LOVING MONEY: MORAL COMMERCE IN THE WORKS OF SARAH SCOTT

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I, Belinda Anne Lee, declare that this thesis has never before been submitted, either in part or in whole, to this or any other university for the purposes of a higher degree. This thesis is an original piece of research and, except where otherwise acknowledged, all conclusions are my own.

Belinda A. Lee
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This study of Sarah Scott's works started with a series of questions. Why did Sarah Scott's narratives interrelate moral and economic discourses? What contemporary conditions might have influenced this? How did her most well known novel, *A description of Millenium Hall*, relate to her other novels and histories? To explore these and other questions I undertook, first of all, to provide a substantial discussion of Sarah Scott's writing. Researchers before me have written about Sarah Scott, but that initial work needed to be extended and consolidated, particularly with regard to her entire body of work. For example, generalisations about Scott as the author of *Millenium Hall* needed to be tested with reference to her lesser known works.

This thesis examines all of Sarah Scott's works except for *Agreeable Ugliness*, a translation of Antoine de la Place's *La Laideur Amiable*. Because my analysis of the texts takes its impetus from the texts themselves the discussion is quite wide ranging – for example, it moves from exploring the status of the romance genre in the mid-eighteenth century when I discuss *The history of Cornelia* in Chapter One, to antislavery discourses in Chapter Five. While the thesis includes such diverse issues, the discussion is focussed by the explication of 'moral commerce' in Scott's texts. I have coined the term 'moral commerce' to explain an ideology in Scott's works that foregrounds the interrelationship of moral and commercial discourses and conduct. Each of the texts manifests moral commerce in different ways, but they all show the intricate relations between financial exchange and moral conduct. The thesis methodology relies on textual reading of Scott's novels and a consideration of how these texts interacted with contemporary cultural discourses.
INTRODUCTION

'Commerce is the link by which men are united in love.'

i. Sarah Scott — 'protestant nun', 'romantic friend' or 'Bluestocking feminist'? I have before me three twentieth-century editions of Sarah Scott's novel *A description of Millenium Hall*. On the cover of the most recent edition (1995) is a photograph in which a woman sits languidly on a lawn, her skirt billowing around her. Another woman similarly dressed stands behind her, her stern face shadowed under a hat. The women's expressions and postures both invite and resist the viewer's gaze. The Virago edition (1986) has a reproduction of Raoux's 'Vierges modernes'; his 'modern maidens' inhabit – or decorate – a neoclassical interior of 'polite' feminine leisure. Walter Crittenden's 1955 edition reproduces Anthony Walker's engraving that accompanied the first 1762 edition of *Millenium Hall*. Two gentlemen, shadowed in the foreground amidst a stand of trees, gaze upon a grand sunlit building. Taken together, these three illustrations evoke the collision of opinions about this novel and about Scott's work as a whole. The original illustration represents the two gentlemen intruding upon the sheltered female community, an image of the novel corresponding with a view that sees this community as a female enclave cut off from the outside world. Critical commentaries about this aspect of the novel see it as a female utopia, a celebration of women's friendship, and sometimes of romantic friendship. The 'Vierges modernes',

3 Refer to Appendix B for a copy of these illustrations.
4 This perspective is by far the most common among Scott scholars. Included in this group are: George Haggerty, Linda Dunne, Joseph Boone, Susan Sniader Lancer, Barbara Brandon Schnorrenberg, Eve Walsh Stoddard. See Chapter 3 for further discussion.
also, emphasises the grouping of the exclusively female company. The neoclassical aesthetic engendered in the images – from the attic architecture to the sandal-clad women – suggests a visual harmony that, combined with the frescoed ceilings and genteel pursuits of the inhabitants, evokes an idyllic and refined community of women.\textsuperscript{5}

Both illustrations encourage the viewer to gaze on the peaceful scenes, and render the women as passive objects to be observed. Conversely, the photographic illustration of the Broadview edition both invites and defies the gaze. The fact that this is a photograph rather than an illustration possibly contributes to this effect. The women dress elegantly, but their feminine, restrictive dress seems to belie the mental activity that their serious faces suggest.

The visual discourses of these cover illustrations inevitably operate differently from narrative discourses, but nonetheless these images have been chosen by publishers or editors to represent the narrative 'inside' the book. In these images, as in the perspectives on Scott's writing, there has been a movement away from emphasising the utopian enclave or utopian 'no place',\textsuperscript{6} towards an awareness of the tensions in the narrative – represented, in a sense, by the ambivalent faces of the photographed women. The photographic subjects are on display, but their faces suggest that they resent the intrusion of the gaze. What at first appears to be feminine retirement from society can, from a different perspective, be interpreted as women's active critique of an unacceptable situation. More recent criticism has begun to identify and explore these tensions in \textit{Millenium Hall}. Instead of concentrating on the feminine harmony and isolation from society, critics such as Markman Ellis, Moira Ferguson and Betty Rizzo have highlighted the ways in which Scott's texts engage with expansive and complex

\begin{footnotesize}
\footnote{The women depicted are dress in a neo-classical style called 'generalised dress' that was used in portraiture. For a discussion of the 'generalised dress' of women sitters – particularly of Joshua Reynolds' 'attempt to produce an elevated pseudo-classical form of dress, particularly for his female aristocratic clients' in eighteenth-century painting, refer to Gill Perry's 'Women in disguise: likeness, the Grand Style and conventions of the "feminine" portraiture in the work of Sir Joshua Reynolds' in Gill Perry and Michael Rossington eds, \textit{Femininity and masculinity in eighteenth-century art and culture}, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994, 19-40.}
\footnote{Since Sir Thomas More coined the term 'utopia' for the title of his sixteenth-century work, the word has played on the duality of 'no place' and 'perfect place'.}
\end{footnotesize}
social issues, such as slavery. This change in perspective has arisen in part from critics looking at Scott's works in relation to each other and in relation to the cultural conditions in which she was writing.

This thesis aims to explore Scott's works in these contexts and as a whole, but it is appropriate to begin the discussion with reference to her semi-biographical novel A description of Millenium Hall because it is the work with which she is most often associated. This novel is the best known of her works, and it has caught interest primarily for its utopian depiction of eighteenth-century women's romantic friendship. When Elizabeth Mavor wrote about the 'Ladies of Llanghollen', she cited Millenium Hall as the vade mecum of romantic friendship. It is unclear whether the 'Ladies' themselves were familiar with Scott's novel, but it is significant that their biographer draws the connection. The term 'romantic friendship' describes the relationship between two women who spurned traditional marriage and instead lived intimately together. The ambiguity of the term by which it hints at but is not explicit about sexual relations is deliberate, for it acknowledges the difficulties of applying recent sexual categories retrospectively.


8 The only work I do not discuss in detail is Agreeable ugliness; or, the triumph of the graces; exemplified in the real life and fortunes of a young lady of some distinction, London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1754. This is a translation of Pierre Antoine de La Place Le Laideur aimable, 1752. Page references to Scott's texts will be parenthetical in the text of the discussion.

9 Elizabeth Mavor The ladies of Llanghollen: a study in romantic friendship, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971, 83. Mavor also speculates about her two subjects, and wonders whether they had been 'fired by the philosophy of Millenium Hall, which had been written by one of a pair of friends like themselves', 49.

At a time when women were excluded from most spheres of public life and when their private lives with their husbands were often characterised by inequality and economic dependency, the cloistered female community that provided opportunities for education, financial security, safety and leisure would have looked idyllic indeed. Scott shows in *Millenium Hall* the personally and socially productive results of female friendship, in a utopian mode – utopian, that is, because few women in the eighteenth century could have hoped for the financial and emotional independence to achieve their goals as do the Millenium 'ladies'.\(^\textit{11}\) The importance of depicting this type of female companionship and the opportunities it afforded for single upper-class women would in itself justify the study of Scott's writing. As my discussion of her other narratives will show, Scott's writing critiqued conventional marriages and promoted alternative models of relationships and roles for women. However, as a focus for study, the value of Sarah Scott's writings lies not only in their attention to or portrayal of 'women's issues' in eighteenth-century England. While this thesis includes discussion of this dimension of Scott's writing, one of the important goals of this study is to argue that Scott's range of works shows her to be an important commentator on a broad range of contemporary political, social and economic issues: for example, the relative merits of politicians and private individuals in addressing social ills; the social consequences of commercial conduct; the need for instruction in virtue, religion and industry.

Much of Scott's writing is not concerned with what we would now label feminist polemic. One commentator has suggested that Scott's importance is as an early feminist. Gary Kelly has attributed and circumscribed Scott's importance as an eighteenth-century woman writer by framing her as a 'Bluestocking feminist'.\(^\textit{12}\) Scott's relationship to the Bluestocking circle was through her sister, Elizabeth Montagu;

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\(^\text{11}\) When I refer to the 'Millenium ladies' I mean the group of six women who initially settled at the Hall. The term 'ladies' is acknowledging that they were all from a relatively high social position.

through her sister, too, she was known to some of the female members of the circle.
But, although she was a woman writer and was personally known to the Bluestockings, Scott spurned the public intellectual life that they led. Although she was from the upper class, Scott was very poor so she did not occupy the same social circles as the Bluestockings. Edith Sedgwick Larson has conducted research into the lives of Scott and her sister and she concludes: 'Mrs. Montagu kept her informed of their activities in their continuous chatty correspondence, but she was not a part of the circle. She was an outsider, a woman more or less alone without the secure social protection Elizabeth's prudent marriage and subsequent wealth afforded her'.

Although I disagree with Larson in the sense that Sarah did indeed have a number of female friends around her, she was a very private writer, publishing anonymously. Some of the Bluestockings also published anonymously, but they were certainly more publicly known for their writing and correspondence than was Scott. For these reasons – of economic, social and public positions – Sarah Scott should not be seen as part of the Bluestocking circle.

Indeed, while Kelly makes claims for the Bluestockings' feminist political ideology (claims which themselves need further examination) it is misleading to label all eighteenth-century women writers or intellectuals as Bluestockings. The members of the Bluestocking circle occupied a very particular class and political situation. They were Anglican, public, relatively conservative politically, and firmly upper-class. Not all women writing in the eighteenth century fit in this category: Catherine Macaulay, for example, was a republican feminist, so was definitely not a Bluestocking.

If Scott's novel was not a manifesto of 'Bluestocking feminism', neither was it simply about 'pious virgins'. She was neither reactionary, nor at the forefront of women's

13 Edith Sedgwick Larson Early eighteenth-century English women writers: their lives, fiction, and letters, unpublished PhD dissertation, Brandeis University, 1981, 103; chapter 2 is devoted to Sarah Scott.
16 This phrase was used by Terry Castle to describe Millenium Hall in her review of Eliza Fenwick's Secresy, 'Sublimely bad' London review of books, 23/2/95, 18.
radicalism. Clearly she did react strongly against the cultural restrictions placed on women, just as many of her female contemporaries did in their writing.\(^{17}\) My point is not to diminish the importance of Scott's attention in her writing to the difficult lives of women, but is to warn that labelling a woman writer as primarily concerned with 'women's issues' can perpetuate a notion that frames these issues as somehow different from the more 'important' or 'serious' ones of economics, politics, or morality, for example. Some of Scott's most pressing concerns are with morality and ethics, financial conduct, individual rights and the nature of liberty, about reason and sentiment, issues that are integral to, not distinct from, issues of gender identity and relations.

But while I emphasise this point that Scott was a writer as well as a woman writing, the fact is that in the eighteenth century it was more difficult for a woman to find space to voice her opinions than it was for a man. As a woman writer, Scott faced well documented hurdles not only to publication, but also to a public voice.\(^{18}\) Preceding recent research that articulates the difficulties that confronted women writing in the eighteenth century, women writers at the time were themselves explicitly describing those difficulties. In a letter to the Duchess of Newcastle, Charlotte Lennox, who suffered terrible financial hardship, commented about her 'present slavery to the Booksellers, whom I have the mortification to see adding to their heaps by my labours, which scarce produce me a scanty and precarious subsistence'.\(^{19}\)

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\(^{17}\) Although I single out a few for mention here, there were many women writers objecting to the cultural restrictions on women, for example: Mary Astell's *Serious proposal to the ladies* (1694-1697), Sophia's anonymous *Woman not inferior to man* (1739), the prolific dramatist, novelist and prose writer Eliza Haywood, including her novel *The British recluse* (1722), Lady Mary Wortley Montague, through to women writers later in the century such as Mary Wollstonecraft.


\(^{19}\) This letter is reproduced in Miriam Rossiter Small's *Charlotte Ramsay Lennox: an eighteenth-century lady of letters*, Archon Books, 1969, reprint. (Yale studies in English vol. 85), New Haven: Yale University Press,
Women poets expressed similar sentiments. Esther Lewis wrote in a poem titled 'A mirror for detractors. Addressed to a friend':

... when a woman dares indite,
    And seek in print the public sight,
All tongues are presently in motion
    About her person, mind, and portion;
And every blemish, every fault,
    Unseen before, to light is brought. 20

And Clara Reeve lamented to a friend:

What by my talents have I gained?
    By those I love to be disdained,
By some despised, by others feared,
    Envied by fools, by witlings jeered.
See what success my labours crowned,
    By birds and beasts alike disowned.
Those talents, that were once my pride,
    I find it requisite to hide;
For what in man is most respected,
    In woman's form shall be rejected. 21

Sarah Scott did have the advantage over some women of gaining a reasonable education, in the course of which she learnt classical and modern European languages. 22 Although she did not receive a formal education, she benefited from an active intellectual milieu at home. Her brothers were educated at Cambridge and, when at home, they had lively debates with their sisters. Emily Climenson, editor of Elizabeth Montagu's letters, quotes this assessment of the household: 23

their [the brothers'] emulation produced a corresponding zeal in their sisters, and a diligence of application unusual in females of that time. Their domestic circle was

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21 'To my friend Mrs. ------. On her holding an argument in favour of the natural equality of both the sexes. Written in the year MDCCCLVI', Original poems on several occasions. First published in 1769. Lonsdale, Eighteenth-century women poets, 248-249.
23 Unless otherwise indicated, references to Elizabeth Montagu's letters are to the following edition of her correspondence: Emily J. Climenson Elizabeth Montagu, the queen of the blue-stockings: her correspondence from 1720 to 1761, 2 vols, London: John Murray, 1906. Subsequent references to this edition will indicate volume number and page reference.
accustomed to struggle for the mastery in wit, or in superiority in argument, and their mother, whose frame of mind partook rather of the gentle sedateness of good sense than of the eccentricities of genius, was denominated by them "the Speaker", from the frequent mediation by which she moderated their eagerness for victory (I, 7).

Sarah's maternal grandmother was married to the Cambridge intellectual, Conyers Middleton, with whom the Robinson sisters spent much time learning and conversing about contemporary issues and scholarly debates. While Sarah's sister, Elizabeth, came to public prominence as one of the leading Bluestockings, and was ensured a wealthy, public existence by marrying a very rich Member of Parliament, Sarah's life was, for a number of reasons, more secluded. In 1751, after a brief, unhappy marriage to George Lewis Scott, sub-preceptor (tutor) to the Prince of Wales, Sarah moved to Bath with her close friend Lady Barbara Montagu. They lived a frugal life, and despite being plagued by financial hardship and constant ill health, ran a charity school for poor children, not unlike the one represented in Millenium Hall.  

There are no records to explain the cause of Sarah's marriage breakdown. However, the facts that Sarah's father and brothers came to the house to remove her and that George Scott, uncharacteristically for the times, agreed to financial reparation for his wife suggests some fault on his part. Letters to and from Sarah's sister, Elizabeth Montagu, are circumspect about the whole affair. In April, 1752, Mrs Delaney wrote in a letter to Mrs D'Ewes:

What a foolish match Mrs. Scott has made for herself. Mrs. Montagu wrote Mrs. Donellan word that she and the rest of her friends had rescued her out of the hands of a very bad man; but, for reasons of interest, they should conceal his misbehaviour as much as possible, but entreated Mrs. Donellan would vindicate her sister's character whenever she heard it attacked, for she was very innocent.

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24 Edward Montagu.
26 The sum was meagre, 150 pounds per annum, and even that was paid irregularly; Climenson, vol. II, 7.
And, in a letter to her husband, Elizabeth Montagu wrote of Sarah: 'poor creature, her situation is miserable, allied to the faults and the infamy of a bad man, subject to his aspersions' (II, 6). These personal views about George Scott's character seem to have been borne out by his removal from the position of sub-preceptor to young Prince George (although, as compensation, he was given the position of Commissioner of Excise in 1756).  

George Scott received a pension, but this did not assist Sarah who wrote in a letter: 'My pocket begins to tremble at the prospect of its future emptiness, for at best it is under grievous apprehensions of passing over the next quarter unreplenished. a [sic] pension may well answer Mr Scott's purpose, but I fear will very ill answer mine'.  

Elizabeth comforted her sister, writing to her in 1753: 'You will see shortly that he and you will have justice done you, and with this difference, that to you it will be a guardian angel, to him an avenging minister. In the mean time "leave him to Heaven, and the thorns that prick his bosom," as says good Mr. Hamlet' (II, 20).

It appears from Scott's letters that her private lifestyle was born of poverty and ill health, rather than of inclination. Sarah and Lady Barbara had neither the stamina nor money to maintain a very active social life outside their home. The letters between Sarah and her sister show that she and Lady Barbara received regular visitors, usually but not exclusively women. They were close friends, for example, with the writer Sarah Fielding. This visiting, rather than appearance at public functions, was their main form of socialising. Although Scott's correspondence shows that she attended balls and public gatherings in her early, single years, she did not continue this form of public entertainment after her marriage ended. She continued her friendships and her

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28 See Climenson, vol. II, 20, 44, 97. Dr Haytor, one of George's preceptors, apparently also accused George Scott of insulting language and personal violence: see Stanley Ayling George the third, London: Collins, 1972, 32. There was also some suggestion, however, that Scott lost his position because it was feared that he was exerting a Jacobite influence on the young prince. Scott was viewed as a protegé of Bolingbroke which always painted him with the Jacobite brush. Paul Langford briefly discusses Scott's suspected Jacobite tendencies: A polite and commercial people: England 1727-1783, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, 221-222.

29 This letter is in the Huntington Library's collection of Scott's correspondence. Subsequent references to letters in this collection will indicate manuscript number and date (where known). Dates are not always certain, with cataloguers often marking the date with a question mark. Letter from Sarah Scott to Elizabeth Montagu, MO 5272, 1 January, 1757.
charitable works in her domestic space rather than in the public spaces of balls, gardens and gatherings. It is to be noted that marital separation seems not to have hindered either George Scott's career or social life.

Whether her privacy was a result of her failed marriage, her disfigurement from smallpox, her financial limitations, her ongoing ill health, or simply from disposition, Sarah Scott chose to live a quiet life with Lady Barbara Montagu. At her own request, Scott's papers were destroyed on her death. The little information that remains must be gleaned from various sources such as her letters to Elizabeth Montagu. What has survived, however, are Sarah Scott's novels and historical biographies. Writing a biography of Elizabeth Montagu in the late nineteenth century, F. S. A. Doran commented that 'Elizabeth and Sarah, were endowed with the same literary tastes. Sarah wrote the more books, but Elizabeth is the better remembered'. While the two sisters were extremely close – in fact, Sarah's family nickname 'Pea' stemmed from her physical resemblance and emotional closeness to her sister Elizabeth – they chose very different avenues in life and different forms of public discourse. It was in the form of anonymously published novels and historical biographies that Sarah expressed her views rather than in the form of highly fashionable, highly public salon discussions like those of her wealthy Bluestocking sister. In her writing Scott transformed her private thoughts into a substantial public contribution to contemporary debates. The fact that Sarah has been little known, while Elizabeth has been recognised as a significant literary figure of the eighteenth-century literary scene, and the fact that their

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30 Sarah's ill health and financial difficulties are consistent subjects in her letters to her sister. While she was always to some extent unwell, in 1756 she underwent sudden surgery from which she had a slow and painful recovery (MO 5262, 5263, 5264). She writes: 'When one suffers a good deal there is comfort in hearing it was necessary, the Learned tell me I coud [sic] not have lived above two years in all probability, & then must have died in much greater pain than bleeding to death. They likewise say that nothing but my low diet coud have kept me tolerable so long', MO 5259, 22 August, 1756.
33 Betty Rizzo has painted a detailed, speculative psychological portrait of the two sisters and suggests reasons for Scott's different choice of a life from her sister's. Elizabeth had chosen to marry well, a wealthy man 28 years her senior, and embraced a public, social, opulent lifestyle, while Sarah married through mutual inclination. *Companions without vows*. 
literary statuses seem now to be reversed, are themselves commentaries on the
sometimes fickle processes of literary history.34

Scott supported herself by writing. Under the terms of her separation, Sarah received
only 150 pounds per annum from her husband. Her property was returned to her father
who did not pass it back to his daughter. She refers to her father's re-appropriation of
her fortune in a letter to Elizabeth:

I know I am oblig'd to you for any schemes you form for me, tho' I am ignorant what
they are. I am sure they are kind, & that is sufficient information to make me
acknowledge myself oblig'd. I intend to leave my father in quiet possession of my
fortune, after having done so much for peace this is but one small sacrifice more, &
what I have so order'd my matters as to bear very well[sic].35

In Sarah's letters to Elizabeth, she often refers to her father's reluctance to assist her
financially.36 Sarah and Lady Barbara pooled their resources.37 Sarah refers to this
explicitly when she writes to Elizabeth 'I speak of Ly Babs Pension as if it were my
own, & in truth it is as much mine as hers, we having as little distinction of property as
any married couple'.38 Scott still needed to supplement their finances by writing for
profit, and when she refers to her works in her letters it is usually with respect to the

34 Although this issue is too complex to discuss here, one place to start would be considering that although
the Bluestockings were primarily women, their salons were frequented, publicised, and supported by
influential male intellectuals. These men, including Samuel Johnson, gave a male authoritative stamp to these
intellectual women. The salons also represented a type of upper-class intellectual woman who was acceptable
partly because of her class and political allegiances. It is a class issue as well as a gender issue. Even early
literary histories of the eighteenth century, which usually neglected women writers, included references to the
Bluestockings. In such histories, representations of the Bluestockings sit neatly alongside discussions of
more 'important' literary figures such as Samuel Johnson. Their association with well known male writers
can only have assisted in the women's public profiles as literary women.
35 MO 5223, December 1752.
36 Elizabeth Montagu's correspondence shows Matthew Robinson, senior, to be a selfish man more interested
in his private pursuits of entertainment than in the care of his children. In a letter to her husband she writes of
her father: 'Life has been to him one long play day, he must not expect the rattles and sugar plumbs will hold
good to the last. He has never tasted business, care, or study' (Climenson, vol. II, 156). Sir Egerton Brydges
said of Robinson, that he 'was never happy out of the high and polished society and clubs in London, and
thought a country life a perfect misery' Biography, II, 2, quoted in Climenson, vol. II, 93-4. Elizabeth
repeatedly asked her father to support Sarah's finances, but with little result. Sarah was financially
vulnerable, a victim of patriarchal control of her finances. Scott takes up this issue in her writing and depicts
women in this position in her novels, such as Julia in The history of Cornelia. See MO 5225, c. 1752; MO
5265, 9 September, 1756.
37 Lady Barbara received 5000 pounds from her father, George Montagu, Earl of Halifax. Rizzo,
Companions without vows, 32.
38 MO 5302, 26 May, 1763. Such a comment might fuel speculation about the romantic nature of their
relationship, but as I discuss elsewhere there is little evidence to support this assertion, and moreover one
should be wary of applying twentieth-century labels, such as 'lesbian', to other periods.
money they have or have not earned for her. Of *The history of Sir George Ellison*, she writes:

Last Saturday I sold Sir George Ellison to Millar, somewhat cheaper than I intended, but the season of publication was so near over I was afraid to hazard any delay; by his readiness to give what I mentioned, I believe I might have had more down, the agreement is 70 l. as soon as published, and 30 l. more on a second Edition which I suppose it will never come to. On hearing I had written such a thing he was very eager to see it.39

She writes in her letters about the constraints inherent in writing primarily for money:

Now that the generality of authors write for bread, or for butter for their bread, which I take to be the case with the richer sorts, I think some who are not hurried by necessity shoud write for the honour of the age, for certainly those who become authors for the sake of profit can never produce what even their talents might afford, since their aim will make them hurry to an end, therefore it belongs to those who are rich in purse and parts to shew that there are Genius's as well as writers in the Nation.40

While Sarah's impetus for publication might have been financial, she embraced the task with intellectual vigour and enthusiasm, producing six novels and three historical biographies in 22 years. She was astute, drawing on subjects and genres likely to appeal to an eclectic reading public, from the translation of Antoine La Place's romance *Le Laideur Aimable*, to the publication of *The History of Mecklenburgh* when the populace was eager for information about George III's new bride, Charlotte of Mecklenburgh. Scott recognised, too, that the French romance was a highly saleable commodity to the English reading public.41 In a letter to her sister in 1754, she shows her commercial mind at work:

I should be obliged to you if you would tell me what french dictionary is the best for the modern french, the language in the trifling books now published is so altered from what it was in its glory. . . . I have likewise another favor to ask which is a great secret, I need not beg you will not mention to any living soul. You often have french novels before they become common, if you could help me to any, a time spent in translating woud turn much to my profit, if I coud get a translation done before any other had publishd one which I coud easily do if I had the original before it became common. I translated the *Laideur Aimable* Dodsley bought it, I am not sure whether it is publishd or no.42

39 MO 5319 30 January 1766.
40 MO 5387 28 November, 1761.
41 Refer to note 18 for critical studies about professional women writers in the eighteenth century.
42 MO 5238, 1754. Cited by Gaby E. Onderwyzer 'Sarah Scott's Agreeable ugliness, a translation'.
This request shows that Sarah was turning her upper-class education in French to a financial use. This passage also indicates the extent to which books were commodities in the market; once they were sold to the publisher, the author had little control over them. In another letter, Sarah discusses her negotiations with the publisher, Millar,

I am much obliged to you for recommending [Millenium Hall], & shall be exceedingly so if you cou'd set Gustavus on foot a little; my reason for which is that I am in Treaty with Millar, for my Geography, not yet finished, which he is to have in Summer, & if a little sale cou'd be procured for Gustavus, which he published, it wou'd go far towards getting me the price I wish. I get but very little by M [Millenium Hall].43

She was commercially astute in her choice of topics, but she was selective on grounds of her own interests as well. The issues structuring her novels and histories show a keen sensitivity to contemporary currents in the cultural environment. Issues of morality, religion, rational virtue, ethical financial relationships, stand side-by-side with issues of state and politics. Her interests in life as well as in her published works were varied. Her letters run the gamut in topics from a humorous interest in balls and gossip, to an active engagement with politics and economics.44 Scott's explorations of charity, slavery, commercial morality, reason and imagination often placed her at the forefront of commentary about emerging social concerns – but her private lifestyle has meant that this contribution to contemporary debates has only recently been brought to light. For instance, before the major groundswell of abolitionist feeling of the later eighteenth century, Scott was taking a stance on slavery in her novel The history of Sir George Ellison (1766). In her biography of the French Huguenot, Theodore Agrippa D'Aubigné (1772) and in her history of Sweden and Gustavus Ericson (1761), she creates a space to comment on political ambition and corruption, factionalism,

43 MO 5300. The 'Geography' to which she refers is possibly The history of Mecklenburg but this was eventually published by Newbery in 1762; Betty Rizzo suggests that this geography was never finished: introd. and ed. The history of Sir George Ellison, xxix.
44 For example in a letter to her brother, William and his wife when they were in Naples, Sarah has a long discussion of Pitt's political style: March 28, 1761, see F. S. A. Doran, Lady of the last century, 89-94, and in letters to Elizabeth, Sarah discusses the riots affecting London and southern England, MO 5350/5338.
leadership qualities and royal power at a time when England was debating these issues with regard to its own monarch and parliament.45

In keeping with conventions for female authors of the time, Scott published her writing anonymously or used a male pseudonym.46 Anonymous publication protected such women from being held accountable for speaking out, but also prevented them from receiving affirmation for their creative works. Contemporary reviewers of Scott's anonymous publications always assumed that they were written by a man, but as early as the end of 1762 Scott's authorship of Millenium Hall was suspected: 'Many here have found out the author', she writes to her sister, 'and can not be persuaded out of it, so I imagine it will not remain much of a secret'.47 However, for some time Millenium Hall was attributed to Christopher Smart and, more frequently, to Oliver Goldsmith. Both Goldsmith and Smart published with Newbery, which goes some way to explaining the attribution. As I discuss in Appendix C, even by the mid-nineteenth century some commentators were still speculating about Goldsmith's possible authorship of The history of Mecklenburgh. Clearly they saw in Millenium Hall a sentiment and style that was associated with these authors. This is more easily understandable in the case of Goldsmith. His narrative poem, 'The deserted village', and his novel, The vicar of Wakefield (1766), show similar concerns to Scott's novel – the need for a renewed sense of rural community, a criticism of gentry for ill-treated tenants and the poor – and they demonstrated a general anxiety about the consequences of agrarian 'improvement' and commercialisation for rural life.48

45 For a discussion of these political debates see, for example, Caroline Robbins The eighteenth-century Commonwealthman, Harvard, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959, especially chapters viii and ix.
46 The history of Gustavus Ericson was published under the name 'Henry Augustus Raymond, Esq.'. For further information about the publishing conventions for women writing in the eighteenth century, see Cheryl Turner Living by the pen.
47 MO 5299, November 1762.
48 See also Goldsmith's The revolution in low life 1762.
Horace Walpole's copy of *Millenium Hall*, now in the British Museum, has a pencilled note stating that it was jointly authored by Lady Barbara Montagu and Mrs Sarah Scott. Presumably, this was an assumption that Walpole made because the two women lived together and because they jointly performed charitable works quite similar to those described in the novel. It shows a conventional confusion of women's private and public circumstances and identities. While this opinion had authority briefly, there is now enough substantial evidence for there to be no doubt that Scott was the sole author of all her works. Horace Walpole wrote to the Reverend William Mason in May 1772, telling him of Mrs Scott's *Life of Theodore Agrippa D'Aubigné*. In his *Censura literaria* published in 1805, Charles Egerton Brydges lists Sarah Scott's works and includes a brief biographical essay that laments her lack of public recognition. When Matthew Montagu published a collection of Elizabeth Montagu's letters in 1809, he also mentioned Sarah Robinson Scott's authorship. In 1824, Watt lists Sarah Scott's works in *Bibliotheca Britannica*, including *The history of Gustavus Ericson* which Brydges had omitted from his first edition. In Scott's own correspondence with her sister she identifies herself as the author of the works.

### ii. Scott's 'moral commerce' and mid-century debates

This section discusses contemporary debates about morality and commerce and introduces Scott's writing in these contexts. Her texts intervened in and interrogated complex relations between moral and commercial conduct. 'Moral commerce' is a shorthand term for the complex ideological position that Scott exhibits over the course of her writings. By coining and using this label, I highlight two of Scott's major concerns – morality and commerce. It is, in part, a rhetorical strategy, somewhat

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50 *Censura literaria*, 1805, 1, 293-305.
similar to E. P. Thompson's formulation of the term 'moral economy', although the two terms apply to very different issues.\textsuperscript{52} Scott's ideology of moral commerce outlines strategies by which emerging economic practices can occur in a rational and pragmatic moral framework that, far from undermining society, will actually enhance notions of individual agency, moral responsibility and social cohesion. She resituates and rewrites roles for gentry women and upper-middle-class men, seeing in them models for moral conduct and leadership and responsible commercial interaction. The brief term 'moral commerce' belies the complexity of Scott's ideology; 'moral commerce' is a multi-faceted ideology that addresses complex moral and commercial features of mid-eighteenth century English society. This thesis explicates each of Scott's narratives to explore the various facets of Scott's moral commerce.

Unlike today where 'commerce' signifies primarily monetary and product exchange, in the eighteenth century 'commerce' was a term laden with a range of meanings and contexts. The economic context is a relatively recent association for the word. More generally, 'commerce' referred to the interrelations between persons in a social setting, what Peter France describes as 'conversation and social intercourse'.\textsuperscript{53} It was sometimes specifically associated with the relations between the sexes, and occasionally referred to the interchange of ideas.

Anonymous publication provided space for Scott to explore topics that were not conventionally associated with – or more accurately, not ordinarily \textit{accepted} as – women's concerns. Her novels provide exemplary moral tales and reflexively rewrite romance conventionsto replace conventional models of behaviour with models based on 'moral

\textsuperscript{52} E. P. Thompson 'The moral economy of the English crowd in the eighteenth century', \textit{Past and present}, 50, February 1971, 76-136. I draw this as a rhetorical comparison only. 'Moral economy' means something quite different from my concept of 'moral commerce'. In this article, Thompson writes about the 'moral assumptions' of the community, that is 'a consistent traditional view of social norms and obligations, of the proper economic functions of several parties within the community, which, taken together, can be said to constitute the moral economy of the poor' (79). Thompson explores the social unrest that occurred when this perceived 'popular consensus' of the 'moral economy' broke down.

In *The history of Cornelia*, for instance, Scott replaces romance conventions and motivations for the female protagonist with a model of conduct based on rationally pragmatic moral and commercial behaviour. In *Test of filial duty*, she deploys gothic and romance conventions ironically to critique aristocratic models of marriage. And, in *The history of Sir George Ellison* Scott uses the domestic sphere to explore issues of governance, tyranny, individual rights and responsibilities, and social justice.

Scott's most well-known novel, *A description of Millenium Hall*, has been read by most commentators as a depiction of female friendship in a utopian – and thus abstract – setting. Even those critics willing to acknowledge the political elements of Scott's writing have concentrated on *Millenium Hall* as a feminist or lesbian attempt to undermine traditional heterosexual and patriarchal relationships in women's lives, while downplaying the text's engagement with other structural social issues such as the displacement of the rural poor, education and employment for the masses. This study is interested in how recent critical lenses have characterised Scott and how this characterisation, in turn, has created expectations that govern subsequent interpretations of her work. Scott has depicted an alternative female community in *Millenium Hall*, but she is not only a writer of female utopias. Her fictional female community has consolidated her label as a lesbian and/or feminist writer, but this classification also comes about because the 'recovery' of Scott's writing in the last twenty years has coincided with feminist and lesbian cultural projects which have emphasised the recuperation of women writers who had been 'lost' precisely because of their marginalisation as women and lesbians. Janet Todd, for example, views Scott in the light of lesbian traditions of women's writing. She states that the open discussion of lesbianism found in Aphra Behn's and Delarivier Manley's writing, and the 'outspokenly celibate and intellectual' community of Astell, 'gave way to gentler

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54 Markman Ellis's recent work on *George Ellison*, however, as part of a larger study on the sentimental novel, has highlighted the political implications of using the sentimental mode for anti-slavery writing. *The politics of sensibility*. See especially chapter 3. Stoddard and Smith have also made important moves in this direction. Eve Walsh Stoddard 'The politics of sentiment; Sarah Scott's *Millenium Hall*, *Studies on Voltaire and the eighteenth century: transactions of the eighth international congress on the Enlightenment*, 1992, 304, 795-798; Johanna Smith 'Philanthropic community in Millenium Hall and the York Ladies Committee', *The eighteenth century: theory and interpretation*, 1995, 36: 3, 266-282.
communities' such as Scott's *Millenium Hall*. This community, Todd continues, 'is more sentimental, less intellectual' than communities such as Astell's.\(^{55}\) The language of physical and intellectual strength - 'gentler', 'less intellectual' - implies that Sarah Scott is somehow intellectually weak or passive. Framing Scott as less challenging ignores or makes light of her intellectual engagement with significant issues of the day. Todd's classification of Scott as intellectually 'soft' allows her to later contrast Scott with male writers including Adam Smith, the former Todd suggests being unable to see beyond the 'conservative communal' unlike Smith who could tackle the issues of individualism arising from an economic society because of an 'idealisation of the thrusting mercantile personality'.\(^{56}\) The discussion will come back to this point.

While Todd and other critics have raised Scott's profile as a novelist, Scott's engagement with wide-ranging cultural debates of the period requires more exploration. This study extends existing work on Sarah Scott to show her engagement with contemporary issues. It is no longer necessary to label Scott as a lesbian or a writer of women's issues in order to appreciate her active critique of eighteenth-century society. This thesis shows that as well as interrogating cultural constructions of marriage and women's roles, Scott's interest in 'women's issues' occurs in the context of her significant contribution to contemporary discourses on commerce and morality.

After Mandeville's assertions that 'private vices were public benefits' in *The fable of the bees* shocked his contemporaries, there was a furious debate about how emerging commercial practices were affecting morality and relations among individuals, among social groupings, and among traditional social and political structures.\(^{57}\) While *The

\(^{55}\) Janet Todd *The sign of Angellica*, 115.

\(^{56}\) Todd, 202.

Fable and its Remarks actually rest on complex philosophical discussions about ethics, and about divine and rational guides to moral truths, contemporary responses often focussed on the simplistic message that evil is necessary and is always attended by some good and that this makes evil acceptable. Cedric Watts suggests that one reason Mandeville was so provocative was that 'he exposed tersely the ideological contradictions of an era which was purportedly Christian and blatantly commercial'.

The resulting debates about moral relativism confronted traditional notions of civic and Christian virtue. Before Mandeville, Shaftesbury had criticised Locke and expressed fear about the outcomes of what he called the 'relativity of all morality'.

\begin{quote}
Virtue, according to Mr. Lock, "has not other measure law or rule, than fashion & custome, morality justice equity, depend only as law will and God indeed is a perfect free agent in his sense; that is, free to any thing however ill, for if he wills it, it will be made good; virtue may be vice, & vice vertue in its turn, if he pleases. Thus neither right or wrong, virtue or vice, are anything in themselves; nor is there any trace or idea of em naturally imprinted on human minds."
\end{quote}

John Brown in An estimate of the manners and principles of the times (1757) expressed this concern in the following way: 'The Spirit of Commerce, now predominant, begets a kind of regulated Selfishness, which tends at once to the Increase and Preservation of Property'. Samuel Johnson pithily expressed a similar fear for the health of the State in 'The vanity of human wishes' where he wrote: 'The Dangers gather as the Treasures rise'. Such commentators, in various arenas, gave voice to fears and questions about whether traditional values such as virtue and civic responsibility were enough to save

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the society from the perceived encroaching evils of greed, luxury and debt. What was
to become of a society where traditional notions of civic virtue were being challenged
or replaced by wealth incentives or personal ambition, where conventional class
hierarchies based on landed wealth and inherited title were being eroded by the newly
created personal wealth of traders and merchants? What were the bases for value –
both material and moral – where pieces of paper were sinking the nation deep in foreign
debt and commercial ambitions were being rewarded? Who was to have public
recognition and respect in a time when any newly monied merchant could buy the
outward appearance of a gentleman and when politicians could buy votes?62 Who
could depend on a system of governance that was compromised, if not corrupted, by
electioneering, bribery and private interest? James Thompson has suggested that
political economy and the novel were two discourses that arose from and described
these kinds of dilemmas about value: 'both the novel and political economy can be
understood as essentially solutions, for each in its way describes or represents or figures
value and at the same time is charged with explaining it'.63

New commercial wealth was felt to be eroding traditional class divisions and the
existing predominance of landed power. Linda Colley reminds us that it is simplistic to
see eighteenth-century England as either an essentially landed society or commercial
society, and that the crucial issue is the relationship between land and trade.64
Elizabeth Montagu's disdainful comment is heavy with the resentment felt by the upper
ranks: she writes that when the current tenant vacates her house 'I presume some retail
grocer, haberdasher of small wares, or perhaps a tallow chandler will shortly be in
possession of my Castle at Hayes'.65 Under such changing circumstances – with their

62 For a discussion of the relationship between commerce and self-fashioning see Barker-Benfield, *Culture
of sensibility*, especially 77-98.
University Press, 1996, 3. Elizabeth Bellamy also examines the rise of these discourses, seeing in them
contrasting, but interrelated, ways of describing the world: *Private virtues, public vices: commercial morality
65 Climenson, vol. II, 56.
material and psychological implications – how was the nation to stay united and economically healthy with an expanding class of poor, disenfranchised from the land and from traditional paternalist notions of duty, subservience and obligation? The commercial revolution brought with it new types of conflict between civic responsibility and private interest and these conflicts were manifest in the print culture.

Print culture shows that contemporary debates attempted to redefine relations between individuals and society because changing commercial practices were increasingly influencing those relations. Stephen Copley has asserted that all texts privilege some subjects and exclude others, and that the novel as a genre traditionally excluded the subject of economics. The boundaries of literary decorum, he suggests, the forms of discourse, and even the vocabulary of the novel do not accommodate economic particularities such as trade, manufacturing, labour and the condition of the poor. Moreover, Thompson suggests that although they are intricately related the development of political economy as a discourse separated public financial discourse from imaginative discourse, with: 'male political economy as a description of publicity and finance versus female novels as a description of privacy and emotion'.

Sarah Scott's novels participate in these contemporary debates by doing precisely what Copley wishes novels would do: foregrounding the material economic issues of life in the eighteenth century in 'imaginative' discourses. Her texts explicitly interrelate the public finance issues that Thompson suggests developed away from the novel, with the issues of 'privacy and emotion' that he sees as embodied in novelistic discourse. As I discuss throughout this study, Scott uses economic discourses both to describe material economic conditions and to articulate complex moral and economic exchanges.

Copley suggests that the imaginative literature of the period silenced economic debates in favour of various representations and explorations of humanism. Not only does Scott include material economic conditions in her writing, her novels embody and interrogate

the complex debates around economic conditions and the type of morality that Shaftesbury articulated earlier in the century.\textsuperscript{67} It would be overstating the case to assert that Scott was the only author to do this. Even Copley acknowledges that Pope's \textit{Epistles} to Bathurst and Burlington incorporate economic discourses. While the details of the economic exchanges might not have been as explicit as in Scott's novels, novelists from Richardson to Austen were articulating the complex negotiations between commercial and moral constructions of social and individual behaviour.\textsuperscript{68} Other critics such as Sandra Sherman have explored the relations between economic and literary discourses in the eighteenth century. Sherman invokes 'a synthetic, homologic approach to "literary" and "financial" discourse' which privileges neither one nor the other. She gives 'equal weight to both as epistemological vectors'.\textsuperscript{69}

During the eighteenth century establishment of a commercial society, shifts occurred from notions of civic virtue and wealth built on property and title – what Pocock has extensively discussed as 'civic humanism' – to an instability or apparent arbitrariness of value built on individual ambition, desires and public credit.\textsuperscript{70} Commentators such as Colin Nicholson have explored this complex issue by explaining that there was a conflict between 'classical virtue, and market-oriented perceptions of individuality'.\textsuperscript{71} Shelley Burtt has also suggested that the new civic personality was defined by the 'private individual, a gentleman of manners, finding fulfillment in economic success

\textsuperscript{68} Cedric Watts discusses Austen's complex conceptions of money in chapter 8 of \textit{Literature and money}.  
and personal pursuits, not in deliberation on the public good'.

The implied opposition here between personal interest and public responsibility invokes earlier ideas put forward by moral theorists such as Hobbes and Shaftesbury. Prefiguring Mandevillean notions of motivation, Hobbes viewed man as essentially selfish. Shaftesbury, on the other hand, saw no conflict between disinterested concern for others' welfare and concern for one's own interests.

Much later in the century, Adam Smith outlined the character of the citizen constructed by emerging commercial relations. Instead of the lower orders being linked to their social superiors by paternalist dependence, the increasing wealth and marketability inherent in their own labour—labour which, theoretically at least, could be transferred from one paying 'master' to another—constructs the lower orders in terms of independent wage labour. Despite this economic division of labour, man is, in Smith's system, a social being who requires external notions of 'justice' as well as internalised senses of morality to harmoniously operate in society. Smith articulated the notion of the impartial spectator, an internalised guide to moral action in this emerging society increasingly dictated by divisions of labour and individual desires for advancement.

This century's debates revealed a perceived sense of decay in traditional notions of citizenship, virtue, and the body politic. This perception manifested itself in public debate and consciousness in various forms and using various labels. Fear or criticism

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73 Thomas Hobbes *De homine*, 1658. Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3rd earl of Shaftesbury *Characteristics of men, manners, opinions, and times* (1711). This included Shaftesbury's earlier treatise *Inquiry concerning virtue, or merit*, 1699. For a discussion of Shaftesbury in this context and with respect to the civic tradition see Lawrence Klein *Shaftesbury and the culture of politeness*.

of luxury, of the roles of stockjobbers, of parliamentary corruption, of idleness of the poor, of the debates about public credit and debt, not only about these individual issues, they were also a manifestation of a populace trying to cope with the uncertainties of a new sense of the individual and conception of community and nation brought about by increasingly influential commercial ideologies. John Brewer and Roy Porter ask the question, to what extent did consumerism exist as a mentalité 'informing attitudes not only towards goods and belongings, but also personal relations and political philosophies'? They are speaking here in particular of patterns of consumption, but the question of a mentalité or milieu can be extended to the widespread characteristics of commercialism.

The fear and attack of luxury, for example, had existed for centuries, but in the commercial milieu of the eighteenth century, the vice and its critics took on new characteristics. It was sometimes spoken of as a decay or disease of the body politic. Scott herself describes luxury as 'an epidemical disease'. In *An essay towards preventing the ruin of Great Britain* (1721), Bishop Berkeley writes 'Frugality of Manners is the Nourishment and Strength of Bodies politic. It is that by which they grow and subsist, until they are corrupted by Luxury; the natural Cause of their Decay and Ruin.' Roy Porter has written about the metaphorical doubleness of the term 'consumption' that pushes together physical, commercial and societal health and disease. He points to eighteenth-century medical writers, like the celebrated George Cheyne, who saw the luxurious life-style of the period as a threat to the nation's physical and moral health. Some years earlier than Cheyne or Scott, Daniel Defoe

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75 J. G. A. Pocock has explored this complex shift from classical conceptions of community to a developing political sense of modernity in *The Machiavellian moment*, and *Virtue, commerce, and history*. See also John Sekora *Luxury: the concept in western thought, Eden to Smollett*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985.


77 MO 5325, 25 March, 1766.


spoke of luxury as a mistress and created the character of 'Lady Credit' with all the paradoxes suggested by pushing together notions of lady-like and economic behaviour. Defoe was continuing a tradition of personifying the vice of luxury as a woman, a pattern that in itself deserves sustained attention.

By the middle years of the century, such discourses of luxury, consumption and credit were commonplace in non-fictional writings and imaginative literature alike. For example, Oliver Goldsmith's 'The deserted village' was a poetical response to the luxury debate.

O luxury! . . .

Kingdoms by thee, to sickly greatness grown
Boast of a florid vigour not their own.
At every draught more large and large they grow,
A bloated mass of rank unwieldy woe;
Till sapped their strength, and every part unsound,
Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin round. (lines 385 - 394)

Of course, eighteenth-century England's concern for the moral and civil effects of luxury was a continuation of a long history of the critique of luxury. John Sekora points out that as a term of abuse 'luxury' was such a strong and all-encompassing concept that it could embrace 'moral, religious, economic, and political attitudes... into a vague and sometimes contradictory amalgum' [sic]. In the eighteenth century England's increasingly commercial culture concerned itself with both the dangers of luxury to the aristocracy who had traditionally had the wealth to enjoy it, and the effects.


80 In his extensive study, Luxury: the concept in western thought, John Sekora notes that portraying 'luxuria' as a lustful woman has been commonplace since Prudentius characterised it thus in the Psychomachia, 44-45.

81 Joyce Appleby discusses the concepts of consumption and luxury in the context of traditional religious and classical condemnations of luxury and desire: 'Consumption in early modern social thought' in Brewer and Porter eds, Consumption and the world of goods, 162-173.


of luxury on the lower ranks. William Cowper in 'The Task' eloquently summarised the concern that the poor were imitating the negative habits of the rich:

Increase of power begets increase of wealth;
Wealth luxury, and luxury excess;
Excess the scrofulous and itchy plague
That seizes first the opulent, descends
To the next rank contagious, and in time
Taints downward all the graduated scale
Of order, from the chariot to the plow. 84

But as well as being a vice that could affect individuals of all ranks of society, luxury was seen as a threat to political and social stability and thus prompted 'the demand for order, discipline, authority, and hierarchy'. 85

Altered modes of exchange, different notions of value, new valuations of labour and individual worth, and modified relations between individuals and groups, brought major social shifts explicitly in practice and less obviously in changing patterns of expectations and thought. The discourses of charity and especially of the 'deserving poor', 86 and indeed the renewed discourses in the 1760s of the 'reformation of manners' gained their character and shape in part as a response to the century's anxieties about new commercial ideologies and practices and especially the effects of such changes on the poor and on social hierarchies. 87 Commentators such as Edmund Burke later in the century articulated the difficulties of categorising 'poverty' and the poor that had come about because of new patterns of labour and manufacture. 88 Chapter Three will take up these issues further.

85 Sekora, Luxury, 49.
86 Raymond Williams discusses the relations between concepts of charity and the 'deserving poor' in Keywords: a vocabulary of culture and society, London: Fontana, 1988. First published 1976. David Owen discusses the effects of increasingly urbanised communities, one of which was to distance the almsgiver and recipient and increase suspicions about the 'professional mendicant': English philanthropy 1660-1960, Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1964, 92 and see chapter 3 for discussion of the increasing scrutiny of the poor.
87 The earlier 'reformation of manners' of the seventeenth century was more concerned with abolishing un-Christian behaviour like adultery, drunkenness, ignoring the sabbath, and with encouraging both regulated work practices and 'gentlemanly' and 'ladylike' behaviour especially amongst the lower ranks. Groups like the Society for the propagation of Christian knowledge took leading roles in this reformation of manners.
The introduction of the Bank of England in 1694, and the increasing association of wealth with paper money and invisible money, that is credit, challenged existing notions of exchange and value. Money came to be seen as an increasingly unstable symbol of value for goods and services; concomitantly, more pressure came to bear on private constructions of morality to identify and fix values of behaviour and action. It is no coincidence that disturbances in monetary and commercial systems caused redefinitions of morality. Objections to emerging commercial practices were increasingly articulated in terms of fear of declining standards of morality and behaviour. As I have outlined above, debates about luxury were as much about licentious behaviour as about the frivolous spending of money on non-necessary items. Notions of 'domestic economy' were lauded, with economic frugality, control, planning and restraint being praised in the same breath as personal and social control and restraint. The popularity of the trope of the inconstant or licentious woman in relation to credit shows how easily writers and the populace made the link between virtue and commerce. Jonas Hanway's work with 'repentant prostitutes' is a well known example of this pairing of morality and economics.

Nicholson has suggested that besides altering the way that business was done, these massive changes to notions of wealth and value affected the notion of the subject. Catherine Gallagher draws comparisons between the apprehensions about the slipperiness of identities and 'realities' in fictional representations and the apparent

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90 See notes 79 and 80 on Defoe, and on the linking of commerce, credit and the mistress.
91 At the Magdalen Hospital former prostitutes were taught practical (usually domestic) skills to make them economically self-sufficient in virtuous, socially acceptable ways. Virtue and money were seen as inextricable. In fact, as prostitutes they were already self-sufficient; but this occupation contravened cultural prescriptions of appropriate behaviour for women, so these women had to be 're-educated' and 're-formed' into virtuously economic women. As the former prostitutes acquired the set skills and mastered outward displays of virtue and piety they received monetary rewards, and ultimately their greatest reward – both financially and in status – was an offer of marriage. Jonas Hanway Thoughts on the plan for a Magdalen-house for repentant prostitutes, London, 1758.
92 Nicholson, Writing and the rise of finance, 7.
insubstantiality of credit and paper wealth: 'the multiplication of nominal entities and the creation of imaginary worlds on paper was closely bound to the anxiety . . . about the new forms of paper property – bills of exchange, stocks and shares'.

The disputes about emerging senses of subjectivity challenged a conception of the individual as part of a public body and replaced it with a construction of the individual whose worth and reward resided in individual pursuit of personal profit and gain. Questions about economic individualism and agency were intricately bound up with debates about individual will and desires versus civic responsibility. This particular sense of the individual was fundamental to Enlightenment reappraisals of individual agency and social organisation. This emerging construction of individual autonomy challenged traditional conceptions of virtue, leaving a void or an uncertainty that writers such as Adam Smith, Adam Ferguson, David Hume and, I argue, Sarah Scott tried to fill.

iii. Sarah Scott's responses to these debates

Scott's writings were part of a growing narrative and ideological response to these major structural shifts in society. This thesis considers how her narratives engaged with some of these issues about commerce and morality and value. Along with many of her contemporaries, Scott recognised the need for an ethical framework to direct and govern the middling and upper classes in their new roles in the economy and in society at large. Her narratives propose models of this ethical and commercially responsible way of life. Social commentators deliberated on the moral qualities appropriate to this

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93 Nobody's story, 130.
94 Adam Smith developed a commercial ethics for the bourgeoisie almost ten years later. Deirdre McCloskey has argued that the notion of 'bourgeois virtue' is implicit in Smith's writing.

What is meant by the phrase [bourgeois virtue] is a third set of virtues, beyond the four cardinal pagan virtues of courage, temperance, justice, and wisdom or the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. . . . The pagan four and the Christian three of the virtues are not to be spurned, but in primitive form are unsuited to a world of commerce . . . . What we need for town life is an ethic of townspeople: enterprise, honesty, sobriety, humor, respect, fluency, thrift, amiability, responsibility, modesty. (3-4).

McCloskey argues that it is in The theory of moral sentiments that Smith most ardently proposes and explores the need for an ethical framework of bourgeois life. 'Bourgeois virtue on the margin: Adam Smith and Benjamin Franklin', presented at The Xth David Nichol Smith Seminar, July 1996, Canberra.
new age and its modified relations between people, between classes. As I will discuss later, a changing pattern of charity and philanthropy was one example of a range of responses to these social changes.

In Scott's vision the new civic personality is not the traditional one grounded in property. She is advocating a new civic personality for the emerging middle class and a more public role for upper-class women. With the commercial society the emerging middling group was at the forefront of changing practices of commerce, trade, fashion, consumption and leisure. Increasingly, the concept of wealth, national wealth, lay not in the aggregation of the landed gentry's assets as it had done in the past, but in trade and business and in the potential consumer market and labour force of the middling and lower classes.

This thesis suggests that Sarah Scott, just like Smith some ten years later, perceived this reexamination and through her fictions and biographies tried to recreate a sense of civic virtue that, far from denying a new commercial individualism, sought to define it as a fundamental structure in a new moral commercial society. She dramatises examples of individuals contributing to this new commercial society, and by presenting these commercially successful individuals who operate according to an explicit moral ideology Scott provides an ethics tailored for a new age. Nicholson suggests that Addison in *The Spectator*, and other social commentators, were arguing 'that market forms of sociability, sympathy and honesty might be developed to redefine citizenship'. Scott does just this in her fictions, showing that emerging forms of commercial relations were not dissimilar from existing modes of relations, but they needed to be rearticulated in an explicit moral framework. Affective debts were now being paid in labour and currency and, vice versa, commercial transactions could exemplify moral/personal responsibilities and affective ties. For Scott, financial power

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brings mobility, reshaped identity, and possibilities for the new merchant class and, to a limited extent, for women. While she was not consistently a radical social commentator, accepting conventional social hierarchy for instance, Scott's narrative did radically critique marriage. As the following discussion shows, she ironically utilised romance, the oriental tale and gothic genres to interrogate conventional financial and moral constructions of marriage and women's relations with men.

In her writing, Scott develops an ideology of moral commerce in a narrative form that outlines codes of behaviour in order to govern individual responsibility, heterosexual relationships, and communal interaction. But to what extent was Sarah Scott really dealing with a new financial age with her blueprints of moral commerce, and to what extent was she establishing a nostalgic re-creation of a classical republic? Was the community she devised a return to a classical hierarchy of privilege and paternalism where only the elite were regarded as citizens with rights and responsibilities? Certainly in her dramatisation of civic virtue where a landed citizen rules over his/her community Scott seems to be buying into the Tory neo-classicism or into an established paternalist model of class relations. In *Millenium Hall*, there is a geographic isolation that seems to hark back to a feudal, or at least paternalistic, age that seems nostalgic in an age of geographic and commercial expansion. Critics such as Barbara Brandon Schnorrenberg have concentrated on this feature of isolation and containment in *Millenium Hall* when describing it as a utopia.96 But as I suggest in Chapter Three of this discussion, in using the frame of utopia, such critics have run the danger of categorising Scott as a sentimental, idealistic recluse and of relegating her work to a minor genre, pushing her voice to the margins of cultural discourse, rather than seeing how engaged she was with those cultural discourses.

However, the main shift from older forms of neo-classical republican civic virtue to Scott's landed civic virtue is that in her eyes the ruling citizen comes from the new

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commercial class, not from the landed gentry. In Chapter Four in discussing *The history of Sir George Ellison*, I note that Scott criticises the gentry and its failure to fulfil its responsibilities to farmers, tenants and the local community. Importantly, while Scott's ideology acknowledges a fluidity in society – in social relations and individual identities – in her novels she still does not envision or extend this new social mobility and individual agency to all classes. While the very poor or indigent are recipients of assistance, charity and moral guidance, they are still *objects* of the new order rather than *agents* in their own lives. In some of Scott's novels, notably *George Ellison*, the poor serve as examples or opportunities for displaying the beneficence of their social superiors. Like many novels of sensibility, Scott's narratives represent poverty and the poor in a mediated way to serve the purposes of the middling and upper classes. The only sense of agency granted to the poor resides in their paying back the financial debt to their benefactors through Christian piety, moral obedience, and social utility. Sarah Scott's voice resounds strongly in the increasingly insistent discourses about the 'deserving poor'.

Commentators like Scott were reconceptualising a sense of morality at a time when the stability of the self and its relation to others and to society were being interrogated. Moral and civic respectability no longer resided solely with the gentry and with those who had traditional access to political power and influence. It had to be rebuilt, but on what foundations? Who was to be the arbiter of this new moral order? By what measures were actions of individuals and beliefs to be judged? If, as Mandeville had asserted, current and future economic health depended on conventionally immoral behaviours, then the disjunctions between an economically healthy nation and a morally healthy populace were vast indeed. Scott's novels exemplify the ways that authors were

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97 Markman Ellis has discussed *George Ellison* as a novel of the sentimental period, chapter 3 *Politics of sensibility*. See John Mullan for discussion about the novel of sentiment and the extent to which it can be an effective vehicle of values and action, chapter 3, *Sentiment and sociability.*
using imaginative discourses to explore and dramatise the complex relations between traditional moral values and an emerging economic structuring of social relations.

At this point this study has introduced the notion of 'moral commerce' in the context of mid-century debates about commercialised society; it is the function of the body of this thesis to 'unpack' the complexity of the term in relation to Scott's novels. It is important to emphasise that the ideology of 'moral commerce' is not a template that has been placed on each of Scott's novels. After considering the novels and contemplating the ways that Scott creates space for herself to discuss conventionally non-feminine issues, while also creating more conventionally entertaining 'female' tales of moral exemplars, it has become clear that Scott has developed a subtle and complex ideology and method to dramatise and address the questions that a changing economic society was prompting people to ask. The methodology of this study depends on allowing Scott's texts to prompt the strategies used to discuss them. This tends, at times, to encourage wide-ranging observations and discussions because each narrative is so different from the others; but while my methodology aims to capture this variety, the organising thread to this analysis is moral commerce in Scott's narratives. Scott's texts explore economic relations between people and the moral dimensions of such financial exchange.

iv. Narrative responses to commercial change

Other writers, predominantly male, were also addressing these issues in print. Addison assumed the role of arbiter of fashion and morality and used *The Spectator* to refashion moral codes and social behaviour. Peter France discusses the role of the essay in establishing a culture of politeness and sociability and notes that such periodicals were directed as much at women as they were at men. Addison's contemporaries took to other genres to explore the redefinition of morality in a commercial age. Adam Smith

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propounded a bourgeois ethics in his *Theory of moral sentiments* and a structural analysis of political economy in *The wealth of nations*. Philanthropists like Jonas Hanway in his pamphlets and projects made broad-ranging, pragmatic recommendations for perceived 'problem' groups in society, such as poor boys, child chimney sweeps and prostitutes. And writers in fiction chose to explore these issues by dramatising the perceived motivations and consequences of this new moral order and by providing fictional moral exemplars to forge a new path in a moral commercial society. One commentator suggests, 'As citizens of a transforming market society refocus ethics and reconstruct value, forms of imaginative materialism arise.' While these eighteenth-century writers ruminated on the effects of commercial changes on groups within society, what was becoming clear in these discussions was the redefinition of morality as a private, an individual issue, which was a significant shift from the civic construction of morality of earlier times. Clearly, private issues of morality and virtue, of individual will, choice and action, are inextricable from collective societal moral codes, but the real challenge for moralists of the age was to address the increasing demands for guides for individual morality while ensuring social cohesion.

J. Paul Hunter has discussed the didactic genres that pre-figured and possibly informed the novel genre. The novel provided guides for individual morality but so, too, did other genres, such as conduct books. Many of these guides aimed at the construction
of female models of virtue. While it ranged from instruction manuals to fictional
guides, the genre asserted a common ideology in which women were encouraged to
internalise cultural constructions of themselves as passive, asexual models of virtue.
There are subtle, and not so subtle, links drawn between women's personal passive
virtue and the strength of marriages, and ultimately strength of the state. Vivien Jones
draws attention to the political underpinnings of Halifax's *Advice to a daughter* in
which he advocates a 'rational subjection' of women in marriage, that implies an
analogous subjection of the individual to the state. But the primary discourse of
conduct literature is one of personal containment and proscription for women, as is
evidenced in Wilkes's comments about chastity: 'Chastity is so essential and natural to
your sex, that every declination from it is a proportionable receding from womanhood.
An immodest woman is a kind of monster, distorted from its proper form'. Such
conduct books show the processes by which cultural proscriptions for women's 'proper'
behaviour are encouraged as natural features of the gender. While such guides for
private conduct were integral to women's public conduct, there was still a perceived
need for guides for public behaviour for the society at large. Conduct literature was
joined by other non-fictional guides and commentary.

Periodicals and pamphlets were full of the work of male writers, and coffee houses and
Parliament full of vocal male commentators, but women like Sarah Scott were limited
to publishing their thoughts anonymously and in fear of damaging their reputations. I
propose that despite limitations of wealth, power, and the public voice of her male
contemporaries, Sarah Scott pushed beyond the boundaries of gender and, using fiction

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103 Vivien Jones Women in the eighteenth century: constructions of femininity, London: Routledge, 1990, 15. George Savile, Marquis of Halifax The lady's new-year's gift: or, advice to a daughter, 1688. Though this was published initially in 1688 it was highly popular throughout the early to mid-eighteenth century.

104 Wettenhall Wilkes, A letter of genteel and moral advice to a young lady, 1740.
and history, made a significant contribution to wide-ranging debates about morality in a commercial world.

v. Methodology and theoretical perspectives

My interpretations of Scott's work are based on my belief that it is possible and fruitful to study narrative and its relations to ideology. In this study, I interpret Scott's texts and their plural discourses in relation to the material conditions of the society in which they were produced. Clearly there are complex issues associated with this historically recuperative methodology. While this study is interested in the relationships between Scott's novels and the historical conditions of mid-eighteenth century England, it would be a hermeneutic error to read her fiction as history, that is to conflate fictional representation with historical reportage. A novel is a different discourse than, say, a periodical essay or a history. But while one cannot read a fiction as a historically transparent record of the times, one can read a fiction as a product of and commentary on the society in which it is produced. Not only does a fictional work show ideological traces that help us to read its social environment, but the text itself – its shape and form, its genre, its availability, its publication, and its circulation – is a product of the dominant and conflictual ideologies of its society.

The term 'ideology' is a notoriously difficult term to discuss. It has acquired multifarious meanings; these meanings point to the complexity with which ideological features are manifest in discursive and social practices. It might be reasonably asserted that when an author writes about, criticises, and proposes changes to social structures and practices then

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105 Vivien Jones also discusses this issue in *Women in the eighteenth century*. Jones comments that in the novel 'What we are faced with here is not a factual account, but a representation; not actuality but ideology', *Women in the eighteenth century*, 2.

106 One can read a fictional text as a historical record in the sense that one can look at the conditions under which it was produced. The history of a novel as a material product is important for the way we characterise a novel and the role of imaginative literature in the culture that produced it. This might include considering how it was read and by whom and what meanings were attributed to it. It is significant to consider conditions such as publishing circumstances, the author's position in society, the circulation and availability to different types of reader. These issues impinge on this study of Sarah Scott's work.
that author proposes a particular ideology – a belief about how the structuring of society, its
power relations and how individual conduct might occur. But ideology need not be, and
often is not, an explicit statement of belief and intention. Indeed, even in texts which do
explicitly discuss ideological positions, it is often the not said, the not included, the not
clarified that are the clearest indicators of an author's ideology or at least indicators of
ideological influences that direct discursive practices.

The aim of this study is to provide readings of Sarah Scott's texts; but just to analyse the
texts for properties and features that are then classified as ideological would betray a
formalism that I find neither comfortable nor particularly useful. Features of narrative are
not stable throughout all historical /cultural conditions even though Saussure's notion of
*langue* suggests they are. There are, however, tendencies and potentials in the narrative
form that indicate ideological struggle in society at a particular time. I do not claim to
explore all the ideological issues impinging on Scott's texts, but instead allude to how a
selection of ideological discourses work and interanimate within, through and around her
texts.

Before I elaborate on what I see as the features of her language and texts that present
ideological traces – what Brooker posits as an idea of language as 'the record and agency of
ideological difference and struggle'\textsuperscript{107} – it is first useful to consider the ways that ideology
and its relationships with narrative have been variously conceived and articulated. Clearly,
it is misleadingly simplistic to conceive of the ideology represented in a text as if one could
extract it as a separate entity from the form in which it operates. While most theorists
would acknowledge at least some ideological dimension of narrative, some critics have
elaborated on this in concrete ways that help us to pin down a difficult dialectical
relationship. When discussing Pêcheux's theory, Tony Bennett asserts that a 'discursive

\textsuperscript{107} Peter Brooker. Review of Raymond Williams *The politics of modernism: against the new conformists*, in
formation [is] rooted in a specific ideological class relationship'.

In the case of Sarah Scott, for example, her works are located in discourses of the middle- and upper-classes in mid-eighteenth century England. Bakhtin suggests that the linguistic discourses available at any one time comprise 'a multitude of bounded verbal-ideological and social belief systems'.

Frederic Jameson, however, questions the validity of any theory that examines formal properties of works to establish inscriptions of ideology. In his words, such a theory 'explores the inscription of ideology in an ensemble of purely formal categories, such as representation, narrative closure, the organization around the centred subject, or the illusion of presence'. He criticizes this approach on the basis that it 'brackets the historical situations in which texts are effective' and 'projects the ahistorical view that formal features in question always and everywhere bear the same ideological charge'. He seems to be criticising the view of normative formal properties that Volosinov criticised in Saussure's work. Volosinov criticised Saussure's model of language as 'a stable system of normatively identical forms', a view that also sees 'linguistic laws and relations [as] ... wholly independent of other social or historical forces'.

This criticism prompts us to conceive of both ideology and features of narrative as culturally and historically situated, and this is precisely the approach that this thesis takes towards Scott's works, that is, to read them as culturally and historically situated. While there are many dilemmas associated with

110 Frederic Jameson The political unconscious: narrative as a socially symbolic act, London: Methuen, 1981, 283. The difficulties that Jameson identifies with regard to formal features and their relationship to ideology highlight a 'chicken and egg' problem; one's definition of, say, narrative unity or of the centred speaking subject, will influence the ways in which you perceive ideological traces in the text. If, for example, one is comfortable with the notion of an organically unified text or of a centred, transparent authorial voice, then one might work with a perceived central ideological position as embodied in that voice. If, however, one questions the notion of the speaking subject and sees in the narrator/text a commingling of divergent, fragmentary, and sometimes contradictory voices, then the notion of a clear, focussed, ideological position is displaced by into a notion that acknowledges a myriad of polyphynous voices that contribute ideological traces in a work. This dialectical problem of identifying textual properties and examining ideological inscriptions indicates the fruitfulness of examining these issues together. Problematizing the notion of narrative unity or the position of the speaking subject opens the text to a more flexible reading of ideology in narrative. Formalised conceptions of the text impose concomitant limitations on our understanding of ideology and its representation.
discussing ideology and narrative, what does seem clear is that ideology is evident in the novel or in narrative both in particular discursive practices and, as Eagleton suggests, as represented in 'an active set of social relations and significations'.\textsuperscript{112} The relation between ideology and narrative in the eighteenth century is well established by, for example, Lennard Davis who has dealt with this issue in his thorough study of the fact/fiction categories in the novel.\textsuperscript{113}

I suggest that in Scott's texts we see the dialectical interrelations between theological, moral, and economic ideologies in the mid-eighteenth century. These ideological contestations are present in the narrative in various ways. For example, a text's dominant or competing ideologies can be seen in the privileging of one type of voice and the denigration or silencing of another. Or, ideological traces can be embodied by dialogues between discourses. Bakhtin suggests that such mixing of discourses is a fundamental feature of the novel.\textsuperscript{114} Scott calls upon complex mixtures of discourses to help articulate complex conceptions of self and community. To articulate her multiple and, at times, competing concerns, the author, consciously or unconsciously, draws upon differing types of discourses; upon economic discourse, for example, to express wide social structures or material labour conditions, and Christian discourses to explain individual moral commitments. These discourses are neither absolutely discrete nor fully fused, instead they interrelate, presenting a complex circulation of cultural forces.\textsuperscript{115} Bakhtin asserts that 'the language of the novel is a system of languages that mutually and ideologically interanimate each other. It is impossible to describe and analyze it as a single unitary language'.\textsuperscript{116}

\textsuperscript{112} Terry Eagleton 'Ideology, fiction, narrative', Social text, 1979, 63.
\textsuperscript{114} Mikhail M. Bakhtin Dialogic imagination.
\textsuperscript{116} Mikhail Bakhtin, Dialogic imagination, 47.
Scott invokes both moral – usually Protestant Christian – discourses and commercial discourses in her novels. While the religious discourses might be advocating selflessness and charity, assisting those less fortunate, the underpinnings of commerce – profiting from fulfilling another’s needs – echo in the background. Discourses of religion and economics are two perspectives on the world which place value and emphasis on different things. In his discussion of Bakhtin’s theory, Holquist asserts that the co-existence and relation of such different perspectives are fundamental to narrative.117 Bialostosky suggests that 'the dialogic event is . . . the impingement of one language on another in their efforts to define the world or some topic in it'.118 In Sarah Scott's novels the moral and economic discourses co-exist in an effort to comprehend the new social conflicts that were arising between these discourses in society at large.

This is a brief theoretical introduction to my interpretation of ideology in narrative. The practical implications of this theory will be evident in my analysis of Scott's texts in the following chapters. As I have suggested earlier, when considering Scott's writings in relation to her contemporaries with similar interests, it is important to distinguish between the imaginative and non-fictional narratives. It is also important, however, to consider that there is a rhetorical imperative to most genres that gives, say, a novel and a history more in common than might appear by the distinction of genre. By 'rhetorical imperative' I mean that the writer of a text often has an audience in mind and an effect he or she wishes to communicate to that audience. Some genres, however, such as conduct literature, have a more explicit moral imperative, giving the genre an explicitly framed ethical agency. All texts have agency, but some, such as didactic genres, are more explicit about this agency. While Scott usually states a didactic authorial intention, making that element of her ideology explicit, I would suggest that this moral agency and ideology is implicit in her work in other ways as

well. Scott's novels are explicitly morally didactic. The textual apparatuses, such as her prefaces, and her use of exemplary characters, contextualise her works in a tradition of writing that aims to teach by example.\textsuperscript{119}

The chapters in this thesis are, for the most part, ordered chronologically, with Chapter One discussing Scott's 1750 novel, \textit{The history of Cornelia}. Scott uses the French romance mode ironically to reject romance as a model for women's virtue and action and to replace it with a model of rational morality and commercial pragmatism. Chapter Two discusses Scott's other early novel \textit{A journey through every stage of life}. It is a rich and complex text, revealing in a series of tales Scott's persistent concerns with: the construction and limitations of gender roles, especially for women; the powerlessness of women; the nature of virtue and morality; the financial construction of interpersonal relationships; and the duties of charity and benevolence. It is a politically courageous novel and in it Scott speaks more boldly than perhaps at any other stage in her writing. These two early novels sit well together as they explore the nature of women's liberty and agency in the context of a critique of traditional romance models for action. Scott shows how traditional romance models, with their aristocratic politics and benign heroines, are inappropriate models for a commercial society. Her female heroines are more likely to be ensnared than rescued by male lovers. These women learn that rational virtue and financial independence are the armour and weapons they need to fight life's metaphorical dragons. In this critique of romance Scott joins a diverse group of mid- to late-century writers such as Charlotte Lennox, Eliza Fenwick and Samuel Johnson, who explored the nature of rational and imaginative discourse.\textsuperscript{120}

Like these other writers, Sarah Scott was engaging with an emerging Enlightenment climate that interrogated issues about reason and the imagination, individual liberties,

\textsuperscript{119} This notion of writing both to 'instruct and delight' was articulated in many mid-century novels and periodicals, including Samuel Johnson's \textit{Rambler}, for example: \textit{The rambler, Number 4, The Yale edition of the works of Samuel Johnson}, v. III, W. J. Bate and A. B. Strauss eds New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969, 19-25.

\textsuperscript{120} Charlotte Lennox \textit{The female quixote} (1752), Eliza Fenwick \textit{Secresy; or, the ruin on the rock} (1795), Samuel Johnson \textit{The history of Rasselas} (1759).
and ethical morality.\textsuperscript{121} Radically for her times, in \textit{The history of Cornelia} Scott refutes the alignment of men with reason and women with imagination. Throughout her writing Scott argues for a genderless rational morality that rigorously examines notions of goodness, altruism, liberty, rights and governance.

By the time Scott wrote \textit{A description of Millenium Hall}, which is the subject of Chapter Three, she had developed a full-scale model for rational morality in action. Crucial to this rational morality is a perception of monetary exchange as fundamentally ethically based. In her model for a moral life, money, both in its acquisition and disposition, is governed by moral considerations. Much has been made of Scott's models for charity and philanthropy in her writing by critics such as Johanna Smith and Christine Rees, and to a greater or lesser extent she provides charitable models in every one of her novels.\textsuperscript{122} In \textit{Millenium Hall} and \textit{George Ellison}, in particular, Scott creates detailed blueprints for reform. But her ideas about the ethics of commercial practice and the commercial model for human interaction — what I label 'moral commerce' — are insistent throughout her writings in subtle and complex ways that are not always as obvious as these pragmatic programmes of reform.

Perhaps Scott's greatest contribution to the exemplary moral character in fiction is George Ellison, the 'good man' of her novel, \textit{The history of Sir George Ellison}. Chapter Four of this thesis concentrates on this novel.

\textsuperscript{121} Any attempt to come to terms with the concept of the 'Enlightenment' encounters enormous complexities. Entire books have been devoted to trying to define the Enlightenment — its time frame, its origins, its concerns, its major thinkers, and its various cultural manifestations throughout Europe and Britain. See, for example, Dorinda Outram \textit{The Enlightenment}, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995; Roy Porter \textit{The Enlightenment}, Atlantic Highlands, N. J.: Humanities Press International, 1990; and for a discussion of gender and the Enlightenment see, Genevieve Lloyd \textit{The man of reason: 'male' and 'female' in western philosophy}, London: Methuen, 1984. Rather than attempting such a task here, I instead comment on those areas of Enlightenment thinking, such as the nature of reason and imagination, and the notion of individual liberties, that impinge on Scott's novels, and note also where she diverges from other Enlightenment figures, for instance, her assertion of the authority of Christianity.

The final chapter discusses Scott's last novel, *Test of filial duty*. Like her two earliest novels, this epistolary novel again ironically deploys other genres – the romance and the gothic – to critique aristocratic models of marriage, and to propose rational morality as a more appropriate model for action in a new commercial society.

I have included as an appendix a short introduction to Scott's histories and biographies. These texts are not integral to this study's discussion of moral commerce, nevertheless I have included a brief discussion of them for two reasons: first, I provide it as an aid to future Scott research because these texts are extremely rare and there is very little critical commentary on them, and second, my approach in this thesis depended on considering Scott's works in relation to each other and as I occasionally refer to the histories and biographies, it is there as reference material for the reader. Issues, for instance, of rational virtue, of pragmatic morality and of justice occupy Scott in these histories as well as in her novels. Another thesis might have room to discuss the complex issues arising from Scott's historical writing. In Appendix C I have space to do no more than point to some of the areas where her histories and novels converge and gesture to the complex issues that need further research, issues such as: women's historiography in the eighteenth century; the relationships between history and contemporary debates, for example, how did Scott's history of D'Aubigné contribute to contemporary treatments of huguenots in Britain.

In concluding this introductory section of the thesis, I reiterate the primary goals of this study and the methods I use to achieve them. First, this thesis aims to provide a thorough reading of Scott's five novels – *The history of Cornelia; A journey through every stage of life; A description of Millenium Hall; The history of Sir George Ellison*, and *Test of filial duty* – and because most critical work on Scott looks at individual novels in isolation, the thesis considers the novels in relation to each other. Second, it

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123 As already noted, the one exception is *Agreeable ugliness*, her translation of Antoine de La Place's novel, *L'aideur Amiable*. 
argues that Scott's narratives display a response to mid-eighteenth century debates about morality and commerce, a response that I label the ideology of 'moral commerce'. Third, although this thesis is guided by a discussion of Sarah Scott's ideology of moral commerce, it also explicates significant related issues that her novels and histories raise, issues that include: Scott's interrogation of the romance genre; cultural constructions of gender and marriage; philanthropy and education; the anti-slavery movements; and the nature of historiography. Clearly, each of these issues is so broad as to be topics of theses in themselves, but I specify them because they recur throughout Scott's writings and are inextricable from her ideas of moral commerce. This also indicates my methodology in this thesis and my dual concerns with explicating the individual narratives while understanding that these narratives are participating in wider cultural debates of the time. This necessitates a number of exchanges within my argument, from close textual analysis to specific and more general comments about related contextual issues. While I aim to provide enough contextual commentary to be useful to the reader, I emphasise that my main concern in this thesis is to explicate Sarah Scott's texts. Her complex narrative responses to the cultural climate of the mid-eighteenth century deserve more attention than they have so far received and in contributing to the growing body of criticism about her works this thesis helps to redress this neglect.
CHAPTER ONE

DISCOURSES OF VIRTUE AND CHARITY

IN THE HISTORY OF CORNELIA

In 1752 Charlotte Lennox wrote an extraordinary tale of Arabella, a woman hiding from the ugly realities of mercantile marriage by emulating the world of literary romance. Margaret Anne Doody observes that 'through reading her romances Arabella frees herself from fearing, or even seeing, the dangers of her position in relation to the paternal inheritance'.2 Ironically, this romantic heroine exercises her own 'quixotic' power in resisting the pressures surrounding aristocratic marriage, until in a physically weakened state she is 'converted' to 'reality' by a 'rational' doctor. Critics have recently paid more attention to Lennox's novel, especially with regard to the strategies the text uses to empower its heroine.3 It is significant that two years earlier than Lennox's publication, Sarah Scott published The history of Cornelia in which the heroine also resists the pressures of aristocratic wealth and power. Both Scott and Lennox deploy the romance genre ironically to articulate an empowered position for women. Scott replaces romantic and aristocratic models of marriage and women's roles with a moral commercial model in which women's roles and relationships are guided by rational virtue and the moral use of money.

Kidnappings, seductions, hide-and-seek chases through the countryside, star-crossed lovers, imprisonment, masquerades, carnivals and death-bed confessions – initially The history of

References to The history of Cornelia are to the following edition: New York: Garland, 1974, a reprint of the 1750 edition, printed for A. Millar, London. Subsequent page references will appear in the body of the text.


Cornelia strikes the reader as an exemplary romance rather than as a novel of exemplary virtue. These romance features of Cornelia seem at odds with the novel's advertisement, in which the author writes that she aims to 'animate in the practice of, virtue'. But, as Ros Ballaster reminds us, there was a strong mode of romance in the early eighteenth century that stressed 'the virtues of chastity or sentimental marriage', exemplified by writers such as Jane Barker and Penelope Aubin. Scott's text, also, has a pious and didactic mode; its didactic discourses of virtue are the very fibres of the novel, but it also aims to 'agreeably and innocently amuse the fancy of the reader'.

The novel follows the fortunes of its young virtuous heroine, Cornelia. Orphaned and dispossessed of her fortune, and pursued by her depraved uncle, Octavio, Cornelia leads a peripatetic life in search of justice, seclusion and safety. Through Cornelia's adventures Scott explores the nature of virtue, charity and gender, and examines operations of power, notions of justice, and the desirability of virtuous love. As in Scott's other novels, the heroine is morally exemplary and her trials provide a model for virtue in action. In Cornelia, Scott confronts quite radically the construction of women's roles. In this relatively early novel, Scott depicts a young woman rejecting the restrictions imposed on her by her rank and by her guardian – her corrupt, aristocratic uncle – and rejecting the romantic solution provided by a young man who wants to rescue her. Cornelia, instead, trusts in her own virtue and resources to survive as an independent woman. So Scott rejects both social and literary conventions of women's roles and asserts a moral commercial role for the aristocratic woman. Scott remakes the romance genre and, at the same time, critiques the traditional aristocratic rule, asserting instead individual worth and virtue.5

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5 Michael McKeon discusses the 'progressive critique of aristocratic ideology' and its stress on individual virtue as opposed to status; The origins of the English novel 1600-1740, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987, 212-214.
As I have outlined in my Introduction, this study of Sarah Scott's writings discusses the ideology of moral commerce. Chapter One contributes to this ongoing discussion by looking at how *The history of Cornelia* establishes a concept of rational virtue, and relates it to charity, monetary and moral value, and liberty. Scott’s text shows that the possession or lack of money and the way one acquires and dispenses one’s wealth are intricately bound with virtue and social justice. This chapter will discuss *The history of Cornelia* in three sections: i) the representation of virtue, romance and rational morality; ii) charity, money and morality; and iii) virtue, liberty and natural rights. This chapter also demonstrates how *Cornelia* establishes models of virtue and charity that anticipate those of Scott’s later novels.

i. Virtue, romance and rational morality in *The history of Cornelia*

The novel contrasts and plays off against each other discourses of reason and romance to establish a concept of rational virtue and morality. Cornelia’s father promotes a virtue based in rational discourse. ‘Content with the virtue founded on reason, true religion, and benevolence, he did not wish she should learn the boasted sentiments of poetry and romance’ (8-9). While one reason for this preference for rational discourse is to prevent Cornelia from developing a sensitive nature, thus defending her from heartache, there is an assumption in her father’s teaching that the virtue of reason and true religion is founded on truth and considered judgment, and this is contrasted with ‘the boasted sentiments’ – the artificiality and superficiality – of imaginative literature.

By arguing for a rational morality – one founded on individual judgment and reason – Scott’s texts participate in an emerging Enlightenment discourse of rationality. In advocating this construction of moral action, Scott prefigures more well-known Enlightenment thinkers such as Immanuel Kant and joins her forebears, such as Mary
Astell, and contemporaries who were arguing for reason as a basis for virtue. In the second part of her *Serious proposal* Astell writes:

everyone who pretends to Reason, who is a Voluntary Agent and therefore Worthy of Praise or Blame, Reward or Punishment, must Chuse his Actions and determine his Will to that Choice by some Reasonings or Principles either true or false, and in proportion to his Principles and the Consequences he deduces from them he is to be accounted, if they are Right and Conclusive a Wise Man, if Evil, Rash and Injudicious a Fool. If then it be the property of Rational Creatures, and Essential to their very Natures to Chuse their Actions, and to determine their Wills to that Choice by such Principles and Reasonings as their Understandings are furnish'd with, they who are desirous to be rank'd in that Order of Beings must conduct their Lives by these Measures, begin with their Intellectuals, inform themselves what are the plain and first Principles of Action and Act accordingly.⁶

Furthermore, Astell and Scott both realised the implications of women's access to education for this rational view of reason.

I have touched on Scott's intervention in Enlightenment discourses of reason in the Introduction to this thesis. In Kant's view – a view shared by other Enlightenment figures – rational consideration and judgment are integral to ethics and morality. Practical reason applies where an individual *chooses* a course of moral action after reasoned consideration of his or her options.⁷ Scott argues for this model of reasoned moral action both by having Cornelia's father teach his daughter a virtue based on rational judgment and by depicting characters who are counter examples to rational judgment and morality. Madame Du Maine's grandson, Mr Du Maine, for example, is good natured but does not show *rational* goodness.

What goodness of temper he had, arose chiefly from a careless and inconstant mind, that could not think of any one thing long enough to be deeply affected with it. All the other virtues he seemed to have, were infected with the same taint. Real good qualities can only arise in a rational mind, where reason confirms and improves what a good natural disposition first gave birth to. (143)

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⁶ *A serious proposal to the ladies Part II*, London, 1697, 26-7. This passage of text is cited also by Ruth Perry in her very useful discussion of Astell as a woman of the Enlightenment, 'Mary Astell's response to the Enlightenment' in Margaret Hunt, Margaret Jacob, Phyllis Mack and Ruth Perry eds *Women and the Enlightenment*, Women and history series, no. 9, New York: Haworth Press and The institute for research in history, 1984. For further discussion of Astell's *Serious proposal*, and her views on women's education, see Bridget Hill, ed. *The first English feminist: Reflections upon marriage and other writings by Mary Astell* Aldershot: Gower, 1986.

It is not sufficient to possess a 'good natural disposition'; one must cultivate a rational reflection on morality. Du Maine anticipates Leontius in Scott's later novel *A journey through every stage of life* (1754), who is good-natured, but who needs an education before his good nature can be enacted rationally, pragmatically, and for the general good.

Here Scott invokes contemporary arguments about whether morality and virtue are natural in man or whether they are learned. Her contemporary Francis Plumer argued for a rational virtue. He criticised Shaftesbury's notion of the beauty of virtue which saw morality as innate and as just another sense.\(^8\) Plumer commented that Shaftesbury, talks as confidently of its being a sufficient *Rule* and *Motive*, as if he were laying down a self-evident Proposition. Very few, I doubt, would be uniformly good, on the Strength of these *Motives* only. It must be a clear and well ordered Mind, that perceives their force: Blinded by Passion, or born down by Interest, they are no Match for the Depravity of *Natural Man*.\(^9\)

This rational construction of virtue and morality clearly has roots in the Ciceronian view of right reason, as evidenced in the opinion of the Cambridge Platonist Benjamin Whichcote: 'Vice is contrary to the nature of man, as man; for it is contrary to the order of reason, the peculiar and highest principle in man'.\(^10\) So in her assertion of a rational virtue, Scott invokes these earlier views as well as foreshadowing the Enlightenment's faith that reason will help to resolve moral dilemmas.

Cornelia's Uncle Octavio provides a counter example to the rational good man; he represents, instead, corrupt court culture. His use of imaginative literature confirms Cornelia's father's opinion that poetry and romances mislead; Octavio deliberately gives Cornelia 'plays, romances, and poetry; a sort of reading she had not been used to', hoping to 'soften' her and to wear down her rational resistance to his passionate entreaties. The text distinguishes between types of imaginative writing, specifying that Octavio chose

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\(^10\) Bredvold, *Brave new world*, 62.
'books as were *fittest for the purpose*’ (8). She had previously been instructed in religion and morality, history, natural philosophy and the sciences (4). Cornelia is affected by these works and they evoke in her heart-felt sentiments, but they do not alter or destabilise her virtuous disposition, suggesting that even those works will not corrupt a sensible reader. Octavio, like a rhetorician, changes his mode of discourse to suit the rational turn of mind of Cornelia.

He soon turned the conversation to the favourite subject, and trying, *as he called it, to reason* her out of her prejudices, used as his chief argument, that if an union with those nearest to us in blood was unnatural, we could love no one within those degrees, as the affections are the gifts of nature. As she was beginning to shew him, that he confounded depraved nature with the more perfect, and that he might by the same argument maintain every vice, and every crime that is any where committed, to be right; his passion, inflamed beyond bounds by the long constraint he had kept it under, deprived him of all his caution and dissimulation, and he stoped her reply, by crying out, it was blasphemy to suppose it a crime for him to love his Cornelia; could the nearness of blood make him less sensible of her charms, or make it wrong in him to doat on her to distraction, who alone deserved such excess of passion? He would not live but for hopes of, one day, seeing her soul united to his in real ties, and not only by those imaginary bonds with which priests shackle the vulgar. (9-10, emphasis added)

However, his style of rational argument – what he considered to be reason – still cannot overcome Cornelia’s opposition. It is significant that, when Cornelia starts to engage intellectually with his propositions, Octavio’s passion overwhelms his rational mask. He cannot converse intellectually with a woman. In this reversal of conventional representations of gender, Scott gives us a woman using reason and a man who is unable to control his emotions. It is significant, however, in Octavio’s passionate outburst that he echoes romantic tropes, such as dying for his love, and uniting of souls, in demanding a corporeal union. And when all these modes of appeal fail – emotive, rational, romantic – Octavio resorts to physical force to effect his desires, and in so doing shows that as a man he feels a right to ignore a woman’s refusal. Despite being Cornelia’s guardian and uncle, Octavio is part of a morally corrupt court culture, and is ‘Little used to controul his inclinations, he neither weighed their justice nor consequences; but only considered the

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11 This is possibly Scott’s response to contemporary critics of the novel genre, whereby she suggests that it is a weakness in readers rather than in the genre that causes corruption of morals.

12 For similar situations in eighteenth-century novels where men use force to overcome women’s resistance see: Samuel Richardson’s novels *Pamela, Sir Charles Grandison* and *Clarissa*, Frances Burney’s *Evelina*, Charlotte Lennox’s *The female quixote* and Eliza Fenwick’s *Secresy*. 
way to succeed in them' (6). I will discuss the implications of this representation of court culture later in the chapter.

Octavio's violent passion forces Cornelia to flee her own home which offers no protection, and it is her flight from harm and pursuit of justice that provides the adventures of this novel. Before Octavio's intrusion, Cornelia's home was idealistically aristocratic, and almost feudal, for she represented the benevolent, paternalistic aristocracy, taking seriously her responsibility to care for her tenants and the local poor, and, in return, being loved and obeyed. That it is the corrupt side of aristocratic culture - exemplified by Octavio - that forces her into the world unprotected is metaphorical for the societal changes that were destabilizing eighteenth-century traditional structures and class relations. It is significant also for Scott's view of women in this new society that it is Cornelia, a young aristocratic woman, who confronts and discovers how to exist morally in this new commercial world and, at least for a time, to do so without the public role of her rank.

The flight of female innocence and virtue and fight for female agency are central to this text. It was extraordinary in this period for a young woman to be fending for herself. In eighteenth-century society women always had companions or chaperones. Betty Rizzo has discussed this issue, suggesting that Cornelia suffers 'gothic assaults' as a result of being a woman alone in society. Cornelia acts contrary to convention, Rizzo suggests, from 'strong moral conviction'; it is 'a mark of purpose so strong that it overrides convention'.

The romance genre in part represented the old feudal structures of society, and conventional - now outmoded - ways to be a woman in the world. In rejecting these romance modes, Scott replaces these feudal structures with more appropriate models for behaviour in a commercial society. Paradoxically, the adventures into which Cornelia's flight take her seem to be of that genre of romance to which the novel otherwise shows

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13 Companions without vows, 28-9.
such ambivalence. But Scott is critiquing the romance genre and its relation to aristocratic ideologies of conduct by remaking the romance genre and promoting a new ideology of moral commerce. When Cornelia flees her house she collapses in a field, her body being weaker than her resolve. She is rescued by a handsome young stranger, Bernardo. The text depicts Bernardo's 'rescue' of Cornelia and his pledges of assistance in conventionally romantic terms:

He told her, that common humanity would make him rejoice in being able to do service to any one, but the pleasure would be much encreased when that one must be a person in whose relief no dangers could appear terrible; that nature when it made her, had given her a right to command, and mankind a sufficient reward in the pleasure of obeying; and that he should think himself happy if by the service of his whole life, he could in any degree relieve the misfortunes with which hers seemed to begin. (22)

As with the best of chivalric heroes Bernardo pledges his entire life to her service. The chivalric romance model is presented here as an answer to Cornelia's immediate difficulties. She can 'command', he will obey, and this obedience alone will be his 'reward'. But Scott's heroine deliberately and explicitly rejects this romantic option by refusing to marry him and insisting on searching for justice and financial independence.

It is in the heroine's rejection of this romantic solution that The history of Cornelia is a radical departure from conventional representations of young women. She chooses to leave Bernardo's safety to find a more reasoned, pragmatic, and long-term solution. Unlike a romance, which would end at Bernardo's offer of marriage and rescue, this novel shows Cornelia rejecting this option and confronting real life with all its dangers. She is pragmatic and recognises that the romantic solution would be fraught with poverty, public shame and, ultimately, unhappiness. 'Cornelia could never be brought to change her purpose, nor Bernardo to agree to the execution of it. He would have been happy if his consent had been necessary to the effecting of it' (35). Cornelia grants him no agency in her decision or her future. Instead of acceding to Bernardo's pleadings for her to stay with him she goes to Paris to find a 'subsistence' of work or service (38). Although Bernardo is introduced in a romantic scene, it is his 'good sense, his great attention to her, his modesty,
politeness and humanity’ that establishes their relationship (25). While the ongoing romance between Bernardo and Cornelia brings both happiness and tribulations, it is their solid virtue, not their romantic attachment, that effects their salvation in the end. Scott is radically recasting traditional notions of romance, whereby the mutual affection is retained, but in a context of female financial and moral independence, and of male sensibility.

But before they can be united, there are two main impediments to Cornelia’s and Bernardo’s marriage. Cornelia must keep her identity and status secret to avoid Octavio, but this secrecy would bring opposition to the match from Bernardo’s mother and, thus, dispossession of Bernardo’s fortune. Cornelia’s revelation about her true identity would bring acceptance from Bernardo’s mother, but recriminations from Octavio. And, for the sake of Cornelia’s reputation, she staunchly opposes a private marriage (115). ‘It is necessary for all persons to avoid being criminal; but women must be equally cautious of not appearing so: to give room for suspicion, in us is a crime’ (31).

Scott makes her heroine choose moral commerce as a rationale for conduct, rather than romance or traditional aristocratic culture. Cornelia knows that she must work for money as well as retain her reputation to secure her future. It is Cornelia’s solid rational virtue, and her pragmatic, moral conception of money that allow her to withstand the larger than life – the gothic – horrors that her escape puts in her way. When Octavio forces her to leave her retired safe community; her naiveté about the world outside brings her into further danger. Her trials originate from Octavio’s evil, but are exacerbated by her own ignorance of society and of human vice and by her determination to face the situation as a single unprotected woman. She is duped by a seemingly caring older woman, and accepts her offer of lodging in Paris. Cornelia narrowly escapes from what is, in fact, a brothel.

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14 In a letter to her sister, Scott raises this issue of women’s reputation: ‘The shame of our sex flies fast, every one tells it, every one listens to it, & most people believe it, the single men publish those faux-pas in hopes of making them general. . . the women are never silent on this head, the immodest want to bring every one upon an equality with themselves, & the modest are desirous of showing their virtue by their censures & of selling it off by the comparaison[sic] of the failings of others & think to turn to their honour what is really the disgrace of the sex’ MO 5163, 1740.
She rejects this financial solution and role for herself. The figure of prostitute is one possible avenue for a woman to be financially independent in this society, but it is an immoral role that is unacceptable to Cornelia.

Scott interrelates the discourses of romance and reasoned virtue in this novel by rejecting or remaking romance models and replacing them with actions based on rational virtue. The ongoing discussions throughout the novel between Cornelia and Bernardo about their marriage and its attendant difficulties is a critique of romantic views of love and life and a commentary on social assumptions about pecuniary-based marriage. Scott deliberately juxtaposes the elements of romance and reasoned virtue to provide a model for judicious and pragmatic behaviour. By taking the ideals of romance — such as the knight saving the endangered maiden — and undermining them with real-life complexities, Scott articulates the demands on women in contemporary society. 'In the traditional romance no one is ever disillusioned. Disillusionment calls into question the whole wish-fulfilling function of the form'.15 Unlike a conventional romance, Bernardo does not rescue Cornelia when she is imprisoned in Chateau De Rhee. As Richard Hurd commented in his Letters on chivalry and romance, 'Violations of chastity being the most atrocious crimes [romantic heroes] would pride themselves in the glory of being its protectors'.16 But in the society Cornelia inhabits, there are no heroes and she must use her own wits to effect that escape. Ros Ballaster has written that 'By dehistoricizing and mythologizing the public sphere, the romantic fiction writer provides the female reader with a sense of feminine power and agency in a world usually closed to her participation'.17 But in Scott's version of romance, love and men are not the means of transcending conventional restrictive practices. She places Cornelia in realistic social situations, and shows her using her rational virtue — not her transcendent romantic relationship — to evade or overcome difficult situations.

17 Ros Ballaster Seductive forms, 34-35.
In discussing the decline of the romance genre and emergence of the novel genre, Gillian Beer has commented that 'the romance concentrates on ideal possibilities; the novel on actual possibilities'. In Scott's novel, these possibilities – both ideal and actual – co-exist to articulate the role that she envisions for women. Unlike the romance which, in Beer's words, allowed women to immerse themselves without responsibility in a hectic world, Scott's novels demand that women – and men – take responsibility for their actions in the world.¹⁸ It is not romantic passion that brings the couple together in the end, but their patience, persistence, selflessness and virtue. In finally resolving the impediments to the young lovers' union, the text establishes a model for romance in which mutual affection co-exists with pragmatic rational judgment and moral financial decisions. Their pragmatic virtue and benevolence make them exemplary models.

ii. Charity, money and morality

Scott explores the interrelations between charity and virtue in all her novels, this being fundamental to moral commerce. In Cornelia she introduces the notions of charity that, in her later novels, she explores in detail. In Chapter Three this discussion considers some of the cultural conceptions of charity and poverty operating in the eighteenth century, and in Chapters Three and Four, respectively, I discuss Millenium Hall and The history of Sir George Ellison where Scott provides her more detailed plans for charity. But here, I will introduce some of the issues about charity that recur in her works, including the relationship between virtue and a sense of benevolence, and the effects of class and gender on the charitable relationship.

First, the novel asserts that a truly virtuous person will possess a sense of charity. Moreover, for the wealthy, there is a public and personal responsibility to support the needy.  Although Scott never questions, and indeed, asserts the naturalness of, social hierarchy, (5, 188) she does stipulate that the wealthy have a duty to alleviate the suffering of the poor. And, secondly, her delineation of appropriate ways of receiving charity shows that virtuous conduct resides on both sides of the charitable relationship.

Throughout the novel charitable acts – both monetary and in kind – are displayed and lauded. The text explores the public dimensions of charity. David Marshall has written about spectatorship in eighteenth-century cultural discourses and suggests that theatricality is a paradigm for cultural behaviour. This is a useful way of understanding the charitable act and the relationship between the provider and recipient of charity. Robert Markley's essay on charity in Laurence Sterne's *A sentimental journey* discusses the importance of public displays of benevolence for the characterisation of the man of sensibility. This sentimental display, he argues, is a replacement for actual engagement with the issues of poverty themselves. As I will discuss shortly, Scott delineates the conditions for benevolent acts and pays particular attention to how they are perceived by the parties concerned, and by the public. There is a consistent ideology underpinning both the charitable acts and their display or concealment. There is a moral and monetary exchange in the charitable act and relationship that invokes responsibilities for both the benefactor and the recipient.

The text establishes an attitude toward poverty, charity and social hierarchy early in the novel. As I have said, Cornelia is a member of the aristocratic class who sees a

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19 It should be noted that, in this novel, wealth usually refers to propertied rather than commercial wealth.
20 Scott naturalises social hierarchy, seeing it as divinely ordained. In *Millenium Hall*, she writes: 'Every thing to me looses its charm when it is put out of that station wherein nature, or to speak more properly, the all-wise Creator has placed it' (71).
responsibility inherent in her social position, a responsibility to assist the poor. She is a model for the virtuous disposition of wealth. Although recently orphaned and very young, Cornelia’s first priority is charity. She views her fortune as little other than a mode of assisting the poor.

She denied herself all superfluous expences, looking upon them as bad, tho' common means, of defrauding the poor; she considered, with compassion, the disproportion in fortune between the low and great, and tho' she saw the necessity of subordination, yet she grieved to see it so often accompanied by extreme poverty. She thought those who were prevented by the gratification of their vanity, from lessening that inequality, by a communication of their wealth, little less criminal than those who were with-held by hard heartedness and avarice. Desirous of removing such evils as came within her power to redress, she employed almost all her fortune in assisting the poor, tho' with such judgment and oeconomy, that she gave no encouragement to idleness. Being convinced that virtue was not to be found with the slothful, industry was not less necessary than poverty, to intitle the healthy to her benevolence. By being sparing in her expences upon herself, she had sufficient to relieve all the necessitous that came within her knowledge. She gave ease and content to the old, attendance and competence to the sick, encouragement and all useful assistance to the young; and by this was made as much happier than those who were the objects of her charity, as the pleasures arising from the riches of the mind, excell those resulting from pecuniary possessions (5-6).

This passage early in the novel establishes the text's attitude to social hierarchy, to relations between rich and poor, to charity, and to money. It outlines ideas which are reaffirmed throughout the text and indeed throughout Scott's later novels: that social hierarchy is natural or divinely ordered; that the wealthy have an obligation to assist the poor; that happiness for the wealthy resides only in the virtuous mind and in giving their money away; and that the poor have an obligation to be industrious (188). The charitable objects listed here are the old, the sick, the young; the 'healthy' receive assistance only if they are industrious. Scott’s view of charity is part of the cultural discourses on the deserving poor, a view, that I will discuss further in Chapter Three, that scrutinized charitable recipients to ensure that they deserved assistance and that such aid would not encourage idleness.

As the text quoted above indicates, Scott interrelates the vices of the wealthy with their effects on charity, showing that the vice of luxury denies the poor assistance. The 'superfluous expences' Cornelia denies herself are the luxuries that the wealthy were
increasingly criticised for displaying. Cornelia views 'superfluous expences' as 'bad, tho' common means, of defrauding the poor' (5). This is part of Scott's ongoing critique of luxury which pervades her published works and her letters. Luxury is a 'gratification of their vanity' and a vice which not only corrupts the rich, but which denies the poor assistance. Scott labels luxury 'criminal' and compares it with the vices of 'hard heartedness and avarice'. As discussed in the Introduction such critiques of luxury were commonplace in the eighteenth century. For Scott, money has a moral imperative that is exerted or withheld when it is spent. Spending money charitably serves a social function of keeping the wealthy morally healthy and the poor free from want. Implicit in this ideology of moral commerce is the view that dispensing money in a morally responsible way justifies the social differentiation of wealth in society.

Scott's texts do not advocate disintegration of class divisions, but suggest specific attitudes towards wealth and social responsibility. Money has a literal function, serving as payment for labour and as a requisite for purchasing basic necessities and luxuries, but it is also a signifier of moral virtue, vice and exchange. As Scott asserts in *A journey through every stage of life*, money is not evil in itself; it instead assumes the moral qualities of its possessor and the purposes for which it is spent. Money, both the granting and withholding of money, is a moral signifier in the novel and throughout Scott's writing. Through support or rejection of monetary responsibilities, characters show moral approbation of another's actions, and often their own moral qualities as they accept or ignore their charitable responsibilities.

The text consistently provides examples of the wealthy not fulfilling their moral responsibilities to the poor (for example, Octavio, Mr De Rhee and Julia's brother). Conversely, Cornelia provides a model of the moral interrelation of the wealthy and poor ranks in society. In her original home, Cornelia cared financially for the poor and, when Octavio's thugs attack her castle, the poor defend her with their lives. Her charity buys
necessities for the poor, such as food and clothing, but it also buys them power and influence as she is a medium between their powerlessness and the expensive sphere of legal power. ‘There was nothing in which Cornelia was more solicitous, than to supply the poor with means of resisting the oppressions of the rich’ (176). In one instance, she provides finance for three sisters to legally challenge their guardian who had absconded with their inheritance (176-177).

Cornelia views her fortune as a means of assisting the poor. Indeed, she receives pleasure from her charity: she is 'happier than those who were the objects of her charity, as the pleasures arising from the riches of the mind, excell those resulting from pecuniary possessions' (6). But if the wealthy have an obligation to direct their money responsibly and morally, so too do the poor have responsibilities. Like Scott’s other philanthropic protagonists, Cornelia assists the poor ‘with such judgment and oeconomy, that she gave no encouragement to idleness. Being convinced that virtue was not to be found with the slothful, industry was not less necessary than poverty, to intitle the healthy to her benevolence’ (6). Poverty through natural hardship is distinguished from poverty arising from laziness. As I discuss in Chapter Three, as pressures on the wealthy increased and as poor laws were debated, there was intense scrutiny of the poor and questions about whether they deserved assistance.22

When Cornelia flees from her community and her uncle, she writes him a letter and begs that he will use her money responsibly to continue her charitable enterprises. She is idealistic in hoping that Octavio's licentiousness towards her could co-exist with a moral social responsibility. It is in this letter that we learn of the scope of Cornelia's benevolence.

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22 But as research into living conditions of the poor in the second half of the eighteenth century shows, it was difficult for a family to exist on one labourer's income. Even in ordinary circumstances such families were likely to need some charitable assistance and, even more so if the breadwinner were incapacitated or unemployed. Historical research has shown how fraught is this issue, particularly because of the difficulty of obtaining reliable and consistent primary records; nevertheless, for discussions of the thin line between poverty and subsistence see, for example, R. S. Neale’s discussion of labourers’ wages and living conditions in his socio-economic history of Bath, Bath 1680-1850 A social history or A valley of pleasure, yet a sink of iniquity, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981, and M. J. Daunton's Progress and poverty: An economic and social history of Britain 1700-1850, Part IV, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.
Here is a model for the philanthropic programme that Scott's readers would see in her later novels, *Millenium Hall* and *George Ellison*. Cornelia's charity provides for the old, the sick, the unemployed. She provides a dowry in the form of stock for young married couples. She teaches young women the skills they will need to find work. And at a later stage, Cornelia establishes a manufacturing business in an isolated rural community to assist the poor (188) much as in *Millenium Hall*, the ladies establish a carpet manufacturing business. These charitable activities show that Scott's novels both uphold conventional social hierarchies, and respond to contemporary financial and economic developments.

Not only do Cornelia's charitable activities validate her public role as an aristocratic woman outside marriage and family, but they also prescribe and support poorer women's roles. By assisting young married couples, Cornelia eases their financial burden, and by teaching young women practical skills she makes them financially independent. She teaches the milliner's daughter book-keeping skills. She acknowledges that poor women are labouring women and that the greatest assistance she can give to them is saleable skills that will, ultimately, protect their health and their virtue.

Charity, ultimately, is not a one way street; it is a transaction entailing social and personal responsibilities on both sides. This sense of charity is reinforced in *Cornelia* where recipients of charity are commended for their sense and judgment with money. One of the recipients, the young Sylvia, for example, is described as having a 'prudent scheme of life' and as living a 'retired, industrious life' (234-235). Her actions and sentiments show that she is a worthwhile charitable investment. Recipients of charity must show that they are deserving, that they will be prudent and productive with what is received, and ultimately that the charity will not alter the station into which they were born. The ideal object of charity is the person who is financially destitute through no fault of her own. Yet, somewhat at odds with this is Bernardo's insistence to Cornelia that the truly virtuous and industrious person will never be destitute,
Think not, my angel, that we could ever suffer from poverty; the honest and industrious may always provide a subsistence for themselves; with such a pattern of unparalleled virtue before me, I could not fail of one of these qualifications: and who that had so noble a motive to industry as the care of my Cornelia, could fail of being industrious? (34).

This comment is in tension with the notion of charity that is otherwise espoused in the text, suggesting that poverty can be avoided by all who are virtuous and industrious and that the destitute are then in some way responsible for their own misfortunes.

While a sense of charity is fundamental to a virtuous life, charitable conduct is a social act, and thus has social prescriptions and rules which serve to show the altruism of the provider and the worthiness of the recipient. As discussed earlier, charity often invokes the public as spectators and judges. The history of Cornelia suggests that charity should be effected privately, thus causing little embarrassment to the recipient and little glory to the benefactor. One should also bestow money and assistance without imposing a sense of obligation (social, financial, sexual or personal) on the recipient. Whilst literally it is stated that there are no obligations on the recipient, in effect there are expectations and codes of behaviour entailed in the acts of charity. As outlined above, the poor person must be industrious, grateful, self-abnegating, and ideally should pay back the money, as did Sylvia. The poor person of higher social status – the genteel poor – should be in need through no fault of his, but usually her, own, should protest vehemently then accede humbly, and then act in a way that affirms the prudence of the benefactor's decision.

In Cornelia, charitable assistance is given both to persons of equal social status as the benefactor and to those of inferior status. Scott provides examples throughout her novels of what was becoming an extensive problem in the eighteenth century – the poor gentry – those who could not keep up with the lifestyle to which they had been born. This is an important distinction which brings with it attendant presuppositions and rules for behaviour. Scott seems to be suggesting that if the recipient is of an equal or near equal
social status, then friendship and love is the basis of charity, whereas with the lower classes charity is a social responsibility which should be strictly impersonal.

Julia is one example of a woman of high social status whose poverty has been imposed upon her – in this case, by the actions of her unjust brother. Scott's texts consistently return to the issue of the single woman who requires financial support and moral guidance. Financially and morally, the single woman was problematic to eighteenth-century society. Without the financial and moral protection of a family a woman was vulnerable to attacks on her virtue. She must support herself in a publicly respectable way and also appear virtuous in order to retain whatever little support society might provide. Given her own divorce and her father's subsequent refusal to support her, Sarah Scott had experienced the difficulties encountered by the poor gentlewoman. Scott consistently presents the cases of women – usually middle to upper class women – whose reputations and livelihoods are threatened because male family members or guardians withhold their rightful monetary entitlements. Cornelia loses her fortune and status when her guardian tries to seduce her. As I will discuss shortly, Sylvia is left destitute because her mother's unsanctioned marriage cuts her off from her fortune. Julia's brother dissipates his own inheritance as well as hers. Lucinda is cut off not only from an income but also from personal liberty when her mother forces her into a convent. Cornelia provides financial and moral guidance to support these women – her social equals – because society will not support them.

Julia was a woman of a well-established and wealthy family; however, on her parents' death, her inheritance was placed in trust with her brother. His dissipated lifestyle and his inability or unwillingness to support Julia, forces her to live a retired and impoverished life while her brother pursues a reckless lifestyle in the city. Clearly Julia presents as a worthy

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23 In a letter to Elizabeth, Sarah laments the situation of the dependent gentlewoman: 'I pity your Damsel much, it is an exceeding melancholy thing to live in perpetual subjection to the temper of others after having had so much reason to expect to be so far above it; to have her happiness always dependent upon the will of a mistress is at best but very precarious, happiness is too much so to us all, but really a servant scarce ever meets with it', MO 5170, 11, November, 1741.
recipient of charity; her needs arose from injustice, rather than through her own mismanagement or idleness. Moreover, her situation provides opportunity for Scott to show the difficulties facing single women where they have rights to justice but no power to effect it. The romance genre offers fantasy solutions for women otherwise trapped, but in this novel Scott shows another woman offering a solution. Julia describes her situation to Cornelia:

“You see the poverty which every thing belonging to me declares. You know how much in justice I should be raised above it, if possession always followed right; and that I retired from all my friends and acquaintance in hopes to live upon the little I received, which was never above the tenth part of what was due to me. I could never bear to use people in trade as my brother did me: running in debt without a prospect of payment, always appeared to me very criminal. . . . My income is so trifling when compared with his, that he could scarce feel the just payment of it. He has known the difficulties it has reduced me to, and yet will not give up the smallest of his pleasures to procure me the ease that in justice I ought to have.” (115-116, emphasis added)

The contrast between Julia’s situation and her brother’s is clear. She has not the means for a bare subsistence, yet he uses their money in an indulgent pursuit of selfish pleasure. As a woman dependent on her brother, she is powerless to redress a situation that is clearly unjust. The choice of vocabulary reinforces the contrast between moral and legal justice. Not only is it morally and legally corrupt of him to use the patriarchal system to deny his sister a subsistence, but it is morally and legally corrupt for him to abuse his aristocratic position by not paying tradespeople. Significantly, it is another woman who redresses the brother’s wrongs.

Cornelia and Julia negotiate a charitable agreement. It has terms and conditions, expectations and concessions. Their equal social stations make the charitable relationship quite different from one where the recipient is of a lower social position. Cornelia paradoxically expresses some pleasure in hearing that Julia’s sadness originates from a mere lack of money. Cornelia declares that Julia’s situation:

“put[s] it in my power to make money yield me some satisfaction. I have an income much beyond what I dare spend. If you, my dear Julia, do not despise me too much to receive any thing at my hands, you shall be freed from the difficulties you at present are under, and I from the secret pain of having unemployed money by me. I own I am exacting the greatest favour of you that you can bestow on me. To give, does not shew so great a part of love, as to accept: this is the greatest sign of a tender
and perfect affection in such a heart as yours. Therefore, my dear friend, make me happy by shewing you have this degree of affection for me; shew me that you look on me as another self, and upon every thing I have as yours. By the generosity of Madame Du Maine, I have a considerable income, tho' I have hitherto had but little use for it. Forgive me if I insist on your sharing it with me, which were you to refuse, I must be convinced you have no friendship for me. I love you well enough to share your possessions, if you were the person favoured by fortune. Consider these sentiments give me a title to success, and wound me not by letting me perceive you have not the same degree of confidence in me.” (118, emphasis added)

There is a subtle negotiation occurring here whereby Cornelia anticipates Julia’s objections to receiving charity and counters them by showing that she would be doing her a service by accepting her offer. Cornelia does this partly by characterising her money in negative terms. Julia can ‘make money yield [Cornelia] some satisfaction’, the implication being that Cornelia is oppressed by having money. Cornelia has a ‘secret pain of having unemployed money’ and she has an income ‘much beyond’ what she ‘dare spend’.

Cornelia characterises money as negative unless it is used worthily. By showing that her money is a burden to her, Cornelia places an obligation on Julia to relieve this burden. Her arguments are based on appeals to romantic friendship and intimacy. Julia would ‘wound’ Cornelia if she did not accept her offer and, thus, prove that she has no friendship for her. Cornelia’s generosity and Julia’s humility in accepting the money demonstrate Scott’s view of friendship wherein there is ‘a reciprocal communication of benefits’.24 This type of romantic friendship exemplifies a feminised moral commerce where the dispensation of money is founded on and renews or strengthens moral ties between the person spending and the person receiving the money. To spend and to receive money is imbued with moral responsibility. The money with which Cornelia assists Julia is derived, not from the commerce of buying and selling, but from her moral commerce with Madame Du Maine. Both monetary exchanges are underlain and interwoven with moral exchange.

Early in her travels, Cornelia lodges with and works for Madame Miteau, a milliner. In this house of an honest tradeswoman she finds respite – accommodation and work – and in

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24 See Millenium Hall, 112.
return Cornelia transforms the haven into a model of moral commerce. Although barely able to support herself, she saves the widow and her children from debtors, gives them the little money she has, takes charge of the business and provides a model of efficiency that inspires her co-workers and expands the business. Cornelia moves on after this success to be the companion of an elderly widow, Madame Du Maine. Cornelia instructs her in economy, the management of her affairs, and the dispensation of charity. Ultimately, Cornelia is both a guide for and a recipient of Madame Du Maine's charitable assistance.

As well as articulating moral commercial charitable relations between women, Scott's text delineates the sexual dimension of charity between men and women. The significant power differential between men and women and the upper and lower classes impinges on the character of the charitable relationship. This suggests that the perfect charitable relationship is like that between Julia and Cornelia - between women of the same class. Charity for the lower classes is a social responsibility which should be enacted impersonally. Especially where there is a gender difference, it is the male benefactor's responsibility to stay personally and physically uninvolved with the female recipient of charity. Scott praises her male heroes who resist the sexual temptation of a financially vulnerable woman. It is this sexual dimension of charity that Laurence Sterne satirizes in *A sentimental journey* when Yorick places a coin in the fille de chambres' 'purse', and wipes the tears, mingling his bodily fluids, with young Maria.25

By her insistence on men resisting sexual temptation, Scott asserts a latent sexual relationship in the act of charity which must be overruled or resisted. What she is emphasising is that being female and being financially destitute makes a woman sexually vulnerable. The virtuous men in the novel are those who resist such sexual dimensions of charity, such as Bernardo, Devaux and Mr De Rhone. Characters such as Mr De Rhee and Cornelia's uncle represent the transgression of charitable principles, for they seek sexual

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relations with their financial dependents. In *Millenium Hall* also Mr Hintman's charity to his ward Louisa is negated as he watches her sexually mature and, in his eyes, sees his investment repaid by her sexual attractiveness. When Bernardo assists Sylvia after her parents die, it is an overt condition of his beneficence that he be physically removed from her.

He told her, she might depend on his constant assistance; and to remove any scruples she might be apt to have, he would never visit her, after she was once conveniently placed. He added, that he aimed at no more than the pleasure of relieving a person who seemed so highly to deserve it. (232)

Again, Scott emphasises the public spectacle of charity by emphasising that Bernardo's relationship with Sylvia would not be seen as anything other than charitable. Devaux articulates the sexual relationship when he recalls Bernardo's comments to Sylvia:

He told her, that as her youth and beauty might render her more liable to be reflected upon, he would scarce ever come near her himself, but gave her a direction where to send to him, in case she should stand in need of his assistance. He then insisted upon the same promise from me, of not visiting her; which, I own, was not so readily given. But this gives him no right to triumph in a superiority of virtue, since love, not philosophy, was his guard. Had my affections been as entirely engaged as his, I could have been as cheaply virtuous, and as easily have determined not to see a pretty woman, when I was insensible to any pleasure arising from the sight of her beauty. However, though unwillingly, I did promise not to visit her. (233-234)

Sylvia's gratitude is doubled: she is thankful not only for the monetary assistance, but 'more still for the regard he had shewn for her, in resolving to prevent the malicious suggestions, to which his great generosity might give rise' (234).

Charity in this text, then, assumes various guises. Cornelia exercises her charity and benevolence by her moral guidance as well as by her money. Her writings are a source of inspiration and teaching to those with less innate virtue, such as Maria - Mr De Rhee's servant. Held captive by Mr De Rhee, Cornelia comforts herself by writing moral essays. Maria, a servant girl of the household, reads these essays when she later falls prey to her master's advances. She later tells Cornelia,

These papers, Madam, shewed me to myself in my true colours. They were short treatises on vanity, pride, virtue, reputation, liberty, conscience, riches and happiness. From them I learned how much I had erred; and how far I had hitherto mistaken the road to happiness. My heart was touched. (194)
Despite being physically absent, Cornelia exerts a moral influence on Maria who declares: 'Thus taught by you, madam, I was determined to renounce my past misconduct, and bring my sentiments to be worthy of such an instructor' (195). It is through a moral text that Cornelia exercises a virtuous example. This situation raises complex and intriguing questions about Scott's view of virtue and class. In particular, how is class tied to virtue? Is it a coincidence that Maria, of the servant class, is unable to resist her passionate temptations and her master's entreaties, and is unschooled in, but is capable of learning virtue, whereas Cornelia, of a higher social status, is strong in virtue and can put it into practice? Scott suggests here that virtue is tied to education and, therefore, shows the implications of not educating the lower classes. Like Samuel Richardson, Scott's writing demonstrates that she saw a need for providing morally instructive models for serving-class women as well as for those of higher ranks.26

Cornelia is a moral guide for characters like Maria. At one stage in the novel, Cornelia is governess in the De La Roche household. Lucinda De La Roche is socially and emotionally deprived, and finds in Cornelia a friend and moral guide, indeed she is the true 'mother' that Lucinda's real mother will never be. When Madame De La Roche tells Lucinda that Cornelia must leave,

"Lucinda begged her not to deprive her of the most agreeable companion, and best guide she ever had. She said that till Cornelia had instructed her, she had but very imperfect notions of virtue; and that she could not but improve by the example of one who had nothing but virtues in her composition. (135-136)"

And Julia, Cornelia's social equal but financial inferior, comments,

"Teach me, my dear Cornelia, how to provide for my support: nature has given you such a superiority of understanding, and painful experience has so greatly improved it, that the old must beg counsel of you; the difference of age cannot make them your equals. This gives you a right to direct me, though I am several years older than yourself". (117)

26 However, this is problematised when one considers that the readership of novels in the eighteenth century did not usually extend to the servant class. Even where literate, those of the servant class would not have been able to afford to buy novels with the average price per volume ranging from 3s. to 6s, Pat Rogers ed, The eighteenth century, London: Methuen, 1978, 50. Nevertheless, Scott's writing assumes a moral educative function that suggests that the lower classes, either through lack of education or lack of innate virtue, need moral teaching.
Cornelia is a moral and financial guide in her personal relationships and in her charitable activities.

While Cornelia is a model for female charity and virtue in the novel, Bernardo is the male equivalent. Bernardo is a model for the 'good man' and anticipates the benevolent protagonist of Scott's later novel, *The history of Sir George Ellison*. Bernardo is sensitive, charitable, loyal, benevolent, and feminine. He is a precursor to the sentimental hero who, for a time, was later to dominate the novel – he sighs, he weeps, he blushes, he swoons and faints. Bernardo demonstrates constancy and loyalty to Cornelia. Despite his own hardship and melancholy he assists the unfortunate, such as Sylvia. As mentioned earlier, in his treatment of Sylvia, Bernardo provides a model for decorous charity. Like Scott's other 'good men', Bernardo is benevolent in private and wise and influential in public. To avoid imputations of pride, Bernardo's acts of charity are narrated by Devaux, who describes Bernardo's public status:

"The only satisfaction he seemed capable of receiving, was from reading; from conversing with the learned, amongst whom he was greatly carressed, being united in friendship with some of the greatest genius's of the age; and in doing good offices to all who stood in need of them. He has often made a worthy use of the arts of persuasion, which nature has so lavishly bestowed upon him; having reconciled many, whose quarrels had been judged irreconcileable, and prevailed on many to be just who seemed quite otherwise disposed". (242)

In the eighteenth-century context, this public role of conciliation and advice is masculine: Cornelia could not perform these public functions. Her charity must be private and localised. Bernardo's and Cornelia's charitable acts are complementary and are enhanced when they marry. They settle in a rural community, have children and establish an extensive charitable base: 'Their neighbourhood, in a few years, was stocked with an honest industrious race, happy in themselves, and useful to their country' (270). Scott phrases this

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as if it were a moral empire and echoes the mercantilist view that charity to the poor provides a productive labour force.\textsuperscript{28}

\textbf{iii. Virtue, liberty and natural rights}

Individual acts of charity occur in the context of debates about natural rights and social justice. In the text Scott creates a variety of literal and metaphorical spaces of freedom and imprisonment to articulate moral agency and social constructions of justice and power. The novel interrelates social liberty, personal freedom and virtue. In many ways, Cornelia's family home and community are ideal before Octavio's desire intervenes. His sexuality destroys the Edenic rural village, and it is Cornelia who is cast out alone, socially and sexually naive, and penniless. Throughout the novel, virtuous characters seek, find and are cast out of such ideal communities, and often it is sexual violence or unwanted sexual attention which prompts them to seek refuge. Ironically, when Cornelia flees Octavio she finds refuge with the Parisian widow who turns out to be a brothel owner wishing to co-opt Cornelia into service – she leaves one kind of sexual exploitation for another. But in the brothel, as in her earlier trial, it is Cornelia's virtue that saves her. Indeed it is a prospective 'customer' and subsequent long-term friend, Mr De Rone, who aids her escape. She saves herself and converts him, for he 'was a man of great honour, and possessed of every virtue but chastity' (42).\textsuperscript{29}

Scott plays with the notions of refuge and imprisonment in this novel, finding them both in physical and psychological manifestations. Vice can be a form of imprisonment whereby a person becomes enslaved to passions and vicious behaviour. In confessing her crimes to Cornelia, Maria declares:

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item This situation is reminiscent of Shakespeare's \textit{Pericles} in which the virtuous heroine Marina is forced into a brothel, but is saved when the king tries to court her.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
That to be free, it was necessary to be good. That the vicious are the greatest slaves, and are ruled by the worst of tyrants. I felt that to be virtuous was the only way of saving us from the pains that conscience can inflict; and of securing to us the supreme satisfaction which we receive from its applause; a pleasure far superior to all others. From hence I was easily led to believe in your maxim, that to be happy it was necessary to be good. (194-5)

But of course in the novel it is often the virtuous who are imprisoned or who need to flee from the vicious, just as Cornelia flees from Octavio and is kidnapped by Monsieur De Rhee. Lucinda is imprisoned in another sense, first, by being a virtuous, sensible daughter trapped with a corrupt mother, and second, when her mother sends her to a convent as punishment for disagreeing with her. Lucinda is intelligent, sensitive and virtuous – qualities her mother resents rather than rewards. When Madame de la Roche fails to overrule Lucinda's rational judgment and virtue, she sends her to a convent in Spain, hoping she will eventually take vows. Celibacy and social exile are a punishment for Lucinda's intelligent rejection of her mother's superficial and spiteful way of life. The same woman tries to use imprisonment to stop Bernardo's and Cornelia's marriage, but again their rational virtue triumphs and they are released not only to marry, but to receive public approbation.

While Cornelia is a model of virtue, sense and moral strength, she is still a young woman with no protection other than her own rational virtue. Like Richardson's Pamela, she cannot defend herself from force against her body, and she is kidnapped by the man she has rejected, Monsieur De Rhee (69ff). Indeed, the similarities between the texts in general and, particularly, between Pamela's and Cornelia's kidnappings are substantial. Like Pamela, Cornelia is carried away by men working for her powerful suitor to one of his castles. There she is locked up under the guard of an uncaring female servant. Her only solace is in her writing. Unlike Pamela, Cornelia has no parent to write to, so she writes essays on various moral subjects for her own edification. Cornelia's imprisonment has more similarities to Pamela's. Both young women count on the goodness of a stranger to assist them. In both novels, the two young women's friends and relatives feel powerless to assist her against a powerful man. After Cornelia's escape, despite Madame Du Maine's
substantial wealth and position in society, she advises Cornelia to remain secluded in her pastoral retreat rather than risk the danger of returning to her where she might again be attacked. Madame Du Maine shows how powerless she feels in the face of a man like Monsieur De Rhee even in protecting a young woman so important to her. But, like Pamela, it is Cornelia's own 'triumphant virtue' that saves her rather than social or legal justice (91). It is a significant commentary on the differences between Scott and Richardson, however, that Cornelia is rewarded with her own liberty and then a marriage on her terms, whereas Pamela is rewarded with a marriage with rules to regulate her conduct.

Cornelia is, however, an aristocratic woman in her own right, with wealth, property and status, giving her greater respectability and volition than the servant-class Pamela.

While De Rhee locks her in his castle prison, Cornelia sees her room, in which she eventually locks herself away from her captor, as a 'sanctuary' (82). She reverses the situation, locking him out, and finding power and freedom within her cell. De Rhee's panic at watching Cornelia's illness through the keyhole shows how much he is imprisoned both by his uncontrollable passion for her and by her unrelenting virtue and resistance. De Rhee's gaze enacts the complex power relationship between the captor and captive. Cornelia is his prisoner physically, but morally she is free because she is never in danger of submitting to him. His gaze figuratively represents his reduction of Cornelia to an object of desire. But in this instance, his power is reduced to a relatively benign gaze as he literally lowers himself to peer at his captive through the keyhole. Ironically, he is powerless, for Cornelia has locked him out. She has exerted what little power she has to separate herself physically from her captor. While she is temporarily defeated in body by losing consciousness, she does so in relative safety, because her locked room is a refuge from his

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30 Albeit that Pamela re-writes some of the rules.
31 This scene echoes the one in Richardson's novel where Pamela breaks free from Mr B., locks herself in a room, then faints. He gazes at her through the keyhole: Samuel Richardson Pamela, (1740), ed. Peter Sabor, London: Penguin, 1980, 64. For a discussion of this scene and the voyeurism of the male gaze see Tassie Gwilliam 'Pamela and the duplicitous body of femininity', Representations, 34, 1991, 104-133, especially 119-123.
sexual violence. His metaphorical impotence is matched by physical impotence as he loses desire when he sees Cornelia unconscious. Like Mr B. when he looks upon the unconscious Pamela, De Rhee feels powerless because he cannot get to his captive; the voyeurism ceases to be erotic when it is accompanied by powerlessness.

Cornelia finds liberty in the virtues of her mind. 'She found him a greater slave to his passions than she was to him, and was sure they were the worse tyrants' (74). Writing serves to show that as a woman Cornelia's body might be imprisoned, but her mind, virtue and morality are free – an important point for an eighteenth-century woman writer to make.

Again, when she is being physically assaulted by her kidnappers her cries are unheard (69). Through their gagging her mouth and restraining her body she not only loses her voice, but also her consciousness when she faints. It is only her written voice that is free and powerful. While she is a captive to Monsieur De Rhee, Cornelia fortifies her strength by writing tracts of moral philosophy.

Her employment was to write her thoughts on several subjects as they occurred to her. These were but melancholy, though she had chosen them out of the least shocking that possessed her mind, in hopes of drawing some comfort from them. By writing these essays she was a little amused; and by fixing her hope on the goodness of God, and her comfort in virtue, which gives more happiness to the distressed than the vicious feel in their prosperity, she by degrees found more composure of mind. (72)

Monsieur De Rhee takes great care to conceal and contain Cornelia physically, but he does not see any harm in her writing. Little does he realise that her writing fortifies her virtue and gives her a symbolic freedom which keeps her out of his control. Significantly, she chooses to write 'out of the least shocking [ideas] that possessed her mind'. She does not dwell on the gothic horror of her situation, but seeks for a model of rational comfort and

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32 Critics have shown how the male gaze enacts complex power relations between men and women: Kristina Straub discusses the politics of spectatorship particularly with reference to the theatrical gaze, Sexual suspects. Nancy Armstrong also explores the trope of the gaze in the politics of the novel: Desire and domestic fiction.

33 This fainting is reminiscent of Clarissa's loss of consciousness in Samuel Richardson's Clarissa. These incidents raise intriguing questions about eighteenth-century ideas of virtue and consciousness. If a woman's body is violated when she is unconscious, does she lose her virtue, or is it necessary to 'will away' one's virtue consciously? Unfortunately, there is not sufficient space to discuss this complex issue here.
This notion of writing as liberating is significant for Scott's works as a whole, for she offers models of independent women surviving happily in a society where she, herself, is constrained and relatively powerless.

In captivity, Cornelia argues against Monsieur De Rhee’s demands in terms of her natural right to liberty. His fault, she argues, is in taking away her liberty, her ease of mind, and removing her from the best of friends. To liberty she had a natural right; she might be deprived of the enjoyment of it, but never of her title to it, which she should assert whenever she should have it in her power. (76-77)

This appeal to natural rights and liberty demonstrates why it is important to view Scott's works as a whole. In the context of her other works in which she explores various types of oppression, such as the issues surrounding slavery in George Ellison, this cry for liberty and natural rights assumes a political dimension that might be underestimated if considered in isolation. It is another echo of Enlightenment discourses of liberty in her writing. But as with Cornelia's fruitless cries for liberty, there is a sense of limitation in Scott's political cries for justice. In George Ellison, her abolitionist sentiments are limited to amelioration and ultimately Ellison leaves the plantation partly because he cannot change slavery practices. In Millenium Hall, the women's philanthropy has localised success, but they are powerless to effect structural change which would prevent further inequality and exploitation. Scott was limited in the means by which she could politically articulate her disquiet with social injustice, or to effect major structural change. But like Cornelia who articulates her protest by writing while physically imprisoned, Scott writes her protests in her narratives.

Moreover, Scott is a woman who clearly recognises that personal issues have political implications. She consistently demonstrates the inextricability of the private and public

34 It is interesting to conjecture how this novel might have been framed if it were written 50 years later, and whether Scott would have found some freedom or consolation in the gothic mode.
spheres. By depicting Cornelia's kidnapping and imprisonment Scott is not articulating one person's misfortune; she demonstrates the powerlessness of women to defend themselves physically or legally against men of superior financial and social power. In *A journey through every stage of life*, Scott exhorts married women to leave unbearable situations even if it means risking censure for being a bad wife; similarly, in this novel she advocates that children should disobey parents if they are treated unjustly. When Madame De La Roche intends to send Lucinda to a convent as punishment, Cornelia encourages Lucinda to disobey her mother. ‘Cornelia desired her not to afflict herself with any apprehensions of being detained in the convent: that in case of such violence, she would be justified in taking any honest means of avoiding it, and would be sure of finding a quiet refuge with her’ (139). Moreover, she depicts vulnerable men as well as women, suffering at the hands of arbitrary power; for example Bernardo is helpless against the attacks of the De Garre women and, later, against his imprisonment. These views of obedience and resistance are radical indeed, for they question the notion of absolute power and absolute obedience. A more explicitly political version of this advice would condone political insurrection if citizens' rights were transgressed or if absolute power were exercised with brutality. Scott may well have been contributing, albeit in a masked way, to the later stages of the debates about justified rebellion that dominated seventeenth-century political argument.

Although Scott does not explicitly theorise about political issues, the situations she repeats – such as the embattled virtuous figure asserting moral superiority and authority in a world of moral and political corruption – speak to political anxieties and debates of the mid-eighteenth century. She is not as explicitly political as, for instance, Mary Delarivière Manley who combined her fiction with a Tory polemic which won her much support from within the Tory camp. But as commentators on the eighteenth-century novel have

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35 There is a substantial literature examining the concepts of 'private' and 'public' and their interrelationship, for example: Jurgen Habermas *The structural transformation of the public sphere*; Dena Goodman 'Public sphere and private life: toward a synthesis of current historiographical approaches to the Old Regime', *History and theory*, 31:1, 1992, 1-20.
articulated, many early women novelists made political statements about moral corruption
of government in veiled narratives seemingly concentrated on individual heroines'
distresses. As Dickinson has discussed, eighteenth-century novels were 'political' in
various ways and using different strategies.36

As I stated earlier, various social activities in the novel, such as travel, are metaphors for
freedom from social constraint. Disguise, too, frees characters from constraint. The
eighteenth-century carnival or masquerade, as Terry Castle has explored, can be seen to
symbolise and unleash forces of transgression and liberation.37 As represented in this
novel, the Venetian carnival frees politicians, nuns and women alike.

There was not a senator here, who did not lay aside his solemnity, to partake of the
general diversions: the contrast between the silent formality of their grand council,
and this time of mirth, was amusing. As for the women, they seemed more licentious
in this city than in any other part of Italy. Here political motives get the better of the
point of honour: even nuns are allowed great liberties, and their irregularities are
winked at, lest too great constraint should deter them from entering the convents.
The Venetians seem more concerned to get the expence of daughters off their hands,
than to regulate their behaviour. (166)

Monsieur De Rone hopes that his attendance at the carnival in Venice will unleash his heart
from loving Cornelia. It does not, but it does provide opportunities for his charity and thus
for his personal pleasure. Indeed his assistance for young women in distress could be seen
as a surrogate sexual pleasure; again, there are echoes of Sterne's Yorick in this
combination of male sexual pleasure and benevolence toward vulnerable young women. At
the carnival a young woman confides in him with a candour and trust which she might not
in another circumstance. The young nun reveals not only her face, but also her heart's
burden to the male stranger. De Rone recalls that:

Beasley 'Politics and moral idealism: the achievement of some early women novelists' in Mary Anne
Schofield and Cecilia Macheski eds, Fetter'd or free? British women novelists, 1670-1815, Athens, Ohio:
Ohio University Press, 1986, 216-236. For more detailed analysis of anti-Walpole novels written by women,
see Beasley's 'Portraits of a monster: Robert Walpole and early English prose fiction', Eighteenth-century
studies, 14, 1981, 406-431. Moira Ferguson, too, argues that we need to look at women's fiction to 'expose
political "subtexts", and identify the dual purposes of literary polemic that speaks softly, indistinctly, or
disarmingly': First feminists: British women writers 1578-1799, Bloomington: Indiana University Press,
1985, 32.
37 Terry Castle, Masquerade and civilization: the carnivalesque in eighteenth-century English culture and
One day in the midst of the carnival, I observed a woman whom, by her shape and air, I guessed to be young, sitting in a very melancholy posture. The uncommonness of this sight, in such a place, tempted me to go up to her. I told her, I was surprized to see any one so untouched with the mirth all around her; that the disguise she wore was generally used to conceal the face, only to give liberty to the heart to yield itself up more freely to pleasure. (150-151)

The young woman tells her tale of virtual imprisonment in a convent, and of her father's rejection of her chosen husband. Monsieur De Rone intercedes on her behalf to reunite her with her lover. The carnival gives her freedom not just from the confines of the convent but also the freedom to speak her heart to a male stranger and, ultimately, freedom to be with her lover. The carnival is a reversal of the social and personal confinement of the convent which, throughout the novel, is described as a prison rather than a spiritual refuge. The convent is linked, too, with patriarchal power and with the physical and sexual restrictions a patriarchal society places on virtuous women.

Characters in the novel seek and find refuge in a variety of places – in physical spaces, in personal relationships, in financial security, and in their own minds and bodies. Scott presents convents as 'unnatural' refuges (169), being more akin to prisons and 'slavery' (166) than sanctuaries. This may however be evidence of an anti-Catholic strain running throughout her writing. Mr De Rone gives an extended diatribe against convents. "I never liked convents, which seemed to me calculated to make numbers really miserable, and only to hide from the world that they were so. I could never suppose, that God had given us talents to exercise many duties necessary to the happiness of the community, and yet had ordained that the surest way for the attainment of salvation should be shutting ourselves up from the world, and neglecting all the duties for which we were qualified. My dislike to the establishment of convents is not greater than my pity for numbers, who either by the cruelty of their parents are forced, or by the allurements of some who pretend to be their friends are inticed or by ignorance and prejudice are tempted, to enter into those houses. Places from whence, like the realms of death, no one returns; where hope ne'er comes that comes to all, but constant regret and repining melancholy dwells in almost every heart." (161-162)

There is textual evidence to suggest that this character's view is shared by the author. In sympathy with this belief that young women are 'inticed' or 'tempted' to enter convents, Scott portrays a scene where Cornelia meets an abbess who tries to recruit her. The abbess

38 Scott's anti-papist sentiments are evident in her other writings, especially her histories, as I discuss in Appendix C.
was much taken with their appearance, and the melancholy observable in Cornelia made her hope, she had received such disappointments in the world as might disgust her of it, and induce her to take refuge in her convent. Whether it be from a belief that these places are the only sure road to salvation, or from a desire of having companions in their unnatural state, it is certain, that all those who are shut up in religious houses, are indefatigable in their endeavours to draw in others. (169-170)

And, Cornelia tells Lucinda that she should disobey her mother rather than go to a convent and 'be confined to the rules invented by mad founders, and enforced by peevish abbesses' (139). These descriptions of convents draw clear contrasts between these religious communities and the religious community in Millenium Hall. The women at Millenium Hall enter willingly, they continue to interact with society at large, are free to leave; the community is protestant, and society is fundamental to the community. This issue of the Millenium Hall community and the extent to which it is conventual will be discussed further in Chapter Three.

There are, nevertheless, many positive models of refuge offered in the novel. After escaping from Chateau De Rhee, Cornelia finds refuge in a cottage in a secluded wood.

The cottage was a very poor one, and her chamber would but just hold her bed, a chair, and a table. But as her mind was not contracted with her habitation, she felt no uneasiness from the size and meanness of it. She looked on it as an asylum from the worst of evils. What would have rendered it agreeable to any one, was the wood near which it stood. Thro' this wood ran a clear murmuring rivulet, which with the great variety of birds, that seemed, like her, to take refuge there from their persecutors, made a most delightful harmony, most of all pleasing to persons, possessed with a tender passion, who naturally love the soothing murmurs of a rivulet gentle as their own souls, and the musick of the birds, who seem to spend their lives in love. (87)

She finds the community idyllic, seeing in it a manifestation of personal and social qualities of moral commerce that she implicitly advocates elsewhere. It is a subsistence village economy cut off from the 'luxury of the nation' (96). Its means of exchange is bartering or a currency of produce: 'the only way of payment was out of the produce of their land; each contributed their superfluity to their neighbours assistance, which kept up a friendly intercourse and good fellowship amongst them' (96-97). This absence of money is important and fits with the narrator's repeated comments about the evils of money. Their moneyless economy also allows marriages to be products of love rather than fortune. 'They said that they could not expect . . . to perform the fatigues of a family with the care
and cheerfulness they ought, unless love was their support under it' (98-99). It is a society based on love, courtesy, social and personal responsibility rather than on money and impersonal social contracts.

The essential characteristic of the village is familial. There is a flexible gendered approach to labour with men doing 'women's' work when they complete their own manual labour. Children are inducted early in the work habits of the village, and work is balanced with leisure in a pastoral setting. The isolation and conditions of the community are described in utopian terms: 'The inhabitants of this place appeared a nation by themselves' (97). Relations between the sexes are uninhibited and innocent. Women declare their sentiments freely and the men 'never were so presuming as to give fears to the women' (98). 'They all appeared like our first parents before the fall; their innocence as unblemished; their happiness as uninterrupted; and their tenderness as delicate' (98). The basis of this community is mutual love rather than financial and sexual avarice. The contrast between this and the outside community is clear when Cornelia has to flee this idyllic refuge to escape Monsieur De Rhee's men, De Rhee representing corrupt aristocratic power and sexual aggression.

The sexual danger of the outside world forces Cornelia to dress as a man to escape. The idea of refuge and freedom in the text is related to sexual concealment and freedom. Metaphorically, characters escape the constrictions of conventional gender boundaries in the novel. Physically and visually, too, they confuse gender boundaries by, for example, cross-dressing. In Cornelia the instances of cross-dressing or discussion of it occur when Bernardo and Cornelia are trying to visit each other in secret (123), and when Cornelia is escaping Monsieur De Rhee and his armed men (99). In these circumstances cross-dressing serves immediate practical purposes, but it also highlights a sub-text about gender roles that runs throughout Scott's novels.
Bernardo's character is often described in conventionally feminine terms. He blushes, swoons and weeps. After a long and seemingly hopeless separation from Cornelia, Bernardo faints when they meet accidentally and she rejects him. 'She exerted more strength than usual, and easily got from him, as her words had given him so deep a wound to his heart, that before she had made three steps, he fell speechless and motionless to the ground. . . . After many deep sighs, he opened his eyes. . . .' (199-200). In this confrontation the gender roles are reversed: Cornelia 'though little more alive herself' (200), displays physical and emotional strength, whereas Bernardo's body succumbs to emotional distress. Bernardo's very physicality has a feminine quality:

The night before he left the place he spent in Lucinda's room, where Cornelia and he appeared in as much grief as if they had been parting for ever; nor could they be made easy by the assurances that Julia had given him, of receiving him at her house in women's cloaths, which the fairness of his complexion, his youth, and the delicacy of his features, made a very convenient disguise. (123)

This feminine physical quality assists his cross-dressing disguise, but Bernardo is characterised positively in a range of feminine terms, not just in appearance. As discussed earlier, his character presages the sentimental hero who gained prominence in novels later in the century. Like many female characters in eighteenth-century novels, Bernardo shows his social powerlessness when he is barraged with unwanted sexual attention. In some ways he is characterised as a sexual ingenue, especially compared with Devaux or with Mr De Rone. Bernardo is admired by women wherever he goes. And, like Cornelia's pursuers, those admirers of the opposite sex who wish to snare Bernardo use devious ploys. This is necessary, also, because his virtue is too strong to be overcome by direct invitations. In some senses he is made as powerless as the virtuous women in the text. Madame De La Roche withholds money to bribe him to marry her daughter and the de Garre women keep him captive; when he intends to leave their house they forge a marriage proposal in his name. He is denied the usual sense of bodily, sexual, financial and public agency attributed to men of his rank in eighteenth-century society; his agency is a private will born of his 'feminine' sense of romantic love, rational virtue and sexual modesty. No longer is gender
a cipher for particular personal characteristics. Scott confronts apparently stable signs of gender and problematises them through Bernardo's and Cornelia's characters. Nevertheless, those characteristics usually associated with being a woman are the ones which are praised in Bernardo's character thereby valorising a particular construction of the feminine. Concepts of bravery and courage are redefined by linking them with traditional feminine traits of virtue and modesty. This also suggests that, for Scott, the ideal man is a feminised man.

Why does Scott cross-dress her hero and heroine? In the immediate sense, it is to give them a freedom which they would not have if they remained in their traditional gendered bodies. As Marjorie Garber has discussed in *Vested interests: cross-dressing and cultural anxiety*, clothes, and social prescriptions about clothes, are an aid to reading and classifying a person according to class and gender. Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub see the 'human body as a carrier of culture, values, and morality'. Dissembling visual signs of gender is liberating for a variety of reasons. Cornelia dresses as a male university student so she can travel safely:

> she determined to disguise herself, and to continue her journey on horse-back no longer. She pitched upon the dress of a student of one of the universities, as it preserved the decency of her own habit. ... Thus disguised, she ventured to travel in a post-chaise; and making her guide put a patch on one eye to prevent his being known, she travelled on with more ease both of mind and body, till she got to her journey's end. (99-100)

In concealing herself from Monsieur De Rhee and his armed assistants, Cornelia chooses to dress as a man, not as another woman. She wants to hide her identity as Cornelia, but she also wants to disguise her very femaleness. Her male assistant, Moullant, also disguises himself but he needs only a patch over one eye, not a disguise for his whole body.

Cornelia's body is eased of its burden of threatened sexual violence by having its sexuality

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concealed. Cornelia chooses to dress as a man, but chooses the figure of a university student – a young man away from home for the first time, sexually and socially naive, and in some ways, then, not yet a real man. In one sense, Cornelia's disguise unsexes her rather than makes her a man; her cross-dressing is acceptable because it brings her freedom of movement, but not a usurpation of male power. She transgresses gender boundaries, but not to the extent of being the powerful man, the Other, the converse of what a woman is – repressed, powerless and vulnerable. Although in her travels she actually meets with her pursuers, and they travel with her coach for some time, she is concealed by her male mask. Her disguise as a relatively powerless male poses no threat to the men and gives her freedom from the intended kidnapping and ultimately feared sexual attack. As a young man, the only attack she receives is in the form of taunts. As a woman she would certainly have received more than verbal assault from the armed ruffians, and perhaps as a man she might have been subjected to a different attack prompted by competing male egos rather than by sexual difference.

When Scott's characters cross-dress, this physical transvestitism gestures to more symbolic transvestitive acts in the narrative. Marjorie Garber suggests that physical crossing of gender identities is 'fundamentally related to other kinds of boundary-crossing'. Cornelia, for example, supports Bernardo financially, and shows greater physical and emotional strength than when he faints; and Bernardo manifests 'feminine' behaviour, as I have discussed. As Thomas Laqueur's work demonstrates, women and men in eighteenth-century society were defined in relation to each other, so for a woman to show strength not only alters the characterisation of 'woman', but redefines the character of and relationship to 'man'. This reorientation and redefinition of social classification is politically active and radical, and something that interested Scott very much. Commenting on the relative

40 In the 'Leonora and Louisa' tale in A journey through every stage of life, Leonora disguises herself as a clergyman because this role is the most feminine of male roles. I discuss this issue further in Chapter Two.
41 Vested interests, 354.
42 Thomas Laqueur Making sex.
emotional strength, social autonomy and financial power of women in relation to men and of the poor in relation to the wealthy are fundamental to Scott's ideology.

Not only does Scott free women from these constraints, she refuses to relegate men to public masks only. By exploring Bernardo's enduring passionate love for Cornelia, Monsieur De Rhone's persistent but unrequited love for Cornelia, Devaux's loyal friendship for Bernardo and struggling resistance to sexual involvement with Sylvia, and by granting these male characters interrelated public roles with complex emotional lives, she insists on the complexity of private/public dimensions of the male self and identity. She grants these men knowledge of and access to supposedly female emotional/private experience, just as she endows George Ellison with a feminine motherliness and compassion in his abolitionist sentiments in her later novel. As I have mentioned, she even goes so far as to swap gendered divisions of labour in the idealised rural community in which Cornelia seeks refuge.

The men took care of the cultivation of their small portion of land; the women's province was, to tend their children, knit, spin, and do all the household business: all which things the men assisted in, when not employed in tillage. The husbands partook of their wives work, the young men of their mistress's. (97)

Throughout her novels Scott plays with, blurs and ultimately refutes the binary opposition of the male/public and female/private spheres. By mixing gender boundaries, by cross dressing, by role reversal, by layered gendered narration, she refuses to bifurcate public and private on gender lines, instead showing the necessary interrelationship of both spheres for both genders.

What is clear in The history of Cornelia is that fluidity of gender is decidedly positive. Bernardo's feminine face is linked to his admirable personal qualities. His swooning and blushing and crying are marks of his sensitivity and gentleness. What is transgressive about Scott's gender-crossed characters is the behaviour of Cornelia rather than that of Bernardo. After all, the man of feeling or sentiment and the cult of sensibility was to
become acceptable for a time, if subsequently parodied. But that Cornelia assumes conventionally masculine roles, such as physically and financially supporting her lover, and that the text depicts a community with interchangeable gendered roles, show just how far Scott will go to challenge traditional gendered modes of behaviour.

Just as Scott's text interrogates conventional gender distinctions and interrelates public and private spheres, the text also broaches conventional hierarchies of political power. The villainous character of Cornelia's Uncle Octavio is tied to court culture and corruption. It is this amoral order that he brings to his relationship with his ward, Cornelia. He lusts after the niece who had been put under his protection. While showing his own vices, he also draws attention to the morally and politically corrupt nature of the court and the aristocracy.

Octavio's money is soiled because it originates in base activities (although none is specified) and as such cannot be used for virtuous purposes. This text is damning of Octavio, of the King, and of court culture. Octavio's character is so base, that when it is clear that he is the King's favourite and is envied by other courtesans, the entire court culture is tarnished by the association. Both Monsieur De Rhee and Madame De La Roche use their influence with the King to have Bernardo and Cornelia imprisoned because they have disobeyed their social superiors' selfish inclinations. Scott's narrative castigates the aristocracy and interrogates their social role. The power of the aristocracy is not exercised morally, but selfishly, luxuriously and corruptly. As mentioned earlier, by questioning

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43 I have already noted Sterne's parody of the over-sentimentalised man, and R. F. Brissenden has commented that, in about the 1780s, the French coined the term 'sensiblerie' for 'false and affected sensibility', *Virtue in distress* 18.

44 One should note that this political comment is made in a novel set in France just 40 years before the revolution.
the ideologies underpinning the romance genre, Scott is also undermining the aristocratic ideologies that were mediated through romances.

Bernardo's and Cornelia's imprisonment and subsequent release are significant to the novel because of what they say about Scott's notions of class, power, justice, virtue and morality. Cornelia's powerful friends also intercede with the King so she can have an audience with him and present her case. This meeting is extraordinary for its highly dramatic, performative aspects. An audience assembles, comprising curious courtesans and Cornelia's most distinguished and powerful friends. Cornelia's costume is chosen. She 'was dressed in the most becoming manner imaginable, with a simplicity and negligence suitable to the humble part she was to act, and to her present unfortunate situation' (251).

Although it is her natural charm and virtue which appeals to the King and the audience, this 'naturalness' of her appearance is carefully constructed. Her beauty makes the audience receptive to her political and moral appeals for justice.

She appeared before the king with courage, and yet with the most engaging modesty. His majesty, prejudiced by her appearance as much as his subjects, received her very graciously. She gave him an account, tho' not without putting great force upon herself, of all that could tend to her justification. . . . She concluded, by begging her own liberty and Bernardo's in the most earnest manner. This request she made on her knees, and in so graceful a manner, and with such an air of truth and innocence, that the king could no longer resist. (251)

Scott creates this scene to look like a cross between a court-room defence and a staged dramatic performance. Sets, costume and applause mingle with personal testimony, evidence and proclamations of judgment. Cornelia's qualities are modesty, beauty, grace, innocence, courage, firmness and articulateness – a mix of conventional 'female' and 'male' gendered qualities. The subtext here is that virtue and innocence of spirit are symbolised by outward signs of modesty, grace and beauty and that they succeed. The King not only gives her liberty, but gives her an apartment in his palace and cares for her with the attention of a devoted lover.
Although the King grows very fond of Cornelia, his virtue is shown by his
acknowledgement and ultimate approval of Cornelia's and Bernardo's love.

The king, one evening, after a long and gallant conversation with Cornelia, wherein
she had mixed, according to custom, many petitions for Bernardo's release, told her,
that tho' she could, without pity, let a king sigh in vain, it would be shameful if a king
should let her do so, as she had a better title to command than hereditary right could
give, and might more properly be said to be possessed of a divine right than any
monarch on his throne. He added, that he would shew her he could obey, and
therefore declared Bernardo free from that moment. (254-255)

Clearly this dialogue shows the good nature of the King, but there are significant political
implications of this conversation. The King declares that Cornelia, with her profound
virtue and goodness, has a natural superiority over the divine monarch. This is an
extraordinary radical overthrow of conventional social hierarchy, giving more weight to a
moral title than to a political title. Fundamentally, the text asserts that rational virtue – in
feminine terms – is more powerful than socially sanctioned institutions of patriarchal
power.

Conclusion

The hectic flight and pursuit of characters throughout the novel gives a spatial
destabilisation that echoes the destabilisation of social categories and assumptions in this
text. While to some extent Scott affirms conventional views, such as the hierarchies of
social organisation, she also explores and dislodges traditional structures such as: the divine
and unlimited political power of the aristocracy, pecuniary-based marriage, patriarchal
hegemony, female helplessness, and the binary oppositions of public/private and
male/female. Cornelia's and Bernardo's rational virtue and love overcome the King's
loyalty to his elite. In releasing them from the Bastille, the King asserts his rational
morality in acknowledging their rights to liberty, rather than the right of Octavio and
Madame La Roche to assert their corrupt and arbitrary power. Cornelia and Bernardo are
rewarded not only with personal liberty, but also with the return of their rightful
inheritances.
In Scott's world view, rational virtue surpasses traditional political and financial power, yet it ultimately manifests itself as — and is rewarded with — social power and financial stability. The powerful, masculine, sexually-driven Octavio loses his power, whereas the rationally virtuous feminised couple find social and personal success. Well might one contemporary reviewer observe and agree that the author's 'reflections are generally just and solid', for Scott's concerns tap into contemporary debates about virtue, morality, class relations and charity.⁴⁵ Scott is not predominantly a polemical writer, and at times appears unwilling to challenge her society's assumptions and values. Nevertheless, in exposing women's constrained situations in society and in her exploring the concepts of liberty and justice, we see a woman author who uses a conventional framework to critique conventional attitudes. In this, her first novel, Scott re-examines narrative genres and cultural institutions to explore the interrelations between virtue and social politics that she continues to address in her later novels. But unlike these novels, *The history of Cornelia* uses and remakes the romance genre to argue for a life of rational virtue, gendered flexibility, moral conceptions of money, and social interdependence, and perhaps by doing so she unwittingly creates an ideal romance of her own.

CHAPTER TWO

'THE UNIVERSALITY OF DISTRESS': A JOURNEY THROUGH EVERY STAGE OF LIFE.

With The history of Cornelia Scott took the popular genre of romance and remade it to assert her guide for rational virtue. In her second novel, A journey through every stage of life (1754), she again uses a popular genre of the period and reworks it to articulate her radical commentary on virtue and women's independence. The novel's narrative structure invokes the oriental tale genre, with the storyteller relating a series of tales to her listener. The most well known collection of oriental tales of the early eighteenth century was Arabian nights. Its fantastical and mysterious tales of the 'orient' were enormously popular with both the reading public, and with authors who later modified the genre, such as Samuel Johnson in Rasselas and Oliver Goldsmith's Citizen of the world. The genre allowed writers to explore one precept with a variety of narrative examples, and to use the fantastic mode and link it explicitly with didactic imperatives. Scott, too, found this flexible form attractive in writing A journey through every stage of life. She, however, spurned the orientalising and fanciful tendencies of the genre, just as in The history of Cornelia she rejected the fanciful elements of the romance, and reworked both these forms so they were more suited to her moral commercial guides for virtuous conduct in contemporary society. Scott's variation on the oriental tale makes it morally didactic. One commentator on the oriental tale genre suggested that Steele and Addison also transformed the oriental tale in this way, utilising it 'to inculcate right living' by making it 'moralistic'.

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1 A journey through every stage of life, described in a variety of interesting scenes, drawn from real characters, by a person of quality, 2 vols. London: printed for A. Millar, 1754.
2 Arabian nights entertainments, 1704-1712.
The Oeconomy of human life. Translated from an Indian manuscript, written by an Ancient Bramin (1750), comprised more than a hundred pages of moral aphorisms, and the fact that it was translated into five languages and went through at least ten editions shows how readily the public accepted moral uses of the oriental tale. In discussing the influence of The Arabian Nights tales on English literature, Peter Caracciolo suggests that it was not only the fantastic, foreign subjects that appealed to writers imitating the form, it was the narrative flexibility it offered, such as intriguing discontinuity in tales, the oral form of tale telling and the undermining of neoclassical unities. Scott utilises these narrative features in A journey through every stage of life.

Another popular publication of the early eighteenth-century was Persian tales, and while there is no direct evidence that Scott read it, the framing narrative of her text is a variation on this popular oriental tale, published in 1714. In Persian tales, the Princess of Casmire is disillusioned with men and love and refuses to marry, so her nurse, Sutlememé, tries to change her mind by telling stories of faithful lovers. In A journey, the nurse, Sabrina, takes her royal charge, Princess Carinthia, who is imprisoned in a castle, on a vicarious journey through the lives of people she has known to show her that life everywhere is attended by hardship. In each of these narratives the nurse assumes the role of the more experienced woman using story to educate her less experienced listener. In Persian tales, the nurse succeeds in convincing the princess that men can be faithful and that marriage need not be unhappy. However, Scott's novel again spurns the romantic solution to women's dilemmas. Carinthia, like Rasselas, cannot experience life through tales; she knows that she must experience life for herself. This conclusion is significant for Scott's radical critique of women's

6 The thousand and one days, Persian tales. Translated from the French by Mr Ambrose Philips, London, 1714. For a brief synopsis and discussion of Persian tales see, see Martha Pike Conant The oriental tale, 13-25.
cultural oppression; she exhorts women to avoid constraints where possible – such as by not marrying – and to experience the world for themselves rather than adopting vicarious means of living by reading romances.

The framing narrative is an allegory of women’s cultural imprisonment, with tyrannous men – or patriarchal societal customs – denying women active and useful roles in society. In this framing story, young Princess Carinthia is isolated from society, imprisoned in a remote castle by her cousin Frederick who has usurped her rightful accession to the throne. Sabrina, her attendant, tries to alleviate the oppressive situation, telling her tales of real life to allow Carinthia's imagination to travel while her body is imprisoned. Sabrina tries to ameliorate Carinthia's situation by showing her captive charge that even those who are physically free are restrained by burdens that are inherent in the human condition.7 She proclaims that her worldly experience shows her,

"that every State, from the lowest Peasant to the highest Sovereign, has its Sorrows and Disappointments; each finds a rugged Road to pass through in this World, which inclining him to think his the roughest Path, leads him to envy his Neighbour, whose Fate, was he to try it, he would perceive to be no better than his own."(I, 3)

As narrator of this tale, Sabrina aims to show her young listener the 'universality of distress', concentrating particularly on the distress suffered by women. These tales show how the cultural construction of women’s roles is in large part responsible for such distress. Sabrina laments:

"my Princess, we are very foolish Creatures; one would almost believe we were made meerly for Man, or Nature would have given us more Sense, and not, by our Weakness, have afforded them so great an Assistance against us. Every other Animal in the Creation is possessed of some Means of Defence, but our peculiar Attribute, those Arms with which we are told we subdue the Strong, and make Mankind our Slaves, however nobly they may sound in Fiction, in sober Truth are Means of attracting Injuries, not of defending us from them, or of revenging them. We may indeed make one Man suffer for the Ills we feel from another, but when a Man hurts us, he is himself out of our Power." (I, 78)

7 Sabrina's opinion is similar to Imlac's in Samuel Johnson's Rasselas, who tells the young prince of the miseries of the world: Imlac says 'Human life is every where a state in which much is to be endured, and little to be enjoyed'; The history of Rasselas, Prince of Abissinia, ed. D. J. Enright, London: Penguin, 1985, 65.
The 'arms' to which she refers is courtly love, where the female lover is armed against and subdues the male pursuer. But, as it does repeatedly, the text asserts the discrepancies between reality and romance. The implied sexual violence in this extract suggests that, in effect, women have no defence, natural or legal, against the attacks of men. And, indeed, women's romantic conceptions of love actually precipitate the attack – they 'in sober Truth are Means of attracting Injuries'.

The introduction to the text establishes two crucial issues that recur in Scott's narratives. First, the narrator explicitly foregrounds the morally instructive purpose of the storytelling, enacting in Sabrina's narrative Scott's own approach to didactic writing. Second, the framing narrative of Carinthia's physical bondage is broadened into general comments about women's symbolic imprisonment by their culturally constructed inferiority to men. Sabrina comments that:

"Life at its full Extent, is short, but the life of Woman is more curtailed by the Fancy and Caprice of Men, than by Age or Distempers; .... In short, when a Woman is dead in Beauty, she might as well be dead in Law, for she is never after a more agreeable Member of Society than if she was a Ghost; she may fright, but she cannot please". (I, 6)

The irony of this comment is that a woman is effectively 'dead in law' as soon as she marries because as a wife she has no status as a person separate from her husband. The narrator introduces her first story, 'The history of Leonora and Louisa', with a more assertive tone when she describes the heroine of the tale:

"she was almost the only Woman I have ever met with, who endeavoured to conquer the Disadvantages our Sex labour under, and who proved that Custom, not Nature, inflicts that Dependence in which we live, obliged to the Industry of Man for our Support, as well as to his Courage for our Defence". (I, 6)

Scott critiques the idea that women's inferiority to men is 'natural'. It is social custom that dictates that women's importance lies in their beauty, and social custom that excludes women from society when their beauty diminishes. Of course, in making this
observation she joins other women writers who were expressing similar opinions, such as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.8

Scott also articulates that financial independence and personal courage are denied women, so she shows in the character of Leonora, a woman who exhibits these qualities. To do so, however, the character must dress as a man – a woman who demonstrated courage or independence would offend against notions of social propriety. Joseph Addison wrote: 'The great point of honour in men is courage, and in women chastity', asserting that courage is not a natural feature of womanliness.9 The oppositional syntactic structure highlights the oppositional construction of appropriate gendered behaviour. Addison spells out this oppositional construction of the two genders: 'Men and women were made as counterparts to one another' and he naturalises this by saying that 'the different inclinations and endowments which are bestowed on the different sexes' seem 'to have been the general intention of nature'.10 Clara Reeve also notes this cultural construction of contrasting genders when she writes: 'for what in man is most respected, / In woman's form shall be rejected'.11 One result of this oppositional definition of 'man' and 'woman' is that, by implication, positive attributes of men can not be held by women, so Addison must attribute different positive qualities to each of the sexes – courage to man, chastity to woman. Addison also reinforces the supposed lack of courage in women by commenting that they are attracted to courageous men because 'this quality [courage] supplies their own principal defect'. He also makes the point that men can recover from attacks on their courage, but women will never recover from a loss of chastity.12 Scott understood and objected to the

8 Scott echoes numerous female writers who articulated the double bind of beauty – it gives women fake power when young which is then taken away when women age: consider for example, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's poem 'Saturday' from 'Six town eclogues' (1747), in which the character, Flavia, is stricken by smallpox and finds her public life deserts her with her beauty, and Mary Leapor who, in 'An essay on woman' (1751), writes of 'Woman, a pleasing but a short-lived flower' and laments 'Despised, if ugly; if she's fair, betrayed'. See also, Alexander Pope's 'Epistle to a lady', especially lines 219-230.
9 Joseph Addison The spectator, no. 99, 23 June 1711.
10 Joseph Addison The spectator, no. 128, 27 July 1711.
11 Clara Reeve from 'To my friend Mrs. ----------. On her holding an argument in favour of the natural equality of both the sexes. Written in the year MDCCLVII', pub. 1769.
12 The spectator, no. 99.
limitations placed on women's lives by such cultural constructions of 'woman', so she developed narrative strategies, such as Leonora cross-dressing, to give women space to demonstrate personal qualities, such as courage and resourcefulness, and to show, then, that such qualities are just as natural to women as to men.

To focus the discussion of this apologetic novel, this chapter concentrates on the three main narratives in *A journey*—'The history of Leonora and Louisa', 'The history of Mr. Rivers and Miss Davers' and 'The history of Collin', but before discussing the first major tale, it is necessary to make a few points about the structuring of the narrative. The relationship between Sabrina, the storyteller, and Carinthia, her listener, is significant for what it shows about Scott's conception of the relationship between writer and audience. Carinthia's responses to the stories, and to Sabrina's methods of story-telling, demonstrate the rhetorical effects of different modes of narrative. As her prefaces attest, Scott's writings are explicitly morally didactic. Sabrina and her listener discuss moralising narrative in a way that promotes the novel as a more effective moral educator than other forms of discourse.

"Oh! my dear Sabrina," said Carinthia, interrupting her, "do not grow Philosophical; I tremble for Fear of a learned Dissertation on the Nature of Good and Evil. Return to your Instances, my sweet Friend; I had rather learn by Examples than Arguments, and indeed am much more edified by them: I forget my own Opinion, while you interest me in a Narration, and consequently do not set my Partiality to it, against the Confutation you labour at: Whereas, when you argue against my Errors, the Sense of their being mine confirms me in them so strongly, that all higher Wisdom in their Presence falls degraded, and as Folly shews. You have never so good a Chance of bringing me over to your Opinion, as when you do not remind me that mine is contrary to it." (II, 119-120)¹³

This defence of the narrative mode as morally didactic is significant for Scott's writing as it presents the imaginative narrative mode as a counterpoint to other modes, more 'Philosophical', such as 'learned Dissertation' or 'Arguments', or theological modes, 'on the Nature of Good and Evil', and asserts an important role for the novel genre. The dichotomy in narrative mode here between philosophical argument on the one hand and 'Examples' on the other is possibly gendered, with argument being identified as masculine and morally

¹³ In the text, page 119 is erroneously labelled 116.
exemplary narrative as feminine. Carinthia warns against a 'learned Dissertation on the Nature of Good and Evil', yet in her stories this is precisely what Sabrina delivers. The crucial distinction is not the content, but the mode of delivery and its effect on the reader. Clearly male writers, such as Samuel Richardson, also found the novel useful as a didactic mode. And while Scott had options of other genres, such as the conduct book, as possible vehicles for moral didacticism, the exchange between the two characters suggests a preference for the novel genre for moral instruction.14

There is some use in drawing a parallel between Sabrina, the narrator of this tale, and Scott as an author in that both explicitly acknowledge the need to make moralising palatable to the audience. The layers of narration in this novel are complex, but assist in drawing these parallels between Sabrina and Scott. At the start of chapter five, the narrator writes 'When Carinthia had slept off the composing Effect of Leonora's Sermon, for no Opiate will operate more powerfully on the Mind of a young Girl than a moral Essay against Coquettry, she sought out Sabrina, who she hoped to find in a more amusing Disposition' (I, 89). Sabrina is a self-conscious narrator who understands the need to mix morals with entertainment. She seems to be successful as such a narrator because Carinthia comments:

"I hope," answered Carinthia, "that my having given you the pleasing Opportunity of moralizing, will induce you to excuse my criticizing your Story. Your Defence is good; I am so interested for a Woman who can exercise an Independence denied to our Sex, and succeed so well in it, that I desire an exact Account of all her Actions, and will henceforward patiently, tho' perhaps drowsily, listen to any reconciling Discourses or moral Sentences she was pleased to utter". (I, 97)

In this quotation, one hears Scott's voice acknowledging that many a young reader might find her stories too heavily moralising at times. But with this self-consciousness, both in Sabrina's narration and her own, Scott foregrounds her explicit mixing of entertainment with political injunctions against women's subordination. Sabrina comments near the conclusion of the story:

"a Novel would make but a bad Figure carried on beyond Marriage; and as I began Leonora's History in order to shew, by an uncommon Example, how capable our Sex

might be made of preserving Independence, I could have no Excuse for continuing it after she had done so common a Thing as marrying, and made herself dependent on one of the other Sex; she might rather serve as an Argument, that, let our Talents be equal or superior to them, our Spirits above Meanness, and our Situations above Control, still sooner or later we become their Dependents, perhaps their Slaves". (I, 159-160)

Sabrina's acerbic wit here anticipates the kind of irony that Jane Austen was to show in her novels at the end of the century. The comment deromanticises the novel's conventions, acknowledging that the novel's denouement is usually marriage. She questions whether the happy ending of this tale subverts her aim of showing an independent woman, pointing out that, in reality, marriage is not a happy event for the eighteenth-century woman.

Sabrina says that it would not be proper to continue a novel beyond marriage, yet at the same time makes it absolutely clear that after marriage a woman is a virtual, because legal, slave.

These interjections that break up the narrative highlight the self-conscious narration, but they also offer subversive and radical commentary on the tales themselves. For example, in 'The history of Cleantho and Alinda', the tale is an occasion to discuss women's right to education. Sabrina's asides carry the weight of much of the text's political and feminist position. Sabrina and her listener have a heated discussion about women's right to education and consider the ways in which men perceive learned and ignorant women.

"Men hate us if they think us learned, but despise us if we want the Improvements which only Reading can produce. The insolent Condescension with which they are apt to treat us in Conversation, shews us how low the Ignorance they attribute to us, makes us be esteemed by them. They think they do us Honour, while they are numbering our Attractions, tho' they include none but what they might find in a Monkey or a Maid Servant; something made for their Amusement and Convenience; an Animal to unbend the Mind of important Man, or to labour for his Service. They flatter us in our Follies to keep us still Fools, and while our Ignorance, and the Inferiority of our Understandings, are made Arguments for our Subjection, we are persecuted if we aim at Improvement. If we should by Education gain the Learning on which Men value themselves, we must conceal it as if it were a Crime."

"Some better Reason," says Carinthia, "than I can expect to have given me by one of my own Sex, is required to make me agree to the Impropriety of Learning for a Woman; if it is destructive of one of the moral Duties, or necessarily destroys any of the pleasing Graces of Behaviour, it should be denied to both Sexes; but if no such

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evil Consequence attends it, whether it improves the Mind, or merely amuses it, what robs us of our natural Right to partake of its Advantages? If our Understandings are made by Nature inferior to those of Men, Instruction is more necessary; the best Heart, if not guided by good Sense and Judgment, is of so little general Benefit, that for the Good of Society all its Members should be made as wise, as Nature, with the best Cultivation, will permit. But, added Carinthia, we have suffered our Eagerness for asserting a female Right to Learning, to interrupt your Narration too long. . . . " (I, 188-189)

This assertion of 'a female Right to Learning' is clearly political and resounds in other women's writing of the period.16 Again, Scott uses the discourse of 'natural Right' to show the unfairness of women's exclusion from learning. Sabrina’s comments eloquently highlight the impossible situation in which eighteenth-century women found themselves: they were persecuted for a perceived weakness that men prevented them from remediying, thus ensuring their inferior status. She analyses how the power differential between men and women is perpetuated. Education which provides 'good Sense and Judgment', is denied to women who are then castigated for their want of sense and judgment.

The remaining sections of this chapter discuss three of the tales: 'The history of Leonora and Louisa', ‘The history of Mr. Rivers and Miss Davers’ and ‘The history of Collin'.

The history of Leonora and Louisa

In 'The history of Leonora and Louisa', Scott depicts a woman with unconventional independence and mobility, to demonstrate that if women were allowed more public roles they could effect substantial good works in society, and lead happy and fulfilled lives. She juxtaposes the situation of an arranged marriage in which a woman is 'sacrificed', with a scenario where a woman has agency and independence.

The tale commences with a situation common in Scott's narratives. Deprived of a mother's love, children become victims of a careless and weak father, Hortensius, and a

16 From Mary Astell’s *Serious proposal to the ladies* (1696) to Mary Wollstonecraft's *Thoughts on the education of daughters* (1788) and Catharine Macaulay's *Letters on education*, (1790) toward the end of the century, women were putting forward, again and again, arguments for women’s right to education.
manipulative step-mother, Arabella. After Hortensius’s first wife dies, Arabella, by
degrees, alienates her husband’s natural children and dependent niece. Like Louisa Mancel
in Millenium Hall, Leonora is betrothed to a hideous old man in order to remove her from
the house. Describing this distressing situation prompts an exchange between the
storyteller and her young listener. Scott interrupts the narrative tale with intrusions from
the listener/reader in order to critique both novel conventions and cultural mores. Carinthia
exhorts:

"The Tyranny that would force a Woman to marry a Man she does not love, must
excuse any Measures which she is reduced to take to avoid them."

"To the Humane and Rational it may," replied Sabrina, "but they are only a very
small Part of the World, and much the most silent. The Multitude, I assure you,
would judge very differently; an Union of Fortunes, not an Union of Hearts, is the
Thing generally aimed at in Marriage; and by those who esteem themselves prudent
People, is thought the only rational View. There is no divine Ordinance more
frequently disobeyed than that wherein God forbids human Sacrifices, for in no other
Light can I see most Marriages. Brazen Images indeed are not the Objects of their
Worship, a purer Metal is their Deity. Every one that reads in ancient History of
human Sacrifices, exclaims against the horrid Practice, and trembles at the Relation,
Tho' scarcely one of the female Readers, if of a marriageable Age, but will, the next
Moment, begin to deck her Person like an adorned Victim, in hopes of tempting some
golden Idol to receive her as a free-will Offering." (I, 16-17)

Scott critiques the idea of marriage as financial exchange by presenting marriage as a
barbaric ritual. Women trade their freedom for financial security. Such exchange, Sabrina
suggests here, constructs a woman as a 'human Sacrifice', a 'Victim' and a 'free-will
Offering'. For the eighteenth-century woman, marriage was a form of slavery, for in all
effective senses, her husband was her master. One contemporary commentator wrote that
being a wife put women 'in a worse Condition than Slavery itself' and set out a number of
articles to justify a change in this situation:

II. That Wives may be made Prisoners for Life at the Discretion of their Domestick
Governors, whose Power, as we at present apprehend, bears no Manner of Proportion
to that Degree of Authority, which is vested in any other Set of Men in England. For
though the Legislature, acting collectively, may dispose of Life and Fortune; no
individual, not even the Sovereign himself, can imprison any Person for Life, at Will
and Pleasure; the Habeas Corpus Act, providing for the Condemnation or
Enlargement of the Prisoner.17

17 Anonymous The hardships of the English laws in relation to wives, 1735.
The legal situation was summarised by Blackstone who wrote in his *Commentaries on the laws of England*: 'By marriage the husband and wife are one person in law: that is the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage, or at least incorporated and consolidated into that of the husband'.

In Carinthia's and Sabrina's conversation quoted above (I, 16-17), Scott links the notion of liberty, or loss of liberty, through marriage with slavery and paganism. Scott implies that marriages for money are un-Christian, and that in such marriages the worshipped deity is money, 'a purer metal'. She uses Christian discourse to radically question marriage, contrasting the notion of true Christianity with prevailing cultural decrees about marriage and women's subordination in marriage. She frames her argument for women's natural right to autonomy and independence in Christian terms. In this scene Scott also identifies the subtle but effective power of social custom to influence women's desires; while society forces women into institutionalised slavery, women themselves are complicit in their own enslavement because they desire and seek marriage. If society ordains this type of marriage as the 'rational choice' then there is cultural pressure for young women to desire and accept it. But as I will discuss later, Scott does not reject marriage entirely; she rejects pecuniary and unequal marriages in favour of marriage based on moral commerce — mutual affection and financial pragmatism between men and women.

A further interruption to Sabrina's narrative allows her to undermine once again marriage as it is constructed by the romance genre. Undermining romance as a genre and as an ideology is fundamental to this text as it was to *Cornelia*. Specifically, Sabrina comments on the power relations in courtship and in marriage. Romantic notions of courtship depicted women as powerful and courting men as weak supplicants. The young Carinthia questions perceived notions of power between men and women, using romantic ideas of love as her evidence.

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"The Lover, on the contrary, is acting the humble Part of a submissive Suppliant, while his Goddess, great as any the Poets place in their Olympus, sits enthroned in the Dignity a Lover's Fancy gives her, dispensing Blessings to her devout Adorer, her timorous Votary. Where is then the boasted Superiority of Man? What Lover will venture to say, Woman was made only to be the Property of that nobler Part of the Creation?"

"No," replied Sabrina, "I allow there are Articles of male Faith professed only by the indifferent, till Marriage makes the Lover a Convert to the Doctrine. That Ceremony makes a greater and more sudden Revolution than that at Brentford, the humble Beggar becomes a King, and the worshipped Goddess dwindles into a tame useful Drudge, or a disregarded Appurtenance. Your Highness, who has known only the idle Lovers in Romance, may think a Train of them establishes a Woman's Glory; but those in real Life, without a Quarter of the imaginary Accomplishments, are blessed with a Confidence which does their Business better than all the heroic Virtues, yield a Woman little Honour by their Courtship, and by quickly ending it in Matrimony, make her pay dearly for that little!" (I, 34-35)

Scott shows how fallacious are romance models of male-female relationships and exposes the reality of unromantic unions of marriage. Women 'pay dearly' literally and figuratively for little return. She anticipates Mary Wollstonecraft in suggesting that romance is used as a kind of entrapment, deluding women into thinking that they have some power over men. In reality, Sabrina stresses, marriage strips women of all power and transfers it to the husband, who once 'the humble Beggar becomes a King'. This politically figurative language was often used by eighteenth-century women writers to discuss marriage. In 1733, an anonymous poet wrote of 'Woman's hard fate':

The tyrant husband next appears,  
With awful and contracted brow;  
No more a lover's form he wears:  
Her slave's become her sovereign now.  
.....  
Oh cruel powers, since you've designed  
That man, vain man, should bear the sway,  
To a slave's fetters add a slavish mind,  
That I may cheerfully your will obey.20

And much later in the century, the lament continues with the Scottish poet Susanna Blamire describing two unhappy women whose lives had altered when they married:

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But now they watch their lordies' frowns,
Their sauls they daurna own;
’Tis tyranny that wedlock crowns,
And woman's joys are flown.21

This political language frames the abuse and oppression of women in marriage in terms of natural rights to liberty. In linking political tyranny with man's tyranny over women, Scott anticipates Wollstonecraft; they both used political models to conceptualise and articulate the injustices faced by women in marriage.22

The women in Scott’s tale must take drastic actions to escape such slavery and to attain natural rights of liberty. Leonora flees her home and imminent forced marriage, taking with her Louisa, her dependent sickly cousin. Because they are unaccompanied young women they are vulnerable and need protection, so to avoid suspicion and detection they disguise themselves. Eighteenth-century fashionable society held many dangers for the unprotected woman, as Frances Burney demonstrated in her novel, Evelina.23 Leonora’s and Louisa’s vulnerability is described in the following terms;

They thought themselves more fit to be roving Citizens of the World as Brother and Sister, than if they had both appeared as mincing Ladies, for since Knight-errantry ceased, Damsels Errant have been in very perilous Situations. Temptations and Follies are the Giants and Monsters, and Deceit and Ignorance the Magicians, from which they find no Heroes to rescue them. Many a seeming courteous Knight and gentle Squire, will undertake the Protection of the distressed Nymphs, but they soon shew their Gallantry is widely different from the Chivalry of old; the poor Damsels find themselves inticed by male Syrens, who prove more baleful Monsters than [sic] those from which they pretended to deliver them. (I, 18)

This extended metaphor contrasts reality with romance. As in Cornelia, the romance genre depicted here, replete with giants, monsters and rescuing knights, is represented as not only deceptive, but as dangerous for the false security it gives to vulnerable women. Society holds many dangers for women, especially for ‘ladies’, and this passage evokes a strong

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21 The lines are from the poem, 'O Jenny dear', written in 1794, but not published until 1842 when all her works were published posthumously as The poetical works of Miss Susanna Blamire, 'The muse of Cumberland', Edinburgh, 1842. Reprinted in Roger Lonsdale ed. Eighteenth-century women poets, 293-4.
22 As an example, see the first paragraph of Chapter IV of A vindication of the rights of woman.
23 Evelina, or the history of a young lady's entrance into the world, London: Thomas Lowndes, 1778.
sense of sexual danger. And, later, the narrator uses romance models to criticise fashionable men's behaviour and their encouragement of the folly of vanity in women:

"Nothing can be more unlike those Mirrors of Chivalry than our modern fine Gentlemen. Women are now won by Flattery not by Fighting, a safer kind of Courtship for the Men, and more amusing, though perhaps less glorious, to the Ladies. Instead of delivering their Dames from Giants and Monsters, they endeavour to increase that Monster-breeding, that Giant-passion of the Mind, Vanity; they first extend the Tyrant's Power, and then share the Tyranny, till they become as necessary to our Sex as a Jackal is to a Lion; they are to provide a constant Support and Supply for insatiable Female Vanity. Not but some of us are so kind and humble, as to share the Office, and cater tolerably well for ourselves." (I, 61)

This witty declamation of men's and women's follies deserves the accolades usually reserved for Alexander Pope's similar jibes. The fashionable milieu evoked here shows men and women relating only on the level of vanity and flattery and contrasts strongly with the moral commerce between the sexes that Scott advocates.

To protect themselves from danger and from being discovered by their parents, Leonora and Louisa disguise themselves. As in The history of Cornelia, cross-dressing provides a convenient disguise for the pursued young women, but as in the previous novel the plot device is also integral to the ongoing analysis of the construction of gender. Throughout the tale Leonora adopts various male personae.

Since a Man's Habit was judged necessary for one, Leonora's Height, her Spirit and Learning, made her the more proper for it. But she could not reconcile this Metamorphosis of her Sex to the Delicacy of her Modesty, except by assuming the Dress of a Clergyman, which left her with Petticoats tho' it took from her her Sex, and obliged People of any Degree of Politeness to behave with much the same kind of Decorum in her Presence as if she had appeared a Woman. (I, 18-19)

This disguise and its description show much about the perceived differences between men and women. Leonora has to wear makeup to 'Shade the Resplendency of her own Complexion... in order to lessen in some Degree the Effeminacy of her Countenance, which before made her not appear Man enough even for a Lady's Page' (18). Leonora's height makes her more suited to the role of a man than Louisa, but also Leonora's 'Spirit and Learning, made her the more proper for it'. The text here shows that the male persona

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24 Refer to pages 34-37 of Chapter One for a discussion of cross-dressing and its relationship to Scott's analysis of cultural constructions of gender. Also, see footnote 39 of that chapter for references to the substantial body of critical work on cross-dressing and gender.
is more than clothes; there is an attitude and consciousness that is perceived as 'male'. The assumed equivalence in modesty of a woman and a clergymen is noteworthy in this passage also, showing that when a man assumes the role of clergymen he in some ways emasculates himself or divests himself of some culturally assumed characteristics of masculinity.\textsuperscript{25} In terms of decorum and modesty, a clergymen and a woman are treated similarly. It is not merely their behaviour, but the behaviour of others towards them that shapes their gender roles. This choice of a clergymen as a male figure recalls Cornelia's choice of a young student which also was a role occupying the space between the male and female genders.

Leonora dresses as a man, and Louisa colours her hair and pretends to be the clergymen's sister. The disguise provides an escape from their family situation, but importantly it also provides an escape from the vulnerability and impropriety inherent in being young unaccompanied women. Thus equipped, our young Ladies began to enjoy an Ease of Mind to which they had been some time Strangers' (I, 19). Paradoxically, it is by dressing as a man that Leonora defends her virtue, her culturally defining feminine feature. The cross-dressing does not protect Leonora from romantic attention, however, for it is her effeminacy as a man that makes her attractive to young women.

\textit{Leonora's Beauty} charms many of the young Ladies; she soon found by the forward Advances of the Coquets, and the sly Glances of the Prudes, that an effeminate Delicacy in a Man is not disagreeable to a Sex to whom it should more peculiarly belong. . . . one would praise her Features, another her Complexion, a third sigh out, as smooth as \textit{Hebe}'s unrazored Lips; those who had studied Romances compared her to \textit{Pyrocles}, and in short to all the imaginary Heroes who had been celebrated for effeminate Beauty, declaring the Description of each was exactly her Picture. (I, 20-21)

It is noteworthy that this effeminate quality is represented as attractive in a man. Scott clearly points to the appeal for women of an effeminate man, but this could also be read as a homoerotic dimension to Scott's use of cross-dressing. It is also an indictment of the more 'masculine' men that they are spurned in favour of a woman masquerading as a man. The text suggests that women are not attracted to 'real men', that is men who exhibit

\textsuperscript{25} In a letter to her father, Sarah's sister Elizabeth compares bishops and women commenting that they 'both wear petticoats and a character of gentleness'. Emily Climenson. \textit{Elizabeth Montagu}, II, 203.
culturally constructed masculine behaviour. Indeed, the sensibility of a woman in the body of a man is what appeals to women. Published in 1754 this novel precedes the main period of the popular sentimental hero who was constructed as possessing some culturally constructed feminine features – such as open expressions of intense emotion. In Chapter Four of this thesis, I discuss *The history of Sir George Ellison*, in which Scott constructs her hero in some respects as a man of sensibility.

Leonora's masquerade of masculinity provides situations which show society's expectations of male and female behaviour. When Leonora faints during an argument with Calidore, he castigates her for being false to her male sex and for adopting 'womanish Arts' (I, 43). Scott repeatedly creates situations which show that the cultural construction of gender is not natural. Lady Haines tries to teach her physically healthy and robust young niece how to be a real woman, and 'a Person of Distinction' (I, 54). She instructs:

> She must never laugh but in such a manner as to shew it as the utmost Effort of her Complaisance, and not as if it proceeded from any Inclination to that unseemly, though customary, Sign of Mirth; and, if possible, she should never suffer her Muscles to relax beyond a Smile, for a Laugh greatly destroyed the Symmetry of the Features. She offered to teach her a Voice suitable to the Delicacy of the softer Sex; who ought to speak in such a manner as to make it appear as a Civility intended to the Company and a Fatigue to herself; for that a Woman then only converses with Dignity, when her Audience is listening with attentive Ears, to catch each whispered Syllable. She desired her to learn to eat as if she had no Stomach, but was reduced to it as the odious Means of preserving Life. To drink a Draught is shocking to all Delicacy, a well-bred Woman will never do more than sip. (I, 54)

According to this guide, a 'real woman' is barely alive. Indeed it suggests a parody of fashionable conduct books that dictated such minute directions to young women. In this and the other tales, Scott insistently provides positive models of women, such as Leonora, who do not behave like this and criticises weaker women characters who do follow the model outlined above.

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26 These instructions of proper behaviour are reminiscent of Chesterfield's comments to his son about laughter and the unnecessary and unattractive distortion of faces that results from laughing too enthusiastically.
As much as Leonora's male disguise liberates her, it also leads her into intricate and often amusing difficulties. She is pursued by besotted women, whom she fends off with great difficulty, much to the comic benefit of the tale. Leonora's greatest trial is not convincing others that she is a man, but is in being put into a situation where she must perform a role culturally written for a man only – public performance. Preaching women were unacceptable in eighteenth-century English society, even in non-conformist religions or amongst the Quakers where some women were known to lead services, but still with little encouragement from their religious authorities. Leonora is forced to replace the local clergyman and give a sermon. The fact that the clergyman is away from the community, leaving it bereft of religious counsel, suggests Scott's criticism of the absent or deficient clergyman, a common situation which was much lamented in the English counties. In order to perform this public, male role, Leonora must convince herself that it is her alter-ego, the Reverend Mr Whiston, who will be performing and not her female self who could not put her voice and opinions forward in public. The internal conflict she suffers is an important commentary on the perceived spaces and roles for the masculine and feminine genders.

When the Sunday came she mounted the Pulpit, with an Air so bashful and disconcerted, as did not at all agree with the Self-satisfaction of the bolder Sex, of which she appeared. She pronounced her Text with so faltering an Accent, and so many Blushes, that gentle Compassion sat on every Countenance. But being seriously affected with her Subject, the Warmth of her Heart soon took off her Attention to her Audience, and left her only just Modesty enough to grace her Words; and give her Doctrine the Air of Advice and Entreaty, rather than of commanding Injunctions; a Method to make it most availing, as a Preacher then has not both the Pride and Inclinations of his Audience to combat. (I, 26)

Leonora's torment arises from the differently gendered sense of performance in public spaces. The text suggests that society constructs a binary model of gendered performance:

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28 Scott's critique of clergymen occurs in her private discourses as well; she laments to her sister that the local clergyman responded badly to a local shortage of food. Instead of responding to the practical difficulties, he preached that fasting was good for the soul. Sarah writes 'I had a great inclination to have got up into the pulpit after the Parson had done his business, to have repeated the song in praise of the roast beef of England, to have try'd whose doctrine would have been most follow'd' MO 5164, 4 February, 1740.
women possess humility and do not present their opinions in public; men are confident in their public roles and comfortable in giving 'commanding injunctions' to an audience. But significantly in this scene Leonora's commitment to religious principles allows her to transcend her 'naturally female' self-effacement and speak so passionately that her audience praises her performance. Scott seems to be suggesting that true Christianity is genderless and is empowering for women.

More awkwardly, Leonora's/ Mr Whiston's performance brings an offer of a preferment which Leonora has great difficulty declining. Scott shows great talents for humorous writing in the scene where Leonora/ Mr Whiston is offered both a living and a wife.

*Leonora* was now compelled to listen to an Enumeration of all the Profits of the Living, and the Merits of the Lady who was to be tacked to it. The Gentleman expatiated on the Comforts of Matrimony with great Eloquence; and sketched in so lively a manner a snug Parson's Life, that *Leonora* almost saw herself settled in a small House, with more Sash-window than Wall; a little Garden of Ever-greens before it, a Church shadowed with solemn Yews behind, and extended along each Side a Church-yard full of Tombstones, which at the same time shew the Poverty and Vanity of the Relations of the Dead; and a cleanly mincing Wife, with a Multitude of Cherry-cheek'd Children within the House thus properly situated. She excused herself from this delectable State so well drawn out, with all the Civility she could, and left both the Benefices to a better qualified Incumbent. (I, 30-31)

A 'better qualified Incumbent' would need to be both a man and a member of the clergy. Leonora's deceived acquaintances supported her rejection of this offer:

instead of being suspected of any other Reason, she was congratulated on having escaped the Snare; and teased about the Effeminacy of her Person, which they told her must have made the Destinies mistake her Sex; since none but Women were ever before devoted to fell Devourers: They compared her to *Andromeda*, and other ill-fated Fair-ones, who had been exposed to ravenous Monsters. . . . (I, 31-32)

The offer comes from a man who, tired of his mistrees, hopes to foist her onto the ingenuous clergyman. The gender confusion here provides both comic dramatic irony, and also comment on the sexual expectations of men and women. Leonora's/Mr Whiston's female acquaintances laugh at the apparent gendered role reversal of a man being snared in a sexual intrigue rather than a woman who is the usually the target and victim of such schemes.
In 'The History of Leonora and Louisa' Scott also continues her ongoing dissertation on charity. Leonora preaches a 'Charity Sermon, for the Benefit of the Poor at and near the Place; great Numbers of whom were brought thither by Sickness' (I, 35). The purpose of this sermon is twofold. First, it offers comfort to the ill, and second, it entreats listeners for financial contributions. Scott is not content simply to recommend the benefits of charity in her writings. She is fascinated with society's complex attitudes towards charity. Her discussion of charitable impulses picks up on the contemporary Mandevillean debate about private vices and public benefits as has been discussed in the Introduction.29

Many bad Qualities have their Uses, but none more than Vanity; it makes the naturally Morose appear mild and Courteous, the Proud humble and affable, the Avaricious generous, and the Cruel and Hard-hearted, humane and charitable. Whoever has a great Share of Vanity is as changeable as Proteus, and can assume as great a Variety of Shapes; tho' it will lead them into many Vices, yet it generally prompts them to borrow the Mask of Virtue. None are more hurtful to those who are intimately connected with them, than very vain Persons; but they are often beneficial to Society; and they should be the less censured, since their Actions may do as much good to others, tho' not to themselves; for the trifling Flash of Pleasure which arises from a Gratification of Vanity, can bear no Comparison to the solid Satisfaction which attends the warm and generous Heart in all its Overflowings of Benevolence and Humanity. (I, 36)

This view that social benefits can accrue from private vices was a well-worn argument as my discussion of Bernard Mandeville has suggested. This line of argument proposes that philanthropy often originates in vanity. Prochaska has discussed the public prestige and power that was seen to originate from public acts of beneficence.30 Leonora's disguise as a male clergyman contributes to the success of her charity sermon and her ensuing distribution of the charitable funds. While her sermon is convincing, it is her sexual appeal, and the womanliness behind her male exterior, that the narrator credits with the generosity of the donations. It is a cynical commentary on the church audience that her sexual attractiveness elicits donations, especially from women.

Later in the tale, an exchange between Sabrina and Carinthia continues the discussion of charity by questioning both the duty to give and the right to receive assistance. The

29 See also E. J. Hundert The Enlightenment's fable.
conversation is prompted by Leonora assisting a destitute woman and her children after her husband has left them in debt. Carinthia questions whether Leonora's precarious position allows her to dispense charity and Sabrina argues that "Protection and benevolent Assistance are Duties which the whole Creation have a Right to claim from us" (I, 104). This view of charity asserts that it is a right to receive assistance when one is in need, and a pleasure to exercise one's duty to assist. This view draws a fine distinction between generosity and justice. "Those who give to others what they want themselves, who suffer by the Relief they bestow, are generous; to impart what is not necessary to us, is bare Justice" (I, 104). Sabrina's pronouncements here show the significance of the narrative framing device; she articulates appropriate lessons for the reader and focusses the reader's attention on potentially subversive elements of the narrative.

Despite her trials, Leonora has no difficulty successfully acting as a man. But when she and Louisa risk discovery or face awkward situations they fulfil their female roles by running away; real men would have the personal and social agency to confront the difficulties directly. Ultimately, Scott demonstrates the substantial difference between men and women in this history in the way her heroines deal with trouble.

When Leonora and Louisa escape once more, they flee to London where Leonora again poses as a man. To earn their living they lodge with a milliner, Louisa working as a seamstress and Leonora posing as a young foreign artist who has come to London to paint women's portraits. Notably, in this role she sheds her clerical skirts and effeminacy. Once again, Leonora's male disguise provides opportunities for exposing men's and women's cultural roles. "Leonora by her present Disguise, had not only Opportunities of discovering the Vices of Men, but also the Folly of Women. No one sees more frequent Instances of human Vanity than a Painter." (I, 79) Leonora uses her position for good works, suggesting that if women had a more public presence they could effect more good
works. By choosing a profession that was so clearly out of bounds for women, even aristocratic women, Scott again pushes against the public constraints on women.31

Leonora cures a young wife of her coquettish behaviour and reconciles a mother to her daughter who had married against her wishes. Carinthia comments that these selfless actions were likely to expose Leonora's true sex, as a woman would be more likely to assist the reconciliation between a mother and daughter than would a man who might instead take advantage of the situation. Sabrina's aim in relating these good actions was to show:

how much good a Woman might do to her own Sex, when she does not appear to be of it: she has then all the Advantages of knowing how to affect the Person she addresses, by her Acquaintence with the Female Heart, and has none of that Prepossession to conquer, that every Woman feels against Advice from one of her own Sex, which is sure to meet with Neglect, if it does not excite Resentment. (I, 96)

The narrator suggests that women are their own worst enemies because their sexual competition denies them the assistance offered by other women.

Scott's voice for women's independence and agency is more direct in this work than in any of her other novels. She proposes a theological view that asserts that contemporary cultural positioning of men and women opposes God's will. She explicitly states that the notion of 'good wife' can be at odds with the notion of 'good Christian'. Sabrina exhorts women to action in the following emotive appeal:

"Patience is a great Virtue, no doubt, but it is a suffering one, and to use it in any but desperate Cases is Pusillanimity; its Office is to teach us to endure only those Evils we cannot prevent. I admire a Woman who chuses to avoid Injuries rather than indolently to grieve under them, and to work for a Support instead of weeping for want of one. A Person long used to act thro' Love, could not easily give up the Reins of Government to Fear; and when People practise that Excess of Christian Meekness, which is now thought only a female Virtue, of turning the other Cheek to him who has smote the one; and to him who has taken Part of her Right and Property, giving the rest also, only from want of Courage to resist, she may be a greater Coward than others, and perhaps a better Wife in the Opinion of some Men, but not a better Christian." (I, 97-98)

31 Of course, women could not have fulfilled this particular role, excluded as they were from professional art training, and especially from life painting which was the basis of such training. For a discussion of the exclusion of women from professional painting see Gill Perry and Michael Rossington eds, *Femininity and masculinity in eighteenth-century art and culture*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994, introduction and especially Wendy Wassyng Roworth 'Anatomy is destiny: regarding the body in the art of Angelica Kauffman', 41-62.
Indeed, it is more than an emotive appeal, it is an outraged incitement to women’s rebellion. What is most radical here is that the text links women’s independence with women’s Christianity, seeing in their strength and courage an exercise of their religion and duty to God. Sabrina defines and qualifies the apparent Christian virtues. Patience should only be evident where there is no other recourse to action, otherwise women should remove themselves from difficult situations. Of course, the best option, Sabrina seems to be suggesting, is avoiding such situations, such as marriage, if at all possible. But given that many women must marry, she exhorts resistance to marital tyranny, not ‘turning the other Cheek to him who has smote the one’. Again, sexual violence is linked to other injustices in marriage, such as taking a woman’s ‘Right and Property’. These objections to women’s position in marriage resonate throughout Scott’s works, but what we see here – not evident elsewhere – is Scott’s radical questioning of eighteenth-century society’s interpretation of Christian doctrine. In the statement, ‘Excess of Christian Meekness, which is now thought only a female Virtue’, she shows how Christian principles can be distorted by a particular society in order to uphold its power structures. In eighteenth-century society, women’s legal and cultural subjugation to men was reinforced through appeals to Christian doctrine. Importantly, Scott does not reject Christianity, but she does question its interpretation by cultural authority. In Scott’s society, and according to her interpretation of Christianity, a ‘good wife’ is not necessarily a ‘better Christian’. What is also radical about this passage is that it has political implications too; she is articulating the right to resist tyranny.

Leonora and Louisa are successful independent women, financially supporting themselves and doing good works for others. This success ends, however, when she and Louisa have to flee. A jealous lover, seeing the young portrait painter as a threat, challenges Leonora to a duel. They flee to the other end of London where Leonora adopts the role of school master at a boys’ school. When characterising Leonora as a schoolmaster, Carinthia laughs at the thought of her as a '"blooming, beardless Pedagogue"' (I, 119). Sabrina’s reply
contributes to an argument for women teaching as well, or better, than men. It also constitutes a treatise on the importance of education for young people.

"I cannot say," answered Sabrina, "but she might appear a little out of her natural Character; but the Fairness of her Complexion and her Beauty, could be no real Impediment, as she was not to teach her Scholars the fierce Air and Gestures of a Prize-fighter. Learning is of noSex[sic], tho' it is chiefly arrogated by one, and Virtue should be common to both, therefore her Scholars might be as well instructed as by a Man, tho' she was a Sort of heterogeneous Animal, in whom Art and Dress contradicted Nature". (I, 119)

Scott's aside here about one sex arrogating education is brief but forceful. Scott uses the word 'Nature' here significantly. It carries the weight of her interrogation of gender construction. Are gender differences 'natural' or created, she asks, and if, as Scott suggests, it is the latter, then this construction is naturalised by social convention. Sabrina counters Carinthia's argument that Leonora would be too lenient to be a good teacher, by a short dissertation on the nature of leadership and justice. Yet again Scott makes space for herself to address issues of governance and leadership, suggesting that gender has no role in leadership qualities. What she says of individual situations is applicable to public governance and leadership. Punishment is about executing justice, and ' "Caprice, Ill-nature, and Tyranny" ' (I, 120) have no part in justice. It is important for Scott to justify the ability of women to teach and to be moral, intellectual and humane leaders because in her narratives she assumes that role. As a woman instructing, and in creating female protagonists with authority, she exemplifies that the qualities needed to lead and to instruct are of no gender.

In Leonora's manifestation as a male schoolmaster, Scott again advocates education as a means of addressing societal injustices. First, the school serves both the sons of the poor and of the wealthy with the fees of the rich covering the costs of the poor. This form of redistributed income has ideological implications that are significant indeed. While Scott explicitly states the naturalness of social hierarchy the implicit messages her text conveys dictate that the wealthy are responsible for alleviating the hardships of the poor. This
situation also provides opportunity to discuss the different roles of education. When Leonora first arrives at the school she finds that:

The School was one of those which seem rather Seminaries of Virtue than of Learning, being filled with Lads whose Parents are more careful of their Sobriety than their Erudition, and would consent to have them [sic] learn little, so as they were but to remain ignorant of Vice; not considering that Strength of Mind, as well as Innocence, is necessary to preserve the Virtue of young People, who, when they are exposed to the greatest Temptations, are out of Tuition. (I, 114)

This is an Enlightenment argument for rational virtue similar to that proposed in The history of Cornelia, in that it advocates a morality based on a conscious reasoning through of the conceptions of vice and virtue. Education, then, depends on teaching virtue and reason simultaneously. The role of a teacher is one of great responsibility. It is not merely an occupation, for the charge of young people's characters is more important than simply earning a living. Leonora takes as her task to teach the boys virtue, knowledge and manliness. She criticises effeminacy in young boys: 'she was by no means inclined to encrease the gentle Race of Fribbles in the Land. She could not bear that a Boy should be more afraid of tanning his Complexion, or wetting his Feet, than of being excelled in Learning' (I, 115). And yet fundamental to this manliness are the same principles that Scott has advocated in her other discussions of education and virtuous life - a love of virtue, the duty of doing good, and the possession of compassion and reason.

While in this novel Scott destabilises social constructions of gender, the tale also seems to advocate heterosexual love in that Leonora gives up her financial and moral independence for love. The love of a man is the only incentive for Leonora to drop her male disguise, and she does so with hope of turning her friend (who knows her only as a man) into a lover. The extent to which Leonora must change her behaviour and appearance to be a woman once again shows the extent to which gender was constructed in the eighteenth century. Not only does she wear dresses, she also hides her learning and her public confidence. One leaves this tale with similar questions to those with which one leaves Charlotte Lennox's The female quixote, where Arabella gives up her independence and fanciful ideas and submits to the Doctor's 'rational' discourse. Both heroines, it seems, have much to lose
from their transformation, much more than they have to gain. They lose their independence, their power, their autonomy. One must ask whether Leonora’s change is a submission to the social constraints of her gender, or a way of experiencing the best of both worlds.

**The history of Mr. Rivers and Miss Davers**

The other substantial narrative in *A journey through every stage of life* is the final tale, ‘The history of Mr. Rivers and Miss Davers’. It is an expansive narrative, embracing two generations to explore issues of love, virtue, and benevolence, but it is a history dominated by money – by the literal and figurative exchange between lovers and spouses, between parents and children, and between friends. Couples are united or parted more often by monetary matters than by inclination. In this world of money, Scott develops finely tuned notions of virtue and loyalty. While the fates of the characters appear to be dictated by their financial situations, by the end of the history Scott makes her point that personal qualities, rather than money, should direct figurative and literal exchange. This history helps to articulate Scott’s ideology of moral commerce: the text dramatises the evils that money brings and replaces this conception of money with a notion of money as a possible catalyst for virtue and benevolence.

The story and fate of one of the characters demonstrates this cleansing power of ‘moral’ money. Miss Reynards is introduced as a virtuous but naive young woman who is seduced by a married man masquerading as a single suitor. Mrs Gowran, an older female friend, comes to her rescue, advising and supporting her and finally acting as an intermediary to give the baby to a couple who have no children.

Her kind Friend made her no Reproaches; she pitied the wounded Heart, and rather endeavoured to heal than to keep the Wound open. Returning Virtue in her Eyes excused past Vice; she saw every Extenuation of her Offence in the fairest Light, and her Grief and Repentance was a Veil under which she hid the unhappy Folly even from her own Sight. How many Girls, like her, weak and unfortunate, might be
entirely reclaimed by such kind Behaviour, that, made desperate by Rigour, are from one false Step led on to everlasting Ruin? (II, 197)

Mrs Gowran preaches forgiveness, a concept that is not unusual in itself, but certainly is when applied to the fallen woman. The text suggests here that it is social judgment that ensures 'everlasting Ruin' for such women, rather than an inherent viciousness of their characters.

Scott strategically brings home her point about reclaiming fallen women's virtue. Late in the tale, a middle-aged female philanthropist enters the drama. It is only after she has been characterised as morally exemplary that the mysterious woman, Mrs Traverse, is revealed to be the much older Miss Reynards, who had changed her name and retired from society. Just like her change of name, from Miss Reynards to Mrs Traverse, this character traverses the seemingly unbridgable gap from fallen woman to virtuous exemplar. The *Oxford English Dictionary* definitions of 'traverse' highlight the complexity of the word and add resonances to Scott's choice of name for her character.

1. The act of passing through a gate, or crossing a river, bridge, or other place forming a boundary. . . . (obs.) A toll paid on crossing the bounding-line of a town or lordship. . . . 8. Something that crosses, thwarts, or obstructs; opposition; an obstacle, impediment; a trouble, vexation; a mishap; misfortune, adversity.

The first definition highlights the fact that Miss Reynards' illegitimate pregnancy was a barrier to respectability. Indeed, given the equivalence between a woman's virtue and her identity, the loss of her virtue means that she loses her identity as a respectable woman and instead gains the identity of a fallen woman. But she traverses this boundary, crossing over from a fallen woman to regain an identity as a good woman by retiring from society and performing benevolent works. She symbolically pays for her sin, by leaving society, by performing good works, and by giving up the roles of wife and mother. Because of her initial fall from virtue, she must surrender her identity as Miss Reynards, and now as Mrs Traverse must reject the many respectable offers from men and, instead, remain single. She literally pays for the absolution of her sin through her charity, and figuratively pays for her sin by denying herself sexual, loving relationships.
Mrs Traverse's philanthropy is, on a much smaller scale, similar to the philanthropy seen in Scott's later novel, *Millenium Hall*. Mrs Traverse employs and teaches skills to local villagers who are too lame or old to conduct usual labour. When the young Mr Rivers enters her house, he finds it tastefully adorned with works created by these labourers (II, 233-234). As with the Millenium ladies, Mrs Traverse manages her money with the strictest economy and on the basis of moral commerce. 'As she allowed herself no superfluous Vanities, neither would she give them to others, and endeavoured to make her Example and Advice as useful as her Purse' (II, 235). Her philanthropy exemplifies an important element of moral commerce: monetary assistance combined with moral guidance. Her guidance takes the form of instituting ' "the divine Truths of Religion, and the Precepts of Morality" ' (II, 236). Like the Millenium ladies, she leads a disciplined and unadorned lifestyle in her country retreat. These lessons and her lifestyle show that a virtuous life is founded on economy, moral dispensation of money, benevolent services, efficiency and religious piety.

When the young Mr Rivers becomes friends with Mrs Traverse the local community encourages the idea of a romantic relationship between the two recluses. Mr Rivers's observations about her are revealing for what they say about the cultural construction of 'woman'.

He admired her as the greatest Ornament to Human Nature; he loved her as the dearest Friend, and most amiable Companion, but felt such a Reverence for her Virtues, that to think of her as a Woman appeared to him a Kind of Sacrilege, which would shock his Nature with the Appearance of a most criminal Presumption. (II, 241)

Clearly, in terms of the narrative, as it is later revealed that he is her illegitimate son, he must hold this view in order to avoid the issue of incest. But more interesting is the construction and opposition established between the virtuous figure and 'woman'. Here, 'woman' is equated with the 'sexual', which is contrasted with Mrs Traverse who is a nun or madonna figure. Even in the ultimate proposal of marriage by Mr Rivers, senior, Mrs
Traverse is characterised as angelic, although this view of marriage combining respect, virtue and the moral use of money is closer to Scott’s ideal. He states:

"Would you but direct my Actions, and appropriate my Fortune as you do your own, you should find me the most obedient Disciple, dutiful from Love and Principle. I should look up to you with humble Reverence, as to an Angel sent to lead me into the Paths of Virtue, and learn to emulate your Purity" (II, 250-251).

Despite the societal perception of her as exemplifying virtue, Mrs Traverse feels that she can not marry because she has been tainted by her youthful mistake. "Since the Time that I could not marry without deserving my Husband's bad Opinion, I have been obstinately determined on a single Life" (II, 252). She has traversed her identity as a fallen woman sufficiently to become a philanthropist and moral example, but only to those persons who remain ignorant of her previous identity. To those who know her dual identities, including herself, she has traversed but not transcended her crime against virtue.

While Scott undermines the model of love exemplified by traditional romance, she replaces it with a model of virtuous and respectful love between men and women. In 'The history of Mr. Rivers and Miss Davers' true love and marriage are contrasted with marriages based on money and convenience. Vanity and deceit, two of Scott’s favourite targets, are exposed where one person lusts after another’s fortune. As a result, Scott often portrays relations between men and women where one wealthy partner’s vanity or naivety is partnered by another’s greed for their money. The elder Mrs Rivers’ vanity leads her to a relationship with a much younger ‘Hibernian Adonis’(II, 124) for whom she would ‘exchange her Estate for her Adonis’s Person’ (II, 123).

The young Man, who had no Fortune but his Beauty, and came over in Hopes of finding a Woman who should think it a Coin well deserving the common vulgar Cash of the Kingdom, approved of the Traffic. He liked his own Face in a Looking-Glass very well, but wisely preferred to it his present Majesty’s Impression on sterling Gold, as also those of his Royal Predecessors, from the good King his Father up to the two Jacobus’s, or either the pious or facetious Carolus. King James’s starched Ruff, or King Charles’s prim Beard, when represented on that valuable Metal, were to him more beautiful than any modern Dress or Ornament. The Delicacy of his own Features he despised, in Comparison of the Royal Fat which gave a bloated Dignity to those of the glorious Anna; and could form no Picture of Matrimony so alluring, as that close Conjunction of Faces to be seen on the joint Coin of William and Mary. Then this prudent young Gentleman wisely foresaw that the Balance of Trade would be on his Side; for tho’ it might often appear on the Account, young Man Debtor to
old Woman, yet the Payment of the Ballance, as well as the settling of the Account, would remain entirely in his Power. (II, 123-124)

This sustained coinage metaphor elaborately and humorously ties vanity, aesthetics, sexual politics, greed and commerce together. This passage reveals intricate exchanges of power between the two genders. Mrs Rivers' age, vanity and wealth make her susceptible to the young fortune hunter. His desire for her wealth makes him willing to exchange his single, youthful and dissipated style of life to become a husband, because in reality he would be barely constrained at all by marriage: 'The Payment of the Ballance, as well as the settling of the Account would remain entirely in his Power'; as a man, marriage will increase his power over his wife and her money. He has very little to lose: she will lose everything. Her money and his gender will bring him social and personal power. Her vanity, her status as woman and wife will undermine the power that her wealth had previously imparted.

The passage above is noteworthy for a number of reasons. First, the metonymic equivalence between coinage and royalty represented here implies an irreverence towards the monarchy. Scott is no monarchist. Her discussions of governance and public leadership throughout her writings show that her allegiance is to virtuous and public minded individuals rather than to the offices of social rank. The ironic tone of the passage suggests that the author enjoyed using her articulation of the young man's greed to slight monarchs whose primary importance lies in their visages as symbols of currency. Of course, Scott is referring to Stuart monarchs, fitting material as humorous figures to Hanoverian readers. Significantly, the present majesty is 'sterling' by contrast.

Second, this remarkable passage establishes an aesthetics based on money which stands in contrast to the feminised ethics embodied in Scott's moral commerce. An aesthetics based on money is shown to be distorted and oriented to an end in itself. 'The Delicacy of his own Features he despised, in Comparison of the Royal Fat which gave a bloated Dignity to those of the glorious Anna'. The aesthetics of personal beauty are inverted here with the Hibernian's handsome face being rejected for the 'bloated Dignity' of Anna, for the latter
has more monetary value. The irony here, though, is that it is precisely the Hibernian's beauty that wins him Mrs Rivers's hand and fortune. And, again, with irony, he praises outmoded fashion knowing that the money on which it is represented will allow him to buy the fashion à la mode. 'King James's starched Ruff, or King Charles's prim Beard, when represented on that valuable Metal, were to him more beautiful than any modern Dress or Ornament'.

As in her other texts Scott condemns the corruption of fashionable London society in *A journey* and uses the pastoral mode to interrogate the nature of virtuous living. As I will discuss further in Chapter three, Scott's use of the pastoral mode is complex. Throughout this tale she continues to advocate rural over city living. Characters retire to a rural abode for its inexpensive living; but the text demonstrates that this retirement from society brings more than mere financial gains. The text suggests that the city taints interpersonal and financial exchanges. The city provides both the opportunity and the encouragement to indulge in vices such as gambling, licentious behaviour, vanity and personal display, and idle amusements. As wealth – often the wealth of trade – enables these vices it assumes the taint of the sin. It is not the money itself that is bad, it is the way it is used. Country life, per se, will not cleanse someone of vice, nor cleanse their money, but a rural style of life does lend itself to contemplation, the simple pleasures of nature, and a modest life.

The text uses the pastoral mode to explore the relationship between private virtues and public actions. In rural retirement characters find the solitude to be alone with their own reflections, their spirituality and their own consciences. In retreat, Scott's characters commune with nature. This commerce with nature, which is based on and reinforces virtue, is a moral commerce to be contrasted with the types of commerce found in city living. In using the term 'commerce' I invoke its myriad of eighteenth-century associations – from the commerce of financial transactions to the friendly relations between people in a

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32 This is of course a very typical Augustan view.
social setting. While in all her writings Scott recommends personal commerce in society as natural and desirable, she also shows that in any setting where persons associate, public display is intricately related to personal communications. It is primarily in the context of society that the individual confronts the dangers of vanity, jealousy, ostentation and conspicuous consumption. By displaying her characters' virtue in an isolated rural setting, Scott removes those vices associated with social interaction, thus allowing her to concentrate on their moral qualities.

Scott links the aesthetics of the pastoral mode with virtue. Emilia's and Rivers' house:

was situated on a rising Ground; from every Part of it the Eye was entertained with most pleasing Prospects. The Farm which belonged to it bore a small Rent, but its Extent was larger than is usual for one of double the Income, there being more Wood than Land for Tillage or Pasture. Before the House was a Field of about six Acres, which he stocked with Sheep, and raised a young quick-set Hedge round it. At the Side of this Hedge, Emilia set all Kinds of the sweetest and most beautiful Flowers, and Woodbines sufficient to wind over and cover almost all the Hedge. Beyond this Field, which one might, if the Word did not sound too elegant for a Farm, call a beautiful Lawn, on one Side was a fine Wood of a considerable Extent, thro' it ran a River which bounded the other Side of the Lawn, running Serpentine thro' the Farm, and after ornamenting the Prospect, disappeared to the Eye, at a great Distance, at another Wood, into which it entered. Among the Trees, and at each Side of the River, Emilia planted all such sweet-flowering Shrubs as were proper for the Place; she did the same round every Field in the Farm, for the gardening Part was her's, in which Art she obtained Instruction from an old Man in the Neighbourhood, till the Whole appeared like a beautiful Garden: She made little Bowers of Woodbines and Jessamine, and there was not a Tree but was incircled with them. I describe the Place as they made it, rather than as they found it, as they were diligent and expeditious in their Alterations, and I should not otherwise give an Idea of this little Seat of Love.

The chief Part of the Land was Pasture, the rest Meadow; there was not a ploughed Field on the Farm. The Care of the Woods, and Preservation of the Fish in the River, was Part of the Tenant's Business, which better suited young Rivers's Inclination and Abilities than Tillage. (II, 173-174)

I cite a long passage here because it reveals the interrelationship of discourses of aesthetics, economics, virtue, class, gender, labour and nature. What strikes one immediately in this text is the importance of beauty in the landscape and the invocation of the discourses of garden landscaping.33 There are 'pleasing Prospects' which entertain 'the Eye'; Emilia

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plants 'beautiful Flowers'; there is a 'beautiful Lawn', 'a fine Wood', through which runs a 'Serpentine' river 'ornamenting the Prospect'. The aesthetics of this scene show how constructed is the natural pastoral scene. They make 'Alterations'; this is a key term in eighteenth-century garden landscaping. They create natural beauty according the the fashionable picturesque aesthetic. In a period where landscape architecture was elevated to enormous aesthetic and financial importance to the upper classes and aristocracy, this scene would have been read as an appropriate aesthetic environment for characters of the upper middling class despite the fact that at this stage of the tale, the couple are relatively poor. The artifice of the natural environment is linked with the couple's labour and virtue. Their labour is a specific type of labour appropriate to their class and gender. Rivers's 'Inclination and Abilities', we are told, suit husbanding of stock rather than the heavy labour of tillage. Emilia's labour, also, is aesthetically and gender based; she beautifies the landscape by planting flowers and making bowers. Not only is this type of labour class-based; it is also regenerative, relatively self-contained and not expanding. Given the agrarian changes to the landscape and its devastating effects on rural populations, Scott's idealised portrayal of rural life and labour is a counter model to contemporary accounts of enclosure and reform. Scott particularly emphasises that the beauty of the scene was made by their labour. 'I describe the Place as they made it, rather than as they found it, as they were diligent and expeditious in their Alterations, and I should not otherwise give an Idea of this little Seat of Love.' In this scene, as in Scott's other rural idylls, efficiency and hard work are linked with the virtue and success of the inhabitants. Indeed, the narrator specifies her description of the beautiful scene was to show the skills of the couple – both practical and moral.

Scott describes the couple and their rural scene as if it were a re-made paradise, reversing the original fall of man and woman. The scene appears Edenic, and Scott characterises

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34 Consider for example the agricultural writings of Arthur Young, including: *A six months tour through the north of England* 4 vols, London, 1770; *The farmer's tour through the east of England* 4 vols, London, 1771.
Rivers and Emilia as a contemporary Adam and Eve. 'Sometimes their different Employments would separate them; like our first Mother Eve, Emilia would be called from the Sharer of her Paradise, to plant or prune her Flowers' (II, 174) but,

No Tempter waited to pervert this fair Eve with delusive Flattery; the Variety of Beauty which Nature had lavished on this Place would exalt her Thoughts to the Creator of them, and fill her Heart with Gratitude, but the Appearance of young Rivers attracted her to a lower Object, and divided her Gratitude between the superior Power who gave her him, and he whose Love gave Charms to every Circumstance, and rendered every Hour delightful. (II, 175)

The pastoral scene is likened to Eden, yet it is an Eden without original sin. Eve is not tempted. The beauty of the scene takes on a sacred dimension as it inspires religious devotion. The pastoral scene depicted here, then, is a blend of classical and Christian traditions of pastoral, yet contains within it discourses of landscape aesthetics and commentary on contemporary issues such as agrarian reform and labour.

The demise of this rural paradise also ensures that the reader knows that this is a contemporary situation, for money and the lure of a fashionable life are the temptations that corrupt this paradise. This peace would not have ended, the narrator tells us, 'had not Riches corrupted Hearts so content in Poverty' (II, 175). Upon an unexpected inheritance and a return to London, the couple lose their happiness as Rivers turns to a licentious lifestyle. Sabrina breaks in upon her own story to comment how money brings unhappiness: ' 'the Encouragement of our Vices, our Follies, and our Vanities, is the general Means thro' which they render us miserable. Many of our Torments are the Offspring of Affluence' ' (II, 187). The text draws parallels between the couple's city life and the fall of Adam and Eve. 'Her Situation was like a Fall from Paradise, an unjust Expulsion from Bliss, having lived free from Offence; every Day more and more deserving of her happy Lot' (II, 190). Significantly in Scott's version of paradise lost, it is man who is tempted by money and illicit sex. The Eve in Scott's story is blameless, yet it is she who suffers as a consequence of the man's fall from Grace. Money and lust prompt this Christian fall for the commercial era. Scott's rendering of the story of Adam and Eve is a fierce attack on men's unrestrained sexuality and its consequences for women; not only is
Emilia left unloved and uncared for, but the woman Rivers pursues is deceived and becomes a 'fallen woman'.

The cyclical structure in 'The history of Mr. Rivers and Miss Davers' shows that the problems of virtue and money are perpetual, and that virtue must be learnt by each generation in turn in an ongoing process of rational, moral education and reflection. The story concludes, however, on a happy note for the characters. And Scott concludes the story by reiterating the insistent point throughout the tale, that is that money serves virtue or vice in turn depending on who possesses it.

**The history of Collin**

'The history of Collin' presents an exemplary male character who exhibits benevolence, judgment, integrity and loyalty. Establishing a position that she later reinforces in The history of Sir George Ellison, Scott shows a common man – in this case, Collin, a wealthy farmer's son – using his inherent integrity and benevolence to morally govern an otherwise leaderless community. This tale takes part, then, in Scott's inscription of the upper middling classes – and merchant classes in the case of George Ellison – as moral leaders in a society left destitute of responsible authority and leadership.

While the tale is structured through the romantic relationship between Collin and Peggy, it is essentially about personal integrity and its ramifications for public service. Scott uses this romance tale to explore virtue and the nature of morally pragmatic leadership and authority. It is a clever melding of the private and public manifestations of the good man. In Collin, Scott draws a character who rules his neighbours with moral authority, a moral authority that comes from his personal virtues and the community's acceptance of his authority.
The narrator describes how Collin 'would forsake the sweet Converse of his Shepherdess, to assist his Neighbours in Affairs above their Capacities' (I, 164), suggesting that moral authority comes about through moral and intellectual superiority. The following description of Collin's good works shows that his benevolence combines economic and moral assistance.

He taught OEconomy to the Negligent, prevailed on the Idle to become industrious, by adding to the Encouragement their Labour would afford them. He instructed the Ignorant, and put the Indigent into a Way of relieving their Poverty. He taught the Parish the Means of making the Poor less expensive, at the same time that they were more perfectly relieved. He improved Husbandry; and introduced a kind of Manufacture for the Weak, the Lame, and the Aged. (I, 164-165)

This passage outlines his economic assistance to the unfortunate as individuals and to the community as a whole. The picture of benevolence drawn in this tale interrelates economic and moral health in a way which prefigures Scott's later novels, Millenium Hall and George Ellison, whereby economic efficiency and morality go hand in hand in a rural community.

Collin's leadership in the community prompts the question – where are the traditional societal leaders? Where is the clergyman, the spiritual leader? And where are the economic and legal authority figures, the local squire and magistrate? Their literal absence here suggests Scott's opinion that they are effectively absent in contemporary eighteenth-century society. This critiques traditional notions of class authority in rural communities. It is not the local gentry who economically and politically control the community. Although Collin is the son of a wealthy farmer, he is of the common people (as his and Peggy's names indicate) rather than of the aristocracy, which is noticeably absent. This text articulates and tries to remedy such vacancies in the social fabric as do her other novels. Collin's role goes beyond leadership in discrete areas, such as the spiritual guidance of a clergyman, or the economic assistance of parish poor relief. It is a brand of leadership that combines moral instruction and pragmatic assistance.
Scott's notion of pragmatic moral commerce comes about through a morally exemplary individual, such as Collin who is described as 'the Peace-maker' (I, 165) and his positive influence on the community. He intervenes in quarrels amongst families and neighbours, advocating 'Patience and Resolution', 'Condescension' and 'Harmony and Mirth' (I, 165). The qualities he encourages in individuals and within families promote social harmony. In describing his good works for the parish, the narrator comments: 'He brought them to live together with the same Affection and Concord, as should govern every private Family; their Views became all fixed on the Good of the Society; no one thought a Thing could be an Advantage to himself, that was detrimental to his Neighbour' (I, 165). Scott's novels assert a belief that individual moral commercial behaviour will produce a socially cohesive and economically productive society.

While formally separating the discussion of Collin's public and private virtues, Scott portrays these virtues and spheres as inextricable. After describing Collin's services to the community which resulted from his 'public Virtues' (I, 166), the narrator turns to the virtues he showed to his lover, Peggy. The qualities that guide his behaviour towards Peggy – loyalty, selflessness and generosity – are precisely those that govern his so called 'public' behaviour. The 'good man' exhibits virtue in private and in public. The real difference between the public and the private spheres seems not to be the qualities and virtues one applies to them, but in the genres used to portray them. It is the consequences of the virtues in action, and not the qualities themselves, that classifies them as 'private' or 'public'. This text asserts that public virtues (usually associated with men) and private virtues (associated with women) are indeed the same. It follows from this assertion that public and private are intricately related and, furthermore, that denying women access to roles in the public sphere on the basis that they have different virtues is a flawed argument.
Collin's authority to rule the community comes from his superior virtue. His right to authority is described in the following way:

In short, *Collin* put one in Mind of the first Acquisition of patriarchal Power; such Virtues, such persuasive Faculties, such Superiority of Understanding, first gave Rise to an extensive Government, and taught even the selfish to obey. But he in Youth, acquired the authority, which the first Rulers gained only with the Assistance of their venerable Age, which sometimes imposes on the Imagination, and obtains its Power from Prejudice. When Wisdom appears without a reverend Aspect, and hoary Head, it is supported only by its own Strength, our Opinion is conceived without Error, and Respect is the Gift of the Heart, in which the Fancy has no Share. (I, 165-166)

Scott draws a contrast here between authority gained through ability and automatic authority gained through social position. In concluding this tale, the narrator asserts that she has tried to show the relative importance of individuals in society on the basis of their virtue, to show that:

this Man's Life was more useful than that of great Kings and Conquerors, and that Riches and legal Authority are not necessary to make Men of excellent Use to Society. In *Collin* appeared a Power founded on stronger Laws than those of Government, and in him we see true Dignity not to be aped by Wealth and Titles. (I, 178)

These 'stronger Laws' are based in virtue and are laws that Scott appeals to repeatedly when judging individuals and society. The political connotations of this passage of text are that the common man might be a better leader than a 'gentleman' who is inadequate to the task. This Enlightenment perspective questions and democratises the locus of moral and political authority in society. As the King in *The history of Cornelia* articulated, those with rational virtue have a greater authority than hereditary right.

While the text emphasises exemplary persons' leadership it also asserts citizens' individual responsibilities. Scott's texts assert a power that resides in every individual — that is the agency to do good.

To every Condition in Life is given a Power of doing good; the Peasant in his Cottage, as well as the Prince upon his Throne, has his Share of it; and whoever will exercise his Portion to the utmost, will find it is not confined within a very narrow Compass. A benevolent Mind makes for itself the Power of exercising it; it wins an Authority to the Person who is seen to possess it, which is built on Reason, on Virtue, and on Self-love, and therefore becomes as universal as the Knowledge of that Disposition reaches. (I, 178)
In this statement, we see a fundamental feature of Scott’s view of society. Power does not reside in inherited title or formal institutions of government. For Scott, inequality or equality have little to do with class or wealth. Power, authority and agency come from individual rational virtue and one’s ability and desire to do good. It is this belief that allows Scott to make conventionally unexceptional characters, like Collin, like women, the heroes and heroines of her stories. There is a subversive political message in Scott's insistence on a supreme moral code or law that supersedes the laws of formal government or public popular opinion. In another tale in this collection – ‘The history of Leontius’ – a character distinguishes between ‘"the Laws of Morality" ' and ' "the Laws of the Land" ' showing that formal legal laws are not necessarily the ones that should guide one’s conduct (II, 112). While there are political implications for this ideology, explicitly Scott is not concerned with conventional political issues, such as class inequality or rights to rule, because it is in individual virtue and behaviour that she sees power and wealth residing.

Millar published *A journey through every stage of life* in March of 1754. It was Scott's third publication and the text confronts the reader directly with the feminist and political statements that are substantial but understated elements in Scott’s later and more well-known novels, *Millenium Hall* and *George Ellison*. Positing, for example, the notion that the features required of a 'good wife' might contradict those of a 'good Christian', *A Journey* explores the cultural construction of gender roles. Cross-dressing a female character is one way she does this, and in so doing she shows that women have natural skills to allow them to be financially independent and morally active in society. Moreover, she exhorts women to have the courage to leave unbearable situations, and to reject cultural distortions of Christian virtues, such as meekness which is used to disempower women. In no other novel does Scott so explicitly support unwed mothers, and exhort society to embrace and forgive these women. Not only is her feminist position established in this novel, but so too are her interests in pedagogy, self-conscious and experimental narrative method, moral commerce, in governance and
justice, introduced in forms that she develops in her later texts. And it is in this novel that we start to see the ways that Scott creates space for herself to critique a society that represses women, that is fashionable and corrupt, and that lacks rational moral virtue as a foundation for leadership. Scott struggled to articulate a moral Christian pragmatics to guide interpersonal relations and social organisation at a time when these relations were increasingly guided by financial exchange.
CHAPTER THREE

A DESCRIPTION OF MILLENIUM HALL: A FEMINISED ETHICS FOR THE COMMERCIAL AGE

The laws and customs of 'this Earthly Elysium' are dictated by Reason, and regulated by social Love.

The illustration accompanying the first edition of A description of Millenium Hall shows two gentlemen shaded amongst trees gazing at a stately home. It would appear that by using Anthony Walker's engraving Newbery, the publisher, hoped to capitalise on the curious nature of the community that Scott portrays in her novel. One contemporary commentator offered the following reason for using expensive illustrations: 'I have known many a Body drawn in to read a Book, merely because they have liked the Pictures; if it had not been for this Reason, I can assure those who condemn them, I should have been as glad as they possibly could be, to have had them omitted. That Additional Charge was not at all necessary in a Work that without it has cost dear enough'. Walker's illustration for Millenium Hall would have created an aura of suspense and enticed the reader to discover, like the gentlemen, what secrets Millenium Hall might reveal.

1 A description of Millenium Hall was first published, anonymously, in London by John Newbery, 1762. In 1764 Newbery published a second edition, and third and fourth editions in 1767 and 1778. Peter Wilson re-printed the first and second editions in 1763 and 1764 respectively. From the number of editions and reprints and from contemporary critical reviews it is clear that the novel was well received in England and abroad. In 1768 a German edition appeared, Hamburg: bey Hertels Witwe & Gleditschen, 1768. Subsequent references to the text will be to the Broadview edition, ed. Gary Kelly, Peterborough, Ontario, 1995, and will be parenthetical in the body of the text.


3 See Appendix B for a copy of this illustration.

The novel itself creates this sense of expectation. The reader, like the gentlemen in the illustration, visits and gazes upon the Hall. The fact that the illustration depicts the two men standing in shadow, in relief, while the mansion is fully lit, highlights that it is the focus of attention and that the men are onlookers or prospective intruders. The narrative echoes this visual image. The novel opens, with the narrator, George Ellison, and his young companion Lamont, stumbling upon the community of women and, like its other inhabitants, finding relief from their immediate difficulties – in their case, a broken carriage, and relief, also, from their curiosity. Ellison describes this curiosity as 'one of those insatiable passions that grow by gratification' and it is this passion that prompts them to proceed (58). Felicity Nussbaum notes that it is this curiosity that 'motivates the narrative'.\(^5\) The isolated community of women provides accommodation for the gentlemen, but it also provides a focus of interest for these two men who are conducting a mini 'grand tour' of England. Rosalind Delmar has noted the long tradition of 'men in the nunnery' jibes, commenting that 'The ladies' college has also had long currency as a location of erotic fantasy, a place in which the temptation of forbidden fruit mingles with the pleasures of woman-administered discipline'.\(^6\) While such masculine erotic dimensions are certainly not explicit in Scott's novel, it might well have been an implicit message in Newbery's choice of Walker's engraving. Felicity Nussbaum suggests that, more likely, it represents a 'curious colonizing desire' rather than a sexual gaze.\(^7\)

*Millenium Hall* is the story of a group of women who reject the patriarchal society that treated them poorly and create an alternative community that provides both a haven for them and philanthropic assistance for the local poor, for indigent gentlewomen, social outcasts, and practical education for poor girls. The male visitors observe the community, but learn most about it from the stories that are told about its inhabitants. *Millenium Hall* combines Ellison's description and commentary about the community

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\(^5\) *Torrid zones*, 150.


\(^7\) *Torrid zones*, 151.
with the dramatic life-stories of the six Millenium ladies.\textsuperscript{8} The episodic accretion of individual women's stories illustrates the ideology underpinning the community – both in the articulation of how society fails to provide, or sometimes exploits, women and its weaker members, and how the Hall redresses these inadequacies and inequalities. The illustration belies the fact that the men's experiences of the Hall are mediated by their hosts who reveal it to them. The reader's experience, in turn, is doubly mediated as she receives information about the Hall, in addition to the narrator's own impressions.

Johanna Smith has noted the ironic structure of the novel, whereby the enclosed community is displayed.\textsuperscript{9} It is significant that Scott chose a successful mercantile man to authorise and publicise this community of women who retired to escape the male-dominated, exploitative society. As I will discuss shortly, this strategy gives a contemporary economic framework to a novel which claims to be a work written to inculcate morals.

\textit{Millenium Hall} is Scott's third novel and it builds significantly on her previous two novels in its experimentation with narrative genres and with its consolidating ideology of moral commerce. As I will detail shortly, most secondary commentary on this novel has considered it in isolation from Scott's other works. \textit{Millenium Hall} has been linked with \textit{George Ellison}, seeing the latter novel as a male variation on the female philanthropy established in the earlier novel.\textsuperscript{10} This chapter considers Scott's best-known novel in the context of her other works to show that while in some ways it is an idealistic or utopian novel, it is also fundamentally engaged with critiquing contemporary society and the place of women in that society. Indeed, in articulating her ideology of moral commerce this novel builds on her previous works. In \textit{Millenium Hall} she articulates one option – albeit an unattainable option for most women – for

\textsuperscript{8} The six Millenium ladies are the original founders who include: Miss Mancel, Mrs Morgan, Lady Mary Jones, Mrs Selvyn, Mrs Trentham and Mrs Maynard.


\textsuperscript{10} Margaret Anne Doody is an exception. She discusses Scott's heroines working to support themselves [Cornelia and Leonora] and comments on the radical sense in which Scott places women in powerful philanthropic positions, and she relates \textit{Millenium Hall} \textit{to} \textit{The history of Cornelia in Frances Burney: the life in the works}, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988, 350, 127. In an unpublished dissertation, Edith Sedgwick Larson included one chapter on Sarah Scott in which she discussed \textit{George Ellison} and \textit{A joumey through every stage of life}, as well as \textit{Millenium Hall} and some of her letters: \textit{Early eighteenth-century English women writers}. 
women who wish to lead financially independent and socially productive lives, a style of life that Scott commends in her earlier novels.

This chapter is divided into a number of sections: first, because the novel has often been viewed in isolation, the discussion considers some of its narrative and cultural contexts; second, it considers *Millenium Hall* as another of Scott's experiments with genre – this time the utopian genre as a didactic mode; third, this discussion queries the usefulness of the term 'utopian' for analysing the novel. Fourth, the narrator of the novel is George Ellison, a retired merchant and plantation owner, so the discussion considers the importance of using a male representative of the commercial world as a mouthpiece for the women's community. Because this is a benevolent community, section five discusses Scott's view of charity in the context of contemporary discourses of charity, philanthropy and the poor. Included in this section is a discussion of the extent to which she critiqued or endorsed contemporary social organisation and roles for women, concentrating particularly on her attitude to marriage as indicated in this novel.

i. Cultural and narrative contexts for *Millenium Hall*

In her first two novels Scott experimented with and remade the romance and the oriental tale to critique contemporary society and assert a moral commercial role for women. She turned these genres to her morally and politically didactic purposes, just as she does with the utopian genre in *Millenium Hall*. Again, in this novel, she spurns the fanciful characteristics of the genre, just as she had done with the romance and the oriental tale, opting not to distance the reader from the narrative, but instead to firmly establish the contemporaneity of the novel's characters, issues and concerns. Not for Scott the utopian world isolated in time and space; the Millenium community is firmly established in Cornwall, in the south of England, in contemporary times. While its conditions might seem ideal to the oppressed and restricted woman, there is no mistaking that these conditions are in response to real-life circumstances.
Although often perceived as fanciful, abstract visions, utopian narratives have a rhetorical imperative aimed at improving society that situates them in a similar ideological space to the more concrete commentaries and plans that propose legislative reform or philanthropic programmes. Indeed, two commentators have gone so far as to suggest that while utopias and political theory have similar aims, it is utopia that is further advanced because it offers a wholistic view of society. These genres, as well as morally didactic and exemplary narratives – whether novel, essay, conduct book or guide – like the utopia posit the subjunctive ideal; that is, they suggest that in a perfect world people would act like this, or governments would be organised like this, and so on. Both the utopia and the morally didactive narrative have a rhetorical imperative that urges the reader to consider change for the better. What I am suggesting here is that it is not sufficient to discuss *Millenium Hall* as a narrative utopia without considering the cultural and narrative contexts which also exhibited the utopian imperative, and the points of convergence with other genres of the period that are conventionally seen as more practical. The following section considers these narrative and cultural contexts and forerunners.

One cultural context for *Millenium Hall* is the resounding discourses that debated women's education, women's public roles, and women's seclusion. In her novel, Scott advocates educational opportunities for women in a safe environment. While in the novel's depiction of an ideal it is utopian, it joins a host of other writing by early women writers who expressed similar ideas in print, including Bathsua Makin, Mary Astell, Clara Reeve, and after Scott, Mary Wollstonecraft and Catharine Macaulay. Bathsua Makin ran a progressive school for girls and she wrote a blueprint for educating gentlewomen – *An essay to revive the antient education of gentlewomen, in religion, manners, arts & tongues. With an answer to the objections against this way of education*, 1673. In 1694, Mary Astell published *A serious proposal to the ladies in*...

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12 While I group these writers because they shared this interest in exploring new options for women, it is also significant to acknowledge that they are not a homogenous group, for example, Mary Astell was a high-church Tory, Catharine Macaulay a republican.
which she proposed the establishment of women's colleges for middle- and upper-class
gentlewomen. Like Scott, Astell envisaged these establishments as providing education,
refuges or accommodation for gentlewomen. Astell's dual aims of providing
education in a safe female setting and a haven for gentlewomen are very similar to
Scott's aims in *Millenium Hall*. Astell's description of the proposed activities of the
women could well be a description of women's lives at Millenium Hall: as well as the
women spending their time in religious devotions,

> the rest shall be employ'd in innocent, charitable, and useful Business; either in
> study in learning themselves or instructing others... or else in spiritual and
corporal Works of Mercy, relieving the Poor, healing the Sick, mingling Charity
to the Soul with that they express to the Body, instructing the Ignorant,
counselling the Doubtful, comforting the Afflicted, and correcting those that err
and do amiss.15

Clearly, Mary Astell and her writing were well enough known that she could be
considered an influence on Scott. Indeed, an extract from Astell's *Reflections upon
marriage* shows two potential intertextual references for the later novel: Astell writes of
'those halcyon, or, if you will, *Millenium* days, in which the wolf and the lamb shall
feed together, and a tyrannous domination, which nature never meant, shall no longer
render useless, if not hurtful, the industry and understandings of half mankind!'.16
Although both 'millenium' and the religious reference to the co-existing wolf and lamb
were part of religious parlance, Scott relates both in her novel with Ellison evoking the
Christian millenium when he states: 'One could scarcely forbear thinking those happy
times were come, when "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb" ' (69). Prominent male
writers of the early eighteenth century were familiar with and quoted Astell's famous
Proposal. Defoe refers to Astell's work in his *Essay on projects*, Richardson does so in
*Sir Charles Grandison* and it has been suggested that Steele used more than one
hundred pages of Astell's work, without acknowledgement, in *The ladies library*.17 It is
noteworthy that Astell had raised sufficient funds to establish her women's college, but
Bishop Burnet stepped in and halted the project because, to him, it was too much like a

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14 Part II was published in 1697.
15 The first English feminist, 156.
16 Some reflections upon marriage, 4th ed. 1730.
17 See Ruth Perry's entry on Mary Astell in A dictionary of British and American women writers 1660-
Catholic nunnery. The fact that, in practice, Astell was ultimately unable to establish her community, shows that, in one sense, she too was writing about a utopia – it was the ideal and non-existent place. But the fact that she was almost successful also shows how narrow is the space between utopia and reality.

Although Mary Astell's Proposal is now the most well known antecedent of female communal education, there were other seventeenth-century Britons advocating women's education in a college-type setting. Bridget Hill discusses a number of these early advocates. Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, for instance, wrote the play, The female academy, and in The convent of pleasure, her female heroine establishes a convent for unmarried gentlewomen. Even before this, Lady Lettice, Viscountess Falkland, confessed a desire to establish a 'Protestant nunnery' at her home in Oxfordshire after her husband died. It would have been for young gentlewomen and widows. Edward Chamberlayne published An academy or college: wherein young ladies and gentlewomen... be duly instructed in the true Protestant religion in which he proposed more suitable institutions for educating daughters of the gentry than were currently available. Such an academy would also house unmarried or widowed women; it would be: 'for sober, pious, elder Virgins and Widdows, who desire to separate themselves from the vanities of the World, and yet employ their Talents to the benefit of the Publick'. Although this proposal shares many features with Scott's female community, its most significant similarity is in Chamberlayne's desire for the college to provide a situation in which 'Persons of Honour and Worth may at all times make choice of Vertuous Wives'. Later, this chapter will discuss the importance of providing 'vertuous wives' in Scott's novel.

18 For further discussion of Astell's proposed community and its relation to notions of protestant religious community, see Bridget Hill's The idea of a protestant nunnery, Past and present, 117, November 1987, 106-130. See also Ruth Perry The celebrated Mary Astell: an early English feminist, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1986.
19 'The idea of a protestant nunnery'.
20 Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, Plays, London, 1662.
21 Her biographer discusses the Viscountess's proposal further: John Duncon Lady Lettice, Viscountess Falkland, ed. and intro., London: M. F. Howard, 1908.
22 Edward Chamberlayne An academy or college: wherein young ladies and gentlewomen... be duly instructed in the true protestant religion, London, 1671, 4-5.
As well as non-fictional proposals for women's 'protestant nunneries' there were a number of novels which discussed or centred on such communities. Scott's friend, Sarah Fielding, published *The history of the Countess of Dellwyn* in 1759 in which she depicts a house established as a refuge for indigent gentlewomen. Bridget Hill draws attention to Thomas Amory whose mid-century novels dwelt on the notion of 'female republics', where gentlewomen lived a quiet, religious (Unitarian), but not ascetic life, away from the noise of the world. These novels all precede Scott's publication, and their similarity of ideas shows how attractive was the idea of a community for gentlewomen that would provide not only educational opportunities, but also the freedom from men's persecutions to allow them to explore a range of conduct and roles that were denied them in society. *Millenium Hall* is differentiated from these fictional and non-fictional models in that it offered the most detailed picture of how such a community might operate while dramatising individual women's lives. It also made integral to the community its economic sustainability, and the fact that while it immediately offered accommodation for gentlewomen, its benefits extended to a range of groups.

That Scott's contemporaries saw her novel as a convincing and practical blueprint is evidenced in the imitation of the community. Elizabeth Inchbald's friend, Miss Davis, operated a 'Millenium House' which catered for unmarried women and widows. The ladies of Llanghollen, Lady Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby, viewed *Millenium Hall* as a *vade mecum* for women's retirement. And Elizabeth Smith wrote fondly about and desired a 'Millenium Hall scheme'. Margaret Anne Doody is one recent scholar who has viewed Scott's novel in the context of other eighteenth-century novels and, as a result, concentrates on it not as a utopia, but emphasises that in depicting women performing extensive charitable works it is quite a radical novel. Later in the

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25 Elizabeth Mavor, biographer of the ladies of Llanghollen, notes that they held this view towards Scott's novel: *The ladies of Llanghollen*, 83. Bridget Hill's article drew my attention to Miss Davis's enterprise and the reference to Elizabeth Smith, 124.
chapter, the discussion considers the gendering of public charitable activities in the eighteenth century.

In France there had been a successful and practical application of the ideas for women's conventual education that were advocated in print. Madame de Maintenon founded Saint Cyr, the famous and influential school for daughters of French gentility. Scott was familiar with de Maintenon, having read her memoirs; however in her letters Scott shows much ambivalence remarking both on her 'bigotry' and 'treachery' and 'her good works'. Elizabeth Montagu was also reading de Maintenon's Memoirs and in 1757, Charlotte Lennox translated Memoirs for the history of Madame de Maintenon, thus making the French woman's achievements well known in England. Madame de Maintenon was also the granddaughter of Theodore Agrippa d'Aubigne, the subject of one of Scott's biographical histories. Although in that biography Scott is critical of Madame de Maintenon, primarily for her Catholicism, the two women's ideas on female education were very similar.

Madame de Maintenon's philanthropic work in establishing a school for indigent girls of the upper levels of society is a substantial comparison for Scott's fictional school for girls. Predominantly, the French school catered for impoverished daughters of minor aristocracy and this remained its clientele despite its increasing fame and the demand for admittance by the daughters of the wealthy. Having been

27 For details of education at Saint Cyr in particular and its influence on French education in general see H. C. Barnard's Madame de Maintenon and Saint-Cyr, London: A. & C. Black, 1934. Two other studies of Madame de Maintenon include: Maud Cruttwell's Madame de Maintenon, London: J. M. Dent, 1930; and Charlotte Haldane's Madame de Maintenon: Uncrowned Queen of France, London: Constable, 1970. Madame de Maintenon has been the subject of numerous biographies and studies. Maud Cruttwell eulogises Madame de Maintenon: 'No personage of her importance in history has been so maligned, so misunderstood, so misrepresented. She, stigmatized as cruel, capricious, vindictive, fatal to France, was in reality a paragon of honesty, loyalty and magnanimity' (Crutwell, p. xvii). Other commentators have more mixed views, with Charlotte Haldane presenting her as both benevolent and vain. Unlike King Louis XIV's previous mistresses, who had collectively spent millions on luxuries, his second wife scrimped on her own needs to establish the school of Saint Cyr in 1680 and to continue to fund it as much as she was able until her retirement there after Louis' death (Haldane, 173).
28 MO 5259, 22 August, 1756, and MO 5264, 2 September, 1756.
29 Elizabeth mentions that she is reading the Memoirs in a letter to Gilbert West; Emily Climenson, II, 19.
30 Theodore Agrippa d'Aubigne, 1762, vii-viii.
an impoverished daughter of a gentleman, de Maintenon understood, as it seems did Sarah Scott, the difficulties facing poor women of the genteel classes. Education was the priority even though Saint Cyr was run on strict religious principles. Although the school was established in 1680 under the auspices of an Ursuline convent, its emphasis was on practical, rather than religious, education for girls. In acknowledging and emphasising the importance of practical skills for young women, de Maintenon's pedagogy is similar to Scott's. She was steadfastly committed to her pedagogical ideology; she was known to have replaced the Ursuline nun who oversaw Saint Cyr for trying to give too much emphasis to religious instruction at the expense of the practical skills and education that the founder regarded as so crucial for young women. This was a secular education built on a conventual model. The girls learnt reading and writing, religion, deportment, dancing, weaving and spinning, and music. Madame de Maintenon's enthusiasm for the school inspired the King, who paid a dowry of 3 000 livres to each girl who completed her education and married. As I will discuss later in the chapter, similar pecuniary encouragement and reward for marriage are given to the Millenium girls.

Another similarity in Scott's and de Maintenon's visions is that the school is seen as a basis for reforming society at large. The founder of Saint Cyr expected that one of the benefits of the school would be that once the girls were educated then they could spread the benefit of that education by influencing the wider community. Her own phrase was to 'multiply' the education given at Saint Cyr.31 This is very much Scott's model in Millenium Hall and George Ellison where those educated in 'moral commerce' become what I call a 'virtuous diaspora' spreading the word throughout the community. Saint Cyr became a model for female education in France right up to and throughout the eighteenth century. A number of schools were established using Madame de Maintenon's model and her advice to her imitators further reveals her ideology. Just as in Scott's vision, Madame de Maintenon believed that girls should be educated according to their class. Her advice to a woman establishing a

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31 For a further discussion of this see Barnard, Madame de Maintenon, 197.
similar school in Bisy was: 'Bring up your bourgeoises as bourgeoises. . . . Tell them that the peasant should not play the bourgeois, nor the bourgeois the gentleman'.32

This context of other seventeenth- and eighteenth-century writers who have expounded similar ideas is important for Scott’s novel. She was not alone in advocating education and occupations other than marriage for upper-class women, and in acknowledging that such a way of life would have to occur in some way separate from the masculinist society, and in a religious setting. That these men and women proposed educational advancement for women of a select social level, and accepted the existing socio-economic hierarchies, makes clear that the issues of gender, class and education need to be discussed together.33 I am also suggesting by these comparisons, that while Millenium Hall has been categorised by twentieth-century scholars as a utopia, for contemporaries it would have been seen as just one of many models proposed for communal women's education. This discussion insists that it is important to see Scott’s novel in this way so as to acknowledge its practical engagement with contemporary debates about women's place in eighteenth-century society.

Another significant cultural context for Scott’s novel is the explicitly morally didactic literature that proliferated during this time. Didactic narrative models in the eighteenth century have been well explored by scholars and I have already discussed in the Introduction how conduct books and guides were powerful discourses advocating models of conduct for individuals and communities.34 It is important to emphasise the

32 As quoted by Barnard, Madame de Maintenon, 193. There is space here only to raise these issues rather than offer a detailed analysis. It might be fruitful, at some later stage, to explore the possible relationships and influences of Saint Cyr on Mary Astell’s proposals for women’s education. Astell, like Scott, appeared to have shared similar pedagogical interests with Madame de Maintenon, however Bridget Hill observes that Mary Astell made no reference to Madame de Maintenon, 1986, 51.
33 Johanna Smith’s analysis of Millenium Hall examines complex issues of class and gender as they inform Scott’s text and ideology ‘Philanthropic community in Millenium Hall and the York Ladies Committee’, 266-282. Indeed, Smith criticises commentators such as Haggerty and Lanser for occluding class relations while concentrating on feminist readings (266).
vast range of forms covered by terms such as 'conduct books' and didactic literature to show that novels like *Millenium Hall* occupied similar cultural spaces to these other didactic genres. Ros Ballaster, for example, has identified the didactic dimensions of early women's amatory fiction, such as the works of Jane Barker and Penelope Aubin, to show how they revived moral vigour in feminocentric representations of love. So categories like 'conduct' or 'didactic' literature could include works as ideologically and formally diverse as: the Marquis of Halifax' *The lady's new-year's gift: or, advice to a daughter* (1688), Jonas Hanway's *Advice from Farmer Trueman to his daughter, Mary upon her going into service* (1805), Samuel Richardson's *Familiar letters on important occasions* (1741), *The Spectator*, and Hannah More's *Cheap repository tracts* (1795). And the audiences to which such literature were addressed were as diverse as the works themselves, ranging from the servant class to the aspiring gentleman.

As mentioned earlier, there is a utopian dimension to such didactic literature. J. Paul Hunter has also noted this utopian impulse underlying didactic literature when he comments:

> Implicit in the idea of didacticism is a notion that reach will always exceed grasp, that all the words in the world will never bring human performance into perfect line with ethical aspirations, and a sense of failure, fragmentation, or incompleteness seems built into each aspiring work.

This fragmentation, Hunter continues, needs a framing structure, such as allegory, spiritual autobiography or novel in order for words to 'become flesh in the sense that they are given a chance to work out their destiny in some defined – and limited – set of human circumstances. The working and re-working of the utopian genre gives Scott just such a frame in which to individuate and exemplify her morally didactic and politically subversive ideas.

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35 *Seductive forms*, 32.
36 *Before novels*, 300.
The foregoing section has suggested that while Scott's *Millenium Hall* has been labelled a narrative utopia by recent critics, it is important to consider that it was not necessarily viewed as utopian by her contemporaries. It might just as easily have been grouped differently, say in comparison with other morally didactic models. Indeed, in 1873, F. S. A. Doran labelled it as a novel whose main strength lay in the 'romantic biographies' of the Hall's 'wealthy and love-lorn ladies'. As long ago as 1969, Richetti criticised Ian Watt's assumption that the rise of the novel could be described as the tendency towards realism that paralleled the rise of the middle class: 'What is involved is nothing less', says Richetti, 'than a gratuitous imposition of the social and philosophical norms (summed up in such terms as bourgeois democracy and pragmatism) and the narrative effects (summed up in the term realism) we value most upon a body of writing which was at least partly unaware of, if not hostile to, them'. Clara Reeve in her critical work *Progress of romance* refers to Scott's novel as a 'moral work' rather than as a utopia. Recent critics have viewed it as utopian because of the idealistic model of beneficence and social responsibility it depicts, and because of the relative isolation of the community. The relatively recent interest in the genre of utopia as a subversive, feminist medium has also provided an avenue by which scholars can examine and articulate the radical feminism of early modern texts that might not have been classified as utopian by their readers. Ros Ballaster has taken to task some types of feminist criticism of the eighteenth-century novel, suggesting that it 'has been inclined to interpret women's choices to write within a particular genre or form as motivated solely by the attempt to escape patriarchal oppression as though the history of women's writing was somehow exempt from the pressures of generic convention within which male writers operate'. While in this way the utopian classification can

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40 Margaret Ezell has considered the effects of underlying assumptions about genre and women's lives on the way we read early modern women's texts, *Writing women's literary history*, Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993, especially the introduction and chapter 1.
41 *Seductive forms*, 21.
be useful, the wider implications of this utopian label need to be interrogated; the following discussion suggests that much analysis of Scott's text has concentrated on this feature, sometimes at the expense of the text's other qualities.

A number of commentators have discussed *Millenium Hall* as an eighteenth-century feminist utopia. Barbara Brandon Schnorrrenberg was one of the first commentators in the new wave of interest in Scott to discuss *Millenium Hall* and she did so in a brief survey-type article, grouping it with Mary Astell's *A serious proposal* (1694) and Clara Reeve's *Plans of education* (1792) and labelling them female utopias. In that the women of Millenium Hall aim to establish a community that redresses the deficiencies of the outside community, and in the sense that they attain an unconventional degree of autonomy and social responsibility, then the Hall is a utopian enterprise. But, as Anne Mellor has suggested, 'a gender-free society has never existed historically, feminist thinking that posits the equality of the sexes is inherently utopian'.

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44 'On feminist utopias', 241.
The title of Scott's novel provides both a Christian and utopian framework. The title invokes a Millenarian tradition whereby a time of political, social and spiritual perfection is anticipated. The community can be viewed this way because it is a version of an improved society that might replace the flawed reality of the present world. However, Millenarianism also suggests the destruction of the flawed present which precedes the perfect world, and Scott's community is firmly rooted in contemporary social structures, such as social hierarchies and established religion. As J. C. Davis suggests, early modern utopias were often built on 'the formalities and formalizing aspirations of their own social milieux'. Writers create in a fictional context social hierarchies, power structures, economic and political and aesthetic orders in their visions of an ideal state. By delineating and exemplifying their visions these authors reveal the far reaching implications of ordering society. And in doing so they often make explicit the relationships between abstract ideology and its concrete manifestations in society.

It can be useful to categorise Millenium Hall as a utopian narrative, because such classification highlights that in depicting the community Scott criticises society and proposes methods of improvement that have ideological implications for concepts of society and the individual.

Classifying a text by genre influences the way that we conceptualise that work, so there are implications in labelling Millenium Hall a utopian novel. Why would Scott choose utopian narrative as a vehicle while another author might choose, say, a political pamphlet? Issues of intention, though unfashionable and sometimes misleading, need to be raised if not concluded; issues of readership, of the author's status in public life,

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45 See Richard Popkin's edited collection of essays, Millenarianism and messianism in English literature and thought 1650-1800, Clark Library lectures 1981-82, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988. One editor of Elizabeth Montagu's letters, F. S. A. Doran, commented of Millenium Hall that, because of its name, one would 'suppose that there is a sort of millennium peace and happiness achieved there, such as will be found on earth generally only in the millennium period. The wealthy and love-lorn ladies of the hall, however, have only founded a female school and society in advance of contemporary ideas, but having nothing wonderful, though now and then something eccentric, if weighed by our present standards'. Doran admired the novel as a romance: 'The real interest of the volume lies in the romantic biographies, and these are narrated with lady-like grace, elegance, tenderness, and, occasionally, tedious prolixity'. A lady of the last century, 105-106.


47 For a discussion of utopia and the explicit relations between ideology and narrative form see Chris Ferns, 'Dreams of freedom'.
are also issues which need to be considered. For example, did the exclusion of women from public, political arenas force them to find alternative vehicles (other than political essays or legal commentary) for their ideological expression? The answer is of course a resounding yes. Harriet Guest, for instance, has argued that in one sense the Gothic genre can be seen as a politically liberating mode for women writers of the late eighteenth century.\footnote{Harriet Guest 'The wanton muse: politics and gender in gothic theory after 1760' in Stephen Copley and John Whale eds, \textit{Beyond Romanticism}, 118-139.} Masking genres make subversive ideas palatable because they deliberately create paradoxical interpretations. Elements of \textit{Millenium Hall} are subversive indeed: the idea that a group of women living without men are happier and more efficient than living with men, would have been a confronting proposal.

But even if the utopian genre can be viewed in this way, that is, as a mode of disguising subversive opinions, applying the utopian label to \textit{Millenium Hall} can impose some limitations on the text. Because utopia is the clichéd 'no place', labelling Scott's novel 'utopian' can distract attention from the complex interrelations of the text with the society in which it was produced by suggesting that it is escapist. As Michael McKeon has commented, the imaginary voyage utopia used and depended on geographical displacement to address ideological displacement of changing social structures. This metaphorical isolation brings out the contrast between the virtuous and naive inhabitants of the marginal community and the corrupt culture of the central civilized society.\footnote{The origins of the English novel, 248-255.} Scott, too, separates the Millenium community, not to escape but to critique the corrupt culture – in this case London. She chooses a setting not too far removed from this corruption to show that it is possible to be morally and economically exemplary \textit{within} the culture which has spawned corruption. One does not have to completely escape from the corrupt culture to oppose it. This is precisely her point, that given the right circumstances, one can live a moral commercial life instead of a corrupt life in the increasingly commercial age.
I have suggested that in some respects it is useful to classify Scott's novel as a utopian novel, but this classification can also cut off potentially fruitful avenues of critical enquiry by seeing the novel as an abstraction or escape from, rather than an engagement with, the issues confronting women like Scott. Far from representing an escape from reality, utopian writing often indicates a positive critique of existing society and a desire for change. Although Eve Walsh Stoddard calls *Millenium Hall* a utopia, she is more aware of the implications of this generic classification than are some other critics who use this label.\(^{50}\) She acknowledges that Scott's novel is more complex than a sentimentalised representation of an ideal or fantastical community of women. The narrator in the novel, in one sense, promotes this sense of the community as being too good to be true when he labels it 'Millenium Hall'; 'so I shall call it,' he says, as it is 'an assured asylum against every evil' (58). 'Asylum' can also be seen as retreat or escape from rather than an active engagement with contemporary socio-political debates. Significantly, it is a man who places this construction on the female comunity. As Stoddard states, 'Even sympathetic critics . . . have dismissed Scott's political vision as pious, charitable, and sentimental, that is, not relevant to the real world of government, social theory, and economics'.\(^{51}\) In a recent review of an anthology of British utopias, Terry Eagleton dismisses *Millenium Hall* as 'an anodyne English pastoral in which female midgets play the harpsichord and tend the shrubberies', showing how in just a few words – first, by labelling it a utopia, and second by eliding the politics into trivial play-time activities – he dismisses Scott's work from serious critical engagement.\(^{52}\)

Narrative utopias can be classified as 'abstract' or 'concrete' to differentiate between those that are fantastic and speculative, and those that are politically focussed or pragmatic. If it is classified as the abstract utopian 'no place', the novel could be divorced from its context and thus not viewed as a narrative response to and product of the material conditions in which it was written. Clearly then, an important

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\(^{50}\) Eve Walsh Stoddard 'The politics of sentiment', 304.

\(^{51}\) Stoddard 'The politics of sentiment', 797.

\(^{52}\) 'Pretty much like ourselves', *London review of books*, 4 September 1997, 6-7; review of Gregory Claeys, ed., *Modern British utopias 1700-1850*, 8 vols, Pickering and Chatto, 1997. Of course, Terry Eagleton has a marxist agenda that prompts him to dismiss the political dimensions of utopian writing by describing them as 'the most ephemeral of literary forms' and as 'provincial and prosaic' 'fantasy'(7).
interpretation of utopia as a genre is that it can be viewed as politically marginalised and disempowering. Novels that are characterised as utopian can be viewed as fantasy rather than as engaged political or social commentary. It can undermine their 'truth' value. Herbert Marcuse has discussed this thorny issue with regard to the role of the 'imaginary' in utopian writing. He criticises Norman Brown's utopian vision because of its imaginary context. Marcuse comments: 'The roots of repression are and remain real roots: consequently, their eradication remains a real and rational job. What is to be abolished is not the reality principle; not everything, but such particular things as business, politics, exploitation, poverty'.

On the other hand, the utopian classification can be beneficial precisely because it can mask political commentary as 'simply entertainment'. The expanding critical work on feminism and utopian narrative, which I have already noted, has recognised the liberatory dimension of the genre, with Toril Moi, for example, regarding utopian thought as 'political inspiration'.

As well as recent commentators viewing *Millenium Hall* as a utopian narrative, many have also seen it as a 'counter-heterosexual' narrative, or lesbian narrative. Joseph Boone suggests that *Millenium Hall* is a 'counter-heterosexual' narrative where 'chapter upon chapter becomes an extended illustration of the same [lesbian] utopian precept'. George Haggerty makes claims for the novel as a 'lesbian narrative' because 'it insists on intimate relations between women as an alternative to the male-centred experience of marriage'. Susan Sniader Lanser also links lesbianism and utopia to discuss Scott's novel.

Linda Dunne views *Millenium Hall* as a utopian counter-heterosexual novel that provides an alternative to the traditional marriage plot of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novel, but her view is more culturally specific than Haggerty's.

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56 Linda Dunne 'Mothers and monsters in Sarah Robinson Scott's *Millenium Hall*. 

Dunne highlights the point that between Miss Melvyn and Miss Mancel, for example, Scott presents an intense intimacy that could be seen as romantic. Importantly, she notes that fundamentally the women come together because of the dangers and inadequacies of the patriarchal society, not primarily because they seek out lesbian relationships.

Those commentators who classify *Millenium Hall* as a lesbian text usually fail to take account of the fact that the community and the characters explicitly advocate marriage and heterosexual relationships even though the founding women are widowed or single. The discussion takes up this issue in detail later. Moreover, some of the women explicitly discuss their romantic feelings for men: Louisa Mancel falls in love with Sir Edward Lambton and, when he dies before they can marry, she vows never to marry any other man (156); Mrs Trentham has a long-standing love for Mr Alworth. Of course, as commentators such as Emma Donoghue would stress, advocating marriage and having relationships with men were overt screening devices for lesbian texts in the eighteenth century, but my point is that while *Millenium Hall* might well have provided opportunities for same-sex relations between upper-class women, one cannot ignore that promotion of marriage as a fundamental commercial and moral duty of the lower and middling classes is an insistent feature of Scott's community.\(^{57}\) The extent to which *Millenium Hall* is not anti-masculinist can be seen when comparing it with one of Scott's early contemporaries. In *New Atalantis*, Delarivier Manley creates an all female Cabal where the women's romantic friendship is exclusive of men: 'they momentarily exclude the *Men*, fortify themselves in the Precepts of *Virtue* and *Chastity* against all their detestable undermining Arts, arraign without Pity or Compassion those who have been so unfortunate as to fall into their *Snare* (i, 578-579). This Cabal is far more an explicit separatist female community than is Scott's.

Two beautiful Ladies join'd in an Excess of *Amity* (no word is tender enough to express their new Delight) innocently embrace! for how can they be guilty? They vow eternal *Tenderness*, they exclude the *Men*, and condition that they will always do. What irregularity can there be in this? 'Tis true, some things may be

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\(^{57}\) Emma Donoghue *Passions between women.*
strain'd a little too far, and that causes Reflections to be cast upon the Rest. (i. 576)\textsuperscript{58}

Of course, Manley is writing in the tradition of the scandal novel, and in the fifty year time lapse between Manley's and Scott's novels there was an increasingly moral and less erotic representation of women's sexuality by women writers. But what this shows is that Scott did have forebears and models of representing woman-to-woman sexuality. She chose not to represent the women of Millenium Hall in this way because it is not a separatist community. It advocates and encourages marriage.

One must be wary, too, of imposing anachronistically twentieth-century sexual categories on an eighteenth-century situation.\textsuperscript{59} Lillian Faderman's important book on romantic friendship highlights the difficulty of categorising 'same sex love'.\textsuperscript{60} While the Millenium ladies find security and intimate – possibly romantic – female friendships in the isolated community, they actively encourage the young girls educated in the Hall to pursue a heterosexual life outside the community. The young women are educated and skilled to become good wives or, if they do not marry, to be financially independent and thus not a burden on society. While women are given skills to support themselves if necessary, there is no exhortation for women to choose a single life, or a lesbian life, in preference to a married one. The fact of these women coming together in a philanthropic community is not enough evidence to suggest that they undermine the institution of marriage as a whole in society. As I will discuss later in the chapter, marriage is a fundamental structure in the Millenium Hall philanthropic vision.

Marriage is an important strategy by which the Hall integrates with the surrounding communities, a feature which further separates this text from other utopias. A defining feature of the conventional utopia is that it is isolated and contained; consider, for example, Thomas More's \textit{Utopia} (1516), Francis Bacon's island of Bensalem in \textit{The
new Atlantis (1627), the female Sub-ondines in Robert-Martin Lesuire's *Le philosophe parvenu* (1787), and Samuel Butler's *Erewhon* (1872). While Scott's community has its own system of organisation, it is not isolated. Indeed, it is crucial to the success of the community's goals that there is constant interrelation with neighbouring communities. The success of the matrimonial matches depends on the Hall producing virtuous wives for the young men who come to the community in search of a wife. The couple then leaves the community and spreads like a virtuous diaspora throughout the rest of society. The Hall is also involved with the local economy with the women managing a carpet factory in the village near the Hall. Millenium Hall might appear like a cloistered community to Ellison and Lamont, but that is because they are used to a metropolitan community that operates on a national and international level rather than on the rural and relatively localised scale of Millenium Hall. Like the young men who procure wives, the two older visitors eventually leave and take with them seeds of virtue and benevolence that take root in the wider community.

Communities and ideologies, such as that depicted by Scott, can never truly be separate from society (except, perhaps, in a utopian science fiction genre that is displaced geographically and temporally), for it is the society which is the impetus for the community in the first place; it is the ideological 'other' that is displaced, reacted against and rejected. Ideologically, the utopian society coexists with the existing society. Moreover, the Millenium community is firmly grounded in the material conditions of the surrounding society. There is a reciprocal dynamic relationship. The Hall is clearly a product of or at least a reaction to the society 'outside'. The charitable arm of Millenium Hall extends into the community, sometimes bringing in new members, sometimes sending former inhabitants into the society, spreading the words and deeds of the Millenium philosophy. Millenium Hall receives and in turn influences that world through sending out 'converted' members or disciples. The community does not cut itself off from the competing visions of the outside social context. Indeed, it even tailors its operations at least in part to suit the needs and

demands of this context. This is, perhaps, my main reservation about labelling *Millenium Hall* as utopian. While the ladies object to some social structures of the wider society, it actually tailors the community's own practices to suit or interrelate with that society.

Whether one finds the utopian label useful or not, it is crucial to see Scott's novel, not as a presentation of an idealistic rural community, not simply as presenting passive, 'pious virgins' sewing and reading, but to acknowledge the active critique of the material conditions in which this text was produced. Just as the community is interrelated with the surrounding communities, *Millenium Hall* the novel is substantially grounded in a specific historic and cultural location. The description of the fictional community and the depiction of women's individual histories provide complex insights into the mid-eighteenth-century constructions of the female gender, the private and public ramifications of gender, the materialist bases for private individual 'choices', the role of money in reinforcing social relations – especially for women – the construction of virtue as an individual and public discourse, and the philosophy and practice of rational morality. And far from presenting a cloistered group of passive virgins, *Millenium Hall* portrays women actively rejecting patriarchal society to construct a community that better suits their needs and the needs of the surrounding community. The underlying principles of the project of creating this new community provide a commentary on existing social structures, particularly moral and commercial structures. The Hall's actual functioning practicalities clearly indicate the women's ideology of community and gender.

Scott's didacticism in this novel places her in a tradition of writers who view imaginative literature as a vehicle for moral instruction and social critique. The narrator of *Millenium Hall* commends the recipient of his dedication: 'Your constant endeavours have been to inculcate the best principles into youthful minds, the only probable means of mending mankind' (53, emphasis added). In Scott's ideology, moral instruction is seen as the root of change.
Scott's contemporaries saw the novel as a morally instructive work. Clara Reeve acclaimed the moral qualities of *Millenium Hall* in her critical work *Progress of romance* (1785). The characters Sophronia and Euphrasia recommend the novel to Hortensius when claiming that the best novels uphold rather than undermine morality:

* Soph. . . . Pray did not *Millenium Hall* come out about this time?

* Euph. It was the year 1762. . . .

* Soph. Have you nothing more to say of *Millenium Hall* than the date of it?

* Euph. It is a very good little book, and you ought to have made its Eulogium.

* Soph. I had rather hear my favourite's praises from another mouth than my own.

* Euph. Then I will pay it the homage it justly claims. It is calculated to inspire the heart with true benevolence and the love of virtue, it is a very entertaining as well as moral work, and very proper to be put into the hands of young persons.

* Soph. I am glad you think it worthy of a place in your class of eminence, for I am fond of it to a degree.  

This response is based on seeing *Millenium Hall* as a didactic work rather than a utopian one.

When Scott's novel was published, *The Monthly Review* gave a glowing account of the anonymous work.  

"We have perused it with pleasure;" it states, 'and heartily recommend it, as a very entertaining as well as a truly moral and sensible performance'.

In the eyes of the reviewers, at least, Scott's novel satisfied Johnson's criteria for the novel, that it should 'instruct and delight'. The author herself frames the work with this didactic intention; the subtitle states that the work 'May excite in the reader proper sentiments of humanity, and lead the mind to the love of virtue'. The reviewer concludes that the work is 'well calculated' to 'inspire the reader' in this way.

In advocating personal change Sarah Scott shows her belief in the changeability of minds, characters and behaviour. Certainly, the gentlemen visitors are spurred to action by their experiences at Millenium Hall. One of the new merchant class, Ellison's

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64 Samuel Johnson *The Rambler* 4.
initial outward appearance seemed little likely to expose a philanthropist; but the novel suggests that even unlikely persons have innate goodness and can be re-formed into more benevolent members of society. Ellison goes off to imitate their scheme (249) and Lamont announces that 'he now saw what that religion in reality was' (248). As Linda Dunne has noted, the two men were ripe for moral regeneration. Ellison's unhealthy merchant lifestyle had left him weak and disillusioned; Lamont's carefree lifestyle had been empty and aimless. This notion of change through individual virtue is integral to the author's political ideology. She aimed to educate young people in virtuous principles, and to encourage the newly wealthy in benevolence. In propounding the duty of individual piety and the duty of benevolence and charity, Scott was aiming at an audience that had the time and money to pursue charitable works.

iii. George Ellison, the commercial man

In Scott's narrator, George Ellison, we see the new merchant man as a moral agent. It is through Ellison's eyes that the reader knows the community, its inhabitants and its benevolent projects. He is both the narrator of the framing narrative – he is the person who makes public the philanthropic works of the Millenium ladies – and Scott offers him as a new moral model, a model that she later exemplifies in *A history of Sir George Ellison*.

Scott was not the first of her contemporaries to identify the merchant as a force for social good. Moreover, research about eighteenth-century philanthropy shows that the mercantile class was instrumental in many of the charitable associations founded in London in the early decades of the eighteenth century. This philanthropy was dominated by a particular ideology, later labelled 'mercantilism', that linked charitable works with a belief that the nation's wealth resided in its workforce. Charitable care of the poor was not only humane, it was also a way of

65 Linda Dunne, 'Mothers and monsters', 56.
ensuring that the nation had a physically and morally healthy pool of labour. Linda Colley reminds us that mercantilist philanthropy often centred on salvaging the nation's poor youth to re-form them into productive labour. So by 1762 when Scott published her novel, the merchant class had established both its commercial power within the nation and a moral authority in guiding the lower orders. Some years later, William Moss, a Liverpool surgeon, wrote that the aristocracy were more concerned with the 'allurement of the gay and fashionable world', than with assisting those less fortunate. That task, he wrote, fell to 'the man of business, and, particularly, that respectable character, the British Merchant, . . . he takes upon himself the benevolent office of their guardian, advocate, and protector; and in him the faithful and industrious of the poor never want a friend and benefactor, whatever may befall them'.

One commentator suggests that in this period 'the social and ethical supremacy of the traditionally valorised landed gentleman was being decisively challenged by his monetary counterpart'. However, Linda Colley comments that despite the increasing economic importance and social prominence of trade, the wealthy merchant was still inferior in wealth, status and power to the traditional landed wealthy. Scott's novel is situated firmly within the debates about the role of the commercial man in British society. The fact that the merchant was not accepted by traditional landed wealth, and the fact that Scott chose a merchant to 'authorise' Millenium Hall, is a significant comment on her views of the traditional landed aristocracy. Sarah Scott dramatises this challenge to traditional landed power and influence with the character of George Ellison, in this, and her later novel. I suggest that Scott deliberately chose George Ellison, a newly monied merchant trader and plantation owner, as the male visitor who 'discovers' and who in a sense authorises the Millenium community by bringing it into the public sphere. The traditionally

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67 See especially chapter 2 of Britons.
69 Colin Nicholson, Writing and the rise of finance, 8.
70 Britons, 60
powerful aristocratic gentleman, on the other hand, is evident only obliquely in Scott’s writings and, as discussed shortly, is characterised as socially irresponsible and outmoded. From the outset of the novel, she replaces the aristocracy with new merchant wealth as the focus of moral power and regulation; having destabilised the traditional locus of power and shifted it to another group – the newly wealthy – then allows Scott to assert another marginal group as agents of moral and public good – upper-class women.

But while he is central to the narrative, George Ellison has an ambivalent status in the text. Sniader Lanser suggests that as narrator and visitor, George Ellison both authorises the community and is excluded by it. This critic judges that the narrative strategy whereby Mrs Maynard tells the stories of the other women, rather than letting them speak for themselves, shows a reluctance to open up the community to the male visitor, and that there is a general resistance to male curiosity; it is a patriarchal intrusion such as that from which the women escaped in the first place. There is no evidence, for example, that the community authorises the narrator’s written account and public display of their personal histories and community. It is George Ellison who talks about the community in a letter to his publishing friend. The women do not speak for themselves.

While Lanser makes her case persuasively, it is equally valid and perhaps more culturally appropriate to see the women’s reluctance to speak for themselves as a socially constructed humility, rather than as a narrative ploy to show resistance to the male presence. Given publishing conventions of Scott’s time, especially for female authors, a male narrator would have given credibility to a novel, a still suspect genre in the 1760s. Of course, the narrator’s male gender gives authority

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71 This criticism of the aristocracy is frequently found in the novels of the mid- to late-eighteenth century, including, for example, Samuel Richardson Pamela, Maria Edgeworth Castle Rackrent, Oliver Goldsmith The vicar of Wakefield, Jane Austen Northanger Abbey.
72 Susan Snider Lanser, Fictions of authority, 227-229.
73 Lanser suggests that this might have been too confronting for contemporary readers because it would have highlighted that the community was a community of women only, with only women’s voices.
74 Indeed, Sarah Scott did publish the novel anonymously, and it was accepted that the author was a man. Scott also uses the convention of a narrator who pretends to be reporting factual events.
to the publication and to the Millenium enterprise, but Ellison's authority also comes from within the community. His familial relationship with Mrs Maynard gives him another entree into the community and into its confidence. It is true that the novel is about the community and not of it as Lanser suggests, and there is no evidence in the text that Ellison was given permission to discuss the community in print; nevertheless, this publication is consistent with 'spreading the word' of Christian piety and charity. It is much easier for a man with publishing connections to spread the word of virtuous women and their charitable works than it would be for them to do it themselves. Such self-promotion would sit awkwardly with their explicit humility. Scott cleverly establishes Ellison's credibility, then uses his authoritative voice to promote the women's good works.

While Ellison occupies a relatively powerful economic position, and while Scott privileges him as a narrator, as Linda Dunne has pointed out, both he and Lamont, his young travelling companion, are metaphorically morally unhealthy and are ripe for conversion. Both men, Dunne asserts, 'are members of the privileged ruling class who have been, in different ways, weakened by their participation in a corrupt society. They are both prime candidates for a healing conversion to a way of life that is informed by both feminist and Christian values'. More specifically, George Ellison and Lamont represent two distinctly different authoritarian male models: first, the newly wealthy merchant who has profited from colonial trade; second, the young independently wealthy and dissipated coxcomb who has had no moral or economic strictures to curtail his desires or actions. One critic has noted the importance of male conversion to the novel of sensibility and to the construction of women's roles as holders of domestic morality. The fact that the Millenium women could convert their male visitors shows their moral authority and qualifies Scott's support of the male merchant as moral agent.

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75 Linda Dunne, 'Mothers and monsters', 56.
76 G. J. Barker-Benfield, Culture of sensibility, 250-258.
But the question remains, why does Scott choose a merchant as the visitor and author/author-iser of Millenium Hall? As well as exemplifying male conversion, George Ellison symbolically and literally represents the commercial sector. He provides a commercial framework for the women's community. When he visits the Hall he brings to this female community the metropolitan commercial interest; he emphasises a species of commercial moral authority, and highlights the economic dimensions of the Millenium community. Ellison calls the women 'good oeconomists' when praising the Hall's timbers (109). Mrs Morgan stresses to their visitors that the community is economically self-sufficient, showing the gentlemen their stocks of pigeons, rabbits, deer, hares and cattle (110). Lady Mary observed to George Ellison that 'after having shown us the beauties of the place, they ought to exhibit the riches of it' (109). As a merchant, his interest brings out the commercial qualities of the Hall.

At the Hall, he asks to visit the carpet 'manufacture' because, in his view, there was 'no sight so delightful as extensive industry' (243). He is truly the new commercial man. But the efficiency and profit that he views as 'delightful' is bettered by the model of commerce that the ladies establish. It is a moral commerce.

Here we found several hundreds of people of all ages, from six years old to four-score, employed in the various parts of the manufacture, some spinning, some weaving, others dying the worsted, and in short all busy, singing and whistling, with the appearance of general cheerfulness, and their neat dress shewed them in a condition of proper plenty. (243)

Ethical management is the feature which makes this manufacture cheerful and profitable. Implicitly, this is compared with the factory that might be economically profitable, but exploitative. Although they take advice from experts initially, the ladies run the factory themselves rather than leaving it to an 'enterprising undertaker' (243). Through their own management they distribute money according to the rules of moral commerce rather than conventional commercial methods. For example, they pay children and the aged a higher wage 'as a proper encouragement, and reward for industry in those seasons of life in which it is so uncommon' (244). There is an implicit
criticism here of what was actually the common practice of hiring very young workers in manufacturing for lower wages than men.\footnote{See M. J. Daunton \textit{Progress and poverty}, 430-432 for discussion of the common use of children's labour in factories. He also discusses the construction of the child as an economic asset because they could very quickly become labourers, 402. Indeed, as Daunton points out, in coal mines the children of miners were automatically bound as workers in the mines, 225.}

While Scott implicitly criticises the emerging capitalist ethic here, this is in the context of an early eighteenth-century discourse that idealised the commercial relationship. In \textit{The Spectator}, Addison commented on the merchant class: 'They knit mankind together in a mutual intercourse of good Offices, distribute the Gifts of Nature, find Work for the Poor, add Wealth to the Rich, and Magnificence to the Great'.\footnote{\textit{The Spectator}, ed I. Bond, 296, cited by Colin Nicholson, \textit{Writing and the rise of finance}, 26.} The merchant relationship between the purveyor and purchaser of goods is idealised and becomes a model for social and interpersonal interchanges. Jonas Hanway echoes this reification of commerce in his statement: 'Commerce is the link by which men are united in love'.\footnote{A review of the proposed naturalization of the Jews, 3rd ed, 1753, 97-8.} The commercial relationship is imbued with sentimental and moral associations. At times, Scott's novel might seem to echo this discourse, for example when the narrator asserts that 'Mutual wants are the great bands of society'; however Scott redefines these 'mutual wants' and the ideology underlying the commerce that fulfils those wants (110).

In society at large the profit motive characterises the commercial relationship, with the purveyor of goods and services \textit{profiting} from the purchaser's needs. It is not a barter relationship such as the one represented in the ideal rural community in \textit{The history of Cornelia}; profit is intrinsic in the commercial relationship. There is an assumption in Addison's statement that one party in the commercial relationship genuinely has at heart the interests of the other. He ignores the inequality, or profit motive, in the commercial transaction that weakens the analogy between the commercial relationship and the friendly or personal relationship. In this novel Sarah Scott reconfigures commercial relationships and the way one perceives money so that the exchange of money, goods and services really does have a moral basis. Before articulating how she does this in
this novel, the next section discusses the contexts of charity and notions of poverty in which Scott offers her model of moral commerce.

iv. The eighteenth-century culture of charity

Paul Langford has noted that the eighteenth century was an age of 'charitable endeavour', and an age in which traditional philanthropic models were replaced with new ones, such as organised philanthropy.80 The practices and ideologies underpinning charity in the eighteenth century were extremely complex and, as recent studies have emphasised, the ideological foundations of charity and notions of poverty are not stable concepts, they change over time. Gertrude Himmelfarb's extensive study of charity, for instance, has critically analysed the ideas underlying notions of poverty that contribute to these multiple dimensions of charity.81 J. R. Poynter has also identified differing conceptions of poverty and charity in this period: 'Certainly two distinct strands of moral opinion – the one attributing indigence to misfortune which it is Christian charity to relieve, and the other regarding it as the result of vice which it is Christian discipline to correct – can both be found through the eighteenth century and beyond'.82 And Joanna Innes has noted that from the seventeenth century onwards, both the practices of relief-giving and the discussions of such practices were intensely fragmented.83 Scott's narrative underscores this complexity, evoking the multiple nuances of eighteenth-century thinking about charity, including: the religious foundations of charity, the philanthropic agent, the perceived economic, social and political ramifications of charity in an increasingly economically driven society, and the role of charity in effecting moral as well as economic change. Scott's narrative highlights the

81 Idea of poverty, especially the Introduction.
83 Joanna Innes "The "mixed economy of welfare" in early modern England: assessments of the options from Hale to Malthus (c. 1683-1803)" in Martin Daunton ed, Charity, self-interest and welfare in the English past, New York: St Martin's Press, 1996, 139-180, 140.
ongoing social debates about the role of the poor, the role of philanthropists, and the appropriate treatment of the lower classes.

Changing economic conditions brought practical results that impinged on charity; moreover, there were also more subtle, less easily defined relations between commerce and the charitable modes of conduct. As I have suggested in the Introduction, increasingly dominant commercial ideologies in the eighteenth century influenced the way other relationships in society functioned and were conceived; the charitable relationship was no exception. David Owen has asserted that charitably-minded citizens learnt useful lessons from commercial ventures, such as joint-stock companies, and that broad philanthropic works were achieved by ammassing small amounts from large numbers of donors. 'Subscription lists were to become as vital to philanthropy as lists of shareholders were to a joint-stock company'.84 Paul Langford calls such reformers 'entrepreneurs of charity', who were 'marketing philanthropy much as Wedgwood marketed porcelain'.85 And, noting a different type of influence of commercialism on charity, Prochaska comments: 'Philanthropy may be seen as the human face of capitalism, addressing the social and individual ills which capitalism often created or exacerbated'. Prochaska also discusses how secular charitable organisations came to mimic capitalist competition for funds. 'Entrepreneurial, they competed for converts and custom. Acquisitive, they had an insatiable appetite for funds and put the public under relentless pressure to contribute.' Clearly, however, there was a certain respectability to be gained from being publicly associated with well-known charities. The Marine Society, for example, was not only the most prestigious merchants' club in London in the eighteenth century, it was also the most recognised public philanthropic society. Being a member of the Marine Society could help one's philanthropic causes, but conversely, one's business prospects were enhanced by being involved in such charity. Prochaska suggests that the monarchy, as well as

84 English philanthropy, 12.
85 Polite and commercial people, 485.
individuals and groups, used charity as a strategy for constructing public faces of respectability, power and morality.\textsuperscript{86}

Changing economic conditions in England during the eighteenth century affected attitudes towards the treatment of the poor as well. One manifestation of this was the scrutiny of the Poor Laws. While debates about Poor Laws had always stressed receiving good value for the charitable pound, these debates intensified during the eighteenth century with various proposals put forward during the century to maximise charitable efficiency.\textsuperscript{87} Longstanding conceptions of the naturalness of poverty gave way to demands for alleviating both the hardship of the poorer sort and the burdens on the wealthy who felt that they were paying for an irreconcilable problem.

These anxieties and debates were manifest, in part, by attempts to describe and differentiate between types of poverty. There was not one class of poor. The rural and urban poor, for instance, had different characteristics and raised significantly different issues. Moreover, those affected by poverty included those unable to work, those unwilling to work, and those who despite working could not earn a basic subsistence. It was in identifying these types of poor and judging appropriate assistance, that the notion of 'deserving poor' was a powerful discourse. Paul Langford notes that even a charity as seemingly deserving as the Foundling hospital was criticised on the basis that it encouraged people to rely on public charity rather than on their own efforts.\textsuperscript{88} As I have discussed in relation to charity in \textit{The history of Cornelia}, the 'deserving poor' were constructed as those who were destitute through no fault of their own and who, upon receiving charity, acted frugally, with gratitude, and with appropriate moral actions. Appropriate moral actions were those

\textsuperscript{86} Frank Prochaska \textit{Royal bounty}, 3, 4-5.

\textsuperscript{87} In the 1760s poor law relief totalled more than one million pounds per annum and rose to more than four million in the early nineteenth century: Frank Prochaska \textit{Royal bounty}, 2. See also, Poynter \textit{Society and pauperism}, 7-20.

which were dictated or decided by the social mores and the benefactor. 'Moral policing' is an increasingly common discourse as the century progresses.89

In a commercial society where the poorer classes have a valuable commodity – that is, their labour – there is an even greater need to control their thoughts and behaviour. Himmelfarb explores the complex associations between these categories of poor and the economic and moral determinants for classifying and dealing with poverty.90 As I have mentioned, a substantial discourse informing decisions about types of charity was the notion that helping poor youth would strengthen the nation's labour and military base. Lyrics written by Anne Penny to celebrate the 1773 Anniversary dinner of the Marine Society highlight the intricate conception of virtuous benevolence and national economic health that underpinned the type of mercantilist charity that the Society represented:

Odes sung in commemoration of the Marine Society

SOCIAL Virtue's liberal plan  
Cheers the helpless race of man:  
O'er the poor's defenceless head,  
See! her healing wings are spread!

See these happy youths, now made  
Bulwarks of our wealth and trade.  
From this glorious source will flow  
Vigorous strength, to quell each foe.

May such noble plans sustain  
GEORGE's empire on the main!  
May rich Commerce, England's pride,  
Still adorn her swelling tide!

Virtue hails the great design,  
She owns the impulse quite divine;  
Bids her patriot King approve  
The golden band of Social Love!91

90 Idea of poverty, 8.
91 The 'Odes' were written in 1773, but were not published until 1780 when Penny's work was published by subscription, Poems. The 'Odes' are reprinted in Roger Lonsdale ed, Eighteenth-century women poets, 295-296.
The Marine Society was responsible for providing charity for thousands of young boys who, in turn, provided labour for the navy. This exemplifies the notion of reciprocal benefits that characterised much of the period's thinking about charity. The 'golden band of Social Love' is the tie that links the boys with their benefactors. Clearly virtue is a motivating force, as is Christianity; Anne Penny comments that the 'impulse' is 'divine'. But there are practical benefits to the nation of this type of charity for the poor.  

Classifications of 'poverty' and 'the poor' are significant, then, not just for the groups who occupy these categories, but also for what they tell us about other groups in society. Research about the changing attitudes of the middling or upper ranks toward the poor is as revealing about eighteenth-century society as the research about the poor as a group. Changes in attitudes towards the poor from, for example the punitive and prescriptive measures of the Act of Settlement, the labour-based mercantilist programmes, to the morally reforming attempts of Christian-based charity schools and Magdalen hospitals, say much about how the wealthy defined themselves in part by how they related to other groups within the society. For instance, the long-standing Christian view considered that God had deliberately made some people poor in order to allow others the opportunity for charity, and thus salvation. This belief raises important issues about the construction of the poor as objects who serve a function in the wealthy person's bid for salvation. However, eighteenth-century philanthropists were usually explicit about expecting something in return. Colin Jones supports the view that charitable relations were based on complex notions of reciprocity, and that a great deal of research about poverty has concentrated on the objects of charity, rather than on the 'material or symbolic returns on charitable donation'. Paternalist relations in rural communities in which squires looked after the local poor, in return for deference  

92 For further discussion about the Marine Society and mercantilism see J. S. Taylor Jonas Hanway.  
94 Colin Jones 'Some recent trends in the history of charity' in Martin Daunton ed, Charity, self-interest and welfare in the English past, 51-64, 57.
and labour, were often based on localised charity as well as more formal labour and rental agreements. The move from religious to secular state control of the poor, then to collective secular philanthropy for the poor, shows the changing conceptions of individual and state responsibilities. While care for the poor had always been integral to Christian teachings, over the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries citizens expected the state to assume more formal roles in caring for the poor. The question was not whether the state had a responsibility to the poor, but rather in what ways that responsibility was to be enacted. Nevertheless, the onus was always on the poor to act appropriately, and much charity depended on recipients behaving in ways that demonstrated that they were deserving of charity. Among other things, the next section of the chapter discusses the appropriate behaviour that the Millenium ladies expected from the poor in their care.

As I have suggested, the agents of philanthropy during the eighteenth century were varied, from the landed aristocracy who gave indirectly through Poor Law contributions, to the founders of charitable societies who literally brought prostitutes in off the streets. These philanthropists were principally men, or at least, the public faces of institutionalised charities were largely men. This was partly a result of the types of charities that flourished as the century wore on. As Paul Langford explains, charitable causes were often publicised and promoted by charismatic figures who were 'not great benefactors, but opinion-makers, men who sought out distress or injustice, analysed its causes, campaigned for its alleviation, co-ordinated its eradication'. Women were restricted from fulfilling such publicly active and displayed activities. One eighteenth-century woman, Catherine Cappe, recorded the opposition to her as a 'general reformer' when she tried to establish a Sunday school. Women were more likely to perform individual acts of charity

95 In Chapter Four this discussion turns to notions of paternalism in eighteenth-century England. More relevant to this chapter is Jessica Gerard's discussion of the role of gentry women in rural philanthropy; although her article emphasises nineteenth-century patterns, it is relevant also to eighteenth-century rural conditions: 'Lady bountiful: women of the landed classes and rural philanthropy', *Victorian studies*, 30, Winter 1987, 183-210.
97 For example, The Magdalen Hospital for repentant prostitutes which was established by Robert Dingley in 1758.
98 *Polite and commercial people*, 483, 485.
within their own social networks; this kind of informal, local charity was regarded as a part of household management. Married women had limited access to their own funds and so their alms-giving was restricted to a great degree by their husbands' attitudes towards their wives and towards the poor. However, Jessica Gerard has written about nineteenth-century women of the landed classes who performed local charity, and points out that few historians have acknowledged these women's role. She notes that by concentrating on men's activities alone, the picture of rural charity has been distorted.

Shortly, the discussion turns to the way that Scott articulates her views of the poor, of charity, and her assertion of a place for upper class women in broad-scale philanthropic work; but before this, I consider how Scott used the pastoral mode to create a combined Christian and economic context for the Millenium philanthropy.

v. Pastoral retreat and economic efficiency

As I have suggested, Scott's textual emphasis shifts the locus of moral standards and agency from the aristocracy to the new merchant class and to upper middle-class and upper-class women. One sees in Scott's narrative that for women of these ranks to gain agency and influence they have to locate physically and symbolically outside traditional marriages or female roles. Johanna Smith notes that the embedded narratives of the ladies show that outside Millenium Hall the women are powerless against 'scheming libertines, heartless stepmothers' and it is only once they are enclosed that they can be powerful examples of displays of virtue. There are, she suggests, complex tensions in the novel that are simultaneously about freedom for women and disciplining of women's behaviour. The ladies have to be contained to be moral examples. And while there is much that is conventional about their particular moral examples, their containment gives them freedom from

99 Joanna Innes 'The "mixed economy of welfare"', 164.
100 'Lady bountiful: women of the landed classes and rural philanthropy', 183, 209.
101 Johanna Smith 'Philanthropic community in Millenium Hall and the York Ladies Committee', 266-282, 268.
exploitation. This notion of separating the women from society in order to protect them is one way of approaching *Millenium Hall*, but I would suggest that in creating a community of women, Scott also reconfigures the traditional pastoral notion of escaping urban vice, so she can create a vision of moral and commercial virtue.

The merchant representative also has to, in a sense, reject the traditional commercial spheres of the West Indies and of trading London, and retire to a rural setting before he can be morally healthy. The land has a pivotal role to play in this morality, but in Scott's narrative, land is not a signifier of the privileged and hereditary wealth of the few. In Scott's view, land is now the means by which a greater number of lower class members of society can contribute to a new economy in a moral context. This rural setting is significant. Containment or isolation is not the main point here, as some Scott commentators have insisted. It is true that the kind of paternal philanthropy that the Millenium women, and later George Ellison, practise, is easier to achieve in a localised setting; but the rural setting is less to do with isolation than with the pastoral belief that the country is less corrupt than a city.

Max Schulz has written that eighteenth-century conceptions of the rural idyll were epitomised by improving on nature to provide a re-created Eden. He had in mind the aristocrats and gentry when he comments: 'That their horticultural investments might earn them paradise as well as profit was a dividend they saw no reason to avoid or reject'. In *Millenium Hall* Scott creates a rural Eden run with commercial efficiency, although it is important to note that this is a community replacing traditional aristocratic landed models of community. The text depicts the landscape using a combination of classical pastoral, Christian pastoral and commercial modes to create a setting of peace, piety and economic efficiency. Schulz notes the irony that the garden and estate of the eighteenth century were so typically discussed in terms of a Christian paradise, despite classical manifestation; commentators found 'Edens everywhere, never
mind that their conventional turns of thought had been schooled in classical mythology and Horatian ideals'.

A Christian pastoral setting predominates from the outset of the gentlemen's encounter with the community. In his initial description the narrator mixes discourses of classical secular pastoral writing and theological description. The initial secular pastoral images are supplanted by a clearly Christian image of Christ the shepherd looking after his flock.

When we had walked about half a mile in a scene truly pastoral, we began to think ourselves in the days of Theocritus, so sweetly did the sound of a flute come wafted through the air. Never did pastoral swain make sweeter melody on his oaten reed. Our ears now afforded us fresh attraction, and with quicker steps we proceeded, till we came within sight of the musician that had charmed us. Our pleasure was not a little heightened, to see, as the scene promised, in reality a shepherd, watching a large flock of sheep. We continued motionless, listening to his music, till a lamb straying from its fold demanded his care, and he laid aside his instrument, to guide home the little wanderer. (56)

The landscape and its inhabitants seem to have walked out of the pages of the Bible, and indeed a little later the narrator refers to Isaiah, chapter 11, verse 6: 'One could scarcely forbear thinking those happy times were come, when "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lye down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a young child shall lead them" ' (69-70). The description evokes Christian millenial and classical impressions of paradise.

George Ellison's initial description and response to the Hall and its environs sets up a classical and Christian pastoral milieu that, during his stay, is gradually modified with images of commercial efficiency. The initial pastoral setting, and the attic schoolroom of peacefully employed ladies suggests a quiescent and retired life. As Ellison, and the reader, learn more about the community, its inhabitants and its activities, images of retired and leisured ladies are replaced with images of active, innovative, practical and hard working women.

102 Max Schulz Paradise preserved, 9, and see Part I for extended discussion of eighteenth-century visions of rural paradise.
The women's efficient use of land overlays the initial pastoral images with commercial efficiency. Of course, this combination of aesthetics and utility was not unusual in the eighteenth century as parks and estates were both the aesthetic symbols of wealth and actual sources of income through grazing, timber and farming.\textsuperscript{103} The peacefulness and beauty of the landscape is a result of hard work and commercial competence. This altered view of land in the novel accompanies the modified view of the women – at first they appear to be leisured, upper-class women, but with the knowledge of their labour and philanthropy this aristocratic model of women is reconstructed. It is a modification, though, and not a replacement because the Millenium women are 'ladies' and represent a specific class of women. But by adding philanthropic work to their polite leisured activities Scott articulates a public function for this class of women, and in doing so she implicitly criticises those gentlewomen who are mere social ornaments, and those models for aristocratic women's behaviour which encourage them to be such.

The natural surroundings of Millenium Hall are simultaneously beautiful and efficient; indeed, the narrator views the efficient use of land with a kind of aesthetic pleasure. For example, when Ellison views the enclosure that houses the deformed members of the community, he is impressed by its combined efficiency and beauty (73) and he asks to be shown the carpet manufacture because 'there is no sight so delightful as extensive industry' (243). This combination of beauty and efficiency permeates the narrative creating an aesthetic of efficiency that combines with the common eighteenth-century notion of interrelated taste and judgment.

Scott highlights the relationship between good taste, good judgment and virtue. This link between virtue and taste is commonplace in discourses of both aesthetics and virtue in the eighteenth century. Philosophers such as Francis Hutcheson wrote about beauty and its relations to unity, truth and virtue. Notions of classical design, in both

\textsuperscript{103} For an extended discussion of gardens and landscape in eighteenth-century England refer to Tom Williamson's \textit{Polite landscapes}. Chapter 6, in particular, discusses 'beauty and utility' of landscape and gardens.
architecture and landscape gardening, were as much about perceived strengths of
caracter as about abstract elements of design. When Scott creates an 'attic feel' to the
Millenium house it is to invoke classical virtues in a theological and commercially
efficient framework. Space, clarity, clean lines, minimal ornamentation, strength and
beautiful function and utility relate to the virtues and qualities that emerge as the
narrative progresses.

There is little form without function at the Hall. While there are displays of flowers in
the gardens, this ornamentation is discussed to highlight the Millenium women's virtue
and judgment. There is no physical detail that is not linked with utility and judgment.
For example, the clean and neat dress of the factory workers shows that they are well
paid and well behaved (243). Lamont comments on the landscape architecture of the
Hall, which at this stage of the century was a focus of taste, luxury and conspicuous
display for those on the land. Instead of privileging culturally, and fashionably,
acclaimed landscape artists such as Capability Brown, Scott overturns that authority,
and establishes her own criteria for aesthetic authority; so that whilst Lamont regards
the landscaping as of a professional's standard he is told that it is the ladies who have
achieved such aesthetic feats (68). With neither training nor experience, they can
achieve a professional's standard because of their superior virtue and judgment. The
aesthetic qualities of the picturesque also inform Ellison's description of the grounds:
'This park is much ornamented by two or three fine pieces of water; one of them is a
very noble canal, so artfully terminated by an elegant bridge, beyond which is a wood,
that it there appears like a fine river vanishing from the eye' (109-110). Perspective to
the eye is matched with a moral perspective of vision that interrelates the landscape
with morality. 104

Scott repeatedly deploys and invokes aesthetics for moral purposes:

104 See John Barrell's *The birth of Pandora and the division of knowledge*, Basingstoke: Macmillan,
1992, especially chapter 3, and the introduction of Barrell's *The political theory of painting from
ideology of landscape is present also in the poetry of the period, consider, for example, Alexander Pope's
'Windsor forest'.
I first went into the gayest flower garden I ever beheld. The rainbow exhibits not half the variety of tints, and they are so artfully mingled, and ranged to make such a harmony of colours, as taught me how much the most beautiful objects may be improved by a judicious disposition of them. Beyond these beds of flowers rises a shrubbery, where every thing sweet and pleasing is collected. As these ladies have no taste but what is directed by good sense, nothing found a place here from being only uncommon, for they think few things are very rare but because they are little desirable; and indeed it is plain they are free from that littleness of mind, which makes people value a thing the more for its being possessed by no one but themselves. Behind the shrubbery is a little wood, which affords a gloom, rendered more agreeable [sic] by its contrast with the dazzling beauty of that part of the garden that leads to it. (64-5)

This descriptive discourse invokes moral ideology that links taste with judgment. It is reminiscent of Francis Hutcheson's discourses upon beauty and harmony. In his Inquiry concerning beauty, order, harmony, design, Hutcheson writes: 'The figures which excite in us the ideas of beauty seem to be those in which there is uniformity amidst variety'\(^{105}\) The narrator explicitly links taste with judgment and sense in his description of the Hall's garden.\(^{106}\)

The discourse of luxury is evidenced here also as Ellison commends the ladies for being 'free from that littleness of mind, which makes people value a thing the more for its being possessed by no one but themselves'. In so doing, Ellison also distinguishes himself from those newly wealthy gentlemen who bought the ostentatious outward appearances of the aristocracy. At Millenium Hall there is no show without substance. Mrs Morgan comments to the gentlemen visitors: 'that building (pointing to what we thought a pretty temple) which perhaps you imagine designed only for ornament or pleasure, is a very large pidgeon [sic] house, that affords a sufficient supply to our family, and many of our neighbours' (110). There is an inextricable link between beauty of form and function. Indeed, part of the beauty of an object lies in its very efficiency.

The rural setting for Millenium Hall, then, evokes conventional pastoral notions of the morally restorative features of the natural landscape, and reconfigures them with

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\(^{106}\) Martin Price discusses the moral basis of garden theory in *To the palace of wisdom: studies in order and energy from Dryden to Blake*, Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1964, 376.
economic efficiency. In this rural setting, away from the urban centre of vice and luxury, Scott creates a community that operates in an explicitly Christian moral framework and that is economically efficient. The following section explores the details of the Millenium philanthropy to show how these moral and economic factors interrelate. The philosophy underpinning the landscape whereby morally regenerative aesthetics and economic efficiency complement one another is echoed in the Hall's charity which has both a moral and economic efficiency.

vi. Millenium Hall's moral commerce

Money and religion

Millenium Hall refutes conventional notions of women's limited public financial power by placing strong women with financial resources at the head of the community. During a period when women were usually at the mercy of fathers or husbands for their financial wealth, these financially powerful women are radical indeed. The women are contrasted with male authority figures by showing that they use their money morally, responsibly and efficiently. When Mrs Morgan inherits her husband's money and property which she uses to establish Millenium Hall, the narrator contrasts her use of money and property with the two previous male owners. Of the two men, the narrator comments: 'equally strangers to beneficence, self-indulgence was their sole view; alike criminal. . . one endeavoured to starve, the other to corrupt mankind', but the new owners established a 'seat of charity and benevolence' (222). The women instituted a moral commerce.

In this novel Scott offers a model of conduct which defines money and labour in moral terms. Scott proposes that there need not be a conflict if one imbues commercial practices with a rational Christian ethics. Commentators on Millenium Hall have labelled it a 'feminized economy', and have seen it as an 'alternative to the tyrannizing
curiosity and rapacity of empire'. In response to a society that was increasingly uncomfortable with the emphasis on financial transactions, Scott explicitly loads money with moral responsibility. The moral use of money is not confined to explicit almsgiving or philanthropic projects. In its most literal sense money is moralised, with explicit moral imperatives given to all dispensation of money – explicitly charitable or not. The narrator details the ladies' 'rational' 'refinement of charity', whereby they give moral forethought to all financial transactions. The ladies:

endeavour so to apply all they spend, as to make almost every shilling contribute towards the support of some person in real necessity; by this means every expence bears the merit of a donation in the sight of him who knows their motives; and their constant application is directed towards the relief of others, while to superficial observers they seem only providing for their own convenience. . . . Those whose youth render them disregarded, or whose old age breeds neglect, will here meet with deserved encouragement. This sort of oeconomy pleases me much, it is of the highest kind, since it regards those riches which neither moth nor rust can corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal; and is within the reach of every person's imitation, for the poorest may thus turn their necessary expences into virtuous actions. (169-170)

Ellison's observation here shows Scott's ideology of moral commerce in its most practical application. The women spend their money so that it is both economically efficient and morally responsible. And, as Ellison suggests, all people have this kind of charity within their power; when buying a good or a service, one purchases it from the tradesperson or merchant in greatest need. Scott's representation of commercial transactions are imbued with moral weight. Throughout her writings, and in this novel in particular, Scott shows how intimate and fraught are the acts and relationships of exchanging money. Money – and financial exchange of various forms – carries moral weight and significance beyond the simple acts of exchange. Indeed, Scott highlights the fact that there are no simple acts of exchange.

This moral view of money is inextricable from her religious charity. Despite the increasing secularisation of attitudes towards the poor as the century continued, Scott reasserts a Christian basis for philanthropic practices. She does not see the state as

107 Gary Kelly intro. and ed. Millenium Hall, 24; Felicity Nussbaum Torrid zones, 150.
108 Himmelfarb discusses the gradual secularisation of attitudes toward poverty in the eighteenth century, Idea of poverty, 4.
accepting responsibility for the poor, and it is a crucial part of social justice and Christian practice that each individual take responsibility for alleviating the suffering of the poor. In describing the Millenium ladies, George Ellison comments 'these ladies, far from thinking poverty the only evil which Christian benevolence should lead us to redress, did not even consider it as the most important. The soul, as the noblest, and most durable part of us, was the chief object of their care and solicitude' (GE, I, 248).

Relieving poverty is a means of Christian conversion. Anglican teachings and practices are part of daily life at the Hall. The girls learn to be good Christians, and the philosophies and procedures of the community are explicitly oriented toward a good Christian life.

The individual narrative histories in *Millenium Hall* illustrate the founding principles of the Millenium community. For instance, in Lady Mary Jones' narrative, the text articulates the interrelation of religion and virtue. Lady Mary has general ideas about God, but without direct religious education she does not lead a rational Christian life. When she encounters a woman who believes in God's intercession in daily life, Lady Mary hears this Christian discourse as 'a new language' (179). Before learning of this 'new language' of 'providence', Lady Mary thought that her good fortune was a matter of chance: 'she began to reflect on the luckiness of the overturn, which had obstructed her rash design, and admiring her good fortune, would certainly have offered rich sacrifices on the shrine of Chance, had there been a temple there erected to that deity' (178). When Lady Sheemess dies and leaves her niece in poverty, another aunt rescues Mary. This salvation awakens Lady Mary's faith: 'Such frequent mercies as she had received, sometimes in being preserved from the fatal consequences of her own follies, at others from the unavoidable distresses to which she had been exposed, awakened in her mind a lively gratitude to the supreme Disposer of all human events' (191). To Scott, Christian belief is about providential design and intercession, but more immediately Christian belief governs individual conduct.
Like other Enlightenment thinkers, Scott emphasised the individual's capacity and responsibility to evaluate and act on ethical bases of behaviour; however, contrary to Enlightenment ideas, Scott saw this individualism occurring in the context of Christian principles. The text operates on the assumption that individuals can be morally healthy if they are Christian. Scott's view of humankind shows little debt to Hobbes. Neither does she agree with Mandeville's or Hume's assertions about self-love being the primary motivator for individuals. Scott suggests that one starts out with gifts which must be cultivated and protected from corrupting influences. In the history of Lady Mary we learn that nature is fragile, that fashion or custom is corrupting and that the opinion of the world is not to be trusted. Only religious instruction can develop one's potential and save one from dissipation and corruption. Indeed, religious education is a defence against the temptations of social ills.

Scott sees an innate but fragile goodness in characters such as Lamont. Ellison comments that in his young companion, Lamont, 'those talents which nature kindly bestowed upon him, by being perverted, gave rise to his greatest faults' (55). Lamont's specific questioning of and objections to the philosophy of Millenium Hall indicate his light-hearted and superficial lifestyle; but his willingness to change his opinions and to recognise the merits of Millenium Hall also show that innate good nature will triumph given the right conditions. Millenium Hall exemplifies these 'right conditions'. Lamont's conversion while he visits the Hall indicates one of the basic ideological premises of Scott's work — if people are innately good, if their behaviour and minds can be changed with examples of good conduct and Christian piety, then revolution is unnecessary to effect social change. The text grants education, pious moral guidance and individual ethical pragmatism the power to effect individual and social improvement. In Scott's Millenium Hall moral instruction is seen as the root of change. This notion of change through individual virtue is integral to the author's 'political' ideology, for a healthy state must have as its basis morally healthy citizens.
This emphasis on individual behaviour and reformation stems from Christian principles which deal with the individual rather than with social structures and institutions. The individual is asked to seek forgiveness for her sins and assistance in attaining a virtuous life. The women in charge of the community exhort the poor not to blame the exploitative squires who are responsible for their poverty. They are told, instead, to turn a critical eye upon themselves to attain perfection. This recommendation not to judge the local squire prompts the following reply from one of the old women: 'They live about a mile off, so perhaps they did not know how poor we were, I must say that for them' (65). Although this woman offers a charitable opinion, there is a touch of irony here, suggesting perhaps that, although the ladies teach the poor not to judge their oppressors, the author is not so charitable. The exhortation to ignore their exploitation clearly represents a double standard that resides in part in the author's unwillingness to question the social hierarchies outside the community. Religious precepts, dictates, and guidelines for individual behaviour have ramifications beyond that individual. If that person's actions uphold or subjugate them to structures and practices in a society which are unjust and inequitable, the motives and validity of those religious principles become open to question. There is some paradox, however, in prompting the assisted poor to deflect their judgment away from their oppressors and toward themselves. To encourage the poor to concentrate on their own moral imperfections is to distract them from social injustices. Ironically in a text which offers options for women, the text echoes for the poor the societal construction of women which encourages them to look at their own faults rather than the social structures which produce their weakened situation.

This narrative echoes Scott's views of rational morality that she articulated in *The history of Cornelia*. Lady Mary Jones' narrative exemplifies Scott's ideas about rational ethics and morality. This woman's example shows that good nature is vulnerable to the corruptions of fashion, dissipation, and scheming men and women. A person requires a rational understanding of morality — and for Scott this is based in education about virtue and religion — to be capable of acting morally. 'Reason seemed
this source of perpetual content, and she fancied that alone would afford a satisfaction suitable to every state of mind and body. Some degree of religion was also necessary (191). This view of rational morality is a fundamental Enlightenment principle that is voiced, perhaps most notably, by Immanuel Kant some twenty years after Scott was writing.109 A person must know that an action or belief is ethical for them to be ethical when carrying out that action or belief.

While Scott supports Enlightenment views on rational examination and conduct, she critiques secular philosophy and sees religious belief as fundamental to rational morality. Miss Selvyn was educated only in secular moral philosophy. 'Miss Selvyn was bred a philosopher from her cradle; but was better instructed in the doctrine of the ancient moralists, than in the principles of Christianity' (200). Indeed, her education has many shortcomings even though her father is a good, learned and honest man. Mr Selvyn gives his daughter accomplishments unfit for her station in life. Her mind is educated, but she does not have domestic skills fit for her station. However,

If he did not breed her up in a manner to gain a subsistence by the most usual means, he however qualified her to subsist on little; he taught her true frugality without narrowness of mind; and made her see how few of all the expences the world ran into were necessary to happiness. He deprived her of all temptation to purchase pleasures, by instructing her to seek only in herself for them; and by the various accomplishments he had given her, prevented that vanity of mind which leads people to seek external amusements. (199-200)

So in many ways Miss Selvyn received a good education, avoiding the love of luxury and ostentation which was undesirable in the wealthy and ruinous for those of little fortune. But Scott makes clear that even the most moral, contemplative, and self-sufficient lifestyle and upbringing are seriously deficient without religious instruction.110

Scott uses the history of Miss Selvyn to show the necessity of religious education, but she also takes this opportunity to present an extended discourse upon scepticism, philosophy, revelation, and the inappropriateness of the scientific method for proving or disproving the existence of God. Nonetheless, Mr Selvyn’s motives are not criticised:

109 Immanuel Kant *Fundamental principles of the metaphysics of morals*, 1785, and *Religion within the limits of reason alone*, 1793, and *Critique of practical reason*, 1790.

110 In the story of Miss Mancel and Miss Melvyn we are told that in educating Miss Melvyn, Miss Mancel ‘was most attentive to inculcate into her mind the principles of true religion’ (91).
Mr Selvyn was not absolutely a free-thinker; he had no vices that made him an enemy to christianity; nor that pride which tempts people to contradict a religion generally received; he did not apprehend that disbelief was a proof of wisdom, nor wished to lessen the faith of others, but was in himself sceptical; he doubted of what he could not entirely comprehend, and seemed to think those things at least improbable which were not level to his understanding. He avoided the subject with Miss Selvyn; he could not teach her what he did not believe; but chose to leave her free to form that judgment, which should in time seem most rational to her. (200)

A minister in Mr Selvyn's parish converts him and his daughter and Scott provides the reader with part of the text of this conversion speech. The minister appeals to the mysteries of science to prove that 'not being able to understand the most mysterious parts of Christianity was no argument against the truth of them' (202). The minister's arguments mask one of Scott's sideswipes at learned men and the sense of authority they assume from scientific paradigms. He comments: 'Of many other things man is in reality as ignorant, only being able to form a system, which seems to suit in some particulars, he imagines he has discovered the whole, and will think so till some new system takes place, and the old one is exploded' (202). Overall, however, the minister's argument depends on the belief that empiricism and the scientific method are inappropriate to religion.

"Facts only are obvious to our reason; we must judge of them by the evidence of their reality if that is sufficient to establish the facts; why, or how they were produced, is beyond our comprehension. Let us learn that finite minds cannot judge of infinite wisdom, and confine our reason within its proper sphere". (203)

Elsewhere she criticises philosophers for making theoretical generalisations about human nature, without having a real knowledge of human behaviour (111). Scott presents such 'real' human behaviour in her narratives of the ladies and in doing so establishes principles - such as Christianity - that underpin the Millenium community.

Gendered philanthropy in Millenium Hall

Although women were involved in British eighteenth-century philanthropy as subscribers and as more active workers, it was predominantly men who were the public faces and organisers of such public displays of beneficence.111 Thomas Coram,

however, recognised the charitable usefulness of women when establishing the Foundling Hospital. It was not until the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with the evangelical emphasis on women's charity, that women came to have a more pivotal and indeed more public role in charity. Frank Prochaska's study of women in nineteenth-century philanthropy shows that while women performed a significant charitable activities they still had to surmount the enormous prejudice that denied women public roles. He notes that some of the greatest opposition came from churchmen, one of whom complained of 'feverish' and 'unfeminine' women, of 'amazonian women who challenge attention, and put us upon our defence'. Even when women were granted greater roles, it is noteworthy that this female influence was configured as an expansion of supposedly 'natural' female roles of altruism, nurturing and educating – the virtues associated with domesticity. At the end of the century, Hannah More suggested that women were naturally disposed to charity in the domestic sphere because of their 'tenderness', 'sympathy' and 'leisure'. Women's presence was localised in schools, in pedagogical and religious writing, and it was not until the nineteenth century that women were to have substantial public roles in charitable organisations, such as in the abolitionist movement. Hannah More and other later century evangelical writers increasingly discussed women's virtue and women's importance as domestic keepers of moral values. While this granted women power in one sense by seeing them as moral guardians, it also restricted their moral agency to the domestic realm.

114 Betty Rizzo has written that altruism was constructed as a 'natural' feature of womanhood. This construction encouraged women to denigrate their own needs, as well as encouraging them to perform charitable actions. Companions without vows. Frank Prochaska also discusses the characterisation of women's domestic virtues, Women and philanthropy, 3.
In contrast, Scott portrays upper-class women enacting broad-scale public philanthropy. The narrator acknowledges their success and comments that the women are 'imitating... [your] Creator' in their powerful beneficence (120). Despite being eminently successful in their philanthropy, the Millenium women clearly feel uncomfortable in discussing their role in these charitable activities. When Lamont states 'if any people have a right to turn reformers, you ladies are best qualified' (166), Miss Mancel firmly replies:

"We do not set up for reformers... we wish to regulate ourselves by the laws laid down to us, and as far as our influence can extend, endeavour to inforce them; beyond that small circle all is foreign to us; we have sufficient employment in improving ourselves; to mend the world requires much abler hands". (166)

Miss Mancel is distinctly uneasy with the label 'reformers', which connotes a public philanthropic role that is more suitable for 'abler hands' – perhaps a male philanthropist – than for a woman, who is required to be privately virtuous, pious and humble. Prochaska notes that even in the nineteenth century when women's philanthropy was more accepted there was still this conflict: 'benevolent women found themselves torn between a desire to express their compassion and morality, which pushed them towards a wider world, and their desire to be modest and unassuming, which kept them back'.117

As I have already discussed, conceptions of philanthropy and the philanthropist were gendered in the eighteenth century which goes some way to explaining why the Millenium women, and Sarah Scott herself, chose a relatively isolated, almost private, setting to philosophise about and enact 'reform' – it was fitting for the 'retirement and modesty' that was seen as crucial to women's nature.118

But despite their humility, their success is obvious and in this novel Scott characterises these upper-class ladies as having both moral and economic agency. The ladies in Millenium Hall are constructed as active and able participants in a range of economic and moral activities in society. Scott's novel is radical in showing women as public agents, not just objects, of social reform. The simultaneous efficiency and piety of the women's philanthropy in this novel promote both a charitable and an economic role for

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117 Prochaska Women and philanthropy, 225.
118 Prochaska Women and philanthropy, 226.
women in this new commercial society. That this is a radical vision is shown by Thomas Clarkson's comment about women Quakers: 'The Quaker-women, independently of their private, have that which no other body of women have, a public character. This is a new aera in female history'. Certainly, not even the women in other non-orthodox religions had this kind of agency. Clarkson's observation highlights that it is not just the Quakers' preaching that was significant, but that the women were allowed to have 'public character'.\textsuperscript{119} Prochaska has argued that it is precisely the public roles in philanthropy that gave women an entrée into other public functions, not only because it was an acceptable public role but also because charity provided experience applicable to a range of professions, such as nursing, teaching, and local administration.\textsuperscript{120}

As discussed earlier, Ellison's commercial interests and background emphasise the economic achievements of the Millenium community. This, combined with the Millenium ladies' explicitly ethical framework for charity and social interaction, provides models of upper-class women having an economic and moral agency in society. While later eighteenth-century views of the woman increasingly saw her as the locus of domestic virtue, Scott's view characterises the woman as using so-called 'private' virtues for public good. It is a spatial expansion of women's moral agency – away from the hearth and into the community. This is echoed in the spatial movement of the narrative from the Hall's central house outwards to the communities surrounding it.

The most conventional way in which women are given agency and authority in this text is as moral exemplars. The author clearly accepts class distinctions, but she also posits a sense of social hierarchy other than that based on wealth – a social hierarchy founded on superior virtue. The text emphasises the social importance of exemplary virtuous figures. Mrs Melvyn comments 'Example is the means given universally to all whereby to benefit society' (125). Although she states that all persons

\textsuperscript{119} Thomas Clarkson \textit{A portraiture of Quakerism}, 3 vols, London, 1806, iii, 288-9, quoted by Paul Langford \textit{Polite and commercial people}, 275.

\textsuperscript{120} Prochaska, \textit{Women and philanthropy}, 227.
have the potential to be models of virtue, throughout the novel particular exemplary figures are singled out and praised above all others. Some persons are especially qualified to know what is the correct and good way of life; in other words, elitism in virtue is one premise of Scott’s notion of community. As Johanna Smith notes, the exemplary histories of the Hall’s founders provide further narrative examples of the society’s prescriptions for the ‘proper woman’. The histories of Lady Mary and of Miss Selvyn show that a woman must act virtuously in order to receive the appropriate respect from men; as Lord Robert comments ‘levity of conduct we [men] are apt to look upon as an invitation’ (209). So there are parallel forms of display occurring in the novel: first, the framing narrative of the community displays the effects of the ladies’ philanthropy in an isolated location; second, the women’s histories show how the ladies came to be worthy of the role of ‘virtuous benefactors’. The morally exemplary ladies’ narratives provide justification for the moral and personal power they exercise at Millenium Hall.

While an important aim in this narrative seems to be asserting women’s moral and commercial agency, part of Scott’s strategy is to use Christian discourses which are, at times, in tension with the agency she promotes. The discourses of Christian piety, duty and virtue construct a sense of female subjectivity that is passive and which is based on intact virtue. For example, Miss Selvyn was an illegitimate child and her story tells of her final reconciliation with her real mother. Miss Selvyn cries on her mother’s death bed, ‘What an example of virtue have you set me! How noble your resolution! How uniform and constant your penitence! Blest you must be supremely by him who loveth the contrite heart; and you and my father I doubt not will enjoy eternal felicity together, united never more to part’ (217). The example of virtue that she presented depended on self-denial and abjection. Because she was pregnant with his child, Miss Selvyn’s mother refused to marry her fiancé, despite his insistence that they marry. Mrs Selvyn refused to marry, she gave up her daughter, and lived an impoverished and lonely life of penitence because she had committed the sin of giving in to bodily pleasures before the wedding day. She is presented as even more virtuous because she internalised society’s
prohibitions and imposed the punishment upon herself. The significant features of this model of virtue are assumption of guilt, contrition, and penitence. Elsewhere Scott advocates forgiving the 'fallen woman' if she repents; but forgiveness does not mean reestablishing the woman's virtue in the eyes of society. Scott's construction of virtue for women is bound up with Christianity. But while Scott's narrative in one sense perpetuates the construction of woman as chaste vessel of moral purity, the text also problematises this construction by giving women more public agency. Scott seems not to have seen a tension in these dual constructions of women's virtue.

The role of public moral agent is granted only to those women who have excelled in embodying conventional womanly virtue. The embedded biographies of the Millenium ladies show that they exemplified virtuous, dutiful, submissive womanhood and fulfilled the conventional roles society had set for them. They all suffered at the hands of cruel persons who had more power than they did. They 'escaped' from these situations, not only because of their own virtue or agency, but because of providential events. For example, Mrs Morgan endured a tyrannic husband and sister-in-law and his early death and her inheritance left her young and wealthy enough to found the Hall. The women's reward for submitting and enduring such hardship was, ultimately, to be saved by providential circumstances which in turn brought them to live at Millenium Hall. The dependence on providence to rescue women from terrible situations is a tension in the Millenium philosophy, at least for the late-twentieth century reader who sees a conflict between moral and economic agency on the one hand and a reliance on providence to intervene in exploitative situations on the other. Clearly Scott is drawing a distinction between Millenium Hall where the conditions are such that the women can enact their agency and the wider society where they are constrained from doing so. Nevertheless, she uses the same Christian discourses to justify passivity on the one hand and agency on the other. Scott seems not to have found a way to articulate a pragmatic way for upper-class women to be privately virtuous, married and publicly morally active in the outside society.

121 In Chapter 2 of this thesis, the discussion of A journey through every stage of life considered the case of Mrs Traverse who repents but who can never have the roles of wife and mother.
The individual in society

The text emphasises women's individual moral agency, virtue and self-examination, but the individual is also characterised as part of a larger body, society. Lady Mary, Mrs Morgan and Miss Mancel articulate their view of social organisation to their two gentlemen visitors when discussing the Hall's relative economic independence. The following passage is significant in foregrounding the relations between economic and moral relationships in society. Miss Mancel declares: 'What I understand by society is a state of mutual confidence, reciprocal services, and correspondent affections' (111). This philosophy underpins economic transactions and moral relations in the Millenium society.

Scott's ideology of moral commerce is a product of the commercial realities of her time, but it also echoes classical conceptions of individual and civic virtue and public spiritedness. The notion of the 'reciprocal communication of benefits' is similar to Cicero's 'mutual helpfulness' or 'mutual exchange' represented in his *De Officiis*, or *Republic*. 'Mutual helpfulness' provides 'a more humane consideration for others, with the result that life is better supplied with all it requires; by giving and receiving, by mutual exchange of commodities and conveniences, we succeed in meeting all our wants'. But this idea of civic and personal co-operation, just like Scott's moral commerce, is historically situated. Cicero's pronouncements were addressed to, and for, a select elite group in the Republic. Scott's notion of a society of 'reciprocal communication of benefits' is more inclusive in the sense that it sees bonds between people of diverse situations: the under-employed spinner who provides cloth to the women who cook for him, for example; or the gentlewoman who spends her leisure time in charitable work, helping the poor woman who cannot feed and clothe her children. It is Scott's redefinition of 'civic humanism' whereby every individual is a

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122 *De Officiis*, London: Heineman, 1918, 183. As quoted by Athol Fitzgibbons *Adam Smith's system of liberty, wealth, and virtue*, 48.
citizen – not just the propertied man – and, therefore, every individual has a right and responsibility to contribute to and benefit from society.123

Athol Fitzgibbons suggests that Adam Smith's social and economic philosophy also has a debt to Ciceronian notions of 'mutual exchange' as he saw commercial and moral interrelations between individuals. Smith's opening sentence of *The theory of moral sentiments* reinforces this: 'How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others... though he derives nothing from it'.124 He criticised Hume's theory of utility, arguing that individuals are bound fundamentally by social bonds rather than by utility. Smith explains that the Humean notion of utility whereby society operates and is held together by self-love and commercial utility does not account for the moral interrelations between people.

Society may subsist among different men, as among different merchants from a sens [sic] of its utility, without any mutual love or affection; and though no man in it should owe any obligation, or be bound in gratitude to any other, it may still be upheld by a mercenary exchange of good offices according to an agreed valuation.125

Social interaction may occur this way, but it is an incomplete view of society in Smith's terms – it is commerce without morality. Smith's systematic view of society sees a natural interest between people that goes beyond purely commercial utility.

Smith explained this interest in terms of an individual's 'sympathy' with another. This capacity, further developed by him in the notion of the 'impartial spectator' was, for Adam Smith, what gave individuals a sense of justice and reasonableness, that is an ideal against which they can judge their own and other's actions. Again in *The theory of moral sentiments* Smith writes: 'The virtues of prudence, justice and beneficence, have no tendency to produce any but the most agreeable effects'.126 But Smith also saw

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124 Adam Smith *The theory of moral sentiments*, as quoted by Fitzgibbons, 54.


a shortcoming in strictly moral codes for individual behaviour, according to Fitzgibbons, because most individuals would be unable to live up to the strict codes of virtue. It is in this context that Smith identified and articulated a system of commercial relations and conduct bound up with moral codes. Smith's project was to develop and explain systematically motives and principles of individual behaviour and social interaction in a moral and economic context. Increasingly, commentators on Adam Smith acknowledge the interrelatedness of his moral and his economic philosophy.\textsuperscript{127} Although writing in different genres, and for different audiences, Sarah Scott and Adam Smith shared an Enlightenment view of society that combined commercial relations with relationships built on rational virtues.

Just as Adam Smith expressed faith in 'sympathy' and 'mutual affection' as bonds between people, Scott in her novels emphasises the importance of friendship's reciprocal interest and offers it as a model for societal relationships. To make this leap from individual relationships to extended social bonds, Scott frames friendships in financial as well as personal terms. Miss Mancel's and Miss Melvyn's friendship is, from the beginning, a relationship that is a constant negotiation of personal and financial obligation, gratitude and generosity. 'Perfect friendship' eliminates traditional notions of individual wealth and property. Miss Melvyn comments:

\begin{quote}
where hearts are strictly united, she had no notion of any distinction in things of less importance, the adventitious goods of fortune. The boundaries and barriers raised by those two watchful and suspicious enemies, Meum and Tuum, were in her opinion broke down by true friendship; and all property laid in one undistinguished common. (93)
\end{quote}

Explaining this relation of financial and emotional ties in this intimate friendship helps Scott establish the larger scale interrelation of finance and morality in social relations in the Millenium community.

Delarivier Manley used similar concepts to characterise the equality amongst the female members of her utopian community in \textit{New Atalantis}:

\textsuperscript{127} See, for example, Deirdre McCloskey \textit{The vices of economists – the virtues of the bourgeoisie}, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996, especially chapter 5.
In this little Commonwealth is no Property; whatever a Lady possesses, is, sans ceremone, at the service, and for the use of her Fair Friend, without the vain nice scruple of being oblig’d. 'Tis her Right; the other disputes it not; no, not so much as in Thought, they have no reserve; mutual Love bestows all things in common.

(i, 589)

But while Manley's Cabal used this philosophy of the feminine 'gift economy' in an exclusively female setting, Scott uses a similar philosophy to integrate male and female in the Millenium community. Nevertheless, while in principle it can operate between men and women, the examples in the novel are between women. As we have seen in The history of Cornelia, such open communications between men and women are complicated by sexual temptation and obligation.

Wetenhall Wilkes discussed friendship in his Letter of genteel and moral advice to a young lady commenting that 'without the commerce of mutual good Offices, how shall we subsist'. In similar terms Miss Mancel describes friendship as 'continually endeavouring to serve and oblige each other' and this 'reciprocal communication of benefits' is rendered both in economic and moral terms (112). When attempting to convey the strength and bond of moral duty between friends she invokes a formal relationship akin to an economic or legal contract. In this way, friendship is presented as a strong and necessary structure of a functional society. Lamont finds such obligations oppressive:

"You seem, madam, answered Lamont, to choose to make us all slaves to each other?"

"No, sir, replied Mrs. Mancel, I would only make you friends. Those who are really such are continually endeavouring to serve and oblige each other; this reciprocal communication of benefits should be universal, and then we might with reason be fond of this world". (112)

George Ellison, the narrator, endorses this conception of society as a grouping of individuals depending upon each other. He describes self sufficiency as:

dangerous to many people, for if, as some have supposed, and, in regard to a great part of the world, I fear with truth, mutual wants are the great bands of society, a person thus placed, would be in danger of feeling himself so independant [sic] a


129 6th edition, 1753, 121.
being as might tempt him to disclaim all commerce with mankind, since he could not be benefited by them. (110)

Wants and needs then, in Scott's view, combined with generosity and friendship are what bind people together and make a healthy society. But this and Miss Mancel's description of society as 'a state of mutual confidence, reciprocal services, and correspondent affections' depend on individuals possessing Christian principles and rational virtue – 'The love, as well as the pleasures of society, is founded in reason' (111). 'Reason wishes for communication and improvement; benevolence longs for objects on which to exert itself' suggests Lady Mary (110). A strong community can not be founded, says Miss Mancel, on the irrational and selfish passions described by Hobbes (111). Such passions, she suggests, are what produce the crowds of the city. She points out the difference between a 'crowd' and 'society' noting that the former is ruled by selfish passions, the latter by reasoned virtue (111).

This interrelation of individual virtue and social stability shows that Scott's ideology is aimed at critiquing broad social structures as well as individual conduct. In this novel, then, the ideology of moral commerce has a two strand approach to social improvement. First, she places great stress on individual piety, virtue, and moral action and, second, she sees broader societal stability as arising from individuals and groups executing their responsibilities to others. It is a pragmatic ideology of moral commerce suggesting guidelines for moral behaviour and a detailed blueprint for discretionary funding of charitable projects. The blueprint for philanthropy that Scott creates in *Millenium Hall* offers both explicit guides for benevolence and social responsibility, and implicit new codes of ethical behaviour. These codes are based on moral pragmatism informed by Christianity, and social organisation that mimics the 'reciprocal communication of benefits' offered by commercial relations and responsible friendship.

What Scott offers in *Millenium Hall* is a Christian and economically efficient community – it is a conventional Christian charity which accommodates new commercial principles to ensure an economically, as well as morally, healthy
community. This ideology of moral commerce incorporates Christian piety, individual responsibility and moral pragmatism with a commercial model of interaction, whereby one fulfils one's responsibilities of benevolence and charity, while benefiting needy individuals and broad social stability. The Christian ideology in Scott's novel gestures toward evangelicalism in that it places more emphasis on service than doctrine, but all Christian denominations considered charity as fundamental duty. The women in Millenium Hall, however, also use Christian-based charity to exercise independent agency; their charitable role is not that of the charitable helpmate that most Christian doctrine articulated.130

This section considers the Christian ideology as a source of authority in the Millenium community. Christian principles are the explicit foundation of the Millenium philosophy. Lamont asks Mrs Mancel which laws regulate her actions:

"From whence, answered Mrs Mancel, should a Christian take them, from the Alcoran, think you, or from the wiser Confucius, or would you seek in Coke on Littleton, that you may escape the iron hand of the legislative power? No, surely, the Christian's law is written in the Bible, there, independent of political regulations of particular communities, is to be found the law of the supreme Legislator. There, indeed, is contained the true and invariable law of nations; and according to our performance of it, we shall be tried by a Judge, whose wisdom and impartiality secure him from error, and whose power is able to execute his own decrees. This is the law I meant, and whoever obeys it, can never offend essentially against the private ordinances of any community. This all to whom it has been declared are bound to obey, my consent to receive it for the rule of my actions is not material; for as whoever lives in England must submit to the laws of the country, though he may be ignorant of many of the particulars of them". (166)

Mrs Mancel asserts the authority of Christianity as law while radically undermining political and legislative law. She states that every individual operates under Christian law and authority — whether or not s/he acknowledges it — and, moreover, that an individual who does so is operating under an authority that surpasses man-made legislation and that extends beyond the boundaries of individual nations. By invoking such a power, the Millsenium ladies, as spokeswomen for that power, assume a powerful position indeed.

130 For the relationship between women's charitable service and evangelical and other Christian religion see Prochaska, Women and philanthropy, 8-17.
Publicly the women are reluctant to acknowledge this authority, 'We do not set up for reformers', says Mrs Mancel. When considering the manifestations of the ladies' power in the community, it is important to remind ourselves that power in itself is not necessarily bad or corrupt or exploitative. Barry Hindess, in his analysis of power, argues that there are different types of power, and while much has been made of the simple quantitative sense of power, what perhaps needs greater attention is that conception of power where there is a tacit agreement between those with the power and those over whom the power is exercised.131 In all her works, and especially her histories which I discuss in Appendix C, Scott implicitly and explicitly discourses on power and particularly the conditions under which one has the right to govern or direct others' actions. Explicitly, God has ultimate authority in the Millenium community. But practically, the ladies who established the community have power over the other inhabitants. While they try to inculcate in their members the belief that God is the all-powerful author of all works, in effect they exercise his power. There is a tension, however, between the clear consensus that the women are in a sense 'governing' the community, and the women's explicit statements that they are only governing their own actions which, incidentally, have charitable results for the rest of the community. As already mentioned, Mrs Mancel denies that they are 'reformers': 'we wish to regulate ourselves by the laws laid down to us, and as far as our influence can extend, endeavour to enforce them' (166). It is difficult for the women to accept that they have power because in their eyes God is all-powerful and they are entirely subject to his will and law. Moreover, part of God's law is prescribing women's virtuous humility which is at odds with their agency.

But what is important in the community is not so much the women's refusal to explicitly acknowledge their power, but the implicit and explicit acknowledgement of the inhabitants that the women possess this authority. In An essay concerning human

131 Barry Hindess Discourses of power: from Hobbes to Foucault. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996. Hindess discusses the various theories of power from Hobbes to Foucault to show how problematic is the notion of power. What is of interest for my discussion here is the problematics of legitimate power. The model of governmental power that relies on the rational consent of the governed is complex and as Hindess has argued, we need to question – as Foucault has – the extent to which there is real moral autonomy on the part of the governed citizen, 21.
Locke identifies three types of law: Divine law, Civil law the 'Law of Opinion or Reputation'. While the Millenium women continually draw authority for their rules from Divine law, it is Locke's third category, the 'Law of Opinion or Reputation' that is also powerful in the community. Locke writes that 'he, who imagines Commendation and Disgrace, not to be strong Motives on Men. . . . seems little skill'd in the Nature, or History of Mankind'.

Despite their stated humility, the ladies do have authority and influence because they financially support so many poor; with this power they can enforce their 'laws'. The ladies' superior social position grants them authority with their social 'inferiors', but their moral and practical advice have weight primarily because the old women’s and poor girls' livelihoods ultimately depend on accepting their benefactors' conditions. The model of power that Scott establishes is hierarchical, where each has an assigned role and function, but where all in the community can expect safety from exploitation and physical need. Mrs Mancel summarises this power structure in the novel: 'Every thing to me looses[sic] its charm when it is put out of that station wherein nature, or to speak more properly, the all-wise Creator has placed it' (71). As Felicity Nussbaum has observed, 'the privileged women at Millenium Hall gain subjectivity and freedom in part by defining themselves as superior to the poor and to the disabled who depend on them'.

vii. Millenium Hall as a vade mecum of charity

This section of the discussion examines the charitable works conducted by the women and considers the implications of these works for Scott's ideology of moral commerce. The Millenium Hall programme of philanthropy includes: a school, cottages for the elderly, provision for young married couples, nurses and food for the sick, a home for

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133 Locke Essay Book II, chapter XXVIII, #12.

134 *Torrid zones*, 161.
orphaned or destitute daughters of gentlemen, a private enclosure for the physically
deformed, employment for those with disabilities, and a carpet manufacturing business.

There are two different philanthropic philosophies in the community according to the
class origins of the poor – the poor of the lower social orders and the genteel poor. The
loquacious old woman who lives in one of the twelve cottages tells George Ellison that
her health and happiness are entirely owing to the ladies' activities:

"I was almost starved when they put me into this house, and no shame of mine, for
so were my neighbours too; perhaps we were not so painstaking as we might have
been; but that was not our faults, you know, as we had not things to work with,
nor any body to set us to work, poor folks cannot know every thing as these good
ladies do; we were half dead for want of victuals, and then people have not
courage to set about any thing. Nay, all the parish were so when they came into
it, young and old, there was not much to chuse, few of us had rags to cover us, or
a morsel of bread to eat except the two Squires; they indeed grew rich, because
they had our work, and paid us not enough to keep life and soul together; they
live about a mile off, so perhaps they did not know how poor we were, I must say
that for them; the ladies tell me I ought not to speak against them, for every one
has faults, only we see other peoples, and are blind to our own; and certainly it is
true enough, for they are very wise ladies as well as good, and must know such
things."(65, emphasis added)

We learn much about Scott's view of poverty from this character's voice. Most
obviously, the old woman is grateful for her rescue from poverty. But, in her
explanation of the parish circumstances she communicates the poverty that comes
from agrarian changes and the failure both of feudal gentry paternalism and of Poor
Law administration. The two squires 'grew rich, because they had our work, and
paid us not enough to keep life and soul together', she states. She reveals the failure
of the traditional paternalist system of responsibility. While the old woman – who
is individuated with a voice, but not with a name – shows an acceptance of the
squires' exploitation, the ironic tone shows Scott's scathing criticism of the gentry's
denial of responsibility for caring for the parish poor. Although he does not list
Scott's works amongst them, Paul Langford discusses the plethora of literary works
that articulated the perceived crisis in rural paternalism. Langford suggests that this
crisis was a result of negligent gentry, who were either physically absent, or had
abandoned their moral responsibilities to their rural communities.\footnote{Public life and the propertied Englishman, chapter 6, especially 367-377.}
The old woman is deferential to the ladies: 'poor folks cannot know every thing' as
the ladies do. The model of power is parental – and maternal rather than paternal.
It has its basis in care and its method is encouragement. In Scott's novels the
persons who are dependent on the benefactors are often the staunchest advocates of
the systems that keep them in subordinate and dependent relations to these
benefactors.

Charity uses money not only to alleviate the poor's physical needs, but also to
encourage modifications in behaviour, thought and belief. The old woman explains to
Ellison that the ladies' approbation of certain types of behaviour is 'a great
encouragement' (67) to continuing that behaviour. After hearing the old woman's
description of the society, Ellison considers: 'I was so pleased with the good effect
which the charity of her benefactors had on the mind, as well as the situation of this old
woman' (68). The poorer or lower classes in the community are persuaded to conform
through physical assistance, financial rewards and personal approbation.

Millenium Hall recreates basic social structures evident in the 'outside' community.
The poorer members perform a labouring function in the Millenium community
which conforms to the social construction of the poor as labourers in the wider
community. They receive charity appropriate to their station in life. The poor
women are given cottages and set to work. Ellison is impressed with the neatness
of the cottages (65). They represent economic efficiency, moral containment and
social harmony. There is a sense of generational harmony, too, at Millenium
Hall with the elderly women caring for young children. The children, some as
young as five years old, are also set tasks. Part of the poor children's education is
teaching them to be practically and economically useful. Young working class girls
are educated and set labouring activities appropriate to their class. The emphasis

136 Both in painting and in literature during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the clean,
efficient cottage is portrayed as a symbol of dignity in poverty and indeed it is even proposed as a
solution to vagrancy and physical and metaphorical dispossession. Interestingly, Millenium Hall and The
history of Sir George Ellison provide early examples of this idealised cottage. In George Ellison, the
protagonist provides his slaves with cottages and in Millenium Hall the older and the maimed inhabitants
of the Hall are established in uniform, neat cottages away from the rest of the community.
is on teaching the practical skills that will make them productive in the outside community, not on teaching them aesthetic skills such as musicianship. Educating the young of the poorer sort will help them to fulfil the station of life to which providence has appointed them.

When Ellison speaks with the old women about the cottages, the conversation emphasises issues of work and labour. The old, blind and lame perform labour according to their abilities. They clean, spin, cook, and care for children. Ellison questions the efficiency and 'profits' of their labour. She responds: 'There is nothing in that, . . . the ladies steward sends us in all we want in the way of meat, drink, and firing' (67). This is an important indication of the economic ideology of the community, particularly with regard to the construction of the poor and their labour. Laboured employment is regarded both as a right and a responsibility. People are employed according to their skills and abilities. The concept of efficiency does not necessarily mean maximising profits. Efficiency is ensuring that everyone has work and is satisfied. The concept of efficiency is reconfigured in a moral framework. If the labour of the poor is not sufficient to support them, then their income or needs are supplemented by charity from the ladies. This seems to be a direct comment by Scott on that group of 'poor' in the population who have employment, but whose earnings are insufficient to provide a subsistence living.

Another way that Scott reconfigures labour in moral terms is to show the other benefits accruing from one's labour. An important function of the poor women's labour is to assist others. Each person helps according to his or her abilities and is paid in return with physical assistance and with the satisfaction that he or she has assisted someone else in need. There is both a duty and a desire to assist. 'Susan is lame, so she spins cloathes for Rachel; and Rachel cleans Susan's house, and does such things for her as she cannot do for herself' (66). Charity to others includes making them feel capable and allowing them to do good for others.: 'The ladies

137 Sarah Scott and Barbara Montagu employed disabled servants as well. In a letter to her sister, Sarah refers to her deaf servant, (MO 5223, December, 1752).
settled all these matters at first, and told us, that as they, to please God, assisted us, we must in order to please him serve others; and that to make us happy they would put us in a way, poor as we are, to do good to many' (66). So part of the charity extended towards the poor is placing them in a position where they can reap the benefits of assisting others, because, in order to be a good Christian, one must exercise charity to others.

Scott's representation of the poor labourers at the Hall comments on the changing labour practices in mid-eighteenth century England. Changing economic and agricultural circumstances left some of the locals destitute. Enclosure and other agricultural reform displaced traditional rural workers. Cottage industries, such as weaving, were replaced with factories. The old weaver who provides cloth for the community, was 'broke for want of work' (67), before the community employed him. But while the community reasserts a paternalist type of responsibility for the poor and employs such displaced workers, it is not returning to feudal models of labour. Scott's vision of a morally commercial society is not nostalgic. The ladies establish a modern carpet manufacture, but, again, their economic framework for this modern manufacture is underpinned by morality. Wages are higher for those in need, such as children and the elderly, than they are for the abler bodied, and all workers are provided with sickness benefits. While the terms are anachronistic, it is a socialist rather than capitalist economy. Linda Dunne suggests that Millenium Hall replaces the existing patriarchal economy with an alternative economy based on 'communal feminist principles'. Clearly, the subsistence model whereby the community primarily provides for its own needs contrasts with the increasingly capitalist economy in which the Hall operates. Still, as I have discussed, it is a community with strict social hierarchy and this hierarchy is reflected in work practices and the types of assistance given to different groups within the Hall.

138 Linda Dunne 'Mothers and monsters' 58.
The ladies' philanthropic approach is different for the 'genteel poor'. Some of this group are without money entirely, but most contribute whatever small fortunes they have to the running of the community. The indigent gentlewomen are provided with a different type of charity, partly because of their different social status and also because they have a financial investment in the community. They are provided with a group house, suitably furnished for their social station, and charitable works to occupy their otherwise leisured daily lifestyle. Mrs Maynard admits that it was more difficult to discipline the indigent gentlewomen who, though in some financial straits, were less willing to accept the absolute authority of women of equal social standing. Nevertheless, most of the gentlewomen had been reduced to dependency on relatives, to being 'toadeaters', so were grateful for the Millenium refuge.

For the first year of this establishment my friends dedicated most of their time and attention to this new community, who were every day either at the hall, or these ladies with them, endeavouring to cultivate in this sisterhood that sort of disposition which is most productive of peace. By their example and suggestions, (for it is difficult to give unreserved advice where you may be suspected of a design to dictate) by their examples and suggestions therefore, they led them to industry, and shewed it to be necessary to all stations, as the basis of almost every virtue. (117-118)

Repeatedly, Scott uses the discourse of moral exemplars when describing the women's power or authority. 'Example and suggestions' are more likely to succeed with their social equals than 'unreserved advice'. There is an emphasis here on the fact that the women had to 'cultivate in this sisterhood that sort of disposition which is most productive of peace' – a disposition of humility and generosity.

More so with the gentlewomen than with the poor, the Millenium ladies represent their power as being democratic. For example, a ballot conducted amongst the gentlewomen determines if any member is to be expelled from the community. Rule 10 of the community states that:

if any one of the ladies behaves with imprudence she shall be dismissed, and her fortune returned; likewise if any should by turbulence or pettishness of temper, disturb the society, it shall be in the power of the rest of them to expel her; a majority of three parts of the community being for the expulsion, and this to be performed by balloting. (117)

139 See pp 116-117 of the text for the eleven rules for the community of gentlewomen.
Nevertheless, the eleven stated rules that govern the gentlewomen's house were written by the Millenium founders and they are rules that dictate economic, physical and moral behaviour. They enforce their standards of conduct by appealing to God's authority, and through their own exemplary behaviour, and through reward and punishment. The ultimate punishment is expulsion from the community which, given the options for the poor gentlewoman, would have been a significant deterrent to bad behaviour.

The passage quoted above states that the gentlewomen were encouraged to 'industry' (118). This industry, however, is not physical labour as it is for the poor within the community. In her discussion of Scott's novel, Linda Dunne highlights the emphasis on aesthetics at the Hall, but it is important to stipulate that aesthetic pursuits are subjugated to industry in the community and, where allowed, it is limited to the genteel groups in the society. The gentlewomen's labour is predominantly labour expended in charitable works. The ladies instructed the gentlewomen that 'it was the duty of every person to be of service to others. That those whose hands and minds were by the favours of fortune exempt from the necessity of labouring for their own support, ought to be employed for such as are destitute of these advantages' (118). This work entailed 'visiting,' 'admonishing' and 'teaching' the poor. The working classes spend most of their time working for their own subsistence and only a little time performing charitable visitations.

The poor continue in this narrative to be a group, types that fit into a reform programme, rather than articulated individuals with a sense of agency. But the exclusion of their individual voices does not indicate an exclusion of their concerns. It seems rather that the rhetorical demands of the genre might dictate this exclusion as Scott writes to prompt action by the upper and middling classes. By the standards of Scott's society, her suggestions – even though limited primarily to the lives of gentlewomen – were still offering significant departures from conventional roles for women. It is women such as the ones she represents to whom Scott directs her advice. It is not the poor girls, nor the disabled nor elderly whom she hopes to inculcate with
philanthropic ideals. It is for gentlewomen that Scott is articulating alternatives to marriage or dependent toadyism.

Recent criticism of the eighteenth-century novel, and of the novel of sensibility in particular, suggests that the novel as a genre struggled to represent the poor as individuated and voiced. Some commentators, especially on the sentimental novel, have discussed the idea that representations of the poor have served to illustrate the moral qualities or sensibility of the wealthy rather than anything about the poor themselves. The poor are functional types. In some respects *Millenium Hall* is consistent with this trend by showing the poor as types to show the success of the ladies' charitable philosophy, and to illustrate the ladies' generosity and sensitivity, or to conform with other stereotypes. Ellison's early description of the rural idyll renders the haymakers in accordance with pastoral images rather than with a realistic description appropriate to the heavy work they perform. As Barker-Benfield notes, and as is evidenced in Scott's novel, such representations of the poor often accompanied idealisations of class relations whereby the poor were happily subservient to their social superiors; such idealisations were often contrary to the actual tensions between the lower and upper ranks.

The final section of this chapter discusses marriage in *Millenium Hall*. The conceptions of marriage in the novel construct roles for the poor and for women in society. Marriage has both an economic and a moral function and value in the Millenium society. Mrs Morgan explicitly states that marriage is a 'general duty'. In eighteenth-century England a woman was, to a large extent, defined by her marital status. Her productive integrated role in society was largely informed by being a wife and mother. The extent to which the narrative endorses this view is evident in the description of Mr Morgan's unmarried sister: 'Mrs. Susanna Morgan had lived immaculate to the age of fifty-five. The state of virginity could not be

141 *Culture of sensibility*, 230-231 and E. P. Thompson 'The moral economy of the English crowd'.
laid to her charge as an offence against society, for it had not been voluntary' (132).

This description suggests that remaining single for a woman is a contravention of citizenship and womanhood. This view is evidenced in other texts of the period. In Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas*, the character Nekayah calls single people 'outlaws of human nature'.

Although non-fictional texts of the period also emphasise men's duty to marry and thus promote population growth, the responsibility for women to marry places great emphasis on their primary role as mothers and guardians to future citizens. This ideology of womanly duty lays the foundations for the evangelical view of women whereby they are seen as domestic angels. For women in the eighteenth century marriage was the predominant story of their lives and for many of the women in Millenium Hall this story continues. The community encourages marriage for the young women, and some of the gentlewomen who live in the mansion also choose to marry or remarry (120).

The Millenium ladies reject marriage for themselves, but actively participate in the construction of lower orders of women as marriageable commodities by making the poorer girls 'good value' in the marriage market. The novel explicitly advocates marriage as a fundamental unit of a stable society. Young men visit Millenium Hall to find wives who they know will be virtuous, practically educated in domestic skills, and financially productive, as the ladies provide young couples with farm stock and household goods. The housekeeper tells George Ellison:

Nor does their bounty cease on the wedding-day, for they are always ready to assist them on any emergency; and watch with so careful an eye over the conduct of these young people, as proves of much greater service to them than the money they bestow. They kindly, but strongly, reprehend the first error, and guard them by the most prudent admonitions against a repetition of their fault. By little presents they shew their approbation of those who behave well, always proportioning their gifts to the merits of the person; which are therefore looked upon as the most honourable testimony of their conduct, and are treasured up as valuable marks of distinction. This encouragement has great influence, and

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143 *The Monthly Review*, 25, 1762, discussed *Single life discouraged for the public utility. Or, an essay on ways and means for the supplies of the government*, London: Rivington, 1762: 'The Author of this Pamphlet calls loudly for a Tax upon Batchelors, which he thinks would not only promote the annual increment of people, by the encouragement of Matrimony, but would produce yearly to the Government the sum of 400,000 l', 502. Jonas Hanway also discusses 'the great benefit of conjugal attachment' to individuals, to children, to the nation, *The defects of police, the cause of immorality*, London, 1775, xx.
144 This suggests that analyses of gender need to be accompanied by analyses of class.
makes them vie with each other in endeavours to excel in sobriety, cleanliness, meekness and industry. (167-168)

These marriages provide an interchange of morality into the wider community with economic dimensions – the women are both morally and economically good value.145

The idea of marriage is conceived in economic terms when the narrator speaks of young farmers wanting to 'obtain' the Millenium girls because their skills are 'profitable' (168). The metaphor of exchange is prominent here, with the problematic equation of moral and economic 'good value' in a prospective spouse. The combination of morality and economics was of course a fundamental issue for women of marriageable age in the eighteenth century. The eighteenth-century woman needed to have both material and moral value.146 A woman must possess virtue in order to reap the 'benefits' of her husband's property; her virtue has a commercial value. This is in addition to whatever dowry and wealth she brings to the alliance. The ladies want to ensure that the young couple's marriage is successful, for them and for the health of society at large. The young women, and their husbands spread practical Christian virtues learnt under the tutelage of the ladies.

Values are historically contingent and socially constructed. In Millenium Hall marriage has a hybridised value – it has intrinsic value, or dignity, and a 'use' value, that is marriage serves a practical use in the ordering and functioning of a healthy commercial economy.147 In Millenium Hall the value of marriage changes depending on the variables of social status. The women running the Hall eschew marriage for themselves, but advocate it for the poorer girls. Mrs Morgan and Ellison discuss this apparent contradiction:

145 But this construction of the young bride as an economic commodity is not Scott's alone. Substantial economic and social research about labour and demographic patterns in eighteenth-century England shows that women's perceived and literal value as wage earners affected the patterns of marriage. For example, families who depended on a 'family wage' were loath to lose the financial input of the daughters and consequently many women deferred marriage. See, for example, M. J. Daunton Progress and poverty, 404.
146 Lynne Vallone discusses the relationship between moral and material values of women in marriage as represented in conduct literature and novels of the eighteenth century, Disciplines of virtue: girls' culture in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995, 49-67.
147 Elizabeth Anderson makes the point that individuals value things in particular ways to a large extent because we operate in a 'social setting that upholds norms for that mode of valuation'. 'To realize a good as a particular kind of good we place it in a particular matrix of social relations'. Value in ethics and economics, Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press, 1993, 12.
... I could not forbear telling them, that "I was surprized to find so great encouragement given to matrimony by persons, whose choice shewed them little inclined in its favour".

"Does it surprise you," answered Mrs. Melvyn smiling, "to see people promote that in others, which they themselves do not chuse to practise? We consider matrimony as absolutely necessary to the good of society; it is a general duty; but as, according to all antient tenures, those obliged to perform knight's service, might, if they chose to enjoy their own firesides, be excused by sending deputies to supply their places; so we, using the same privilege substitute many others, and certainly much more promote wedlock, than we could do by entering into it ourselves." (163)

The reforms are done to these girls: they have a different agency in the community. The value of marriage for these girls is measurable in practical financial terms, rather than in personal emotional terms. The poor girls are not individuated as are the ruling women. Indeed, in this plan the poor girls serve a rhetorical purpose as they illustrate Scott's point about marriage and its role in social cohesion. The ladies running Millenium Hall justify their single status because it allows them to better facilitate a healthier society especially for the lower sorts and to encourage marriage in general. Paul Langford remarks that Jonas Hanway considered that his single status allowed him to devote himself to charitable works. The ladies' aim is to make young women successful in society; that success comes through virtuous and economically viable marriage. Far from using marriage to secure the 'perpetuation or protection' of the community as one commentator has suggested, the Millenium women use marriage and their manipulation of marriage to ensure that young women are not likely to need the shelter of a community such as the Hall. The ladies are relieved of the obligation of marriage because they serve a different function in society – philanthropy. In this novel at least, Scott seems to find it difficult to articulate a space for women where they can combine these roles of philanthropic agent and marriage partner.

Miss Melvyn's approach to her forced early marriage to an elderly, selfish man provides a model of how a wife should submit to unhappiness in marriage. In acceding to this

149 Boone Tradition counter tradition, 287.
150 In Journey through every stage of life this also is the case; although in The history of Cornelia and The history of Sir George Ellison, husband and wife couples are depicted as the perfect philanthropic unit.
Miss Melvyn hopes to save her reputation, but in return she subjects her freedom to duties, responsibility and reputation. Although her husband treats her cruelly she submits with no complaint, considering that hiding her unhappiness is integral to a wife's duty to her husband. In depicting this marriage, Scott shows that marriage for the eighteenth-century woman required the subjection of her will to duties which in some cases amounted to little more than slavery and cruelty. Mrs Morgan, nee Melvyn, had no redress against her husband's unjust treatment of her. Her only satisfaction came from submitting dutifully and carrying out her duties without complaint and this, in turn, gave her the satisfaction that she fulfilled her duties as a married woman. This construction of the married woman concomitantly constructs the married man as dominant and unrestricted. The fact that 'providence' leaves Mrs Morgan widowed relatively young and in possession of a large fortune seems to be Scott's reward for her character's previous compliance with social mores, but providential intervention is Mrs Morgan's only escape from the tyranny of this marriage.

In Scott's novel, providence plays a large part in saving women from dangerous or unbearable situations, often indicating how little agency they possess to effect their own escape. Mr Hintman dies before he can endanger Louisa's chastity; Mr Morgan dies leaving Mrs Morgan happily widowed with money and the property in which she founds the Millenium community; Louisa gains employment with a woman who turns out to be her long lost mother; Miss Selvyn discovers her mother, and Lady Mary Jones has an accident that saves her from eloping with a married man. Individuals are exhorted to surrender their lives to providence, for God knows what is best. This exhortation to submit to providence in these dramatised narratives sits as a contrast to the framing narrative which shows the Millenium ladies with agency, actively working to better their lives and the lives of others. But showing the limited agency of most women is an accurate depiction of the powerlessness of women's lives in the eighteenth century. These tensions in the text between agency in some quarters and not in others show the attempt to smooth
over the inconsistencies of Scott's Christian ideology. But the ideology is not seamless and just as Scott uses Christianity as a source of authority for her critique of society, it also at times undermines her radical critique.

Boone suggests that the marital state has been represented as the ideal in the novel genre and a happy marriage equals supreme happiness: 'the power of the fictional marriage tradition owes much of its idealizing appeal to its manipulation of form to evoke an illusion of order and resolution that, as we have seen, glosses over the contradictions, the inequities, concealed in the institution of marriage itself'.

Despite the Millenium Hall ladies' own narratives showing the ongoing injustices of marriage for women, they advocate marriage and the family unit as a stabilising force in society. They advocate a specific type of marriage – the woman entering such a marriage is educated in virtue, piety and practical skills appropriate to her station of life. They educate the poor women in useful skills and provide financially for the young couples, and while this assistance gives a good grounding for the marriage it does not address the more complex gender and economic inequalities that cause conflict and exploitation in marriage. Indeed, this solution is a partial solution only for the lower orders of society. Apart from retreating from patriarchal society, the Millenium philosophy provides few solutions to the inequalities and tyranny associated with marriage for women of rank other than the long term optimistic view of changing social mores to promote more caring relationships.

In her reform blueprint, Sarah Scott might have been making a statement about the inadequacies of existing English society, but that does not mean that her handbook for reform was a complete revamp of this society to which she was reacting. Necessarily, there is criticism of society inherent in her novel and much critical work on *Millenium Hall* has emphasised this. Nevertheless, Scott's vision depends on significant existing social structures, such as class distinctions; the construction of the individual as a

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151 *Tradition counter tradition*, 9.
Christian subject; the family as the fundamental moral and economic unit of society; and Christian religion as the supreme authority. This is not to say that Scott is a reactionary thinker; but it is to point out that plans for reform depend on broad frameworks, and often these frameworks are more rigid or conservative than surface details might lead us to believe. As Bridget Hill has observed of Mary Astell, there is a central contradiction in Astell's philosophy: 'her attachment to the divine right of kings and passive obedience opposes her reluctance to accept women's position as slaves to domestic tyranny'. Although Scott is more critical of conventional political architecture she, too, had difficulty reconciling her critique of upper-class women's public roles with poorer women's lives and with Christian passive obedience.

Conclusion

In her study *Communities of women*, Nina Auerbach comments that

All true communities are knit together by their codes, but a code can range from dogma to a flexible, private, and often semi-conscious set of beliefs. In literature at least, male communities tend to live by a code in its most explicit, formulated, and inspirational sense; while in female communities, the code seems a whispered and a fleeting thing, more a buried language than a rallying cry. Auerbach articulates an ideology of community. It is notable that in the female community that Scott creates there is an 'explicit, formulated, and inspirational' code uncharacteristic, Auerbach suggests, for women. It is explicitly ideological. Scott had an explicit agenda in delineating her community of women. She encroached on male political and philosophical territories by critiquing society, making this novel an important contribution to mid-century cultural debates. It is important not just because she is a woman joining other outspoken women writers, but because she was joining other commentators — male and female — in exploring the consequences of commerce on social relationships and offering suggestions for providing solid bases for society.

By articulating moral bases to economic transactions and relationships, Sarah Scott is proposing a feminised ethic for the new commercial age. The community at Millenium

152 The first English feminist, 43.
Hall demonstrates that financial transactions do not have to be dictated by the Mandevillean notions of lust, greed, self-interest and ambition. Financial transactions can be based in moral integrity, virtue and love of one's fellow citizen. This is not only an ideology that propounds a civic virtue for a new commercial age, it is an ideology that advocates a virtuous, rational and self-respecting individual. Linda Dunne asserts quite rightly that *Millenium Hall* is a novel of the Enlightenment - but one which respects Christian values - rather than of Romanticism. Its ideology depends on reason, rational reflection, order and control, rather than on the 'glorification of uncontrolled passion'.

Scott joined other British thinkers of the Enlightenment, such as Smith and Clarke, in articulating pragmatic ethical conduct. As the age of commerce came to focus on and scrutinise the individual's desires and labour, Scott's articulation of an individual morality linked with societal responsibility was crucial indeed. Sarah Scott saw this need and *Millenium Hall* is one model offered to address the society's fears.

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154 'Mothers and monsters', 70.
155 John Gascoigne has claimed that the theologian Samuel Clarke believed that moral agency in individuals was the basis of religion. 'Science, religion and the foundations of morality in Enlightenment Britain', a paper presented at the 'Colloquium on the Enlightenment, religion and science in the long eighteenth century', Humanities Research Centre, Canberra, 5/9/96.
'HUMANITY IS ALL HE CAN PROPERLY RISE TO': THE HISTORY OF 
SIR GEORGE ELLISON

'I own that a good woman is my favourite character', Samuel Richardson admits in a letter to Lady Bradshaigh, 'I can do twenty agreeable things for her, none of which would appear in a striking light in a man. Softness of heart, gentleness of manners, tears, beauty, will allow of pathetic scenes in the story of one, which cannot have place in that of the other. Philanthropy, humanity is all he can properly rise to'. Richardson points to what was 'proper' in the eighteenth century about being a man, being a woman, and being a philanthropist. Indeed, if he had been writing some twenty years later, he might not have been so hasty about his gendered classification of emotions and manners, for the 'man of sensibility' who was to make his presence felt, first in novels, and then in society, was lauded precisely for his 'softness of heart' and 'gentleness of manners'. While this issue of sensibility touches on the topic of this chapter, what is of more concern here is Richardson's characterisation of philanthropy as a gendered activity. One aim of this chapter is to consider the extent to which Scott's exploration of the 'good man' is a comment on the gendered differences of philanthropy conducted by men and by women.

Richardson's depiction of the good man was published three years later as Sir Charles Grandison. Despite his reservations about being able to represent such a character, Richardson's contemporaries approved of his attempt. But in his letter, the author betrays an eighteenth-century view of gender, which Thomas Laqueur has identified as

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1 All references to Sarah Scott's A History of Sir George Ellison are to the following edition: Betty Rizzo ed, Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1996. This edition is based on the first edition: London, Printed for A. Millar, 1766, which I have also studied. Subsequent references will be parenthetical in the body of the text.

'two incommensurable sexes', whereby men and women are defined and constituted as opposites. Indeed, Richardson echoes this opinion again in his novel: 'Can there be characters more odious than those of a masculine woman, and an effeminate man?'. In this oppositional view of gender, those qualities constituting a good woman could not, with propriety, be transposed onto her counterpart, the good man. While this binary opposition might have characterised gender construction in the eighteenth century, many of the narratives of the period seem to exult in the play between or transgression of such binary opposites. Sarah Scott is the writer of one such narrative. She, like other writers in the latter eighteenth century, explored the societal construction of gender roles.

Some critics have seen her character George Ellison as a sentimental man, and there is textual evidence for this label. In the sense that she succeeds in doing what Richardson claimed was impossible – delineating a 'good man' by characterising him with 'feminine' qualities – she did contribute to the discourse of the feminized, sentimental man. This is not to suggest that the 'sentimental' man was simply a man with feminine qualities, or that the transference of so-called feminine qualities to a man is simple or unproblematic. As John Mullan has argued in his study of Samuel Richardson, David Hume and Laurence Sterne, the 'language of feeling' was used by writers in representing 'necessary social bonds'. In delineating a man who adopted conventionally feminine qualities, such as delicate and passionate feelings, in order to

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4 Samuel Richardson's A history of Sir Charles Grandison, 3:247.
5 Markman Ellis The politics of sensibility. In his book, Sentiment and sociability John Mullan comments 'it is the body which acts out the powers of sentiment', and to the extent that Ellison describes moments of high emotion in terms of bodily sensation, then he shows that characteristic of the sentimental man (200). Nevertheless, as Mullan, Ellis and others have shown, the notions of sensibility and the sentimental man are very complex, and applying this latter label to Scott's character raises too many issues to discuss satisfactorily as an aside in this chapter; therefore, I hope to take up this issue in a later paper.
6 He has 'sensibility, and a sweetness of countenance' (II, 11), a 'tender' heart (II, 16) and a 'laudable delicacy' (IV, 54).
7 Unfortunately, I cannot consider here the complex issues of 'masculinity' and 'effeminacy' which were hotly debated throughout this period. There are a number of critical works that do address these issues, for example: Michele Cohen Fashioning masculinity: national identity and language in the eighteenth century, London and New York: Routledge, 1996; John Barrell 'The dangerous goddess: masculinity, prestige and the aesthetic in early eighteenth-century Britain' in The birth of Pandora , 63-87; G. J. Barker-Benfield The culture of sensibility, especially chapters 2-3; and Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub eds. Body guards. Discussions of effeminacy were also linked to issues of luxury and the moral and political health of the nation. This issue is explored by Kathleen Wilson in The sense of the people, 185-205. See also footnote 14 in this chapter.
enact public reform, Scott questioned both gendered views of sentiment and gendered constructions of philanthropy. In doing so, she was tackling, in the words of Mullan, the difficulty British 'polite culture was having in imagining the nature of social relations'. In Scott's novels, these social relations revolve around morality and commerce.

Much of the early tension and complications in the novel arise because Ellison's character is criticised for its effeminacy, particularly because his methods of charity are deemed weak, and therefore feminine. But, as the novel progresses, Ellison assumes a more powerful, paternal masculinity that is contrasted with the charitable women, both in this novel and in *Millenium Hall*. Nevertheless, it is precisely the 'feminine' side of Ellison which makes him successful as a philanthropist, as he uses such qualities for his humanitarian works. Such works, Richardson claims, are the only features open for discussion by an author creating a 'good' man. Still, that Scott chooses a man, a feminized man, as the vehicle for abolition and philanthropy is significant and continues her insistence, evident in her other writings, that a 'real' man, a desirable and virtuous man, is one who possesses feminine qualities and who also asserts the rights and independence of women. As Scott writes in *George Ellison*, 'however the poets may personify them, the virtues are of no sex' (42). While problematisation of gender and emotional display are fundamental to Ellison's character—and I will touch further on these issues—it is the relations between money, authority, philanthropy and gender that will be the focus of this chapter.

Contemporary commentators noted Richardson's and Scott's shared interest in the 'good man'. In *The Critical Review* the reviewer comments rather condescendingly of Scott's book that 'those who do not recollect Mr. Richardson's *Grandison*, will discover great merit in it', thus asserting Scott's inferiority to her male contemporary. Readers at the time would have seen the character of George Ellison in the context of a continuing

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8 *Sentiment and sociability*, 2.
9 1776, 288. Paradoxically, Scott commented to Elizabeth Montagu that she was unimpressed with *Sir Charles Grandison* and thought that 'all after the third volume appears exceeding dull' MO 5239, 19 February, 1754.
exploration of the 'good man' that occurred in both novels and non-fictional literature. Shaftesbury in his *Characteristics*, for instance, described the good man as having: 'a mind subordinate to reason, a temper humanised and fitted to all natural affections, . . . a thorough candour, benignity and good nature, with constant security, tranquility. . . equanimity'.

Scott's Ellison also sits beside other novelists' good men, such as Richardson's Grandison, Burney's Orville in *Evelina*, Harley in Mackenzie's *Man of feeling*, and Oliver Goldsmith's dramatically rendered *The good natur'd man*, and next to non-fictional discussions of the type, such as Johnson's *Rambler* 4, in which he discusses the moral exemplar. In a letter to Thomas Lyttelton, Elizabeth Montagu defines the 'good man': 'The Bible alone will make a good man', she writes, 'human learning without the fear of God, which is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of Him, which is understanding, will produce but a poor inconsistent character'.

Scott's histories and biographies—especially *Theodore Agrippa D'Aubigné*—also contribute to her exploration of what makes a man 'good' and 'great'.

That Scott frames her novel with claims for her hero as the common man's moral exemplar, also situates the novel in this discourse of the 'good man'. She writes in the Preface to the novel that an ordinary man 'whose station and opportunities of acting are on a level with a great part of mankind, might afford a more useful lesson than the lives of his superiors in rank or piety' (3), an assertion that she confirms in the preface to *Theodore Agrippa D'Aubigné*. That eighteenth-century society saw a need for such exemplary models of male conduct is evidenced by the circulation of a pirated, condensed version of the novel. *The man of real sensibility* was 84 pages in length, constituting primarily the first, Jamaican, section of Scott's novel. It was prepared by the American James Humphreys, but was printed in numerous other versions.

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11 Emily Climenson *Elizabeth Montagu* II, 255.
title of this version, published at the height of the period of sensibility in 1774, and the use of an epigraph from Laurence Sterne’s *A sentimental journey*, shows that it was framed in the context of the discourses of sensibility.\textsuperscript{13}

This chapter in part explores whether ‘philanthropy, humanity is all [George Ellison] can properly rise to’, and therefore what ‘philanthropy, humanity’ might mean. It also examines how Scott establishes Ellison as the ‘good man’ to be emulated, and considers the philosophical tenets that underpin his ‘goodness’. But while the protagonist is evidently ‘good’, this narrative is not just about the exemplary moral character. It is far more ambitious, for the author delineates and explores a complex web of power relations in society founded on differences of class, race and gender. By examining and subverting these power relations that reflect social mores, Scott explores alternate social structures based on Christianity and commerce, based on the ideology of moral commerce.

This chapter discusses moral commerce in *A history of Sir George Ellison* in two ways. The novel is considered as a companion text to *A description of Millenium Hall*. As both novels provide models of charitable communities, the discussion probes to what extent *George Ellison* alters or reinforces the philanthropic ideology portrayed in the earlier novel. The obvious difference between the two models of philanthropy is that the later novel has a single man instead of a group of women as the community authority. The ramifications of this different authority figure raise important issues about the gendering of philanthropy. As indicated by Richardson’s letter (quoted above), in the eighteenth century there were gendered constructions of ‘goodness’ with some virtues being deemed more appropriate for men or for women.\textsuperscript{14} George Ellison himself observes that ‘benevolence appears with peculiar lustre in a female form’ (42).

\textsuperscript{13} It would appear that in using this epigraph, James Humphreys did not consider that Laurence Sterne’s portrayal of Yorick as the sentimental man was at all parodic.

\textsuperscript{14} This construction of gendered virtue or goodness is also connected with the mid-century debates about the effeminisation of man, debates which linked manliness with national identity and strength. For example, John Brown’s *An estimate of the manners and principles of the times* (London, 1759), George Colman’s *Prose on several occasions*, 3 vols, London: T. Cadell, 1787, in which he writes ‘in the moral system there seems at present to be going on a kind of Country-Dance between the Male and Female Follies and Vices, in which they have severally crossed over, and taken each other’s places. The men are growing delicate and refined, and the women free and easy’ (2: 87-88), cited by Kristina Straub *Sexual
In addition to offering significant comment on the gendering of philanthropy in eighteenth-century Britain, the novel offers a significant contribution to eighteenth-century discourses of slavery. The initial, Jamaican, section is significant for the novel, too, for it amplifies the novel's comments about gender, philanthropy and social change to an international context. While this chapter is concerned with teasing out the complexity of *George Ellison* as a narrative and cultural discourse - particularly its role in debates about 'goodness', virtue, enslavement and duty - the issue in Scott's writing that is the primary focus here is the relationship between morality and commerce, and it will be shown that moral commerce is an ideology that permeates these debates and discourses.

Commerce is an explicit framing discourse in the text, the narrative commencing with Ellison's discussion of his finances, his family's economic situation, and his move to Barbados as a trader. The status of Ellison's wealth is significant in the novel, offering an insight into Scott's ideology of moral commerce and into the period's differentiation between, and valorisation of, types of wealth. His wealth is not traditional landed wealth; he is a merchant, a man of commerce. The first pages of the novel set up a schematic framework for relating and evaluating professions and types of wealth in Britain. Ellison's father was a younger son of 'an ancient and opulent family' who, 'according to custom' had little share in his father's wealth and, therefore, had to earn his living in a profession. He outlines, however, the impossibility of earning enough in a profession to support a family. He is unable, for example, to leave much more than a thousand pounds for each of his children. The contrasting lifestyles associated with inherited versus professionally acquired wealth show the inequality inherent in the patrilineal system of inheritance. Mr Ellison worked hard, but still had little money for his children: 'the difficulty he had found in providing for his family, had disgusted him with professions; which are better suited to the single, than the married state' (5). So he

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suspects, 105; and Joseph Addison's *The Spectator*, for example, no. 435, 1712, in which he discusses the partition of the sexes: 'I think it however absolutely necessary to keep up the Partition between the two Sexes, and to take Notice of the smallest Encroachments which the one makes upon the other'.

urges George to pursue 'merchandize', which he considers a more profitable enterprise. 'He knew the young man to be perfectly sober, humane, and generous, and at the same time an exceeding good economist; extremely diligent, and well inclined to that care of, and attention to, his affairs, so necessary for those who undertake merchandize' (5-6). He makes a moral and economic investment in his son, giving George two-thirds of his wealth to consolidate on behalf of his siblings, and hoping to reap a minimum of six percent interest. George Ellison's financial and ethical credibility are evidenced by his not only increasing his stock by one-third within two years, but also by returning half of his capital to his father for his brother and sister. In this portrayal of Ellison's early trading, Scott shows him to be dependable and efficient, and in the process, depicts the commercial man as a respectable character, in some way addressing contemporary criticism of this new form of wealth.

So Scott introduces commerce in the novel with this positive portrayal. Commerce is also evident in the novel in the specific form of the production and exchange of goods and services for money. Plantation owners and British merchants make their fortunes from trade and slavery, fortunes which are then spent. Money is also procured and exchanged through marriages, inheritance and charity. The absence or presence of money determines personal limitations or freedom, both in practical and less tangible ways. Edith Sedgwick Larson has also noted the emphasis in this novel on financial detail, with characters being introduced and described in terms of their incomes and assets. As in her previous novels, Scott continues to draw connections between women's vulnerability and their access to wealth. This issue is inextricable from the metaphorical commerce between men and women. In particular, the text builds on Scott's exploration of the ways in which men and women can find both personal happiness and perform public duties, or the extent to which social roles limit them from doing so. But before considering the moral and commercial dimensions of marital relationships, the discussion turns to the initial, Jamaican section of the novel and its contribution to eighteenth-century debates about slavery.

15 Early eighteenth-century English women writers, 166-168.
i. Moral commerce and slavery

The slavery section of the novel configures Scott's ideology of moral commerce in the contexts of international politics and commerce, and shows that these contexts are interrelated with individual moral stances. This initial section has a structural independence from the rest of the narrative that made it easy for Humphreys to publish it separately. But despite this apparent detachment, the Jamaican section resonates throughout the rest of the novel, for in George Ellison's encounter with and opposition to slavery we see a forerunner of the complex integration of moral and economic issues which structure the narrative.

As I have noted, from the beginning of the novel George Ellison's character is conceived in economic and moral terms. His father places economic and moral trust in his eldest son, and this is repaid with George's economic success. In the narrative, his commercial success is linked with the public acclaim he receives for his personal merits: 'in two years after his arrival he had increased his stock one third; and at the same time, had gained the esteem of all who were concerned with him' (7), and 'the more generally he became known, the more extensive his trade grew, as every one wished to be connected with him' (7). Indeed, not only do his virtue and business acumen go hand in hand, but his financial success is a reward for his virtue; 'his industry, sobriety and temperance, shewed that he had a just title to more than uncommon increase of riches' (7). G. J. Barker-Benfield has discussed how emerging eighteenth-century commercial practices called for, and prompted, new standards of 'mannerly conduct necessary to business and credit', such as 'courtesy'; this 'self-fashioning' was especially important with the increasing reliance on credit, and the essential requisite of personal reliability.16 Contrary to the notion of the aggressively individualist and selfish merchant, Ellison is shown to be part of a friendly community in Jamaica and to be linked with England by his familial attachments.

16 The culture of sensibility, 87-88.
While Ellison is successful in Jamaica, his accumulation of wealth is fraught with a moral dilemma. Despite being commercially successful, Ellison does not fit easily into the slave-based economy; his unease is exacerbated when he marries a wealthy widow who owns a substantial plantation that depends on slave labour. To this point, he has not been directly implicated in the slave trade: 'he had hitherto avoided the keeping of any negroes' (10). His marriage, however, forces him to confront the slave labour which is the basis of the trading island.

Ellison acknowledges that slavery is a commercial fact of life in the plantation economy, yet he rejects the moral and political ideologies underpinning the practices of slavery. He also rejects corporal punishment for his slaves. In defending his opposition to slavery to his wife, Ellison proclaims: 'I am exerting a power merely political, I have neither divine, nor natural right to enslave this man' (16). Ellison here evokes a conception of power relations that is fundamental to the novel as a whole, and not just to the issue of slavery. He draws distinctions among three types of power - divine, natural and political, comparable to Locke's identification of three types of law in An essay concerning human understanding: Divine law, Civil law, the 'Law of Opinion or 

17 John Locke An essay concerning human understanding. Book II, chapter XXVIII, # 10. For an extended discussion of Locke's Essay and his notions of power see Barry Hindess, Discourses of power.
Ellison draws authority for his moral laws from the divine power of God. In his view, slavery overturns divinely imposed laws about the equality of all men before God. Such inequality then is a manifestation of the abuse of inferior political power. Scott's critique of slavery is part of a radical political position in which she proposes the ultimate authority of God over the authority of man-made government. But while George Ellison is guided by Christian authority (like the Millenium women), in Jamaica he is constrained by society's political laws. 'According to the present state of the island he was sensible he could not abolish this slavery, even on his own estate' (10). Although he objects to slavery on Christian and humanist grounds, Ellison states that he could not abolish it because, at this time, Barbadian law prohibited such abolition. He does, however, withdraw his attentions from commerce to devote his time to ameliorating the slaves' conditions (13).

Scott's novel is part of a complex debate about slavery which was manifest in pamphlets, political and philosophical writings, and in imaginative literatures. Published in 1766, *The history of Sir George Ellison* is a substantial and early contribution to the debate, as it chronologically preceded the main wave of anti-slavery sentiment, and effectively preceded it with quite radical suggestions for reform, even if it did not give outright support for manumission. Paul Langford suggests that although a number of prominent figures of the mid-century made their anti-slavery stance clear, it was not until the late 1770s and 80s that anti-slavery debate reached real momentum. Granville Sharpe's lobbying on behalf of slaves is representative of, and a crucial contribution to, this intensification of the debate. The Somersett decision of 1772 was also enormously influential to the cause and debate as it brought to a head the long standing arguments for the rights of slave owners to transfer ownership of their slaves from the colonies to British soil. The Somersett case overturned a 1729 decision...
by declaring this transfer of power illegal, though it was still common for planters returning to England to be accompanied by their favourite slaves.21 Newspapers of the period often feature advertisements offering rewards for runaway slaves, and keeping black servants was common.22 Samuel Johnson was a notable public figure who did so and it became quite a status symbol to be seen accompanied by one's black slave/servant. The frequently lavish depiction in paintings of aristocrats with their black servants showed how desirable it was, not only to possess, but to display such servants.23 In the context of lavish portraits, the black servant/slave seems to be a cypher denoting a connection to plantation wealth and power.

In the context of the anti-slavery debate, Sir George Ellison is a significant contribution to contemporary discussions, but critics disagree about Scott's position on slavery.24 Whereas Eve Stoddard and Wylie Sypher consider the novel an important forerunner of anti-slavery texts, Moira Ferguson criticises the text, seeing in it instead a self-congratulatory, sentimentalised and politically benign benevolence that views slavery much the same as 'any other charity'. Moreover, Ferguson considers Scott's stance as not anti-slavery, but pro-ameliorative, and tries to parallel George Ellison's character with that of Mr Powell in Charlotte Charke's The history of Henry Dumont and Miss Charlotte Evelyn. 25 She accepted slavery, but wished to improve slaves' conditions. In order to make this statement, Ferguson seems to ignore those parts of Scott's text in which she uses the discourse of natural rights to undermine the institution of slavery as a whole, a discourse which Ferguson states did not gain currency until the radicals of the French Revolution.25 But despite this criticism, it is clear that some of Ellison's


23 Hogarth, for example, depicts black servant boys lavishly dressed, in his study Captain Lord George Graham in his cabin (1745) and in one illustration from his Marriage a la Mode series (No. 6, 1745); see David Dabydeen Hogarth's blacks: images of blacks in eighteenth-century English art, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987.

24 Recent work acknowledging this includes Markman Ellis The politics of sensibility. Moira Ferguson's Subject to others. Clare Midgley's Women against slavery, which by recognising women's contribution rectifies an enormous gap in the literature on anti-slavery.

25 Eve Stoddard 'A serious proposal for slavery reform'; Wylie Sypher Guinea's captive kings: British anti-slavery literature of the eighteenth century, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1942,
more radical statements about slavery are forerunners to very similar sentiments expressed by well recognised anti-slavery reformers. While it is not possible to say that reformers such as Granville Sharpe, Joshua Steele or Thomas Clarkson read and were influenced by Scott's novelistic contribution to debate (although later in the chapter I discuss similarities between these writers' and Ellison's opinions), it is important that we now acknowledge how significant a forerunner Scott was, and how much the novel as a discursive mode was part of anti-slavery discourses. Some critics, such as Ferguson, have seen the combination of anti-slavery issues with the sentimental mode as problematic, and somehow less political than non-fictional expressions of similar abolitionist sentiments. While it might appear that it was public activists, such as the evangelical groups, that galvanised public opinion, Langford and others have noted that anti-slavery had been part of the sentimental discourses somewhat earlier than this stage of organised abolitionist opinion.

Furthermore, James Walvin argues that largely intellectual trends in antislavery – philosophy, theology and literature – came to have manifestations in broader popular opinion and action. Sarah Scott was part of that vanguard of writers who in their writing provided examples of anti-slavery ideology in action through characters like George Ellison. She was joined by other writers of fiction, and especially by writers of poetry, in arguing for abolition, by dramatising slaves as individuals or by appealing to notions of natural rights to liberty. William Cowper, for instance, wrote a number of anti-slavery poems. And Clare Midgley has argued that women's exclusion from political avenues of anti-slavery encouraged a burgeoning of imaginative forms of protest. Anna Laetitia Barbauld, for example, wrote 'Epistle to William Wilberforce'

266; Moira Ferguson Subject to others, 98-111, 3. Ferguson refers to Charlotte Cibber Charke's The history of Henry Dumont, Esq; and Miss Charlotte Evelyn, 1755, 2nd ed. 1756, London: H. Slater.
26 For example, Joshua Steele's The mitigation of slavery (1814).
29 Roger Anstey discusses the different kind of contribution that imaginative literature made to the anti-slavery debates, in contrast to the overtly political or philosophical texts: The Atlantic slave trade and British abolition 1760-1810, London: Macmillan, 1975, chapter 6.
30 They include: 'The negros complaint', 'Fity for poor African', 'The morning dream' and 'Sweet meat has sour sauce'. 
(1791), and some works, such as Hannah More's 'Slavery' (1788), were explicitly written to coincide with debates in Parliament. Midgley also suggests that it was in anti-slavery poems that women found a voice for social criticism while using accepted 'feminine sentiment'.

When Ferguson criticises Scott's position on slavery, she writes that 'the unstated subtextual monster is profit, cornerstone of the rising and predacious capitalist-colonialist economy', and she is correct in saying that profit is a subtext of Scott's novel. Ellison draws the connection between economic necessity and moral corruption in the plantation society, acknowledging the economic origins and realities of slavery, and recognising that without slaves his acquisition of wealth would be limited. He refers to the 'poor wretches, whose labours were to yield him affluence' (10). But it is precisely Scott's insistence on pushing together the moral dimensions of material economic practices that makes her anti-slavery position so effective. David Turley has pointed out that 'liberal political economy in its anti slavery guise sought to maintain the link between private motives and public consequences, to check the anxiety arising from perceptions of the divorce between morality and economic development in the era of industrialisation'. This, too, is Scott's task; she resists the separation of the moral and material dimensions of slavery.

Paradoxically, it is through slavery that Ellison amasses most of the wealth which will later allow him his extensive philanthropic works. The recipients of this benevolence, however, are white British citizens. But he condemns slavery very clearly: 'This shocking subordination may be necessary in this country, but that necessity makes me hate the country [Jamaica]' (16). Ellison is sensitive to the slaves' plight, and he understands the economic arguments that the plantation owners use to justify that plight; he acknowledges that slavery originated in shortages of labour, scarcity of natural inhabitants introduced slavery, which can never be established but at the expense of humanity; the master becomes a tyrant, for human nature

31 Women against slavery, 32, 34.
32 Subject to others, 104.
always abuses a power which it has no right to exert; and the slave's mind being as heavily fettered as his body, he grows sordid and abject (16).

Scott's text offers a reasoned response to such economic excuses. Ellison acknowledges the economic origins of slavery and articulates a complex analysis of the master/slave relationship, and in doing so he shows how economic decisions need to be made in a moral context. Ellison states that the labour 'contract' and relationship make the master a tyrant and the slave inhuman; that is, it is the unnatural basis of the relationship which creates the behaviour and not the individual's own qualities. Ellison defends the slave here from criticisms of the race, spelling out that slaves' behaviour results from their oppression not from innate qualities. In this comment, Scott echoes an idea put forward by the famous anti-slavery writer Thomas Clarkson who wrote of slaves: 'For if their minds are in a continual state of depression, and if they have no expectations in life to awaken their abilities, and make them eminent, we cannot be surprized if a sullen gloomy stupidity should be the leading mark in their character'. Ellison also makes explicit that the assumed superiority of whites over blacks is a result of historical conditions and is not natural; defending his conception of blacks as human, he exhorts:

"I must call them so, till you can prove to me, that the distinguishing marks of humanity lie in the complexion or turn of features. When you and I are laid in the grave, our lowest black slave will be as great as we are; in the next world perhaps much greater; the present difference is merely adventitious, not natural". (13)

In suggesting that the black persons' colour is the incidental excuse for slavery, Ellison foreshadows William Dickson, an abolitionist who wrote that colour 'is a very equivocal mark of superiority'. Ellison's provocative attack on the racial excuse for slavery contradicts other characters' essentialist, racist views that black slaves deserve their treatment and oppression because they are less than human.

Ellison's wife, the plantation owner, represents this essentialist view of blacks, considering slaves to be less than animals. She shows more compassion for her lap-dog's injured leg than for the inhuman treatment and suffering of the slaves (13). When

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35 Letter on slavery, 1789, repr. James Walvin The black presence, 186.
Ellison suggests that she is "hardened against the sufferings even of her fellow creatures" (13), Mrs Ellison responds indignant ' "Sure, Mr. Ellison, you do not call negroes my fellow creatures?" ' (13). She is offended at his comparison and feels that he is debasing her, because she views the slaves as 'the most despicable part of the creation' (13). This racism combines with a politics that, while unquestioningly accepting existing social hierarchies, sees power as a personal quality rather than as a structure of society. So, when Ellison refuses to treat the slaves harshly, she views his moral and political decision as personal weakness, accusing him of effeminacy. Reminiscent of Lady Macbeth to her husband, Mrs Ellison states to her husband: "you have less spirit than a sucking babe" (15). Mrs Ellison cannot understand that her husband is exercising a moral and political opinion, and instead considers that his aversion to slavery is a personal fault to be corrected. Mrs. Ellison loved her husband too well not to pity his failings, of which she thought this the chief; and attributed it to a total ignorance of his affairs, with which she hoped to make him better acquainted. Accordingly she calmly represented to him the impropriety of what he had done' (11, emphasis added). This patronising view shows Mrs Ellison as a 'native' of Jamaica, and as one more accustomed to the ways of the colony. Ellison's response, however, in which he discusses the nature of punishment and justice, shows that he has a reasoned position on slavery, which instead shows his wife as the one possessing a personal weakness.

Mrs Ellison represents a Jamaican, commercial model of femininity. The colonial context destabilises the hierarchy between husband and wife, with the wife representing traditional masculine toughness, and Ellison being accused of effeminacy. Mrs Ellison considered that:

however it might be in other families, in their's woman was certainly not the weaker vessel, since she was above those soft timorous whims which so much affected him; [she] had always kept her slaves in as good order as any man in the island, and never flinched at any punishment her steward thought proper to inflict upon them. (12)

By asserting her masculine strength, she reveals her lack of compassion and shows herself to be less than a woman. But as masculine and strong as she considers herself,
Mrs Ellison has a passive kind of tyrannic power, somewhat like Mrs Bertram in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, whereby she languishes on her sofa, with lapdog, enjoying the fruits of her plantation wealth and not wanting to question the moral implications of the commerce that provides that wealth. But while Ellison adopts conventional feminine traits, such as explicit displays of emotion and sensitivity to others' misfortune, he is not "effeminate" in the eighteenth-century, negative sense of the word, that is, ineffectual and morally corrupt: what Kathleen Wilson describes as 'a degenerate moral, political and social state that opposed and subverted the "manly" characteristics – courage, aggression, martial valor, discipline and strength – that constituted patriotic virtue'.36

By setting up the 'masculine' model of Mrs Ellison against the 'feminised' model of George Ellison, Scott takes issue with the value judgments attributed to constructions of gendered virtue. Mrs Ellison's "masculine" toughness is criticised, while the 'feminine' compassion of her husband is linked not only to justice, but also to strength of character. In this reversal of expected gendered behaviour, the narrative critiques a valorisation of the imperialist colonial enterprise as masculine, a valorisation that devalues the feminine. Wilson suggests that, 'As the antidote to national effeminacy, the imperial project constituted its version of masculinity partly through the marginalization, subordination or even ridicule of femininity out of its proper bounds'.37

Scott questions the moral basis of this 'imperial project', suggesting that its pursuit of commercial power could benefit from conventional feminine principles.

As I have mentioned earlier, the feminisation of Ellison is linked to the 'cult of sensibility' in which some conventional female attributes are valorised for men in the public sphere. Although critics such as Markman Ellis see his sentimentality as compromising his political effectiveness, I see these qualities as indicating Ellison's

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36 *The sense of the people*, 186-187; for a discussion of 'effeminacy' as a political trope see 185-205.
37 *Sense of the people*, 203. Wilson is joined by a number of other writers who have explored the relation between colonial imperialism and the public valuation of masculine and feminine: Laura Brown *Ends of empire: women and ideology in early eighteenth century English literature*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993; Maaja Stewart 'Inexhaustible generosity: the fictions of eighteenth-century British imperialism in Richard Cumberland's *The west indian* The eighteenth century: theory and interpretation, 37:1, 1996, 42-55; and on the related issue of the intersection of anti-slavery and anti-patriarchal discourses see Moira Ferguson *Subject to others*. 
motivations for his assertions of natural rights and liberties. What Ellis and others object to about the 'sentimental hero' is that the expression of sensibility for others' distress stands in place of direct political action in alleviating that distress. Indeed, Scott's narrative criticizes sentiment for its own sake, with the narrator stating: 'his humanity never rested in inactive compassion' (25). While Ellison does display features of the sentimental man, these features indicate the strength of his compassion, which in turn, motivates him in taking action.

Exertions of power and relationships among unequal power groups are not a personal issue, in Ellison's opinion, but are part of the fabric of the moral and economic interdependence of society's constituent groups. Part of this interdependence is a contract of duty and obligation between master and servant or slave. He lectures to his slaves: '“While you perform your duty... I shall look upon you as free servants, or rather like my children, for whose well-being I am anxious and watchful”' (14). When he qualifies his classification of the slaves as servants, no, as children, he articulates a paternalist basis to the relationship, rather than a contractual basis that would underpin a servant/master contract. Given the contemporary British situation in which the status of servants was being clarified in terms of an economic contract rather than a paternalist contract of reciprocal service, this may well have been Scott's attempt to reinforce a moral commerce basis to master / servant relations.

It is at this point in the novel that Ellison details his provision for his slaves – health care, leisure, and ultimately property. He also outlines that punishment would ensue only if the slaves were negligent in their responsibilities. The necessity of 'punishment' whether it be corporal, which he rejects, or the withdrawal of privileges, still establishes a power relationship. But while Ellison expects his slaves to act according to rules, he also establishes codes of conduct for himself because he is in a position of authority and responsibility. ‘"All order"’ he states ‘"depends on a superior’s

38 The politics of sensibility. Robert Markley has also commented on the political ineffectiveness of sentimentality 'Sentimentality as performance'.
inviolable adherence to his own laws” (16). Again, here we see how Scott’s texts assert positions on individual situations that are linked to her broader political critique. Throughout her works she criticises those in positions of authority who do not ‘adhere to their own laws’.

Although Ellison renegotiates the power relationship between master and slave, there is no question of abolishing authoritative and hierarchical structures. Some forms of inequality are considered ‘natural’. Ellison will go only so far in opposing slavery. Markman Ellis has labelled George Ellison’s plan for his slaves as ‘a kind of commercial sentimentalism’ where ‘social relations are commercialised and based on mutual trust in a "compact" of "reciprocal service"’.40

As David Turley points out in The culture of English antislavery, there are ‘moral’ and ‘material’ dimensions to the issues of slavery.41 George Ellison appeals to both Christian and economic factors to win support for the abolitionist cause, arguing on theological grounds that white men have no divine right to govern, let alone to tyrannise, black men. As the only absolute power is that vested in God, and as God dictates that all men are equal (excepting of course the divinely imposed hierarchy of class), slavery must be contrary to the laws of God. Ellison appeals to theological law to undermine those English laws – both codified and unwritten – which condone slavery. Scott would not have to have gone far to find the theological discourses of antislavery because, as Turley suggests, ‘The idiom of antislavery was predominantly religious’. He goes so far as to suggest that the antislavery movement was fundamentally theologically based: ‘three religious-intellectual traditions which comprehended virtually all abolitionists from the 1780s to the 1860s – evangelicalism, Rational Dissent (which emerged in the nineteenth century as Unitarianism) and Quakerism’.42 It would be more accurate however to say that while religion and particularly Protestantism galvanised abolitionist sentiment, and gave focus to a general
feeling, antislavery was actually an issue which cut across and unified divergent groups in British society. Nevertheless, appeals to Christian authority gave convenient and relevant grounding to the arguments against slavery. And, as one commentator has suggested, 'the idea of an underlying providential moral or natural order which the earthly order of things should attempt to express, it may be supposed, demonstrated the need for change while offering security and assurance about its legitimacy'.

As well as arguing against slavery on Christian moral grounds, Ellison also appeals to the material advantages of treating slaves as free servants. When Ellison's slaves are treated humanely, when their health, housing and leisure are ensured, their productivity increases. Here, then, is the ultimate argument for freeing slaves:

He made it the object of his constant endeavours to prevail with all his acquaintance to treat their negroes with humanity; but his arguments might possibly have proved ineffectual, had not the good conduct of his own slaves, their more than common industry and dispatch of business, shewed the advantages arising from it to their master. This was so obvious, it could not fail of influencing men attached to their own interest (36).

Given the enormous number of deaths of slaves in the colonies, this argument would have been a persuasive one.

The text's anti-slavery stance contributes to the discourse of natural rights that is evident throughout Scott's works. With its origins in John Locke's political theory, natural rights referred to human beings' inalienable rights outside of political organisations. The anti-slavery movements were signs of a general Enlightenment liberationist ideology which had implications far beyond this one oppressed group. In *Millenium Hall*, for example, Mrs Mancel comments:

when reason appears only in the exertion of cruelty and tyrannical oppression, it is surely not a gift to be boasted of. When a man forces the furious steed to endure the bit, or breaks oxen to the yoke, the great benefits he receive from, and communicates to the animals, excuse the forcible methods by which it is accomplished. But to see a man, from a vain desire to have in his possession the native of another climate and another country, reduce a fine and noble creature

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44 More than 35 000 Africans were imported into Barbados between 1764 and 1771, but the slave population increased by only 5000, indicating the extreme mortality rate both on ship and upon arrival. James Walvin *Black ivory: a history of British slavery*, London: HarperCollins, 1992, 76.
The immediate context for this comment is a discussion about keeping wild animals in zoos, but it is suggestive of, and consistent with, the broader issue of natural rights throughout Scott's works. In creating the rural, nurturing environment where the weak are protected rather than oppressed, Scott provides a moral alternative to the exploitative colonies.  

Scott's discourse of natural rights is framed in terms of Christianity. She articulates her anti-slavery ideas using established Christian beliefs in the divine order of society, and by drawing upon the emerging Enlightenment views of the natural right of liberty for all persons. For one group of God's beings to oppress and exploit another group through slavery is to subvert and distort the supreme being's divine order. Combine this religious belief with Scott's ideas of the right of all humans to liberty, respect and opportunity for Christian service (as seen in her treatment of dwarves, the disabled and other social outcasts in Millenium Hall) and we see a philosophy that incorporates the emerging Enlightenment ideas. Her condemnation of slavery is in keeping with her identification of other inequalities in society; it is especially linked to the economic causes and results of such oppression, such as the subjugation of women.  

In her study of women anti-slavery campaigners, Clare Midgley highlights the point that these issues were often linked: 'Anti-slavery ideology simultaneously raised and sought to suppress uncomfortable questions concerning the exploitation of women as well as the exploitation of labourers'.

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45 Felicity Nussbaum writes of Millenium Hall that the community 'represents a respite from colonialism, from the travails of being a slave owner, and an alternative to the tyrannizing curiosity and rapacity of empire. Empire and colonization are ostensibly opposed to the domestic tranquility of Millenium Hall'. Torrid zones, 150.

46 But, as I have pointed out earlier, Scott differed from other Enlightenment thinkers in her appeals to Christian authority.

47 For a discussion of this tradition, especially as it relates to the freedom of women, see Jane Rendall The origins of modern feminism: women in Britain, France and the United States 1780-1860, London: Macmillan, 1985, 9-13.

48 Women against slavery, 4.
The issue of slavery in *George Ellison* demonstrates the moral principles which are Scott's concern, and the networks of moral and commercial power which underlie her ideology. But slavery also demonstrates the limited extent to which Scott is willing to engage with the broader implications of her philosophical position. Indeed, the extent to which she limits her engagement with wider social structures and issues is a fundamental pointer to her ideological positions. Slavery – an issue which demands an examination of the material conditions which make it possible – is only obliquely treated in this regard. This complex, socially constructed issue is ultimately reduced in the novel to an individual moral question or position.

Despite some ambiguities in his view of slavery, Ellison's fundamental opposition to the practice is evident when he compares Jamaica with England, which he praises (and idealises), saying that,

"with all its faults [it] is conspicuously generous, frank, and merciful, because it is free; no subordination exists there, but what is for the benefit of the lower as well as the higher ranks; all live in a state of reciprocal services, the great and the poor are linked in compact; each side has its obligations to perform; and if I make use of another man's labour, it is on condition that I shall pay him such a price for it, as will enable him to purchase all the comforts of life; and whenever he finds it eligible to change his master, he is as free as I am" (16-17). 49

The narrative's ideological positioning portrays this kind of power relationship as legitimate, natural and beneficial to society. The 'reciprocal services' described are much the same as the master/slave relationship, in that there is still inequality. Still Ellison's idealistic comments beg questions such as whether there is really fair pay for labour? And is it so easy for a labourer to change his employer? There is a power differential, and therefore a lack of freedom, inherent in this distribution of wealth and power just as there is in the Jamaican master/slave relationship.

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49 This celebration of Britain's libertarian state of equality and contrast with the entrenched inequality of slave states seemed to have been a common catchcry even amongst pro-slavery writers; for example, Charles Leslie in *A New and Exact Account of Jamaica* (3rd ed. 1740), Edinburgh: R. Fleming, 1740, proclaims 'Happy Britannia! where Slavery is never known, where Liberty and Freedom cheers every Misfortune. Here we can boast of no such Blessing, we have at least Ten Slaves to One Freeman' (321). Quoted by Eve Stoddard who has also noted this paradox and states that the British had a 'schizoid view that celebrated liberty at home and accepted slavery in the colonies', 'A serious proposal for slavery reform', 385.
In the end, George Ellison turns his back on the slavery issue, literally, by leaving Jamaica. Instead of confronting the structures of oppression, he resorts to establishing a moral system of inheritance, where instead of passing on wealth, he passes on moral responsibility for the slaves. He depends on someone else, in this case his brother and his steward Mr Hammond, having a similar moral position to carry on his philanthropic and commercial works. It is a one generation responsibility. On his death bed, Ellison grants Hammond continuing responsibility for the slaves, but stipulates that on his death the slaves are to be given money to buy their freedom. It is an awkward freedom, however, for the material conditions of employment for black free labourers would have been difficult indeed. Ellison’s fears that slaves are inherently lazy is clear in his stipulation that they are to be given some money, but not sufficient that they could give up work altogether. Even after his death he would try to exert moral pressure over the black workers. This care for the slaves is only for his slaves. There are no ongoing structural changes to the slavery culture other than the nebulous effects of Ellison’s example of well treated and more productive and compliant slaves. It is important to reiterate with the issue of slavery, and indeed in Sarah Scott’s ideology in general, that taking moral responsibility almost always ensures commercial as well as spiritual wealth.

Ellison’s faith in the benefits accruing from a reciprocal relationship between master and slave depends on the commonly accepted paternalist notion that hierarchy and inequality in society are divinely imposed in order to provide the wealthy with the opportunity and duty for benevolence and the poor the opportunity for humility and gratitude. But this kind of paternalism does not work in a commercial plantation economy because the economic considerations will always outweigh the moral relationship between labourer and land owner. Ellison’s wealth accrues, in part, from this slave system, but ultimately he cannot continue in Jamaica because he opposes slavery. By returning to England, he can use his accumulated commercial wealth and

50 See Scott’s contemporaries, for example Jonas Hanway’s *Virtue in humble life: containing reflections on the reciprocal duties of the wealthy and indigent, the master and servant*, 2 vols London, J. Dodsley 1774; and *The defects of police: the cause of immorality*, London, J. Dodsley, 1775. See also Jessica Gerard’s ‘Lady bountiful: women of the landed classes and rural philanthropy’. 
power to establish a philanthropic community that can operate on moral commerce principles. Ironically, the commercial man transfers his economic wealth to rural property, apparently embracing old patriarchal landed power. But this geographical transference is not harking back to a nostalgic feudal paternalism. Ellison's experiences in Jamaica signal him as the modern commercial man, and he incorporates this pragmatic economics in his paternal projects of benevolence, these in turn following the pattern of Millenium Hall; thus his philanthropy cleanses his commercial wealth of the taint of slavery, and the taint of commercial individualism.

ii. Renewing paternalism in the framework of moral commerce

As well as contributing to debates about slavery then, George Ellison contributes to eighteenth-century debates about the place of paternalism in a commercial society. Earlier in the century, The Tatler idealised the paternalist role of the landed gentry:

There is no Character more deservedly esteemed than that of a Country Gentleman, who understands the Station in which Heaven and Nature have plac'd him. He is Father to his Tenants, and Patron to his Neighbours, and is more superior to those of lower Fortune by his Benevolence than his Possessions. He justly divides his Time between Solitude and Company, so as to use the one for the other. His Life is spent in the good Offices of an Advocate, a Referee, a Companion, a Mediator, and a Friend. His Council and Knowledge are a Guard to the Simplicity and Innocence of those of lower Talents.51

Notions of paternalism had been debated for many generations, but especially so in response to broad social and economic changes. Agricultural and economic changes restructured not only the physical and demographic features of the rural landscape, but also the social and personal landscapes of rural communities. As land was viewed increasingly as an economic resource to be tapped, a resource to be utilised to maximise profits, farmers and tenants were viewed as units of labour. During the eighteenth century there was a distinct shift in the way agricultural land was perceived. Whereas it was once a symbol of communal and affective ties between landlords and tenants, agricultural and economic developments changed land into an economic unit which was to be managed as a profitable resource. Enclosure, for example, made farms more

51 The Tatler, no. 169, 1710.
economically efficient but stripped many small tenants of homes and subsistence.
To force these people from 'their' land then was not only to redistribute land
management, but it was also to break up communities and interdependent reciprocal
ties of service, obligation and guardianship among landowners and tenants.

Agricultural writers of the period such as Arthur Young were active proponents of
enclosure and agrarian 'improvement'. In *A six weeks tour, through the southern
counties of England and Wales*, he writes:

> All the country from Holkam to Houghton was a wild sheep-walk before the
spirit of improvement seized the inhabitants; and this glorious spirit has wrought
amazing effects; for instead of boundless wilds, and uncultivated wastes,
habited by scarce any thing but sheep; the country is all cut into inclosures,
cultivated in a most husband-like manner, richly manured, well peopled, and
yielding an hundred times the produce that it did in its former state.52

His writings show not only an encouragement of such improvements, but they also
display a discourse that was to become increasingly dominant, a discourse about
rural life in England that commodified labour as inputs in the processes of
agricultural production and a discourse that devalued – if not discounted altogether
– the paternal ties of obligation and duty that existed between landowners and
tenants. Such changes were spatial as well, converting small intimate communities
and estates into larger, less populated units.

Traditional paternal structures of social interaction depended on small scale
communities. As the landowner knew his tenants, and as his power often extended
through judicial and religious structures as well, his capacity for influence was
substantial. The paternal relationship which demanded cooperation from tenants
because of their economic dependence on the landowner could also entail less overt
but equally strong moral and social dependence and cooperation. As *The Tatler*
extract above shows, tenants' duties to their landowner were, in theory, reciprocated
with an obligation on the lord of the manor to 'look after' his community and thus
ensure their continuing allegiance, subservience and productivity. As Howard

Newby has pointed out, paternalism was an important mode of social control and was manifest in numerous guises. 'At one and the same time paternalism may consist of autocracy and obligation, cruelty and kindness, oppression and benevolence, exploitation and protection.' 53

Scott was clearly aware of the monumental changes to such social and economic structures. In George Ellison she presents her solution to the problems that such changes produced. Ellison is by no means the traditional 'country gentleman' lauded in The Tatler. He is quite the opposite, representing precisely that new commercial wealth that was threatening to take away the political and social power from traditional propertied interests. But in the philanthropy that he conducts in his country property, he represents the ideal of conventional paternalist reciprocal benefits, but in a modern commercial setting.

Ellison establishes his country estate near his uncle's property. Although older than George Ellison, Sir William Ellison is the voice of the landowner who is starting to embrace the new ideology of 'improvement'. He comments to his nephew that the labourers 'ought to be very grateful to us improvers, for I know not what they would do without us, and yet they are a set of grumbling rascals' (51). Sir William ignores the fact that many labourers are idle or 'grumbling' because their livelihoods have been eradicated through the gentry's 'improvements'. Improvement had as much to do with the beautification and aggrandizement of estates as with agricultural efficiency. While Ellison the younger sets the poor to improving his garden, his aim is to give employment to labourers when they have no more important work to do.

"I shall therefore let my work stand still when the poor are sure of other employment; and particularly when the success of the harvest depends so much on the quick gathering in of the corn; for if, while I am making an elegant garden, the grain which should bring in a subsistence for my neighbour's family should be spoiled for want of labourers, I could feel little pleasure in walking in it". (51)

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Unlike Sir William, George Ellison is the voice that both defends old paternal relations between landowner and tenant, and renews such relations to satisfy changing social and economic features of the rural landscape. The aim, he asserts, should be full and utilitarian employment as much as 'aesthetic improvement' of his grounds. He asserts in his conversation that aesthetics for the rich are less important than food for the poor. He also employs more local labourers than are really needed for the job, demonstrating that true efficiency lies in the full utilisation of labour resources in the most practical way, rather than in minimising units of labour. It is, again, a theory of labour built on the principles of moral commerce.

Scott would not have used such terminology, but by discussing employment she was participating in the emerging discourses of the economics of labour and production, of Adam Smith's political economy, and while doing this she emphasised the moral context of labour. I have already discussed in the Introduction the extent to which Smith, also, was interrelating political economy with moral philosophy. In a sense, Scott was articulating the ideology of political agrarianism which was to gain currency at the end of the century. Agrarians such as Thomas Spence considered that a return to the land would be a cure for social and economic ills, a return to the land that was utilitarian and egalitarian, not nostalgically pastoral or conventionally patriarchal.

Although Scott was not a member of this radical political movement, her philosophy of moral commerce nevertheless articulates an alternative shape for rural relations between landowners and tenants. The model she articulates in *Millenium Hall* and *George Ellison* does not sweep away existing traces of paternal duty and obligation; instead, it proposes increased efficiency and full employment in the rural landscape. And, instead of embracing the new conception of the land as purely an economic resource to be managed efficiently, Scott creates a moral commerce view of rural life.
where economic efficiency coexists with a continuing sense of paternal duty and obligation between landowners and tenants.  

David Roberts suggests that paternalist duty principles include ruling, guiding and helping the poor or lower sorts. In Chapter 3, I outlined the philosophy of Millenium Hall whereby the ladies have financial power to change the lives of the poor in the community, and where they use this financial power to dictate and encourage correct moral behaviour. Under such circumstances, gratitude, obligation and dependence go hand in hand. Gratitude for charity is then a very powerful tool for shaping people's behaviour, especially the behaviour of the 'lower sort of people'. Ellison, too, uses his paternalist power to instruct his community; holding social gatherings for 'farmers and decent labourers' at which he offers sustenance for both body and soul: 'he endeavoured in the course of easy and familiar conversation, to instruct them gradually, and seemingly without design, and to instill in the same imperceptible manner such sentiments into their minds, as had never yet found entrance there' (69-70).

The inequality of power inherent in this paternalism is portrayed positively by Scott because George Ellison is characterised as a fatherly figure. He treats his slaves and his community like wayward children who need guidance and education in Christian principles. Ellison states to his slaves: 'While you perform your duty... I shall look upon you as free servants, or rather like my children, for whose well-being I am anxious

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54 A number of historians have written extensively about paternalism and the changing social and economic patterns that occurred with agricultural 'improvement'; for example, Howard Newby, et al Property, paternalism and power: class and control in rural England, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978; David Roberts, Paternalism in Victorian England, London: Croom Helm, 1979, and E.P. Thompson Patrician society, plebeian culture, Journal of social history Summer 1974, 7:4, 382 - 405. See also Beth Fowkes Tobin's study Superintending the poor: charitable ladies and paternal landlords in British fiction, 1770 - 1860, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993, which examines novels of the period to show how they contributed to the conflicting discourses of paternalism and economic, social and agricultural change. She looks in particular at the way that middle class men and women were creating space to take over the upper class landowners' control of rural communities. With particular emphasis on nineteenth-century writers, Fowkes Tobin looks at the debates about the upper classes' inadequacy as guardians for both the rural poor and the rural economy.


56 See Caroline Gonda's article 'Sarah Scott and "The sweet excess of paternal love"' for further discussion of the trope of the father in Scott's writing, Studies in English Literature 1500 - 1900, v.32, 1992, 511 - 535.
and watchful" (14). In *Millenium Hall* too the women in authority treat their
community inhabitants as children. The Christian trope of God the father is reenacted
in these philanthropic relationships. The recipients of charity are always characterised
as ingenuous and the moral exemplars as guides to these childlike powerless figures.
This issue of parental philanthropic structures is discussed later in the chapter.

The success of his paternalism is shown when Ellison's community asks him to run for
parliament; they feel that he has the integrity and power to represent their interests, but
he rejects that option because he feels that their financial dependence would bring an
obligation to vote for him. Throughout her narratives, Scott spurns social reform
through political institutions, advocating instead reform through moral exemplars,
Christian conversion and philanthropy. In this novel, she makes her rejection of
institutionalized politics as a force for change clear when she explicitly denies George
Ellison access to party politics (II, ch 5, 131 ff). Her texts criticise and subvert existing
government processes and laws, seeing in them a misallocation of both wealth and
power, which results in squandered opportunities to govern and provide for the
labouring poor.

Ellison equates elections with bribery, corruption and drunkenness. Candidates provide
alcoholic and other inducements to vote for them. But apart from condemning the
general debauched revelry attending elections, Ellison considers that his philanthropic
relationship with the populace would be metaphorical if not literal bribery for their
vote:

"my constituents, who are obliged to swear they are uninfluenced by mercenary
temptations in their choice of me, must many of them be perjured, since to their
fear of disobliging their landlords I should owe the votes of the major part: and I
cannot see the taking an immediate sum of money, and the continued possession
of a farm on which their livelihood depends, in any very different light: in either
case the influence is undue; they would not chuse me as the person most likely to
serve their country, but as one by voting for whom they should best promote their
private interests". (132)

Ellison does not want his 'constituents' to feel obliged to vote for him, nevertheless he is
happy to influence them by offering advice, advice which might also be seen as having
an obligation attached:
"the utmost use I shall make of my fortune at the ensuing election, is to tell my tenants and tradespeople my opinion of the candidates, as many of them may not be able to form a judgment on their different merits, assuring them at the same time, that they are perfectly at liberty to give their votes where they think they are best deserved, and have no resentment to fear from me though they should reject him whom I prefer, except I find they are induced thereto by interested or vicious motives". (133)

Ellison sees no contradiction in this offer of advice. The situation is not simply that the people will feel obliged to follow his advice, but that his financial and moral authority will have influence over them. But he is asserting the moral power of his 'fortune', not its literal power – it is a form of moral commerce.

Aside from these reasons for Ellison not entering politics, it is clear that Scott denounces such avenues of social change, seeing politics as corrupt and ineffectual. This is hardly surprising given that the 1760s, the years in which George Ellison was published, were fraught with political turmoil. George III was reasserting the power of the Crown over the House of Commons by replacing the Duke of Newcastle and his supporters in their administrative powers with his own. The Scottish Lord Bute was supported only by the King with most levels of society disapproving of him either by virtue of his Scottishness or because he represented greater royal intervention in Parliament. But it was not just the appointment of Bute that brought instability in the early 1760s. Bute resigned to be succeeded by Lord Rockingham, then Pitt (later Earl of Chatham), then the Duke of Grafton. Indeed it was not until Lord North became first minister in 1770 that someone in this position enjoyed support from both the Crown and the House of Commons.

Scott participates in a long-standing English distrust of political structures and elections. Hogarth's 'Election' series of illustrations (1754) which highlight corrupt political processes show how widespread was the perception of election corruption and debauchery. As Pocock has pointed out, 'The rhetoric of parliamentary corruption entailed a rhetoric of parliamentary reform, which might go so far as aiming at the creation of a virtuous electorate, independent enough to resist corruption of either their
representative or themselves'. This notion of the 'virtuous electorate' was where Scott's priority lay, but the electorate's independence was of less importance. The benevolent philanthropist is a subtle director of political thought as well as an explicit provider of material support. In this narrative, there is a subtext which continually questions the facilities of mere citizens to understand and judge political representation.

But while she criticises government, she also supports parliamentary democracy, with George Ellison praising House of Commons representation, calling it 'the great bulwark of our liberty, and best part of our constitution' (133). However, he dismisses his abilities for such a position. Ellison states to his petitioners that:

"Though integrity might prevent him from doing harm, yet too narrow a capacity would disable him from doing good. . . . "Once in a century perhaps," continued he, "a man may arise whose single voice will have more weight than that of hundreds, who can convince the most obstinately prejudiced, and warm the coldest heart to virtue; but such an one is a prodigy; nature is sparing of such productions: for in him the purest integrity, the firmest resolution, and most extensive capacity must unite. But what can a man of ordinary abilities perform in that situation? He cannot gain authority enough to bring others over to his opinion, but may vainly struggle through life without obtaining one end he aimed at."

(132)

It is an exemplary man indeed who could live up to such a role. The irony of these comments, of course, is that George Ellison is shown to be such a man. But Scott needs to restrict her protagonist's movements within his own philanthropic domain to show how effectively local philanthropy can transform an entire community. Nevertheless, the ambivalence Scott shows towards the legislature and election procedures, in particular, clearly indicates her criticism of political structures of power. Ellison indicts a lack of motivation as a major inadequacy in parliamentary figures; he suggests that it is ambition and not dedication or a real ability that leads them to politics.

"From the desire of rising to a more considerable sphere, we are apt to reject that wherein we might laudably acquit ourselves. . . . if many who seek admission into the house of commons, to the ruin of their fortunes and happiness, would reconcile themselves to the same humble lot [as his own], it would be far better for the nation, as well as for themselves." (132)


58 Scott discusses this issue of politicians' motivations in her letters as well as in her novels. She discusses a speech by the Duke of G---n [Grafton] in which he states the reasons for his resignation: He said his only reason for quitting his post, was a sense both of his own inability & that of those with whom he was connected to execute properly the affairs under their care, and so far was he from declining business that notwithstanding he had borne the staff of power, whenever Men were in office who were capable of serving the State, he would take up even the pick axe and the spade in concurrence with any
Ellison is asserting the value of attending to one's own sphere, indicating quite a conservative political position.

Ellison is not represented as being like the eighteenth-century figure Jonas Hanway who, with similar concerns about social welfare, used government and legal systems to entrench his influential social and philanthropical reforms. So, instead of allowing Ellison's exemplary qualities to influence society through government, Scott confines his sphere to a small, devoted and fortunate community where he establishes a benevolent dictatorship. Scott's exclusion as a woman from public power and governance might underlie her mistrust of government structures, but in writing this novel she found a way of working within such strictures. The narrative shows that her criticism and lack of faith in existing government structures are so pervasive that she rejects it as a viable avenue of reform for her male character. This strategy also places more faith and more responsibility on individual benevolence – an important Christian emphasis – and this is a philosophy that has implications for the polity as a whole. To concentrate on the family, or on the local context, does not necessarily eliminate its applications to society more generally.

Whatever her motivations for rejecting political representation for George Ellison, her narrative takes part in an ongoing critical discourse against political structures of power. The text emphasises that political structures have not succeeded in bringing the most talented statesmen into positions of power – for one thing they exclude women. Scott takes up this exclusion of women from political power. When Lamont, Ellison's young male companion, states that women's role is in the domestic sphere while men's sphere is that of public governance and policy, Ellison articulates Scott's most subversive statement about both political and social structures. George Ellison provides a counter

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measures of theirs; and expatiated on the capacity of one Man to raise the drooping condition of the Nation.' (MO 5329, 31 May, 1766)
59 Consider the following of Jonas Hanway's writings: Thoughts on the plan for a Magdalen-House for repentant prostitutes, London, James Waugh, 1758; Letters on the importance of the rising generation of the laboring part of our fellow-subjects, London A. Millar and T. Cadell, 1767; Virtue in humble life: containing reflections on the reciprocal duties of the wealthy and indigent, the master and servant, 2 vols, London, J. Dodsley 1774; and The defects of police: the cause of immorality London, J. Dodsley, 1775.
argument for Lamont's assertions about women, and he broadens the argument by suggesting that class as well as gender come into play when it comes to governance and power.

"When in regard to property," (said he) "all men were in a state of equality, a superiority of parts and courage were sufficient to raise a man to power and command; but since nature's Agrarian law has been abolished by political institutions, few men have a chance of filling those important offices you seem to think the property of all. Poverty is an impenetrable cloud, which will conceal the greatest merit from the rest of mankind; rank and fortune are such steps to honour, that it is difficult for a man to climb to any height who is not possessed of them: Some degree of one, or both, is absolutely necessary to bring the brightest talents into such a light as can render them conspicuous; and the whole course of a century will scarcely produce half a dozen men of such superior abilities, as shall conquer the disadvantages of a small fortune, or obscure descent, and raise them to that distinguished rank, for which you seem to think us all qualified; and to which a great estate, or high birth, will frequently exalt those who are as unfit for it as ourselves. What visionary ideas, therefore, have you conceived of the dignity of man!" (41)

Scott's political commentary is clear. Existing political structures have been harmful to society, inducing poverty for many and empowering a few who have institutional power, but not necessarily the intelligence, skill or responsibility to utilise that power. Both political institutions and men of rank have failed society, and those men – and women – with real talent are hidden under constraints of rigid class and gender systems. Ellison's declaration invokes the ideology of natural rights whereby 'all men were in a state of equality'; he uses the past tense to indicate that political structures have eradicated natural rights for all but the privileged few who possess 'a great estate, or high birth'.

As this discussion has reiterated, instead of relying on the power and authority of government, Scott relies on individual moral exemplars to effect improvement. With regard to the passage quoted above, Ellison continues his commentary by asserting that fundamental to the governance of a nation is governance of oneself, and that governance depends on virtue. I have pointed to Scott's rejection of social reform through political institutions and to her transferral of power to moral exemplars as agents of change. But how in particular does she see social reform occurring as a result of this? Once again, this novel postulates that ultimate power resides in the Christian God. One's adherence to God's laws will ensure personal
virtue and, in turn, collective personal virtue will ensure social stability. Her novels show how this philosophy works in practice, by articulating exemplary lives and their positive effects on individuals and communities. But while she rejects political processes in favour of individual action, she does not reject outright existing social structures. Indeed, while critiquing society, she articulates her reform in terms of similar power structures in her philanthropic communities, such as a hierarchy of rank and status, authority and deference. What she depends on, however, is that the metaphorical head of state is a morally virtuous and benevolent philanthropist. George Ellison is that man.

George Ellison is virtuous, talented and benevolent, and he has ultimate economic as well as moral power over his community. It is crucial to Scott’s philosophy of moral commerce that both the Millenium ladies and George Ellison have power to influence and change society because of their financial and moral strengths. This conjunction of moral and monetary influence is a crucial pairing both for the power of the philanthropist and for the shape of their philanthropic works.

iii. Domestic credit and power in George Ellison

Scott used her novels to counteract her limited avenues for political discussion, and in George Ellison she appropriates domestic space to discuss governance, power and women's positions in society, particularly in relation to money. As I have already discussed, she explores the nature of power in her treatment of slavery; she continues this exploration of power in relation to marriage. She dramatises and critiques a number of marriages to point out the limitations inherent in women's roles in society, demonstrating how these issues are intricately related to economic and moral credit and debt.

Scott's discussion of women invariably involves their financial situation, for as Scott’s own marriage separation showed her, a woman's freedom to live separately from a man
depended on her financial means. In this novel, women’s roles and identities are
delineated in terms of money. Ellison’s sister is introduced in a financial context:

He now thought it time to remit half his capital to his father, telling him that he
could not be easy till he had restored that sum; for as his sister was become a
woman, or nearly so, some advantageous match might offer; and he should think
himself very culpable, if by detaining her fortune, he should deprive her of a good
establishment. (7)

Ellison and his father acknowledge how critical money is to a woman’s independence
and happiness; therefore they ensure that the young Miss Ellison receives a fair and
substantial inheritance. She is the first woman mentioned in the novel, and as she is
characterised primarily in monetary terms, this sets up a relationship between money
and women that is sustained throughout the novel. More specifically, women’s
liberties are represented as proportional to their access to wealth, and Scott uses
women’s dependence on money to articulate their vulnerability in society.

The sustained linking between women and money occurs most clearly in the treatment
of marriage in the novel. The first Mrs Ellison – the plantation owner – is continually
characterised as a woman of substantial wealth, and the nature of her relationship with
her husband is framed by the personal debt Ellison owes for her financial contribution
to the marriage and to his accumulated wealth. Despite his fondness for his wife,

Ellison conceives of the marriage in primarily financial terms. Her monetary
contribution entails an emotional debt which he must pay back; the repayments are
emotionally costly, with him pandering to her every whim. The repercussions of
Ellison asserting himself or expressing anger to her are shown in the following scene:

she was sure of carrying every point for some time after [he lost his temper]; for
the concern he felt, at having broken into angry expressions, against the woman
whose affection had led her generously to put herself and so large a fortune into
his power, (for in this light he saw her marrying him) and who therefore had a
just title to his gratitude, as well as his protection, made him seek every means of
making reparation for what he thought injurious treatment. (22)

He had bought her with emotional credit which he must pay back again and again.

Because she had married him and not a man of greater wealth Ellison considered that he
owed her emotional loyalty (23). Indeed, as the marriage continues, his devotion
becomes more than loyalty – it is a form of bonded labour. Scott in fact uses such
verbal combinations of tyrannic governance and economics to describe the power
imbalance in this relationship: his friends 'advised him to free himself from his bondage' (23), and 'By these arts [emotional blackmail] she soon made her husband that slave which he would suffer no one to be to him' (22). His 'slavery' to his wife shows how marriage and gender relations are distorted in Jamaican society. Mrs Ellison's power is tyrannic, just like the colonial power over slaves.

Ultimately, George Ellison has the last, and most telling, word on the emotional credit arrangement of his marriage when he responds to his friends' criticism:

"they must not wonder if his long application to merchandize had taught him to see every thing in the light of traffic; and his wife had bought him at so great a price, that he thought she had a right to make the best of the purchase". (23)

It may be congruent with Ellison's merchant background for him to conceive of his marriage in such commercial terms, but Scott too dramatises all the marriages in the novel in terms of these economic and power discourses, and thus continually foregrounds their economic and power relations. Though Scott acknowledges emotional bonds in marriage, power and economic relationships are fundamental and primary to any marriage she depicts – love and personal regard are optional extras rather than romantic essentials. It is not that she undermines the importance of romantic love, but she acknowledges that issues of money and authority are fundamental to the marriage institution, regardless of the emotional compatibility of the couple.

The linking of credit and morality is evident too in the character of Mr Hammond, the steward with whom Ellison entrusts the care of his slaves. This office is of the greatest importance to Ellison. Indeed, it is presented as the greatest impediment to his return to England. He will not leave his plantation until he can ensure the continuation of the care for his slaves. Hammond assumes that role. It is noteworthy that Hammond's character, primarily his moral standing, is tested and proven worthy by his attitude to credit. The character is first introduced in the narrative as a person wary of credit and aware of the moral obligations of borrowing money. He was:

an English gentleman, who had been established there [in Port-Royal] above two years as a merchant *in good credit*; his capital not being great, his trade was not
very extensive, for he never could be prevailed upon to make that use he might of the good opinion which, from his excellent conduct, every one had conceived of him. To all who would have advanced him money on credit, he replied, that, "if he could depend on his own prudence, diligence, and frugality, which was rather more than a man moderately humble ought to do, yet he could not answer for success, as the hazards of trade were great, and the losses attending it sometimes inevitable. While he ventured only his own fortune, he could behold those dangers with tranquillity; but if the property of his friends was involved, the thought would be accompanied by intolerable apprehensions." (31-32, emphasis added).

Just as Ellison himself had been reluctant to use his father's savings to establish his trade, Hammond too sees a moral responsibility in borrowing other persons' money. There is a moral significance attached to money – and not just on borrowing, but also on lending money. Hammond does, however, lend his money to a friend who faces bankruptcy and the consequent destitution of his large family. Scott draws a clear distinction between borrowing money for the accumulation of one's own wealth and borrowing or receiving money to relieve one's own poverty. Clearly this distinction fits her ideology of benevolence, in which lending and accepting money is an important part of the reciprocal duties of charity. Hammond's creditors, who are unsympathetic to his reasons for distress, are contrasted with the generous Ellison, making the latter the virtuous model for responsible use of wealth. He lends money to aid a fellow man, not to charge interest and increase his wealth. There is a dichotomy set up here between money for private interest and money for public responsibility. But this discourse of credit is far more than a discussion of individual financial and moral choices.

Scott's text is participating here in the eighteenth-century discourses critiquing usury. This critique had, of course, been longstanding, with Aristotle commenting in his

*Politics*:

Usury is most reasonably hated, because its gain comes from money itself and not from that for the sake of which money was invented. For money was brought into existence for the purpose of exchange, but interest increases the amount of the money itself. . . consequently this form of the business of getting wealth is of all forms the most contrary to nature. 60

While criticism of usury had long existed, in the eighteenth century it gained momentum with a society increasingly dependent on credit as a form of currency.

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60 As quoted by Marc Shell *The economy of literature*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978, 94.
As discussed in Chapter Three, spending money is imbued with moral status and significance and weight. The Millenium women 'endeavour so to apply all they spend as to make almost every shilling contribute towards the support of some person in real necessity', and even 'the poorest may thus turn their necessary expenses into virtuous actions' (MH, 121-2). These 'wants' of others in society are satisfied not because one expects emotional or physical credit or interest in return, but because one feels a duty to assist and pleasure in assisting those in need. Indeed, 'benevolence longs for objects on which to exert itself' (MH, 110). The notion of owing interest or a debt is turned on itself by the altruism of benevolence: 'the receiver of a favour from a truly generous person, "by owing owes not, and is at once indebted and discharged"' (MH, 94). So, for example, Ellison gives work to the rural labourers, not so that his garden will be completed quickly, but because they need employment.

But while Scott joined in a chorus of writers who discussed the moral and financial consequences of credit and debt, it is important to point out the various discursive regions of these discussions. Scott's discussions of credit, debt and moral consequences use the novel genre and a domestic arena, and in George Ellison she ventures imaginatively to Port-Royal and into the regions of male creditors. This is as far as she can go as a woman writer. Though she shares her subject with male pamphlet and tract writers of the period, her genre is fiction and this prescribes both the ways that she can talk about credit and debt, and the audience she addresses. So Scott depicts in George Ellison the ways in which the private interests and selfishness of creditors lands Mr Hammond in gaol. A male pamphlet writer might have taken the topic further than the effects of debt on an individual family to a discussion of more detailed political and economic origins and consequences for the nation.61 But drawing this distinction between Scott's 'domestic' view of credit and debt and male writers' treatment of similar issues is not to diminish Scott as a social commentator. She, and other writers of fiction, were adding to the debate by examining and dramatising the consequences for

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61 Consider, for example, the writings of the prison reformer John Howard. Paul Langford discusses the major problem of the imprisonment of small debtors in Polite and commercial people, 490-491.
individuals and families of an emerging social pattern of credit and debt in a way that encourages readers to perceive and empathise with its ramifications for individuals, families and communities, rather than discussing the issues in abstract, depersonalised ways.

Similarly, when Scott represents marriages in detail, she is engaged as much in general discussions of power and politics as in imaginative dramatisations of character interaction. Mr Reynolds, Ellison's friend in the colony, had two successive marriages which illustrate different types of power relations in marriage. Because Reynolds' first wife was "inferior to him in understanding, he would not so far affront himself, as to believe she could attempt to govern so wise a Being, one of the Lords of the Creation; he therefore was not on his guard against her" and further, he "never perceived she governed, because he was convinced she had no title to do so" (24). But his second wife being more intelligent, "he immediately resolved to be very watchful in the preservation of his sovereignty" (24). But the narrator of this marriage, the young Miss Reynolds, has an interesting status in the narrative. As a character, she is allowed a more extreme, and more outspoken, opinion than could be expressed by the narrator. She is portrayed as having a perceptive understanding of interpersonal relations. She argues that women may not have financial power but that they have the art of emotional power over men in marriage. This situation has developed especially where women have been denied education, for women have less need for 'cunning' in proportion to their greater education (24). She also extrapolates to broader issues from the individual circumstance she observes, commenting about her brother's marriage, "it is scarcely possible to persuade one of his turn of mind that power is preserved, if it is not exercised in tyranny" (25). Unfortunately, however, the most sensitive persons - George Ellison and Mr Reynolds' second wife - are too good natured to exercise the power that they rightly deserve. As Scott's narrator asserts, in marriage 'cunning attains its little ends more surely than wisdom' (21). Ultimately, however, the model of power in marriage that Scott promotes is that of 'strength, courage, and wisdom', not that of 'fangs and claws' (21). And inevitably, perhaps, Mrs Ellison loses her emotional 'fangs
and claws' only through her own death and, by dying, her emotional control is
overthrown so that Ellison can be free to fulfil his potential benevolent power.

The text postulates that those persons in marriage who have or exert power must have
the respect of their spouse for this power to be truly effective. Force or tyranny are not
sufficient to govern – at least not in marriage – as Miss Reynolds asserts (25). Mr
Ellison supports this sentiment, commenting to Mr Reynolds:

"That which you may imagine your sex gives, is lost by shewing a weakness of
mind that degrades you; when you appear to act from noble principles, then you
shew man in his true dignity, and will be respected and obeyed with pleasure, by
a woman who has sense enough to discern your merit. A wife may be obedient to
your caprices, but she will all the time feel herself your superior; her submission
is such as might be expected from a man enslaved by a race of monkeys, if we
can imagine a country ruled by those animals; he would be passive from a sense
of their power, but despise them for the capricious manner wherein they exercised
it. The man who has the good fortune to be married to a woman of sense and
education, has only to make himself beloved and respected by her, and then he is
sure of being obeyed with pleasure". (28)

One would read this as simply a disquisition on respect and subservience in marriage if
it did not echo so closely Scott's comments throughout her works about natural rights
and about the need for the higher ranks of society to exhibit exemplary conduct if they
are to wield power. It also reinforces Ellison's comments to Lamont that gender and
rank alone may entitle, but not necessarily enable, a man to govern well (41). And
Ellison uses the slavery discourse to draw comparisons between different types of
oppression.

But what is also significant about these remarks is the status of Ellison's voice. He
seems to be speaking as a woman, criticising men in marriage. Ellison's
characterisation up to this point in the novel, in which he has been created as sensitive,
feminine, and emotionally sympathetic and engaged with the plight of the oppressed,
makes him an effective channel for this kind of feminist criticism of men.

The lessons of power and governance that are proposed in these early marriages in the
novel are that ' "to oblige is as much an exertion of your power, as to mortify, and far
more rational, as well as amiable" ' (28). But what this 'plantation' section of the novel
also does is set up a rationale for Ellison's benevolent autocracy which is brought to fruition later in the narrative. In the last comment quoted he continues, 'The conferrer of an obligation stands in a superior light to the receiver of it; let that superiority content you, for it is the greatest we can have' (28).

That Ellison's subsequent relationships with women reveal more about his Christian and philanthropic philosophies than about the relationships or the persons involved, indicates that Scott uses him as a character type of the exemplary good man.

Nevertheless, passionate love sweeps Ellison away when he meets Miss Allin. His earlier marriage is thrown into shadow when we learn that it is only in meeting Miss Allin that Ellison is captivated by a woman (53). But his beloved is betrothed to someone else, and Ellison's response to this disappointment is used as a model for Christian forbearance, selflessness and generosity. Ellison's response to Miss Allin's rejecting him is to give her the money she needs to unite her with another man. Again, the text shows money solving emotional problems. His passion and disappointment are assuaged by financial generosity that is a sign of his moral magnanimity. His disappointment is conquered too as Ellison considers that such a passion would have interfered with the execution of his Christian duty. From the outset conceptualised and framed in an oppositional structure of Christian duty versus passionate sexual love.

Initially, Ellison is distressed by the force of his emotions and fears that his passionate love will undermine his Christian duty. When he discovers that his love is unrequited his disappointment is overcome by relief as he admits that there is now no impediment to Christian works.

"I see some evils that have already arisen from my too strong attachment to Miss Allin; it has made me remiss in the offices of humanity to others, who had not a due proportion of my thoughts; so much were they engrossed by this passion. Had I been successful in my pursuit, every affection might have centered in her; and from my assiduity to please a beloved wife, all other duties might have been neglected. If this could be the case, as is rendered too probable by the excess of my love, have I not reason to think Providence has been supremely merciful in denying me a temptation I was too weak to resist; and which, from an useful member of society, would have degraded me into a mere fond infatuated husband; and have substituted the ensnaring and intoxicating indulgences of passion, to the calm and solid joys of conscious virtue." (63)
Ellison sets up a dichotomy here between public virtue and personal, specifically sexual, love, or between the husband in love and the virtuous, assiduous philanthropist.

Or is it simply oppositional as he suggests? It is not that marriage and benevolence are incompatible, but sexual passion complicates marriage. Ellison rationalises his disappointment by turning his attentions to his charitable works, thus setting up a dichotomy between the virtuous philanthropist and the romantic husband. Throughout the novel, business – either trade or charitable business – is held up as a defense against love. His disappointed love is softened also because he is able to replace his romantic love for Miss Allin with material generosity. He unites her with Dr Tunstall, the man she loves, by giving them money. And, when Dr Tunstall's dissolute lifestyle threatens ruin of his wife and children Ellison steps in with money to ease their burden.

This assistance is conducted always with the same care and propriety with which he effects his other charitable works. He ensures his anonymity and thus hopes to prevent obligation in the recipient of the charity. This generosity and anonymity pay off, however, when the widowed Mrs Tunstall is later swayed to marry her lover because she learns of his ongoing financial and emotional care for her. Her father discloses that for some time she had been 'in great measure kept by Mr. Ellison' (177). The sexual overtones here of her being 'kept' by Ellison are strong indeed. She responds:

"I see, Sir," said she to him, "that Providence has decreed I should owe every blessing to your generosity; what return can I make to such obligations! accept my thanks; accept me; most amiable of men! such goodness is irresistible[sic]; henceforward command my will, for by your's it must ever be regulated; I can no longer resist any inclination of your's; on the contrary, find my affection for you grow so entire, that I must wish to have it made my duty to love you with a warm and undivided heart." (178)

While he rejects any romantic notion of true love for himself seeing true love for one person only as 'contrary to good sense, to experience, to religion' (62), he uses money to assist the course of true love for Miss Allin and Dr Tunstall. He sets up different criteria for himself and for others; the standards for himself are exemplary. But, in the end, his sexuality is sublimated and he gets the woman he wants – through charity. The
sexual language in the above quotation – 'accept me', 'irresistible', 'command', 'resist' – highlights the interconnection of charity and sexuality.

To have succeeded in his quest for Miss Allin would have shown the victory of love's passion rather than his virtuous victory over his passions. Such passion is seen as a potential threat to true devotion to Christian duty. Sir William claims of his nephew: \[ "You are like a statuary who should think the beauties of a Venus would not be sufficiently distinguished, if he did not put a Sybil or a Tesiphone by her side" \] (63). The younger Ellison takes it as a compliment. Venus, goddess of love is best complemented by mythical figures of prophetic women, guardians of justice and instruments of God. This balance of love, Christian virtue and wisdom is his ideal love. And this is how Ellison's second marriage is characterised.

Whereas Ellison's first marriage in the colonies was an impediment to his benevolent projects for the slaves, and his initial love for Miss Allin a potential threat to his Christian priorities, Ellison's second marriage is an adjunct to his philanthropic schemes. The second Mrs Ellison is best characterised as a Christian helpmate to her husband. Though he treats her with respect, friendship and love, she is subservient to him in person, just as their marriage is subservient to their public works. Her virtue is built upon this dual subservience. Their marriage is represented as exemplary because it allows them to consolidate their individual charitable works.

George Ellison's love for Mrs Tunstall, nee Miss Allin, explores the material dimensions of love and interpersonal relationships. In this marriage, then, we see Ellison's two great pleasures in life – benevolence and Mrs Tunstall – unite. But more crucially for the current study of moral commerce, this marriage, this love that is held up as exemplary, has as its basis a strong passionate love and a longstanding financial connection. Love and Christian duty underpin Ellison's financial care for Mrs Tunstall, and ultimately he reaps emotional rewards for his charitable actions. Moreover, the passions which so distress Ellison when he first falls in love, mellow and persist
through his ongoing charitable works. It is not until Ellison institutes his philanthropic structures and until he has proved the constancy of his love that the two are brought together. While ever he dichotomises these areas of his life he will not be ready for marriage. As Sir William says early on in the love affair, "You a lover! love and so much philosophy never dwelt in the same bosom; you are made for disappointment" (63). It is not until he is capable of uniting these two loves that the union can occur. After Mrs Tunstall agrees to marriage, Ellison again hints at the danger of love, but this time in terms that show no fear that passion will have a long term deleterious effect on his public works:

He now experienced the danger of extreme joy; hitherto benevolence had always possessed the first place in his thoughts, but at this period he was too much intoxicated with his own happiness, to give his usual attention to the happiness of others; he perceived this change, but hoped his mind would recover its former tone when the turbulence of joy was abated by certainty and possession, and his spirits naturally become composed by the removal of all anxiety. (178)

Just as Scott separated the Millenium women's philanthropy from their private relations with men, in this novel the author seems ambivalent to Ellison's passionate love, both delighting in its passion, and unsure of how such private, selfish emotion should coexist with public love for one's fellow man or for God. Certainly his passion for his philanthropic works is expressed with almost the same sexual fervour as his passion for his lover: they are described as 'the great feasts of his soul' (77). Indeed, Ellison's joy at assisting others is presented as ecstatic, embodying in one scene a Christ-like religious 'extasy' with his slaves petitioning and grateful at his feet (11). Just days before the nuptials Ellison is on his death bed, the author seemingly again denying him sexual love. On his apparent death bed, Ellison is represented in almost monastic or celibate terms, with love for a woman again being set up as a threat to true Christian devotion. He ponders his death, suggesting: "how happy it might be for him to be taken away at the time most dangerous to his virtue, as it was too possible, had he lived, his extreme fondness for her might have withdrawn his affections from Him who was best entitled to them; and the intoxication of passion have led him to omit the duties of a christian" (183-184). But Ellison is allowed to live, perhaps reasserting at last that
true love and true Christian devotion are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, the Ellisons' relationship is framed in spiritual terms later in the novel:

"tenderness was heightened by veneration, and the affection, which in the happiest pair is merely human, seemed in them to be divine; and in reality was so in a good degree, being mingled with that spark of divinity imparted from above, that benevolence and love, which however now defaced, still shews how man might once be properly called the image of his Creator." (195-196)

So this marriage is shown to embody Christian love - a love that controls sexual passion, and that exemplifies duty and benevolence in action. The community reaps rewards from the marriage as Mr and Mrs Ellison embody a formidable team of Christian duty, virtue and benevolence. This union, then, is both a paradigmatic marriage based in love and a pivotal structure in the philanthropic community.

The strong, healthy Christian community that they establish is presented as a conglomeration of family units, each embodying personal affection and social responsibility intricately tied in a bond of moral commerce - that is Christian virtue, personal affection, and responsible dispensation of wealth. Marriage is actively endorsed in this text as it is in *Millenium Hall* and Scott's earlier novels.

"Sir George considered marriage as a state commanded by God, and very useful to the community; he respected it therefore both on religious and political motives; always endeavoured to promote it with propriety, and heard with pleasure that any of his friends had entered into it with virtuous and rational views." (202)

"Political motives" it appears are those that prove 'useful to the community'. A marriage built on virtue and love is a strong, productive and stable unit for society. But while he promotes marriage 'on religious and political motives', Ellison does not condone it for financial reasons. He provides for his daughters so that they will never have to marry only for 'pecuniary motives' (202). And, another character, Miss Almon, stipulates that she would not go to Jamaica in search of a wealthy husband, 'for she had always looked on that proceeding as one kind of prostitution, and she was equally determined to avoid all sorts. Both virtue and pride, she thought, forbade making a traffic of her person' (164).62 While it seems to ignore the pecuniary base of Ellison's first marriage, this statement is a radical and provocative critique of money-based marriages.

So, while a good marriage is a fundamental structure of society, a part of the social and economic intercourse of society, and while its benefits to society might be as a productive economic unit, its origins should not be pecuniary.

In this narrative, marriage provides support for, and demonstration of, the ideology of 'moral commerce' and it also provides a circular structure to the novel. The novel commences with George Ellison sailing for Jamaica to seek his fortune and concludes with his extended family of children acting as a virtuous diaspora spreading the ideology of moral commerce.

... their parents cannot lament their absence: and as they practise the virtues they had learnt both from the instruction and example of Sir George and Lady Ellison, their dispersion serves to extend happiness to a greater number of persons than could reach the knowledge of a man fixed like Sir George chiefly in one place, and indeed beyond what the fortune of one person could supply. (221)

Marriage and the stable family are crucial components of Scott's vision of a strong Christian society and Ellison's charity often takes the form or has the effect of keeping family units together. There is much talk of familial responsibility and where this is remiss, for example in the Maninghams' relatives not assisting them in their distress, or where Miss Almon's father and step-mother actively promote her distress, benevolent individuals with inclination and financial power intercede. Family units are supported in all spheres. In his own household, Ellison encourages his servants to marry — though, importantly, not interracially — to have children to breastfeed, thus showing that society relies on the family unit for its stability at all levels of society. The breakdown of this family unit, the abnegation of familial responsibilities, is fundamental to many instances of financial and emotional poverty and distress in the novel. For example, of the charitable recipients, most are wives and children who are left destitute by the vices of dissolute husbands and fathers.63 Women, again, are shown to be practically responsible for the home and for children's welfare, while having little power to effect that support. Because they have little agency in this regard, Ellison intercedes with

63 Again, one cannot help but see the similarity between these characters' situation and Scott's own financial difficulties.
assistance, showing that because societal structures do not support women, there is a need for the kind of benevolent individual that Scott portrays.

While other men are often represented as the source of distress, wives and mothers are depicted as the stable foundation in families. When husbands are dissolute, it is the wives – Mrs Blackburn Jr and Mrs Tunstall – who hold the family together. They are pivotal to the family, often having to accept financial assistance from George Ellison. The women are in a double bind, having to show economic acumen in managing on small means, and meanwhile having to show continuing loyalty to their husbands who are often the source of their financial distress. While Ellison assists such women, it is almost always through their own economy and virtue that they are able to support their children in material and spiritual ways and to keep the family together. In this, as in her other works, Scott articulates how difficult are the lives of women because of the restricted roles society imposes upon them.

iv. 'Honour thy father and mother': Gendered philanthropy in George Ellison

Through their philanthropy, both the Millenium women and George Ellison influence and change society because of their financial and moral power, but their gender differences determine the nature and degree of such change. In one sense, Millenium Hall and George Ellison are companion texts. Intertextually, George Ellison provides a male variation on the female model established in Millenium Hall. While my earlier discussion of Millenium Hall has highlighted the role of the male narrator in authorising the women’s philanthropic community, what follows in this part of this chapter is a discussion of how in George Ellison Scott explores a differently gendered philanthropy.

In this section of the chapter, I suggest that Scott establishes a paternal model of philanthropy in George Ellison, which contrasts with the maternal model of Millenium Hall. While the parental model of philanthropy is common to both – a model which I will revisit shortly – there are significant implications for the contrasting genders of
George Ellison and the Millenium women. Just as women's positions in eighteenth-century society were increasingly restricted to the domestic sphere, so too are the women philanthropists restricted by gendered notions of domestic philanthropic 'housekeeping' – albeit while achieving far-reaching results. This corresponds with Janet Todd's observation that in the eighteenth century women were increasingly characterised and 'marginalised into the unproductive vessels of morality'.\textsuperscript{64} George Ellison, the husband and father, on the other hand, controls both the domestic sphere and beyond; his greater freedoms and responsibilities take him beyond the home, beyond the estate, to the communities outside – and even beyond the coasts of England – in order to fulfil his benevolent desires and responsibilities. This section explores features of Ellison's philanthropic enterprise, identifying how moral commerce underpins the philanthropy and how Ellison's male gender gives Scott freedom to explore avenues for reform that she could not in \textit{Millenium Hall}.

Ellison does what the Millenium women cannot do, and that is to explicitly criticise and reform public structures, such as legal, political and welfare institutions. In formally taking over the distribution of poor taxes (66), the administration of sickness insurance and benefits (67), and by becoming a Justice of the Peace (70-71) he assumes formal administrative roles in the commercial and legal infrastructure of the community that the women could never do. While in a sense they establish their own systems of governance and control, they have to establish a largely sequestered community in which to do this. Their power and control are a consequence of the dependency of the inhabitants rather than of any wider socially sanctioned authority. Their only authoritative sanction is that given by the male visitor, George Ellison, who then goes on to copy and expand their philanthropic model.

In contrast to these women, George Ellison has authority on a number of grounds – his gender, his success as a merchant and his consequent wealth, his inherited title, and later his status as a Justice of the Peace. These authoritarian bases provide access to a

\textsuperscript{64} \textit{The sign of Angellica}, 202.
broader range of philanthropic activities, a greater power to effect change, a greater mobility and, hence, greater opportunities to assist more people. It also gives Ellison more credibility with other men, which is important for a number of reasons. His influence over Sir William encourages the latter to contribute substantial funds to Ellison's programmes. As a titled male in the community, Sir William's contribution and sanction are more lucrative than the Millenium women's supporters who are, invariably, other disenfranchised if moderately monied women. As a successful male merchant he has the money and status to convince local authorities to allow him to control and restructure welfare programmes for the poor. Half the county's poor funds are reallocated to Ellison and his new programmes. While the community benefits in the reduction of poor payments, Ellison is granted freedom to redesign existing social welfare structures according to his philosophy. The women at the Hall, however, usually have to bring the poor to them, rather than go out to the existing community. 

*George Ellison* offers a spatial and metaphorical model of expansion in contrast to the model of containment in *Millenium Hall*. As a man, Ellison has power and freedom to expand his charitable empire: as women, the Millenium women must consolidate their sequestered domestic charitable enterprise. This is not to deny the effectiveness of the Hall's philanthropy. Perhaps its greatest success is prompting a man to emulate and expand the charitable principle. After all, Scott's stress on the power of example suggests that such moral emulation is her ultimate aim.

To increase his philanthropic power, Ellison institutionalises his existing legal advantage as a wealthy, landed man. In the novel, the corruption of local politics oppresses and exploits the poor, who have no recourse to expensive legal services. Ellison's solution is to become a Justice of the Peace to extend his legal power of benevolence in his parish and and beyond. He assumes the role of JP, for nothing but want of power appeared to him a just boundary to benevolence; for this purpose he obtained admission to that bench, which, if the office were executed with discretion, vigilence, and integrity, would prove one of the most valuable blessings in the British constitution. (70)

Ellison adopts this legal mantle to give him power to help the poor and also to show how the office should be fulfilled. This is yet again one of Scott's swipes at political
corruption. Scott allows her character to fill this legal position of power, even while denying him access to parliamentary representation because it gives him administrative power on a confined geographic and institutional scale. For his power to be completely effective he needs to be the big fish in the small pond. As a member of parliament, he would be a small voice with little individual power to effect large scale change. If this is true, then it suggests that the types of philanthropy shown in Scott's novels depend on benevolent dictatorships rather than on broad democratic structures. And, as Paul Langford stresses, even those members of parliament who attempted to battle poverty through legislative means, such as Richard Lloyd and Thomas Gilbert, found that amendments were often passed in principle but were rarely effected in legislation. At best, such legislation was localised and piecemeal, a situation that adds support to Scott's belief that individual rational virtue and benevolence were the only way to effect broad-scale improvements.65

While commenting on the characteristics of Ellison's programmes for reform, it is worth pausing to consider the parental model that Scott gives to her philanthropists. Why does she adopt such a parental model? In eighteenth-century society the parental model would echo society's wider structures of hierarchy and authority overlain with moral intent. The model of parental care, in its ideal form, is an authoritarian but not a tyrannic model of power. As the parent has the child's interests at heart, the former's authority is directed for the child's benefit. Given Scott's emphasis on corrupt government, it is a model that she might suggest for national as well as localised government. Clearly this model is exemplified in the idea of rural gentry paternalism, an issue discussed earlier in the chapter and which needs to be revisited briefly here.

Some eighty years after Scott wrote George Ellison, J. S. Mill wrote about paternalist relations between the upper and lower classes in terms of the familial model. In Principles of political economy, Mill writes of the poor that:

\[
\text{they may resign themselves in all other respects to a trustful } \text{insouciance, and repose under the shadow of their protectors. The relation between rich and poor}
\]

65 Public life and the propertied Englishman 1689-1798, 156-7.
should be only partially authoritative; it should be amiable, moral, and sentimental; affectionate tutelage on the one side, respectful and grateful deference on the other. The rich should be in *loco parentis* to the poor, guiding and restraining them like children.66

There is a pact of faith here on the part of the poor – that the upper classes have their best interests at heart.

Another foundation for this parental model is Scott’s Christianity. God the father is replicated in Ellison the benevolent father figure. This characterisation is portrayed dramatically – and problematically – with the slaves deifying their master, seeing him as the benevolent god (18). Ellison tries to clarify this situation by asserting that he is ‘God’s steward’ and that God is their ‘General Parent’ (18). In terms of the Ellisons' English rural estate, the parental model reinforces the gendered basis of philanthropy, imposing and reinforcing the gendered stereotype of a marriage onto philanthropy. In the traditional family the father has public, monetary and legal authority, whereas the mother is responsible for providing a domestic model of virtue and propriety. Men are the guardians of money and law: women are the guardians of virtue; in the words of Joseph Addison: 'Female Virtues are of a Domestick turn. The Family is the proper Province for Private Women to Shine in'.67 This latter role makes female philanthropists particularly suited to be educators and, accordingly, we find the Millenium women setting up schools for girls.

The narrator draws the relationship between maternal roles and responsibilities and education. In both *Millenium Hall* and *George Ellison* women philanthropists use a maternal model for their benevolence. While they can provide financial assistance, their primary role is as moral guides. As discussed previously, the heterosexual philanthropy in Ellison’s community establishes a model showing Scott’s view of society. In *Millenium Hall* a predominantly female power structure prevailed, but

67 *The Spectator*, 81, June, 2, 1711.
nevertheless aimed at and promoted marriage in the community, while still sequestering social outcasts.

In addition to comparing Ellison's and the Millenium ladies' charity, Lady Ellison's charitable works show the gendering of philanthropy in the novel. From the start, Lady Ellison's charitable 'sphere' is characterised as 'different and more minute' than her husband's. In 'expence' and in 'consequences' her charities were 'less considerable' (196). Lady Ellison's charity is directed primarily to women, assisting them when they are lying in and providing practical assistance for babies and children. Congruent with the expected benevolent roles of gentry women, she also provides appropriate clothing to assist women in developing their figures. As girls 'grew near to woman's estate' she adjusted the clothing 'making them somewhat stiffer as they advanced in size, being as great an enemy to the slatternly appearance of too unconfined a waist, as to the impenetrable boddice worn by the common people in the country' (196-7). Such clothing, Scott states, is beneficial both to the health and shape of a woman, but dress and demeanor were also symbols of virtue and moral health. Elizabeth Montagu commented on an acquaintance's losing a child in pregnancy: 'There seems to be nothing tight about that lady, I should expect her ever and anon to drop a child or a garter. There are people who have no tensities or tensions or tensitiosities, which you please, and all moral and natural matters hang loose about them'.68 Lynne Vallone discusses the policing of the body in her study of girls' culture: such 'synechdochical scrutiny' takes a particular physical characteristic apart from the body and then uses it as an example of the entire being. 'Thus the seemly or unseemly gesture becomes the visual representation of both the girl's exterior (body) and interior (soul) – what can be seen and what is inferred'.69 The intimacy of this bodily policing needs a woman's guidance, and one advantage of representing a gendered philanthropy is that Scott can discuss issues which would have been indelicate business for a man.

69 For a discussion of dress restrictions and its symbolism for girls' virtue, see Lynne Vallone Disciplines of virtue, 31.
Lady Ellison's most prominent role, however, is as promoter of virtue in the young women of the community. In this sense, she embodies a role that Scott has implicitly asserted throughout *Millenium Hall* and *The history of Sir George Ellison*, that is the role of the woman, and especially of the mother, which is to teach and police virtue in daughters and other young women. This role of promoting virtue is symbolised in 'Lady Ellison's Maidens'.

Every girl, who at fifteen was sober, modest, industrious, and cleanly, she formally received under her protection, and gave her on the occasion a scarlet ribbon, which was afterwards worn on Sundays, as a distinguishing mark of Lady Ellison's favour. These young women were called in the neighbourhood Lady Ellison's Maidens (197).

Again we have here an embodiment of moral commerce with virtue being intricately connected with financial support and reward. Just as young, virtuous women are rewarded with dowries at Millenium Hall, Lady Ellison's maidens are rewarded for their virtuous conduct when they marry 'an honest, industrious man' (197). Such a man was sure of receiving in dower with his wife furniture for a cottage, a cow, a pig, a male and two females of different sorts of poultry, a decent sober wedding-dinner for themselves and their parents' (197). While young marriageable men are seeking virtuous wives, the financial inducement is paramount. As Scott asserts, the dowry 'seldom failed of getting these maidens good husbands, and the rather as it was known to be the source of still farther advantages if after marriage they continued to deserve it' (197). It is no wonder then that 'If a young man was inclined to marry, he was directed more by the top-knot than by the face in his choice of wife' (197). The symbolic power of the scarlet ribbon was so great that literal or explicit criticism was not needed to chastise wayward girls: 'if a friend asked her what was become of her ribbon, the recollection never failed producing an amendment' (198). Ignoring this policing of virtue has serious consequences; one girl who did so lost pecuniary assistance and faced virtual banishment from the community because of her shame. Such powerful social sanctions are reminiscent of Defoe's badges for the poor, and Puritan badges of adultery, showing that sanctions work as well to promote as to dissuade specific types of behaviour.
Lady Ellison's red ribbons are signs for the girls' virtue. That these symbols are so potent in both disciplining the girls' behaviour and in attracting prospective spouses is an indication of the importance in eighteenth-century society of publicising women's virtue. It is also an indication of the extent to which women's private virtue is constructed by public discourses, again showing how inextricable are the private and public spheres. Consistent with the literature of self-improvement of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there is a tension between the great responsibility placed upon individual women to keep and display their virtue, and the limited agency that they have to protect and form their own lives.

To a great extent, then, *The history of Sir George Ellison* can be viewed as an expansion of *Millenium Hall*, primarily because, as a man, Ellison can extend his sphere of benevolence. Not only can he travel throughout the country rescuing debtors in prisons, he can also institute his reforms outside England. The fact, however, that his anti-slavery intentions are limited by British rule in the colonies does pose the question of how effective Scott's model for change is in situations where it directly opposes political and economic law. Nevertheless, by transferring Ellison's benevolent activities from a Jamaican plantation to the English countryside, Scott shows a model for morally healthy dispensation of colonial trading wealth. While ostensibly assuming the role of a traditional landed gentleman, he instead establishes a philanthropic community with his new wife, reforms local poor law and legal administration, and rears a family that becomes a virtuous diaspora, spreading the virtues of moral commerce throughout England, and even back to the colonies. Scott indeed shows that the 'good man' can 'rise to' more than 'philanthropy' and 'humanity'.

*George Ellison*, like *Millenium Hall*, promotes the heterosexual family as a building block for a healthy society, partly by explicitly praising and encouraging marriage, but more powerfully still, by depicting a heterosexual authority structure in its philanthropy; that is, a man and a woman are the public authorities, rather than the group of Millenium women. This difference between the two narratives is an important
reason to consider *Millenium Hall* and *George Ellison* alongside one another; in doing so, the texts comment upon the other. While she articulates a more active moral and commercial agency for women in the earlier novel, in *George Ellison* Scott shows how much more comprehensive a philanthropic programme can be when instituted with a heterosexual structure. Her emphasis on this heterosexuality in the latter novel prompts one to read *Millenium Hall* slightly differently. Instead of emphasizing the lesbian or single-sex features of the community, as some critics have done, examining these novels in tandem - *Millenium Hall* seems less radical than if one considers it in isolation. One sees, for instance, how important was the issue of promoting marriage in *Millenium Hall*. If considering the text in isolation, this emphasis on promoting marriage for the lower orders might well be seen as a narrative strategy to counter or mask the lesbian structure of the women's authority, that is to give the novel a less radical tone; however when placed next to her later novels one sees it as part of a social view that considers heterosexual marriage as a more effective philanthropic base. In *Millenium Hall*, the text promotes marriage for the lower ranks; however, in *George Ellison*, marriage is presented as a duty, and as a powerful agent of social change, for all ranks. By considering the models of marriage in *George Ellison*, one can see that in her earlier text, Scott had not quite negotiated the problems of a married woman having philanthropic agency.

Indeed, in *George Ellison*, the narrative offers a more conventional view of gender roles and relations than *Millenium Hall* or than Scott's previous novels where women are depicted and promoted as having a greater sense of public agency separate from men. In her depiction of Lord and Lady Ellison's benevolent works, Scott advocates a very conventional model of gender roles, where the man has public authority and financial power, and where the woman is restricted to promoting domestic virtues in a smaller sphere, moral education of children and individual acts of kindness being her main responsibilities. And, perhaps more telling still, is the comment that education should prepare women for being 'daughter, wife, or mother' - one of women's three roles which are domestic and relational to men (94). While the context for this remark is a
description of the Millenium ladies' establishing public schools for girls, schools in which women are the educators, the public agency of these teachers is undermined by the fact that the emphasis on proper girls' education is grounded in virtue and fulfilling them for the station for which their rank has designed them. By representing women of the upper ranks marrying, Scott decreases their independent moral commercial agency, but shows the consolidated agency of a husband and wife team.

Instead of offering a sustained and consolidated model of independent women as did her earlier novels, *George Ellison* offers instead a more radical political critique, with a strong discourse of natural rights that extends across class, race and gender issues. Combined with her critique of the institution of slavery and the assumed hierarchy of race, Scott's questioning of rank, class and gender marks her as a subversive writer indeed. She is a writer who acknowledges the social constructions of such divisions as man and woman, master and slave, authority and obedience. Not only did she take part in debates of the mid-eighteenth century such as the feared effeminisation of man and country, but she questioned the very constructions of gender and virtue which underlaid such issues. Not only does she advocate abolition of slavery, she goes so far as to suggest that the superiority of white over black is 'adventitious' and not 'natural' (13). It follows then that Scott would see in other social power structures such as class and gender the same arbitrary constructions of hierarchy and authority that are evident in the slavery issue. The discourses of natural rights thread through her writing, promoting individual's inalienable rights outside of political structures. Importantly for Scott as a woman writer, the novel appropriates domestic spheres to discuss issues of power, governance, individual rights and responsibilities. In her dual moral and material exploration of liberty and enslavement in *George Ellison*, Scott displays a two-pronged approach to her social critique which is evident also in *Millenium Hall* and *The history of Cornelia*. In these novels she examines the restrictions placed on individuals by their material circumstances – both economic and political – questions these restrictions, and asserts a moral and Christian agency as the reason why these restrictions are unnatural and unjust.
The narrative reinforces the moral commerce ideology evident in Scott's earlier novel by articulating moral bases for spending and earning money. She provides models of renewed paternalist structures suitable for contemporary commercial situations. Looking forward to Spencean agrarians, she conceived a notion of land that was neither pastorally nostalgic, nor promoting agrarian 'improvement'; instead, land has a utilitarian commercial productivity and a moral political egalitarianism. Unlike Mackenzie's eulogy for old-style gentry paternalism in *The man of feeling*, Scott provides a model of moral based commercial practices in a rural setting. Ellison and his progeny spread out from the rural base, utilising and reforming existing administrative structures, unlike Harley who ultimately retires and shows that his sentimental paternalism cannot survive.70

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70 Beth Fowkes Tobin discusses *The man of feeling* in relation to the 'dissolution of the paternal order' and concludes that Mackenzie's text confirms the death of paternalism by idealising Harley's benevolence towards Edwards and by participating in the commodification of emotion; *Superintending the poor*, chapter one.
CHAPTER FIVE

TEST OF FILIAL DUTY:¹ THE GOTHIC MARGINS
OF A COMMERCIAL CULTURE

Rosemary Jackson has suggested that the gothic is sited on 'the edges of bourgeois culture' where it exists in 'dialogical relation' to that culture.² This view is borne out in Scott's final novel, *Test of filial duty*, where the female protagonist banishes herself to a gothic Welsh locale as punishment for not acquiescing to a 'mercantile marriage'.³ The central characters in the novel, Emilia Leonard and Charlotte Arlington, eschew both romantic and financial models of heterosexual relations, and their epistolary conversations, which structure the novel, discuss different models of marriage and the resulting constructions of women's roles. This epistolary form lends itself to a level of psychological realism that is new to Scott's novels, and it is this interiority that allows her to detail individual responses to eighteenth-century constructions of women and of marriage. It is also this interiority that highlights the gothic mode in the section of the novel where Emilia is in exile, for it depicts her internal conflict. This more psychological exploration of individual women's experiences is a departure from Scott's previous narratives which have used characters more as types, and as a result of this new approach the narrative presents the issues of moral commerce quite differently. At the same time, this interiority foregrounds the interrelationship between the private and public dimensions and constructions of women's

¹ *Test of filial duty. In a series of letters between Miss Emilia Leonard, and Miss Charlotte Arlington, A novel in two volumes*, London: T. Carnan, 1772. Subsequent references to this text will be parenthetical in the body of the chapter and will indicate volume and page number.

² *Fantasy: the literature of subversion*, London: Methuen, 1981, 96. See especially chapter 4, 'Gothic tales and novels'.

³ The term 'mercantile marriage' is Scott's and refers to a marriage of financial convenience with no mutual affection between the betrothed.
lives in the eighteenth century which Scott deals with constantly. The narrative continues to critique traditional aristocratic social structures and romance as models for female action as Scott had done in her earlier novels, but at the same time unsettles the stabilising potential of rational morality.

The following is a brief precis of the novel. *Filial duty* is an epistolary correspondence between two intimate friends, Emilia Leonard and Charlotte Arlington. Through their letters, the reader learns about the passionate excesses of Emilia's step-sister, Sophia, and of Emilia's mother's inability to guide Sophia, as she does her own daughter. Both the correspondents come from aristocratic families who, while adoring their daughters, see their future marriages as a way of consolidating family wealth and prestige. As in a Jane Austen novel, marriage is uppermost in the characters' thoughts and conversations, and the narrative sets issues of marriage in broad political and financial contexts. Not having any hope of a son, Mr. Leonard wishes to marry Sophia to the male relative on whom his estate is entailed, and Emilia to another eligible man; but the plans go awry when Sophia elopes, and when Emilia, instead, falls in love with her sister's intended, the young Mr. Leonard. While neither of the planned marriages ensues, Emilia is banished to overcome her wayward emotions. Charlotte, in the meantime, struggles with her own planned marriage.

As the title suggests, filial duty is the moral law with which this novel is most concerned. The text advocates filial duty and responsibility and represents disobedience to one's parents as 'one of the greatest of crimes' (I, 147). Emilia describes her parents as a 'kind of subordinate Providence to me; – it is my duty to submit to their will' (II, 55). But while the text instructs young persons in filial duty, it also makes explicit that the duty is reciprocal and parents have obligations to direct

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children according to their welfare rather than according to parental whim or ambition. Significantly, for a text that is preoccupied with marriage, the novel links filial duty and wifely duty. Emilia states to her lover: "What dependance could a man have on the fidelity of a wife who had violated her faith to her father, and failed in her first duties?" (II, 141). Provocatively, Scott highlights the argument that for young women, instruction in obeying one's parents is a preliminary education for women in obeying their future husbands. The father and the husband are both established as authority figures to whom women must submit.

The oppositional characterisation of the half-sisters, Emilia and Sophia, foreshadows that in Jane Austen's *Sense and sensibility*, with the former being rational, and the latter, passionate. The text constructs reason as obedience to moral laws, and contrasts this with passion, which is following one's desires with no reference to social constructions of virtue. Emilia and Sophia exemplify this opposition of reason-based and passion-based conduct. Sophia lost her natural mother early in life, and when her father remarried he requested that his new wife not discipline Sophia, so she was raised with little restraint and with no moral instruction. Emilia, on the other hand, was well taught by her mother that one's reason should dominate one's natural passions (I, 18). Passions, Emilia states, 'were given us, to be our servants, not our masters' (I, 152).

When she goes into exile, Emilia states:

My heart will feel it; but it's [sic] sensations shall be directed by reason, not by passion; my regrets, though tender, shall not be impatient; I will cultivate my taste for every blessing I can attain, and endeavour to enjoy them with gratitude, drawing no comparisons between what is allowed, and what denied me. (II, 55-56)

Here, Emilia's triumph of reason over passion is actually resignation in the face of hopelessness and defeat.

I chace from my mind all hope of a change in my situation, that I may, with the less struggle, submit to it, and save myself those anxious moments which expectation of more happy days must necessarily occasion. . . The composure of spirits that I have procured by a perfect submission to my fate, may then well preserve me from unhappiness. (II, 88-89)
The text's psychological realism reveals the struggle Emilia and Charlotte confront in controlling their passions, by holding on to the construct of 'reason' and their internalised constructions of womanhood. Just as the heroine of *The history of Cornelia* exemplified rational morality, Emilia is lauded as a 'rational' rather than 'passionate' woman, but the gothic section of the novel also shows that she has strong passions and emotions. Despite the apparent oppositions, then, between Emilia and Sophia this narrative emphasises that reason and passion are inextricable and co-exist, but that social constructions of women's virtue dictate that women repress and denigrate those thoughts and behaviours that are unacceptable. For instance, the desire to remain single, rather than to marry a man for whom one has no affection, is a wayward and selfish passion that is to be repressed by one's duty to become a wife. What Emilia lauds as 'reason', and rational thinking, are usually the Christian moral norms that women of her rank were encouraged to internalise so that they could be monitors of their own thoughts and conduct. Exercising one's 'reason', Emilia shows, requires reflection on and judgment of a situation and one's options and responsibilities, but it usually results in suppressing conflict or contradiction to the dictates of a moral law.

The text shows the significance of the mother's role in such instruction, and like all of Scott's texts, places emphasis on the mother as a moral instructor and guide. As discussed earlier, *The history of Cornelia* and *Millenium Hall* demonstrate that the absence of a mother's care leaves a daughter vulnerable. In *Filial duty*, Emilia's relationship with her mother exemplifies this moral care which provides protection and guidance on one level, but which, ironically for the late-twentieth-century reader, ensures the daughter's continued subjugation to male power. Thus, the mother's guidance cannot protect a daughter from culturally entrenched oppression. This suggests how much the eighteenth-century woman – as wife and mother – was expected to be an instrument in perpetuating the construction of women as passive, obedient and self-regulating.
Emilia’s step-sister, Sophia, does not benefit from a mother’s care and, consequently, does not learn self-discipline. Scott uses the traditions of romance to describe Sophia’s passionate and wayward character. While in the Preface to her novel, she defends the novel genre as a virtuous and rational discourse and rejects morally misleading romances, Scott still finds it convenient to use the term ‘novel’ as synonymous with ‘romance’ when referring to the bad influence such reading has had on Sophia’s character (I, 122, 155). Like Arabella, Charlotte Lennox’s female quixote, Sophia views herself and men as characters from such romances, judging men’s worth on the extent to which they live up to their romantic models. The dominant model for marriage in the context of the novel is commercial and not romantic, so Scott contrasts the romance model of female life, as exemplified by Sophia (I, 32-3), with the rational lives of Emilia and Charlotte. Sophia acts out the part of a romance heroine, conducting clandestine romances, dressing and acting like a spoilt princess, and contriving dramas which allow her to act out emotional performances. While her father would never force Sophia to marry against her inclination, she still enacts dramatic responses as if he were doing precisely that: ‘I see the conflict that is preparing for me’, she cries, ‘but he shall see I can die, but I cannot marry Mr. Leonard. Cruel, inhuman father! Must I be sacrificed to a caprice! No; barbarous parent! filial obedience does not exact such a submission’ (I, 121). Her rational and restrained step-sister Emilia comments, ‘I found she only wanted to form a distress in her imagination, that might bear some analogy with what she had read in novels; she was sensible an undistressed heroine would make a very uninteresting figure, and was seeking in her fancy, for what she had no chance to find in reality’ (I, 122). When Sophia finally elopes, Charlotte writes to Emilia and comments wryly: ‘she took her flight through the window, which she no doubt would have chosen had all the doors been set open’ (II, 214).
However, as much as romance tropes are used to criticise Sophia, the text shows an ambivalent and ambiguous attitude to romance, both decrying its female models and excesses and appropriating its tropes such as the knight errant (II, 84) and the romantic landscape (II, 58) to critique the mercantile marriage. Indeed, Emilia is ultimately 'rescued' from her exile, when the young Mr Leonard finally discovers her whereabouts and takes her home. G. J. Barker-Benfield has shown that such ambivalence to romance was common in eighteenth-century novels, with writers selecting those elements of romance that were useful for their purposes.° Scott's purposes here are partly comic, for there is much humour in Sophia's excesses, but like much of the humour in the novel, it is dark, because although Sophia is selfish and irresponsible, her ultimate punishment far outweighs the crime. Nevertheless, Sophia's romantic leanings and passionate excesses also serve as a contrast to her restrained sister.

While Sophia is at times rendered with a wry tone, romance in the narrative is primarily associated with danger for women and licentiousness in men. Sophia exercises an extraordinary degree of autonomy, expressed spatially in the novel: she comes and goes, enters and leaves rooms unbidden, leaves the house to go to public entertainments, returns to eat and dress, only so she can leave the domestic realm again. The text represents this autonomy as morally corrupt, with her physical autonomy equating with her moral waywardness. While displaying herself in public, Sophia encourages the attentions of inappropriate men, such as the deceiving Captain Ireson. Sophia indulges passions of display, luxury, vanity and sexual desire. She lacks the restraint of her passions that is so well exemplified by her step-sister, Emilia; but then Sophia has not had the restraining influence of a mother, and her father renounces any moral responsibility for his daughters and intervenes only in commercial matters of marriage. This division of parenting establishes a conservative model for marriage and gender roles where the husband rules the public, financial sphere, and the wife is the guardian of domestic virtues, somewhat similar

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5 The culture of sensibility, especially 315-321.
to the Ellisons' division of labour. The text very clearly condemns Sophia for this autonomy and lack of restraint and implicitly blames her for her final demise as she elopes with a rake. The counterfeit Scottish Baronet purchases Sophia cheaply as he plays out her romantic fantasy and benefits from her thirty thousand pounds inheritance. Her pre-marriage waywardness is rewarded with physical confinement and emotional desolation in rural Scotland after her marriage, whereas her rakish husband uses her fortune to extend his public licentiousness.

But while Sophia's passionate autonomy is condemned, and ultimately punished, in the novel, Emilia and Charlotte exercise a different type of autonomy and, after various trials, are rewarded with happy marriages, showing that ultimately the narrative supports their intellectual freedom. There is an ideological instability in the novel's construction of female freedom, for, while on the surface there appear to be 'good' and 'bad' forms of autonomy in the novel, represented by Emilia and Sophia respectively, there is an anxiety about women's autonomy and, as I shall explain shortly, no woman who exercises her own will in the narrative escapes some kind of punishment or discomfort. It is often noted in the text that Emilia spends most of her time at home and ventures into public usually to accompany, unwillingly, her mother and step-sister. Her merits are the kind that are best displayed in the drawing room in conversation rather than at public entertainments. Emilia voluntarily remains in the domestic sphere because she finds public amusements offensive, but this disadvantages her marital prospects because she is limited to the men who seek her out. The irony of being on public display (to prospective marriage partners) in her domestic setting shows the intricate relations between the public and private selves.

If the women in the novel exercise autonomy or independence, it is important to consider what restraints they are resisting. Emilia and Charlotte are apparently well behaved, modest and dutiful daughters. They obey their parents' instructions and seem to have shaped their lives in accordance with expectations for their rank in society. They are
accomplished in education, the arts and polite manners. Their behaviour is guided by expectations of modest and polite conduct. It is in their correspondence, however, that they exercise the autonomy of expressing their thoughts and reservations about these constructed roles and behaviour in candid voices. Their physical bodies and mouths are restrained, but through their pens their voices dissent.

The epistolary form offers freedom of voice to Emilia and Charlotte. As critics such as Ruth Perry and Julia Epstein have suggested, this form also freed eighteenth-century female authors as their voices were distanced from the voices of their letter writing characters. This ventriloquism gives Scott opportunities to critique marriage from a woman's perspective by displacing these views to the voice of a fictional character. The potential subversiveness and intense intimacy of correspondence is precisely why correspondence between a man and woman was viewed as highly regulated during this period. Forms of conduct between the sexes were strictly observed in polite society and made it necessary to police one's written words as well as one's public voice.

Samuel Richardson's publication of Letters written to and for particular friends on the most important occasions in 1741 was partly in response to demand for models of polite correspondence from persons who were unsure about such written forms of conduct.

Of course the letter form is neither transparent nor unmediated. As Elizabeth Heckendorn Cook articulates, for the eighteenth-century reader the letter was both 'the most direct, sincere, and transparent form of communication' and 'the most playful and potentially deceptive of forms'. Its capacities for self-dramatisation are enormous and part of its artifice is the creation of apparent artlessness. This is evident a little later

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7 Consider, for example, the complications arising from Charlotte Grandison's secret correspondence with Captain Anderson in Richardson's Sir Charles Grandison, vol. II, letter xxix.
8 Epistolary bodies, 16.
than Filial duty in Frances Burney's creation of Evelina's plural voices in her novel of the same name. In representing her experiences to her guardian Mr Villars, Evelina retells, recreates, performs and dramatises both the events and her own character. Still, it was precisely this flexibility of the form that offered Scott, and other authors, the potential for more complex and more explicitly intimate interaction between characters. The potential for intimacy and openness in the letter form is clear in the correspondence between the novel's female friends.

Although both Emilia and Charlotte are self-regulating, 'good' women, obedient to their parents' wishes and societal expectations, in their letters they question, complain, and undermine cultural constructions of the good daughter, the good woman and good wife. Their correspondence is almost entirely taken up with the issue of marriage. They discuss marriage in general – the relative merits of the married and single state; how a 'mercantile' marriage compares with a marriage of mutual affection; the function of marriage in society – and marriages in particular, that is, their own marital opportunities. While they present a range of opinions about marriage, Charlotte's question to her correspondent is central to their discussion: '"Say, if you know, what is it to be a wife?"' (I, 166).

The correspondence shows two young women speculating about their options, freely stating opinions and laughing about the possibilities and absurdities of their situation; yet it is a dark humour because under their lightness is the knowledge that marriage is their fate. And, fundamental to this knowledge, is their recognition that when married a woman ceases – legally at least – to exist as an individual. The laws respecting women stated: 'by marriage the very being or legal existence of a woman is suspended'. It is only within their private correspondence that they can weigh their options and express their opinions with impunity. While both young women are fortunate to have parents

9 Frances Burney Evelina, or the history of a young lady's entrance into the world, 1778.
10 The laws respecting women, 1777, as quoted by Linda Colley Britons, 238.
who will not force them to marry against their inclination, the two girls know that it
would be an affront to filial duty to refuse any reasonable marriage offer recommended
by their parents.

The novel's discussion of marriage is conducted in a way that pushes together male and
female spheres to show that the motivations, goals and aspirations of men and women
are more similar than the artificial separation of male and female spheres might suggest.
For instance, Emilia and Charlotte draw analogies between domestic concerns and
political situations, political power struggles; 'conquest', for example, is common to
affairs both of romance and of war (I, 19, 36). By drawing analogies between
seemingly more significant events, such as war and politics, and apparently
unimportant women's affairs, Scott demonstrates that for women, decisions about
marriage have profound effects similar to those usually associated with supposedly
more 'important' affairs of state. These analogies are also consistent with Scott's refusal
to separate 'private' and 'public' spheres for men and women, and, as evidenced in her
histories and biographies, her insistence that individual virtues are the basis for public
responsibility.

The text articulates men's views of marriage as a primarily commercial transaction that
involve financial exchange, transfers of land, and consolidation of family alliances.11
The correspondents suggest that a 'mercantile' marriage in which mutual regard is
ignored ensures unhappiness for a woman because she becomes a slave to the
capricious tempers of her commercial master (I, 44). Scott again uses the discourse of
slavery and of natural rights, just as she did in *Cornelia, Millenium Hall* and *George
Ellison*, to protest against the injustices visited upon women. The woman who
possesses either land or fortune is herself commodified and becomes, depending on her
perceived faults or virtues, either another asset for her husband or an unfortunate debit.

11 But, as I will discuss shortly, Emilia's and Charlotte's beaux are differentiated from other men, specifically
older men, because of their emotional attachment to their lovers.
As Charlotte suggests, she has both beauty and fortune, so 'Truly the man is fortunate enough to have such a girl as I am thrown in with the thistles, as mere appurtenances to the estate' (I, 95). While she jests, Charlotte acknowledges that to the man looking for a mercantile marriage, the thistles which are an unwanted accompaniment to the land.

Men's commercial views of marriage are not restricted to the upper ranks of society, although these views are usually held by older men. When Emilia meets cottagers in Wales, the 'mercantile marriage' is discussed, but using a different rhetoric from that used by English gentry. The old cottager comments that there is 'not the worth of six goats difference between any two women' and 'a woman with goats is always better than a woman without' (II, 195-196). He describes his own profitable marriage:

My wife, rest her soul! I am sure she would never let mine rest while she lived, brought me a pretty stock, or I should have thought I had a bad bargain. Before I had been married to her a month, I would have given her gratis to any one that would have taken her; but I did not repent of my marriage; for the cattle she brought throve purely, were towardy, and profitable, and bred faster than she did, and so I was never afraid of her kidding. (II, 196-197)

While Emilia smiles at the old man's marital philosophy and while Scott appears to present his views humorously, the text clearly pushes together the cottager's and aristocratic Englishmen's opinions of marriage. To such men, women are no better – and these views would suggest that they are less – than domestic animals. But younger men, of both aristocratic and rural ranks, are presented as more concerned with affective, than financial, ties. Mr Leonard, Mr Edmondbury and Peggy's lover all prefer love to money in marriage, although as in Scott's previous novels, love and rational morality are always rewarded with financial security.

Charlotte suggests that there are temperaments which are suitable to mercantile marriages. In such a marriage it is important that there be no affection on either side, as unreturned love would lead to disappointment and bitterness. She suggests that Mr Edmondbury is unsuitable for 'a dull mercantile marriage' because 'he can never sit soberly down in a state of stupid indifference till death do us part. For such an union
the man ought to be as heavy as the acres that occasion it, and then we might change
the matrimonial service for the burial, and with a little variation say, earth to earth, &c.'
(I, 70).

But while older men might be associated with commercial interests in marriage, and a
more traditional view of landed wealth and power, the text does not construct a
gendered opposition in which men are interested in money and women are interested in
love. It is a generational, rather than a gendered, distinction, suggesting that traditional
aristocratic mercantile models of marriage are outmoded. The text defines the
reasonable woman's attitude to marriage as commercially sophisticated but emotionally
uncompromising. This combination of moral and commercial bases of judgment is
clearly a continuing concern for Sarah Scott and, for her, the ideal marriage is certainly
one based on moral commerce. In marriage as in other social relations, Scott sees no
reason why commercial expedience and mutual affection need be exclusive.

Even more subversively, perhaps, than the idea of marrying for love, is the text’s
suggestion that single life should be a serious alternative to marriage. In positive or
sympathetic representations of the single state, Scott joined other female writers such as
Jane Barker and Sarah Fielding. Charlotte suggests that men ridicule single women
as 'old maids' to ensure that women do not contemplate a single life: 'To cast a ridicule
on that state has been a great piece of male policy; but I hope I shall never be the dupe
of so poor an artifice' (I, 45-6). Not surprisingly, both Charlotte and Emilia see much
that is positive in remaining single (I, 159). Charlotte's mother, however, considers the
latter state socially and personally irresponsible when she states: 'Such notions are
selfish, marriage is a duty' (I, 49). Mrs Leonard's view of women's role in society is
one that is promoted both in *Millenium Hall* and *Sir George Ellison*. We'll remember

12 Jean Kern has written about eighteenth-century novels' treatment of the unmarried woman: 'The old maid,
or "to grow old, and be poor, and laughed at" in Mary Anne Schofield and Cecilia Macheski eds, *Fetter'd or
free?*, 201-214.
that George Ellison 'considered marriage as a state commanded by God, and very useful to the community' (GE, 202).

Marriage is a fundamental commercial and moral unit of a healthy moral commercial society. The idea of remaining single also configures a woman as independent and as exercising individual will and judgment. While Mrs Leonard is depicted as a reasonable woman with credibility in the text, the tone of the novel suggests some questioning of her opinion that spinsterhood is selfish, and an ambivalence towards the marriage state. In Charlotte's and Emilia's letters, remaining single is equated with liberty (I, 48), and romantic power over men (I, 47), which ultimately must be surrendered by marriage, at which time a woman must cede her power to her husband. Of course, for the eighteenth-century woman, the option of not marrying was open only to those with independent means. The practical difficulties facing a dependent single woman were severe enough to make an unhappy but financially comfortable marriage the better option.\(^\text{13}\) Scott, of course, offered her own solution to this dilemma in *Millenium Hall*, and endured the dilemma in her own life, by living a constrained financial existence with Barbara Montagu.

Charlotte describes marriage as a 'great lottery' (II, 202). Although Emilia describes the prospect of one marriage opportunity as ensuring 'a state of joyless insipidity' (I, 116), she clearly respects marriage as an institution. Both correspondents agree that marriage can be better than the single state: 'where two very good people, whose dispositions are perfectly suited to each other are united' (I, 160). They also agree that the married state is attended with duties and is to be taken seriously: Emilia comments that she could not imagine 'commencing a life of care at eighteen', it being 'too early an age to know the extent of the duties of a wife, still less how properly to fulfill them' (I, 114). For all her

\(^{13}\) For a discussion of eighteenth-century attitudes to 'spinsterhood' see Emma Donoghue's *Passions between women*, 121-130; and Betty Rizzo's *Companions without vows*. 
cynical comments, Charlotte also views marriage as a serious duty and ponders the changes to her life prior to her own marriage:

the condition of a wife is full of duties, and hitherto I have had occasion to practise but few. I am sensible of the difficulties that may attend such a change in situation, and I hope I shall therefore be the more able to acquit myself as I ought; for those must be in much danger who think they are to alter nothing but their names; nor are those very safe, however strong their sense of duty, to whom every duty is accompanied by a sacrifice of their own will. (II, 202-203)

But while both women talk of doing their duty in marriage, they both stress that it is mutual affection that makes such duty bearable. And, indeed, it is when Charlotte marries the man she loves, that she can write: 'A domestic life I am persuaded affords the greatest happiness, if we conduct ourselves in it as we ought; and have the good fortune of being united with one who deserves and returns our affection: all is calm content, heart-felt joy; every hour gives pleasure as it passes, and satisfaction on the review' (II, 204). The caveat, 'if we conduct ourselves in it as we ought' is a substantial one and Emilia offers a portrait of how a woman should not conduct herself in marriage:

A giddy, dissipated wife, is the most despicable of beings; flying from the happiness she might enjoy, seeking it were [sic] it is never to be found; despised equally by her husband and by those who caress her; suspected, though innocent; by none more censured than by those who flatter her. She violates her duty, destroys her happiness, forfeits her character. (II, 224-225)

Charlotte's arranged marriage disputes the simple opposition of mercantile and affectionate marriages because she has a regard and affection for the man her parents wish her to marry. Charlotte is portrayed with some ambivalence in the novel, for it appears that she is punished for wanting too much from marriage. It is insufficient for her to love and respect the partner whom her parents have chosen; she demands that he feel the same affection for her. She acts aloof from Mr Edmondbury and risks losing him because of her stubborn refusal to believe his proclamations of love. She believes that it is her inheritance to which her lover is emotionally attached. The fact that Charlotte is tormented, but ultimately successful in marrying Mr Edmondbury suggests that the text both condemns her stubbornness, and approves of her high marital standards. This conclusion is supported by the fact that the other heroine of the novel
also achieves a marriage of mutual affection and commercial strength. In granting their success in resisting pressures to accede to aristocratic notions of marriage, Scott creates and rewards independently-minded women who combine commercial knowledge with emotional standards.

Nevertheless, while Scott advocates and condones women's unconventional openness and strength and affectionate expectations of marriage, it is significant that both marriages renew and stabilise existing aristocratic landed gentry families. Filial duty is clearly a novel for, and in support of, the landed upper class. While Mr Leonard and Mr Arlington demand mercantile marriages for their daughters, the wealth that is required must be old, aristocratic wealth. Mr Arlington refers to Nabob's wealth as disagreeable: 'I am not fond of wealth so acquired; an empty pocket, and an unstained sword, are to me more agreeable' (II, 172), and thus echoes the opinion that merchant wealth is morally unhealthy, an opinion that Scott tried to counter in George Ellison. Mr Leonard provides his daughters with 'the accomplishments usually acquired by girls' of their rank, that is instruction in French, drawing, music, geography and reading, in order to enhance their marriage prospects (I, 9). His primary concern, however, is the perpetuation of his family name, somewhat like Mr Elliot in Jane Austen's Persuasion, whose favourite book is Debrett's Baronetage of England. Mr Leonard promptly remarries when his first wife dies without leaving him a son, and when no son ensues with his second wife he decides to marry his daughter Sophia to the relative on whom the estate is entailed.

Unfortunately, Mr Leonard (junior) would rather marry Sophia's step-sister, Emilia, and Sophia would rather marry a 'romantic hero'. It is the intrusion of such personal inclinations that complicates the otherwise straightforward commercial transaction of marriage. As I have stated, the text dramatises the complexities of these moral

commercial transactions in marriage with a new degree of psychological realism which delineates and explores psychologically complex characters. Emilia's blindness to her developing love for Mr Leonard, and Charlotte's deciphering of this love between the lines of Emilia's letters, create a complex portrait of friendship, self-deception and discovery (I, 154ff). that is closer to Austen's novels than to Scott's earlier narratives. Such interest in motivation and the resulting delineation of subtle and complex interpersonal situations, make this novel substantially different from Scott's other novels, where characters act according to, or in contravention of, their moral duties to illustrate a didactic point. *Filial duty* is comparable with the novels of, say, Frances Burney rather than earlier eighteenth-century novels that predominantly viewed characterisation as a vehicle for moral didacticism.

In the following section of the chapter, the discussion considers Emilia's exile in Wales in terms of a gothic struggle between duty and desire. It is in the subtle portrait of Emilia's conflict between duty and desire that we see Scott's perception of the forces of 'reason' and passion operating in women of the period. Carefully educated to internalise social prescriptions for correct behaviour, how must the woman have felt whose desires contradicted her duty? Emilia's character offers one example. Initially, knowing that Mr Leonard is betrothed to her half-sister, Emilia represses her love for him, and speaks of the joy she feels for gaining him as a brother. It is too much of a contravention of her duty to her parents and her sister to acknowledge her love to herself, so it is left to her correspondent, who reads her more clearly, to read between the literal words of Emilia's letters and inform her of her true passions. Self-deception is not seen as a personal flaw, as it might be in a character of Jane Austen's, but as a response to the apparently unresolvable conflicts between duty and desire in a society where women have little room to move, and where their status as 'good' women depends on their fulfilling their duties.
Emilia's self-knowledge, however, brings no relief from her dilemma. In the aristocratic context of land and family consolidation, Emilia sees no room for her private desires, and neither does her father, who demands that she marry the titled and wealthy Lord Wilton, even though this ignores her affections. The situation tests both Emilia's filial duty, and Mr Leonard's care for his daughter's happiness. While, ironically, it is Emilia's submission to filial duty that leads her father to spare her — ultimately, he is so touched by her filial obedience that he does not force her to marry a man she cannot love — Emilia punishes herself with physical and psychic exile from her family, lover, and community. Her father grants her freedom from the arranged marriage, but Emilia cannot reconcile her own feelings of relief with her feelings that she has transgressed her filial duties. While she suggests to her father that she go to a convent as penance, his anti-papist fears turn him towards her other suggestion, that is, that he choose a suitably remote and secret location for her exile.

The exile is simultaneously self-imposed by Emilia, and condoned by her father. While it is a banishment, at one point in the narrative Emilia refers to it as 'my quiet retirement', which suggests a pleasurable respite from the trials she has suffered, rather than a punishment (II, 3 and 57). By moving to rural Wales Emilia is marginalised from the cultural centre of English aristocratic society until she can overcome her unacceptable passion and emotions. As an indication of its remoteness the post arrives only once a month which prompts Emilia to remark that it is a 'savage spot' (II, 29). Her location is secret so she becomes invisible to society, just as the questioning of the mercantile marriage must be invisible and punished if the institution is to survive. In this exile, Emilia inhabits a sublime landscape, and a gothic milieu where she socialises with larger-than-life characters in dark mansions, and tries to cure herself of her love for Mr Leonard. It is no coincidence that in the first of Scott's novels to probe the complexities of characters' motivations and conflicts between duty and desire, we see her using the gothic mode that so dramatically represents the conflicts of passion and
reason. While in her earlier novels individual characters experienced transitory conflicts, the conflicts were resolved in the texts' central ideological stability and certainty of religious, rational, moral action. In *Filial duty*, the textual certainty and stability are decentred, with not only individual characters, but the text itself manifesting a struggle between what social mores dictate and what the reasonable, moral individual feels is right.

The Welsh landscape is both romantic and gothic. Emilia writes to Charlotte that for a love-sick girl: 'I am placed in the most favorable spot imaginable. Such caves to sigh and mourn in! such pretty rivulets to swell with my tears! such shady groves to sooth my melancholy, and trees whereon to carve my lover's name!'. She sees the sublime landscape as a foil to this 'country which is too well formed for soft contemplation. . . . when I find myself reduced into any indulgence of too tender sentiments, I climb up one of the highest of the neighbouring mountains, steep and craggy, sufficient to conquer the most obstinate reverie; or go to the edge of a cascade, whose roaring confounds all one's senses' (II, 58). The sublime excess of the landscape is 'terrible' Emilia continues and, like 'Michael Angelo's art', it excites 'as much horror as admiration' (II, 59), echoing the relation between the aweful landscape and her gothic state of mind.

Emilia's experiences in her Welsh abode are conflicts between passion and restraint. In her letters to Charlotte – her one connection with her old life – Emilia establishes a structural duality whereby she describes how she really feels and what she really wants to do – that is, submit to the melancholy and lonely desperation of her situation – and describes what she does instead to resist these passions. For example, Emilia learns to play the Welsh harp, but while her sensibility calls her to play music fit for her emotions she instead plays marches and rousing tunes to counteract her melancholia. And, when she paints her sublime landscape, she resists choosing 'the terrible' views,
and likewise resists the temptation to paint a female figure flinging herself from the top of one of the sublimely aweful mountain peaks. Charlotte responds to Emilia's description of her restraint by chiding her for trying to repress her passions.

I perceive that woods, groves, and purling streams, arbors, and solitude, are very efficacious things, however the prudent may try to baffle their effects. What useless trouble have you given yourself in this way, my little philosopher? Had you enjoyed all the reveries your inclination or solitude tempted you to indulge, you could not have grown more tender than you appear by your letter, notwithstanding all your reasonings and conflicts, your flights and your victories. (II, 181-182)

It is a fruitless struggle in the end, suggests Charlotte, and an efficacious one: 'While you lived in the world, it would have been impossible to have extracted from you so warm an acknowledgement of your affection to any man; but this pastoral life has tenderized your [sic] prodigiously' (II, 182).

Emilia's life is saved from becoming emotionally fragmented and self-absorbed not only by her own rational restraint, but also by her friendship with Mr Lewis, an urbane retired gentleman, and by her continuing correspondence with Charlotte. By interacting with representatives of the cultural centre, Emilia does not lose herself in the sublime landscape or the frighteningly sensual community. She resists the violence of the neighbour's son's sexual advances, just as she resists the temptations to self-indulgent pity and romance encouraged by the sublime landscape and sentimental Welsh music.

Just as Ronald Paulson reads the gothic as a metaphorical treatment of the French Revolution, I would suggest that the gothic mode in *Filial duty* (for it is a mode, rather than a full-blown gothic novel) allegorizes the instability and problematics of conventional views of marriage as an instrument of aristocratic perpetuation. Emilia leaves the aristocratic scene of her family in London to try to overcome her desires that undermine aristocratic mercantile bases of marriage. It is no coincidence that in Wales

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15 *Representations of revolution* (1789-1820), New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983. The novel has gothic elements and is not entirely a gothic novel, indicating how early it is in terms of the gothic tradition. Although Horace Walpole wrote *The castle of Otranto* as early as 1764, the most intense period of gothic fiction was in the 1790s, with Matthew Lewis' *The monk* (1794), Ann Radcliffe's *The mysteries of Udolpho* (1794); Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein, or the modern Prometheus* was not published until 1818.
where she settles, her neighbours, the ap Rees, are a decaying remnant of Welsh aristocracy, so decayed, like their mansion, that they are driven by sexual desires and base carnal emotions to the exclusion of any sign of social ‘politeness’. The ap Rees’ insistence on their royal lineage is a desperate attempt to hold on to social significance, just as the Welsh as a nation were clinging to their fraying tradition in the face of English cultural and political dominance. Welsh aristocratic culture was in decline and faced threats from British commercial culture, as did the English aristocracy’s hold on power, wealth and lineage face challenges from new commercial wealth. Indeed, the parallel is evident also, with the ap Rees’ sexual violence approximating the violence forced on Emilia by an imposed marriage.

Emilia’s struggle to overcome her passions, and her denial of the realities of aristocratic mercantile marriage, leave her in a nether world where she can neither run away to Scotland, as did Sophia, nor submit peacefully to a marriage of aristocratic convenience. She submits neither to her father’s desires, nor to her own. Each would be a death to her, metaphorically as a personally anaesthetised wife, or literally as the woman jumping to her death from the mountain top that she imagines in her landscape painting.

From the Welsh sublime landscape, Emilia looks figuratively toward beautiful England, living out Burke’s distinction between the sublime and the beautiful. In *A philosophical enquiry into the origin of our ideas of the sublime and beautiful*, Edmund Burke articulated the qualities of and differences between the aesthetic categories of ‘the sublime’ and ‘the beautiful’.

*sublime objects are vast in their dimensions, beautiful ones comparatively small; beauty should be smooth, and polished; the great, rugged and negligent; beauty should shun the right line, yet deviate from it insensibly; the great in many cases loves the right line, and when it deviates, it often makes a strong deviation; beauty*
should not be obscure; the great ought to be dark and gloomy; beauty should be light and delicate; the great ought to be solid, and even massive.\textsuperscript{16}

To explain the aweful and wild landscape of Wales, Emilia contrasts it with the smallness, the cultivated neatness and particularity of English landscape.

The country around is beautifully wild. Every thing here is in a great stile: I shall hence forward look on the middle part of England as the miniature of nature. Here she appears in all her grandeur, and majesty more than compensates for the want of those nice and delicate touches, which are observable in countries formed on a smaller scale. Wales should be the habitation of giants, and England their parterre. (II, 24-25)

Her aesthetic preference is for the sublime Welsh landscape, rather than for the English decorative landscape aesthetic, the former representing expansiveness, largeness, freedom from constraint, and the latter, the 'parterre' for giants, being decorative, small, controlled and artificial. Arguably, this desire for the wild landscape rather than the artificiality of English symbolises Scott's movement from the ideas represented in \textit{Millenium Hall} to those of \textit{Filial duty}, which are less certain, less settled, less contained. Emilia resisted the constraints of traditional marriage conventions representative of central British aristocratic culture – just as did the Millenium women – and while she is banished to Wales as a result, the exile is both a punishment and a freedom for a resisting woman. There is a sense, however, of greater freedom, if greater uneasiness, for Emilia in her isolation, than there is for the ladies of Millenium Hall, for despite their retirement and philanthropy at the Hall, they still perpetuate the cultural restrictions on women, by, for instance, promoting conventional roles for poorer women through marriage.

Apart from the contiguous and contrasting landscapes of Wales and England, it was the cultural contiguity of England and Wales that helped Scott illustrate the gothic margins of English aristocratic society. The re-birth of interest in Wales in the eighteenth-century created myths of Welshness that originated in a combination of tour narratives,

landscape paintings, and nostalgic re-creations of Welsh cultural activities like bardic story- and music-making.\textsuperscript{17} The distinct landscape, language, and claims to direct ancestry to the ancient Britons, made Wales seem like a foreign country to the English who came to view Wales as a foreign land, and consequently travelled there viewing it as a miniature grand tour. Representations of Wales by painters helped encourage the mystique of Wales by sublime depictions of an already foreign landscape.\textsuperscript{18}

Scott uses this pastiche of Welshness – of sublime landscape, music, foreign language, and feudal ancestry – to emphasise Emilia's displacement and exile from English aristocratic society. The name of Emilia's neighbours, ap Ree, is a remnant of the old Welsh tradition of ancestral patronymics, that was by the eighteenth century virtually extinct (the particle \textit{ap} meaning 'son of'). The sense of decaying tradition in Wales, with its loss of language, traditional music and bardic storytelling, was seen as a result of English modern, rational individualism destroying traditional feudal-style communities.\textsuperscript{19} It is difficult to tell whether Scott was simply using the Welsh nostalgia to stress Emilia's isolation, or whether she was harking back to this traditional communitarian tradition. The models of paternalist and maternalist beneficient communities that Scott depicted in \textit{George Ellison} and \textit{Millenium Hall}, notwithstanding their commercial modernity, might suggest that she was in part idealising the traditional Welsh way of life. However, there is no doubt that in \textit{Filial duty}, Scott primarily satirises the ap Rees for their fruitless retention of their feudal ancestry in the face of commercial and societal change, and similarly criticises the deficiencies in Welsh culture and politeness. For instance, Emilia learns the Welsh harp from a cottager, but satirically contrasts their musical aesthetics, 'he thinks good part of the merit of the

\textsuperscript{17} Welsh tour narratives proliferated in the final years of the eighteenth century, but earlier narratives included Daniel Defoe \textit{A tour thro' the whole island of Great Britain}, Samuel Richardson ed, London: J. Osborn, 1742; Henry Rowland's \textit{Mona antiqua restaurata}, 1723 and later, Thomas Pennant's \textit{Tours in Wales}, 1778. For a discussion of eighteenth-century Wales and English conceptions of Welshness see Donald Moore \textit{Wales in the eighteenth century}, Swansea: Christopher Davies, 1976 and Prys Morgan \textit{A new history of Wales: the eighteenth-century renaissance}, Dyfed: Christopher Davies, 1981.

\textsuperscript{18} See Donald Moore's essay 'The discovery of the Welsh landscape' in \textit{Wales in the eighteenth century}, 127-151.

\textsuperscript{19} Prys Morgan, \textit{New history of Wales}, 30 and 38.
performance consists in that jingling, which I endeavour to avoid, and in playing as loud as possible' (II, 94). She also learns the Welsh language primarily to communicate with the local indigent so she can better perform her charitable works (II, 94), and Charlotte laughs at the incongruity of the beautiful Emilia speaking such an ugly language, ugly perhaps in a symbolic sense when compared with the polite languages of France and Italy (II, 78, 94). In her criticism of this decaying Welsh life, Scott seems to be echoing the sentiments of Ellis Wynn who, in 1703, lamented the loss of traditional Welsh culture and satirised Welsh nostalgia in his *Gweledigaetheu y Bardd Cwsc (The visions of the sleeping bard)*. Compare, for example, Wynn’s description of a ruined Welsh manor house with Scott’s description of the ap Rees’ house:

> We came down upon the great bulk of a vast yawning manor house, the dogs and crows having torn its eyes out, its owners having gone to England or France, to seek there what they would more easily have found at home... One could find there [in Wales] a host of such abandoned manor houses which but for Pride could have been, as of yore, the haunt of the best of men, a shelter for the weak, a very school of peace and all goodness, and a blessing to a thousand lesser houses around them. (Wynn, 13)

After passing through a very narrow avenue, of very shabby trees, I entered a house, which, by its [sic] air, I should suppose the chief prison in Wales; and, indeed, nowhere could confinement wear a more melancholy aspect. The walls look black and ruinous, from the natural ravages of time; and are in several places propped up with buttresses, which now want support themselves. (*Filial duty*, II, 97)

Both descriptions lament the decay of once great Welsh familial traditions by depicting decrepit manor houses. In the ongoing description of the ap Rees’ house, the critique is more pointedly levelled at the current residents whose coarseness, crudeness of taste, physical ugliness and lack of ‘politeness’ makes them fit residents for such an abode.21

The house also fits the gothic conventions, being dark, dank and feudal.

> The windows are casements of about two feet in length, little more than one in breadth; and as of these the iron bars, and the lead, wherein the small panes are set,

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20 Ellis Wynn *Gweledigaetheu y Bardd Cwsc (The visions of the sleeping bard)*, 1703, 13, as quoted by Prys Morgan, 39.
21 I use the term ‘politeness’ in the sense of a cultivated, social, intercourse of an educated and wealthy citizen of society, such as is defined by Shaftesbury. See Laurence Klein’s ‘The third Earl of Shaftesbury and the progress of politeness’; and *Shaftesbury and the culture of politeness*. 
make the greatest part, so little light enters, that through the whole house reigns a kind of 'darkness visible'. The hall is hung round with mildewed armour, rusty swords and spears, and broken guns, all fixed to a wainscot, so rotten from age and want of air... (II, 97-98)

Emilia finds the manor oppressive physically and psychologically, having difficulty breathing, seeing and relaxing in the company of the ap Rees. She feels endangered, imprisoned, disoriented and out of control.

She ridicules their taste in gardens, too, to emphasise their outlandish and outmoded aesthetic:

I found forresters with their withered guns, in yeugh, swans in box, and foxes in holly; this I was told was the work of Sir Llewellen ap Rees, who had served in the armies of King William; and from that prince's new made gardens acquired this curious art. I was pleased to think his works will not long survive him, for the greatest part of every animal is dead, little more than the beak of the swan, and the tail of the fox remaining green; yet I was called upon to admire the exact resemblance they bear to the originals they are designed to imitate. (II, 103-104)

As the reference to King William suggests, topiary is a remnant of an out-dated landscape gardening aesthetic, yet the ap Rees' try to retain the grandeur of their ancestry, unsuccessfully as is indicated by their attempts to prop up the withering plants.22 The coarseness of taste and inappropriateness of customs and conversation are annoying and a source of ridicule for Emilia, but the attentions of the ap Rees' son cause her more serious concern.

He is 'Caliban' to her (II, 156), having 'the soul of a savage' (II, 180). Emilia feels threatened by his oafish physicality and by his unrestrained passions. He has no customary politeness or civility to restrain his base, animal desires. That Mrs ap Rees boasts that he is their hope for continuing their lineal descent is no little comment on the decline of the Welsh, who may continue biologically but not culturally. Emilia writes to Charlotte:

Young Mr. ap Rees torments me abominably with his addresses; a gentle, sighing beau may tieze one a little, but it is only like the buzzing of a fly, disagreeable, but no

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22 In his historical study of landscapes and gardens, Tom Williamson discusses the decline of topiary in the early eighteenth century: *Polite landscapes*, 40.
way tremendous; not so the courtship of this coarse, boisterous lover: he is angry at my rejection of his suit; and I am sometimes afraid he will beat me; yet this is the least alarming of his emotions, if a smile escapes me, which his absurdity sometimes renders unavoidable, he will catch hold of my hand with such a gripe, that I expect to see every finger broken; for I verily believe he could snap my bones . . . . His gallantry robust, terrifies me, and prevents my going to any distance from the house without my maid. (II, 119-120)

This description of her fear as well as her description of his monstrosity, as 'Caliban' and as a 'cannibal' (II, 120), evokes a sense not only of physical fear, but of sexual fear in a way that recalls Miranda's fear of Caliban in Shakespeare's *The tempest*. In her letter to Charlotte, Emilia describes him as Polyphem, the monster who devours Ulysses' men. Charlotte replies:

> your description of him frights me: I know not which is more terrible, his love or his anger, to be caressed, or to be devoured by such an animal; yet when you mention Ulysses's companions, I think I tremble most at the latter.

> "He sucks the marrow, and the blood he drains," conveys a very shocking image; it is worse to be so served, than to have both fingers and arm broken. (II, 125)

Charlotte's evocative and monstrous description of Mr ap Rees 'devouring' Emilia grammatically refers back to 'his anger', but seems to suggest fear of sexual violation and consumption. Depicting uncontrollable or violent sexuality is a common feature of the gothic mode as critics such as Vijay Mishra and Coral Ann Howells have noted. In Scott's text, the uncontrolled and threatening sexuality adds to the sense of Emilia's exile from restrained rational society. Whereas in London Emilia feared the violation of an enforced marriage, in the wilds of Wales she fears literal sexual violation. The social world of her parents might restrict Emilia's passions, but it also protects her from the unrestrained passions of others. Nevertheless, an enforced marriage would, ultimately, bring enforced sexual relations, which brings the two dangers much closer together than might initially appear.

*Test of filial duty* is Sarah Scott's last published work and exemplifies her ongoing experimentation with narrative form. While as the title suggests it continues in the

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author's vein of moral didacticism, there is a spontaneity and humour in the narrative that makes this didactic mode aesthetically more seamless than in her previous works. Julia Epstein has suggested that it is in the letter form that women writers' voices were often most 'natural', 'a voice unconstrained by expectation or apology'. There is a relaxed tone and humour in this novel that compares closely to the tone of Scott's personal correspondence with her sister. And, in Scott's letters, there is an insistent moral tone mixed with light, self-deprecating humour. But while this stylistic departure from her earlier narratives is notable, perhaps what is more significant about this work is its gothic elements. In the gothic Welsh section of the novel in which Emilia is exiled, there is an ambivalent attitude to the outmoded aristocratic way of life and progressive commercial culture from which she is separated. While the gothic offers the dangers and instability of violent passion and uncultured society, it also offers sensual pleasures and uncertainties that are simultaneously liberating and frightening. While embracing the emerging gothic elements that were increasingly common in the novel in the latter part of the century, Scott's novel also harks back, albeit ironically, to traditional romance models. It is significant that it is Scott's final novel which is least comfortable with the stabilising potential of moral commerce. Although both female characters end up with the ideal combination of commercial and affectionate marriages, this good fortune seems to result from accidental circumstances, rather than from a sense of reconciliation between the seemingly conflicting aims of aristocratic consolidation and individual happiness. Emilia's exile from, then return to, the cultural centre of London does not represent a transcendence or reconciliation of the conflict between duty and desire. The conflict is well articulated by Mr Lewis: 'you neither distrust your lover, nor are a slave to love, being under the equitable government of duty; but your sensibilities are too strong, and your heart too tender; you sacrifice love to duty, but your fears conquer your reason' (II, 147-148). Emilia's character is always shown to contain that conflict wherever she resides. The ideology

24 The iron pen, 48.
of moral commerce in *Filial duty*, then, is more open to possibilities and places fewer constraints on the characters, but it is less certain of its liberatory or stabilising properties for a society whose structural bases were increasingly being challenged by the commercial culture.
CONCLUSION

This study commenced with a discussion of some of the images and persons that have been associated with Sarah Scott – utopia, romantic friendship, women’s conventual education, Elizabeth Montagu, her Bluestocking sister – and, in concluding this discussion, I would like to revisit them briefly. A number of critics have quoted Elizabeth Montagu’s assessment of Sarah’s and Lady Bab’s ‘conventual’ existence at Batheaston, as an entrance to discussing Scott’s novels. I quote the section of her letter to Gilbert West in which she refers to Sarah:

My sister rises early, and as soon as she has read prayers to their small family, she sits down to cut out and prepare work for 12 poor girls, whose schooling they pay for; to those whom she finds more than ordinarily capable, she teaches writing and arithmetic herself. The work these children are usually employed in is making child-bed linen and clothes for poor people in the neighbourhood, which Lady Bab Montagu and she, bestow as they see occasion. Very early on Sunday morning these girls, with 12 little boys whom they also send to school, come to my sister and repeat their catechism, read some chapters, have the principal articles of their religion explained to them, and then are sent to the parish church. These good works are often performed by the Methodist ladies in the heat of enthusiasm, but thank God, my sister’s is a calm and rational piety. Her conversation is lively and easy, and she enters into all the reasonable pleasures of Society; goes frequently to the plays, and sometimes to balls, etc. They have a very pretty house at Bath for the winter, and one at Bath Easton for the summer; their houses are adorned by the ingenuity of the owners, but as their income is small, they deny themselves unnecessary expenses. My sister seems very happy; it has pleased God to lead her to truth, by the road of affliction; but what draws the sting of death and triumphs over the grave, cannot fail to heal the wounds of disappointment. Lady Bab Montagu concurs with her in all these things, and their convent, for by its regularity it resembles one, is really a cheerful place.1

This description of Sarah’s life is one reason why *Millenium Hall* has been viewed as semi-autobiographical, as central to, and as a blueprint for reading Scott’s novels. It contains many of the elements that have been viewed as Scott’s characteristic traits: ‘a calm and rational piety’, romantic friendship, female affliction leading to contented retirement, charity, and simple, retired living. What this description glosses over, however, is Scott’s subversive politics, a topic that is appropriate neither for Elizabeth Montagu’s polite epistolary conversation, nor appropriate for a retired, religious woman separated from her husband. This study has shown that these mixed images – of pious

retirement and of outspoken radical politics – coexist in Scott’s oeuvre. Scott did write a novel about an idealised community of women; but what we see most of all in *Millenium Hall* is Scott’s engagement with contemporary cultural discourses; in particular the narrative articulates the material and moral dimensions of economic relations between friends, between groups, among sectors of the community. This thesis has explored these inclusive aspects of Scott’s novels. Moreover, by considering Scott’s works alongside each other, it has demonstrated that *Millenium Hall* is not the only one of her novels to do this.

As well as being one of the only studies to look at Scott’s works in relation to one another, this study has provided readings of five of Sarah Scott’s works, and has traced the concept of moral commerce through each of these works. Each chapter has dealt with diverse, yet related, issues – among them gender politics and cross-dressing, slavery, and eighteenth-century philanthropy – because moral commerce is an ideology that cuts across a broad range of issues. There is no need to define ‘moral commerce’ any further here, but I should recap briefly how it is manifest in the works discussed. The common features of this ideology as seen in all the works are as follows: the ideology foregrounds the relationship between economics and morality; it accepts class hierarchy and emphasises individual responsibilities given a person’s place in the social ranking; it sees government as for the good of the nation and the populace, but considers ultimate authority as residing not in political institutions, but with God; and responsibility resides fundamentally with the individual who must pay allegiance to that divine power by acting piously, and with a rational morality in a reciprocal relationship of mutual responsibility. One feature of the ideology that resounds throughout the narratives is Scott’s assertion that reciprocal relationships between rationally virtuous individuals provide the basis for a healthy, efficient, moral commercial society.

This study has shown how each of Sarah Scott’s narratives gives different emphasis to this ideology of moral commerce. She wrote her first two works in the early
stages of the novel genre's development and they show a writer experimenting with the emerging form and reconfiguring existing literary genres. As this thesis has discussed, Scott experimented with the romance genre in particular, and throughout her works one reads her critique both of its literary form and also her critique of the aristocratic models of society that the romance genre endorsed. Her narratives show how outmoded were the aristocratic conceptions of the state, of the citizen, and of woman, at a time when commercial events and ideologies were destabilizing, what Pocock has labelled 'civic humanist' values and structures. While Scott was concerned with debating the complex issues surrounding the question 'who is a citizen?', this study has shown that she articulated this concern especially in terms of the construction of middle- and upper-class women's identities, of their roles, and of their agency in society. Characters such as Cornelia and Leonora exemplified, for Scott, ways in which women of these ranks could 'be' in the world, by developing and enacting a rational virtue and financial agency in the public sphere.

This study has shown that moral commerce rejects the idea that the public, monied sphere is the sphere of men only, and in *Millenium Hall* Scott articulates a view of society where middle-class women have financial and moral agency. Chapter Three explored *Millenium Hall*, showing that the novel most explicitly demonstrates this moral commerce in terms of the financial and moral agency of philanthropy. The fact that charity figures large in her works is related to the issue of women's financial and moral agency. Even though women were mostly excluded from *public* charitable roles in the mid-eighteenth century, charity work was still an area in which women could quietly exercise their talents. As discussed in Chapter Three, eighteenth-century women's charity was more likely to be private, individual and close to the domestic realm. By demonstrating large-scale charity that, while relatively isolated, extended into public spheres of industry and community, *Millenium Hall* demonstrates that women have the abilities if they are given the opportunity. And not only do they have abilities, they have a rational virtue that allows them to participate in the emerging commercial society while retaining a
firm moral sense of individual and public responsibility. Still, as much as she advocates agency for some women, she still constructs poor women as recipients of the agency of others, and at times reinforces restrictive social restraints on women, such as encouraging women to internalise self-criticism.

Scott continues to explore philanthropy in *George Ellison*, but she articulates a gendered model of charity whereby women concentrate on the domestic realm and men have agency in public, administrative, institutionalized arenas. This emphasis on *male* authority and moral agency is partly because this novel is her contribution to the debate about the good man. Nevertheless, while this text is radical in making a strong case for individual rights — initially exemplified in the case of slavery — it does not radically confront restricted gender roles to the extent that her earlier novels do. Its general politics are more subversive, but specific cases of gender politics are less subversive than in her other novels. One advantage of considering her works side by side, as this study has done, is seeing the extent to which Scott views the construction of women's oppression as analogous with restrictions placed on other marginal and oppressed groups in her society.

In depicting Ellison's life in Jamaica and in England, Scott emphasises economic relations between people, doing so in a Christian moral framework that provides an ethics of moral commerce. She also appropriates the domestic sphere, making space to discuss not only gender politics, but also issues of power, governance and tyranny.

Despite the fact that Scott's gender politics in *George Ellison* are relatively conservative, as seen in Chapter Four, her contribution to gender issues is substantial, as has been acknowledged by critics who have labelled *Millenium Hall* a 'feminist utopia'. Her works do particularly emphasise the difficulties eighteenth-century women confronted. I have shown that her earlier works, *Cornelia* and *A journey through every stage of life*, are especially outspoken in asserting increased agency for
women, and *Millenium Hall* provides a model of happiness and agency for upper-class women who are unmarried. *Test of filial duty* explores women's competing duties and desires in terms of marriage, the author using for the first time the gothic mode to articulate the difficulties of this conflict for the eighteenth-century woman. And regarding an issue confronting both men and women, Scott uses the gothic mode to explore the breakdown in conventional aristocratic notions of marriage and wealth in the face of a new era of commercialism.

While I have explored Scott's articulation of the good man in *society*, and of the rational woman with *public* moral commercial agency, this study has also emphasised that Scott destabilises notions of separate public and private spheres. This study shows that fundamental to the ideology of moral commerce is the belief that an individual exercises similar virtues when interacting privately with another person as when operating in public office. Scott grants heavy responsibilities to the individual because she sees the strength of society residing in a collection of rationally virtuous persons. Moreover, these responsibilities are related to one's rights in society and her narratives espouse a view of natural rights that was current in some forms throughout the century; she goes further, however, applying arguments of natural rights to issues of gender, politics, and race.

Her narratives articulate a moral framework for commerce that is based on individuals developing and exercising rational virtue. This emphasis on rational ethics, on individual agency, and natural rights, prompts one to conceive of Scott as an Enlightenment writer. To a certain extent she does contribute to British Enlightenment discourses; however, she also accepts and endorses Christianity as an authority structure, an idea that many Enlightenment thinkers questioned. The preceding discussion has identified in which ways Scott spoke to Enlightenment ideas and in which respects she differed from them. Scott's narratives endorse an ideology of natural rights that aligns her with radical politics of the period, leading up to the revolution in France. For example, in questioning slavery in *George*
Ellison, she joins other abolitionists in relating anti-slavery issues to natural rights of the individual, rights that cut across social constructions of power, race and gender. Nevertheless, as much as she covertly subverts political and social structures, Scott functioned within those very structures and, as such, unquestioningly accepted a divinely imposed social hierarchy.

What I have demonstrated in this thesis is not that Scott's fiction can be read as history, but that writers of fiction, such as Sarah Scott, were making significant contributions to public debates, alongside those authors, predominantly male, who were writing in non-fictional modes. She articulated and explored crucial dilemmas about the place of morality in the emerging commercial age.

This study has contributed to and extended the relatively early stages of scholarship about Sarah Scott, but it has also provided directions for further enquiry. For example, the different voices evident in Scott's novels, histories, and letters, show her construction of flexible authorial personae, but they also raise significant issues about cultural constructions of discursive conduct and propriety. What type of voice is acceptable for a writing woman, for a writer of fiction, for a writer of politics, for a writer of history in the eighteenth century? They prompt questions about the plurality of the eighteenth-century discursive voice and its relations to genre, gender and cultural constructions. This thesis also points to the need for further enquiry about women's historiography in the eighteenth century. Moreover, the questions which prompted this thesis, about the interrelation of moral and economic discourses need to be pushed further using interdisciplinary methods to see in what ways eighteenth-century writers used a range of mixed discourses in fiction and in non-fictional writing.

The title of this thesis is 'Loving money: moral commerce in the works of Sarah Scott'. I play with the word 'loving' to highlight the tensions in the eighteenth century between the new fascination with money and consumption, and the perceived need for commercial transactions to occur within a 'loving' and ethical context. I have explored
how Scott uses financial relations and bonds between friends to illustrate ties of moral
duty, reciprocal care and personal love and respect. But money is not just a metaphor.
It is not just a narrative strategy to figuratively represent or illustrate these bonds;
financial relations are inextricable from the personal bonds and perceived moral
obligations inherent in friendships and other social relations. Charity or systematic
philanthropy is perhaps the most explicit articulation for Scott of how money can be
intricately bound up with care, concern, duty, obligation, but it is by no means isolated
in this respect. So in her charitable blueprints in *Millenium Hall* and *George Ellison*,
Scott helps us to articulate some of these relations that are so subtly evident in less
explicit financial and moral exchanges and that she explores in her other novels.
APPENDIX A

SARAH SCOTT'S WORKS


__________  *The history of Gustavus Ericson, King of Sweden; with an introductory history of Sweden, from the middle of the twelfth century*. ‘By Henry Augustus Raymond, Esq.’ London: A. Millar, 1761.

__________  *The history of Mecklenburgh, from the first settlement of the vandals in that country, to the present time; including a period of about three thousand years*. London: J. Newbery, 1762.

__________  *A description of Millenium Hall and the country adjacent, together with the characters of the inhabitants and such historical anecdotes and reflections as may excite in the reader proper sentiments of humanity, and lead the mind to the love of virtue*. London: J. Newbery 1762.

Further editions and reprintings of *Millenium Hall*:

1763. Printed for Peter Wilson
1764. 2nd edition, corrected, for J. Newbery
1764 2nd edition for Peter Wilson
1767 3rd edition for J. Newbery
1768 German edition. Hamburg: bey Hertels Witwe & Gleditschen
1778 4th edition printed for T. Carnan and F. Newberry (sic) junior


__________  *The life of Theodore Agrippa D'Aubigné, containing a succinct account of the most remarkable occurrences during the civil wars of France in the reigns of Charles IX., Henry III., Henry IV., and in the minority of Lewis XIII*. London: Edward and Charles Dilly, 1772.

APPENDIX B

Appendix B contains copies of the cover illustrations of the three editions of Sarah Scott’s *A description of Millenium Hall.*
A DESCRIPTION OF Millenium Hall
by Mrs. Sarah Scott
An 18th Century Novel
ed. by Walter M. Crittenden
APPENDIX C

'TO SWELL TH' HISTORIC PAGE':

SARAH SCOTT'S HISTORIES AND BIOGRAPHIES

Idly too long the Female Pen has stray'd
Thro' Fairy Bower, or gay enamell'd Mead,
Content in Trifles to exert its Art,
Play round the Fancy, but not reach the Heart:
Mine be the Task to swell th' Historic Page,
And paint my Sex's Worth in every Age.

J. B. Black suggests that in the eighteenth century 'the basis for historical research was simply a wide and generous culture, and every man of letters who felt he possessed this deemed himself capable of trying his hand' at composing history. One contemporary commentator lamented the dearth of good historians and ascribed one reason as being 'that persons best qualified for works of this nature are seldom sufficiently at leisure for the performance'. One might have suggested that he look to the women writers of his country who, excluded from public life, might have had sufficient 'leisure for the performance'; but it was precisely because they were excluded from public life that women were deemed unqualified to write history. It was only those persons who 'had mingled in affairs who could legitimately hope to write history as it should be written', and that meant men of a certain social standing. Historical discourse was viewed as a male sphere of writing, as was the historical genre in painting, and women attempting

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1 Epigraph to Charlotte Cowley's *The ladies history of England; from the descent of Julius Caesar, to the summer of 1780*, London, Bladon, 1780.
the genre were castigated, as criticism of Catharine Macaulay on the basis of her gender demonstrates.5

Writing history was very lucrative, and as a genre it was also closely aligned with biography, making it well suited to moral didacticism.6 It was commonplace to suggest histories as instructive reading, as opposed to novels. Elizabeth Montagu advised Thomas Lyttelton to study history because, she writes, it 'will best fit you for active life. From history you will acquire a knowledge of mankind, and a true judgment in politics; in moral, as well as physical enquiries, we should have recourse to experiments'.7 In Test of filial duty, Scott shows one of her virtuous female characters reading Pere Daniel's History of France and Davila's History of the civil wars of France (II, 111). In her Letters on the improvement of the mind, addressed to a young lady, Hester Chapone wrote:

The principal study I would recommend, is history. I know of nothing equally proper to entertain and improve at the same time, or that is so likely to form and strengthen your judgment, and, by giving you a liberal and comprehensive view of human nature, in some measure to supply the defect of that experience, which is usually attained too late to be of much service to us.8

Chapone recommended reading history for young ladies, but Mary Astell argued specifically, that the study of history, as history was currently written, had limited value for women, given their exclusion from public affairs:

For tho' it [history] may be of use to the men who govern affairs, to know how their fore-fathers acted, yet what is this to us, who have nothing to do with such business? Some good examples indeed are to be found in history, tho' generally the bad are ten for one; but how will this help our conduct, or excite in us a generous emulation?

5 Wendy Wassing Roworth discusses the gendering of painting genres in the eighteenth century in 'Anatomy is destiny: regarding the body in the art of Angelica Kauffman', in Gill Perry and Michael Rossington eds, Femininity and masculinity in eighteenth-century art and culture 41-62; as does John Barrell The political theory of painting from Reynolds to Hazlitt, Introduction. For a discussion of Catharine Macaulay and her public status see Bridget Hill's The republican virago; and on eighteenth-century women historians and the subsequent dearth of research about them, D. R. Woolf, 'A feminine past? Gender, genre, and historical knowledge in England, 1500-1800', American historical review, 102:3, June 1997, 645-679.

6 For a discussion of payments to authors for histories, see The correspondence of Robert Dodsley, 1733-1764, James Tierney ed, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, especially Appendix B; Pat Rogers ed, The eighteenth century, 55-56; Paul Langford A polite and commercial people 98; Langford also discusses the relations between history and biography, 98-99.


Since the men being the historians, they seldom condescend to record the great and good actions of women.\(^9\)

Nevertheless, the financial rewards for writing history, as well as its relatively respectable moral status, would have made it a genre attractive to the woman writer. As an indication of the genre's higher intellectual status, Elizabeth Montagu wrote to the Earl of Bath, enclosing a copy of *Millenium Hall*, and writes: 'I think you will see the writer has talents above her subject, & I hope she will employ them on something of a higher rank in les belles lettres than novel writing'.\(^10\) No doubt Elizabeth would have been pleased at her sister's histories. However, the requirements of the genre demanded a particular education from which women were usually excluded. Penelope Wilson cites eighteenth-century women who were classical scholars, and Jane Spencer points to Sarah Fielding and Sarah Scott as unusual cases of women writers whose writing spheres were broadened because of their unusually good education.\(^11\) But most women lacked the formal education that would have equipped them for writing histories. The most well known woman writing history in this period was Catharine Macaulay, and contemporary responses to her *History* show the extent to which historical writing was seen as a male domain. While her *History* was generally praised, this approbation was often not extended to its female author. Even where her writing was commended, it was often at the same time as her womanliness was questioned. The author of *The Monthly Review* praised the 'fair Historian', but suggested that the genius she demonstrated should have been 'exerted in more suitable pursuits'.\(^12\) While she was lauded in some circles, many male and female contemporaries criticised her for writing history, for being explicitly political and, later in life, for marrying a man much her

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\(^10\) Elizabeth Montagu to the Earl of Bath, MO 4554.


The latter criticism shows the extent to which women writers were judged by their private lives, and Macaulay's marriage, Bridget Hill argues, provided an excuse for many to drop their acquaintance with her. Hannah More was a vocal critic of Macaulay and Elizabeth Montagu refused to read Macaulay's works, although, for these women, this was more likely because of her republican politics rather than her sex.

The quotation that prefaces this chapter is Charlotte Cowley's epigraph to *The ladies history of England*. The epigraph delineates that genres are gendered, and that women do not usually write history. Audaciously, Cowley had the dual aims of writing history and writing of women's place in history; her title, however, could be read more conservatively in the sense that it is presenting history for the perusal of ladies, rather than presenting a radically different type of history. However, when she discusses Boadicea early in the work, the author explicitly states: 'in pursuance of the plan I have proposed, of giving THE MOST STRIKING TRAITS IN THE CHARACTERS OF OUR MOST ILLUSTRIOUS WOMEN, I now proceed to say something of Boadicea, from materials that are not to be met with in common Histories of England' (emphasis in original). Cowley's epigraph suggests, rather ironically, that women writers have traditionally written 'Trifles' or the work of 'fancy', playing on the surface rather than working towards the heart of the matter or to the heart or mind of the reader.

Despite or because of – the title that explicitly genders her history, Charlotte Cowley is little known, being absent from even feminist anthologies of women writers. Isobel Grundy

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13 A. Barbeau in *Life and letters at Bath in the eighteenth century*, London: William Heineman, 1904, discusses the enthusiastic responses Macaulay received in Bath, where her birthday was publicly celebrated every year, 171. Ironically, Barbeau does not list Catharine Macaulay's works in his extensive bibliography, but does list the works of Thomas Macaulay, even though he received a very brief mention in the text. This treatment is one reason why if one mentions Macaulay the historian, recent audiences usually assume one is referring to Thomas, not Catharine.

14 See Bridget Hill's *The republican virago* 24.

15 Hill *The republican virago*, 144.


17 Of course, as Judith Lowder Newton points out in her now well established study, *Women, power and subversion*, even those eighteenth-century 'feminine texts' that appeared to be trifles on the surface often had patterns of covert power and retaliation that asserted women's agency: *Women, power and subversion: Social strategies in British fiction, 1778 - 1860*, New York: Methuen, 1985. First published in 1981 by University of Georgia Press. See also Judith Lowder Newton's article: 'Evelina: or, The history of a young lady's entrance into the marriage market', *Modern Language Studies*, 6, Spring 1976, 27-42.
has written about the genre of historical writing and argues for a broadening of the category to enable a range of women's writing to be incorporated, such as personal histories, memoirs and community histories. In a recent article that discusses these issues surrounding gender and historiography, D. R. Woolf has argued that during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the broad category of historical writing was broken down into sub-genres – such as sacred histories, fictional histories, 'true histories', genealogy, antiquarian history – and that this process was linked to the 'gendering of genre'. As an example of this, Woolf refers to the gendering of French historical writing, in which biographical texts authored by women were identified as 'particular history', distinguishable from the "general history" written by men.19

But the fact is, there was history written by women during the eighteenth century, however difficult it is to recover these works. Mary Wollstonecraft's *A historical and moral view of the French revolution* (1794) is known because of the author's status, but the histories by lesser known women authors, such as Eliza Haywood's *Life of Mary Queen of Scots* (1725), Mary Hays' *Memoirs of queens* (1821), and Susanna Dobson's *Life of Petrarch* (1775) and *The literary history of the troubadours* (1779), are not easy to find. Incidentally, Samuel Johnson at one time attributed *The history of Theodore Agrippa D'Aubigné* to Susanna Dobson.20 This relative invisibility of history written by women compels me to include this discussion of Sarah Scott's histories in this thesis, even though it is additional to the main theme of moral commerce in Scott's works. Not only is it important for this thesis to view her works in relation to one another, but, as the discussion has highlighted, Scott experimented with a range of genres. Her histories are part of an ongoing effort to introduce a woman's voice and perspective into the male sphere, and they show, therefore, her experiments to find a speaking position.

Just as in *Millenium Hall* and *George Ellison* Scott created a space to discuss traditionally male issues, such as the public role of philanthropy in addressing social ills, or the abolition of slavery, in her histories and biographies she created a place to intervene in discussions of nation and state politics. The ease and interest with which Scott engaged with a range of political issues are evident in her letters.\(^{21}\) In her historical biographies, she also continues her theme of presenting exemplary individuals. In this respect Scott was writing the kind of history that Bolingbroke had in mind when he wrote that history was 'philosophy teaching by examples how to conduct ourselves in all the situations of private and public life'.\(^{22}\) Other contemporaries shared Scott's view that extant histories were lacking in some respects. According to Caroline Robbins, Thomas Pownall, author of *A treatise on the study of antiquities*, saw history as 'generally only the recital of the "brutal part" of man' and 'The springs and principles which affect human affairs must be studied as well as the facts'.\(^{23}\) But despite Bolingbroke's and Pownall's nods to private life, it was the public arenas of men which remained the primary subjects of history. Nevertheless, as Scott is most concerned with the effects of private virtues on public action, her histories mix discourses to enable the genre to incorporate conventional historical issues, as well as the dramatisation of individual virtues.\(^{24}\)

Sarah Scott's three histories are: *The history of Gustavus Ericson, King of Sweden: with an introductory history of Sweden, from the middle of the twelfth century* (1761); *The history of Mecklenburgh, from the first settlement of the vandals in that country, to the present time* (1762); and *The life of Theodore Agrippa d'Aubigné, containing a succinct

\(^{21}\) For example, she discusses Pitt (MO 5267, 4 December, 1756), elections (MO 5240, April, 1754), the Stamp Act (MO 5322, 18 February, 1766), and events in America (MO 5380, 17 November, 1777).


\(^{24}\) The extent to which other eighteenth-century historians also mixed genres is outside the scope of this discussion, but D. R. Woolf has asserted that some male historians were adopting some 'sentimental techniques' from the novel genre and were 'experimenting with generic boundaries': 'A feminine past?', 665.
account of the most remarkable occurrences during the civil wars of France in the reigns of Charles IX, Henry III, Henry IV, and in the minority of Lewis XIII (1772).  

Whilst all three of these histories were well received by Scott's contemporaries, they are now viewed as obscure works. Scott published the first history under the pseudonym Henry Augustus Raymond, Esq., the next two anonymously and, as I will discuss shortly, *The history of Mecklenburgh* was attributed to a well known male writer of the time.

David Hume wrote: 'I believe this is the historical Age and this the historical Nation'. The popularity of novels for the reading public coexisted with a demand for narrative histories. These histories embraced a number of genres and subjects, ranging from historical biographies (the two genres of history and biography had long been linked), antiquarian history, local histories, classical, and political histories. Histories written in eighteenth-century England were often overtly party political and various versions of events were endorsed or condemned according to the commentator's political sympathies. In the *Westminster magazine*, Joseph Tower recommended to readers 'that after they have perused Mr. Hume's *History*, they will qualify it with a quant. suf. [sic] of Mrs. Macaulay's; and the real state of truth and things may probably be found in the mean between them'. And, in a letter to Sarah in 1755, Elizabeth Montagu commended Hume's history of James I and Charles I, but feared that it would 'promote

25 References to these works will be parenthetical in the body of the text and will refer to the following editions: *The history of Gustavus Ericson, King of Sweden. With an introductory history of Sweden, from the middle of the twelfth century*. By Henry Augustus Raymond, Esq. London: A. Millar, 1761; *The history of Mecklenburgh*, 2nd ed. London: Newbery, 1762; *The life of Theodore Agrippa d'Aubigne, containing a succinct account of the most remarkable occurrences during the civil wars of France in the reigns of Charles IX., Henry III., Henry IV., and in the minority of Lewis XIII*. London: Edward and Charles Dilly, 1772.

26 Only *The history of Mecklenburgh* is available on *The eighteenth century* microform series and one is fortunate if one can find copies of the other two in rare book collections of scholarly libraries.

27 As quoted by Paul Langford *A polite and commercial people*, 96.

28 Paul Langford discusses the range of historical interest and writing during the eighteenth century in *A polite and commercial people*, 96-99. See Caroline Robbins *The eighteenth-century Commonwealthman*, for a discussion of eighteenth-century narrative history, in general, and republican history in particular, 288-294. One of the prominent classical republican historians that she discusses is Conyers Middleton, who was married to Sarah Scott's maternal grandmother, and who was very influential in Sarah's education. A study of the possible influences of Middleton on Scott's histories remains to be done.

Jacobinism'. Jacobinism was a political movement that emerged during the French Revolution, characterized by its support for radical democratic principles and its opposition to the monarchy and the aristocracy. The prominent historians of the times were Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, whose *History of the rebellion and civil wars in England* was known as a Tory history. Hume's influential *History of England* was also seen as decidedly Tory in orientation and it was on political grounds that Hume criticised the earlier and well-respected history of England by Paul de Rapin-Thoyras, *Histoire d'Angleterre*. Caroline Robbins has discussed eighteenth-century classical histories, by authors such as Edward Spelman, Conyers Middleton and Edward Wortley Montagu, and comments that, 'a whole philosophy about contemporary conditions may be discovered in these classical studies'. Of course, the most recognised eighteenth-century historian, at least to the late twentieth-century reader, is Edward Gibbon, whose *History of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire* was published in 1776.

Given the political reception of histories in the eighteenth century, one should consider the political contexts of Scott's histories to determine whether she was indirectly offering a political comment or whether these narratives were written for other reasons, such as money. As I will discuss shortly, *The history of Mecklenburgh* responds to contemporary events in Britain, such as the Seven Years' War and the marriage of George III and Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburgh. *The history of Gustavus Ericson* has a close political antecedent in Henry Brooke's 1739 play, *Gustavus Vasa*. The play was banned under the recently enacted Licensing Act (1737), for espousing opposition sentiments against the Walpole ministry, but in the Prefatory Dedication to the published version, Brooke defended his play as a simple historical tragedy. He

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30 Climenson, II, 68.
32 Caroline Robbins *The eighteenth-century Commonwealthman*; she gives the example of Edward Spelman's *A fragment out of the sixth book of Polybius* London, 1743, for a classical history used to comment on contemporary political issues, such as reform of parliament, annual parliaments, annual and equal representation, see note 31, 294.
identifies the similarities between 'the natural Constitutions of Sweden and Britain' and states that: 'I look'd no further for Sentiments, than as they arose from Facts, and for the Facts I am indebted to History: Nay, I ingenuously confess, I was so far from a View of Merit with the Disaffected, that I look'd on this Performance as the highest Compliment I could pay the present Establishment' (iv-v). W. A. Speck discusses this apparent political 'ingenuousness' in terms of the predominantly Whig subscription list for the publication.34 There is a sense in which Scott endorses this Whig view in her histories. In her anti-Catholicism, she seems to be buying into the Whig appropriation of the long-standing British anti-Catholic sentiment to support the Hanoverian succession.35 Moreover, Brooke's sentiments in his appeal to natural rights and freedoms resound in Scott's political statements about slavery, about women, and about the rights of other oppressed groups. For instance, Brooke writes:

By Personal Freedom I mean that State resulting from Virtue; or Reason ruling in the Breast superior to Appetite and Passion; and by National Freedom I mean a Security (arising from the Nature of a well-order'd Constitution) for those Advantages and Privileges that each Man has a Right to, by contributing as a Member to the Weal of the Community. (vii)

Especially in terms of relating individual virtue and reason to an individual's rights and responsibilities to society, Scott and Brooke have much in common. Both writers valorise Gustavus Vasa for his leadership and virtue, especially his disdain of war, which had particular resonances, in Scott's work, because she wrote her history during the Seven Years' War. Gary Kelly has also noted the influence of classical republicanism on Scott's works, and for this history in particular, he asserts that Scott was making a clear political statement.36

As there is so little information available about eighteenth-century female historians it is difficult to establish whether there were significant gendered differences between

34 'Politicians, peers, and publication by subscription 1700-1750' in Isabel Rivers ed, Books and their readers 47-68.
36 Gary Kelly Introduction to A description of Millenium Hall, 23.
male and female models of historiography during this period. Unfortunately, this study
does not have scope to consider this complex issue in detail, but one significant point in
discussing the possibility of gendered history is raised in Bridget Hill's comment about
Catharine Macaulay's representation of 'great' individuals in history. Macaulay, Hill
claims, placed primary importance on individual morality. She goes on to claim that
Macaulay's approach to history was 'essentially a moral one... when in her History she
wished to consider all sides of a question, she nearly always resorted to an analysis of
the moral character of the individuals concerned'. Lynne Withey also has stated that
'individual morality lay at the heart of Macaulay's writing of history'. Hill seems to be
claiming that this emphasis on individual morality is unusual in or specific to
Macaulay's history. Sarah Scott, too, shapes her histories on the basis of individual
morality, but whether this is a particularly female approach to history in the eighteenth
century is yet to be examined. The following discussion of Scott's historical
biographies shows that she saw this moral basis of historical writing as important just as
she placed similar emphases in her fictional prose. Of course, Scott's three histories,
especially Theodore Agrippa D'Aubigné and Gustavus Ericson, are mixed genres of
biography and history, and biography – especially spiritual autobiography – had a
traditional emphasis on moral exemplars. Oliver Goldsmith describes this aspect of
biography:

Biography has ever since the days of Plutarch been considered as the most useful
manner of writing, not only from the pleasure it affords the imagination, but from the
instruction it artfully and unexpectedly conveys to the understanding. It furnishes us
with an opportunity of giving advice freely and without offence. It not only removes
the dryness and dogmatical air of precept, but sets persons, actions, and their
consequences, before us in the most striking manner; and by that means turns even
precept into example.

The following sections discuss Scott's three histories.

37 Hill Republican virago, 39. Lynne E. Withey 'Catharine Macaulay and the uses of history: ancient rights,
perfectionism, and propaganda', The journal of British studies, 16, 1976, 59-83, 72.
38 As quoted by James Prior The life of Oliver Goldsmith, 305.
i. *The history of Gustavus Ericson, King of Sweden, 1761.*

In terms of her aim in writing history — that is, to sketch the outlines of state politics and history and relate them to the details of the private qualities of her biographical subject — *The history of Gustavus Ericson* is Scott's most successful history. In the Preface to *Gustavus Ericson*, the author states that histories provide 'outlines of a picture' and biographies provide 'detail which more properly develops the human mind', and in this narrative she combines the two genres, with the preliminary stages of the history outlining a historical framework of Sweden that contextualises the detailed analysis of Gustavus Ericson's achievements as a statesman and proponent of Protestant religion (iii-iv).

Scott establishes her opinion of conventional history and outlines her different approach in this Preface. The rhetorical demands of the genre, she suggests, require that historians 'reconcile . . . contrarieties' to unify and give consistency to a broad plan (iv). This need for 'reconciling' is needed especially in narrating Gustavus Ericson's life, because his 'actions wear a continual appearance of contradictions, which the historian, whose mind is elevated by a view of the extensive plan he has laid down for himself, endeavours to reconcile by refined reasoning, and imaginary schemes' (vi-vii). Throughout her history Scott points out these apparent contradictions in her subject's motives and actions in a way that emphasises his complexity as an individual, rather than his inconsistency or weakness as a leader. I will speak further about how she represents her subject's personal qualities shortly, but first, a point about Scott's self-conscious methodology.

Scott reflexively positions her historiography in the context of other historians, as she points out how her approach to the history of Sweden and of Gustavus Ericson differs
from other examples of the form. Significantly, her comment quoted above (iv), stresses the imaginative and creative aspects of historiography, rather than the supposed 'objectivity' of reporting historical facts. She also takes issue with the conventional subjects of history, commenting that heroic kings have been seen as good subjects because they are interesting, but she suggests that the heroic actions that make them intriguing – such as initiating wars – make them dubious moral objects for study. The king, for instance, who initiates wars with little concern for dragging his citizens into danger, might have little to offer on the subject of moral leadership.

These are the real sufferings of a people, who, for their sins, are visited by that cruel punishment, an heroic prince: but yet heroes are the embellishments of history; and few readers would patiently proceed through (what would be called) a lifeless detail of such actions, as render a king the benefactor and real father of his country. The peaceful virtues which dispense happiness to millions, and extend their benign influences through many successive generations, may be all enumerated in a few short lines (375-376).

Heroes are 'embellishments of history', suggesting that ordinary folk are the foundations of history. Implicitly, this comment refers to ordinary men and ordinary women. In referring to 'peaceful virtues' that have influence through 'successive generations' she appears to be singling out women who reproduce these virtues in their children. Moreover, she implies here that historians have conventionally chosen subjects for their interest rather than for their worthiness. She, in contrast, discusses morally worthy historic figures. Her reflexive comments on historiographic method suggest that to portray moral leaders one must vary one's historical approach or focus, that is to focus on private virtues.

*The history of Gustavus Ericson* interrelates Gustavus' private and public conduct and in so doing provides a different history of Sweden and of Gustavus Ericson than those provided by her antecedents and sources. Scott writes: 'Many of the particulars of his private conduct are buried in oblivion, while his public actions are preserved with

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39 Scott cites the following sources for this history: Abbé Vertot, with whom she disagreed, and Pufendorf, Loccenius, Pontanus, Meursius, Gramero's *Compendium of the history of Sweden*, and Des Roche's *History of Denmark*, xiv.
sufficient exactness: his behaviour as a father, a husband, and a friend, are passed over in silence, and his conduct as a king only recorded' (xi). Scott also represents his 'public actions', but does so in terms of his private qualities and motivations.

Gustavus possessed both 'peaceful virtues' and the political courage, determination and ambition that brought him public acclaim. Scott characterises her hero to show that his great public feats originate in his worthy rational, Christian principles. When all other Swedish leaders withered under the oppression of the Danes, Gustavus escaped from imprisonment in exile, rallied peasants, fought, and eventually won back control of the country from the invaders. Scott represents these acts as morally motivated, but also acknowledges his ambitions and pride: 'The desire of revenging the death of his prince and friend, and of delivering his country from such inhuman oppressors, perhaps not unaccompanied with some motives of ambition, were unresistable temptations to him' (119). While Scott identifies Gustavus's ambitions as a weakness, she shows that these ambitions were not his primary motives. She points out that although Gustavus had the power to seize the crown of Sweden after his military successes, he opted instead to be legally elected knowing that this would ensure stability for the country (199).

While highlighting this strength and wisdom of leadership, the history also comments on issues of politics, nationhood, and assesses the effects of leaders' personal traits on the health of a nation. For example, she discusses leaders' attitudes to war. Gustavus viewed war as a means rather than an end in itself: 'to bring the miseries of war on mankind, only to gain the reputation of an hero, is a degree of brutality, which should degrade him below the rank of a man'. Scott describes Gustavus's view of leadership: 'he was more bent on civilized than extending [Sweden]. His desire was to let his subjects feel the benefits of his just and mild government' (233). So Scott interrelates her description and assessment of private and public history by showing that the two are inextricable. The historical record of a nation is partly a record of the public acts of
great figures, but these public acts need to be related to the private motivations and qualities of such people.

While Scott biographically details Gustavus's virtues, her work increasingly becomes a history of Sweden's religious struggle between the established Catholic clergy and the rise of the Lutheran religion. Her historical method here approaches that of Edward Gibbon who, in his *History of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire*, excavates the political and social conditions for the rise of Christianity. While Scott explicitly shows a greater religious partisanship and interest than did Gibbon, she depicts a complex political battle between the established Catholic power in Sweden and the new Protestant religion that Gustavus promoted. Scott's politico-religious perspective is consistent throughout her histories. She views Catholic clergy as elitist, wealthy and corrupt, and Protestantism as democratising and benefitting the people at large. This attribution of political corruption to Catholicism and democracy to Protestantism was evident elsewhere in the community. As Kathleen Wilson points out, the London Protestant Association had long tried to establish 'the relationship between arbitrary power and an arbitrary religion'; she quotes Thomas Slack's Chronicle in which he wrote: 'Popery is best adapted for slavery, and protestanism for freedom'.

Scott's narrative strategy for showing the supplanting of Catholicism with Lutheranism depends on portraying the extensive corruption and wealth of the Catholic clergy in Sweden early in the history. She describes the Catholic clergy's 'pomp and luxury' (69). Gustavus suggests that the kingdom's strife originated in the 'ambition and exorbitant power and wealth of the clergy' (213). He states that the clergy 'have indulged in the most flagrant excesses, and practised every vice with impunity. Grown vain and licentious in their dispositions, from the corruption of mind and manners which

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40 *The History of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire*, 1776. In Chapter XV, Gibbon writes of the 'melancholy duty of the historian': 'He must discover the inevitable mixture of error and corruption, which she [religion] contracted in a long residence upon earth, among a weak and degenerate race of beings'.

41 *The sense of the people* 367; Thomas Slack *Chronicle*, 12 February, 1780.
naturally arise from wealth and idleness' (285). To undermine the popular support for
the clergy, Gustavus published a declaration outlining the clergy's vices. When the
clergy refused to surrender any of their wealth to pay for public works, Gustavus taxed
them to provide schools, hospitals and support for the indigent (297). His is a
benevolent government. Gustavus seals the religious conversion of the country by
marrying Catherine, daughter of the protestant Duke of Saxe-Lawenburg.

This religious section of the history is the most significant, for it details the social and
political complexities of religious rivalries in Sweden. Despite Scott's clear Protestant
bias, her analysis of Gustavus's attempts to wrest power from the Catholic clergy and to
establish Lutheranism is complex and lucid. Scott justifies Gustavus's motives by
establishing the corruption of the clergy and by stating that Gustavus studied the tenets
of the religion and consequently 'his reason acquiesced in the doctrines of Luther' (216).
Scott supports Gustavus's rational religion and also his union of religious faith and good
works because they accord with her religious perspectives (256).42

The other aspect of this history that is remarkable, is the extent to which it narrates the
histories of Swedish women. Scott traces the position of women in early Swedish
history, from discussing the good character of Christina, wife of Prince Eric IX, to
Birgerius's thirteenth-century legislation which enacted women's right to inheritance.
Scott gives female leaders equal attention as their male counterparts, revealing their
vices as well as their virtues. Scott identifies previous historians' reluctance to discuss the
rumour that Queen Blanche poisoned her son, Eric, who was ready to take
power from her. She analyses the situation of women in power, identifying that their
influence and power are often threatened by close male relations. Queen Margaret, for
example, ruler of the three countries of Denmark, Sweden and Norway, resisted
pressure to marry for she knew her power could only be diminished by a marriage

42 This belief in combining religious faith with practical benevolence and good works is evidenced
throughout Scott's novels and histories.
With her 'courage and martial spirit', Scott states, Margaret 'secured to herself the obedience of the turbulent and warlike nations over which she reigned' (73). Scott shows that women in power need to compete and win on male terms, that is, to be victorious in war, but that they also need to fend off attacks on their virtue. King Albert of Sweden unsuccessfully initiated war when Margaret was Queen of Norway. As a result of this military defeat, he 'endeavoured to ridicule her on account of her sex, which he thought unfit to bear sovereign rule, and calumniated her as criminally attached to the Abbé Soora' (77). When Albert could not defeat Margaret on the battleground like a man, he attacked her on conventionally 'female' terrain by questioning her virtue. Scott likewise reveals the invidious position of Queen Philippa, wife of the fifteenth-century King Eric. When the Germans attacked Copenhagen in 1429, Philippa showed 'more masculine courage' than her husband who sought refuge in a monastery. She repelled the enemy, but when she raised another battle at sea, less successfully, Eric beat her and sent her to a convent (83-4). Christina, widow of Steeno-Sturous, Administrator of Sweden, defended Stockholm from the Danish attack 'with an intrepidity unusual in her sex, and at a time when all the men in the kingdom were terrified into submission' (117). Despite describing Christina's courage as unusual, Scott's repeated inclusion of courageous women in Swedish history shows that courage – conventionally gendered as male – was as likely to occur in women as in men.

The major contributions of this history are its portrayal of powerful public women, the discussion of Gustavus's private peaceful virtues and their influence on his public governance, and the history of Protestant - Catholic conflict in Sweden. The vigour with which Scott approaches these three subjects makes *Gustavus Ericson* a complex and significant history. These qualities, combined with her reflexive commentary on historiography, testify to Scott's importance as an eighteenth-century writer of history.

43 The diminution of women's power through marriage is an issue that interested Scott, as is seen in her portrayal of single women exercising philanthropic power in *Millenium Hall*. 
ii. *The history of Mecklenburgh, 1762.*

In 1760, *Considerations on the present German war* appeared, voicing many of the objections to the Seven Years' War that were resounding throughout Britain. As W. A. Speck points out, Pitt was obsessed with the war and, until the death of George II, he was supported by a monarch who defended the ongoing involvement of Britain; but George III had different opinions about the war. On the 8th of September 1761, the peaceable George III married Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburgh, and in 1762 Newbery published Sarah Scott's *The history of Mecklenburgh* for a public eager and curious for any information about their future queen and her country. Scott states in the Preface: 'The general curiosity of the nation renders an apology for the subject of the following sheets altogether needless' (vii). The appearance on the shores of Britain of Charlotte, the future queen of the nation, and a queen who could barely speak English, would certainly have raised curiosity, and could have prompted Scott to write this history. Moreover, there is a sense in which her history is answering the question that was posed by the author of *Considerations on the present German war*: 'what is this Germany to Britain?'. In this narrative, Scott defends the moral and political character of the Mecklenburg, and later German, states, and their sovereigns.

As with her novel *Millenium Hall*, Scott's *Mecklenburgh* was attributed to Oliver Goldsmith. Apart from the two writers' similar interests, the most obvious reason to attribute the history to Goldsmith was his increasing indebtedness to Newbery and,

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44 For further publishing details about *The history of Mecklenburgh*, including editions, printings, prices at which editions were sold and current locations, see S. Roscoe *John Newbery and his successors 1740 - 1814: a bibliography*, Wormley, Herts.: Five Owls Press, 1973, 369.
45 W. A. Speck's discussion of this publication first drew my attention to it. Speck notes that *Considerations* was ostensibly written by Israel Mauduit, but that the real author was more likely Lord Hardwicke, *Stability and strife: England 1714-1760*, London: Edward Arnold, 1977, 273.
46 W. A. Speck *Stability and strife*, 272-273.
consequently, the miscellaneous publications and hack works which he was obliged to
write. Although by 1805 Charles Egerton Brydges listed Sarah Scott's nine known
works in his *Censura literaria*, by mid-century Goldsmith's biographer James Prior was
still speculating about Goldsmith's authorship of *Millenium Hall* and *The history of
Mecklenburgh*, even though he acknowledged that there was 'no direct evidence' for this
claim.47

The *British Magazine* was not particularly impressed with the history, stating that it was
'carefully compiled, but dry and uninteresting'.48 The *Monthly Review*, on the other
hand, speaks of it positively: 'The style is easy, and the materials appear to be faithfully
collected from Authors of credit'.49 But it seemed not to be hugely popular at the time
and has had little interest shown in it since. The importance of this history for the
present study is that, when considered as part of Scott's oeuvre, it helps to demonstrate
her concerns with principled governance and leadership, and with virtuous and pious
actions. As shown in *The history of Sir George Ellison*, she was interested in exploring
the characteristics of 'the good man' and her historical biographies offer different modes
of presenting examples of such men. As well as continuing Scott's interests in these
areas, the history shows a woman keenly aware of contemporary political
circumstances and of narrative engagements with these circumstances.

The Preface of *Mecklenburgh* is typical for Scott, in asserting the importance of writing
about acts of virtue; to do this, she states, is to provide uplifting models of virtuous
action:

47 For Prior's attribution of *Mecklenburg* to Goldsmith, see Chapter XI of Prior's biography. John Forster,
another biographer of Goldsmith, clearly relied heavily on Prior's study and he, too, makes claims for
Goldsmith's contribution to *The history of Mecklenburgh*. Forster, however, limits Goldsmith's contribution to
and son, 1877, 275. Given that extensive records remain of Goldsmith's financial and publishing transactions
with Newbery, and that there is no record of a contract or payment for Goldsmith's work on *Mecklenburgh*, it
seems highly unlikely that Goldsmith contributed to Scott's history. Moreover, as Walter Crittenden suggests
in his introduction to the 1955 reprinting of *Millenium Hall*, Charles Egerton Brydges lists Scott as the author,
and as he was married to the daughter of Scott's brother William, he probably was a reliable source.
An ambitious man may spread his renown through many nations, while peaceful virtues are seldom wasted by the voice of fame, beyond those confines which set bounds to the Prince's power. From hence it happens, that where national historians are wanting, we generally remain ignorant of those particulars, which would afford the greatest pleasure to a judicious reader. (xi)

Scott grants great powers to 'the voice of fame', that is to those historians who narrate and perpetuate the stories of 'ambitious' men, and implicitly criticizes such historians for neglecting 'peaceful virtues'. Conventional histories are not written for the reader who is interested in such virtues, that is, the 'judicious reader'; and given that traditional histories were written for the public man, Scott might be suggesting that the 'judicious' reader is a woman. She laments the fact that histories give prominence to war and to the vices of rulers that lead to war, and positions her histories in opposition to this style of narrative.

The Introduction proposes that her then, is a counter to previous examples which, Scott asserts, are 'entirely military' (xi). She laments that previous histories of Mecklenburgh have represented only one side of their history – the warring side; in contrast, she aims to show their 'peaceful virtues'.

While we behold them actuated by so laudable a spirit, we cannot but regret, that they have had no national historians to do justice to their actions, and that many material circumstances relative to a family, which has given monarchs to three different kingdoms, should be involved in obscurity. (xii)

It is no coincidence that it is Mecklenburgh women who have contributed to monarchies of 'three different kingdoms' and that these women's histories are not adequately represented.50

When criticizing existing histories, she is criticizing the genre itself. Her comments have significant implications for both the writing of history and the subjects of history. Scott identifies absences in history that have the effect of excluding women subjects.

50 Most likely, the three kingdoms Scott refers to are: Scotland (then England) – Ann, Princess of Denmark married James VI, king of Scotland (then England); Russia – the Duke and Duchess of Mecklenburgh's daughter was princess royal heiress to the throne of Muscovy until Elizabeth, daughter of Peter the Great, took control; and Britain – Princess Sophia Charlotte of Mecklenburgh who married George III of England. Scott might also be referring to Princess Margaret who became Queen of Sweden in 1385.
and women's perspectives on the past. 'Peaceful virtues' are not the province only of peaceful princes; they might also be the province of women who are excluded from public life. What is disappointing for the contemporary reader is that, given the radical views she expresses in her introduction, her record of Mecklenburgh history is relatively conventional. Like Macaulay's History, Scott's history is not a history of women, but like Macaulay, 'reveals a sympathy for her sex'. But she published anonymously in a male genre and, for the most part, wrote a conventional history that was saleable and publishable.

Ultimately, this conventional history, The history of Mecklenburgh, is informative rather than absorbing and is more concerned with telling events than with interpreting individuals' actions. It appears, from the extent of detail about wars, political alliances and genealogical relations, that providing in-depth information was her primary aim in writing this history. It does not engage with the character of the country, its politics, and its prominent figures as did her first history, or her later biographical history of Theodore Agrippa D'Aubigné. The author reserves her best writing for depicting inspiring acts of virtue and piety, for praising and advocating just governance and generous exercise of power and authority. That this history is a departure from the approach of her history of Gustavus Ericson – and that this earlier history had not been commercially successful – suggests that Scott reverted to a more conventional historical narrative for commercial reasons.

When the narrative pauses from relating endless territorial skirmishes to reflect on the nature of virtue or vice, or on the individual exemplifications of such admirable or lamentable qualities, the prose comes alive to represent two prominent discourses running throughout Scott's writing – first, the discourse of governance and secondly, the discourse of virtue. On government and tyranny, she writes 'No power can protect the

51 Hill Republican virago, 140.
unjust from the revenge of his inferiors' (111-112), invoking a theme that resounds throughout her works. And, taking up again the cause of rational virtue, she writes 'Fire and steel will operate powerfully on the apprehensions of a coward, but cannot influence the reason of a brave man' (100). In this history, she continues to integrate her ongoing interests while revising conventions of narrative history.

Consistent with her other narratives, Scott's histories judge past sovereigns on their abilities and their virtue, rather than their status. She demonstrates historical examples of figures who represent virtue in action – despite social rank. Like her contemporary Catharine Macaulay, Scott strongly criticised or commended rulers for their personal virtues. In representing King Canute, for example, she concentrates on his personal virtues, interrelating private virtues and public greatness (pp 81 ff). As in her fictional works, Scott demonstrates the positive effects of a virtuous man on the men around him.

She argues in her histories that only those sovereigns or rulers who are personally virtuous are capable and deserving, of good governance and leadership. Scott represents Gustavus Adolphus, the king of Sweden who fights on behalf of the protestant princes, as honourable in war (268-9). After recording his death, she eulogises him, interrelating his religion with his courage and leadership in war:

> It is certain that he was sincerely pious: he never omitted regular and public acts of devotion; neither began any engagement till he had joined with his army in prayers for success; or gained any victory, for which he did not in the same manner, return his grateful acknowledgements to the Supreme Being. His generosity and humanity were felt by his greatest enemies, as well as the meanest of his soldiers (272).

And in Henry, Prince of Mecklenburgh, she portrays Christian – Protestant – principles as the basis for good leadership.

> The remainder of Henry's reign was spent in the administration of justice, the government of his state, and the care of religion. His natural piety led him to examine into the theological disputes which at that time agitated all Germany. He found that Luther's doctrine approached nearer to the spirit of Christianity, and was more consonant to the Gospel, than the faith he had hitherto professed; he therefore embraced it in the spirit of meekness, not with the fire of zeal. He introduced it into
his kingdom, and endeavoured to establish it, by convincing the understandings of his subjects, without constraining their professions. Rational arguments, and generous encouragements to a candid examination, were the only arms he used; nor did he wish that complaisance should make one Lutheran; but far more esteemed the sincere Catholic, than the man whose indifference to religion made him ready to embrace any mode of faith he thought most agreeable to his Sovereign.

He considered a peaceful disposition as so essential a part of Christianity, that he refused to engage in the Smalcaldisan league; which he considered as the foundation of a civil war, and thought that piety was better practised in privacy and peace, than in open profession. (200-201)

Implicit in this praise of Henry's religious practices is a criticism of the Catholic religion that he abjured, an anti-Papist sentiment evident throughout her works.

Ultimately, then, The history of Mecklenburgh is a commentary on the state of religion in the territories, specifically, an anti-Catholic commentary. From her descriptions of the heathen idolaters with their human and animal sacrifices, to the political machinations of Rome and the rise of Lutheranism, her anti-Catholic prejudices are clear. Her comments about pre-Christian religions in the German territories is limited to detailed, gruesome descriptions of the violent sacrifices of idolaters (19). This contrasts with the description of the Saxons' initial settlement in Mecklenburgh, where Scott describes their 'humanizing' attempts to convert the locals to Christianity: 'The country soon abounded in Priests and Monks: schools were instituted; the people were humanized by religious instructions and introduction of letters' (102-103). Christian religion is equated with benevolence, social justice, and civilizing culture. When Henry, Prince of Mecklenburgh, becomes interested in Luther's religious teaching, Scott spends some time exalting the prince's virtues as a Christian.

He esteemed the heart the seat of religion, and the more seriously he was converted, the less earnest he was to make his conversion conspicuous. It was not novelty, but truth that charmed him; and he hoped that while he endeavoured to live up to the precepts of Christianity, no one would molest him on account of any particular doctrines. He relied on the words of the Apostle, "Who shall harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good;" and considering a good Christian as the best citizen, the best neighbour, the most faithful ally, the most humane Sovereign, and the most dutiful subject, he did not fear of giving offence to others. (200-201)

Scott's promotion of protestant Christianity is clear, with her comments about Rome and Catholicism almost exclusively detailing the political corruption and vice
associated with the religion and its administration. She sets this critique in the context of her self-conscious historical methodology, and explains the purposes of her history or biography, so the reader then can measure the project against these authorial assertions. Her histories, like her novels, are directed by three major concerns: her Protestant Christianity, her Christian moral standards directing individual behaviour, and her intolerance for corruption in governance. What is clear in these ongoing themes, is that, for Scott, concepts of 'liberty' and 'lawfulness' are based on religious affiliation.

While it is interesting to trace these ongoing precepts in Scott's histories as an extension of her novels, what is also significant about her histories in general and this history in particular is the extent to which Scott considers the nature of historiography, and the way, for example, that a historian's perspective influences judgements about the subject. In her Introduction to this history, for instance, Scott raises the issue of the selectivity of historians and the subjectivity determining historiography. When writing of the settlement of the Vandals in Mecklenburgh Scott states:

The ravages these people committed in the Roman empire, have rendered their name opprobious; but this seems to be rather a consequence of their leaving their conquered enemies to relate their actions, who, we may suppose, would not in this case adhere strictly to the truth. The devastations they made are indeed indisputable; but were the Romans themselves more merciful conquerors? The state of war is a state of destruction; but their virtues, by all accounts, were such, as few more civilized nations could then equal. (11)

This shows a rather subtle examination of the state of war and the way in which concepts of 'enemies', 'losers' and 'victors' are constructed in a military context. It says something very important about Scott's mode of history that she acknowledges the ways in which historians view and construct notions of the 'enemy'. Of course, one could suggest that this is a cynical rhetorical move on the author's part in order to present the subject of her history in the best light; but this is unlikely, given Scott's willingness to criticise her own subject. In her biography of Theodore Agrippa D'Aubigné, Scott comments on existing histories of the Huguenots:
Their actions have been related by historians, who were under the influence both of party and religious prejudices; men blinded by passion, and warped by interest, as incapable of judging with candour, as averse to acknowledging truths, which might give offence to the Powerful. (vi)^52

Stephen Bann has written about the impact of Romanticism on the notion of history, and he suggests that it was not until Hegel that there was an explicitly self-conscious formulation about historical methods and consciousness. It was Hegel, Bann suggests, that made explicit the difference between history as things and history as the narration of things.53

But the self-consciousness of Scott's narrative raises precisely these important distinctions between historical circumstances and the narration and interpretation of those circumstances. Scott's reflexive approach to historical method in which she discusses biases and their effect on historiography, provides insights into the historiography, but also serves to point up some of the political and social contexts for her history, for example anti-papist feeling.

One needs to keep in mind that Newbery might have employed Scott as a hack to write this history, and although she places her authorial stamp on the text, it would have served Newbery's purposes as well as Scott's. The political and religious contexts of this history are indicated by the publisher's dedication of the history to the Queen. The praise of Queen Charlotte is in terms of political and religious freedom:

To whom could a Volume replete with the Struggles made for Liberty by the German Princes, particularly those of Mecklenburgh, be addressed with so much Propriety as to Your Majesty, whose Ancestors so eminently distinguished themselves in the long protracted Contest, and who enjoy the Glory of being called to share the Throne of a Monarch reigning over the greatest, because the freest, People upon Earth. . . . (iv-v)

This dedication overtly politicizes the history. In recent times, scholarship has highlighted the significance of textual apparatus in contributing to analyses of texts.54 Texts gain cultural authority for themselves in various ways — through authorship, patronage,

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52 I will discuss this further in the following section of the chapter.
53 Stephen Bann discusses Hegel's 1830-31 lectures on The philosophy of history in Romanticism and the rise of history, 11-12.
54 Wendy Wall, for example, examines the relationships among technological, material and cultural features of the emerging print culture in the Renaissance. The imprint of gender: Authorship and publication in the English Renaissance, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993. Wall's study examines the conditions of the change of a manuscript to a commodity print culture.
circulation, advertisement, dedications and prefaces. As Wall suggests, apparatuses for texts encode class and gender in elaborate ways (17). The material features of the text provide guides to the author's/publisher's intended audience and also their anticipated critics. Newbery politicises both this particular book and his own publishing enterprise by addressing the dedication to the Queen. Wall states: 'In the early modern period, writers, printers, and compilers rethought manuscript authority and printed literary wares through a wealth of tropes, forms, and textual apparatuses; as a result, they devised a language of justification and disavowal that activated various gendered models of Renaissance authorship' (21). Although Wall writes specifically about the Renaissance period, a period where the transition from manuscript to print was most prominent, her observations about the creation of the author-figure are still relevant and important in the eighteenth-century period. Merely the facts of a woman like Scott publishing, anonymously, a history (a male genre), with a publisher's dedication, representing and praising the Queen's German antecedents raise complex issues of political and cultural authority and of perceived audience composition and judgement.

Scott's history circulated both literally and metaphorically in a highly politicised environment. There is a critical assumption and judgement in her history that the German princes were fighting for the 'right side', that is, for Liberty, against Catholic Imperialist forces. Scott's retrospective representation of the Mecklenburgh provinces is guided by the contemporary state of the provinces under the reign of Adolphus Frederic IV, the current Duke of Mecklenburgh. Because at the time of writing the provinces were under the title of Mecklenburgh, previous rulers of the territories are represented retrospectively as 'occupiers'. Scott writes of the area as a 'duchy being always in the hands of one or the other [Imperialists/Swedes]; generally indeed divided between both; continually exposed to their ravages, and equally treated as an enemy's country, which side soever came into possession of it' (295). She is writing also in the midst of the Seven Years' War, which had substantial opposition in Britain. That she sees the Dukes of Mecklenburgh as the rightful
rulers of these territories is shown in her description of their reinstatement. When the
Dukes of Mecklenburgh are restored to their power over the duchies, Scott's description of
their reinstatement is elaborate and ceremonious (262-3). Scott's attitude to the Protestant
dukes, and to their Catholic opponents, is clear when she describes this scene as 'the re-
establishment of their lawful Sovereigns, of their religion, and of their liberty' (263). Scott
was writing for the Hanoverians in England, of course, valorizing the Protestant sovereign
and endorsing Hanoverian claims, so this narration of this elaborate public display would
have found sympathetic readers.

While endorsing Protestant religion is a major part of the history, Scott overtly continues
her commentaries on good governance and leadership qualities. She debates the roles of
sovereigns in relation to parliament and, as I have discussed earlier in the thesis, condemns
corruption and selfish interest in politicians. A text in which the dedication praises the
sovereign becomes the site for explorations of the nature of a good sovereign. Newbery's
dedication and Scott's history, work collaboratively to reinforce assumptions about good
leadership and good citizenship. The dedication describes the populace as 'a People who
venerate their Sovereigns for their Virtues, and whose Obedience is dictated by Affection;
the strongest, best, most durable, and most glorious Security on which the Throne can be
raised, and Empire be established' (v). Dedications have a mode of their own, often
representing an ideal, and not necessarily a description of what actually is the case. Here,
Newbery's comments are built on a model where the people venerate their sovereigns, the
sovereigns have virtue, the populace is obedient, and the throne is secure. 'Wishing your
Majesty every Honour entailed on your exalted Station, and every Happiness due to your
private Virtue' (vi). This is not mere rhetoric, for George III was publicly active in
promoting virtuous principles.

Despite more and more publications being written in the eighteenth century with neither
patrons nor subscribers, dedications retained the high-blown forms of address appropriate
to a patron. The dedication as a textual apparatus was not mere convention. By imitating the relationship between patron and grateful author, this obsequious dedication replicates the power relationship in the model of patronage. There is more than a nod to the power of the dedicatee to endorse or reject the commercial product. And the praise of Queen Charlotte Sophia becomes a lens through which to read the war-ridden history of Mecklenburgh. As well as privileging Queen Charlotte in the dedication, the text privileges the perspective of the Dukes of Mecklenburgh in all the territorial and religious skirmishes in which they were involved, writing the history of Sweden as a history of the victory of Protestantism over barbarity.

Compared with *Gustavus Ericson*, *The history of Mecklenburgh* has fewer depictions of women. Initially, it appears that the only women in it are mentioned as daughters or wives or mothers of the men who have agency and who are topics of discussion. Most women in the history are represented as little more than bargaining chips in negotiations among men (for example 145-6). At a time when Scottish troops were allied fighters against Imperial troops, Ann Princess of Denmark is betrothed to James VI, King of Scotland, to strengthen national ties. Women served to consolidate alliances before and during wars and, afterwards, were part of peace settlements along with money and territory. Scott's history records the position of these women but, conventionally for the time, registers no exception to or criticism of their situation. The silences around the individual lives of these women declare what cannot be said in this history. As I have suggested earlier, the genre of history that Scott actually writes here (as opposed to the genre she advocates) has rules about content and representation, and one of these rules is still that the actions of men, the public actions of men, are the

55 There is no evidence that the Queen was Scott's patron. John Feather's study of British publishing has shown that a situation where writers were supported by patrons gradually evolved to a situation where individuals wrote for profit. *A history of British publishing* London: Croom Helm, 1988.

56 See Macherey *A theory of literary production*, trans. G. Wall, London: Routledge, 1978, 84. 'Thus the work cannot speak of the more or less complex opposition which structures it; though it is its expression and embodiment. In its every particle, the work manifests, uncovers, what it cannot say.'
main focus of historical representation. With a few exceptions, women's lives are present only where they affect or interfere with the lives of the men around them.

In the latter stages of the history, which record events from the fourteenth century onwards, Scott does record an exception, and a powerful one. Scott again refers to Margaret, Queen of Sweden. Some of the most interesting intrigues and manoeuvres for power that Scott reports are those centred on the fight for power in Russia in the eighteenth century.57 Ann provides a counterpoint in the history to the multiple women who are pawns in the political manoeuvrings of state affairs. In Ann's case, the pawn transforms herself into the queen. In exploiting her own powers and her nobles' ambitions she showed herself to be as politically astute and cunning as any man. Quite radically for the times, Scott shows that, in personal qualities, there are no gender differences in positions of power – both men and women are capable of either responsible authority or cunning exploitation.

In the Preface, Scott criticises previous histories of Germany for concentrating on the Empire and on wars between the territories, and for thus eliding the history of personal virtues in the public arena. The result, Scott suggests is 'unentertaining' because 'the history of Germany thus becomes entirely military' (xi). Pierre Macherey has suggested that a text reflects both a history and an ideological version of that history.58 Scott's history also centres on the affairs of war. Her version of the Mecklenburg history conveys the accepted modes of historical writing – which privilege public men in public action – as well as her own priorities in history – judgements about virtuous individuals in the public arena. The unevenness in the texture of the history appears to reflect this tension between conventional forms of history and Scott's desire for a

57 To recap briefly, the Russian born Duchess of Mecklenburgh inherited the right to the throne of Muscovy upon the death of Peter II. Not wanting to fall under control of the Duke of Mecklenburgh, and hoping for a political puppet, the Russian court appointed the Duchess' younger sister, Ann, in her place. As an interesting commentary on contemporary views of women and on political intrigue, Scott details the political manoeuvrings of Ann: 'Ann consented at first to every article they required; but when she saw herself well established on the throne, they found her less passive' (345).
58 Although Macherey would object to or qualify use of the word 'reflect'. See 115.
different focus for historical writing with documentary recording of events interspersed with dramatic rendering of individual's conversation and circumstances.

Scott's *History of Mecklenburgh*, then is predominantly that type of conventional history that she criticizes in her Introduction, but she attempts to modify such conventional representations of war and public vices with frequent reflexive comments about the genre.


Scott's third historical biography continues her anti-Catholic theme, and her interest in exemplary public figures. She comments on issues of politics and state in her own country as well as on French history, and the implicit criticism of French Catholicism and government capitalised on British anti-French sentiments. Scott's depiction of Theodore Agrippa – the sixteenth-century Huguenot – presents him as a zealous Huguenot militant and an exemplary virtuous public figure who rejects the intrigues and pettiness that were part of daily life in the French court and in party politics.59

In many respects D'Aubigné was ill qualified for a court where Catherin of Medicis presided; frank and open in speech himself, he detested art and deceit in others; regular and virtuous in his conduct, his manners were a tacit reproach to the licentious; a zealous huguenot in heart, and such a bungler in dissimulation, that he was little able to conceal his opinions, and absolutely incapable of assuming the appearance of a good catholic, which too many did without scruple. (54)

The history has substantial scholarly apparatus, including footnotes and an extensive index, a type of rigorous research and documentation that, according to Thomson and Black, was unusual in eighteenth-century historical biography.60 It is clear, however, that Scott relies heavily on Theodore Agrippa's own *Memoirs* and this has the effect of

59 Compare Maud Cruttwell's derisive account of Agrippa in her biography of Agrippa's famous granddaughter, Madame de Maintenon. London, 1930. Cruttwell writes of Agrippa that he 'was past-master in the art of bluster, and even his probity is doubtful, while his main characteristics seem to have been cunning and bombastic vanity' (3).

making her positive accounts of him even more glowing. In doing so she reiterates her ongoing concerns with moral leadership. The Monthly Review received the biography well: 'The present life of the celebrated Huguenots appears to be written with judgment and impartiality; and it is, we believe, the most compleat account of the honest, brave, and learned D'Aubigné, that hath yet been laid before the public'.

Allibone's Critical Dictionary suggests that Scott's history of Agrippa is 'perhaps the best' of her works.

Again, historical biography continues Scott's ongoing exploration of the 'good man'. In her introduction to the biography she comments that 'there is a secret satisfaction in relating the actions of a man who has particularly engaged our esteem' (v). As in her novels, and especially in George Ellison, Scott praises the man who is good because he is pious, virtuous and principled, rather than he who is acclaimed merely for his public position of power.

Such exalted stations as call for the exertion of talents like theirs [Alexander, Caesar or Augustus] are above the reach of most men, and ought to be foreign to their wishes. But the man of steady integrity, of inflexible virtue, of noble frankness, of disinterested generosity, and of warm and sincere piety, is an object every man may, and every man ought to imitate. Virtue is within the reach of every station; it cannot, in all, wear a dress equally splendid, but it is alike respectable in its plainest garb, and in its richest attire. (xiii-xiv)

She explicitly chooses such 'ordinary' figures as objects of study, for she believes it is easier for ordinary persons to identify and emulate the virtuous rather than the great. In the words of D'Aubigné himself, whom Scott quotes, 'the actions of private men, not of princes, are the proper objects of your imitation' (xi).

Scott's Introduction both justifies her choice of subject and addresses problems of historiography.

The justice of a fair representation is more especially due to men from whom it has long been withheld. Such has been the lot of the Huguenots. Their actions have been related by historians, who were under the influence both of party and religious prejudices; men blinded by passion, and warped by interest, as incapable of judging with candour, as averse to acknowledging truths, which might give offence to the Powerful. Near the times of the dreadful desolation made by those civil wars, the hatred excited by the contention must have influenced the minds of men, and given asperity to their pens; but many of the French historians wrote after the cruel and impolitic revocation of the edict of Nantz; and little justice could the Huguenots expect, under the reign of their bigoted persecutor. (vi)

Her opinion of French historiography is that extant records of this period of French history and of the personages involved are biased, although she, too, is clearly biased in favour of her Huguenot subject. At one point in her history she comments on the difficulties of ascertaining the truth of a situation, because contemporary records were written either by biased Catholics or biased Huguenots, and both recorded events completely differently (347).

Huguenot history would have been more acceptable in eighteenth-century Britain than sixteenth-century France. In her history of D'Aubigné, however, she lauds his personal and public virtues. She contrasts D'Aubigné with those who act from personal interest and ambition rather than from professional responsibility, for in her portrayal of D'Aubigné he is motivated by religious principles, rather than from personal gain. She contemplates her own choice of subject, reflecting that:

it is certain, that when an author makes choice of a character, because it is particularly pleasing to himself, he would be very unreasonable were he to expect, that it should become equally the favourite of his readers. Taste influences our judgements in regard to virtue, as in other things; people differ concerning intellectual as well as corporeal beauty, but they differ only in degrees of approbation; they will give a preference to one particular turn of mind or features, but some charms will be allowed to every object, that can produce any just claim to real beauty, though it be not of the kind most agreeable to the peculiar taste of the spectator, or of the reader. (viii-ix)

While this is partly a continuing justification for her topic, these comments also reveal a subtle understanding of human motivation and judgement. Just as earlier in *The history of Mecklenburgh*, Scott discusses the motivations for constructing enemies or 'the other' as evil, here she muses on the positioning of the subject. Scott is participating, too, in a popular form of Protestant biography. One commentator has suggested that there was
such a proliferation of Protestant biography in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that it would be fruitful to 'make a study of the various patterns of Protestant sanctity' and that this task might 'be more instructive than most of the biographies'.

Although Scott claims not to be writing a religious history of the times, only a history of an eminent person (25), she makes emotive and dramatic pleas for the Huguenots. Her rendering of the Saint Bartholomew's Day massacre is evocative and pathetic. Scott gives her biography a mixed stylistic texture and tone with its combination of scholarly apparatus and dramatic re-creation of conversations and personal thoughts, and part of the aesthetic appeal of the history is this mixing of rhetorical strategies and discourses. Amidst historical description she relates death-bed exhortations, childish pranks, gruesome injuries and dramatic flights of escape into the night that are more reminiscent of a romantic novel than of historiography. This extent of the mixing of modes is innovative in historical writing, but shows how closely interrelated were genres in the eighteenth century; after all, novels often were titled as histories, and their authors gave their works status by attesting to their historical veracity.

But most of all Scott aims to present an admirable and virtuous figure in private relationships and in his professional capacities. One way of doing this is to depict Catherine de' Medici as a moral counterpoint to Agrippa – this contrast is significant for the religious and moral themes of the history and Scott deliberately pushes these issues together. Catherine's dissimulation and intrigues are contrasted with Agrippa's loyalty and openness. Scott criticises her particularly for her deception in failing to execute the edict of pacification with the Huguenots (74), and it is interesting to note that in her Introduction to the history the author spends considerable time castigating Catherine:

Catherine de Medicis so eminently possessed, and with such general success employed the arts of seduction; to the ambitious she held forth the temptations of power, to the avaricious of wealth, to the luxurious of pleasure. Never had the great enemy of mankind so able a minister, and so faithful a representative. Every species

64 Mark A. Thomson, Some developments in English historiography, 8.
of dissimulation, every mode of treachery, was adopted by her to allure, to betray, and to ruin: not only on the common frailty of human nature, or on the weakness of peculiar dispositions, did she found her hopes and schemes to corrupt, but even when zeal for right objects was carried beyond just bounds, or a virtue beyond its due proportion, she watched the opportunity for mischief. (ix-x)

When Scott writes of Catherine's death, her denunciation is detailed and passionate (285-6).

This juxtaposition of the virtuous and the corrupt is a standard rhetorical device in this history, especially in representations of the King of Navarre whom D'Aubigné served faithfully. Scott's history shows that D'Aubigné's loyalty was to the Huguenot cause, rather than to his King's character or position. After Agrippa flees the court with Henry, the King of Navarre, we see these two figures together in a series of political wrangles and personal situations. Scott presents their respective responses to these situations to disclose their moral qualities and moral right to leadership. D'Aubigné always spoke frankly even when this was likely to offend Henry. For example, the womanising king seeks D'Aubigné's assistance in his conquest of a married woman. Though threatened with professional demotion, D'Aubigné refuses because he respects women's virtue and considers such acts not worthy of his lord. Scott says of her hero, that he 'always acted on fixed and strong principles, [and] could not be prevailed on by such insidious artifices' (72). And, when Henry wanted to marry a woman of inferior rank and virtue, though many disapproved, only D'Aubigné speaks because he was never 'led by that timid caution which actuates the self-interested courtier, to neglect an opportunity of speaking useful truths'. While in this instance, the king asks his loyal follower to speak with his '"accustomed frankness and fidelity, and according to the precepts of [his] severe morality" ' (273), it is precisely D'Aubigné's frankness and severe morality that so often offends the king of Navarre. This explains why, paradoxically, he both asks for D'Aubigné's advice when he assumes the throne of France, and several times during his reign banishes or threatens his adviser.
The emphasis of the history is on D'Aubigné, but she uses his biography to discuss issues of governance, power, qualities of leadership and loyal service. In the Introduction to the volume, the author discusses the repression of the Huguenots and comments that 'the effects of persecution have ever been directly contrary to the views of those who employed it' (xv). She contrasts D'Aubigné with most of the king's other adherents:

for ambition will steal into almost every heart, when there is a prospect of its gratification; and when once entered, it seldom remains long a secondary passion; affection for the merits of the prince will turn into an attachment to his power; and having so much to hope for themselves, their attention will center there; the regards of friendship will be considered as trifling gifts from a man who has so much more to give (94-95).

Just as Scott comments in *George Ellison*, positions of power are rarely held by those with the personal qualities appropriate to the responsibility (GE, 41). Ambition and power rarely give way to principled, unselfish exercise of authority. She says of royal leaders:

it cannot be imagined that any prince will contentedly see his authority abridged; if some have, of their own free choice, set bounds to it, the smallness of their number, and the greatness of their virtue, will allow us to consider them as prodigies, to be admired, to be venerated, but not likely to be imitated. (97)

Throughout, Scott portrays Agrippa as a spirited, talented and courageous military man. His first love is the Huguenot cause and battle and the author tells us that between the ages of 17 and 37 D'Aubigné had spent only four days successively without some battle or military expedition, not including illness (284). Scott devotes great swathes of the history to detailed discussions of individual battles, establishing causes, outlining battle strategies, and explaining the outcomes. In almost all of these battle situations, D'Aubigné takes a leading role either formally as a commander, or informally as the bravest warrior. Such is Scott's representation of her hero. She uses the genre of history to interrelate private and public morality and action. D'Aubigné is rarely shown in personal situations outside of war and politics, except for those where he is resisting personal intrigues or trying to persuade nobles to resist personal vices. The structural
framework for the hero is military, political, religious and public. We are told that D'Aubigné spends time with his wife and family only when he could do no more in battle (227). So Scott's history is guided by conventional forms, but in representing the public works of D'Aubigné, Scott emphasises private qualities of a personally principled individual whose life is spent in a public sphere, and thus reinforces her belief that the good man's virtue is what makes him a success in the public arena.

In an extended summary she assesses D'Aubigné's strengths.

The interests of the religion he professed were through life his first object; he wished to extend its influence, and steadily practised the duties it recommended; from which even his passions, strong as they were by nature, could not seduce him. His integrity, his love of civil liberty, and every principle of virtue, were so founded on, or blended with his piety, that neither the sunshine of favor, nor the storms of fortune, could overcome them. Ambition could not tempt him to violate the natural probity of his mind nor to forgo his sincerity, though he knew that his fortune was at stake; that by courtly compliances he should rise to honours and dignities; without them had nothing but neglect, perhaps even hatred to expect; for princes seldom love the man who refuses their favours. (415-416)

In this long passage, Scott simultaneously records a single individual's virtues and a blueprint for moral action in power – that is, civil liberties, rational virtue, and piety – which, it could be argued, is the rationale and methodology of her *Life of Theodore Agrippa D'Aubigné*.

It is a difficult task to write about women writing history in the eighteenth century. Female historians have not been remembered, and there is little secondary research published on the topic. Indeed even in the study of male historians it is the nineteenth century that is seen as the period in which historiography flourished. It was not until late in the eighteenth century that Catharine Macaulay's *History of England* and Mary Wollstonecraft's *A historical and moral view of the French revolution* (1794), were to make important public contributions to historical writing by women – although as I discussed early in the chapter there had been other women historians before them who were less well known. We see by Sarah Scott's three 'histories' that it is important to widen our conception of the genre of history to incorporate other types of writing about 'the past' – writing which incorporates
dramatic re-creation of events, writing which interrelates 'great' public actions with private motivations to show that the distinction between 'private' and 'public' is artificial. Isobel Grundy has done so by writing about English nuns who wrote biography, autobiography, and community chronicles.\(^65\) While Scott's histories are significant for a number of reasons, they are particularly useful for their self-conscious reflections on the nature of historiography. Richard Steele claimed that 'History . . . written by a woman, you will easily imagine to consist of love in all its forms'.\(^66\) Scott's histories refute such a claim, but significantly they also question the assumption that a true history should exclude such topics. And, in the context of this thesis, Scott's histories are significant for showing the different arenas and modes in which she explored her ongoing interests in piety, good leadership and moral action.

\(^{65}\) 'Women's history? Writings by English nuns', 126 - 138.
\(^{66}\) *Tailor* 36, 2 July, 1709.
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