

Adeline or The Orphan

- *Publishing History* -

The anonymous novel *Adeline or The Orphan* was published in three volumes by William Lane of the Minerva Press, Leadenhall Street, London in 1790. Lane was able to earn great profit from his main domain- cheap sentimental fiction, and in 1801 he formed a partnership with Anthony King Newman, becoming “Lane, Newman and Co” in 1803. Eventually in the 1820’s Newman succeeded Lane as proprietor for the press and dropped the Minerva name completely thus eventually becoming the “A. K. Newman & Co” press.

As the author of *Adeline or The Orphan* remained anonymous there is no concrete way of discovering whether any subsequent novels were written by them, or whether anymore of their works were published. Lane directed his publishing interest into “the fertile field of romantic novels”¹, claiming that the reason he opened Minerva Press in around 1770 was because he wanted to produce an outlet for “the principle productions of his press; light novels”². A number of these sentimental novels were distributed by the Minerva Press, either to its own circulating library, The Minerva Circulating Library, or to other circulating or private libraries. Dorothy Blakey claims that “in the minor fiction of the eighteenth century anonymity was the rule”³, thus providing authors with protection and the chance to strengthen their reputation without revealing their name. However, as Janet Todd states many “educated people in the period saw within the Minerva Press an undermining of traditional classical culture”⁴, and perhaps explains why many authors were not able to gain success in the literary marketplace, because many saw the press’s reputation as nothing more than what Blakey

¹ Alison Adburgham *Women in Print: Writing Women and Women’s magazines from the Revolution to the Accession of Victoria* (George Allen and Unwin Ltd, London 1972) p159

² Alison Adburgham (George Allen and Unwin Ltd, London 1972) p19

³ Dorothy Blakey *The Minerva Press 1790-1820* (Oxford University Press, London 1939) p 48

⁴ J. Todd, *The sign of Angellica: women, writing and fiction, 1660–1800* Columbia University Press (October 15, 1989) p86

states as “an epithet of contempt.”⁵ Lane was also very strategic with his advertising, as on the final page of the novel *Adeline or The Orphan*, Lane advertises other books he has published as well as inviting the “public to send in their manuscripts”⁶, which again implies that Lane was not fussy about the quality of the books he was publishing. This implies that he was after quick and easy publications and perhaps explains why although he promised authors work of the highest standard, he was not always able to deliver. This is apparent in *Adeline or The Orphan* which although was printed on good quality paper which is clearly linen pressed, its quality of printing is low, highlighted by the scratchy print evident throughout the novel. Furthermore, although the binding is sturdy, it is not of high quality leather, implying that it was not intended to be a possession of a grand private library. In a period which saw a rapid increase in reading with the number of “books sold being four times as great”⁷, Lane was aspiring to be a publisher whose business was accessible to everyone, and in this respect he succeeded. The question of success and public approval of his publications therefore remained beside the point.

- *Anonymity* –

Adeline or The Orphan focuses primarily on relationships between the sexes, which is a typically female characteristic. Furthermore sentimentalism was argued to have “deeper roots in feminine minds than in masculine ones”⁸, because feminine natures were regarded as tender as opposed to the ruggedness attributed to masculine natures. Whilst taking this into account, as well as the typically female dedication illustrated in the preface and the sentimental genre the novel inhabits, I would presume the author to be female as relationships

⁵ Dorothy Blakey *The Minerva Press 1790-1820* p1

⁶ *Adeline or The Orphan*, (Minerva Press, London 1790)

⁷ John Taylor ‘The New Reading Public and the new Novel’ in *Early Opposition to the English Novel: the popular reaction from 1760 to 1830* (New York, Kings Crown Press, 1943) p3

⁸ Harrison R. Steeves ‘Sentimentalism: A Literary Epidemic’ in *Before Jane Austen* (George Allen & Unwin Ltd, London 1965) p161

are central to women's fiction because "they are central to women's lives"⁹. From here on I will therefore be referring to the author as female. Furthermore it is clear by the plot of the story and its virtuous sentimental heroine that this novel was written for female readers, specifically young women who were approaching a marriageable age and could therefore understand the trials and tribulations that young women had to face. In this period the world of print culture was seen to be a very public sphere, and a Lady was generally thought of as an entirely private person. For this reason the author may have decided to remain anonymous, knowing that her writings would "naturally reflect her private circumstances"¹⁰, and could possibly shame not only herself but her family too by being involved in this public world which is outside the sphere of domestic commitment. Whether the author was scared of what Paula Feldman states as "the humility of being in trade"¹¹, or whether she was just following the trend of other eighteenth century female novelists, her decision to publish her novel anonymously did not work in her favour if acknowledgement was what she sought.

- *The Physical Book and its Preface* -

The novel was printed in duodecimo containing roughly 250 pages per volume. Duodecimo was the most popular format of printing as it was cheaper to produce than Octavo books as the paper size was a lot smaller. The price of the novel was 7 shillings 6 pence which is not cheap but is by no means very expensive either. There is an inscription on the front page suggesting that it belonged to a private library by the name of John Charles Hardy. The bookplate which appears on the centre of each volumes inside cover shows a picture of a hand with the words "I hope to speed" written above it, suggesting that this is the family motto of the books buyer. There is also a motto referring to the novels heroine on the title

⁹ Dale Spender *Living By the Pen, Early British Women Writers* (Teachers College Press, London 1992) p15

¹⁰ John Mullan, *Anonymity: A Secret History of English Literature*, (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 2007) pp.74

¹¹ Paula R. Feldman, 'Women Poets and Anonymity in the Romantic Era' in E. J. Clery, Caroline Franklin and Peter Garside, (ed.) *Authorship, Commerce and the Public: Scenes of Writing, 1750-1850* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2002) pp. 44

page, which is a creation of the author's imagination and perhaps an attempt to elevate her novel as Janine Barchas states that "the presence of mottos on title pages announces arrogantly and often deceptively the novels scholarly qualifications."¹² However, the standard trade bindings suggest that it was not a possession of a grand private library, and there are many scribbles and ink marks amongst the books pages, insinuating that it was not a treasured work as it was not well kept by its owner.

Whilst trying to establish the aim of the author in writing this novel it is important to look at its preface. With the instance of marketing it is suggested that a review of a novel functioned as an aspect of advertisement which George Justice claims "helped make a book a success"¹³. By addressing this dedication to "the Reviewers" it is clear that the author was requesting a response from periodical critics to elevate recognition of her novel as well as seeking patronage for it. Demanding a critic's protection in a dedication is a daring feature as the author was probably well aware that "addressing a critic could backfire"¹⁴, and I presume that in this instance it did as reviews for this novel are very scarce, if not completely non-existent. The author references their anonymity by admittedly being "an offspring of obscurity"¹⁵ and states that she is writing for mere amusement, not "for subsistence"¹⁶, and thus instead of wealth, recognition may have been what she was primarily seeking. The use of the word "public" is also very important as the author acknowledges the idea of a community rather than just addressing an assortment of random citizens and this is a vital sign that she is seeking approval from the main contributors of the literary marketplace. Furthermore by requesting for a patron to grant his "protection", the author is seeking "safeguard against the

¹² Janine Barchas *Graphic Design, print culture, and the eighteenth-century novel* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2003) p85

¹³ George Justice 'The Excursion, Evelina and Novel culture' in *The manufacturers of literature: writing and the literary marketplace in Eighteenth-Century England* (London, Associated University Presses 2002) p 160

¹⁴ Gina Campbell *How to Read Like a Gentleman: Burney's Instructions to her Critics in Evelina* (John Hopkins University Press 1990) p557

¹⁵ The Preface to *Adeline or The Orphan*, (Minerva Press, London 1790)

¹⁶ The Preface to *Adeline or The Orphan*, (Minerva Press, London 1790)

competition of other authors”¹⁷ to try and gain the acknowledgement required to establish themselves in literary marketplace, which was a tactic that many women writers of the late eighteenth century employed.

- *Plot Summary* –

The novel is narrated by an omniscient third person, and tells the story of Adeline Clermont. Adeline’s parents die in India when Adeline is very young and she is left in the care of Mr Warren. Mr Warren brings her back to England where he and his wife raise her like their own. Adeline grows very close to her brother Charles and his friends Emma and Edward Woodford, as well as the owner of Seymour Abbey, Lady Mary and her niece and nephew, Lady Louisa and Lord Melville. Aged sixteen, Adeline becomes an inmate of Lady Mary. Her mother Mrs Warren falls ill and she is told the shocking news that she is not their biological child, but that she would always be loved unconditionally by the Warrens. She travels to Bath with Lady Mary and is reunited with Louisa and Lord Melville and also meets their friend Mr Harley and his sister Eliza Harley, who was committed to marry Lord Melville because of an agreement made by their fathers when they were younger. They journey to London and visit the Duke of Malden and it is here that Lord Melville confesses his love for Adeline. His marriage to Eliza is postponed because his parents are worried for his health because he is so distressed. Adeline faints with grief and returns back to Mr Warren where she confesses her heartache to Emma. Adeline then has to refuse Edward who confesses his love for her and her guilt leads to a severe decline in her health and Lady Mary, who was also severely ill through distress, was unable to cope and dies. Adeline eventually recovers and is devastated by the loss of her friend. She also learns that Charles intends to marry Emma; however Emma’s aunt and father refuse as she is promised to Mr Browne, and so she and Charles elope. Adeline then meets her Uncle Lord Ormond and cousin; Mr

¹⁷ Dustin Griffin ‘The cultural economics of literary patronage’ in *Literary Patronage in England, 1650-1850*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1996) p21

Beauford, and learns the history of her parents. Upon discovering that her mother's parents live in France she travels to France where she is informed through Louisa, who is now Lady Sedley that Lord Melville and Eliza are no longer getting married. However the Marchioness tries to force Adeline into marrying her son and when they approach the altar Adeline faints. The Chevalier (the Marchionesses other son) then arrives with Adeline's father Henry Seymour and father and daughter are reunited. Lord Melville arrives and as well as Mr Beauford and Julia Faulkland, he and Adeline are finally wed.

- *The Frances Burney School* -

Critical evaluation for the novel *Adeline or The Orphan* is scarce, yet its didactic message to its readers is clear; maintaining virtue and a kind disposition will always be rewarded, whereas those who are inferior and dishonorable will ultimately be punished. The plot of *Adeline or The Orphan* bears a very close comparison to Frances Burney's *Evelina*, as both heroines are portrayed in realistic and contemporary circumstances. Like Charlotte Smith's Emmeline, Evelina and Adeline are orphans, and whilst they are both raised by a respectable and loving father-type figure, their unsecure patronage is vital in underlining Katharine Rogers' argument that the device of the orphan "obscures class distinctions and underscores the fragile position of the unprotected women"¹⁸. Novels written by women in the late eighteenth century were focusing less on class equality, an idea expressed through the function of the orphan. This leads to what George Justice states as a "cultural class transcending traditional systems of social and economic status"¹⁹, in which the only way that both Adeline and Evelina can respectably prove their merit is as a "thinking person"²⁰. Furthermore motherless daughters like Adeline and Evelina, or even neglected daughters like Adeline's cousin Constance, lacked information about the world and thus were left exposed to situations which could place their virtue askew. The fact that they are initially naive and

¹⁸ Dale Spender *Living By the Pen, Early British Women Writers* p96

¹⁹ George Justice 'The Excursion, Evelina and Novel culture' p 152

²⁰ George Justice 'The Excursion, Evelina and Novel culture' p 152

unaware about social etiquette because they do not have a maternal guide presumes that they are encouraged to model themselves on what they perceive to be right, therefore ultimately falling victim to unscrupulous seducers like Mr Woodford and Mr Willoughby, thus excusing many of the mistakes that they make, and contributing to the “learning process”²¹ that they are both designed to engage in. However whilst Burney portrays her views of class equality through a satirical middle class who are aspiring to be the upper class, like the Branghton's, the author of *Adeline or The Orphan* does not implement the use of satire at all, which by the end of the eighteenth century was a concept that was becoming increasingly exercised. Considering that satire was a traditionally masculine concept the author may have been scared to include it in her novel as she may have been frightened of being unaccepted by her readers.

It is clear that Evelina makes mistakes and simultaneously learns from them up until the novels end, whereas in *Adeline or The Orphan*, Adeline's only real mistakes occur very early on in her childhood, for example when Adeline goes out at night by herself and wanders into the garden of the Melville's. When Adeline is confronted by devious male admirers such as Mr Woodford, Mr Harley and the Marquis of Clairville, she is able to reject them politely yet firmly. Furthermore in the passage where Adeline has to tell Edward Woodford that she can never return his affection, she is compassionate and caring and “exerts herself wonderfully”²². On the other hand Evelina gets herself into drastic situations, for example, when she is in the carriage with Willoughby and he deliberately orders the driver to go the wrong way so that he can confront her with his feelings, which immediately places her virtue in danger. The clash of manners and values is more apparent in *Evelina*, because *Evelina* is continuously exposed to what Matt Bramble states as “this incongruous monster called the

²¹ Dale Spender *Living By the Pen, Early British Women Writers* p20

²² *Adeline or The Orphan*, (Minerva Press, London 1790) volume 2 p4

public”²³, and thus is more susceptible to making mistakes as she does not always know how to act when placed in public situations, especially those occurring in the busy city of London. Adeline, in contrast is always in “privatized spaces”²⁴, such as Seymour Abbey and Malden Castle, and she is never as exposed to this London “public” as Evelina is. So whilst Evelina forges a social identity for herself through public culture, it is clear that Adeline finds her own social identity against it, thus lacking the cultural experience that Evelina receives and perhaps explaining why her process of learning is not as extensive as Evelina’s. Whilst they may differ in this respect the two heroines are equal in their love for their eventual husbands. Both are subject to illness when they are distressed over matters of the heart, and this is most evident in the passage in *Adeline or The Orphan*, where Adeline has to say goodbye to Melville, where upon seeing him leave she is “so overpowered by a faint and sickly coldness, she turned pale as death, trembled and then fell”²⁵. Overwhelming emotion proves to be a danger and Adeline almost dies because of it. Evelina also falls ill by what she “feels is Orville’s bad faith”²⁶, and therefore both texts imply that Lord Orville and Lord Melville are the only people that can secure Adeline’s and Evelina’s happiness because they possess control of their hearts. This relates back to the idea of class struggle mentioned earlier. Whilst the orphaned heroine immediately opposes class equality, Nancy Armstrong claims that these competing class interests are only abandoned because they are transferred instead into “a struggle of the sexes”, which are hidden through the female protagonist “because her power is ultimately subject to the authority of man”²⁷. Physical weakness itself demonstrates how “man” is able to gain authority of the protagonist’s power because as sentimental novels show this “power” is usually represented as the heart. Furthermore in a period in which

²³ George Justice ‘The Excursion, Evelina and Novel culture’ p153

²⁴ George Justice ‘The Excursion, Evelina and Novel culture’ p153

²⁵ *Adeline or The Orphan*, (Minerva Press, London 1790) volume 1 p241

²⁶ Harrison R. Steeves ‘Sentimentalism: A Literary Epidemic’

²⁷ Nancy Armstrong *Desire and Domestic Fiction, A Political History of the Novel* (Oxford Uni Press, Oxford 1987) p49

“society has rules that are weighted against women”²⁸, it is vital for a woman to gain male protection, and both women receive this by the end of each novel from a father and a husband. Many female writers of the late eighteenth century were as Ros Ballaster claims; “under pressure to become acceptable in society and so took on a maternal authority”²⁹, thus the function of the dead mother in both novels is fitting, because it is through death that they are capable of becoming not only teachers but also warning examples to ensure that their daughters do not follow suit. Evelina’s mother married without her father’s consent and ultimately was left alone when she fell pregnant because her husband deserted her. Adeline’s mother also did not listen to her father and eloped with Henry, and therefore both heroines are aware of the importance of authoritative approval when contemplating marriage because they know the consequences their mother’s faced by ignoring it. The fact that they both possess a striking resemblance to their mothers is henceforth also of importance, as by serving as dutiful daughters who may appear to be recreations of their mothers, they are ultimately “reincarnations with a difference”³⁰. They escape those errors which subsequently end the learning process and therefore each novel concludes with a woman equipped to be a dutiful mother. This is a feature of the sentimental genre; a concept I will be focusing on in the next section.

- *A Sentimental novel* -

The novel *Adeline or The Orphan* derives from the sentimental genre as it portrays the journey of a heroine who inhabits what David Humes describes as “a propensity to the tender passions”.³¹ Adeline’s emotions are signalled by her actions as opposed to words, and this is demonstrated in many passages in the novel, most notably when she is told by the Chevalier that her father is still alive. Adeline’s shock creates “her senses to be suspended between life

²⁸ Dale Spender *Living By the Pen, Early British Women Writers* p132

²⁹ Dale Spender *Living By the Pen, Early British Women Writers* p206

³⁰ Dale Spender *Living By the Pen, Early British Women Writers* p207

³¹ Janet Todd *Sensibility, an Introduction* (Methuen, London 1986) p119

and death and tears forced their way down her cheeks”³², portraying how words such as “tears” and “senses” highlight the sentimental doctrine which is endorsed through vocabulary. Janet Todd states that in a sentimental work “the appealing quality of virtue is displayed through a vague and potent distress”³³, and throughout the novel *Adeline* faces misery and heartache as she is forced to continually say goodbye to Melville, the man she loves, as well as being forced into marriage to a man she despises. The idea of young, naive women who constantly prevail with distress and anguish links directly to the concept of sensibility, where the heroine who possesses sensibility amongst virtue will typically be rewarded with a worthy marriage. This notion of sentimentality was introduced early on in the period and John Mullan states that the sentimental novel became so popular by the last decade of the eighteenth century because “they learned their appeal from the most successful and most respected novels of the mid century including most notably those by Richardson and Sterne.”³⁴ Samuel Richardson’s *Clarissa* published in 1748 marks an initial foundation for the sentimental novel in which “it’s capacity to stir emotions and touch nerves”³⁵, underlines Richardson’s assertion that delicate feelings were “morally admirable”³⁶ and the ultimate symbol of virtue. Whereas Richardson’s *Clarissa Harlowe* dies because of her exceptional virtuous sensitivities, his heroine Pamela endures suffering triumphantly even though at times collapsing under the pressure of her feelings. Laurence Sterne’s *A Sentimental Journey* which was published in 1768 pays attention to Richardson’s ambition of “writing for the moment”³⁷ and portrays through his sentimental traveller the possibility that human communication and sympathy can actually exceed language. This links directly to *Adeline or The Orphan*, in which it is clear that the author is aspiring to incorporate the

³² *Adeline or The Orphan*, (Minerva Press, London 1790) volume 1 p163

³³ Janet Todd *Sensibility, an Introduction* p3

³⁴ John Richetti, *The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth Century Novel* (Cambridge University Press, New York 1996) p237

³⁵ *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson* ed. John Carroll (Oxford, Clarendon, 1964) p 252

³⁶ John Richetti, *The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth Century Novel* p247

³⁷ Samuel Richardson *Sir Charles Grandison*, ed. Jocelyn Harris (Oxford, Oxford Uni Press 1986) p 4

fundamental ideas that these important male novelists have previously and successfully fashioned. Adeline's feelings and emotions are continuously put under pressure, most evidently when Melville tells her he loves her even though they cannot be wed due to a prior contract made by his father, which results in "a passion of tears bursting from the full bosom of Adeline"³⁸. Words cannot express her grief and are therefore transcended through her emotions. Her virtuous nature allows her to prevail through these sufferings and therefore like Pamela she gains the happiness attributed to the sentimental heroine. Furthermore the author of *Adeline or The Orphan* quotes two verses of poetry from both Alexander Pope and Oliver Goldsmith in the third volume of the novel. The first excerpt taken from Oliver Goldsmith's *The Traveller* says;

"Where'er I roam whatever realms to see
My heart, untravelled, fondly turns to thee."³⁹,

This verse is a direct signifier of pain and the second excerpt taken from Alexander Pope's *Eloisa to Abelard* denotes melancholy in its strongest sense, and both link to the representation of distress that the heroine faces before happiness prevails. By including these passages in the novel the author of *Adeline or The Orphan* is not only trying to encompass the notion of sentimentality that her male predecessors have created, but she is also attempting to elevate her novel by referencing these particular works that the reading public are sure to already be immensely aware of. Henry Mackenzie's *The Man Of Feeling* which was published in 1771 presents the protagonist Harley who was so scorned and ill treated by the world that he became the foundation for the emergence of the sentimental hero. This notion is implemented in *Adeline or The Orphan* where Lord Melville invokes the characteristics of sentimentality which are previously not attributed to male characters. When parting with Adeline he is so overpowered with sadness that "as he took Adeline's hand a tear

³⁸ *Adeline or The Orphan*, (Minerva Press, London 1790) volume 1 p236

³⁹ *Adeline or The Orphan*, (Minerva Press, London 1790) volume 3 p97

drops as he raises it to his lips.”⁴⁰ Furthermore his sorrow is so great that he is sent away to try and overcome it, another attribute of sentimentality that was formerly only associated with the heroine.

Considering that this novel was produced in the last decade of the eighteenth century, *Adeline or The Orphan* was literature from the period of the French Revolution. During this politically charged decade the novel of sentimentality and sensibility which included an intelligent, compassionate and virtuous heroine became what Jane Spencer claims as a “model for a new kind of engagement with public issues”⁴¹. Margaret Doody takes this one step further as she states that “heroines are able to discover society and history”⁴², and this is portrayed in *Adeline or The Orphan*. The history of a Battle in Bengal is mentioned in the pages of this novel however the battle is not named which shows that the author may have been reluctant to address such political issues so obviously by naming events. Research however has led me to believe that this battle was the Battle of Plassey which took place in Bengal during the Seven Years War of 1756-1763, in which the British East India Company defeated the “Nabob”⁴³ of Bengal as well as his French Allies, establishing a Company Rule in India. Whilst this war is only mentioned in passing as it is where Adeline’s father had been captured and presumed dead, it is important that it is mentioned, as the novel was written very soon after the impeachment of Warren Hastings, the Governor-General of Bengal, in 1787. Furthermore irony lies in the fact that Adeline’s adoptive father figure is named “Mr Warren”, who is seen as a loving and benevolent man throughout the novel and a man who “always wanted to administer the smallest comfort to his beloved Adeline”.⁴⁴ Considering that Warren Hastings was arrested for impeachment is daring of the author to administer an

⁴⁰ *Adeline or The Orphan*, (Minerva Press, London 1790) volume 1 p240

⁴¹ John Richetti, *The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth Century Novel* p227

⁴² Margaret Anne Doody ‘George Eliot and the Eighteenth-Century Novel’ in *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (1980) p 278

⁴³ *Adeline or The Orphan*, (Minerva Press, London 1790) volume 3 p174

⁴⁴ *Adeline or The Orphan*, (Minerva Press, London 1790) volume 2 p27

ideal father figure under his name, perhaps illustrating her sympathy towards him and underlining this change that was occurring at the end of the century in which the novel of sentimentality was not only capable of reciting history but also invoked its writers with “a license to comment on that culture”⁴⁵ in their novels.

Furthermore the question of high and financially worthy marriages was becoming increasingly important to address by novelists. Marriage became a contemporary anxiety in the 1790’s due to what Edward Copeland states as “the truly extraordinary experience with inflation”⁴⁶, where a worthy marriage was not only desirable but was necessary in the interest of survival. This is highlighted in *Adeline or The Orphan*, where Mr Woodford rejects Charles Warren for his daughter Emma on the basis that he is not financially acceptable for his daughter’s hand. This issue is again addressed in the last volume of the novel in which Madame Clairville is trying to force Adeline into marrying her son and when Adeline refuses Madame Clairville bellows to Adeline that “it is a connection you have no right to object too.”⁴⁷ Whilst Madame Clairville is portrayed as a bold and vulgar woman, the idea of a financially suitable marriage was an important issue. Therefore Adeline’s paternity at the end of the novel is highly significant as it is precisely this which secures her a brilliant and happy marriage. Furthermore in a period in which Lawrence Stone states that “romantic love is now obligatory in marriage”⁴⁸, the sentimental heroine is virtuous enough to secure her “desired station”⁴⁹ and is thus rewarded with both love and wealth through marriage. However whilst romance becomes an important feature morality must be maintained, and this is achieved through the acceptance of chastity. Heroines cannot express what Gina Campbell calls “an

⁴⁵ John Richetti, *The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth Century Novel* p227

⁴⁶ Edward Copeland ‘The General calamity: the want of money’ in *Women writing about money: women’s fiction in England, 1790- 1820* (Cambridge, Cambridge Uni Press, 1995) p 17

⁴⁷ *Adeline or The Orphan*, (Minerva Press, London 1790) Volume 3 pp 152-153

⁴⁸ Lawrence Stone *Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (Harper and Row, London 1977) p1222

⁴⁹ Edward Copeland ‘The General calamity: the want of money’ p 23

autonomous sexual desire”⁵⁰ and so in turn this creates an increase in emotion and sentiment which poses as a mask for this desire. Whilst this abided to the rules of eighteenth century women’s literature, it created the notion of excessive sentimentality, which was a concept that was brought into question by the end of the century. This is demonstrated in *Adeline or The Orphan* through the character of sister Frances, a genteel and benevolent woman who was so distraught over the loss of Orville, the man she loved, that she ended up dying because of it. Furthermore although the novel concludes with a marriage it is collaborated with the death of three characters which perhaps serve as an attempt by the author to address and illustrate this view of the dangers of acute sentimentality. Jane Austen takes this idea one step further and openly “ridicules excessive sensibility”⁵¹ by overturning the clichés and conventional views of sentimental fiction. For example she illustrates vulgar mothers, like Mrs Jennings in *Sense and Sensibility*, dishonorable lower class orphans, like Jane Fairfax in *Emma*, and sentimental friends who turn out to be a pretence, such as Isabella Thorpe in *Northanger Abbey* who possessed “shallow understanding and a mind preoccupied with itself”.⁵² It is perhaps for this reason that Mary Robinson claims in her novel *The Natural Daughter* published in 1799 that “romances only sell for waste paper”⁵³, as the idea of the perfectly sentimental heroine was becoming old fashioned, paving the way for the future literary figures such as Jane Austen to provide a twist in the archetypal heroine and challenge the traditional views of sentimentality which were so prevalent in the eighteenth century.

⁵⁰ Gina Campbell *How to Read Like a Gentleman: Burney’s Instructions to her Critics in Evelina* p581

⁵¹ Frank W. Bradbrook *Jane Austen and her Predecessors* (Cambridge Uni Press, London 1966) p 120

⁵² John Hardy *Jane Austen’s Heroines* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1984) p8

⁵³ Mary Robinson *The Natural Daughter* ed. Sharon M. Setzer (Broadview Press, Ontario 2003) p 208