured than accurately portrayed.

Most continental travellers visiting England, from Muralt in 1693-94 to Mercier in 1781, emphasise the same characteristics: lack of decorum (the English are excessive and have no sense of proportion), a taste for originality, national pride (the English despise foreigners), melancholy, fierceness.[12] Such stereotypes were not just the meat of travel accounts but also found a place in literary works. Riccoboni in *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby* presents Ossery as the victim of

such a prejudiced view: 'On me présentait à la Cour, à la Ville, comme un sauvage qui joignait à la férocité attribuée à sa Nation un éloignement révoltant pour des goûts adoptés et des usages reçus' [I was introduced in court, in town as a savage who combined the fierceness attributed to his nation with a revolting ignorance the tastes in vogue and the social graces] (p. 140). Crébillon describes Rutland in a way which corresponds to the preconceived idea of the typical Englishman, that is to say serious, thoughtful, prone to melancholy: 'né anglais et par conséquent plus sérieux et plus philosophe qu'il ne semblait devoir l'être à son âge' [English by birth and as a consequence wiser and more serious than he should have been at his age] (p. 41).[13] None of that appears in Haywood's portrait of Dorilaus: 'he was young and gay, loved magnificence and the pomp of courts, and was far from being insensible of those joys which the conversation of the fair sex affords' (p. 2). Crébillon is therefore creating a character who is more English than the English original on which he is based.

Both texts being concerned with social relations and the relations between the sexes they adopt views on politeness, manners and gallantry which were common at the time. Chester claims to be a living proof of the supposed 'superior standards of courtesy, address, deportment, table manners' of the French: 'Je prouve bien évidemment la supériorité des grâces françaises [...]' [I am the living

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[12] Bruneteau and Cottret, pp. 9-49.

[13] 'Ce fut dans un de ces moments de mélancolie, qu'une rêverie profonde le conduisit [...] au bout d'un vaste jardin' [It was during one of those melancholy moments that lost in a deep reverie he found himself at the end of a large garden] (p. 42).

proof of the superiority of French social graces] (p. 155).[14] Politeness being part of the social game it can easily become a sign of hypocrisy, a mask. European continental courtliness was opposed to the emerging English national identity which was characterized by sincerity. *A Sentimental Journey* contains a critique of French politeness: like the coins polished by constant contact the French gain sophistication but lose all individuality and sincerity.

> The English, like antient medals kept more apart, and passing but few peoples hands, preserve the first sharpness which the fine hand of nature has given them - they are not so pleasant to feel - but in return, the legend is so visible, that at the first look you see whose image and superscription they bear. (p. 76)

The association made by Haywood clearly links France and the extremes of gallantry (that is to say 'l'art aussi cruel que honteux de séduire et de tromper' [the cruel and shameful art of seducing and deceiving] (*Les Heureux Orphelins*, p. 135)) in the person of Bellfleur. Known for his 'arrogance, vanity, perfidy' (pp. 163-164), Bellfleur is a double of Chester without however the stature of the latter. Chester's belief that 'il ne faut à l'homme sensé que des plaisirs' [a sensible man only needs pleasure] (p. 161) echoes what the narrator of *The Fortunate Foundlings* remarks about Bellfleur: 'what he felt for Louisa could not be called love, he desired only to enjoy her' (p. 184).

The presence of the libertine and the deleterious effects of his actions are counterbalanced by the creation of virtuous French characters who work in the

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[14] Newman, p. 2.

narrative as doubles of the virtuous eponymous heroes: Louisa is the archetype of innocence and integrity, while Horatio is a faithful and sincere lover, polite, generous and brave in duel and in battle, and devoted to the king. The stereotype of the French libertine (gallantry and dissimulation) is replaced by another constructed image of the French. 'The gallant and courtly manner in which Horatio expressed himself on every occasion' (p. 263) is only matched by his French counterpart's (Du Plessis) refinement and his capacity to feel and 'distinguish the real passion from the counterfeit' (p. 171). As for Charlotta, Louisa's counterpart, she is noticed for her 'modesty and delicacy' (p. 93) and is said to know '[She] knew very well what became the decorum of her sex, and was too nice an observer of it, not to behave with all the reserve imaginable' (pp. 86-87). A minor character in the plot, the Prince de Conti is another significant example of the construction of a virtuous French aristocrat 'a prince whose virtues would doubtless have rendered it [Poland] as flourishing and happy as it has since that unfortunate rejection been impoverished and miserable' (p. 148). France is a land where one can improve one's innate virtues: Horatio possesses 'a politeness which was natural to him but which had received great improvements since his arrival in France' (p. 71). We can wonder if it is because of the somewhat distorting prism of love that Horatio, having just met Charlotta, declares: 'The French are a people born to inspire and instruct virtue and benevolence' (p. 61) while Charlotta recognises in Horatio the 'natural politeness of the French [...] sweetness of disposition' (p. 94). For Haywood's moralising narrative to be effective certain characters need to possess specific qualities: she needs virtuous

characters (du Plessis) and characters who attack virtue (Bellfleur). Bellfleur's and du Plessis's existence is the condition which makes the existence of a virtuous woman possible. But the portrait of the French is on the whole positive. France is after all where virtue triumphs and is rewarded: parent, children and lovers meet again in Paris, after having undergone great trials all over Europe, where the initial fault is repaired.

The image of the other is manipulated in the diegesis of *Les Heureux Orphelins* and is subservient to the dominant discourse in the way that it participates in the libertine's monolithic discourse of control and domination. In his seduction discourse Chester adapts the image of the other to the personality of each of his victims.

> J'avais parlé décemment des françaises à Madame de Suffolk, à laquelle je n'aurais pas plu en prenant sur elles un air léger; j'en médis avec Madame de Pembrook à laquelle en les louant je n'aurais pas fait ma cour. (p. 167)
>
> [I had spoken of Frenchwomen with decency to Madame de Suffolk whom I would not have pleased if I had spoken of them lightly. I spoke ill of them to Madame de Pembrook whom I would not have been wooing if I had praised them.]

In this extract the image of the other appears as just another weapon in the libertine's armoury of sexual strategies. But the discourse on the other is also part

of an authorial strategy. Although in the end the libertine world view seems to be the dominant one Chester is given a remark which totally undermines him.

> Il est rare qu'en cherchant à prendre les grâces d'un pays dans lequel on n'est pas né, l'on ne se donne pas dans le sien beaucoup de ridicules. J'ai vu chez vous quelques Français qui voulaient bien nous faire l'honneur de nous ressembler, et qui, avec leur air singulier et profond [...] avaient perdu beaucoup de leurs agréments, sans avoir pris rien de notre solidité, ou même de nos travers. (p. 167)
>
> [It is not rare for one who tries to adopt the airs of a country in which one was not born to ridicule oneself in one's own. I have seen in your company a few Frenchmen who were doing us the honour of looking like us and who, with their peculiar and profound air, had lost most of their charm without having acquired our sturdiness or even our shortcomings.]

By criticizing the idea of emulation, as affectation and sterile imitation, ('nous ne vous rendons justice que par le soin que nous prenons de vous imiter : et ce n'est point, à dire vrai, ce que nous faisons de mieux' [we do you justice only by the effort we put into imitating you and it is not, really, what we do best] (p. 167)) Chester is actually criticizing his own position as a disciple of a French libertine and implying that his own way of life is sterile.

*The Fortunate Foundlings* indicates the beginning of a new period in Haywood's literary career (after a series of scandal novels, Pope's satire in *the Dunciad* and a decade of theatrical activity): 'in the 1740s Haywood redefined

herself as a writer of moral essays and improving novels.'[15] She abandoned the romances and scandal chronicles in the tradition of Delarivier Manley's *New Atalantis* which made her fame to write moral and domestic novels and to produce the *Female Spectator*. This construction of a new image corresponds to the cultural changes of the 1740s which were privileging the bourgeois values of respectability, discipline, virtue, civility, containment of passions heralded in Richardson's fiction. *The Fortunate Foundlings* can be seen as prime evidence of Haywood's extraordinary capacity to adapt to the literary market. Haywood uses the image of the French in two ways. Through this text she associates herself with a combination of extreme refinement and virtue. But at the same time could Haywood be using this pro-French stance to make her readers look back to her early period? Could she be putting limits to the concessions to morality she had had to make on economic grounds by reminding her readers of the French origins of the romance?[16] As a matter of fact Haywood includes two masquerade scenes, which work here as plot catalysts in an otherwise respectable domestic narrative, and which are reminiscent of the romance novels of the 1720s.

By using strategies involving constructed or reconstructed images of the other, Crébillon and Haywood manage to deconstruct to a certain extent the generic categorisations imposed by literary discourses or the literary market.

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[15] Beth Fowkes Tobin in the introduction to her edition of *The History of Miss Betty Thoughtless* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. xv-xvi.

**Inventing the Other.**

The previous section dealt with the way in which the geographical other entered textual strategies which resulted in a generic instability and pointed to the permeability of the libertine and sentimental discourses.

This section concentrates more particularly on representations of sexual difference in Crébillon's *Les Heureux Orphelins*, Riccoboni's *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby*, Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey* and Burney's *Evelina*. These texts show how the initial polarity defined along the lines of national difference (English vs French) is intrinsically linked to another polarity: that of the masculinity-femininity divide. These texts also show individuals 'engaged in a politics of self-definition': individuals who use the other to construct their identity, to create themselves as autonomous desiring subjects. Inflation and obliteration are the two principles on which these constructions are based.[17]

The confrontation with the other escapes with difficulty from the polarity of fascination and repulsion. We saw in the first section that the way in which the European explorers resolved that difficulty was by obliterating the other. The difference of the other was seized only to be erased. Once this real difference erased, the other could be assimilated into the dominant colonial discourse. Exoticism became a vehicle for the critique of political systems, institutions, values, mores as part of a discourse on national identity.

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[16] Fowkes Tobin, pp. xxix-xxxiii.

[17] Beth Kowaleski-Wallace, 'A Night at the Opera: The Body, Class, and Art in *Evelina* and Frances Burney's Early Diaries', in *History, Gender and Eighteenth-Century Literature*, ed. by Beth Tobin-Fowkes (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994), pp. 141-58.

For the construction of one's identity one therefore embarks on a 'frenzied differential construction of the Other and of perpetual extrapolation of the Same through the Other'.[18] One produces the other as difference to produce one's identity in return. 'The other is never more than the ephemeral form of a difference that draws me closer to the I'.[19] The production of the other as difference is therefore an invention and this is also the case for sexual difference in which the masculine side is the privileged pole. But to manage the sexual other the fiction of difference which is put in place is one of suppression, equating therefore women to the colonized.

The gaze of the male desiring subject is almost concomitant with the voice of the male writer. In the person of the foreign woman the male desiring subject confronts itself to a double alterity: the difference of nationality and that of sex. Women need doubly to be put in the position of the negotiable other.

Chester confirms his identity by classifying women according to their availability, their sexual easiness. By limiting women's identity to a category, to an attribute (the 'sensitive', the 'coquette', the 'prude') he confirms himself in his position of domination but also positions himself socially as the cosmopolitan gentleman well versed in courtly behaviour. The libertine's reductive and trivializing construction of femininity is built along the lines of national differences:

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[18] Jean Baudrillard, *La Transparence du mal* (Paris: Galilée, 1990), p. 2.
[19] Baudrillard, p. 1.

> [...] Toutes vos femmes ne sont ni vaines ni coquettes, [...] toutes ne prennent pas une idée pour un sentiment, [...] l'honneur, la vertu, la fidélité dans les engagements ne sont pas des chimères pour toutes, toutes les nôtres ne sont pas ou sensibles, ou raisonnables ; mais toutes en général sont prudes, et ce fut là-dessus que je crus devoir me régler. (p. 157)
>
> [The women of your country are not all superficial or coquettish. They do not mistake ideas for feelings and honour, virtue and faithfulness are not chimeras for them. All our women are neither tender nor sensible, but they are all, general, prudish and this is what guided my behaviour.]

The woman reduced to a category is integrated in a discursive system of domination and opposition in which she has no capacity to represent herself; to answer by reflecting back a self-produced image. Abstracted in that way female desire is dismissed. She is erased because she is simply the object of a discourse. The male narrator creates an asymmetrical relation which is founded on the impossibility of exchanges between the 'I' and the 'You'.

The reduction of the woman to an object invested by male desire goes one step forward in *A Sentimental Journey* with the construction of fantasmatic images of the female other on which Yorick projects his desires and construct his image as the benevolent man of feeling. The image of the woman becomes a screen which allows the male subject himself to reveal himself. Mme de L*** is a case in point. The woman is here erased as an autonomous desiring subject while the desire of the man is asserted and projected. The only women whose desire is given

a voice are working women. The financial independence (even if relative) of these women puts them outside the strict boundaries of the gender assignments. They are active, manipulative, shrewd and therefore sexually available in a way that the desirable genteel heroine cannot obviously be.

Apart from the working woman's, the voice of the woman is totally erased in *A Sentimental Journey*. On that point it is crucial to remark that the 'libertine' text, that *Les Heureux Orphelins* is, is more open to the female other than the sentimental one. The structure in three distinct parts makes it possible to hear the female voice. And although the text ends on the male voice, seeming thus to dominate the female voice to which it is juxtaposed, the circular structure of this end gives a dialogic dimension to the text.

**Female Negotiations of the Other**

An even more dialogic structure is adopted as a narrative strategy in *Evelina*. The epistolary mode allows the female speaker to voice her desires (albeit in a very naive and un-selfconscious way) against the prescriptive and normative voice of the father figure: Villars. The heroine is confronted to various models of behaviour and it is against the rigidity of the gender assignments that she discovers in the social environment with which she becomes familiar, that she gradually builds her own (social and national) identity. Being in contact with the most exacerbated exponents of cultural tropism in the persons of Duval and

Mirvan, Evelina develops her own moral sense of what is acceptable and discerns that moderation and integrity are cardinal values. Excesses of effeminacy or masculinity are as condemnable.[20] The ideal is the moderate combination of the two which is hypostasized in Orville ('so *feminine* his delicacy' (p. 261)).

Emulation is not a bad thing per se. France is the place where young women are sent to be educated. France which is the country where culture and refinement reign is particularly suited to the development of such feminine graces which will then be used to polish men: 'Much is to be expected from emulation' (Lady Howard, p. 21). In Dr Johnson's *Dictionary* emulation contains ideas of rivalry, envy, desire of superiority, imitation with the hope of equality or superior excellence.[21] It is excess of emulation which has to be avoided: when it becomes merely servile imitation and artifice.

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[20] French fashions are mocked in the image of the monkey: 'What, I suppose you'd have me learn to cut capers? –and dress like a monkey? –and palaver in French gibberish? –Hay, would you? – And powder, and daub, and make myself up, like some other folks?' (p. 61).
What is ridiculed in the characters of Duval and Captain Mirvan are the excesses of francophobia or francophilia. They are ridiculed because they provide the vulgar humour of the novel in scenes of incredible violence. They also ridicule each other in the numerous abusive verbal exchanges which stage the most exacerbated political positions and in which they try to prove the superiority of their respective nation other the other but only succeed in surpassing each other in coarseness.
'I think the English a parcel of brutes; and I'll go back to France as fast as I can, for I would not live among none of you.
'Who wants you? cried the Captain; 'do you suppose, Madam French, we have not enough of other nations to pick our pockets already? [...]
'Pick your pockets, Sir! I wish nobody wanted to pick your pockets no more than I do [...]. But there's no nation under the sun can beat the English for ill-politeness: for my part I hate the very sight of them, and so I shall only visit a person of quality or two, of my particular acquaintance, and then I shall go back to France.
'Ay, do, cried he, 'and then go to the devil together, for that's the fittest voyage for the French and the quality.'
'We'll take care, however,' cried the stranger, with great vehemence, 'not to admit none of your vulgar, unmannered English among us.' (pp. 50-1).
[21] *Dictionary*, abridged version (1843, repr. 1994)).

Emulation is criticized in *Les Heureux Orphelins*: when it is limited to an imitation which makes oneself foreign amongst one's group and which is perceived as affected, servile and sterile: 'à prendre les grâces d'un pays dans lequel on n'est pas né, l'on [...] se donne [...] dans le sien beaucoup de ridicules' (p. 167). Not much can be expected from that kind of imitation because one loses one's integrity.

The conventional ending in marriage which *Evelina* shares with *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby* can be said to be a concession to the patriarchal ideology which oppresses women. Many critics have commented the coexistence of movements of resistance to and internalization of the normative model of womanhood imposed by society. It is clear that both Burney's and Riccoboni's texts do not try to escape from that bind. Direct criticism of the plight of women coincides with a collusion in deeper societal structures. Each narrator sticks to very rigid gender assignments in their representations of social interactions.

> 'The woman=colonized, man=colonizer metaphor lacks any awareness of gender [...] as a contested field, an overdetermined sociopolitical grid whose identity points are often contradictory. [...] theoretical necessity of abandoning the idea of women's (and men's) gender identity as fixed and coherent.'[22]

The only place where Burney seems to allow herself to transgress is on a textual level: when she writes in the vein of the broad physical comedy. The violence

conjured up is quite striking for a female narrative voice. But of course the conditions of the publication make this quite acceptable: *Evelina* was published anonymously and the Preface points the reader towards a male authorship by associating the text to the great tradition of male writers. This assumed male persona allows the narrator to subvert the established model through a process of inflation of this very same model. Here lies the paradox of the female writer who manages to dismiss and ridicule the structure of which she is captive and which she cannot, in the end, escape. The textual strategy adopted by Riccoboni's narrator is the complete reverse. The text posits a narrative authority which is recognisably female and who almost totally obliterates the sexual other. This also puts Riccoboni's narrator in a paradoxical situation: although this stance appears to be much more radical because of its intransigence, the textual result is one that is formally more conservative than Burney's text. It conforms much more to the male idea of female emotional and confessional writing.

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[22] Laura E. Donaldson, *Decolonizing Feminisms: Race, Gender, and Empire-Building* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), p. 6.

# Conclusion

It is undeniable that the eighteenth century reader attached precise sets of expectations to fictional genres in terms of contents and that in turn writers intended to produce specific effects on the readers. What would have therefore been expected from sentimental and libertine texts? Novels of sentiment would have been expected to provide tales exploring personal relationships and emotions in plots of found and betrayed love that are happily resolved for the virtuous characters (reunions or marriages) or to provide scenes of distress and benevolence, episodes of sympathetic grief and violent emotional response. The intended effect of such texts would have been of a cathartic nature, the reader being expected to learn from them and to 'react with an appropriate degree of sympathy to distressed innocence and of abhorrence to vice.'[1] Libertine novels would have been expected to provide narratives of pleasure, seduction, and psychological analysis, narratives detailing strategies of persuasion and domination. The intended effect of such texts would have been of a specular nature, the reader being expected to take pleasure in the games of the libertine intrigue.

It is clear that if our texts fulfil such expectations it is only to a certain extent. Discrepancies from what is perceived to be the norm in terms of mode,

[1] George Starr, 'Only a Boy: Notes on Sentimental Novels', *Genre*, 10 (1976), 501-27 (p. 515).

style, use of form all contribute in our texts to the frustration of the reader's expectations and to his assignment to an unexpected position.

Scenes of broadly physical and violent comedy like the beating of Mme Duval or the race of old women create a striking dissonance in *Evelina* as Burney introduces in the epistolary mode 'a "masculine" mode of comedy'.[2] Cleland's use of a euphemistic and metaphorical style and of a language of emotional response cancels out somewhat the imitative principle of the erotic scenes he describes and therefore turns the reader into more of an interpreter than a voyeur. Riccoboni's text departs from the epistolary form in that it is does not have a paratextual apparatus. Such an absence creates an unmediated reading which could be termed emotional but also puts the reader in the position of a voyeur. The abrupt endings of both *Les Egarements du cœur et de l'esprit* and *Les Heureux Orphelins* are problematic and certainly do not fulfil the reader's ultimate desire for completeness in the resolution of the plot.[3] Crébillon bafflingly ends *Les Heureux Orphelins* with Chester promising, in his eighth and last letter, that his first letter will reveal the outcome of his affair with madame de Pembrook. Crébillon's play with the reader's desire to know is two-fold: firstly he provides an ending that does not close the text but refers back to its own past, secondly he points the reader back to a part of the text which in fact does not contain what he is led to expect (the outcome of the affair is mentioned in madame de Suffolk's narrative

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[2] Margaret A. Doody, *Frances Burney: The Life in the Works* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988), p. 48.

[3] Despite his protestations to the contrary in the preface to *Les Egarements du cœur et de l'esprit* ('Les Préfaces, pour la plus grande partie, ne semblent faites que pour en imposer au Lecteur. Je méprise trop cet usage pour le suivre.' (p. 9) [The purpose of most prefaces seem only to be to

and not in Chester's first letter). The reader of *A Sentimental Journey* is also left with an unfinished text which does not fulfil the promise of its title and stops in mid-sentence. Such a tantalising end does not come as a surprise in a text that consistently teases the reader as it indulges his appetite for sentimentality with sentimental episodes shrouded in sexual connotations. The suspended end of *A Sentimental Journey* which conflates decency and suggestiveness, by not saying which part of the *fille de chambre*'s body is touched but showing it, forces the reader into the position of a complicit and knowing voyeur.

The way in which our sentimental and libertine novels envisage the relation between text and reader shows them appropriating elements from the other discourse, operating along some of the parameters of the other discourse in order to question their own modes of reading. Thus the positioning of the reader in our sentimental texts suggests the inherent presence of an element of control, opacity and voyeurism in the sentimental discourse. And the positioning of the reader in our libertine texts suggests the existence of an inherent anxiety about the nature of knowledge and the control of meaning in the discourse of the libertine.

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mislead the reader. I despise this practice too much to partake of it]), Crébillon does mislead his reader when he announces that several parts will follow the three that actually constitute the text.

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