

The Social Responsibilities of the Novelist: A Late 18th-Century Model

From its beginnings in the first half of the eighteenth century, the novel has been an important way of influencing the culture of its day. The birth (and then evolution) of this literary genre in England was closely linked to transformations in political life, modifications of economic and social structures, and changes of mentalities triggered by the Glorious Revolution in 1688. It took over from previous narrative forms, attempting to say something about the changes in society in a new way. The novel had then to be understood in the context of a particular society at a particular time.

As novels in the eighteenth century became evermore popular so their authors became increasingly better known, some reaching celebrity status. Society then began to examine not just the characters and the plots of the novel to gain education, inspiration and social change, but also the personalities and lives of the novelists themselves.

This work returns to almost the very start of this two-pronged process by examining both the lives and works of two sisters, Sophia and Harriet Lee. The Lee sisters were leading lights in the innovation of novels for women. The latter had been left out of the literary loop. The landmark and best-selling novels had been written mainly by male authors (*eg.* Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* and Tobias Smollett's *Humphrey Clinker*) in a realistic vein and in a style which did not really take account of women's aspirations and desires. The Lees were part of the new generation of women who took over the feminine mantle. Their work accommodated a burgeoning middle-class female readership, whilst through their lifestyle they served as contemporary role models.

Using the medium of the novel, the sisters established a real connection with their female readership. Through a judicious mix of historical, sentimental and gothic tradition, the Lees created through their fictional heroines something their readers could identify with and be inspired by. For themselves, the Lees achieved a place in society and were able to help pave the way in the liberation of the role of women to a more prominent and acceptable position, one of being potentially successful figures of commercialism.

The Novelists

Strong-willed, practical and shrewd in business, Sophia and Harriet Lee showed a male-dominated world what women could and would be capable of achieving, free from mental and physical shackles.

Early Life

Sophia Lee (1750-1824) and Harriet Lee (1757-1851) were among seven children born to two actors (John and Anna-Sophia). Their father, who also became a theatre manager, was controversial, eccentric and imprudent with money. He was bankrupted at least three times, one occasion leading to his wife and children being thrown out onto the streets. Yet from this existence Sophia and Harriet acquired two major assets: pragmatism and culture. The sisters' strengths were severely tested. For Sophia, it was particularly difficult. Not only was she, before twenty (while writing her first novel) obligated to look after her dying mother, but soon to be sent to jail through the imprudent financial dealings of her father. She responded to these traumas by writing a best-selling play *The Chapter of Accidents* (1780) whose first night was performed to a packed Haymarket theatre. The remuneration from this work enabled Sophia to release her father from jail and provide financial security for the younger family members. At that point, Harriet and Sophia decided to purchase a boarding school in Bath (rather than either one concentrating on their own writing career). This choice was to produce a full range of benefits for the Lee children and allowed Sophia and Harriet to construct a way of life that gave stability, independence and status.

The Boarding School

On January 16th 1781, Harriet and Sophia opened their boarding school in Bath. Sophia (who provided the capital) took on the role of headmistress. Her younger sisters Harriet and Ann were employed as teachers whilst a third sister Charlotte (the eldest of the family) had already opened her own day school six months before. The success of the school was rapid. The Lees were shrewd enough to set fee levels which undercut their rivals. Very soon, the sisters were able to move the school to larger premises in more pleasant surroundings (7 Belmont). By August 1782, the school was boarding twenty-three pupils. Four years later, a further move was necessary. "Belvedere House" in Lansdown Road was chosen for the extra capacity along

with the panoramic views it offered. The new school was always full (fifty-two boarders plus twenty-two day pupils). It was well-known nationally, attracting the best families in the country. Sophia was clearly the authority figure, the one who set the rules. Harriet was more a mother figure, closer to the girls. The two sisters had very distinct personalities, which allowed them to occupy various and complementary functions inside their establishment. The working days for both of them were long and hard, starting at 6 a.m. and going through till after 8 p.m., six days a week. Harriet's duties additionally included the night shift. It is a testament to the inner strength of the Lees that their writing should be so prolific and successful when one considers their workload. Harriet herself acknowledged in 1832 the difficulties involved: "An interval, however, still elapsed between the publication of each succeeding volume: not from lack either of inclination or materials to proceed upon, but that 'carking cares', and necessary occupations, engaged the hours of both sisters..."¹

The Literary Work

Despite a time-consuming school curriculum, Sophia and Harriet wrote prolifically in various forms: plays, poems, translations and novels (one running to five extensive volumes) published separately and jointly. Altogether, they wrote twelve literary works. Amongst them were five novels. The major titles were *The Recess; or A Tale of Other Times* (1783-85) written by Sophia and *The Canterbury Tales* (1797-1805) written jointly by the two sisters. Three other minor epistolary novels were: *The Life of a Lover* (1804) by Sophia as well as *The Errors of Innocence* (1786) and *Clara Lennox; or The Distressed Widow* (1797) by Harriet. Both *The Recess* and *The Canterbury Tales* (which included the most famous tale 'Kruitzner') were national and international best-sellers. The first volume of Sophia's *The Recess* was published in 1783 as a trial: "The success of this work far surpassed her expectations: its interest was increased by her publishing only the first volume, in order to feel the ground" (*Obituary for the Year 1825*). This was a common practice used by the novelists at the time. But as soon as it was published, it was an immediate success. The circulating libraries were invaded, and the readers literally fought for the book. Two years later, Sophia published the second and third volumes in answer to the demand of many readers eager to know what was to follow: "Popular applause, and urgent inquiries even from individuals wholly strangers to her, encouraged her to produce the remainder" (*Obituary for the Year 1825*). Referring to the completed three-volume work, James R. Foster noted: "The fame of this novel (*The Recess*) made its author one of the best known novelists of her day" (p. 445). Indeed, it was published

several times, together with shortened and adapted versions. It was also translated into French², German, Swedish, Spanish and Portuguese over a period spanning twenty years.

Harriet's *The Canterbury Tales* was first published in 1797, this again gaining the unanimous approval of public and critics alike. 'Kruitzner' (in Volume 4) in particular stood out, mentioned even in Harriet's obituary. *The Canterbury Tales* was published several times (including in the US). Two of its tales ('The Two Emilys' and 'Kruitzner') were published separately in both English and French. 'Kruitzner' additionally was adapted for theatre (*The Three Strangers*) in 1822.

The remaining novels, although less successful with the critics, enjoyed popular public support. Both *The Errors of Innocence* and *The Life of a Lover* were popular enough to be translated into French.

The Lees' work not only had a direct influence on the reading public. It also heavily influenced the next generation of writers. Imitation was indeed the sincerest form of flattery. A whole generation of novelists began using the idea of mixing history and fiction: Ann Fuller with *The Convent, or the History of Sophia Nelson* (1786) and Alan Fitz-Osborne, *an Historical Tale* (1787), Anna Maria Mackenzie with *Calista* (1789), Rosetta Ballin with *The Statue Room; an Historical Tale* (1790). Even Sir Walter Scott's true historical novel *Kenilworth* (1821) had something of the Lees' touch.³ Ann Radcliffe too was known to have been a great admirer of the sisters' work, and particularly *The Recess*. She was able to take the Lees' concepts to new heights for the readers to come.

But perhaps the most vivid impression made by the Lees' works was on the genius of writer Lord Byron. Not only was his writing inspired by 'Kruitzner', but having read this work at the age of just fourteen, his lifestyle itself seems to have been influenced. Byron's 1822 publication of *Werner; or the Inheritance*, one of his last tragedies, was entirely inspired by 'Kruitzner':

« Le drame suivant est entièrement emprunté de *Kruitzner*. J'ai adopté les caractères, le plan et souvent même le langage de cette histoire ; quelques uns des caractères sont modifiés ou changés, et j'en ai ajouté un, celui d'Ida de Stralenheim ; mais, du reste, l'original est généralement suivi. Je crois que c'est à l'âge de quatorze ans que je lus, pour la première fois, ce roman, qui fit sur moi une vive impression. Il est peut-être devenu la source de mes inspirations et de mes idées. Je ne sais trop s'il a jamais été populaire, ou si, d'ailleurs, sa popularité a été remplacée par celle d'autres grands écrivains dans le même genre ; mais j'ai trouvé généralement que tous ceux qui l'avaient lu convenaient, comme moi, de l'imagination et de la conception singulière de l'auteur. Parmi ceux dont je pourrais citer l'opinion, figuraient des noms illustres. Mais ce n'est nullement nécessaire, car chacun doit juger d'après ses propres sentiments. Je renvoie simplement le lecteur à l'histoire originale afin qu'il puisse juger combien je lui suis

redevable, et je ne serais pas fâché qu'il la lût avec plus de plaisir que le drame que j'ai fondé sur ce sujet. »⁴

Social Life

The Lees also enjoyed a prolific social life, becoming pillars of a prestigious circle of international celebrities. These included Sarah Siddons (famous tragedy actress), Mrs. Piozzi (writer and friend of Samuel Johnson), the Sheridans (theatrical couple), and Sir Thomas Lawrence (official royal portrait artist) whose talent was first discovered by Sophia herself. Along with soirees and visits to the theatre, the circle provided them with a way of climbing to the highest levels in society and there gaining full recognition. Bath at this time lent itself to high socializing. It was a very busy and fashionable city, complete with its spa, theatres, parades and balls. It also enjoyed regular visits from the royal family. It attracted prominent politicians (like Robert Walpole and William Pitt) and many celebrities from the artistic sphere (like Thomas Gainsborough, Samuel Richardson, David Garrick). Sophia and Harriet “... had a numerous and agreeable circle of acquaintance among the residents of Bath, and few persons who had a taste for literature visited Bath without becoming acquainted to them”. (*Obituary for the Year 1825*)

Furthermore, there was an international dimension to the sisters' social circle as it comprised writers and politicians in exile: Hippolyte Pindemonte and Count Melzi d'Eril from Italy, and General Paoli from Corsica for example.

Whilst the Lees remained busy socially, love was a subject that somewhat deserted them both. Sophia herself remained a staunch spinster, and although Harriet had several pressing suitors, she likewise resisted commitment to anyone of them. The most persistent (and the most famous) was the philosopher William Godwin. He was a recent widower of Mary Wollstonecraft, with two small children to look after.⁵ And whilst he was looking for a mother figure for them, there is little doubt he fell in love with Harriet at first sight, taken by her charm and quick wit. However Harriet issued a cutting rebuttal. It would seem that the sisters' connection to each other was always more important than any connection to others, in terms of love and reliance.

The Lees retired from both school life and writing in 1803, Sophia at fifty-three and Harriet at forty-six. They remained socially active, mixing with the likes of fellow writers, the Porter sisters. Sophia finally passed away, cuddled in her sister's arms, aged seventy-four. Harriet carried on for further amazing twenty-seven years. She died at ninety-four, “a brilliant

conversationalist to the last”.

The Lees, through their professional success and lifestyle, managed to influence many people in society. For example, they served as role models for a new generation of writers. They also inspired both the thinking of the child pupils who attended their school and that of the influential public figures with whom they mixed socially.

The Novels

As the novel became further established in the public domain, so too did the opportunity for it to bear social responsibilities. The primary functions of any novel are to entertain its reader by bringing excitement and joy, and to respond to the feelings of the day. The Lees understood these primary functions, but also the pressing need of women to establish a greater self-sufficiency and equality.

Entertaining the reader

New reading public

Throughout the eighteenth century, literature underwent spectacular changes, in particular with regard to the composition of the readership. Up to the beginning of the century, writing had been dominated by wealthy aristocrats (like Sir William Temple, Lady Winchelsea) who had no need for income from book royalties. Poorer writers made a living at the behest of rich patrons, which was now declining. A marketplace for book sales started to establish itself for two reasons. Firstly, people were better educated, and more of them in the middle and lower classes were able to read. Secondly, there was more leisure time available in society, particularly amongst a new middle-class. This new readership however, required a different approach to literature than the previous rather elite one. It initially required subject matters that were closer to real life. That, in turn, needed both a new type of author and a functioning marketplace where these new works could be found. The decline of patrons introduced a new dynamic, that of the commercial publisher. These newcomers were businessmen looking to make a profit from the changing literary circumstances. They made a point of studying the marketplace they were involved in, and making judgment as to what that marketplace was asking for at any given time. The law of supply and demand was liberally applied. What the

public wanted, the public got. Thomas Cadell and G.G. & J. Robinson were two of the leaders of this new trade. Both were involved in the publication of the Lee sisters' works. As far as new authors were concerned, the growth of women's literacy created a demand for writers of much more sentimental stories who could better empathize with them. As opposed to Henry Fielding's or Tobias Smollett's somewhat crude realism and light humour, the second generation of authors sought to cater for a more emotionally sensitive readership. This market then developed into one where sensitivity was to be coupled with stronger emotions, such as fear associated with the gothic.⁶ It was this market to which the Lees applied themselves.

Elaborate mix

The success of the Lees was not merely understanding and applying themselves to the marketplace of sentimentalism and gothicism (initiating what was later to be called the "gothic romance novel"). In *The Recess* for example, Sophia added a historical setting to enrich the mix. It was a novelty at the time as Harriet pointed out in her preface to *The Canterbury Tales* (1832): "*The Recess* was the first English romance that blended interesting fiction with historical events and characters, embellishing both by picturesque descriptions." *The Recess* plunges us in the heart of 16-17th century England, from Elizabeth I to James I (1558 to 1625). It is peopled with great historical figures such as Mary Stuart, Queen Elizabeth and her favourites Norfolk, Essex and Leicester, together with many other secondary characters also belonging to British history.⁷ But the novelist was not really interested in the political and religious role they might have played at their time. What mattered were their human and dramatic dimensions and the emotional effect they could have on the reader. For Sophia, Mary Stuart's sad destiny was an ideal starting point. What's more, the author had no hesitation including a few inaccuracies here and there (eg. Matilda and Ellinor being Mary Stuart and Norfolk's twin daughters), provided her reader's thirst for strong emotions and fascinating stories was quenched.

The Canterbury Tales afforded itself of a different yet still elaborate form of literary mix since it was twelve completely separate stories. Whilst some tales had a simple basis of sentimentalism ('Arundel', 'Mary Lawson'), others combined that sentimentalism with either historical ('Constance') or gothic ('Lothaire', 'Kruitznier') nuances.

Even the Lees' minor works demonstrated a certain mix of genre. Their basis was generally one of sentimentalism. However in these cases, the sentimental was in the form of series of letters written between correspondents. Making delightful literary mixes was really something the Lees enjoyed playing with. What else could explain the reader being faced with the

anachronistic use of a factory setting of a hundred looms at work in an ancient castle?

“To exclude whom (the unwelcome visitors) he had now let it (the castle) to some manufacturers... A numerous body of diligent mechanics were plodding in those halls where Elizabeth had feasted, and their battered sides hardly now informed us where the rich tapestry used to hang. My ears were suddenly stunned with the noise of a hundred looms; and the distant lake... presented us another scene of industry not less busy, strange, and surprizing.” *R*, III, 201-03

Responding to the feelings of the day

The period leading up to that of the Lees writing was one of great change in England. The first half of the 18th century had been fairly settled both politically and economically. But as the century wore on, this stability began to waver, driven by the commencement of the Industrial Revolution. The socio-economic transformations were profound indeed for the population. On the positive side, mechanism produced better and greater quantities of goods manufactured more time-efficiently and with less labour. James Watt’s invention of the steam engine in 1765 for example mechanized many processes such as weaving, printing and harvesting as well as opening the door for steam train transport. People enjoyed the availability of improved products together with an increase in their own leisure time and an upward mobility. Nevertheless, there was a price to pay. The Industrial Revolution necessitated mass migration of people away from rural areas and into urbanism. Urban life was a far cry from the more gentle pace of the countryside. Urban living conditions reflected the somewhat unplanned and hasty nature under which housing and industrial buildings were constructed. Life was crowded, dirty and somewhat soulless. Such were the circumstances that the Lees found themselves having to respond to in their writings.

The new readership was looking for reassurance that the benefits of the new way would not be paid for by the loss of traditions of the old. There was a certain nostalgia running through people’s thinking. As noted previously, the primary change the new readership required was from the “picaresque realism” of Smollett and Fielding to something based more on sensitivity. New generation authors such as Eliza Haywood (*Betsy Thoughtless*), Fanny Burney (*Evelina*), Mrs. Griffith or Frances Brooke took up this mantle, as did the Lees. But the Lees went further. They tapped into their readers’ disquiet about the new urban lifestyle by using picturesque country settings (similarly painted by William Gilpin for example)⁸, the wild and sublime landscapes of Wales, Scotland or the Alps (inspired by Edmund Burke’s

esthetical theory) and detailed descriptions of 18th-century landscape gardens made trendy by Capability Brown and Mason.⁹

In addition to this, their use of the historical served two distinct purposes. The first was the acknowledgement of people's nostalgia for a past now lost. The second was to enable the use of the gothic in order to respond to a new desire of readers to experience matters of stronger emotional content. It was not just the clever use of mixes in genre but how the components of these mixes applied themselves so directly to the readership of the day which made the Lees the great success they were.

Promoting the cause of women

Alongside the advent of the Industrial Revolution was the beginning of another major sociological change, that of women's emancipation. Until this time, women were merely the property of their husbands without any formal legal existence. A woman's belongings, salary, even her children were the property of her husband. In 1882 (coincidentally just one year before the publication of the first volume of *The Recess*), *The Married Women's Property Act* was passed through Parliament, enabling a woman to have material independence. Moves towards equality such as this were greatly aided by an improvement in educational standards generally, and for females in particular. For the lower classes, literacy was developed mainly through charity schools and Sunday schools. For the upper and middle classes, education was evolving through the expansion of the use of governesses and boarding schools. Belvedere House was one such example of the latter. New levels and greater numbers of female literacy produced both a demand for appropriate reading material and a female authorship capable of supplying that demand. A new generation of female authors was writing specifically for the women in their own society. The novel was the perfect genre since it had at that time merely simple story-telling at its base. What emerged were books empathetic to women's position, which was still subordinate. Yet further, works were deliberately motivating women and their quest towards equality. The Lees tapped into those aspirations by representing the limitations of women's lives and inserting strong female characters to demonstrate a way out.

Characters were put in restrictive settings. In *The Recess* alone, the protagonists found themselves imprisoned in convents, castles, dungeons and on remote islands. Matilda spends eight years in Jamaica imprisoned in a "melancholy dungeon" (*R*, II, 137), "a grave" (*R*, II, 138). Likewise, after being shipwrecked on the shore of a Scottish island, Ellinor and her friend Lady Southampton feel "prisoners at large, as we were, effectually bounded by the

roaring ocean, and depending solely on contingencies for freedom, the days to us crept heavily away” (*R*, III, 101). The title itself, *The Recess*, refers to the underground basement of the gothic ruins of a monastery. Matilda and Ellinor (the twin sisters) are “entombed alive in” (*R*, I, 9) until womanhood: “Our light proceeded from small casements of painted glass, so infinitely above our reach that we could never seek a world beyond; and so dim that the beams of the sun were almost a new object to us when we quitted this retirement”. *R*, I, 3

Beyond the title moreover, the whole novel, in its nine hundred page entirety, is a representation of woman’s struggle. Facing and overcoming one obstacle merely leads the character to yet another.

Another recurring theme of the Lees’ work is that of inequality and the dominance of male society. There are comparisons of male and female education, male and female freedom of movement and the dutiful wife compared with a neglectful husband. In ‘Julia’, the last of *The Canterbury Tales*, the eponymous heroine was still a child when she was “bought” (p. 431) by her husband Mr Seymour, an old and solitary man who never made her happy.¹⁰

To indicate the way forward, the Lees produced female characters, strong both intellectually and physically, to cope with their difficult circumstances. Numerous examples can be found of women intellectually superior to men. There is the figure of the bright young girl who can manipulate her lover (such as Miss Hervey in *Clara Lennox*), the mature woman who is confident in her own strengths (such as Emily Fitzallen in ‘The Two Emilys’, Mrs. Mordaunt in ‘William Cavendish’ or Julia¹¹) and the experienced and independent widow (such as Mrs Selwyn in ‘The Two Emilies’). The ultimate symbol of woman power is portrayed in the character of Queen Elizabeth: ‘Her eyes were remarkably small, but so clear and quick they seemed to comprehend everything with a single glance’ (*R*, I, 200)

With regard to physical prowess, both sisters in *The Recess* display a robustness beyond the normal expectation of their own sex. Pregnant and trying to escape, Matilda rides on a horse across England, with only a small drink of milk to sustain her: “I went through incredible fatigues uncomplaining, riding the whole day with no other refreshment than a draught of new milk, supplied by a girl as we past along” (*R*, I, 252). Ellinor is similarly physically resistant: “I travelled almost without resting for two days and a night” (*R*, II, 207).

The Lees even resorted to the use of female characters symbolically dressing as men. Ellinor dresses herself as a page to run away from the recess. When she meets Lady Southampton on her way to Ireland, she decides to keep her masculine habit in order to remain unnoticed: “But to guard against all suspicion and enquiry, I resolved to retain my masculine habit, and pass for one of Lady Southampton’s pages, till safely lodged in Ireland” (*R*, III, 51).

Overall, the Lees were no feminists, but their writings clearly helped set the ground for the feminist movement led by Mary Wollstonecraft and others.

At the birth of the novel in the eighteenth century, books were the kings of communication and their authors held in high esteem. Whilst the Lee sisters served as a representative model of popular literature for this period, that model does not necessarily hold up so well when applied to their twenty-first century counterparts. Today, books must compete with a phenomenal range of media including radio, television and internet. For the wider public, it seems arguable that the author of popular books has largely lost his position as a role model, that mantle now being taken by musicians and sportsmen.

The primary functions of the novel remain unchanged: entertaining the reader and responding to the feelings of the day. The social responsibilities of the novel, whilst much accepted by authors of the more "serious" works, appear diluted in the field of current popular literature. Although most welcome in any form, there is strong argument that social responsibility is simply not one of the novel's primary functions, and indeed, has never been. It is a writer's option. Nevertheless, the power of the novel should never be underestimated. The work of skilled authors, who choose to use the novel as a platform to promote social responsibility and change, has so often been at the forefront of great causes.

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NOTES

¹ Preface of *The Canterbury Tales*. 2 vols. London: Colburn and Bentley, 1832, XVIII.

² It was first translated by Théophile Barrois le Jeune in 1786 (*Le Souterrain, ou Matilde*), then by Mme Herbst en 1787 (*Le Souterrain, ou les deux soeurs*).

³ "The Recess gave Sir Walter Scott some valuable suggestions for *Kenilworth*" Summers 209.

⁴ Lord Byron, préface, *Werner, ou l'Héritage*, de Lord Byron (Paris : Pigoreau, 1824).

⁵ William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft's daughter then became Mary Shelley, author of *Frankenstein* (1818).

⁶ The pioneer was Horace Walpole with *The Castle of Otranto* in 1764, followed by Clara Reeve with *The Old English Baron* (1778).

⁷ "Sophia Lee's romance, *The Recess* (1783-85) ploughed a deep track in the field of contemporary letters. It was welcomed by reviewers for its novelty. A tale in which so many of the great figures of the Elizabethan age moved was a refreshing change from the banal love-affairs of young ladies and gentlemen in Georgian drawing-rooms, or from the disreputable humours of rogues in taverns and on the highways. For the first time, the reader of English fiction was brought face to face with the statesmen and courtiers of the great Queen - a new and exhilarating experience." Tompkins I

⁸ "We found ourselves in a noble cloister. We flew into the garden it border'd, and how strong was the impression of the scene before us! from the mansion, which stood on a hill, spread a rich and fertile valley, mingled with thickets, half seen or cluster'd hamlets thro' which flow'd a river, and to the main, *The liquid serpent drew his silver train*, The sun was sinking, involved in swelling waves of gold and purple, upon whom we almost gaz'd ourselves blind...." (R, I, 14).

⁹ In 'Montfort', Don Anthonio's garden is typical of the trend: "There was somewhat not wholly uncongenial to the scene. Through lattices which were thrown open, a garden

presented itself, which, though neither artfully disposed in walks or parterres, was rich in the wild graces of nature... (It was) a view of fairy-land. On one side a thick grove of limes strewed the ground with blossoms... On the other, the stream of a distant cascade stole through the turf, betrayed by its own brightness, till it was collected in a marble bason, and encircled by orange and citron trees. Nature breathed tranquillity” (‘Montfort’, p. 8-10).

¹⁰ “She had indeed little reliance on his (Mr Seymour’s) love; it was, unfortunately, because love had not been a bond of union between them, that all the present misery had arisen, and all the chance of the future had been incurred. Mr Seymour, when he made his election in life, had not chosen a companion, a friend, in a word, a wife; one whom he could believe it possible should ever be disinterestedly attached to him: but a mere expensive bauble to decorate his house with, and outshine his acquaintance.” (‘Julia’, p. 493)

¹¹ “At the electrifying sound of Emily Fitzallen’s name, imagination had presented her to the whole group, in the very form in which they last beheld her - gay, glowing, beautiful, imperious, savagely exulting in her power over the unfortunate...” (‘The Two Emilys’, p. 523-24). “She had prescribed to herself no duty, no tie, no rule in life” (‘William Cavendish’, p. 145). “Her knowledge of music was confined, but her ear was exquisitely true, and she had those low and melting notes in her voice which are always sure to reach the heart; perfectly informed how to add to them, by every grace of expression and every charm of feature, she delighted in this case, as in all others, to baffle sober judgment or critical skill. The women said it was detestable and out of all taste or time; the men thought it ecstatic: she secretly smiled at both - but she knew her power, used and abused it” (‘Julia’, p. 447).