

**Domesticating the Novel:
Moral-Domestic Fiction, 1820-1834**

by

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Ph.D. Thesis

Cardiff University

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Summary

Domesticating the Novel: Moral-Domestic Fiction, 1820-1834

Since the late 1960s, the marginalised status of women within literary studies has been addressed. Critics such as Kate Millett set the standard for studies of male-authored fiction that read them for signs of their oppressive, patriarchal assumptions. Somewhat differently, Elaine Showalter's 1977 text A Literature of Their Own proved seminal for its shift in focus towards women's writing, and the aim of detecting female experiences of society. The effort to retrieve lost or neglected fiction by women mobilised many critics, such as Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, yet of most significance for the subject matter of this thesis is Ellen Moers. Moers's Literary Women (1976) essentially suggests an expansion of the types of female-authored fiction that should be recovered. For Moers, women's writing does not have to be about isolated, feminist rejections of male-oriented society in order to be worth retrieving. Female novelists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were taking advantage of one of the few outlets available to them to make money, and their works were defined by intertextuality. Moers writes about a 'sounding board' of mutual awareness and resonance that exists between women writers across periods and genres; a female tradition of writing is formed by the 'many voices, of different

rhythms, pitches, and timbres' by which women writers are encircled.¹ Collectively, existing works such as those by Showalter and Moers offer justification for retrieving a range of lesser-known, seemingly mundane female-authored works from the past, as these contain connections with surrounding works as well as a narrative on women's experiences of society. Currently, however, there is a critical hiatus in which this opportunity is not being satisfied, and many women writers remain neglected. The gap in our knowledge of the female literary tradition can be filled in part by increased familiarisation with the Moral-Domestic genre of the 1820s and 1830s. This genre relates to fictional forbears such as Jane Austen and Maria Edgeworth, as well as later Victorian authors. It also offers a female perspective on a publishing scene whose significance is arguably yet to be fully realised. In this way, the female-authored, Moral-Domestic novels that proliferated in the late-Romantic period represent one, as yet unrecognised voice in Moers's 'sounding board'.

¹ Ellen Moers, Literary Women (London: Women's Press, 1978), p. 65.

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I

Introduction

Rediscovering Women's Moral-Domestic Writing, 1820-1834

The 1830s were lacking in first-rate literary achievement.

Richard D. Altick¹

Early women's writing needs rediscovering because much of it is still forgotten, because it can prove a delight to read, because without it our notions of literature become misleadingly one-sided, and because it offers insights into the historical condition of women (and therefore obliquely into our own situation) which are unavailable from other sources.

Isobel Grundy²

The 1830s is a neglected decade in the history of British literature, falling as it does between the end point of Romanticism and the onset of the Victorian era. Indeed, the critical consensus has for many years sided with the point of view put by Richard Altick, that the 1830s were something of a lost decade, lacking in first-rate literary achievement. The argument of this thesis, however, is that the 1830s are worthy of critical attention as the decade that witnessed the efflorescence of one particular form of popular literature, written mainly by women and addressed primarily to a female readership, namely Moral-Domestic fiction.

Moral-Domestic fiction had existed before the nineteenth century in the form of fictionalised conduct literature evident, on the one hand, in Samuel Richardson's mid-eighteenth century novels, and, on the other, in Jane Austen's novels of manners. But the

¹ Richard D. Altick, *Victorian People and Ideas* (London: Dent, 1973), p. 6.

² Isobel Grundy, '(Re)discovering Women's Texts', in *Women and Literature in Britain 1700-1800*, ed. by Vivien Jones (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 185-86.

type of Moral-Domestic fiction which flourished in the first three decades of the nineteenth century is marked out by a unique emphasis upon sisterly relationships, and the empowering potential for women of the religious, domestic life. This Moral-Domestic fiction also facilitated an authoritative, educating voice for the female novelist. Altick's claim that the literary culture of the late-Romantic period was relatively ineffectual, and is therefore not worthy of the scrutiny with which other writers and genres are treated, is born of a bias towards ostensibly unique productions and texts. The Moral-Domestic genre that emerged between the Romantic and the Victorian periods, however, may be used as a correlative to such accounts. The genre may seem incompatible with prevailing conceptions of literary value, yet it can contextualise the phenomena to which Altick refers. Feminist critics, notably Ellen Moers and Isobel Grundy, provide a framework within which to retrieve Moral-Domestic fiction, and reinstate its importance, as they promote the recovery of lesser known female-authored fictions of the past.³ Moers is particularly interested in the creative ways in which apparently minor writers adapt one another's styles. On closer inspection, Moral-Domestic writing contains unexpected innovations at the levels of style and theme. Thus, in addition to illuminating the rise of the Victorian novel, the elucidation of Moral-Domestic fiction contributes to debates regarding the contested role of the woman writer in the nineteenth century and the nature of her literature.

In the early decades of the nineteenth century, the works of the Moral-Domestic genre are characterised by their almost exclusive delineation of everyday scenes and uncompromising Christian value system. With this content and tone, they departed from

³ Ellen Moers's Literary Women (London: Women's Press, 1978) will be referred to throughout this thesis, for its statement that a feminine history in the novel warrants recovery. Her accentuation of intertextuality in women's literature is also critical, as it enables a reconsideration of seemingly minor texts.

existing styles of writing, including Gothic and society novels. These genres had fallen into disrepute by 1800, as the appearance in 1813 of Eaton Stannard-Barrett's The Heroine; or, the Adventures of a Fair Romance Reader, a fictional attack on the perceived shallowness of familiar romantic heroines, suggests. The gravity of Moral-Domestic writing picked up on the turn towards moral seriousness by which Britain was gripped in the decades following the French Revolution. In this anxious climate, novels featuring exotic settings, and accentuating the importance of the individual's feelings, were criticised for their frivolity, and for Revolutionary connections. The intrigues of romances, for example, as well as the abstract intellectualism of the novel of ideas, were felt to rouse the expectations of the reader beyond the life that society could offer. This was dangerous in a nation that relied upon the domestic woman, residing in the family, as the cornerstone of British stability. Indeed, even seemingly conservative fictional styles could be suspect owing to their emphasis on entertainment rather than education alone. Reacting against all of these types of fiction, and with a view to avoiding censure, Moral-Domestic texts such as Hannah More's Evangelical manifesto Coelebs in Search of a Wife (1808), and Mary Brunton's Self-Control (1811), found an eager, approving audience. Moral-Domestic works appeared as a different kind of fiction; mobilised by morality instead of suspense or mystery, they claimed to instruct rather than to amuse the reader.⁴

The success achieved by the Moral-Domestic genre is impressive by any account. In a context that was generally disapproving of women novelists, Moral-Domestic contributors were respected, and maintained a feminine voice in the public sphere. Indeed, Moral-Domestic fictions by women constituted 52 of the 207 female-authored

⁴ Hannah More, Coelebs in Search of a Wife (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1808); Mary Brunton, Self-Control (Edinburgh: George Ramsey & Co. for Manners and Miller; and Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, London, 1811; Corvey CME 3-628-48640-8).

titles produced in the 1810s, and 110 of the 421 texts published in the period 1820-1834.⁵ There is much justification for revisiting the moral and domestic tales that appeared in the early 1800s, firstly because they were contemporaneously prominent, and secondly because their meanings can be ambiguous and surprising. It would be easy to sideline the Moral-Domestic genre for its moral conservatism, and for its formulaic plots. Yet a nuanced interpretation of the genre's statements and images exposes a key duplicity, an anti-radical form of revisionism, within the movement, by which its reinstatement in feminist accounts of the period is urged. In particular, the domesticity and Christianity of Moral-Domestic heroines and creators could involve them in debates concerning civil rights, and lead them to missionary work on a global scale.

In assessing the impact of Moral-Domestic fiction, certain existing approaches to the literary and social context are enlightening. The historians Linda Colley and Kathryn Gleadle, and literary critics including Ellen Moers and Anne K. Mellor, advance alternative ways of understanding literary quality and cultural importance. As a result, they may be utilised in support of the idea that the significance of lesser-known Moral-Domestic texts is greater than has erstwhile been realised. With the aim of exploring this possibility, the appendix to this thesis, the 'Checklist of Moral-Domestic Fiction, 1820-1824', lists and describes Moral-Domestic literature. The years covered by the checklist are determined both by the area of interest and the availability of material. The 1820s and 1830s bridge the Romantic and Victorian periods, and see the proliferation of Moral-Domestic fiction. 1834 is both the latest year in which the genre definitively appears, and the final year covered by the Corvey Microfiche Edition of Romantic-era fiction, the

⁵ Moral-Domestic works appearing between the years 1820 and 1834 are catalogued in the appendix to this thesis. Publication figures regarding Moral-Domestic works appearing in the 1810s, as well as those circulating in the years under consideration here, can be found in Peter Garside's The English Novel 1770-1829: A Bibliographical Survey of Prose Fiction Published in the British Isles, 2 vols. (Oxford: OUP, 2000).

main source of this research.⁶ Three qualitative chapters, discussing the key writers and sub-genres of the movement, convey the project's interpretation of this checklist, detailing the novel's domestication by the Moral-Domestic genre, and the impact that this process had upon the woman writer and her society. Critical to the appreciation of Moral-Domestic fiction, however, is an understanding of its origins, including the reasons why it came to prominence, and the way in which it was perceived. For this reason, the present chapter introduces the circumstances from which Moral-Domestic fiction was born and outlines some of the critical perimeters within which its comprehension must take place.

⁶ Edition Corvey: English Language Titles of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries (Wildberg: Belsher Wissenschaftliche Pleinot, 1994). This collection was viewed on microfiche in Cardiff University's Arts and Social Studies Library.

Hannah More, Evangelicalism, and the Birth of Moral-Domestic Fiction

She conceived a plan for a new type of literary work, aimed at the subscribers to the burgeoning circulating libraries: an anti-Corinne, which, by setting out the message of her conduct books in fictional form, would fulfil what she saw as the true function of a novel.

Anne Stott⁷

1808 saw the appearance of Coelebs in Search of a Wife, the first and only novel by the prominent Evangelical, Hannah More. A didactic and moralising narrative, Coelebs is scarcely recognisable as a novel when compared with the Gothic and sentimental tales with which the literary scene of the 1780s and 1790s had overflowed. Indeed, More's Evangelical manifesto has been defined in the years following its publication as a staid, tedious attempt to gain favour amongst conservative critics. Supporting this perspective, More herself claimed that she had been enticed to write her novel only because she wanted to reinvent this artefact as a moral instrument.⁸ Fulfilling this aim, Coelebs is narrated by a pious bachelor, in search of a simple, Christian wife. It might easily be dismissed as a non-creative, anti-feminist text as a result. More's definition of ideal womanhood is, after all, confined to the domestic sphere, and she seems to prioritise male wants and needs. There is more to Coelebs, however, than meets the eye. Despite its somewhat unpromising, and certainly unfashionable, credentials, Coelebs became the biggest-selling novel of its time, and did much to extend the influence of

⁷ Anne Stott, Hannah More: The First Victorian (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 273-74.

⁸ Mary Waldron summarises this view when she states that More 'simply believed she could transform the genre' with a text that would 'purify the waters' of the novel. Waldron makes this point in her introduction to Coelebs in Search of a Wife (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1995), p. ix. She bases her argument on the view of novels evident in More's conduct writing, as well as comments that she made to her acquaintances regarding Coelebs.

the woman writer.⁹ More herself had also been a prominent and respected thinker for the previous two decades. When viewed in terms of the pressures exerted in the early 1800s to silence women in public and confine them to the home, Hannah More is important in that she played a role in blurring the division between these spheres. Certain critics, notably Anne Stott and Mitzi Myers, have encouraged such contemplation, by revisiting Hannah More's long and varied career.¹⁰ What remains to be appreciated is that Hannah More's novel had immediate influence, as the instigating figure in a prominent novelistic genre. More's career anticipates the anti-radical feminism of both Coelebs and the Moral-Domestic texts that it shaped. The nature of More's career and writing is, therefore, prerequisite to understanding Moral-Domestic fiction. In domesticating the content of the popular novel and moralising its register, More elevated the role of succeeding female authors. The form of power that she gained, which largely avoided the censure of male reviewers and commentators, urged novelistic imitation on a large scale.

Anne Stott identifies a subtle form of revisionism at work throughout More's varied career. In Hannah More: The First Victorian, Stott rejects the popular image of Hannah More as a sanctimonious figure, and argues instead that she was independent and ambitious. According to Stott, More's support for the existing structure of society has served to render her resistance to patriarchal control acceptable. Stott writes that critics including Mitzi Myers have detected a "bourgeois progressivism" at work in More's career as a playwright, teacher, and conduct writer, as it was her adherence to a conservative value system that lent her authority and longevity.¹¹ Her success, from the 1770s to the 1820s, enabled her to

⁹ Robert A. Colby makes this point in Fiction with Purpose: Major and Minor Nineteenth-Century Novels (London: Bloomington, 1967), p. 80.

¹⁰ Mitzi Myers, 'Hannah More's Tracts for the Time: Social Fiction and Female Ideology', in Fetter'd or Free? British Women Novelists, 1680-1815, ed. by Mary Anne Schofield and Celia Macheski (Athens, Ohio; London: Ohio University Press, 1986), pp. 264-84.

¹¹ Stott, p. x. Stott discusses the Evangelical movement as a whole in terms of its dissenting nature. Other texts drawing attention to the threat that Evangelicalism could pose to the social order include G. M.

influence prominent writers and actors, High Churchmen, and members of parliament, whilst also targeting the lower classes through the Cheap Repository Tracts of the 1790s. As a result of these activities, Stott claims that More's Evangelical piety and respectability render her 'the woman who did so much to create the conditions which made Victorianism possible'.¹² More's conversion to Evangelicalism in the 1780s led her to become a mouthpiece for this faith, at a time when it was a powerful movement. Experiencing a revival during More's lifetime, Evangelicalism could be both restricting and liberating. The movement prioritised direct communion with scripture over and above organised religion, for example, desiring individuals to believe so fervently in their faith that the Established Church would be unnecessary. Additionally, Evangelicalism instructed its adherents to tolerate their worldly strife and social position, focusing instead upon earning a privileged place in the afterlife. Yet whilst these tenets soothed the anxiety pervading Britain in the wake of the French Revolution, and posed no threat to the social hierarchy, Evangelicalism was nonetheless a reformative, empowering movement. Whereas dissenters such as Methodists and Calvinists separated from the mainstream Church, Evangelicals retained some links with this powerful institution as well as the government. They subsequently enjoyed a more public profile, with key figures such as William Wilberforce befriending and influencing members of parliament. In Fathers of the Victorians: the Age of Wilberforce, Ford K. Brown examines the political side of the Evangelical faith.¹³ Brown states that the people attached to Evangelicalism were, despite their apparent conservatism, attempting to evoke extensive social change. Psychological rather than structural in nature, the Evangelicals' goal to elevate

Ditchfield, The Evangelical Revival (London: Routledge, 1998) and Michael R. Watts, The Dissenters: From the Reformation to the French Revolution (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985).

¹² Stott, p. 19.

¹³ Ford K. Brown, Fathers of the Victorians: The Age of Wilberforce (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961).

the morality of Britons targeted the hearts and minds of the people. The movement was, therefore, a transformative one.

Hannah More was both an instrument of Evangelicalism, and a woman whose career was furthered by the movement's success. Along with William Wilberforce, More and other members of the 'Clapham Sect' were at the forefront of the second wave of the faith's revival in the 1780s and 1790s. Stott examines More's place within this group, and surmises of her message to women that 'while she advocated modesty and humility, she also gave them permission to dip their toes into public life, to campaign, to organise, to develop expertise'.¹⁴ In aiming to shape culture, albeit in a grave, orthodox manner, More fulfilled such ambition that even '[m]ale commentators were awed by a courage and determination that hardly fitted contemporary stereotypes of the frailer sex'.¹⁵ To return to More's novel, Coelebs in Search of a Wife, Stott points out a complexity by which its unabashed, unquestionable conservatism is undermined. This three-volume Evangelical novel celebrates an extremely religious heroine, who strives to be useful every hour of every day; Lucilla Stanley has internalised a Protestant, British ideal of womanhood to such a degree that she regulates her behaviour against rigid standards, and is finally rewarded with the love of the hero-narrator, Charles. Nonetheless, Lucilla Stanley is a strong heroine, created by a persuasive woman writer. As Stott argues, Lucilla represented 'a new, Evangelically-inspired ideal of useful womanhood', with which More embarked on a quest to overhaul the novel.¹⁶ Significantly, More achieved success with this aim. With her first and only novel, Stott remarks,

More had given an Evangelical world deeply suspicious of novels permission to read fiction; the publication of Coelebs led the Christian Observer to begin reviewing the occasional novel [...] She had also provided encouragement for other women to use the novel form to propagate the Evangelical message. Evangelical productions such as Mary

¹⁴ Stott, p. x.

¹⁵ Stott, p. 119.

¹⁶ Stott, p. 273.

Martha Sherwood's The Fairchild Family (1818) and Charlotte Tonna's social-realist Helen Fleetwood (1814) were part of her legacy to the next generation.¹⁷

With Coelebs, More effectively sermonised female-authored fiction, assuming the authority and the capacity to correct the problematic fields of writing and reading.

Stott appreciates Coelebs's influence upon fictional successors, yet she does not define More as the instigator of a distinctive genre of female-authored novels. Indeed, of the immediate repercussions of More's novelistic enterprise, Stott writes that 'More's refusal to provide her readers with more of the same left a vacuum which opportunists were not slow to fill with imitations, unauthorized sequels, and parodies'.¹⁸ The existence of the Moral-Domestic genre reveals that cultural responses to Coelebs were more detailed and deliberate than this summary implies. Far from being filled by 'opportunists' and the like, the space opened up by Hannah More encouraged a series of serious as well as commercial women novelists to domesticate the novel. Mary Brunton, for example, popularised Hannah More's Evangelical style of writing shortly after the success of Coelebs, with Self-Control in 1811. This work exceeded its publisher's expectations, entering into numerous editions. Authors from quite different backgrounds, including Harriet Corp and Barbara Hofland, followed this trend, so that the Moral-Domestic genre accounted for around a quarter of women's novels in the 1810s, and remained a prominent element of the publishing scene after 1820. The fact that Moral-Domestic fiction derives from Hannah More's Evangelical novel is significant; the anti-radical forms of feminism and social change at work in Coelebs both fostered the creation of this genre, and encourage a careful, detailed understanding of its tropes, themes, and plots. Representing a great deal more than a sequence of opportunists and parodists, the Moral-Domestic

¹⁷ Stott, p. 282.

¹⁸ Stott, p. 281.

genre continued More's shrewd use of conservative, domestic ideals, to fulfil creative and political ambition.

Moral-Domestic Fiction and Existing Criticism

Given women's lack of legal rights and independence, the language of women's domestic authority was critical in fostering female self-respect and functioned to re-establish a balance of power between husband and wife.

Kathryn Gleadle¹⁹

Domesticity is always a contested proposition.

Harriet Guest²⁰

Hannah More and the Evangelical movement contextualise the appearance of Moral-Domestic fiction, and suggest the duality with which it might be laden. Yet an array of current approaches to nineteenth-century fiction and society also invites the present study of Moral-Domestic fiction, and assists in its interpretation. As the quotations above suggest, scholars including Kathryn Gleadle and Harriet Guest, as well as Ellen Moers and Linda Colley, reveal that female domesticity in the period is more complex than it often appears. These critics agree that cultural artefacts that appear unpopular or anomalous today may be invaluable in conveying women's experiences in past societies. Existing criticism also contains blind spots, which condition the framework within which the appearance and impact of women's moral writing needs to be interpreted. The feminist project to recover 'lost' novels is an ongoing one, for example, and remains to be exhausted. The absence of the Moral-Domestic genre from discussions of late Romantic Britain represents a significant neglect. It is born of varied

¹⁹ Kathryn Gleadle, *British Women in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p. 84.

²⁰ Harriet Guest, *Small Change: Women, Learning, Patriotism, 1750-1810* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 15.

causes, including the comparative youth of the alternative approaches to literary history in which the genre's importance has come to light, as well as the persistence of biased notions of fictional worth, and the scant availability of the texts.

The period 1820-1834 was a shifting cultural moment, and a diverse time for the novel. Emphasising the intermediary or internally fractured status of the late Romantic novel is, however, both restrictive and arguably misplaced. Compounding a disparate image of late Romantic fiction, for example, Richard D. Altick's definition of the history of the novel, as set out in Victorian People and Ideas, represents the 1820s and 30s as a vague, indistinct phase for the British novel, existing between the turbulent and insecure Romantic society, and the increasingly stern, harmonious Victorian world. For Altick, the years between these two great periods lack the kind of events and movements that would have brought about such change. In relation to many of the novels proliferating in the 1830s, for example, Altick writes that in 'literary history these years are sometimes called the interregnum, a fallow interval following the exhaustion of the Romantic age's energies and awaiting the fresh invigoration that would soon come as new, identifiably "Victorian" voices were heard'.²¹ Gary Kelly's English Fiction of the Romantic Period also describes the series of minor sub-genres, which were not necessarily related to one another by mutual themes or concerns, of which late Romantic literature is comprised.²² The literary scene by this estimation is interesting, yet also somewhat random.

The picture of late Romantic literature as disjointed is undermined by the existence of Moral-Domestic fiction, which constituted a dominant, unifying element of the publishing scene. Additionally, certain approaches to the processes by which literary and cultural

²¹ Altick, p. 2.

²² Gary Kelly divides the fictions of this time into a number of distinct but minor styles, including the Gothic, Sentimental, and National tales, as well as 'Tales of the Times', 'Tales of the Heart', and 'Novels of Country, Town, Region and the Exotic', in English Fiction of the Romantic Period (London: Longman, 1989), pp. 71-230.

transmission occur can be drawn upon, so that this genre may be seen to bridge and explain the puzzling gap between the Romantic and Victorian periods. Linda Colley's Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837, for example, challenges conventional ideas about the kinds of events that have been important in British history.²³ Colley's theory is that social change, far from existing in large-scale and publicly documented events alone, occurs primarily in the consciousness, or the 'thought-world', of the people. This view enables Colley to attribute reformative power to apparently marginal social groups and cultural events. This, in turn, opens up the sources to which we might look when accounting for the transition from the Romantic to the Victorian social organisation. Colley cites three central elements of Victorian Britain as having their roots in Romantic ideology rather than in its political structure. These are the emergence of nationalism as it was felt by the people, the growth of the middle class, and the consolidation of women's domestic identity. Within this framework, late Romantic celebrations of home-centred women and Christian philanthropy appear as key, transitional factors. Decades of unrest, Colley argues, motivated Britons to look to religion and the past to establish who they were; Protestantism 'gave the majority of men and women a sense of their place in history and a sense of worth. It allowed them to feel pride in such advantages as they genuinely did enjoy, and helped them endure when hardship and danger threatened. It gave them identity'.²⁴ As a result of this ethos, in the years 1707 to 1837, society was harmonised in a gradual, piecemeal process.

Colley's inclusive approach to historical change explains the transition from the Romantic to the Victorian periods more successfully than did Altick. As an historian, however, she does not focus upon literature in the period that she considers. Nonetheless, her

²³ Linda Colley, Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837 (Yale: Yale University Press, 2005). Complimenting Colley's focus upon the mood and consciousness of the people is Benedict Anderson's Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (London: Verso, 1991).

²⁴ Colley, p. 53.

recognition of the mindset of the citizen as an important factor in social change elevates the Moral-Domestic genre. Colley identifies ethos and mood as being amongst the key influences upon and gauges to late Romantic Britain. As the popular novel was a prominent cultural object in the 1810s, 20s, and 30s, it must have been a critical part of this thought-world. Certain literary critics approach fiction in a way that compliments Colley's history, viewing the novel as a psychologically and socially determining device. Ann H. Jones's Ideas and Innovations, for example, counters the notion that fictions must appear unique or original in order to warrant study. She states that lesser-known, even mundane, fictions can be valuable, because they may have influenced subsequent generations of writers through subtle channels. Indeed, of the project to reconsider forgotten texts of the early 1800s, Jones argues that 'though the exploration may reveal no further peaks and eminences', it may nonetheless expose 'several important fertilizing streams'.²⁵ Similarly, in The Victorian Novel Before Victoria: British Fiction during the Reign of William IV, 1830-7, Elliot Engel and Margaret F. King view the 1820s as significant in literary history. They do so because, instead of looking for examples of direct impact, they appreciate the piecemeal ways in which influence can be exerted. Engel and King delineate these decades as a 'seed bed' for Victorian fiction, in which are contained the 'structural and thematic germs which blossomed so brilliantly when Victoria came to the throne'.²⁶ They look at nautical and military tales of the late Romantic period, and discern their connection with later writers, with whom we are more familiar.

²⁵ Ann H. Jones, Ideas and Innovations: Best-Sellers of Austen's Age (New York: AMS Press, 1986), p. 1. This text will be invoked throughout this thesis, for its valuable claim that large-scale literary movements and events are inextricably linked to minor texts and writers. Jones's idea of 'fertilizing streams' may be incorporated to empower lesser-known writers, and the roles they have played in literary progress.

²⁶ Elliot Engel and Margaret F. King, The Victorian Novel Before Victoria: British Fiction during the Reign of William IV, 1830-7 (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1984), p. 17.

Studies such as those by Jones, and Engel and King, legitimate the retrieval of lesser-known works.²⁷ Despite their open nature, however, these works must also be modified in the study of Moral-Domestic fiction. There is a sense in which Jones, for example, risks undermining the literary quality of the fictions to which she directs attention, precisely because she expands the criteria by which texts can be deemed worthy. In stating that certain texts are significant for the light that they shed on surrounding writers, eras, and genres, Jones imposes a relational identity upon them. Yet an analysis of Moral-Domestic fiction exposes the creativity at work in such minor fictions, as well as their capacity to reflect upon more familiar genres. Engel and King's study suffers from a different blind spot, which results from a decided male bias. Engel and King argue an impressive case for scrutinising fiction of the 1830s. Yet The Victorian Novel Before Victoria is limited, by and large, to male writers. The comic and patriotic elements of the works of Dickens and Thackeray are seen to have originated in the novels of a handful of male writers of the period under consideration, such as Bulwer-Lytton and Marryat. Engel and King do not, however, fully consider the possibility that the moral seriousness of Victorians such as George Eliot, and the focus on female psychology discernible in Charlotte Brontë's *oeuvre*, may be indebted to female-authored works of the preceding years.

In a sense, Ideas and Innovations and The Victorians Before Victoria demolish certain prejudices in existing theories of pre-Victorian fiction, but replace them with others. What is lacking is a qualitative examination of lesser-known, female-authored fictions, and an appreciation of their creativity. Such a reading benefits from the approaches to meaning

²⁷ Other valuable literary critics and historians who critique familiar notions of what renders literature worthy of study include Jon Klancher and Clifford Siskin. Klancher's The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790-1827 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987) considers texts as social devices, which have wide-reaching repercussions owing to their effects upon the subjectivity of individuals. Siskin's The Work of Writing: Literary and Social Change in Britain, 1700-1830 (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1998) also uses a nuanced understanding of book production and consumption in order to see the literary marketplace as an instrument of cultural change.

evident in the work of feminist critics, appearing from the 1960s onwards, who address the minutiae of women's writing. Ellen Moers's Literary Women is particularly relevant here, as it appreciates the integral worth of female-authored texts whilst also establishing the connectedness of women's writing across historical and generic boundaries. Moers provides justification for retrieving the 'lost' works of marginalised, seemingly mundane women writers, by arguing that this status as unworthy results from prejudices in the dominant discourse against women's experiences and styles of authorship. Moers draws upon Gertrude Stein's notion of a 'sounding board' consisting in mutual awareness and resonances between women writers, in order to define the nineteenth-century publishing scene.²⁸ For Moers, the female tradition is formed not of overtly feminist rejections of patriarchy alone, but rather of 'many voices, of different rhythms, pitches, and timbres'.²⁹ Women authors, from the most successful to the least well-known, played roles in constructing this sounding board, loading it with their experiences, and creating relationships with one another. Moers advocates searching feminine narratives for interesting or experimental instances of imagery and theme. Isobel Grundy participates in a similar project to recover lesser-known female-authored fiction, as the comment at the beginning of this chapter implies. Grundy argues that many works that appear minor today owe this status to the bias of existing notions of history and literary worth. She comments that, for the feminist literary critic, 'despite the glamour of the individual find, the individual reprint, the really significant point is the rediscovery of women's writing as a whole. The really significant issue just now is the state of that overall historical process'.³⁰ If the aim of a study is not to examine large-scale occurrences, but rather to uncover female voices and experiences of communities of the past, then minority viewpoints and achievements appear newly important.

²⁸ Moers, p. 43.

²⁹ Moers, p. 65.

³⁰ Grundy, p. 181.

Critics such as Moers and Grundy offer broad justification for retrieving a genre such as that of the Moral-Domestic novel. In terms of the way in which we should interpret the themes and plots of the genre, further critics are helpful, because they discuss the nature of domesticity and Christianity, two key aspects of the movement, more specifically. The historians Kathryn Gleadle and Sarah Richardson are useful in regard to this point.³¹ In their introduction to Women in British Politics, 1760-1860. The Power of the Petticoat, Gleadle and Richardson state that there was a discursive emphasis on female domesticity in nineteenth-century Britain, but argue that, rather than being an imprisoning discourse, as we might at first imagine, it encouraged women to live productive lives by cultivating female pride and confidence. Given the limitations imposed within anxious, post-Revolutionary Britain, domesticity could be empowering for women, largely because of its links to nationalism. Harriet Guest is another critic who takes account of the pressures placed upon women by the cultural climate in which they lived, and suggests that they may have appropriated, rather than grown resigned to, the roles and meanings that they could not evade. Guest's Small Change prioritises the minutiae of private life, and recognises that domesticity and religion could cut across the gendered division of the public and private spheres. She states that 'femininity may seem of small significance in some of the major transactions of cultural change, but it is always part of what gives those transactions current value'.³² It is within this framework that Guest proposes an unlikely relationship between Mary Wollstonecraft and Hannah More. Domesticity and Evangelicalism offered More the kind of supervisory, overseeing role of which Wollstonecraft may have approved. Both More and Wollstonecraft also rejected extreme delicacy and sensibility in women, which they viewed as

³¹ Women in British Politics, 1760-1860 The Power of the Petticoat, ed. by Kathryn Gleadle and Sarah Richardson (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), pp. 1-18.

³² Guest, p. 2.

degrading to the female intellect.³³ Writing about domestic life allowed women to contest the grounds of wealth and beauty on which they were often evaluated, as their abilities as household managers and carers proved their possession of greater attributes. For Guest, there is certainly duality in women's adherence to domestic orthodoxy.

The theories and ideas discussed here provide the tools with which the politics of moral and domestic fictions, produced by women in nineteenth-century Britain, might be interpreted. Yet Moral-Domestic writing, 1820-1834, remains to be recognised as a genre worthy of this task. Indeed, in Desire and Domestic Fiction Nancy Armstrong writes that it 'is significant that few, if any, major domestic novelists appeared during the 1820s and 1830s'.³⁴ Whilst the current project makes use of certain of Armstrong's views, particularly regarding the facilitating nature of the domestic voice for women, it also aims to counter the claim above. Moral-Domestic fiction represented a key and influential element of the publishing scene in the 1820s and 30s, whose novelists were in fact 'major' in a number of ways.

Introducing Moral-Domestic Fiction

The approaches outlined above, and the ways in which they relate to one another, create a theoretical space in which lesser-known, female-authored fictions of the nineteenth-century literary marketplace may be appreciated. Moral-Domestic fiction was a dominant element of this publishing scene, originating with Hannah More in 1808, and flourishing throughout the 1810s. The Moral-Domestic movement entered its most colourful phase in the 1820s, however, and this decade represents the central focus of this thesis. A number of important

³³ Guest, pp. 275-77.

³⁴ Nancy Armstrong, Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 162-63.

changes occurred in the 1820s, which enabled the Moral-Domestic genre to fracture and diversify from its point of inception. At this time, the discourse around fiction continued to direct hostility towards the female novelist owing to her public role. As a result, Moral-Domestic fiction remained a popular choice for female writers, who retained the serious themes with which the genre had previously gained respectability. Yet whilst Moral-Domestic fiction continued to be one of the few styles in which a woman could write without compromising her respectability, the tropes of the genre had become somewhat hackneyed by 1820, and required fresh innovations if they were to avoid being discarded as formulaic trash. The need for creativity was all the more pressing from this decade onwards due to the intensified competition brought about by male novelists, who appeared increasingly to invade this female-dominated sphere. The effect wrought upon the female-authored novel by Scott and his imitators is complex, being a matter of both a negative 'edging out' and a more positive liberation.

As a result of the need to negotiate this climate, Moral-Domestic fictions of the 1820s and 1830s contain themes, characters, and tropes of complex meanings. Seemingly conservative features of the genre, such as the depiction of stable families and the inclusion of female mentor figures, may be seen to make inroads into the novel, on formal as well as thematic levels. The proceeding chapters elucidate this point by dividing the Moral-Domestic movement in terms of its key contributors and sub-genres. Certain Moral-Domestic texts that evade these categories, however, are nonetheless interesting as examples of the genre's anti-radical feminism. These texts will be discussed here, with a view firstly to expressing their worth, and secondly to introducing the style and objects of analysis by which the following chapters will be governed. Across a range of Moral-Domestic fictions, particular images and formal elements exhibit a subtle form of revisionism, which illuminates the context in which

the genre's contributors worked, and signals their developing relationship with the novel. The preface is one such revealing element of Moral-Domestic writing.

Always an important space in female-authored fiction, the preface reveals the persona with which the writer confronts the reader and critic at any given time. In the late-Romantic period, the female-authored preface tends to exemplify the pressures placed upon women to avoid radical associations. As Kathryn Gleadle comments,

even the most successful female writers had to pick their way through a complex maze of gendered assumptions. Social convention meant that women frequently felt obliged to insist that they did not write for money. Many female writers chose to adopt male pseudonyms because of the widespread bias as to the intellectual and artistic capabilities of women.³⁵

Many Moral-Domestic prefaces of the 1820s assert humble, apologetic voices. This suggests that their writers needed to avoid critical censure, which supports the point being made in the quotation above. Didactic prefaces can also have sub-texts, however, which foreshadow the quiet form of revisionism at work in Moral-Domestic tales. For example, in stating an educational purpose, the woman writer might seem to have rendered herself invisible, subordinating her creativity in instructional writing. Yet this educating voice also lent her authority. In a tense climate, in which overtly assertive authors would have been silenced, the educational and moral women writers were able to present strong opinions. This duplicity suggests that, despite their proclaimed difference from their radical forbears, Moral-Domestic writers existed in a relationship of continuity with feminist authors, including the bold Mary Hays, because both sought to maintain a public voice for the female thinker.

Miss Driscoll's preface to Nice Distinctions: A Tale (1820) illustrates the way in which the Moral-Domestic genre could confuse the distinction between conservative and radical representations.³⁶ The tale of Nice Distinctions confirms moral norms; its narrator

³⁵ Gleadle, p. 5.

³⁶ Miss Driscoll, Nice Distinctions: A Tale (London: Longman, 1820; CME 3-628-48223-2), pp. i-vii.

chastises the non-religious Courtneys, whilst praising the admirable, Evangelical Vernons. The heroine, Caroline Vernon, also recalls Moral-Domestic protagonists of the 1810s when she is disappointed in her first love, and has to learn to prefer a wise but certainly less exciting man. In her preface we see that this adherence to domestic, moral scenes enables Driscoll to defend the novel as a feminine sphere. Driscoll's preface, dated 30 September 1819, may be seen to comment on the increased number of male novelists in the period in a manner expressive of anti-radical feminism. It is dedicated to 'Jedediah Cleishbotham', the pseudonym of Walter Scott, and in it Driscoll playfully undermines newly prominent male writers. Adopting a bold, humorous voice, that is at odds with her retreating, apologetic heroine, Driscoll states that, despite his celebrity, Scott may feel intimidated by her own genius. She offers him a relationship of fraternity, which suggests, through its implication of brotherhood, that whilst men might gain equality with women writers, they cannot supersede them.

Such prefaces as Driscoll's anticipate the complexity of the Moral-Domestic tale's content. Within Moral-Domestic texts, stock characters and tropes can appear formulaic and conservative. Yet a closer inspection reveals more intriguing meanings. The interesting career of Elizabeth Lester, who does not correspond to any particular sub-genre discussed later in this thesis, is significant here.³⁷ Lester maintained a career of some longevity across the 1810s and 1820s. She can therefore function as a gauge to some of the ways in which the genre changed between its heyday and its decade of diversity.³⁸ Additionally, Lester exemplifies the unexpected freedoms afforded by Moral-Domestic affiliation in the 1820s. She produced

³⁷ Elizabeth Lester is important for her contributions to the Moral-Domestic genre, yet as Peter Garside has outlined, she is also interesting in that her career illustrates the difficulty that can be encountered when we attempt to unravel the authorship of novels in a period in which many female authors wrote anonymously. See Peter Garside, 'Mrs Ross and Elizabeth B. Lester. New Attributions', *Cardiff Corvey*, Issue 2, http://www.cf.ac.uk/encap/corvey/articles/cc02_n02.html.

³⁸ Only one other Moral-Domestic writer, Barbara Hofland, was prolific enough across the 1810s and 1820s to perform this representative function. Hofland's work is the topic of Chapter Two.

seven texts between the years 1817 and 1825. These are: The Bachelor and the Married Man, or the Equilibrium of the “Balance of Comfort” (1817), The Quakers: A Tale (1817), The Physiognomist. A Novel (1818), Hesitation; or, To Marry, or, Not to Marry? (1819), Tales of the Imagination (1820), The Woman of Genius (1821), and Fire-Side Scenes (1825). In one of her early works, The Quakers, Lester adheres fairly strictly to Moral-Domestic norms.³⁹ This text opens with a young Quaker girl, Kezia Brooks, who shows dissatisfaction with her life, and is tempted into dissipation by male admiration. The tale warns against vanity, and stresses the value of a religious upbringing. The Quakers fits in with the Moral-Domestic mainstream of the 1810s, mirroring its tract-like tone. In keeping with the trend towards diversity manifest in the genre as it moves into the 1820s, however, Lester’s later work, The Woman of Genius (1821), depicts a more unusual female protagonist.⁴⁰ Edith Avondale is a virtuous heroine who endures adversity, and who strives to retain her moral standards despite the dubious example set by her friends in the fashionable world. Yet the intrigue of Woman of Genius centres on the revelation that Edith is the true artist behind a number of philosophical and fictional works, for which her patron has been taking credit. Within this framework, Edith recalls the exceptional heroine of Gertrude de Stael’s Corrine (1807). The Moral-Domestic plot with which she is fused, however, renders this somewhat radical representation acceptable. Indeed, the narrator’s orthodox view that Edith deserves contentment because she is a good Christian facilitates the more daring claim that this heroine also warrants respect because she is a ‘woman of genius’. Lester’s heroine asks ‘because I am dependent, must I necessarily sacrifice that delicacy, those feelings, which the woman of modesty and genius equally cherishes?’ (Woman of Genius, vol. 1, p. 51). In sanctioning a

³⁹ Elizabeth Lester, The Quakers: A Tale (London: Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1817; CME 3-628-48038-8).

⁴⁰ Elizabeth Lester, The Woman of Genius (London: Longman, 1821; CME 3-628-48975-X). All references are to this edition, and are given in the text.

woman to be intellectual, this novel shows that the presence of established and respected Moral-Domestic novelistic features, such as that of the persecuted, isolated heroine, could enable a text of the 1820s to represent an empowered female role.

Further useful in introducing the anti-radical feminism of the Moral-Domestic genre is one of its most frequently recurring tropes: the figure of the happy old maid. In Moral-Domestic fictions, the narrator often focuses upon mature, single women, whose representation marks an expansion of the kinds of protagonists depicted in existing fictional styles. Whereas romantic and Gothic styles, as well as Moral-Domestic texts of the 1810s, tend to depict women in love, many Moral-Domestic writers of the 1820s presented spinsters existing happily without men. Their depiction of this form of womanhood suggests that, far from limiting women's lifestyles, Moral-Domestic writers could depict their enlargement. Indeed, Olivia More's The Welsh Cottage (1820) re-works feminine roles whilst retaining propriety.⁴¹ This is a novel of rural nostalgia, which celebrates a stable, Christian version of Britain. More's young heroine, Eliza, looks forward to courtship and romance, but in early discussions with her mother she expresses concerns regarding the female condition. She is subsequently curious about the single life, and the example set by another female character, Miss Owen, a middle-aged spinster living in Wales. Whilst the story follows the heroine's changing tastes and growing virtue, one of the most interesting protagonists present is this single woman. She is arguably the most content female in the tale, despite being neither a wife nor a mother. Owing to her Christian philanthropy, and her observation of societal norms, the spinster of The Welsh Cottage is beyond the suspicion of others. The radical nature of this aspect of More's text is evident in the fact that many female as well as male writers of the period felt threatened by old maids. Jemima Layton's Hulne Abbey (1820), for

⁴¹ Olivia More, The Welsh Cottage (Wellington, Salop: F. Houlston and Son, 1820; CME 3-628-48883-4). All further references are to edition and are given in the text.

example, chastises single women, implying that they posed a threat to the family, which in turn risked the British society of which it was the cornerstone.⁴² The following description of old maids reveals this attitude:

Destruction and unhappiness are in their ways. Envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness, dwell upon their lips [...] because the worm of discontent eternally gnaws their heart, they wish no one to feel happy; because their persons are bad, the handsome are denounced as wicked [...] Old maids, if they will not purify their hearts and cleanse their tongues from defamation, should share the fate of ferrets, and have their mouths sewed up. (Hulne Abbey, vol. 1, pp. 304-5)

In this denigration of spinsters, Hulne Abbey accords with male needs, implying that a respectable, useful woman must marry. In contrast to this delineation, More's old maid is far from bitter, and actually enjoys independence. In her preface More states that although 'the term old maid implies a malicious, insignificant being, devoted to cards and scandal, to frivolity and ill nature', the 'accurate observer of life and manners cannot adopt this vulgar, unjust, and undistinguishing sentiment' (The Welsh Cottage, pp. v-vi). A comparison between The Welsh Cottage and Hulne Abbey reveals that the Moral-Domestic context enabled More to create an approved spinster, who presents the possibility of a female-centred social organisation.

The strong prefaces, intellectual heroines, and happy old maids discussed above reveal that there is more to the seemingly conservative commonplaces of the Moral-Domestic genre than a cursory glance would suggest, as Moral-Domestic affiliation enabled the proposal of alternative messages. It is conceivable from this point that, in terms of the approaches to literary and historical transmission outlined previously, the Moral-Domestic movement could have influenced readers and future writers in ways that illuminate our understanding of a range of issues, from the way in which women negotiated their cultural position, to the origins

⁴² Jemima Layton, Hulne Abbey (London: William Fearman, 1820; CME 3-628-47972-X). All further references are to this edition and are given in the text.

of various Victorian writers. Only a thorough examination of the Moral-Domestic genre's most prominent themes and contributors can respond to this possibility. The following three chapters trace the development of the Moral-Domestic genre, looking at the impact that it had upon different aspects of its environment. Chapter II introduces the first object of study, Barbara Hofland. Despite her currently marginal status, this writer was extremely prolific, successful, and creative. Hofland produced Moral-Domestic works from the earliest years of the movement's appearance to its denouement, meaning that she can assist in a chronological delineation of the genre. Yet Hofland's retrieval also represents a substantial addition to the female tradition defined by Ellen Moers, as her works and biography are remarkable in their own right.

The third and fourth chapters of the thesis deal with two sub-genres into which Moral-Domestic fiction fractured in the 1820s, and in which many writers were involved. Dealing with the post-Austenian sub-genre, which had its heyday in the mid-1820s, Chapter III incorporates some of the Moral-Domestic genre's most skilled and ambiguous productions. Typically, post-Austenian texts share Jane Austen's satire on gossip, snobbery, and social climbers, and are concerned with courtship, companionship, and the marriage market. These fictions sometimes paraphrase sections of Austen's novels, and reproduce key, recognisable scenes. In doing so, they support the notion that Austen was a respected and fairly well-known novelist, who picked up on concerns that were relevant to many writers and readers. The post-Austenians' key characteristic, however, is their extension of the boundaries of Austen's novels. Marriage, for example, is placed at the beginning or in the middle of the post-Austenian text, as opposed to constituting the 'happy ending' in which the reader is expected to invest hope. This has dramatic consequences for the work at hand. In Mary Ann Kelty's post-Austenian tale Osmond (1822), for example, the heroine's marriage proves to be

less than satisfactory, which suggests a critique of the system in which women marry before fully knowing their suitors. This portrayal of trial and unhappiness renders the novel intriguing; Kelty delves into complex psychological states, such as despair and depression, whose presence adds sophistication to the narrative.

Chapter IV focuses upon a body of Moral-Domestic texts concerned with religious conversion. The tales of the conversion sub-genre, which peaked around 1825-6, usually portray a heroine converting from Judaism or Catholicism to Protestantism. The converting heroine is helped by a Christian mentor, often a female religious and domestic exemplar, and loses many of her existing family and friends in the process. Conversion novels might be presumed to comprise the most orthodox of Moral-Domestic sub-genres, depicting the Protestant status quo of Britain as so stable that an individual will risk identity and community in order to assimilate. Yet there is something inherently revisionist in the act of conversion, which, in keeping with the anti-radical feminism of the Moral-Domestic genre as a whole, could be sanctioned owing to the unquestionable correctness of its overt aim. After all, to convert led the heroine to reject patriarchy, in the shape of the father's religion.

There are more texts and authors in the 'Checklist' that forms the appendix of this thesis than can be given adequate space in the following chapters. The importance of intertextuality in the female literary tradition, as understood in relation to the approaches discussed above, also dictates that the many influences upon Moral-Domestic fiction, as well as the movement's impact upon surrounding and future cultures, are difficult to limit. As a result, this project is open-ended. The following examinations of Moral-Domestic writers and sub-genres aim, nonetheless, for detail, striving to gain insights into important questions relating to the status of the woman writer and the development of the Victorian novel. The

aim of this thesis is to examine the Moral-Domestic genre, and to ascertain what it meant to domesticate the novel.

II

Barbara Hofland's Moral-Domestic Career, 1809-1834

Life and Writing

It is good for me that I have been afflicted.

Barbara Hofland.¹

Barbara Hofland was one of the most prolific and familiar figures in the early nineteenth-century literary marketplace, producing over sixty works of fiction and non-fiction between the years 1793 and 1846.² Hofland's fictional output for adults was exceeded only by Sir Walter Scott's and Mary Meeke's, and belies the marginal place occupied by Hofland in current criticism.³ Tales for youth were extremely significant within Hofland's *oeuvre*. As Dennis Butts argues in his analysis of Hofland's career, The Son of a Genius; A Tale for the use of the Youth (1812) was the most popular of this writer's books, reaching a fourteenth edition in 1841, and attracting a wide readership in America.⁴ Nonetheless,

¹ Barbara Hofland, The Merchant's Widow (London: Minerva, 1814; CME 3-628-48066-3), p. 236. All further references are to this edition and are given in the text.

² Details of Hofland's novels for adults are given in The English Novel, 1777-1829: A Bibliographical Survey of Prose Fiction Published in the British Isles, ed. by Peter Garside, James Raven, and Rainer Schowlerling, 2 vols (Oxford: OUP, 2000). Dennis Butts's Mistress of Our Tears: A Literary and Bibliographical Study of Barbara Hofland (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1992) also offers a comprehensive list of this writer's productions, detailing 66 works of fiction and non-fiction by Hofland, which were published between 1805 and 1846.

³ This comparison can be calculated using the entries in The English Novel, vol. 2. Peter Garside also compares these three writers' production figures in 'The English Novel in the Romantic Era: Consolidation and Dispersal', the introduction to The English Novel, vol. 2, pp. 64-65.

⁴ Dennis Butts, Mistress of Our Tears, p. 61. Butts's study merges bibliography and biography. It is the most detailed existing study of Barbara Hofland. Other attention attracted by Hofland tends to focus upon her children's fiction, despite the varied nature of her long career. Representative of this interest is the reference

Hofland's moral tales for adults were also greatly admired, and met the demands of the literary market during the 1810s and 1820s. This has been overlooked by Butts, who argues that 'Mrs Hofland's moral tales were written for children, not for poor adults'.⁵ A closer inspection of Hofland's works contradicts this view, revealing that some of her most provocative meanings derive from adult tales. In the 'Advertisement' for The History of a Clergyman's Widow and her Young Family (1812), Hofland herself suggests that a grave, mature novelistic style, characterised by a focus upon struggling widows, had proven to be her most profitable. She writes of the 'favourable reception which THE OFFICER'S WIDOW AND HER FAMILY met with from the Public' and anticipates similar 'kind indulgence' and 'approbation' for her rendition of 'another Widow and her Family'.⁶ Additionally, Mary Russell Mitford's support of specific texts by Hofland in the 1820s implies that, in this later decade, Hofland's adult moral tales still constituted those for which she was most recognisable. In a letter to Hofland, her fellow writer asks 'is 'Moderation' out yet? I augur much from the title. It seems to me likely to be a tale in your very best way; there is undoubtedly no one who can combine so much instruction with so much heart and feeling'.⁷ Hofland's adult works certainly register amongst her most intriguing and readable. Two interconnected factors seem to have been particularly important in their production. Firstly, Hofland's *oeuvre* existed in a complex relationship with the Moral-Domestic genre, which was a dominant element of the contemporary publishing scene. Secondly, as Dennis Butts argues, Hofland's works invoked a strong

to Hofland made in Dictionary of National Biography, From the Earliest Times to 1900, ed. by Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee (London: Oxford University Press, 1921-1922), vol. 9, pp. 972-73.

⁵ Butts, p. 17.

⁶ Barbara Hofland, The History of a Clergyman's Widow and her Young Family (London: Minerva, 1812; CME 3-628-47713-1), p. 1. All further references are to this edition, and are given in the text.

⁷ Letters of Mary Russell Mitford. Second Series, ed. by Henry Chorley, 2 vols (London: Bentley, 1872), vol. 1, p. 130. This comment is reproduced in British Fiction, 1800-1829. A Database of Production, Circulation and Reception, <<http://www.british-fiction.cf.ac.uk/titleDetails.asp?title=1825A041>>.

biographical basis, which affected their personal and political impetus in various ways. According to Butts, Hofland's life was one of extreme adversity, if not tragedy, in which writing served an atoning purpose. Hofland's *oeuvre* was a commercially motivated response to the husband and children that she had lost, and to the poverty that she overcame despite limited professional opportunities.

Hofland benefited from the respectability of Moral-Domestic fiction, and many of her themes and concerns are generalisable to the movement as a whole. Her upbringing and opinions also inflected the genre in turn. Fiction and life were intimately linked for women writers in the late-Romantic period; for many women, the novel represented a space in which they could negotiate the economic and cultural pressures to which they were subject. This connection is especially pronounced in the case of Hofland, as her personal life provided templates for a number of the images, events, and scenes by which her fiction is pervaded. As will become clear in the following discussions, Hofland's depiction of the family, a theme that was popular with Romantic women writers as different as Francis Burney, Amelia Opie, and Mary Wollstonecraft, was individualised by her own affinity with struggling orphans and mothers. In addition to her subject matter, Hofland's writerly practices were also influenced by her lifestyle, with financial distress adding interestingly to the self-consciousness of her narrative voice. Hofland's biography and the Moral-Domestic genre in which she participated appear inextricably linked. She invites retrieval, therefore, both as a case study in her own right, and as a gauge to the chronology of Moral-Domestic trends. Hofland sustained a career of considerable longevity, which fell into five phases. These phases may be seen to mirror, albeit not always perfectly, some of the stages through which the Moral-Domestic genre travelled. Comparable oscillations in popularity and experimentation, for example, can be discerned in relation to both Hofland and Moral-

Domestic fiction as a whole between the genre's birth around 1809, the decade of diversity in the 1820s, and its decline in the mid-1830s.

Barbara Hofland and the Moral-Domestic Heyday, 1809-1817

The 1810s saw the Moral-Domestic genre's inception and subsequent heyday, during which its contributors were at their most cautious but also their most successful. An understanding of Barbara Hofland contextualises this phenomenon. She first appears as a strong fictional presence in the 1810s, producing eleven novels for adults between 1809 and 1817, and becoming the Moral-Domestic genre's most prolific writer. In these texts, Hofland articulates some of the circumstances under which Moral-Domestic fiction broke away from existing genres. Four of Hofland's works of these years adhere to the genre's tenets very strictly, and are therefore reflective of the Moral-Domestic movement's foundational tropes and influences. The History of an Officer's Widow, and her Young Family (1809), The History of a Clergyman's Widow and her Young Family (1812), The Merchant's Widow and her Family (1814), and The Good Grandmother, and her Offspring; A Tale (1817) are stark tales of female suffering and endurance, narrated in sermonising, straightforward registers, and promoting a vital version of Christianity with which the reader is encouraged to identify. Of these tales, The Merchant's Widow and her Family is particularly suggestive of the main sources upon which the early Moral-Domestic genre drew.

Many novels of the late 1700s and early 1800s, including Mary Hays's individualistic The Memoirs of Emma Courtney (1796), and an array of allegedly frivolous Gothic texts, had attracted critical hostility owing to their implied support of social change.

In a climate in which many were repelled by the results of the French Revolution, and anxious about the potential for rebellion in Britain, women's writing and reading were the objects of scrutiny, due to their inclusion of fantasy and ideal outcomes.⁸ Early Moral-Domestic texts, such as Hannah More's Coelebs in Search of a Wife (1808), managed to gain critical approval by reacting against such writers as Hays, and the revisionism with which they were associated. Merchant's Widow typifies the widespread effects of More's turn towards novelistic seriousness; it is one of the imitative tales encouraged by Coelebs. Hofland participates in the backlash against revolutionary sympathies in her opening to this tale, for example, instilling an anti-French ethos by referring to the 'disastrous period of the French Revolution', and discussing its negative effect on the British economy (Merchant's Widow, p. 11). Yet over the course of this novel, we see that such conservative affiliation as that evinced by More, Hofland, and their contemporaries, was a shrewd choice on the part of the Moral-Domestic writer, from which she could derive authority, whilst avoiding the censure to which many women writers were subjected. Indeed, Hofland's is a tale celebrating extremes of female fortitude. Moreover, it enabled her to earn a living as a professional writer, despite the perilous nature of appearing in the public sphere in this way.

Distancing itself from the censured politics and fictions of the 1790s, Hofland's tale is concerned not with creating suspense and intrigue, but rather with conveying religious experiences occurring in the home. Merchant's Widow, for example, begins with the death

⁸ During the 1790s, Hannah More followed many male literary critics and conduct writers in defining the popular novel, represented by the female-dominated Gothic and sentimental styles, as a device that might distract the woman reader from domestic cares. In her own conduct piece, Strictures on Female Education (Oxford and New York: Woodstock Books, 1995), originally published in 1795, More asks 'Who are those ever-multiplying authors, that with unparalleled fecundity are overtaking the world with their quick-succeeding progeny? They are novel-writers. Such is the frightful facility of this species of composition that [...] the glutted imagination soon overflows with the redundance of cheap sentiment and plentiful incident' (pp. 184-5). Within this framework, More defined her own fiction, Coelebs in Search of a Wife (1808), as a new kind of novel, opposed to Revolutionary associations. Such background to the Moral-Domestic novel's appearance and success is discussed in Chapter One, pp. 7-8.

of a father figure, and is based around a series of financial hardships and moral tests, which invite the reader to contemplate the value of stoicism. The solemnity and domesticity central to this formula support the existence of a connection between the Moral-Domestic genre and early, male-authored novels such as Samuel Richardson's Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded (1740-1). Merchant's Widow follows Pamela in its investigation of the emotional sensitivity of female characters within the domestic sphere. The neglected Moral-Domestic genre might be assumed to have been stylistically inferior to Richardson's work, yet its feminine, domestic impetus actually gave some of his key concerns a lengthened examination. In addition to the ground that it shares with Richardson, Merchant's Widow centralises the family, a theme that reveals further literary debt within Moral-Domestic fiction. The family was a resonant concern in Britain throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with its stability as an institution being associated with that of the social hierarchy. Many women writers focused upon the family, theorising it variously as the cornerstone of society, or as a cause of female limitation. The large number of female authors who produced children's literature in the period substantiates this notion that the family was pivotal in women's writing. Such authors focus on the importance of children's education, and the proper roles of sons and daughters. Mary Wollstonecraft's Original Stories From Real Life (1791) is one such text.⁹ It shares parallels with Hofland's Merchant's Widow in its adoption of a harsh, punishing attitude towards those who disobey the rules of the families to which they belong. Both writers accentuate the importance of children's socialisation, whilst providing positive and negative images of motherhood. Maria Edgeworth similarly emphasises the family, in her novels as well as her children's

⁹ The Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, 7 vols, ed. by Janet Todd and Marilyn Butler, vol. 4 (London: Pickering & Chatto, 1989).

tales. Caroline Gonda interprets this focus in Reading Daughters' Fictions 1709-1834: Novels and Society from Manley to Edgeworth.¹⁰ Gonda dissects the nature of the power held by the woman as a daughter, and deals with both the lives of female writers and the ideals of the family to which their heroines adhere. Whilst Hofland would come to adapt the image of the family in her life and fiction, her concentration on this theme nonetheless reflects the early Moral-Domestic genre's participation in a long, female-centred tradition of family-oriented writing.

When viewed in the context of its continuation of Richardson's moral and educational concerns, its scrutiny of the family, and its implicit criticism of forbears such as Mary Hays, Hofland's Merchant's Widow yields insights into the unexpected intertextuality of the early Moral-Domestic genre. Moral-Domestic fiction appeared to be doing something new with fiction in the 1810s. Indeed many of its contributors, including Hannah More, claimed that this was the case; More dismissed the popular novel as it stood, and argued that her Coelebs aimed to teach rather than to entertain. In support of her statement, the increased seriousness and domesticity of her work, as well as those of her fellow Moral-Domestic writers, succeeded in creating distance from Gothic and sentimental predecessors. In so doing, Merchant's Widow is reactionary, and therefore intertextual. In order to make its conservative point, for example, the Moral-Domestic text relied upon the reader's awareness of the various genres and styles incorporated by the writer. Merchant's Widow suggests that Moral-Domestic texts of the 1810s, including More's Coelebs, were, somewhat surprisingly, fundamentally intertextual, as they existed in a state of discourse with previous literary trends. At its core, Merchant's Widow is a response, both to

¹⁰ Caroline Gonda, Reading Daughters' Fictions 1709-1834: Novels and Society from Manley to Edgeworth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Hofland's own need to make money, and to the hostility with which Revolutionary identifications were punished.

The alignment of Merchant's Widow with important factors in the birth of Moral-Domestic fiction is illuminating, but it does not constitute the sum-total of this tale's interest. Certain aspects of Merchant's Widow personalise Hofland's writing, even as they assert kinship with the broader fictional genre. These points are worth elucidating, because they demonstrate the way in which Hofland made alterations and inroads in the novel. For example, whilst Merchant's Widow is a one-volume tale with a simple title, it exchanges the conventionally young, inexperienced heroine depicted in many novels, for an older female protagonist, Mrs Daventree, who has been married and widowed. Hofland begins with a bleak northern scene, and a woman who is left poor when her husband suddenly dies. Mrs Daventree is a well-educated exemplar of domestic capability and Christian goodness. She suffers on the death of her husband, who loved his family, but saw little of them owing to his work as a merchant. In delineating Mrs Daventree's survival of her situation, Hofland draws a plot of female strength that illustrates and heightens the anti-radical feminism that, as Chapter One argued, exists in Moral-Domestic fiction. Through her orthodox role as a caring mother, Mrs Daventree becomes an alternative heroine; she unites with her children, and is eventually able to repay her husband's debts in order to create a positive future. The influence that Mrs Daventree possesses as a matriarch is greater than that held by those heroines, and inescapably dependent creatures, who are the captivating objects of men's love in courtship. Indeed whilst female power might, in a context other than that of the moral tale, have been censured, the eventual autonomy of Hofland's heroine can be represented as acceptable, because her 'higher power of self-denial and holy resolution Mrs Daventree derived from her piety, which was sincere,

humble, and efficacious' (p. 82). In this comment we see that, ultimately, it is religiosity that enables Mrs Daventree to gain a sense of validation that is non-rebellious yet potent.

More often than not, correlations between Hofland's life and her writing prove central to the more individualised, signature aspects of her tales. Butts seems to suggest this relationship, when stating that '[i]n her books Mrs Hofland did not shrink away from death; she was a realist, after all, who outlived both her husbands, and buried both her children'.¹¹ Qualifying this point, a close relationship exists between Mrs Daventree's plight in Merchant's Widow and Hofland's own life. Mrs Daventree encounters the world of work and commerce, and proves a consistent ability to help her family to recover from trauma. Likewise Hofland spent most of her childhood and early adulthood in Sheffield and Leeds, having been born in 1770, the daughter of Yorkshire manufacturer Robert Wreaks.¹² This background goes some way towards contextualising Hofland's characteristic portrayal of the English towns most affected by the onset of industrialisation, and her related interest in the effects of social mobility, both upward and downward, on the individual. Furthermore when her father died, Hofland was discarded by her mother, and sent to live with a maiden aunt. Later in life, she was also left in debt by her first husband, before being ill-treated by her second. Like Mrs Daventree, Hofland defeated such rejections and persecutions through economic independence and an appreciation of alternative networks of support. She ran her own millinery shop, for example, and advertised and sold her fictions with persistence. Shedding light on the study of Hofland, this biographical basis also illuminates the Moral-

¹¹ Butts, p. 17.

¹² These and all following biographical details, which have been used to form an account of Hofland's life and its relationship to her fictional themes and concerns, are gathered from three sources: the entries for Hofland and significant members of her family in Dictionary of National Biography, From the Earliest Times to 1900, ed. by Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee (London: Oxford University Press, 1921-1922), vol. 9, pp. 972-73; The Feminist Companion to Literature in English, ed. by Virginia Blain, Isobel Grundy, and Patricia Clements, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 530; Dennis Butts, Mistress of our Tears.

Domestic genre to which she contributed; it suggests that the movement's key events and characters in the 1810s were pertinent to women's lived experiences. Gothic fictions, for example, could be criticised for their heroines' irrelevance to contemporary women. In Merchant's Widow, in contrast, as well as in the Moral-Domestic movement as a whole, the trials depicted resonate with those undergone by writers such as Hofland. This lends the genre a certain poignancy and truth-value.

In the plot outlined above, Hofland also depicts the problems inherent in male-female relationships. This portrayal signals further emulation of Hofland's own life, whilst it also mobilises feminist potential in Merchant's Widow. In particular, the circumstances surrounding Mr Daventree's death serve to critique patriarchal assumptions regarding female weakness. We learn early in the tale that Mr Daventree had struggled economically for some time prior to his death, and that he had concealed these affairs from his wife. In keeping with pervasive views about the emotional fallibility of women, this husband believes that his wife cannot be of service in worldly matters. This is proven to be a misplaced notion, however, which also worsens the plight of those concerned. The narrator comments that 'it was an unfortunate circumstance for this tender husband that he had never seen the superior mind of his excellent lady drawn out by any of those trials in life which might have evinced her fortitude' (pp. 12-13). On Mr Daventree's unexpected death, his grieving wife must quickly familiarise herself with economics, becoming financially capable as a widow, in order to save her children from poverty. In this situation, the surviving members of the Daventree family suffer less from Mr Daventree's insolvency, than from his undervaluing of Mrs Daventree. The contemporary reader might have been familiar with this scenario, owing to its appearance in Mary Brunton's Self Control (1811),

the second biggest-selling novel of the 1810s, and a seminal Moral-Domestic text.¹³ In Self Control, a patriarchal figure ignores a woman's potential, and fails his family as a result. Laura Montreville is a far shrewder, more resourceful young woman than her father realises. When he endures pecuniary difficulties, Mr Montreville tries to conceal his problems from his daughter. She is perceptive enough to detect his impending poverty, however, and attempts to assist him by painting for money. All the while, she conceals her labours in order to protect her father's pride. Despite her position of subjection as a daughter, then, Laura possesses dignity and a certain degree of power; she quietly attempts to compensate for her father's errors, and decides whether or not to give him knowledge of her business.

The coping mechanisms exhibited by both Brunton's and Hofland's female protagonists may be drawn upon to qualify Caroline Gonda's point that, when let down by their fathers and husbands, many heroines of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century fiction reveal the dangers of limiting women's knowledge and education. With reference to writers including Jane West and Amelia Opie, Gonda states of heroines that, '[r]eluctantly forced by lack of fatherly control and guidance into acting for themselves, they show how little their upbringing, at any rate, has fitted them for independence'.¹⁴ Brunton's and Hofland's heroines offer both support and slight adaptation of this notion. The peril in which Laura Montreville and Mrs Daventree are placed indicts their status of dependence within patriarchy. Yet their response of surviving rather than being destroyed by their abandonment represents a more empowering mode of critique. Butts offers support for this point, as he discusses the undetected strengths possessed by both Hofland and many of her

¹³ Mary Brunton, Self Control (London: Longman, 1811; CME 3-628-48640-8).

¹⁴ Gonda, p. 176.

heroines.¹⁵ Laura Montreville, Mrs Daventree, and Barbara Hofland eventually cope admirably with their plights. This proves their possession of abilities, instead of vulnerabilities, which expose the injustice of their subjection.

The image of the heroine who is capable in the conventionally masculine, material sphere, and who argues a case for female reason and autonomy, has particular resonance in Merchant's Widow, because Hofland had found herself in Mrs Daventree's position. Undervalued in economic affairs by a patriarch, Hofland understood the difficulties inherent in expressing her knowledge without fully breeching her feminine role. At the age of twenty-three, Hofland left her guardian and became financially independent, running her own millinery shop. She also wrote for the Sheffield newspaper, The Iris, producing some pieces of Augustan verse, and her 'Characteristics of Leading Inhabitants of Sheffield'. Hofland gained life-long friends and a spirit of independence from her time here. In 1796, however, she gave up her shop and also her writing to marry Thomas Bradshaw Hoole, a prosperous Yorkshire businessman. The first year of this marriage was apparently happy, but when the Hooles' first child, a daughter born in 1797, died, a series of unfortunate events was triggered. Hoole struggled with financial problems, yet despite his wife's capacity for economics, proven by her activities in the millinery shop and in her writing, he was not open in sharing his problems. Like Mrs Daventree, Hofland suffered for her husband's attitude. Mr Hoole died of consumption two years after his marriage, and although he left his wife considerable property, the family home was lost owing to the failure of the firms in which he had invested. At this time Hofland was left confused as to the causes of, and potential solutions to, her debts. The ideology that legitimised Mr Hoole's and Mr Daventree's secrecy is hereby laid open to criticism. Neither Barbara

¹⁵ Butts, p. 29.

Hofland nor Mrs Daventree needed to be kept in ignorance, and both were eventually able to resolve their poverty. Indeed, Hofland worked well towards paying Hoole's debts at the time of his loss, continuing to write, and circulating collections of her poems.

Gender politics are further expressed in the dramatic symbolism that is another striking feature of Merchant's Widow. In this tale, certain theatrical scenes are drawn, in which a particular image gains metonymic value. This use of imagery may be seen to typify early Moral-Domestic authorial shrewdness; the symbols that Hofland invokes are often loaded with the kind of revisionist potential that might, if stated openly, have attracted censure. Two prominent scenes illustrate the point. The first is that in which Mr Daventree dies. Here the male corpse takes on complex meaning, owing to its positioning in relation to the home, and eventually contributes to Hofland's critique of both patriarchy and restricting notions of family life. In Merchant's Widow, the father figure's death occurs on the pathway leading up to the house from which he has, owing to his work, been absent. He collapses before passing the threshold, and his lifeless body is brought into the house in front of his family. This manipulation of Mr Daventree's body reverses the conventionally male gaze. Instead of giving details of her heroine's physicality, Hofland's narrative claims control of the male body. It does so in a way that announces male impotence. Mr Daventree's lifeless body emblematises Hofland's exclusion of men from the space of the home, and, by association, from the family group. Merchant's Widow evicts the male presence from domesticity, claiming this sphere for the mother, who grows empowered by her lack of a husband. Importantly, the home does not appear as a limiting, confining place for women in this framework. Rather, it is the safe starting point from which Mrs Daventree and her children can redefine themselves.

Hofland's rejection of patriarchal authority targets a certain kind of man. This type of man is self-important and controlling. Mrs Daventree's own son differs from this dismissed version of masculinity, however, and is subsequently allowed to inhabit the text's safe spaces. After the death of Mr Daventree, the remaining members of the family have to alter their roles in order to survive, in a process in which the son, functioning more as a comfort than as a breadwinner, is vital. In centralising family relationships in this way Hofland was, as noted above, following a long tradition of women writers. In keeping with convention, she argues the necessity and value of family life, as the Daventree children survive by uniting with one another, and by obeying their mother. Yet Hofland searches the theme of the family for alternative modes of kinship. Most notably, with the Daventree children Hofland suggests that the family need not be structured along conventional lines. Hofland's depiction of the son forms just one part of this representation. In Merchant's Widow, the son comes to play the companionate role of the father, for example, whilst Mrs Daventree's daughters earn money, as if they were male professionals. This depiction challenges an array of habitual identity roles in the family group, which in turn suggests resistance to broader social assumptions relating to age, gender, and class. Mr Daventree's impotence, and the ensuing construction of a family that functions without a patriarch, may be seen to imply that male authority need not operate in society to the degree to which it did. In further proof of the importance of her life to her work, Hofland herself experienced alternative family groups, spending much of her childhood with a maiden aunt, and later in life caring for her husband's illegitimate son. By inviting this boy, who would probably have been stigmatised in contemporary society, into the home, Hofland undermined the importance of inherited identity and status.

A second symbolic scene invoked by Hofland, which serves a similar purpose to that involving the male body, centres on female hair. Mrs Daventree's daughter, Sophia, works as a governess in order to assist her family out of poverty. She soon considers how she might gain more money, when her brother Henry needs books in order to go to university to become a doctor. In a selfless act of sisterly love, Sophia has her hair cut off and sold, leaving her bald and bleeding. In one respect, Sophia's lost hair represents support for the patriarchal marginalisation of women; Sophia is literally lessened when she is stripped of her hair, whilst a male relative enlarges his opportunities by consequence of this act. Sophia's lost hair is more feasibly understood, however, as an act of empowerment. In view of the limited options open to her, the fact that this protagonist takes advantage of her capacities is impressive; she uses the resources that she does have in order to assist the financial stability of the group to which she belongs, and upon which she relies. Sophia feels emboldened, although she regrets having angered her mother, as the following comment reveals: "I do repent, now I see I have made you angry, mother; but I *must* tell you the truth, I never was so happy in my life as I was til then, for I thought I had done a good thing." (p. 104) In cutting her hair, Sophia also takes control of one of the principle signs of her femininity, and a site of her attractiveness to men in the marriage market. Sophia removes the conventional signifier of her femininity, discrediting the notion that a woman's self and worth are written on her body. This interpretation of Sophia as rejecting the importance of female physical beauty contextualises Mrs Daventree's statement that "at sixteen, such a sacrifice to affection may almost be termed heroic" (p. 105).

As the example of Sophia illustrates, Hofland draws a series of capable, independent females in Merchant's Widow. Her point seems to be that, in the 1810s,

women could and did undertake valuable work. The fact that Hofland herself worked throughout her life, in different occupations, suggests the applicability of her working heroines to the society in which Merchant's Widow circulated. The historian Kathryn Gleadle, in British Women in the Nineteenth Century, provides support here, in her discussion of women's contribution to the British economy.¹⁶ Gleadle states that contemporary women carried out many kinds of work, both unpaid and paid, whose significance in the 1800s must not be obscured by our own, partial notions of labour. Whilst women were encouraged to view themselves, financially and intellectually, as 'relative creatures', Gleadle proposes that they nonetheless 'made a considerable contribution to the economic and domestic well-being of both their families and their communities'.¹⁷ Contextualising and supporting this point, Mrs Daventree's emotional work, her household duties, and her selling and teaching activities, are critical to her family and acquaintances. Gleadle contemplates the situations in which women became household managers and domestic carers, as well as labourers and governesses. Her idea is that not all women 'could take financial security for granted. Family bereavement or financial disasters ensured a continued pool of needy, genteel women'.¹⁸ Hofland may be seen to thematise these circumstances. As will become clear in reference to Hofland's later fictions, she sometimes depicted heroines at work in agricultural as well as factory settings.

Through works such as Merchant's Widow, many of the traits to which the Moral-Domestic genre owed its 1810s heyday come to light. This ostensibly simple, orthodox moral tale also suggests some of Hofland's more specific interests. Indeed, we have seen that both the image of the male body and the symbol of female hair are represented in

¹⁶ Kathryn Gleadle, British Women in the Nineteenth Century (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001).

¹⁷ Gleadle, p. 51.

¹⁸ Gleadle, p. 53.

Merchant's Widow in such a way that Hofland supports women's isolation from men, suggesting alternative familial, and by implication social, organisations. In utilising images rather than any explicit political manifesto, these points are made powerfully yet subtly. The second half of Hofland's early Moral-Domestic work, consisting in Says She to her Neighbour, What? (1812), Patience and Perseverance; or, The Modern Griselda (1813), Iwanowna; or, The Maid of Moscow (1813), and The Sisters (1813), yield further insights into her life, her views, and the inroads that she made in the female-authored novel. These four texts are less easy to demarcate than are the 'widow tales' of which Officer's Widow and Merchant's Widow are representative, as they diverge slightly more from the Moral-Domestic mainstream. In doing so, they reflect an undercurrent of fiction in the 1810s, which arguably anticipated the kinds of Moral-Domestic tales that would come to prominence in the 1820s. The way in which these four novels are packaged and introduced signals their difference from the Moral-Domestic texts with which they are interspersed. As indicated above, Officer's Widow and Merchant's Widow occupy the one-volume, tract-like form that was standard within the early Moral-Domestic genre. They either omit a preface, or include a humbly apologetic one, addressed to a male critic and a religious reader. Indeed the prefaces to the majority of Moral-Domestic texts claim to target the contemporary need to educate young women. Hofland's Patience and Perseverance (1813), however, is presented in a more atypical fashion. In stark contrast to prefatory norms, the preface to Patience and Perseverance states that its objective is to elevate the lapsed morality of men rather than women. It turns away from the male reviewer, in order to seek approbation from women. Hofland thanks a fellow female writer, Miss Edgeworth, and implies moreover that women have the capacity to control their husbands through moral superiority. She begins:

Whoever honours these volumes by perusal will perceive that the admirable little work of Miss Edgeworth's, entitled "*The Modern Griselda*," induced the author to attempt proving, by an example, taken from our own times, that patient forbearance, and persevering kindness, may awaken the affection, and reform the conduct of a bad husband.¹⁹

This remark encapsulates Hofland's anti-radical feminism. In keeping with convention, the status of the woman is determined by her husband in this preface. Yet more daringly, Hofland suggests that this is a role in which the wife is, in a strong sense, superior, and in which she can wield considerable power. This assertion of female authority is rendered acceptable by the fact that it does not challenge the institution of marriage as such. Nonetheless, it contains threads of the bold and sometimes sarcastic attitude that Hofland adopted towards male involvement in the novel. In the above preface, Hofland may be seen to reverse the association made by many contemporary male critics between women and children. As James Fordyce's *Sermon to Young Ladies* exemplifies, much male-authored conduct literature aimed to instruct women in a manner more fitting for the socialisation of infants.²⁰ Appropriating Fordyce's description of the way in which women's minds might be moulded, Hofland hopes that men can be altered by their wives, as her novel urges women readers to 'adopt, or persist in that line of conduct, which nurtures the germ of virtue in their husbands' (*Patience and Perseverance*, p. iii). Hofland's preface is empowering for the female writer as much as for the reader, as it asserts women's superiority both within marriage and in the sphere of writing. Hofland's limitation of her address, to include Maria Edgeworth and reading wives, simultaneously sidelines male readers and influences in regard to the sphere of the novel.

¹⁹ Barbara Hofland, *Patience and Perseverance; or, The Modern Griselda. A Domestic Tale* (London: Minerva, 1813; CME 3-628-48404-9), p. i. All further references are to this edition and are given in the text.

²⁰ James Fordyce's *Sermons to Young Women*, 3rd edn, 2 vols (London: Cadell, 1776) is one example of the conduct writing popular in the period, which assumed women's child-like need for regulation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The story told in Patience and Perseverance plays out the scenario referred to in the preface. Griselda is a sheltered but clever heroine, who marries against the advice of her wise aunt. The man of her choice does not correspond to the husband that a prudent, virtuous woman ought to seek. After an initially bad marriage, however, the heroine persuades this rake of a husband towards a good Christian life. This plot suggests that Griselda is an anti-radical but empowered protagonist. Griselda is an inexperienced heroine, for example, who rejects advice and marries badly. Yet she is proven right in many of her convictions. Despite her status as a wife, Griselda is, in a sense, independent, both in her decision to marry, and in her hard-fought battle to change her husband. This strikes an accord with Merchant's Widow; once again, Hofland's superior heroine exerts her power in a quiet manner.

Indeed, many of Hofland's heroines, throughout her *oeuvre*, fit the descriptions of Mrs Daventree and Griselda given above; they are very quick to contest poverty, but are more covert in fighting against the negative decisions made by the men in their lives. The destiny of the heroine of Patience and Perseverance, for example, is to strive constantly, and despite frequent rebuke, to elevate her husband's morality. The impression we gain from this is of a muted kind of feminism, working within, rather than against, existing perimeters. A pattern emerges, as a result, in which Hofland constructs her powerful heroines as martyrs. Further recourse to Hofland's biography clarifies this nuance. In 1810, Hofland married the struggling landscape artist Thomas Christopher Hofland, a charismatic and handsome, but temperamental man. Accounts of his frequent displays of erroneous thinking contrast starkly with the astute judgement of which Hofland's recent widowhood had proven her capable. Yet Hofland submitted to her husband's authority, assisting him in difficult situations, and hereby limiting her own work. Mr Hofland had been teaching art at

a school in Harrogate, for example, which closed in 1811. The artist then urged his wife to move to the more cosmopolitan environment of London. This upheaval was initially worthwhile for both parties; Mr Hofland received greater respect and remuneration as an artist here, and his wife befriended some of the era's prominent female writers, including Maria Edgeworth and Mary Mitford. Hofland had reservations about the durability of their work here, yet she kept quiet about her own views on the best plan by which her family might earn a stable income.

In the later 1810s and 1820s, Hofland continued to submit to a husband whom she must have known to be her inferior in strength and judgement. Mr Hofland experienced a number of professional failures at this time, owing to which he exhibited increasingly erratic and abusive behaviour. Nonetheless, Hofland agreed to a joint commission with her husband, a venture to complete a book for the Marquis of Blandford, heir to the Duke of Marlborough, celebrating his Whiteknights home near Reading. By the time of the book's completion, the eccentric Marquis was too poor to pay the Hoflands in full. Mr Hofland was rendered inactive by this failure. His wife, however, put her upset aside, and wrote prolifically in order to support the family. These experiences contextualise Hofland's depiction of wives who seem, somewhat paradoxically, to be both powerful and submissive. Hofland, like her heroines, sometimes had to conceal her knowledge and instincts in order to appease her husband. The fact that she did so serves as a reminder of the powerful ideological and actual limitations within which women of the Romantic period lived, and with reference to which their actions and expressions must always be considered. In view of how hard life was, Hofland's construction of wives who were the saviours of morally inferior men is at once realistic and empowering.

A final text of Hofland's 1810s *oeuvre* that is enlightening of her views on men, both as husbands and as novelistic contemporaries, is Says She to her Neighbour, What? In Four Volumes. By an Old-Fashioned Englishman (1812). In contrast to her spate of more conventional Moral-Domestic, one-volume texts of this decade, the present novel is an ambitious and experimental four-volume effort. It is arguably one of the most unusual texts of the 1810s, and in this respect anticipates Hofland as she would appear in 1820 and beyond. Says She focuses on Baronet Sedgewood, the bachelor and 'old-fashioned Englishman' of the title, who chronicles events in the lives of various members of his noble family. Philanthropic figures in the local community, the Sedgewoods have been plagued by idle neighbours, who spread emotionally and materially damaging rumours about them. In particular, one of the Sedgewood women is tormented until her death by gossips who question her husband's fidelity. The tale preaches that such slanderers should be reformed, through a palatable version of religious instruction. What is interesting about this fiction is that, despite its morally standard plot and message, it incorporates several formal innovations, which exhibit Hofland's outlook. The title, Says She to her Neighbour, What?, indicates self-conscious writerly practices; it refers to the act of telling, the passing on of information, and, more importantly, the prejudices that can seep into the spoken and printed mediums. This point is substantiated by the fact that, in contrast to the illusion created by a third person, omniscient narrator, the present work is narrated by one of the central characters. Hofland uses the 'old-fashioned Englishman' to relate the story. This framing device subverts the notion of straightforward conveyance, and furthermore throws doubts on the involvement of men in the sphere of the contemporary novel. In manipulating a male authorial voice, Hofland becomes a female writer, playing a man. This confusion of

gendered viewpoints ultimately protects the female space of the novel, as Hofland's male narrator proves to be a fallible story-teller.

In the opening pages of the book, the narrator states that he has read a male relative's life history, and now wants to write his own. This adoption of the male focaliser invites comparison with Hannah More's Coelebs In Search of a Wife (1808), an early and influential Evangelical novel, which is also written from a man's perspective. More's narrator may read as unwittingly humorous in some of his more pompous moments, yet he is constructed by and large as respectable and trustworthy. Hofland's narrator, in contrast, is ostentatious. He states that his history, which will follow the style of that written by his relation, will be superior to other fictions as it will contain

a fund of rational entertainment and admirable example, though utterly ungarnished by any of the various adventures, incidents, politics, metaphysics, fashions, frights, doctrines, horrors, duels, robberies, elopements, and descriptions, which either constitute or ornament other works of apparently the same character, or at least agreeing in an outside resemblance.²¹

In feeding him this self-aggrandising statement, Hofland takes control of the male mouthpiece in such a way that he may be rendered foolish. Says She thus puts forward a pejorative view of the male discourse that surrounded female-authored fiction. Ultimately, Says She is an atypical text. Its existence supports the point, which has emerged over the course of this discussion, that Hofland produced some very diverse works in the 1810s. These texts are united, however, by the themes of the widow and the alternative family, and by a confident writerly presence. They are also united by their amalgamation of biographical specificities and elements of the broader Moral-Domestic genre. Hofland's 1810s *oeuvre* reflects both the beginnings of her career and the start of the Moral-Domestic

²¹ Barbara Hofland, Says She to her Neighbour, What? (London: Minerva, 1812; CME 3-628-48530-4), pp. 1-2.

movement. The impression created by this amalgamation is of a trend towards experimentalism. In the 1820s, this undercurrent comes to fruition, for both Hofland and the genre as a whole.

Barbara Hofland and Moral-Domestic Diversity: The Early 1820s

Numerous Moral-Domestic texts appeared in the 1810s, as writers attempted to recreate the popular success of Hannah More, Mary Brunton, and indeed Barbara Hofland. Whilst this phenomenon marked the accomplishments of the genre, the prolific nature of Moral-Domestic fiction meant that its tropes and axioms risked becoming obsolete. The competition from male writers, who appeared in new numbers from 1820 onwards, also placed pressure on women to revitalise their appeal.²² As a result, whilst Moral-Domestic fiction remained a dominant element of the publishing scene in the 1820s, it entered a phase of new diversity in this decade. Social and literary mores still exerted a powerful influence on women writers in these years, demanding that they exhibit a certain degree of propriety and humility in their register, yet contributors increasingly placed existing Moral-Domestic tropes within new settings, which were framed by alternative narrative modes. As was the case with the 1810s, the 1820s can be interpreted through the works that Hofland produced at this time. This decade needs, however, to be divided into three phases. 1820-1822 is the first of these, representing a turning point that demarcates the initial years of the decade. The Moral-Domestic works circulating at this time tended to be more experimental, but less coherent, than their predecessors, as writers grew accustomed to new freedoms. The middle

²² Peter Garside has indicated that in 1815 only 6% of novels have been identified as male-authored, compared with 33% in 1825, in the introduction to *The English Novel*, vol. 2, p. 73.

years of the decade gave rise to a number of more stable Moral-Domestic sub-genres, concerned with the experience of conversion, for example, and with plots made familiar by Jane Austen. These sub-genres, which constitute the subject matter of later chapters within this thesis, are impressive for the range of protagonists that they portray. The period 1828-1829, finally, generated further striking texts, which made accomplishments by emphasising individual heroines.

In the early 1820s, Hofland produced two emblematic collections of tales, Tales of the Priory (1820) and Tales of the Manor (1822). Form constitutes these works' primary point of interest. As this varies very little between the two texts, key aspects of Tales of the Priory will be read as generalisable to Tales of the Manor. 1820 saw a turn within Moral-Domestic fiction as a whole against such earlier tales of the genre as Mary Brunton's Self Control (1811). In a similar way, the present work signals a departure for Hofland; Tales of the Priory is a very different text to Merchant's Widow (1814). In one respect, Tales of the Priory steps unproblematically into familiar Moral-Domestic territory; in similarity with Merchant's Widow, each tale in the present collection features religious and domestic exemplars, such as good mothers and parish vicars, who assist persecuted heroines in a number of situations.²³ Tales of the Priory, however, differs from other short, tract-like moral tales, being individualised by its status as a four-volume work, consisting of four different tales.²⁴ These tales could feasibly have been published separately as short, Moral-Domestic texts in the preceding decade. Yet their collective presentation involves a use of narrative structure that was innovative for two reasons. Firstly, whilst collections of tales

²³ Barbara Hofland, Tales of the Priory (London: Longman, 1820; CME 3-628-51040-6). All further references are to this edition and are given in the text.

²⁴ The tales that constitute Tales of the Priory are situated in the text as follows: 'The History of an Old Maid', vol. 1, pp. 10-217; 'Constancy; or, Domestic Trials', vol. 1, p. 218-vol. 2, p. 216; 'The Poet's Son and the Painter's Daughter', vol. 2, p. 217- vol. 3, p. 203; 'Elizabeth and her Boys; or, the Beggar's Story', vol. 3, p. 204- vol. 4.

were not uncommon in nineteenth-century British fiction, they were relatively unusual amongst moral writers, who preferred the shorter form for its identification with the religious tract. Secondly, each of the stories in Tales of the Priory is related by one of a series of surrounding characters, who represent a second fictional level in the text. Tales of the Priory's inclusion of numerous narrators is amongst its most significant attributes. These story-tellers are 'assembled at the hospitable mansion of Mr Selwyn, whose house, named The Priory', is the scene for a regular evening of story-telling (Tales of the Priory, vol. 1, p. 1). Mr and Mrs Selwyn and a number of family members, including their son, an aging aunt, and a number of young female relatives, are story-tellers in this setting. Their narrations constitute the bulk of the text, and each tale is discussed by the speakers and listeners. As a result of this structure, the story-tellers and listeners function as a meta-text in Tales of the Priory, which in a sense comprises a small-scale reproduction of the contemporary literary marketplace. Within this framework, every aspect of Tales of the Priory flags a different part of fictional discourse. The tales themselves, for example, can be viewed as a series of Romantic fictions and genres, with the Selwyns appearing as their creators and readers; these characters represent variously the male critics encircling fiction, apparently malleable readers, and, of course, novelists themselves. Hofland manipulates these mouthpieces in various ways, playing with the reader's expectations of their ages, genders, and dispositions. In doing so, she may be seen to contribute to important questions about fiction, particularly the role played by gender in reading and writing.

Fears abound in the Romantic period regarding women's reading. What is immediately notable about Tales of the Priory's preoccupation with the status of fiction is its challenge to this anxiety. As Jacqueline Pearson argues in Women's Reading in Britain, 1750-1835: A Dangerous Recreation, alarm about social change in the period often led to

hostility towards women's writing and reading.²⁵ This was partly because women were considered too weak to perceive the dangers of certain reading material. It was also, however, because the predominantly female sphere of the novel represented a blind spot within patriarchy. In response to these concerns, writers such as Eaton Stannard-Barrett, as well as female authors including Elizabeth Hamilton, wrote fictions thematising the dangers of women's unchecked reading. Stannard-Barrett's The Heroine; or, the Adventures of a Fair Romance Reader, for example, depicts a woman who interprets her life as if she were the heroine of a Romance.²⁶ She subsequently humiliates herself, and fails to fulfil her role as a daughter. The way in which Hofland characterises her narrators reverses such constructions. She challenges the popular view that women's reading required regulation. Whilst listening to the tales of the evening, the female members of the Selwyn group become critical, realistic consumers of fiction. One of the text's earliest tales, 'The History of an Old Maid', is comprised, in part, of a colourful portrayal of dissipation. Far from desiring this lifestyle, however, the Selwyn women can enjoy its delineation, whilst vowing to avoid unguarded behaviour themselves. These women contradict the notion of Quixotic female readers, and in this way they argue against the limitation of women's reading material. Hofland's representation of the female Selwyns emphasises women's capacity to consider fiction rationally. As they appreciate the differences between their lives and those of heroines, female readers may be trusted with free, independent access to knowledge.

In contrast to these sensible female readers, one of the men present at the story-telling, Mr Selwyn, appears vulnerable at points to the romantic content of fiction. This

²⁵ Jacqueline Pearson, Women's Reading in Britain 1750-1835: A Dangerous Recreation (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). See also Lucy Newlyn, Reading, Writing, and Revolution. The Anxiety of Reception (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

²⁶ Eaton Stannard-Barrett, The Heroine; or, the Adventures of a Fair Romance Reader (London: Henry Colburn, 1813).

confident, middle-aged character represents the kind of man who, like the disapproving male critic, might be expected to view moral tales as beneath his notice. Indeed, prior to beginning his own story, Mr Selwyn voices the qualities in which he believes a worthy story ought to consist, and predicts that his female listeners will prove giddy and romantic. Yet Mr Selwyn is also carried away by the emotion of his tale, frequently interrupting his own narration, and perceiving the beguiling effect of fiction. At one point, for example, ‘Mr Selwyn found that he had run into the very error he wished to avoid, the feelings of his family were all awakened, and it was necessary to suspend the story’ (vol. 1, p. 53). Through Mr Selwyn, Hofland arguably bolsters the sense of fiction as a female sphere, into which men might, despite their protestations to the contrary, like to gain entrance, but in which they are often inadequate.

The content of Tales of the Priory accords with its atypical structure. The first story in this collection comes from the memory of Mr Selwyn, mentioned above, as he narrates ‘The History of an Old Maid’. In this tale, Maria Templeman fulfils the role of a sweet-natured, sensible young heroine. Yet when she falls in love with her neighbour, Montague Thornton, her life takes a turn for the worse. She refuses to marry Montague, owing to the manipulations of her younger brother, Frank. Mr Selwyn states that “‘Frank was aware that Maria would have many admirers, and he sincerely desired that she should not marry; she was necessary to him; he had accustomed himself to lean upon her in all emergencies’” (vol. 1, p. 114). Montague subsequently disappears, and marries another woman, whilst Maria resigns herself to a single life with Frank. The latter grows extremely dissipated, however, moving to London, and rashly marrying a woman of extravagant tastes and suspect virtue. He is led into debt and disgrace. Unfairly, the exemplary Maria faces danger owing to Frank’s follies, having to deal with gossips, as well as the prospect of prison. With

resilience and resourcefulness that recall Hofland's heroines of the 1810s, Maria manages to order her affairs. For a time, Maria is happy, and learns that a single life can be fulfilling and liberating. Yet a bout of melancholy follows when the deaths of Frank and her nephew force Maria to contemplate the tragedies that have characterised her life. At this time, she takes a tour of the coast of Wales, and becomes involved in the rescue of a young orphan, named Sophy, from a shipwreck. Sophy turns out to be the child of Montague Thornton, who has died. Spurred to renewed activity by the joyful responsibility of becoming a mother-figure, Maria nurses Sophy back to health, and becomes the child's guardian, with the assistance of her elder brother, who returns to Britain after years of absence in Canada.

Maria Templeman's obedience and Christianity align her with the Moral-Domestic mainstream of the 1810s. Suggesting an appropriation of Moral-Domestic staples fitting for the decade of diversity, however, is the depiction of the family in this tale. In 'The History of an Old Maid', the family provides a safety net against grief, and constitutes woman's destiny. Indeed Maria is a stable carer throughout the novel, yet prerequisite to her achievement of true femininity and a happy ending is the development of maternal abilities that occurs when she becomes Sophy's 'mother'. Although Sophy's grandfather eventually becomes her protector, the reader is informed that Maria will play a maternal role in the child's life. Despite the orthodoxy implicit in this representation, the type of family praised in this tale is alternative. As we saw with the Daventree family of Merchant's Widow (1814), Hofland suggests unconventional familial organisation through her omission of patriarchal omniscience. During the 1820s, Hofland's fictional families came to operate with yet more unusual dynamics. The family for Hofland needs to contain habitual roles, such as those of breadwinner, child, and wise elder. Yet these do not need to be filled in accordance with customary attitudes towards age and gender. In the present tale, they do

not even need to be based on blood relations. For the Templemans, the ties of mutuality and reciprocity that exist between people are more important than inherited, biological status. They can be used, moreover, to help individuals to evade poverty or misery. Hofland's image of the alternative family can therefore be viewed as having transformative implications, as Sophy's abandonment and ensuing retrieval suggest resistance to received identity and hierarchy. In this tale, Hofland prioritises necessity, kindness, and merit, and pays comparatively little attention to the rank conferred on individuals by biological belonging to a particular family. Indeed, Maria's loyalty to her blood brother Frank leads her astray, whilst her affiliation with another, non-related female offers a valuable sense of kinship. Maria makes a daughter of a virtual stranger, and in doing so becomes a fulfilled woman, without either belonging to a husband or bearing children. Caroline Gonda has argued that heroine-based novels of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries upheld the family.²⁷ Hofland's concern with the family qualifies this notion. For Hofland, the family is a critically important institution, yet it need not pivot around a male. Indeed, throughout her career, Hofland would continue to depict families lacking fathers.

A final point to note about the alternative family exemplified by Maria and Sophy in the tale above is that, with this image, Hofland's writing once again harks back to her own life. As already briefly mentioned, Hofland's widowed mother remarried in 1773, and abandoned her daughter to the permanent and sole care of a maiden aunt in Sheffield. Some of Hofland's fictional mothers, such as Mrs Daventree, can be seen to atone for Hofland's own mother's lack of responsibility. Indeed rarely, with a few harshly condemned

²⁷ Caroline Gonda, Reading Daughters' Fictions, 1709-1834: Novels and Society from Manley to Edgeworth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

exceptions, do Hofland's mothers reject their children. Viewed in light of this fact, the novel appears as a space in which Hofland could create correlatives to her experiences. Hofland also, however, used her writing to celebrate the more positive aspects of her life, which did not need such amendment. There is much to suggest, for example, that she gained a positive model from the aunt who played a significant role in raising her, and who may have suggested the possibility of female empowerment, living without men. Further suggesting her approval of alternative familial relationships, Hofland became something of an unconventional mother herself. In 1816, Hofland's second husband fathered an illegitimate son, whom Hofland took in, and treated as her own. This relationship has clear resonances with 'History of an Old Maid'; Maria brings Sophy back into society, where strict hierarchy and a pervasively negative attitude towards illegitimate children might otherwise have seen her ostracised. By accepting children other than their biological offspring, Hofland and Maria re-write the way in which familial and social roles are organised.

In terms of both content and narrator, 'Elizabeth and her Boys; or the Beggar's Story' represents Tales of the Priory's most significant vignette.²⁸ This is the final tale of the collection, and it is strikingly different from the first. 'Elizabeth and her Boys' is written and put forward by the maiden aunt, Miss Selwyn, who has been listening intently to the tales of others. Unlike her fellow story-tellers, Miss Selwyn offers her tale in manuscript form, and asks somebody else to read it aloud on her behalf. Miss Selwyn is a professional writer, and may thus be perceived as closer to Hofland's stance than are any of the text's other narrators. Supporting this idea is the fact that Miss Selwyn embodies many

²⁸ Hofland would later adapt and re-package this tale. It was published in 1833 as the single-volume fiction Elizabeth and her Three Beggar Boys (London: A. K. Newman, 1833).

qualities of the late Romantic novelist, in terms of her abilities as well as the practices upon which she draws in order to protect her propriety. Like so many women writers, for example, Miss Selwyn advances a humble self-representation, which the reader soon comes to realise masks considerable skill. In employing her nephew to narrate her tale, Miss Selwyn claims shyness, which recalls the process, familiar to Romantic women writers of various genres, in which apologetic prefaces sought male protection from censure. Miss Selwyn has no reason to doubt the quality of her work, however, as 'Elizabeth and her Boys' is by far the most accomplished and coherent tale of the collection. This suggests that such humility was by and large a pretence geared towards protecting the writer from scorn.

'Elizabeth and her Boys' is primarily a tale of working-class familial and social life, although it deals with a range of characters, and frustrates the reader's expectations regarding gender, age, class, and wealth. In this tale a whole host of organisations, surpassing the family and including businesses and communities, are revised. The opening of the tale sets this mood in place, as one woman stands up for herself against a mob. 'Elizabeth and her Boys' begins as a group of thirsty, tired labourers, working for Farmer Foresster, spot a beggar boy standing at a distance, and send him to the farmhouse for a jug of ale. When he returns with only half a jug, he is accused by the labourers of consuming it himself. They insult and cajole the boy, but he refuses to admit to any crime. Only Betty, the Elizabeth of the tale's title, believes his protestations of innocence. She is eventually proven right when Mrs Foresster appears, and admits to having only sent half a jug of ale. Betty's gesture of good will is rewarded when, later the same afternoon, she injures her hand on her sickle. The beggar boy comes to her aid, and accompanies her to her home. Betty is described at this point as a hardworking Christian, 'of great humanity, extraordinary industry, possessing much spirit and good sense, together with considerable

patience and perseverance; the former she inherited from nature, the latter were ingrafted by religion' (vol. 3, p. 210). Hofland's praise of an ethic of hard-work and Christianity is clear in this representation, as is a more radical sympathy for the socially marginalised; Betty is to be commended for having stood up for the beggar boy.

The boy soon shows himself to be worthy of Betty's protection and trust, in a portrayal through which social class hierarchy is tacitly questioned. On the way to Betty's home, the boy provides a moving account of his sad trials, in the inset story of William Warren, 'our helpless, but not worthless vagabond' (vol. 3, p. 220). In this story William Warren describes the way in which he managed the death of his father, who had fought and died in the American wars. William was very young at the time of this event, as was his sister, and their grieving mother found herself in a state of financial hardship and relative friendlessness. Mrs Warren decided to return, with her children, to her native England, in search of her home village and the hope of parochial aid. On arriving in England, however, the Warrens were soon reduced to begging from door to door. William remembers with pain both the common rejection of his pleas and the mortification of their occasional success. Life grew yet worse when Mrs Warren gave up hope of reaching her home parish, and abandoned her family. Mrs Warren is one of very few mothers in Hofland's *oeuvre* who reject their children. Whilst Hofland usually expresses great sympathy for women placed under pressure, she also praises networks of communal assistance and unity. By turning her back on this system, Mrs Warren invites the narrator's disapproval. She is shunned in the text, with the result that we learn little more of her fate.

The village in which Mrs Warren deserts her children is bitterly poor. As no family in this village is either willing or wealthy enough to take the children in, they are sent to a nearby workhouse, which is overseen by a wicked, greedy man named Mr Gunner. The

workhouse is drawn, in highly visual scenes, as an unremittingly miserable place. The narrator states that '[i]n consequence of Mr. Gunner's management, the abode of poverty was rendered also that of misery and vice, as his niggardly hand was against every inhabitant, so were theirs against him' (vol. 3, p. 237). Thankfully, after some time here Betsey (William's younger sister) and William manage to distinguish themselves in Gunner's eyes; Betsey is an excellent spinner, and William is renowned for his honesty. As a result, Betsey gains work at a cotton manufactory, before being consigned to a local lady, whilst William is assigned over to a tanner, named Mr Hardy. Although grateful for his position, William soon finds Mr Hardy's demands untenable. For visiting his sick sister, for example, William receives disproportionate punishment; Hardy 'gave William two or three smart lashes with the whip', before threatening to send him to sea (vol. 3, p. 256). William cannot contemplate leaving the country in which his sister is resident, and runs away. He roamed penniless and friendless through Lancashire and into Yorkshire, until the present day, which has brought him to Betty's cornfield. On hearing this stirring narrative, Betty invites the endearing beggar boy to spend the evening with her, although her home is a 'lowly dwelling' (vol. 3, p. 268), and she and her husband Joseph Allen only have meagre food. William continues to live with the Allens for some time, and the couple grow extremely fond of him, particularly when William proves his abilities, and gains several jobs in succession. Knowing the value of small pleasures in a hard life, William uses his earnings to elevate the situation of his friends, by buying tea for Betty and tobacco for Joseph. For a time, he is an excellent brick maker, despite his youth and lack of experience, before becoming an errand boy for a member of the local gentry, who gives him and the Allens a pig and some chickens.

In response to the Allens' change in fortunes, the locals grow jealous, and at the peak of their bitterness contrive to have William turned out of the village. Forced to start again, in what has become a string of misfortunes, William manages to evade the lowly position that appears to be his destiny. Owing to his personal qualities, he attracts the notice of some wealthy people, from whom he gains a suit of smart clothes and a glowing reference. With this help, he procures a job in service to Mr Thorncliffe. Thorncliffe experiences financial hardships of such severity that he is deserted by the majority of his servants. William remains loyal to his errant master, however, assisting him in the rebuilding of his business. After many years of hard work, during which time he has proven his intelligence and tenacity, William becomes a partner in Thorncliffe's business, which is renamed 'Warren and Thorncliffe Manufacturers'. In a vindicating yet wholly Christian conclusion, William returns to his old enemy, Mr Hardy, who is forced to realise his previous error in undervaluing his servant. He is forgiven by William, who becomes his business associate. The ending of this tale is a happy one, in which past grievances are resolved. William is reunited with his sister, and also marries Mary Allen, Joseph's daughter from a previous marriage. Finally, Betty and Joseph resolve to continue to support beggar children.

There are many interesting themes in the story of William Warren's life, not least that of the alternative family. Indeed, this tale contains Hofland's most extreme imagining of the unusual relations that can exist between women and their offspring. By agreeing to take in a number of beggars, Betty uses the family, often invoked as a conservative image in fiction, in a way that literally challenges the social order. Indeed, through Betty's support, a beggar becomes a rich, influential man. Betty herself predicted this outcome, telling her husband that

‘[w]e can do everything, Joseph, if *you* please, we can take him and make a man of him; he will soon be able to earn his own bread, he can begin to make bricks directly; and if he would get to work at the furnace with you, he could soon earn money – he might be a son and a comfort to us both.’
(vol. 3, p. 273)

In Betty’s comment, unconventional kinships appear empowering and rewarding for all concerned.

The alternative family feeds into a further intriguing aspect of ‘Elizabeth and her Boys’, however, which also becomes a problematic component: its ultimately ambiguous attitude towards the poor. Despite her clear attempts to defend the working classes, and to argue against the excessive wealth and greed of characters such as Mr Gunner and Mr Hardy, Hofland depicts the links between poverty, cruelty, and responsibility, as fraught with conflict. In ‘Elizabeth and her Boys’, for example, the villagers’ lack of sympathy for William and his sister is not pointedly condemned. This suggests that the narrator does not blame these individuals for their actions, but believes instead that they have been brutalised against the suffering of others by their own poverty. Somewhat inconsistently, however, Hofland is at pains to praise William for overcoming his trials. Despite his harsh treatment, William manages to toil in the workhouse, retaining the honesty, integrity, and agency that those around him seem to lose. Throughout the tale, William embraces responsibility, as a son, brother, and employee. He gains the ability to change his life as a result. The fact that William manages to exercise the qualities from which his aggressors are exempt poses problems for Hofland’s perspective on social class. This does not, however, necessarily indicate a failing in either Hofland’s thinking or the plot of the present work. Instead, Hofland’s difficult portrayal of social class may be seen to anticipate some of the unresolved tensions that would characterise Victorian novels. Charles Dickens’s fiction, for example, constantly dissected class identity in changing British society, implying a

connection with Hofland's concerns. Robert A. Colby's Fiction with a Purpose: Major and Minor Nineteenth-Century Novels suggests the existence of such a relationship. Colby does not consider Hofland's fiction in great detail, yet he suggests that Dickens's Oliver Twist may be viewed as the successor of Tales of Priory, as both depict the workhouse, and sympathise with the children of the poor. Colby states of 'Elizabeth and her Boys' that 'Mrs Hofland's tale for her times prepares us for Dickens's fable' of Oliver Twist.²⁹

We might expand Colby's point by noting that the 'rags to riches' story of Hofland's hero also foreshadows the protagonist of David Copperfield. Both Hofland and Dickens consider the new middle classes, and the opportunities that meritocracy gave them to rise up the social ranks. Both authors also struggle to maintain a distinction between the 'undeserving' and the 'deserving' poor. Such resonances between 'Elizabeth and her Boys' and later Victorian texts exemplify the way in which many Moral-Domestic novels of the 1820s anticipated the fiction of the proceeding decades.

Tales of the Priory exemplifies Hofland's experiences as they appeared to her at a specific stage in her life. In 1820, Hofland was fifty years old, and could reflect upon the advantages and disadvantages of the various families to which she had belonged. In Tales of The Priory, her openness to the alternative family, and to ways of bypassing male involvement in the novel, contributed to the general movement discernible in the Moral-Domestic genre as a whole in 1820 towards experimentation. In the collection above, Hofland created varied themes and scenes; her different narrators deal with male protagonists, the workhouse, failed first love, and industry, amongst other topics. Hofland's manipulation of form, however, remains the most striking feature of her work in the early

²⁹ Robert A. Colby, Fiction with a Purpose: Major and Minor Nineteenth-Century Novels (London: Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967), p. 123.

1820s. Her self-conscious play with modes of telling introduces to the text a discourse on the nature of fiction itself. Hofland's carefully chosen 'tellers', who as we have seen are provocative in their discussion of the fictions at hand, serve as a reminder of the range of meanings and interpretations to which texts can give rise. In moving on from her own efforts of the 1810s, Hofland's 1820s work christens the Moral-Domestic genre's decade of diversity.

A Break in the Story:

Barbara Hofland and Moral-Domestic Fiction in the Mid-1820s

After Tales of the Priory and Tales of the Manor, Hofland's 1820s output entered a second distinctive phase. Between 1823 and 1827, Hofland produced six fictions for adults, which were packaged simply; these are one-volume texts, introduced by simple, one-word titles, with the attached sub-title of 'Tale'. Each of these works is geared towards the illustration of a different, Evangelically inflected virtue, to which the title usually refers. One such work, for example, draws and defends 'self-denial', whilst another puts the quality of 'moderation' to practice. Hofland's mid-1820s spate of Moral-Domestic tales is united by a stock plot. Typically, this plot involves a Christian heroine, who undergoes a series of trials, before emerging victorious. What is interesting about these works is that, owing to their likeness with one another, they give a somewhat outmoded impression. This is surprising, given the innovations that Hofland had recently made in the sphere of the female-authored novel with her works Tales of The Priory (1820) and Tales of the Manor (1822). In the early 1820s, Hofland dealt increasingly with socially marginalised figures,

such as widows, single women, and orphans, and in this way reflected the broader trend in Moral-Domestic fiction towards diversity. In her mid-1820s tales, in contrast, Hofland seems to revert to a more conventional heroine, analysing the lives and fates of young, beautiful women. Owing to the simplicity of these works, the relationship between Hofland's *oeuvre* and its parallel Moral-Domestic stage is more ambiguous than was the case in the two phases outlined above. Generally, the mid-1820s Moral-Domestic genre saw a continuation of the trend towards experimentation begun in the early 1820s. Conversion writers diversified into the realms of history and politics in these middling years, for example, whilst post-Austenian novelists indicted the limiting nature of marriage for women. When viewed against such texts, Hofland's mid-1820s tales are undeniably 'safe', which seems odd, given that she was erstwhile at the forefront of the genre.

Once again, reference to Hofland's personal life contextualises her fictional choices. In the mid-1820s, Hofland experienced one of her most financially testing times. This may have encouraged a regression in her authorial boldness, as the need to produce her fictions more quickly and profitably than before attracted Hofland to mass writing. In order to earn a steady, reliable income, Hofland may be seen to have taken the quickest route to commercial success. Less risky than her collections, Hofland's mid-1820s works were more likely to find a publisher, being overtly moral, omniscient narratives. Another consideration is that the mid-1820s represented a personally tiring period of Hofland's life as well. Whilst her first husband left her poor, Hofland never suffered more than under the temperament of her second husband. Throughout the 1810s and 1820s, Christopher Hofland required that his wife compensate for his financial losses, as his melancholy and anger rendered him ineffective. As a result, the works that Hofland produced in the mid-1820s evince a narrative voice that is much more hurried than that mobilising Tales of The

Priory. The narrator of the present tales expects a great deal less fortitude from her heroines; Hofland puts her protagonists through fewer trials in the 1820s, as though she herself was weary of struggle. Hofland's mid-1820s *oeuvre*, then, prioritises the most commercially viable trends and traits of Moral-Domestic fiction. This meant a reversion to the genre as it appeared in the 1810s, rather than a maintenance of the more detailed, varied works by which the movement was characterised in the 1820s. Hofland's relationship with her fellow Moral-Domestic writers is complex in the mid-1820s. It will be useful when analysing Hofland's works at this time, therefore, to make reference to other Moral-Domestic works appearing concurrently. This will elucidate the similarities and differences between Hofland and the Moral-Domestic genre as a whole in its third phase.

Integrity (1823) is the first of Hofland's mid-1820s group of tales.³⁰ Following her initially experimental works of the 1820s, Integrity marks a seemingly backwards move for the writer. Integrity is conventional in its structure, opening with a plight and closing with a happy resolution, and it is related by an omniscient, unwavering narrator. Thematically, there is conservatism and little diversity in this work. 'Integrity' is itself a recognisably Evangelical quality, for example, referring to the need to practice vital faith, and reinforcing the emphasis prominent in the Moral-Domestic genre of the 1810s towards encouraging qualities in the heroine that might be construed as quietening, or even oppressive. Emily Shelburne is a good but sometimes tormented heroine, who is interested in education, and who is depicted as she learns domestic economy and the importance of monitoring her own behaviour. Mrs Shelburne decides to remove Emily to a quiet village on the death of Mr Shelburne, 'partly because it offered extraordinary facilities for the

³⁰ Barbara Hofland, Integrity. A Tale (London: Longman, 1823; CME 3-628-47664-X). All further references are to this edition and are given in the text.

education of her daughter, combined with the retirement she courted, and partly because it was within an easy distance of an elder and much beloved sister', Mrs Hastings (Integrity, p. 9). The need for steadiness, in terms of family and upbringing, is established with this opening. Emily is guided towards a happy, Christian life by pious characters, set against a negative collection of nominally religious individuals. The question of Emily's inheritance dominates the tale, as she must seek what rightfully belongs to her, without compromising her values and friendships. Emily prizes integrity up to the end of the novel, stating finally that, with her prospective husband, she will defend 'the full value of performing a promise made to one's own heart' (p. 264). Most Moral-Domestic works of the mid-1820s presented religion as complex, being divisible into a whole range of degrees of adherence, as the conversion novel epitomises. Yet in the heroine and peripheral characters of Integrity, Hofland operates with a very straightforward understanding of religiosity, in which a character is either truly Christian, or lamentably misguided. This plainness is more aligned with Hannah More's Coelebs in Search of a Wife, which was published in 1808, than with the creativity of the 1820s.

The extent of the sea-change represented by Integrity's reversion to simple Evangelicalism can be more fully appreciated when it is contrasted with Justina; or, Religion, Pure and Undefined.³¹ Justina is an anonymously published work, which also appeared in 1823, and which captures the playfulness of the Moral-Domestic genre at this time. Justina announces itself as a 'Moral Tale', showing alliance with the respectable Moral-Domestic tradition. Yet Justina suggests a new kind of heroine for the decade of diversity, who may be viewed as troubled by the need, the very one promoted in Hofland's Integrity, to exercise self-control and regulation. Justina features an intriguing plot, which

³¹ Anon, Justina; or, Religion, Pure and Undefined (London: A. K. Newman, 1823; CME 3-628-48011-6).

is pervaded by a mood of questioning, and which undermines certain older Moral-Domestic axioms. In this text, Justina Melross has to struggle financially after her father's economic failure. She suffers persecution at the hands of a patron aunt, who tries to marry her off to a rake, yet she manages to endure her trials with religious devotion and seriousness. Whilst this heroine would reap rewards in many Romantic novels, and certainly in those of the early Moral-Domestic genre, she is disappointed in the present text, when two of her potential suitors fall in love with her lively but less moral sister. In this occurrence, the Moral-Domestic genre's defence of the persistently virtuous, self-regulating heroine, is examined; the anonymous author arguably shows, quite realistically, that a coquette can prove more attractive in the marriage market than the 'angel' heroine. In this way, Justina conflicts with Integrity, as the former text exposes the cracks that lie beneath the surface of the notion that integrity will be rewarded. In doing so, Justina treads where we might have expected Hofland to; this novel deals with the possibility that the Moral-Domestic woman may be unhappy, precisely because of the qualities owing to which she is praised. Justina leaves the reader to ponder the relationship between life and fiction, and in this way recalls the meta-textual Tales of the Priory, rather than Hofland's own latest production.

In 1824, the Moral-Domestic genre continued its pattern of diversification. This was a particularly strong year for the post-Austenian Moral-Domestic sub-genre, as Susan Edmonstone Ferrier's The Inheritance exemplifies.³² Ferrier reproduces Austen's social satire, whilst also venturing into economics in a way that anticipated aspects of Victorian fiction. Ferrier's heroine, Gertrude St Clair, is an heiress who is strongly influenced by social snobbery. She takes up her noble social status before discovering that she may be the

³² Susan Edmonstone Ferrier's The Inheritance (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1824; CME 3-628-47877-4) is discussed fully in Chapter III.

daughter of the lower class and uncouth Lewiston. Struggling with feelings of confusion, she directs her repulsion at others, and jeopardises her identity. This concern with the repercussions of social mobility anticipated Charles Dickens, amongst other Victorian writers. As will become apparent in Chapter III, Gertrude's shame on discovering her origins echoes the feelings of Pip in Great Expectations when, having climbed the social ladder, he feels embarrassed by his former family, and is disgusted on learning that his benefactor was a criminal. Post-Austenian writers such as Ferrier illustrate the innovative, forward-looking nature of Moral-Domestic fiction in the middling years of the 1820s. As a result, The Inheritance represents another Moral-Domestic text of this stage that resonates with Hofland's works of the early 1820s, but which leaves her concurrent fiction in the shade. We know that Hofland was capable of the kind of questioning typified by Ferrier, yet Hofland's 1824 text, Decision. A Tale, seems to hark back to writers of the 1810s such as Mary Brunton.³³ Decision's heroine, Maria, is left destitute, and must survive economically and personally with the help of females alone. Like Brunton's Laura Montreville in Self-Control (1811), who started painting for money, Maria overcomes her suffering through work. She is a virtuous, selfless, and hard-working protagonist.

There is, however, some hint in Hofland's mid-1820s fiction of more radical themes and views. Suggesting diversity, Maria in Decision is involved not in a refined pursuit, but rather in a typically masculine industry. Maria borrows six pounds from a female friend and determines courageously to 'immediately start business', in a venture to 'sell iron – sell it by retail in small quantities, to little manufacturers' (Decision, p. 77). The fact that Maria relies on another young woman in her venture creates a new role for female friendship in

³³ Barbara Hofland, Decision. A Tale (London: Longman, 1824; CME 3-628-47665-8). All further references are to this edition and are given in the text.

the novel. Instead of appearing as a confidante, or a sympathetic ear, Maria's female friend facilitates her entrance into industry, which in turn could lead to her independence. The heroine also asks boldly 'who knows how well I might do?' in relation to her potential income (p. 77). The suggestion in this question is that multiple opportunities might be opened up to the heroine if she encroaches on the male world of work. In this way, Maria's ambition and industry mark a progression from Laura Montreville. In Self-Control, the heroine gains monetary reward owing to a suitor's admiration, as his desire leads him to purchase the fruits of Laura's labour. Maria, in contrast, is successful in her own right. She is decisive, and wants to be considered as the professional equal of certain men. By the end of the text, Maria has also declined two proposals of marriage, preferring instead to live with her aging mother. Decision reveals, then, that even within her most safe fictional phase, Hofland was capable of some surprises. Indeed, Butts refers to Decision as a remarkable tale, which comes close to feminism in its portrayal of a prosperous, autonomous young woman.³⁴

Another tale in Hofland's mid-1820s spate, however, testifies to the generally conventional nature of her work at this time. Like Decision, Moderation. A Tale (1825) does invoke certain atypical themes, yet these are not centralised to the degree that they are in Hofland's earlier works.³⁵ This is a straightforwardly moral tale, which is comparatively unchallenging at the level of content. Moderation is set in the home of the Carysford sisters, Harriet, Emma, and Sophia. Sophia's piety is so excessive that she cannot relate to those in need, whilst Harriet is consumed by her enthusiasm for fashion. Existing between these extremities, Emma regulates her feelings and behaviour. Her domestic skills and economy

³⁴ Butts, p. 34.

³⁵ Barbara Hofland, Moderation. A Tale (London: Longman, 1825; Corvey CME 3-628-47662-3).

avoid excess, and enable her to be industrious. Hofland's 1826 work, Reflection. A Tale (1826), is also a conservative text, although it contains representations of alternative familial and social organisations.³⁶ In this tale, Clara Brailsford is a simple country girl, whose Christian principles and affectionate disposition are united with a strong, self-assured character. Clara is contrasted with the Reeds, a town family influenced by the shallow Mrs Armstrong. On seeing that she has no sway with Clara, Mrs Armstrong seeks to blacken her character. At the end of the novel, however, Clara has reformed members of the Reed family, and helped to save one of their acquaintances from prison. As a result, Mrs Armstrong humbles herself before Clara. This image empowers a young, unrefined woman, and reminds the reader of the liberated female characters with which much of Hofland's fiction abounds.

The final tale of Hofland's mid-1820s *oeuvre* is Self-Denial. A Tale (1827).³⁷ Rather than deal with extremes of adversity, or with women involved in the world of work, Self-Denial depicts the concerns of fashionable individuals. Reputation is presented as being of pivotal importance in this text, as the heroine Caroline falls in love with the rich and outwardly appealing Charles Ravensworth. When this man proves to be a gambler, however, Caroline must find pleasure and contentment with the stable and truly Christian Sir Mervyn. Self-Denial represents the way in which, in the main, Hofland's works of the middle years of the 1820s differ from the direction in which Moral-Domestic fiction travelled at this time. For the Moral-Domestic genre, thematic diversity established itself in the mid-1820s, giving rise to a significant number of challenging texts and sub-genres. Somewhat surprisingly, Hofland did not take advantage of this transition. On the contrary,

³⁶ Barbara Hofland, Reflection. A Tale (London: Longman, 1826; Corvey CME 3-628-47661-5).

³⁷ Barbara Hofland, Self-Denial. A Tale (London: Longman, 1827; CME 3-628-47660-7).

her spate of one-volume, quality based works, of which Integrity is representative, manifested something of a regression. With such works, Hofland turned away from the boldness of the collections of tales that she had recently produced, and back towards a simplicity that is more consistent with the Moral-Domestic movement of the 1810s. A closer inspection suggests that the state of Hofland's personal life influenced this phenomenon. As such, a final significance of this spate of tales is that it reveals Hofland's impressive ability to alter herself and her writing, in accordance with her needs, and with respect to market pressures. When added to existing works in her *oeuvre*, this material constitutes important support for the notion of Hofland's output as changing and multifaceted.

Accomplished Diversity: Barbara Hofland's 1828-1830 Novels

The fourth of the categories into which Barbara Hofland's fictional output may be divided appears in the final years of the 1820s. This phase in Hofland's career gave rise to two novels, Katherine. A Tale (1828) and Beatrice, a Tale Founded on Facts (1829). These works remain faithful to the Moral-Domestic mainstream in plot and moral message. Their focus, however, is narrower than that apparent in any of Hofland's preceding fictional stages. In relation to Tales of the Priory (1820), we saw that Hofland's expanded range of characters signalled an increase in her experimentation as a writer. 'Elizabeth and her Boys', for example, conveys the action through William's as well as Betty's perspective, and also portrays a breadth of minor protagonists, ranging from the kindest of individuals to the cruellest. In her two fictions of the late 1820s, in contrast, Hofland adopts a limited number of characters, and restricts her sympathy to just one heroine in each text. This does

not reflect a decrease in the writer's diversity or skill, however. Rather, it reveals a broadening of her ambition. Katherine and Beatrice emphasise an individual's feelings within family and community, instead of dissecting the nature of these larger institutions. In doing so, they delve into psychological investigation, involving the reader more fully in a protagonist's emotional trials, and depicting morality as ambiguous. As a result of the way in which these texts follow their heroines from childhood to older age, they also anticipate the literary future. The Victorian novel was particularly concerned with the conflicts that existed between the individual and his or her community in the changing society of nineteenth-century Britain. In this way, Katherine and Beatrice exist in harmony with the Moral-Domestic phase with which they are chronologically connected; the genre as a whole anticipated the pre-Victorian novel at this time.

Many texts appearing around 1828 suggest the existence of a mature Moral-Domestic genre. 1828 was one of the strongest years for the conversion sub-genre of Moral-Domestic fiction, for example, which saw the publication of many accomplished works. The conversion sub-genre featured strongly from 1823, and was present up to Victoria's accession.³⁸ Texts written in this style deal with a protagonist's conversion, usually from Catholicism or Judaism, to Protestant Christianity. Conversion writers were able to portray such themes as cultural difference and psychological torment, and considered Britain's as well as Europe's past. In the early 1820s, the instigating texts of the sub-genre had to stake their territory. By consequence, they emphasised their educational, authoritative capacities to such a degree that they sometimes appeared almost text-book-like. Each year of the 1820s saw additions and improvements, however, meaning that by 1828 its historical and psychological elements were combined more coherently. Amelia

³⁸ The conversion sub-genre of Moral-Domestic fiction is the subject of Chapter IV.

Bristow, a conversion writer who had herself abandoned Judaism in order to feel at home in British, Christian society, produced a trilogy of texts, focusing upon different generations of the Lissau community of Polish Jews, during the 1820s. The latest work in this *oeuvre*, The Orphans of Lissau (1830), substantiates the notion that the ultimate years of the decade gave rise to the Moral-Domestic genre's most skilled productions. Bristow's early conversion work Sophia de Lissau (1826) uses an index page, explanatory notes, and footnotes, in order to categorise a cross section of the Jewish people. The Orphans, in contrast, involves the reader in the plight of its protagonists, finding a space in which to individualise them, whilst still defining the Jewish faith as a whole.

Hofland's late 1820s works are similar to Bristow's Orphans, in that they centralise the heroine, in what is not a simplification of the novel, as it may at first appear, but rather a complication. Katherine (1828) is a sophisticated work, which draws a sole female character across four volumes.³⁹ Over the course of the novel, this heroine experiences various intense psychological states, some of which indict the difficult positions in which she is placed in contemporary, patriarchal society. Katherine begins in a manner that is fairly typical of the Moral-Domestic novel. The Vicar of Pennington, who has lost many children over the course of his life, is overcome with grief when his wife dies, requiring that his eldest daughter, Katherine, who is twenty-four, sacrifice herself in order to care for him and her sister. In a scene reminiscent of the Gothic genre, the Vicar throws himself onto his wife's coffin, leaving his daughters shocked and concerned. An example of the symbolic scenes for which Hofland was, in relation to her 1814 text The Merchant's Widow, recognisable, this spectacle marks a reversal of the way in which qualities such as

³⁹ Barbara Hofland, Katherine. A Tale (London: A. K. Newman, 1828; CME 3-628-48004-3). All further references are to this edition and are given in the text.

emotional strength were often gendered in Romantic fiction. The Vicar might be expected to restrain his grief, for example, and to comfort his daughters. Yet instead, this male character finds that his feelings are uncontrollable; his 'firmness sunk' as 'the powers of his mind seemed to have forsaken him' (*Katherine*, vol. 1, p. 4). This episode serves to question popular distinctions between feminine excess and male self-control. The fact that Katherine is stoical in this situation anticipates the adoption of masculine strength and empowerment that she undertakes in the following stages of the text.

Katherine's trials seem at points to be never-ending, as do those of many Moral-Domestic heroines of the genre's earlier years. What is striking about the present heroine's suffering, however, is that instead of being expressed through physical punishments or external hardships, it is comprised of extremely personal, intimate, and mental torments.

The narrator's focalisation through Katherine reveals her troubled mindset in the heroine's own terms. As events unfold, we are made aware, through the relation of the heroine's thoughts, that she battles not so much with material problems, as with jealousy and guilt. These feelings stem from the fact that Katherine's lover, Walmesley, rejects her, in an unusual take on the plot of courtship and romance. Walmesley is a religious and faithful young man, for whom Katherine would appear to be the ideal partner. Yet Katherine is jilted in favour of her gay and cheerful, but less moral, sister, Sara. Katherine is described as a 'mild, gentle, and retiring girl', who 'had known sorrow; she had been the watchful nurse of her younger brothers and sisters' (vol. 1, pp. 2-3). Sara, in contrast, is 'thoughtless, and imprudent, but most devotedly attached to her sister' (vol. 1, p. 3). Whilst she maintains her composure, and continues to love her sister, Katherine feels dejected. As a kind and obedient young woman, Katherine wishes happiness for her sister. Yet confusion frequently inflects the narrator's descriptions of her. With regard to Walmesley's

increasing affection for Sara, we are informed that 'Katherine had a heart as free from any jealous feeling as perhaps any woman; and it was not towards a sister, and that too a most beloved sister, that such feelings were to be excited; and yet she could not help thinking, that for some time she had been neglected' (vol. 1, pp. 123-24). Apparently unable to attract Walmesley, Katherine is courted by an undesirable man, Mr Caldwell. Caldwell's attentions are 'flattering, but did make [Katherine] forget that they were only admitted by the neglect of Walmesley; and, under such an impression, they became extremely irksome to her' (vol. 1, p. 207). These circumstances force duplicity; Katherine must conceal her resentment from Sara, resist Caldwell, and also prevent Walmesley from discerning her heartache.

Katherine impresses the reader with a sense of a female character subjected to impossibly conflicting demands. Katherine can only contemplate her desires and needs when she is alone. She also feels unable to please those around her. With regard to her feelings for Walmesley, we learn that 'in her own chamber, these ideas had occurred to her; a blush of conscious shame mantled on her cheek; and humbled, yet indignant, she threw herself on her knees by the bed' (vol. 1, p. 210). Katherine also sheds 'bitter and agonizing tears' over her situation (vol. 1, p. 210). The indication seems to be that the demands placed upon Katherine to observe propriety lead to dishonesty: 'so long as she had imagined her secret safely locked in her own breast, she had not been sensible of the full extent of the degradation to which the indulgence of such feelings might subject her' (vol. 4, p. 190). The image of imprisonment here emphasises the restricted nature of Katherine's feminine identity, and it is typical of those by which this heroine's struggles are pervaded. Yet despite her problems, by the end of the text Katherine makes a virtuous, happy marriage to

Walmesley. This contrived resolution, however, does not distract the reader from the questions created by Katherine's potential fate as a rejected, bitter spinster.

With Katherine, Hofland shifts her emphasis away from the heroine situated in the community, and towards the heroine's experience of her subjectivity. In this way, Hofland's 1828 protagonist expands upon a tradition of troubled heroines to which Justina (1823), discussed above, and Mary Ann Kelty's Osmond (1822), a text delineated in Chapter III, contribute. The need to make a good marriage forces Katherine, Justina, and Lady Ellen of Osmond into situations in which their values and modes of conduct, which bolster Moral-Domestic ideology, prove unattractive. This results in mental anguish and a crisis for the heroines, and a challenge to the Moral-Domestic writer's own tenets. Katherine implies the possibility that the Moral-Domestic woman is not the ideal marriage partner; marriage, the state that the dominant ideology dictates as desirable for the woman, becomes the very state withheld from heroines who adhere to the dominant ideology. In this representation, Hofland seems to argue that the image of the transparently selfless Moral-Domestic angel, which she herself supported in Integrity, breaks down in nineteenth-century society, being exposed as a confining, perhaps unrealistic feminine ideal. In Katherine, then, Hofland continued a theme detectable throughout the 1820s, of a virtuous heroine whose disappointments lead to a broader textual questioning. This is a theme that would prove difficult, if not impossible, to resolve in years to come. Whilst Dennis Butts does not discuss Katherine, he refers to a connection between Hofland's analysis of feminine roles, and issues that would be contested in Victorian Britain. Butts writes that Hofland's 'simple stories of domestic life often ask questions about Family, Work and the Role of Women in ways which anticipate the later novels of Dickens, the Brontës and Mrs

Gaskell'.⁴⁰ Contextualising this notion, the disparity between the female public and private self displayed in Katherine would be picked up by numerous Victorian female novelists, suggesting a relationship between Hofland's works of the late 1820s and women writers and thinkers of the following years.

1828 was a strong fictional year for the Moral-Domestic movement, in which many of its constituent novels undertook extended psychological investigation. 1829, in contrast, was a sparse year for the genre. Nonetheless, it can be seen to further the notion that the period 1828-30 was at the pinnacle of thematic and formal improvement. Bridging the gap between the 1820s text and the pre-Victorian novel, the fictions of 1829 are transitional. Exemplifying this point is Harriet Corp's Tales Descriptive, Characteristic, and Allegorical (1829).⁴¹ Corp is relevant in the present chapter because of the parallels that she shares with Barbara Hofland. In some ways, the two can be used to contextualise one another. Corp relates to Hofland firstly in that her extremely hard life dictated when and what she would write, and secondly in that her style altered as the Moral-Domestic genre did. Corp was amongst the strictest Moral-Domestic writers of the 1810s. Whilst Tales Descriptive, Characteristic, and Allegorical (1829) retains the rigid, uncompromising Evangelicalism of these earlier years, it also contributes to the lengthened analysis of character manifest in the genre of the 1820s. Despite her ostensible conservatism, Corp's text expresses the genre's diversity, as well as revealing its openness to a range of women writers, such as herself, whose priorities could alter over time. In the preface to Tales Descriptive, Corp celebrates the changing, malleable nature of women's writing, by using a water metaphor. She comments insightfully on the collaborative nature of literary production, when arguing that

⁴⁰ Butts, p. 1.

⁴¹ Harriet Corp, Tales Characteristic, Descriptive, and Allegorical (London: Baldwin, 1829; CME 3-628-51144-5). All further references are to this edition and are given in the text.

‘one generation of books rolls like waves over another, to be in its turn overwhelmed. Readers turn with them, riding on the same waters, only changing the direction of the course’ (Tales Descriptive, pp. ii-iii). Corp’s view is that fiction is a social product, which has a broad effect on culture through its influence on the reader. In her correspondence with the Royal Literary Fund, Corp states further that writing assisted her in avoiding financial distress, suggesting that, for the moral woman writer, fiction and life infiltrated one another.⁴² Here again, she recalls Hofland. Corp produced Tales Descriptive after a twelve-year absence from the fictional marketplace. Her Royal Literary Fund letters reveal that she had pecuniary reasons for doing so, and that her moral tales provided her only money, as well as being an outlet for expression. Like Hofland, Corp at once felt committed to the tropes and themes with which she shared an affinity, and benefited from what the market demanded.

In the same year as Corp returned to the literary scene, Hofland’s Beatrice (1829) appears.⁴³ In Beatrice a farmer, George Merton, finds a young, malnourished girl at the gate of his home on a stormy night. George takes Beatrice in and adopts her, yet when he dies, the heroine is left once again to the mercy of strangers. By the end of the novel, it is discovered that Beatrice, who was stolen from her parents many years before, is of noble descent. Whilst the text’s concern with economic deprivation and its proposal of an alternative family group align it with the bulk of Hofland’s *oeuvre*, the present work shares Katherine’s minute portrayal of a fluctuating female self. Beatrice represents the problems that arise when George dies, and the heroine is left with a flawed understanding of her

⁴² For Harriet Corp’s correspondence with the Royal Literary Fund, see The Archives of the Royal Literary Fund, file number 701.

⁴³ Barbara Hofland, Beatrice, A Tale Founded on Facts (London: Longman, 1829; Corvey CME 3-628-47675-5).

origins. Beatrice struggles with her identity, lacking a definite ancestry with which to compare the different hosts upon whose charity she relies. This scenario prompts an investigation of familial identity and class-based psychology. As was the case in 'Elizabeth and Her Boys', this move anticipates the concern in much Victorian literature with the way in which changing society, and especially increased social mobility, posed problems for the stability of the self in nineteenth-century Britain. In the 1829 climate of analysis and debate, Beatrice follows certain of Hofland's earlier works, re-addressing the way in which particular characters, such as that of the old maid and the abandoned child, are sidelined in fiction.

The final stage of Hofland's 1820s career reflects a late, increasingly complex, phase for the Moral-Domestic genre as a whole, in which many of the decade of diversity's provocative themes culminate. Mary Russell Mitford seems to have recognised the quality to which this context gave rise, describing Beatrice in a letter to Hofland as 'the very best thing that you have ever written; interesting, striking, and true'.⁴⁴ Qualifying this image of Hofland's mature novel, form became polished in the Moral-Domestic genre of 1820-1830, and narrative voice gained more confidence, meaning that works such as those by Hofland anticipated literature in the 1830s and beyond. To conclude with reference once again to Katherine (1828), this is one of Hofland's most sophisticated works, which draws a sole, and quite complex, female character. In this text, Hofland works more emphatically than she had done before to make the novel a space of psychological experimentation. The disparity between Hofland and the Moral-Domestic movement, which was documented above as having appeared in the mid-1820s, thus closes in 1828. 1828-30 marks a stage of

⁴⁴ Letters of Mary Russell Mitford. Second Series, in British Fiction, 1800-1829. A Database of Production, Circulation and Reception , <<http://www.british-fiction.cf.ac.uk>>.

new skill and confidence, for Hofland and her fellow Moral-Domestic writers. For both, developments tended to manifest themselves in terms of competent, authoritative analyses of subjectivity, rather than at the level of thematic or character-type numerousness.

Concluding Moral-Domestic Trends: Barbara Hofland, 1830-1834

In the 1830s, Barbara Hofland's Moral-Domestic career tailed off. Only one of her productions, The Captives in India, a Tale; and a Widow and a Will (1834), is relevant to the discussion.⁴⁵ This text contains multiple threads of the writerly identity with which the reader has grown, owing to our familiarity with the texts of the 1810s and 1820s delineated above, to associate Hofland. The Captives is a collection of two tales, and as a result it partly recalls the packaging of Hofland's most opinionated and varied compilations, Tales of the Priory (1820) and Tales of the Manor (1822). The central characters of the present text also convey Hofland's constant concern with marginalised yet strong women. In 'The Captives in India', the longest tale, which runs to the third and final volume of this text, a young heiress returns to Britain from India, where her nearest family has been taken prisoner. Livia manages, against expectation, to exert a positive influence upon the Falkland family in Staffordshire, whose patriarch also assists in retrieving the travelling captives. The second story of the collection, the vignette 'A Widow and a Will', reiterates the writer's concern with economics, pitching inheritance against the individual's right to earn a living. Hofland's lonely heroine redeems her finances, and creates a solid home for

⁴⁵ Barbara Hofland, The Captives in India, a Tale; and a Widow and a Will (London: Richard Bentley, 1834; CME 3-628-27676-3). All further references are to this edition and are given in the text.

her dependents. We see in both of these tales something of the close proximity in which Hofland's fiction and women's lived experiences always existed. As the text's advertisement states, 'The Captives in India' draws upon the writing of Eliza Fay; Hofland describes her influence as the 'late Mrs. Fay' and her 'overland journey to India [...] which has been published in Calcutta, but has never, I believe reached England' (The Captives in India, p. i). Similarly, 'A Widow and a Will' deals with a woman whose bereavement recalls that of Hofland herself. The Captives in India thus provides a final indication of Hofland's commercial desire to secure a readership, and the interconnected nature of the woman's life and the Moral-Domestic genre.

As demonstrated above, each phase of Hofland's career was inflected by events and views emerging in her personal life. The fact that this combined literary life also mirrored the phases occurring within the Moral-Domestic mainstream, albeit not always exactly, contextualises the genre, revealing the relevance of its concerns to women's lived experience of contemporary society. The 1830s saw decreasing numbers of Moral-Domestic writers. Correspondingly, Hofland's output falls at this time. Whilst this plunge can be explained partly by reference to the decreasing presence of the fictional genre with which she was most affiliated, other factors influenced this decrease. A final look at Hofland's biography is illuminating here.

As already described, the Hoflands' marriage was unstable in the 1820s. This only spurred Barbara Hofland into writerly activity, however; she needed to write in order to earn money, and became increasingly prolific in order to do so. What encouraged the breakdown of her writing in the 1830s was Hofland's lost relationship with her son. The fact that this had such a dramatic effect on Hofland reveals that, for this writer, the mother-son connection was of greater significance than the ties that bind husband and wife. For all

the protestations regarding female self-sufficiency discernible in both her fictions and her own youthful behaviour, Hofland was ultimately dependent on her personal relationships. The son represents a uniting thread in Hofland's life and career, appearing in every Moral-Domestic phase, and testifies to the importance of this figure in the writer's adult life. Indeed, for Mrs Daventree in 1814 and Betty Allen in 1820, the son furnishes the woman's life with purpose and joy, even if he is not her child by birth. A key factor in such representations was the pleasure brought to Hofland by her only surviving, biological son, Frederick. There is evidence to suggest that Hofland's relationship with Frederick gave her stability, and helped her to take on a positive persona, enduring Christopher Hofland's unsettled temperament, whilst persistently writing during the 1820s. Frederick played the role of a confidante to Hofland, and was the pride of her life. The two were extremely close, even when Frederick took Holy Orders and became a curate. Throughout his life, this dutiful son maintained frequent visits and a close correspondence with his mother. Frederick was the template for the model figure of the son so idealised and centralised in Hofland's fiction. In 1832, however, this beloved son died. The loss of Frederick coincided with, and perhaps caused, a hiatus in Hofland's career. Hereafter, she was a minor literary figure. Her husband was struck by a fatal illness in 1843, and the writer died a year later.

This chapter has aimed to show that Barbara Hofland's Moral-Domestic career and her biography are intertwined, and that a combined approach to the two can expose some valid, erstwhile neglected, insights into the late-Romantic literary scene. Hofland's works enlighten our understanding of one of the Romantic era's most prominent fictional genres, whilst they also help us to build a picture of this woman as a significant figure in women's literary history. Hofland was drawn to the Moral-Domestic genre because it was facilitating, yet she also adapted it. Her signature traits of the happy spinster, the alternative

family, and the strong widow, were possible because of this style's approbation of an educational, religious purpose. They were also relevant to Hofland's own life, and enabled her to enunciate a resisting, critical persona. Hofland used the novel as a space in which to negotiate her experiences and her future. Her heroines remain in the reader's mind for their closeness to the writer's own persona; whereas many Moral-Domestic protagonists face their trials as young women, Hofland's heroines are often deserted wives, widows, spinsters, or grandmothers. All are particularly solid and sympathetic females, who reject, albeit in sometimes quiet ways, the stifling roles open to them.

Hofland's personal features fed not only into the subject matter of her fictions, but into their forms as well. Of particular, enduring significance in Hofland's changing Moral-Domestic career are the various inroads that she made in the structure and voice of the female-authored novel. On a basic level, as a result of her financial necessity, Hofland was self-conscious with regard to the status of the novel, expressing no delusions about its status. Her habituation to communicating her need through fiction led her, in turn, to use it to assert authority and opinions regarding the lot of the woman writer. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the 1810s novel narrated from the perspective of its male protagonist, Says She to her Neighbour, What? (1812). As noted already, Hofland skilfully manipulates a range of personas in this form, drawing attention to the opportunities presented by fiction, as well as the way in which it can be deceiving. In this reflexivity, she foreshadows writers for decades, if not centuries, to come, who would question the relationship between life and art. At the end of Says She, Hofland's own voice may be seen to emerge through the male narrator, as the following comment suggests:

To you, my dear, patient, amiable readers, who have travelled with me through four long volumes, begun in the dreary reign of winter, but finished under the cheering rays of June, I would beg leave to say, 'that the powers

of conversation admit of higher praise than communications I have just stated but sink infinitely lower, when they degenerate into malignant remarks, the far-fetched conclusions, the ungenerous suppositions, and the insurmountable propagations, which form the common basis of “says she to her neighbour.” (Says She, vol. 4, p. 333)

This remark layers Hofland’s own outlook with that of her narrator, chastising gossips, whilst also praising the kind of dialogue, existing both around fiction and between fiction and life, which is celebrated in Tales of The Priory (1820). It offers a lasting indication of the narrative complexity facilitated by the rooting of Hofland’s Moral-Domestic writing in her lived experience. Hofland’s career has discursiveness at its core. This final example of the connections between Hofland’s biography and her fiction testifies to the value of always examining literary texts in both their social and personal contexts, demonstrating that Hofland’s identity was fundamentally that of a writer.

III

The Post-Austenian Sub-Genre of Moral-Domestic Fiction

Moral-Domestic Fiction and the Female Literary Tradition

Male writers have always been able to study their craft in university or coffeehouse, group themselves into movements or coteries, search out predecessors for guidance or patronage, collaborate or fight with their contemporaries. But women through most of the nineteenth century were barred from the universities, isolated in their own homes, chaperoned in travel, painfully restricted in friendship. The personal give-and-take of the literary life was closed to them. Without it, they studied with a special closeness the works written by their own sex, and developed a sense of easy, almost rude familiarity with the women who wrote them.

Ellen Moers¹

Since the late 1960s, feminist critics have addressed the marginalised status of women within literary studies. As Catherine Belsey and Jane Moore outline in the introduction to The Feminist Reader,² writers such as Kate Millett studied various male-authored fictions for the oppressive, patriarchal assumptions by which they were pervaded.³ Somewhat differently, Elaine Showalter's influential text of 1977, A Literature of Their Own, focused on women's rather than men's writing, with a view to uncovering female experiences of society.⁴ Works including Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's The Madwoman in the Attic (1979) and Ellen Moers's Literary Women (1978) paid similar attention to female-authored

¹ Ellen Moers, Literary Women (London: The Women's Press, 1978), p. 43.

² The Feminist Reader, ed. by Catherine Belsey and Jane Moore (London: Macmillan, 1997), pp. 1-15.

³ Kate Millett, Sexual Politics (London: Hart-Davis, 1971).

⁴ Elaine Showalter, A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1977).

texts, searching them for an alternative, resisting feminine narrative.⁵ Indeed Moers offers particular justification for retrieving the 'lost' works of marginalised, seemingly mundane, women writers. As noticed in Chapter I, Moers draws upon Gertrude Stein's notion of a 'sounding board', consisting in mutual awareness and resonances between women writers, in order to define the nineteenth-century publishing scene.⁶ For Moers, the female tradition is formed not of overtly feminist rejections of patriarchy alone, but rather of 'many voices, of different rhythms, pitches, and timbres', including women authors from the most successful to the least well-known.⁷

Collectively, existing critical works such as those by Showalter and Moers provide a rationale for expanding the range of female-authored fictions that should be revisited. This invitation has been taken up in various ways in recent decades; new, accessible editions of works by writers including Mary Brunton have appeared, for example, whilst revitalised ways of reading have been applied to genres from the female Romantic Gothic to the National tale.⁸ Currently, however, there is a hiatus in this process of recovery and repossession, owing to which gaps remain in our understanding of the female literary tradition. Notably, the 1820s and 1830s appear as something of a dearth in existing critical work; the full significance of the female-authored novels that proliferated at this time is yet to be fully recognised. An increased familiarity with the key Moral-Domestic texts of this period can go a long way towards overcoming this impasse, answering several unresolved questions regarding this literary climate. As the study of Barbara Hofland has shown, the

⁵ Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: the Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Imagination* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1979).

⁶ Moers, p. 43.

⁷ Moers, p. 65.

⁸ Dale Spender's *Mothers of the Novel: 100 Good Women Writers Before Jane Austen* (London: Pandora, 1986) revived awareness of neglected works, as did new editions of novels by writers such as Ann Radcliffe, with contextualising introductions and annotated bibliographies.

Moral-Domestic genre gave rise to some prolific writers, whose individual careers enhance our understanding of the female literary tradition. Moral-Domestic fiction may be approached not only in terms of its key writers, however, but also in terms of the different sub-genres into which it divides. Separated by their prioritisation of certain themes and concerns, the two Moral-Domestic sub-genres discussed in this thesis form a valuable narrative on the experiences of women writers in the late-Romantic publishing scene. Perhaps more significantly, however, these sub-genres testify to the existence of a powerful intertextuality between women writers of the period, which illuminates both the preceding and proceeding literary contexts. One especially important forbear, Jane Austen, proved central to a body of Moral-Domestic works that were prominent in the 1820s. This post-Austenian sub-genre represents an important phase in the collaborative tradition of female writing.

Jane Austen and the Moral-Domestic Genre of the 1820s

A man would always wish to give a woman a better home than the one he takes her from; and he who can do it, where there is no doubt of her regard, must, I think, be the happiest of mortals.

Jane Austen⁹

The destiny of a woman, though it be a very unhappy one, is never completely miserable till she has made an unfortunate marriage. I became the wife of Mr Woodville, and put the final seal upon my fate.

Mary Ann Kelty¹⁰

A series of changes took place within Moral-Domestic fiction in the period 1820-1834. The large number of male writers entering the literary marketplace at this time created intense competition, which encouraged many female authors to expand their works thematically in order to attract and retain readers.¹¹ Additionally, whilst literary reviewers continued to direct a certain degree of hostility towards women writers in the 1820s, their moral expectations softened notably, rendering variations in the standard lessons taught by the Moral-Domestic novel more acceptable. The result of this heightened commercial pressure on the one hand and relaxation of moral norms on the other was that experimentation came to define the Moral-Domestic genre, although its contributors were always careful to remain within the boundaries established as respectable in the preceding decade. The principal source of this experimentation was intertextuality; the authors of new Moral-

⁹ Jane Austen, *Emma* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 336.

¹⁰ Mary Ann Kelty, *The Story of Isabel* (London: Longman, 1826; CME 3-626-48676-9), vol. 3, p. 137.

¹¹ Peter Garside has documented the increase in male writers over the course of these years, and indicates the increased commercial pressure that this would have placed on women writers. In 1815 only 6% of novels have been identified as male-authored, compared with 33% in 1825. This discussion can be found in *The English Novel 1770-1829: A Bibliographical Survey of Prose Fiction Published in the British Isles*, ed. by Peter Garside, James Raven, and Rainer Schöwerling, 2 vols (Oxford: OUP, 2000), vol. 2, p. 73.

Domestic novels engaged creatively with existing genres, re-vitalising the works of a range of female literary forbears from Frances Burney to Mary Wollstonecraft.

Reciprocity and exchange had been important conditions of women's writing throughout the Romantic period, prior to the Moral-Domestic genre's appearance. The sheer abundance of female authors working in the Romantic period, as well as their subjection to keen debate in the discourse surrounding fiction, rendered feminine experiences and voices prominent in the publishing scene. As Marilyn Butler surmises in Jane Austen and the War of Ideas, allusion was significant at this time, rendering '[a]lmost every novelist of Jane Austen's day [...] in some degree or other in the most literal sense a reactionary'.¹² Many novelists of the early 1800s, for example, could not help but reproduce aspects of plot, such as the learning curve experienced by the heroine, or her persecution at the hands of a male villain, popularised by the sentimental and Gothic trends of the preceding decades. The conservative writers Hannah More and Mary Brunton also invoked their fictional inheritance, yet they did so with a more deliberate, resistant energy. Indeed, More claimed that her principal reason for publishing the instructive Coelebs In Search of a Wife (1808) was to counter popular romantic and frivolous narratives. The intertextuality at work in Moral-Domestic fiction of the 1820s that will be discussed in this chapter, however, appears different from that operating in the examples given above. It contributes to our understanding of the ubiquitous 'sounding board' identified but not exhausted by critics such as Moers and Butler. The most successful and prolific Moral-Domestic writers of this decade continued to draw attention to the female-authored fiction

¹² Marilyn Butler, Jane Austen and the War of Ideas (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 8. Butler seems to see intertextuality as ubiquitous in women's Romantic writing. Complimenting this view, Moers, as noted above, makes the point that, whilst commercial and political pressures sometimes encourage women writers to attack one another, a more positive, celebratory intertextuality simultaneously emerges.

by which they were encircled, but they did so in a celebratory and expansive manner. In developing its antecedents, the Moral-Domestic genre forged subtle connections with the fictional future, which go some way towards bridging the gap in literary history between early Romantic writers and the later Victorian novel.

Of the many forbears whose influence is evident in this body of fiction, Jane Austen is amongst the most important. Certain works by the Moral-Domestic writers Mary Ann Kelty, Laetitia Matilda Hawkins, Anne Raikes Harding, and Susan Edmonstone Ferrier may be seen to comprise a distinctive sub-genre, which spans the years 1821 to 1831, and which carries aspects of Austen's style and idiom forth in interesting ways. A series of direct parallels establish an initial connection between Austen and these authors. The settings and themes that comprise what Ellen Moers has termed Austen's 'women's realism', for example, reappear in the novels of Kelty, Hawkins, Harding, and Ferrier.¹³ Collectively, these writers depict domestic lives and marital preoccupations, and focus upon a few upper-middle-class families residing in small English villages. Their use of humour further recalls Austen's characteristic register, and often involves striking echoes. This is not to suggest, however, that the relationship between these writers is one of deliberate emulation. Indeed, there is no evidence to suggest that this is always the case. Rather, the themes shared by these writers imply that the register and concerns of which Austen would become representative in years to come were pervasive in the period under consideration. Austen's brand of comedy enables her to highlight the faults of various characters and social practices whilst it prevents the text at hand from becoming a

¹³ Moers, p. 71. In defining 'women's realism', Moers suggests that the activities and dilemmas with which Austen's heroines are involved avoid conventionally male, public spheres, and could feasibly be drawn from women's day-to-day lives, even if the happy endings that they achieve are less realistic.

manifesto.¹⁴ Pride and Prejudice exemplifies this; the detached mockery with which Mr Bennet treats his youngest daughter's folly in this novel is amusing and engaging, but it is also part of a broader textual questioning of male authority. It is, after all, Mr Bennet's levity that facilitates Lydia's unguarded behaviour, which in turn threatens to disgrace her innocent sisters. Comedy serves similarly to render social commentary palatable in post-Austenian fiction. Indeed, when Susan Ferrier opens The Inheritance (1824) with the line '[i]t is a truth universally acknowledged that there is no passion so deeply rooted in human nature as that of pride', the reader familiar with Austen expects a detached but pointed criticism of social climbers (The Inheritance, p. 1). This amusing satire does not disappoint.

The most significant feature of the post-Austenian sub-genre is not, however, this tendency for direct, straightforward emulation. Whilst Kelty, Hawkins, Harding, and Ferrier certainly resemble Austen at the levels of theme and style, they also alter other Austenian idiosyncrasies quite drastically. It is in this more adaptive side of the relationship between Austen and her successors that the pivotal interest of the sub-genre lies. Austen invokes certain tropes which arguably fetter her from expressing provoking, if not radical, meanings. The valued female friend, for example, and the ultimate happy marriage serve to soften the Austenian heroine's experiences in patriarchal society, and in this way they obstruct the more problematic outcomes that the reader might imagine from occurring. Whilst such realities as spinsterhood, abusive marriages, and downward social mobility are never eradicated from Austen's texts, largely because the means by which the central protagonists avoid them are tenuous, these negative fates remain sub-textual in her

¹⁴ Comedy is an extremely prominent and varied aspect of Austen's register, as many critics agree. Jan Fergus argues that the centrality of comedy and character define Austen in Jane Austen: a Literary Life (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991). Similarly, Austen is depicted as a comedienne of manners in Valerie Shaw's 'Jane Austen's Subdued Heroines', Nineteenth-Century Fiction, vol. 30, number 3 (December 1975).

fiction.¹⁵ This ‘fettering’ aspect of the Austen text represents the main element with which the post-Austenian authors engage. The post-Austenian sub-genre targets Austenian fetters, such as the consoling friend and the protective marriage, and either explodes or removes them. This process centralises possibilities that are latent in Austen’s *oeuvre*, bringing marginal or lost stories of unhappiness to fruition, and opening up the politics of the text at hand. Many of the sub-genre’s protagonists begin life with social commitments and marital prospects that would not be out of place in an Austen novel, but by the end of the text they come to suffer the unstable life with which their forebear’s heroines are usually only threatened. In ways that vary from author to author, the anger and isolation that result from the heroine’s difficulties are connected with male control, and serve to indict the limited roles available to her.¹⁶ Just as such plots encourage the reader to re-think women’s position in nineteenth-century society, the literary skill and political interest that their creation necessitated call into question the marginal, neglected status of Kelty, Hawkins, Harding, and Ferrier as writers in literary history.

¹⁵ Not all of Austen’s protagonists evade misery. Mary Crawford and the Bertram girls in Mansfield Park are evicted from the safe, happy spaces of the text, whilst in Pride and Prejudice both Lydia Bennet and Charlotte Lucas make marriages that appear doomed. These characters are peripheral, however, in the novels in which they appear. With regard to her pivotal heroines, Austen is much more careful in giving them every opportunity to make the best possible marriage, hereby creating a fantasy of equality.

¹⁶ In their isolation and confusion, these heroines suggest further resonances with the kinds of images and themes that are re-worked by women writers in the ‘sounding board’ discussed above. In Literary Women Moers discusses suffering and psychologically troubled heroines, and describes the delineation of such characters in terms of a motif of ‘brooding female resentment’ (p. 19). Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar thematise this figure on a large scale, as an indictment of patriarchal control, throughout The Madwoman in the Attic (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979).

Mary Ann Kelty

In her father's estimation, then, poor Catherine had been a blank almost from the day of her birth; Lady Vincent, her aunt, coinciding with him in this opinion, it was not considered as worth while to do more for her, than provide her with a governess, and let her take her chance.

Mary Ann Kelty¹⁷

Mary Ann Kelty was a fairly prolific Moral-Domestic writer of the 1820s, whose early fiction attracted some unusually positive notice. The Favourite of Nature (1821) is a morally correct, engaging tale that was praised in the Monthly Review as one of few 'golden grains' to be found amongst 'the great quantity of useless or pernicious novels' circulating in the literary marketplace.¹⁸ By the time that The Story of Isabel was published in 1826, however, the reviewers had turned against Kelty somewhat. Isabel gained none of the specific interest excited by The Favourite, being described in La Belle Assemblée as merely another 'of those religious and moral fictions' which are barely 'acceptable'.¹⁹ One critic explained this weakened support by reference to a lapse in Kelty's attention to detail. Yet it is more likely that Kelty's growing experimentation, or more specifically the dilution of Moral-Domestic values by which this was accompanied, encouraged such ambivalence. Isabel is indeed a bleak, challenging novel when compared with The Favourite; in the later text, a heroine who is possessed of extraordinary abilities is frustrated by social exclusion, before an abusive marriage finally ruins her.

¹⁷ Mary Ann Kelty, Trials; a Tale (London: G. and W. B. Whittaker, 1824; CME 3-628-48828-1), vol. 1, p.11. All further references are to this edition and are given in the text.

¹⁸ Monthly Review, 2nd series 97 (March 1822): 299-303. This piece of anecdotal information can be found in British Fiction, 1800-1829, <<http://www.british-fiction.cf.ac.uk/reviews/favo21-54.html>>.

¹⁹ La Belle Assemblée, 3rd Series 3 (March 1826): 130. This piece of anecdotal information can be found in British Fiction, 1800-1829: <<http://www.british-fiction.cf.ac.uk/reviews/tria24-58.html>>.

Kelty produced two fictions between the predominantly light Favourite and the more solemn Isabel that combine certain traits of the two, and which contribute significantly to the post-Austenian sub-genre.²⁰ Osmond, a Tale (1822) and Trials, a Tale (1824) are intertextual works, which infuse the Moral-Domestic tale with a developing interest in Austenian themes. Like her counterparts within the sub-genre, for example, Kelty re-writes the Austenian marriage. In the following tales, marriage neither closes the text nor furnishes it with hope. Instead, it is relocated to earlier stages of the novel, where its inadequacy as a site for female happiness becomes apparent. A more individual departure from Austen is manifest in Kelty's interest in language, however. In Osmond and Trials, Kelty represents women's problematic relation to male-oriented definitions and spheres. This involves a subversion of the ability of women to communicate with men. This ability to commune is a stronghold of most Austen heroines, being amongst the most notable traits of Elizabeth Bennet, for example. Whilst Marilyn Butler, amongst others, has commented on the facility with expression and the sociability of Austen's heroines, the observation that this communicability might be a device that restricts a feminist polemic from developing in the text, because it prevents the heroine from meeting a harsh fate, has eluded a number of critics. In contrast with Austen, Kelty deprives her heroines of shared understanding with others, meaning that they experience their oppression with new severity.

²⁰ Existing in the middle of Kelty's oeuvre, Osmond and Trials elicited a mixture of positive and negative reviews. Some newspaper advertisements praised Kelty at this time, as the following comment reveals: 'we consider 'Osmond' one of the most successful Novels of that class which undertake to wean us from strong passions, and teach us the philosophy of virtue' (Morning Chronicle, Thursday 14th August 1823: 1.3.8). The Monthly Review, however, charts a decline in Kelty's works, stating that '[i]t is with regret that we have noticed the diminished merit of each succeeding work from the pen of the lady' (Monthly Review, 2nd Series 195, November 1824: 332, <<http://www.british-fiction.cf.ac.uk/reviews/tria24-58.html>>).

Osmond, a Tale (1822)

Osmond draws upon a broad fictional inheritance.²¹ On a basic level, this is a tale of spiritual and worldly trials in the style of the Moral-Domestic genre of the 1810s. The novel's heroine, Lady Ellen Seymore, has already endured the death of her father, as well as a period of persecution at the hands of her self-interested mother, by the time that the action of the novel begins. Her Christian fortitude, poise, and integrity continue to be called upon throughout Osmond, as she deals with her initially unrequited love for Lord Osmond Arlington, and her ensuing negotiation of the marriage market. Yet many of the Moral-Domestic values that Ellen appears to promote turn out to be less than straightforward. The virtues that Ellen shares with model protagonists such as Laura Montreville and Lucilla Stanley, for example, are gradually shown to comprise only one, visible aspect of the heroine's character.²² Over the course of the novel, Ellen's shy appearances and modest statements come to contrast sharply with feelings of desire and anxiety to which she seldom gives expression. Ellen's perplexity is attributable to the fact that her strict education in proper female behaviour causes her to construe these elements of her character as shameful. This suggests that adherence to rigid notions of femininity, which many of her fellow heroines apparently found easy, must on close inspection prove to be a superficial practice, which can cause a split sense of self.

Kelty's tendency to delve into her heroine's psyche represents one of her most distinctive and significant characteristics. The fact that she finds there evidence of a

²¹ Mary Ann Kelty, Osmond, a Tale (London: G. and W. Whittaker, 1822; CME 3-628-48317-4). All further references are to this edition and are given in the text.

²² These heroines are the paragons of virtue, sense, and humility that set the standard for Moral-Domestic novels, because they appeared in two of the genre's most important, instigating texts, Mary Brunton's Self-Control (1811) and Hannah More's Coelebs in Search of a Wife (1808). Laura Montreville and Lucilla Stanley seem to adhere to conventions and expectations with few problems. As Kelty's expanded representation of the heroine suggests, however, this may be the case only because the creators of these characters failed really to convey their thought processes, which may have revealed contradictory emotions.



fissured, tortured individual aligns her with a specific tradition of feminist imagery identified by a number of critics. Psychoanalytically interested writers such as Jacqueline Rose, for example, surmise that women's subjection to unworkable standards of conduct in patriarchal society causes resistance at a psychological level.²³ For Rose, as well as for Juliet Mitchell, the notion of the unconscious becomes a radical one for feminism because the persona to which women publicly adhere falls apart in this space, and its problems and conflict are laid bare.²⁴ In this way, a fiction's depiction of the female unconscious can reveal the individual's problematic relation to the ideological and material roles to which she seems to conform. This, as will become clear, is certainly the case with Kelty's heroine. On the surface, Ellen Seymore is a conventionally philanthropic and calmly virtuous protagonist, 'the gentlest of human beings' (*Osmond*, vol. 1, p. 2) who was 'created to show how well [she] can suffer' (vol. 1, p. 11). The impact on Ellen of expectations regulating her desire and needs, however, cause a 'conflict within her own heart' that Kelty explores in some detail by conveying her psychic life (vol. 1, p. 78). In this life, Ellen has difficulty with her existence as a chaste and unassuming woman. Only in her mind, and when alone, are these troubles expressed, as Ellen vents her love for Osmond, but fears that she might 'wholly forget what is due myself' if she allows the veneer to slip (vol. 1, p. 49). By consequence, she often turns to God: ' "Oh! My Father!" she exclaimed, as she lifted her eyes to Heaven, "to Thee I turn! Remove from me these vain and empty hopes, and fill my soul with love of Thee alone." ' (vol. 1, p. 42) Such representations suggest that, even if Ellen does not react openly or consciously against her limiting role in male-oriented society, her thoughts do, implying that patriarchy cannot help but breed dissatisfaction and

²³ Jacqueline Rose, *Sexuality in the Field of Vision* (London: Verso, 1986), p. 91.

²⁴ Juliet Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (London: Allen Lane, 1974).

a kind of counter discourse. A critic interpreting the mentality of heroines in this way is Mary Jacobus, whose essay 'The Difference of View' comments upon the complexity of the heroine's womanhood in Mary Wollstonecraft's The Wrongs of Woman as creating sporadic dumbness and mental torment.²⁵ The point to be carried forward from Jacobus's reading is that stifling notions of womanhood, particularly those urging women to be sentimental or forbidding their sexual desire, force an angry overflow of emotion, as the female self exceeds the mould into which it is forced. Jacobus states that, '[l]ike the rich stream overflowing its banks, a wash of desire throws all the elements of thought and imagination into confusion', and that 'the language of feeling can only ally itself with insanity - an insanity which, displaced into writing, produces a moment of inappropriate excess, over-brimming the container of fiction'.²⁶ The lack of fit identified by Jacobus is exemplified in the representation of Ellen Seymore; this heroine's anxieties are exacerbated by the need to be moral and non-desiring whilst also being subjected to the marriage market.

Whilst it problematises the norms of the early Moral-Domestic genre, Osmond also draws upon certain Austenian characters and scenarios too. Osmond's setting and register signal this relationship from the offset. Most of the action takes place in a provincial English village, for example, with visits to London and the spa towns. Within this setting, questions of marriage and social prejudice come to the fore, and are rendered with ironic detachment rather than with energy. Whilst these replications of theme and idiom are noteworthy, other more adaptive elements of Osmond are yet more interesting. In particular, Kelty's depiction of a divided heroine expands Austen's representation of gender

²⁵ Mary Jacobus 'The Difference of View', in The Feminist Reader, pp. 66-76.

²⁶ Jacobus, p. 71.

inequality by subjecting its impact on friendships, courtships, and marriages to a more candid examination. Austen may be seen to bridge the gap, albeit somewhat implausibly, between men and women; many of her heroines possess a saving communicability that grounds them, as well as like-minded sisters, friends, and suitors, whose understanding alleviates their subjection. Osmond, in contrast, thematises the divisive effects of material inequality on both female subjectivity and male-female relationships. In doing so, it answers the question of what would happen to the Austen heroine were it not for the positive relationships that enable her to ignore, although never really to vanquish, her dependent position.

Kelty's refusal to soften her portrayal of gender inequality is reflected in Osmond's domination by rifts. Gender difference pervades this text, influencing characters, themes, and imagery, and appearing as a force too powerful to be overcome by friendship or even by love. The opening scene anticipates this preoccupation with divisions. Osmond begins in a carriage, as the wealthy couple Lord and Lady Arlington travel to their home with their friend Lady Ellen Seymore. The Arlingtons discuss their son Osmond, and are pleased by his good principles and outstanding abilities, but vexed by his prolonged travels and unwillingness to settle down. These parents are not alone in their concern for Osmond; the narrator states here that Lady Ellen, 'pensively reclined in one corner of the carriage, had, though silent, been as deeply interested in the conversation as either of the others' (vol. 1, pp. 2-3). Despite her reticence, Ellen is fixated by Osmond, and has loved him secretly since the previous summer. The unassuming and serene persona that she presents to the Arlingtons, and to the outside world in general, is sharply at odds with an inner life that is conveyed to the reader. When Ellen arrives at the Arlingtons' home, for example, she seeks solitude to vent her suspicions and her frustrated desire, remonstrating:

'he comes not! There is something mysterious in this continued absence. Oh, Osmond! Is it possible that my hopes have deceived me? Is it possible that you can have fallen from those high, those very high ideals formed of you?'. (vol. 1, p. 8)

In relation to her affection for Lord Osmond, a fissure appears between Ellen's public persona and her private self. Over the course of the first volume, this disparity grows increasingly destructive, as Ellen berates herself for feelings that she struggles to repress. On one occasion, she is quiet and poised when Lady Arlington speaks to her about Osmond, yet she quickly retreats to her own room, where she kisses a miniature portrait of Osmond. This in turn leads to self-doubt; Ellen feels compelled to love and yearn for Osmond, but having internalised the idea that it is vain and improper to do so, she grows ashamed of herself:

she pressed her lips upon the picture; but though in absolute solitude, the blush of virgin modesty suffused her cheek at this involuntary action, and she cast a hurried glance around, as if shrinking at the idea of being observed. (vol. 1, p. 9)

Ellen goes on to chastise these actions by referring to 'this treacherous, foolish heart that betrayed me' (vol. 1, p.9). She speaks of her heart, the part of the body associated with love and desire, as if it were an unruly, undesirable aspect of her feminine identity, and one that ought to be repressed. In these scenes, Ellen's inner turmoil may be viewed in terms of the broader clash that exists between women's needs and patriarchal ideals of womanhood. In attempting to reconcile these forces, a conflict appears within female subjectivity, which highlights the negative repercussions of the male-orientated nature of society.

Ellen's struggle causes additional divisions, as it encroaches on her relationship with Osmond when he returns from his travels in northern England. Osmond and Ellen resume a close friendship at this point, in which she is initially happy and relatively open. Yet when Ellen becomes jealous of Osmond's acquaintances, her difficulties reappear, as

she knows that, in the eyes of society, her resentment is selfish and transgressive. Ellen is especially guilty and surreptitious with regard to Osmond's potential suitor, Lady Jane Eustace. The narrator recalls Ellen's 'agitating emotions, that she would not absolutely call by the name of jealousy, but which, she dreaded to believe, could not justly be otherwise denominated, and which she had never been able to divest herself of' (vol. 1, pp. 77-78). Ellen cannot admit to her desire, as she is aware of the importance of appearing to be a proper lady. As a result, she falls increasingly silent, which in turn exacerbates her problems; with yet fewer outlets for her emotions, Ellen's thoughts turn inwards, confusing the heroine but also Osmond, who becomes uncertain as to how to relate to her.

Perhaps frustrating the reader's expectations, there is no end to Ellen's dilemmas in Osmond, as even the kindness and love that she eventually receives from others cannot mend her troubled identity. When Ellen's love for Osmond is discovered by the sensitive Lady Arlington, the heroine and hero eventually marry. This occurs after a series of confusions, which is of course a staple feature of women's Romantic-era fiction, showing that Kelyt conforms to certain norms of the climate even as she diverges from others. In an Austen novel, such a marriage would close the text, and at least attempt, even superficially, to atone for more substantial injustices. In Pride and Prejudice, for example, Austen depicts men and women as inhabiting different physical and linguistic spaces, and in the lead up to marriage she lays bare a number of factors, including social class, that obstruct reciprocity between Darcy and Elizabeth. Nonetheless, a loving marriage is promised between these protagonists, which the reader hopes will render their continued differences in power insignificant. As if setting itself up in opposition to this model, Kelyt's text sees Osmond and Ellen marry in the middle, rather than at the end, of their story, and the final volume of the text portrays a disappointing union. Despite the fact that she loves Osmond, it becomes

clear in the later stages of the novel that Ellen cannot be content within marriage. After an initial period of happiness she is, if anything, more pensive and secretive than she was in courtship. Ellen feels the pressure of the expectations placed upon her as a wife, and becomes increasingly guarded in her behaviour. Osmond also fails to fulfil his promises to his wife; he keeps a mistress for some time, before repenting and gaining Ellen's forgiveness. Just as Ellen is alienated by this situation, exhibiting signs of a distressed relation to her own language and space, Osmond also appears dumbfounded, and becomes disaffected. The description of the aftermath of one of the couple's disagreements reflects a stalemate:

Both of them, however, did, as many under similar circumstances had done before them, and yielding to a mistaken idea of each other's sentiments, with hearts most fondly yearning to be reconciled and happy, parted, nevertheless, with cold civility; Osmond to pursue the engagements of the day, and Lady Ellen to console herself with more real sorrow than she had yet experienced. (vol. 3, p. 21)

Kelty represents the gulf between husband and wife as insurmountable; Ellen's marriage is doomed, as a wall of silence persists between the couple until Osmond's relatively early death. With this outcome, Kelty ultimately suggests that the limitations placed upon Ellen as a woman represent a fundamental, enduring barrier to male-female relationships. Where Austen creates a fantasy to conceal this crisis, Kelty has urged its fuller consideration.

In its refusal to harmonise the clashes inherent in patriarchal society, Osmond gives rise to a final example of intertextuality. An unlikely alliance exists between Osmond and Mary Hays's 1796 novel The Memoirs of Emma Courtney.²⁷ Osmond is set primarily in the

²⁷ Mary Hays, The Memoirs of Emma Courtney (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996). This novel was first published in 1796, and was one of the Jacobin novels that openly defended women's right to self-definition and expression. It was initially received favourably by reviewers, but owing to the backlash against reformative, liberal ideas around 1800, its writer was discredited and subjected to ridicule. Of particular disdain to critics was Emma Courtney's openly sexual, physical attraction to Augustus Harley, the hero who Hays controversially based on the man to whom she offered herself, William Frend.

home, and has a strong moral impetus that enabled Kelty to avoid the hostility of critics and reviewers. Emma Courtney, on the other hand, traces the intellectual development of a young woman, and eventually brought ridicule upon its creator. Nonetheless, both texts depict a woman who suffers because her desire is deemed unacceptable, and is not given adequate expression. Emma and Ellen are attacked by convention because of their desire for the men they love. The precise source of this attack differs between the texts, however, in a manner revealing something of a progression between Hays and Kelty. Emma wants to declare her love vocally, and for this she is reprimanded by others. Ellen, in contrast, wants to make sense of her desire for Osmond in her own mind, and so she punishes herself. In this depiction, Kelty adds complexity and subtlety to Hays's arguments; she demonstrates the role played by psychological factors as well as external demands in her heroine's decline, which conveys the ubiquity of male power. Both Kelty and Hays depict an isolated, misunderstood woman who may be read as an indictment of female oppression. It is with this tragic figure, rather than with Austenian hopes for a redeeming marriage, that Osmond ends.

Trials, a Tale (1824)

In common with Osmond, Mary Ann Kelty's second post-Austenian novel depicts a heroine who struggles to fulfil feminine roles. Yet Trials examines a broader spectrum of female experiences than does Osmond, and throws the heroine's deterioration into sharper relief. This tale follows Catherine Dorrington from childhood to old age, and depicts the pressures placed upon her not only as a wife, but as a daughter, friend, and mother as well. Whilst Catherine begins the novel a strikingly vivacious and outspoken character, quite the

opposite of Ellen Seymore, two volumes later she appears as a virtually friendless young widow, who has suffered what can only be described as a mental breakdown. The isolation and incommunicativeness that result from this process are linked explicitly to male control. The heroine's father Mr Dorrington, for example, is shown to criticise Catherine's character when she is a teenager, suggesting that masculine power in the family is the starting point of lasting female self-doubt. Later as a married woman, Catherine is betrayed and bewildered again by the actions of her friend Augusta Belmont, a character who also embodies aspects of male control, albeit in a displaced form. Trials's inclusion of these two characters may be read as an appropriation of Jane Austen's typical fathers and female friends. On their initial appearances, neither Mr Dorrington nor Augusta Belmont appears out of keeping with their counterparts in Austen's fiction. Yet these characters become decidedly negative, rather than ambiguous or positive, influences in the heroine's life; instead of moderating her distress, Catherine's father and friend actually exacerbate it during two stages of socialisation. Kelty's rendition of this heroine's parent and confidante is arguably more credible, and certainly more unforgiving, than Austen's, and it facilitates a fuller exploration of the fragility of female happiness.

The opening of Trials, in which Mr Dorrington and his widowed sister, Lady Vincent, discuss Catherine's future, contains a number of parallels with Pride and Prejudice. In particular, Catherine's reported liveliness and tendency towards satire suggest a kinship with Elizabeth Bennet, whilst the pleasure that Mr Dorrington takes in provoking his sour sister allies him with Mr Bennet. Catherine is an entertaining and engaging heroine, 'the child of gaiety and glee' who 'loved a laugh more than anything', and who has early 'acquired a habit of amusing herself with everything and everybody that was

ridiculous' (Trials, vol. 1, p. 25). She is also intelligent, possessing abilities that elevate her above the governess Miss Mathews, whose teaching

might have afforded something to some children- quiet, orderly, little bodies, who were contented to do as they were bid, and could go through their daily routines of tasks and practicings, without open rebellion to their instructors. But Catherine very early in the day set herself in direct and determined opposition to Miss Mathews (vol. 1, p. 15).

Such descriptions of confidence fade with Catherine's maturity, however, as her increasing familiarity with norms of female conduct encourage her to view her attributes in a more problematic light. Catherine's relationship with her father instigates this process. It is in this representation that Kelly departs from Austen. Austen's father figure, Mr Bennet, is one of many characters in Pride and Prejudice who shield the heroine from her own limited status; whilst he is lax in regard to many aspects of his family's welfare, Elizabeth's father nonetheless encourages her pertness, enjoys her company, and believes that she deserves a better husband than Mr Collins. Mr Dorrington, in contrast, comes to embody a stern patriarchal force; he does not value his daughter as he would a son, and does not consider her to be a fit partner for conversation. Instead, he evaluates her in terms of the marriage that she might make, and the wealth that she might thereby generate. Within this gaze, Catherine appears less than pleasing, and she is encouraged to shed the wit and self-sufficiency that Elizabeth Bennet is allowed to retain.

Mr Dorrington surmises that his daughter lacks the poise, beauty, and accomplishments of which most suitors would approve. As the patriarch of the family, he has the power to instil this view, as is evidenced in Catherine's growing alienation. When her elders 'laid down to her the various duties of an elegant young gentlewoman; duties in which, it must be confessed, poor Catherine was sadly remiss in performing', the heroine seems dejected:

It was in vain that she looked around her narrow circle of kindred and friends, for some clear partner in her little joys and pleasures. She would have loved her father. She would have been delighted to have loved him. But temperament betrayed itself before him, in any action derogatory, as he conceived, to a young lady of fashion. The severity of his reproof was like a bolt of ice to her heart [...] she had gradually grown, therefore, in her father's presence, to be taciturn and grave.
(vol. 1, pp. 19-20)

Here Catherine begins to resemble Ellen Seymore more than Elizabeth Bennet. She becomes apprehensive, reserved, and stifled, as she must constantly monitor and check herself. Despite her efforts, the heroine is unable to please her father, and is sent to board at a finishing school.

Whilst at school, Catherine is away from the dominant male influence represented by Mr Dorrington, and regains some of her former self-assuredness. She provides entertainment and stories for her fellow pupils, and is befriended by Miss Augusta Belmont, a mischievous but apparently warm-hearted girl from whom she becomes inseparable. Catherine and Augusta spend vacations together, and share their most intimate thoughts. They also court two soldiers from the barracks neighbouring their school, with Catherine eventually marrying her suitor, the poor St. Aubyn. This marriage does not meet Mr Dorrington's approval, however, and he disinherits Catherine as a result. Nonetheless, the heroine and St. Aubyn go to a Scottish regiment, where they live quite happily.

Marriage is never an atoning event in Kelty's fiction, however, and Catherine and St. Aubyn's trusted, contented marriage is undermined as time passes.²⁸ The principal cause for this second phase of Catherine's suffering is, perhaps surprisingly, neither her father nor

²⁸ Kelty's negative view of marriage pervades the text, appearing not only in the central plot of Ellen and Osmond, but in background stories too. This gives ubiquity to Kelty's anti-marriage message. Catherine Dorrington's mother, for example, is described as having been stifled by marriage. When writing about her death, the narrator states that Mrs Dorrington missed raising her child, as 'she was called hence at a time when a marriage not eminently happy to a person of her views and feelings, was beginning to present a charm to her which endears many a union, that without it would hardly be supportable' (*Trials*, vol. 1, p. 8).

her husband. Rather, Augusta is represented as the bane of Catherine's adult life; the heroine comes to view Augusta as 'the most finished coquette that ever came out of the hands of a governess', and she finds 'with improving observation and maturer faculties, that it was impossible for her to regard her with any sentiments of respect' (vol. 1, p. 97). These reservations become more serious over the course of the tale, with Catherine believing that her former friend aims to seduce St. Aubyn. Catherine has strived to cultivate the sense of feminine propriety that her father propagated, however, and the narrator is at pains to point out that she has centred her whole life on St. Aubyn's happiness, even educating herself in his interests, and seeking at almost any cost to avoid distressing him. Thus, Catherine feels unable to disclose her speculations to St. Aubyn, for fear that he will be upset by them, or that he may think her lewd for detecting them. Despite her good intentions, Catherine's secrecy builds a barrier of misunderstanding between husband and wife. The narrator describes the way in which Catherine

indulged her emotions till they exhausted themselves, and till she had perfectly astonished St. Aubyn by such an exhibition of temper, for such a trifling cause. He knew not indeed how far imagination operated to make poor Catherine so apparently absurd and unjust.
(vol. 1, p. 104)

To make matters worse, Catherine refuses to attend Augusta's gatherings and parties, leaving St. Aubyn to go alone, whilst she suffers mental anguish owing to her lack of an outlet for her escalating thoughts. The heroine grows obsessed with 'the allurements of a woman, who lived only upon the tributes of admiration she extorted from every man who came her way', and becomes increasingly frenzied (vol. 1, p. 134). Catherine is described seeking

her chamber, there to indulge, not the 'luxury of woe,' - for in whatever department of misery that is to be found, it certainly does not exist in the precincts of jealousy- she retired to be as completely and entirely wretched

as the fact of her husband's visiting her mortal enemy, and the great probability of his being deeply fascinated and charmed by the affections of that enemy, could possibly render her. So vividly did her imagination place before her the scene in which he was engaged, that more than once she started up with a sudden resolution of dressing herself and following him to the house of Augusta. (vol. 1, p. 150)

A critical shift takes place in such scenes, in which the two female characters switch roles and attributes. Augusta appears as a succubus figure here, growing in popularity and power as Catherine simultaneously withdraws physically from various spaces. Catherine's once celebrated mental faculties break down with Augusta's continued presence; 'a weight the most oppressive seemed to have been thrown over the whole of her mental frame' (vol. 1, p. 159), and she suffers 'beyond the power of language to describe [...] the most impassioned, the most undisciplined emotions' (vol. 1, p. 168). Much is made of the heroine's warped perspective, as she views 'everything herself through an extravagant and distorted medium', and 'compel[s] St. Aubyn to hate her' (p. 178). After living for many months in this state, St. Aubyn is called abroad to battle, where he later dies. Augusta insists on being present at his farewell, meaning that his wife is pushed out of her rightful role; Catherine never has the chance to say goodbye to her husband, or to discover his innocence in Augusta's schemes.

The portrayal of Augusta Belmont as an instrument in Catherine's decline might seem at odds with Kelty's gender politics, given that earlier in the novel, as well as in Osmond, male characters and masculine concerns are most clearly implicated in female alienation. Yet Augusta represents more than a wicked woman; a closer inspection reveals that her destructive potential lies not in her female powers of seduction, but rather in Catherine's adherence to patriarchal norms. It is Catherine's confused attempts to reconcile herself to the roles that she is expected to fulfil that force her to reject her former friend.

Over the course of their acquaintance, Catherine comes to despise Augusta for her loquacity, her liveliness, and her defiance. These are the very traits, however, that Catherine once possessed, and which she has strived, on the command of her father and teachers, to relegate. In this way, Augusta can be read as a corporealisation of all those elements of Catherine's subjectivity that are defined as unacceptable in the conventional definition of a good wife. In battling against Augusta, therefore, Catherine is also battling against herself. Supporting this notion is the fact that both attraction and repulsion characterise the heroine's relationship with her tormentor. Additionally, the scenes in which the two women appear are often physically close, almost claustrophobic, in their imagery; the narrator states, for example, that 'Catherine's heart literally sickened at [Augusta's] approach, her hand almost recoiled from her touch' (vol. 1, p. 163), and further that 'a feeling that was wholly unaccountable took possession of Catherine as Augusta spoke, which fettered her tongue, and riveted her to the spot' (vol. 1, p. 167). These remarks suggest that Augusta is the heroine's 'inner demon', who damages her mindset as well as her marriage. Crucially, Augusta is only demonic in terms of the limiting yardstick of femininity to which the heroine has long been subject. Viewed in this way, Kelty's portrayal of a dangerous, harmful female friend is actually consistent with a feminist polemic.

A final point to note with regard to Augusta is that she is interesting from a literary point of view. This character of the inner demon creates metaphorical and psychological complexities in Trials that resonate with James Hogg's The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner, which was published in the same year.²⁹ In Hogg's text the religious first person narrator, Robert Wringhim, is beleaguered by a wild character known as Gil Martin. Robert is apparently very different from Gil, and yet Gil has a certain

²⁹ James Hogg, The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner (London: Penguin, 1983).

hold over him, encouraging him to become increasingly immoral and to break the law. Gil might be the devil, a real man, or a figment of Robert's imagination, but he parallels Augusta in his effect on the protagonist. Gil becomes increasingly potent, for example, as Robert's grip on reality loosens, just as the succubus Augusta did in Trials. He also embodies the traits that his 'victim' possesses but is unwilling to acknowledge. In Robert's case, these are control, power, and immunity from moral law. This alliance of theme between Hogg and Kelty is fitting, given that both writers, albeit for different reasons, occupied a marginal status in the contemporary publishing scene. Just as Kelty was a woman writer giving voice to female experiences, James Hogg was distanced from contemporary men of letters by his working-class status and reportedly coarse manners. He populated his fictions with interesting marginal voices as a result.

Trials's resonances with writers as different as Jane Austen and James Hogg suggest that it is an expansive, intertextual novel. This notion is supported by the fact that Catherine's story is taken beyond her mental torment and failed marriage. The later stages of Trials depict the heroine's motherhood, religious awakening, and old age. There is also a second story of love and marriage concerning a younger generation of characters. After St. Aubyn's death, Catherine is bereft and suffers from melancholy. She discovers the possibility of contentment, however, in the example of a pious life set by Miss Morton, the governess of Edmund St. Aubyn, the son of whom we have as yet heard little. As Catherine watches her son pray, a new moral earnestness 'seemed to have sprung up within her—something happier, better than anything she before possessed' (vol. 1, pp. 210-211). Whilst this epiphany appears as the kind of atoning event that might close a moral tale, it is quickly complicated by Kelty. Indeed, Catherine's conversion to true as opposed to nominal Christianity is a rough but plausible journey; when the narrator skips forward in the tale by

several years, we learn that although Catherine has retained a religion of sorts and is far from a bad individual, she cannot be called pious. Tempted by an offer of reconciliation from the wealthy and lonely, but still shallow, Lady Vincent, Catherine recovers a taste for a sociable and more fashionable life. She is a kind and engaging woman, but she lacks either the virtue or the happiness to seal a moral message.

A second chance for an atoning conclusion, however, presents itself in the story of Catherine's son and the object of his affection, Matilda Belgrave. Matilda fulfils many of the Moral-Domestic ideals of which Catherine, despite her efforts, consistently fell short; Matilda is 'enlightened by religious principle, strong, fervent, and sincere', and demonstrates that she can endure her lot of 'trial and of disappointment' whilst always considering the welfare of others (vol. 2, p. 154). Despite this promising introduction, Matilda soon comes to represent a second example of female suffering in Trials. Owing to the very sweet, unassuming nature for which she is praised, Matilda is unaware of Edmund's love for her, and so when the seemingly good and wealthy Charles Harcourt proposes, she accepts. Charles turns out to possess as much vice as virtue in his character, however, and his enduring love for his wife does not discourage him from dissipation and gaming. At one point, the couple's belongings are repossessed, and Charles is arrested. Throughout this period, Matilda resists berating her husband, being disinclined either to shame him or to burden others by disclosing her distress. Interestingly, this depiction of Matilda's predicament substantiates certain of Gillian Skinner's arguments regarding the multifaceted nature of oppression for the married woman, or 'feme covert', when compared

with the independence available to some single women.³⁰ Matilda's impossible situation reveals that marriage not only deprives her of material rights, but also subjects her to personal and social restrictions that might not have been problematic if she had remained a 'feme sole'. Whilst Matilda lacks the power to intervene in her husband's affairs, she would bring a great degree of notoriety upon herself, which could prove worse than her present state, if she used his behaviour as grounds for a separation. As a result, she keeps her difficulties to herself for some time, before extreme peril forces her to seek help. In relation to such a life of subjection, Gillian Skinner compares the married woman to a slave, owing to her total immobilisation; even if the law allows a separation, the reputation of the woman concerned could be too seriously tarnished for this to be an option. Marriage thus traps and makes the woman invisible, through a combination of ideological as well as financial pressures.

In sustaining Skinner's ideas about marriage, Trials further problematises the Moral-Domestic ideal of the obedient, virtuous wife; in giving even Matilda, her most conventional Moral-Domestic heroine, a bad marriage, Kelty suggests that there is very little that can counter woman's hard lot. In making this point, the story of Matilda encourages comparison with Elizabeth Inchbald's A Simple Story, published in 1791.³¹ In both Trials and A Simple Story, there is a sense in which the mistakes of a first heroine, whose character incorporates both virtue and vice, are revisited on the protagonist of the next generation. The second heroine is in many ways the antithesis of the first, meaning that her suffering appears especially unjust. In the case of the double story that structures A

³⁰ Gillian Skinner, 'Women's Status as Legal and Civic Subjects: "A Worse Condition than Slavery Itself"?', in Women and Literature in Britain 1700-1800, ed. by Vivien Jones (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 91-106.

³¹ Elizabeth Inchbald, A Simple Story (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

Simple Story, Matilda is forced to endure her father's neglect and banishment of her owing to the unruly behaviour of her mother, Miss Milner. Likewise, despite her own exemplary behaviour, Matilda of Trials undergoes a worse marriage than does Catherine. Both 'second heroines' eventually achieve rewards (Miss Milner's daughter earns her father's love, and Matilda Harcourt becomes Edmund's wife), but their positions are tenuous, and the praise that they excite is not unequivocal. Their trials therefore problematise contemporary ideals of womanhood.

Osmond and Trials inhabit the middle space of Mary Ann Kelty's oeuvre, as well as the heart of the Moral-Domestic genre's decade of diversity. They draw upon a range of fictional counterparts, developing Moral-Domestic and Austenian themes, as well as drawing more surprising parallels with Mary Hays, James Hogg, and Elizabeth Inchbald. Within the variegated texts thus created, certain tropes and idiosyncrasies emerge for which Kelty becomes distinctive. Most significantly, Kelty is recognisable for her depiction of the isolated, alienated heroine, whose creation results from the liberating, de-fettering writerly process that defines the post-Austenian sub-genre. The misery of Kelty's heroine may be read as a re-writing of Austenian scenarios, with Kelty confronting certain facts about women's existence that the reader might have expected her to avoid. Owing to their full exposure to conflicting, male-oriented demands within the family, marriage, and wider society at large, for example, both Ellen Seymour and Catherine Dorrington fall silent and hide themselves from others at crucial points in the novels in which they appear. The effect of this segregation is a kind of psychological suffocation, a madness almost in the case of Catherine, which torments the heroines and also harms their husbands. The suggestion is that even the best friend, a respectful husband, or the possession of wealth cannot atone for

the unworkable demands placed upon the heroine's identity. To argue otherwise is to fantasise.

Laetitia Matilda Hawkins

It was not her custom to surrender her opinion while she thought she could support it – but times, or circumstances, were altered – she told herself she was married.

Laetitia Matilda Hawkins³²

Laetitia Matilda Hawkins is Kelty's contemporary within the post-Austenian sub-genre, appropriating such tropes as the happy marriage and the comforting friendship in order to portray various states of female suffering. Yet where Kelty's expansion of Austen resulted from her characteristic isolation of the heroine, Hawkins makes her mark by masculinising the domains of the female-authored novel. Hawkins's The Countess and Gertrude; or, Modes of Faith and Practice (1811) was amongst the most successful Moral-Domestic texts of the 1810s, helping to strengthen the position of the genre with its Christian orthodoxy and gentle humour.³³ With her subsequent publications Roseanne; or, a Father's Labour Lost (1814), Heraline; or, Opposite Proceedings (1821), and Annaline; or, Motive Hunting

³² Laetitia Matilda Hawkins, Heraline; or, Opposite Proceedings (London: F. C. and J. Rivington, 1821; CME 3-628-47541-4), vol. 2, p. 77. All further references are to this edition and are given in the text.

³³ Hawkins's The Countess and Gertrude; or, Modes of Faith and Practice (1811) received some uncommonly positive reviews, in which it was praised for its superiority to the more common, frivolous novels of the period. It owed this superiority, according to the critics, to its amalgamation of humour, plausibility, and religious instruction. The following address to readers is representative: 'let them not suppose, that they are reading a novel. It may be called an amusing book; and this we must allow, that it is in a very great degree. But, we, serious people, who do not read merely to while away the fleeting hour, have great pleasure in asserting, that we have found it a very useful, pleasing, and sensible production.' The same reviewer continues by stating of Hawkins that 'she has delighted us with her sterling sense, charmed us by her vivacity, and amused us by her anecdote. She has done even more; she has made us reverence her for her rational and her cheerful notions of religion. With this impression we take our leave, hoping that we may, but fearing that we shall not soon look upon her again' (Critical Review, 4th Series. 2, July 1812: 47-63). This anecdote can be viewed in British Fiction, 1800-1829, <<http://www.british-fiction.cf.ac.uk/newspapers.html>>.

(1824), however, Hawkins boldly incorporated both masculine and feminine themes in a confident, experimental register.³⁴ Heraline best exemplifies this tendency, straddling the professional and the domestic spheres so deftly that at least one contemporary critic believed its anonymous author to be a man.³⁵ Indeed, Heraline Beltravers appears as an Austenian heroine whose environment has been re-written in important ways; Heraline's father believes in her capacity to lead, exposes her to public life, and encourages her to adopt masculine expectations. In representing Heraline, Hawkins elaborates upon certain themes that are vague in Austen's fiction, such as male interactions and female property rights. Through Heraline's losses and gains, Hawkins also questions women's domestic confinement to extensive, but ultimately ambiguous, effect.

Heraline Beltravers is heiress to title, land, and wealth, and has been raised to direct others rather than to obey. With regard to St. Emeril's, the estate of Heraline's father, Lord Beltravers, we are informed early on that 'the earldom was entailed on male issue; but by the limitation of the patent, the barony might descend to a female. The estates might be separated from the title, at the will of the possessor' (vol. 1, p.2). The proceeding story examines Heraline's development as 'the baroness in potentia'. As she will become the ruler of a substantial estate, and because her father invests faith in her, Heraline possesses an extraordinary degree of power as a single woman. Yet the novel traces Heraline's movement through a series of struggles, in which she does not always behave wisely, and which result in her negation as a wife. Heraline is a heroine who blurs various boundaries;

³⁴ This authorial persona may be seen to derive in part from Hawkins's own active life. She worked as her father's secretary, for example, which enabled her to gain a small salary, and to acquire an understanding of the publishing world, without transcending her daughterly role. Her non-fictional work, Letters on the Female Mind (1793), contributed to public debates about female education and history whilst avoiding radicalism.

³⁵ This magazine refers to the way in which Hawkins 'visits none without leaving behind him traces of a masculine and highly susceptible mind' (The Morning Chronicle, Saturday 12 June 1824). This anecdote can be viewed in British Fiction, 1800-1829 <<http://www.british-fiction.cf.ac.uk/newspapers/anna24-46.html>>.

she crosses into masculine spheres, exhibiting both male and female character traits, whilst she also elicits a mixture of sympathy and censure from the reader. In creating this heroine, Hawkins adopts a correspondingly transgressive style as a writer, by amalgamating a number of fictional genres. A sense of pastiche is created by the interplay of this ambiguous heroine on the one hand and Hawkins's broader intertextuality on the other, which renders Heraline one of the sub-genre's most unusual, if undecided, contributions.

Heraline depicts the rise and fall of an English estate through a breadth of fictional genres. The opening of the novel, for example, is Gothic-inspired, featuring a lengthy scenic focus in the style of Ann Radcliffe. The narrator addresses the reader in the first line:

Whoever has inclination and opportunity to make the tour of the south-western coast of our island, and can afford leisure to deviate nine miles from a high road, may, with some little trouble indeed, frequent jolts, some considerable inequality of ground, and perhaps not entirely without the apprehension of a fruitless search, find, if he has turned the right way, the Romantic village of St. Emeril. (vol. 1, p. 1)

Hawkins adds authority and political history to this picture, by remarking that 'mankind are ingenuous to their own hurt; and St. Emeril's Court has been sometimes, like other persons' courts, rendered uncomfortable by the want of a little judgement in the possessors' (vol. 1, p. 3).

In addition to the Gothic background created by these descriptions, a resonance with the British National Tale becomes manifest as the story unfolds. A number of Romantic-era critics have studied the Irish National Tale, promoted by Lady Morgan and Maria Edgeworth, as well as the Welsh National Tale. Yet there was a strong movement in the period to qualify and to bolster a sense of Britishness that was rooted in England, and which was part of the widespread contemporary backlash against the French Revolution, and the threat of social change with which it was associated. With regard to this

phenomenon, Linda Colley's Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837 is informative.³⁶ As outlined in Chapter I, Colley states that, in order to stabilise the nation, government, social commentators, and religious groups encouraged the development of an 'imagined community', which celebrated an honourable, unshakeably Protestant image of Britain. This image existed in Britain's 'thought-world' more so than in existing history, becoming 'real' through the implementation of selective accounts of the nation's past, which emphasised courage and success in wars, as well as representing Protestantism as a long-standing stronghold. An important part of this process was the definition of foreign countries as Other, as negative and alien spaces against which 'we' ought to police ourselves. As Colley argues,

Men and women decide who they are by reference to who and what they are not. Once confronted with an obviously alien 'Them', an otherwise diverse community can become a reassuringly or merely desperate 'Us'. This was how it was with the British after 1707. They came to define themselves not because of any political or cultural consensus at home, but rather in reaction to the Other beyond their shores.³⁷

Supporting Colley's views, many novels published in Britain in the early 1800s incorporate ideas about the country that fit the above description. In this way, whilst Moral-Domestic novels are not about Britain in the same central way that Lady Morgan's are about Ireland, they nonetheless express positive identification with their country of origin in a manner akin to the National Tale. Moral-Domestic fiction of the 1810s fortified a sense of British nationalism, and in this way made political points and gained authority. More openly, the Moral-Domestic conversion novels of the 1820s and 30s that form the topic of Chapter IV assume a stable and worthy Protestant Britain by constructing a Catholic or Jewish Other.

³⁶ Linda Colley, Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837 (Yale: Yale University Press, 2005).

³⁷ Colley, p. 6.

The post-Austenian novels discussed here also reveal the influence of the National Tale, as the present example of Hawkins illustrates.

We learn in the initial chapters of Heraline that Lord Beltravers is a hypochondriac who, believing that he is dying, consigns his daughter's welfare to two sets of guardians, half of whom are virtuous and half of whom are ruthlessly self-interested. It is in the delineation of these opposing guardians that Hawkins's interest in national traits, and the conflict existing in contemporary society between nations, emerges. Heraline initially falls under the negative influence of the fashionable Mr and Mrs de Quinte, for example, a French couple favoured by her father, and she is unable to realise that the kind and familiarly British rector Mr Meryon might prove a valuable ally. Heraline's eventual rejection of the de Quintes is conveyed as a fortification of Britishness and associated recognition of the national Other as threatening. In building this meaning, Hawkins foists several undesirable characteristics onto the de Quintes. De Quinte is, after all, Beltravers's dishonest, superstitious 'Quack' doctor, who disregards the institution of the family by marrying flippantly in order to please his patron. In contrast, the reader is encouraged to feel kinship with Mr Meryon, the sincere and courageous rector who speaks out against Heraline's exposure to the de Quintes:

He had baptized her: he wished to see her in due time confirmed; and on this point he ventured to speak to Lord Lynford, at the same time offering his professional services, and excusing his intrusion by fear that, educated under persons not Protestant, a very essential part of education might not well be attended to.' (vol. 1, p. 48)

Beltravers is so angry at Meryon's interference in the issue above that he gives the de Quintes yet further freedom to influence Heraline. The de Quintes take this opportunity, displaying the depths of their depravity by scheming at length to steal from their hosts.

In the plots that they concoct to elicit money from Heraline, the de Quintes contribute to another intertextual connection, with the anti-Jacobin novel of the turn of the century. Over many months, the de Quintes manage to dupe Heraline into a false courtship, by which they gain financial advantage. In doing so, they turn the heroine into a Quixote figure, of the kind drawn in Elizabeth Hamilton's Memoirs of Modern Philosophers (1801), as they utilise her predilection for romantic narratives and clichés in order to fool her. Owing in large part to her formidable status as the 'baroness in potentia', Heraline has few friends or acquaintances who are prepared to challenge her. Her notions about love and life, which are drawn largely from fiction, are thus rarely checked. Detecting scope in this situation to swindle his charge, de Quinte finds a miniature portrait of a handsome, noble-looking youth in an obscure part of the house, and places it in Heraline's view, knowing that her curiosity will be roused. De Quinte does not know who the man in the picture is, but he tells Heraline that it is a deserving and brave youth, the 'Comte de Quel'qu'un', who has lost his fortune unfairly. Keen to believe in the existence of such a 'hero', and to fancy herself as his 'heroine', Heraline obliges when de Quinte offers to transfer to the Comte any money that she might want to donate. Spurred on by this success, de Quinte fabricates a bogus correspondence between Heraline and the Comte, which ends in the heroine contemplating marriage. At this point, however, Beltravers discovers the portrait and the de Quintes' machinations, and chastises Heraline. He also confides in Meryon that, unbeknown to either Heraline or the de Quintes, the man in the portrait is a pretender to his fortune who has not been in Britain for many years. He hopes that his daughter will have gained wisdom from her mistakes, and that, if she ever met such a man, she would reject him. Unlike her counterparts in other Quixote plots, however, Heraline is neither humiliated nor coerced to mend her gullibility; this heroine possesses too much confidence

and potential power to be permanently daunted. Thus, when the portrait's real subject, Colonel Wantston, eventually appears in the novel, Heraline goes against all advice and marries him.

The above summary substantiates the notion that Hawkins crosses boundaries in Heraline. These stylistic amalgamations inflect the heroine herself, who is similarly mixed. Heraline's character is one in which generosity meets foolishness, for example, and in which intelligence blends with stubbornness. In terms of the circles in which she moves, Heraline also accrues masculine knowledge of the world whilst exhibiting feminine sensibility. Likewise at the level of the reader's response, Heraline is at once likeable and irksome; her independence renders her refreshing and empowered, yet the errors that she makes over the course of her life also serve to question her right to this autonomy. Heraline's masculinity lies at the heart of these seeming paradoxes, and it is the trait that differentiates her from many of Austen's heroines. From her youth, Heraline's gender is confused. She is given the attention and responsibilities that would normally be reserved for sons, bearing witness to the kinds of conversations about the monarchy, work, and government, from which Austen's female protagonists as well as her readers are debarred. Most importantly, Heraline is assertive and self-governing, as the way in which she is named anticipates. The act of naming is an important one. Naming signifies the individual's entrance into the linguistic universe and, as we saw in relation to Kelty's stifled, silent heroines, a woman's relationship with language is critical to her self-concept. Beltravers names Heraline in a manner foreshadowing a confident use of language; he and his advisors give the child's name serious thought, before deciding on Heraline because it combines the Latin for ruler (Heral) with a more conventionally feminine and English ending (line). This name unites the masculine and the feminine, shaping Heraline's

development of masculine confidence as well as female beauty. Whilst quiet in the early stages of the novel, Heraline grows into her name and role simultaneously, with her acquaintances realising that it was impossible ‘that in this situation the young lady should not have assumed high notions of herself, her importance, and her power’ (vol. 1, p. 23).

A large part of Heraline’s confidence derives from her familiarity with her father’s views and activities. Beltravers spends a great deal of time in London in the House of Peers, where he grows dissatisfied with inheritance laws and the reported state of the monarchy. Hawkins’s delineation of Beltravers’s experiences and state of mind enlarges the territory of the novel, but it is also significant for the impact that it has upon Heraline; whilst many fictional fathers keep such aspects of their lives from their female relatives, Beltravers makes his daughter his companion when he returns to St. Emeril’s, and reports details of his business to her. Beltravers describes his daughter repeatedly as the ‘baroness in potentia’, and awards her responsibilities accordingly:

She saw a house and establishment kept for her – she had her carriage and her servants; her health was matter of inquiry in the immediate neighbourhood, and her improvements seemed to set the country in motion; she was the idol of the villagers, she was flattered by her teachers, and everything gave her to understand, that some great conclusion awaited these preparatory premises. (vol. 1, p. 23)

Owing to her mien as much as to her rank, Heraline is treated as a person of independent worth and consequence. This heroine’s prospects do not necessarily rest on her making a fortunate marriage; indeed, if she remains a single woman, Heraline will possess wealth and power. As she realises this fact, Heraline comes to adopt more and more masculine character traits. In keeping with the emphasis on language suggested by her naming, Hawkins conveys Heraline’s growing autonomy in terms of an improving facility with language. Tellingly, Heraline’s ability to think and speak for herself is represented as an

encroachment on conventionally masculine rights; the heroine's positive speeches often involve a usurpation of her father's authority. The following exchange exemplifies this:

Now was the moment of projection. 'Will you let me choose for myself?' said her ladyship, advancing unconsciously from her seat.
 'Hey-day!' exclaimed his lordship – 'Pray let me know, Lady Heraline, who is the happy man – pray tell me who it is that is to be honoured with the possession of my property; for, after all, something may depend upon my choice. – I did not quite expect this, I must confess – but I am a poor, broken-down creature – of no consequence now to any body – so I might have expected this. – Pray, madam, let me into your councils – if I may be so bold.
 (vol. 1, p. 77)

In this scene, Beltravers and his daughter appear to switch roles. Beltravers's language reflects the flustered and somewhat helpless state more usually occupied by a heroine, whereas Heraline words her right to choose her husband confidently and precisely. As the novel progresses, Heraline's assertion of her freedoms is further linked to the patriarch's decline:

Now, why did the Earl of Lynford, who was no very egregious fool, though he was perhaps equidistant from the character of a wise man, talk in this silly manner?– His daughter was very far from the least tincture of silliness- it could not therefore be to please her- Why did he talk so?- He did it, because he had points to carry which he did not have the independent courage to bring forward at once:– with absolute power in his hands, he was afraid of his daughter- it was, he knew, she who bore the lofty mind. (vol. 1, p. 132)

At this point in the novel, Heraline's confidence appears unshakable. Hawkins has protected her heroine from patriarchal control by giving her wealth and independence. During the second half of the text, however, Heraline suffers a downfall, the cause of which is marriage. Lord Beltravers states that Heraline may marry of her own accord when she comes of age. His only advice is that her husband should be British and trustworthy, and that if Heraline wishes to marry before she is twenty-one, then she should consult Mr Meryon. On her father's death, Heraline meets and falls in love with Colonel Wantston. Despite his implication in the de Quintes' deceit, Wantston appears to be a good, genuine

man. Unwilling to submit to Meryon's, or indeed to anybody's, authority, Heraline marries Wantston.

Heraline's marriage represents a turning point in the text. The heroine arrives at St. Emeril's a triumphant married woman, so accustomed to her independence as a single woman that she does not expect her status as wife to be accompanied by any drastic alterations in her life. Changes do occur, however, when Wantston turns out to be a neglectful husband. Heraline's earlier power now becomes a hindrance, as it throws her current oppression into sharp relief. When she realises Wantston's dishonour and depravity, Heraline is dumbfounded, firstly by the affront that this represents to her, and secondly by the fact that she is largely powerless to help herself. When her husband grows increasingly cold and indifferent, the narrator places great emphasis on Heraline's state of shock; she assumes initially that she has the right to obtain a separation from Wantston, and wishes to do so. She is quickly made aware, however, that such an action would generate too much shame and ostracism to be borne. Heraline is struck by her dependent status, and her world collapses. The narrator recounts her thoughts:

A long conference, in which no sensitive part of her mind escaped the probe, ended in her submission, against her judgement, to that which at present made a sad inroad in her integrity, and threatened in future to be no less hostile to her peace. She, who had so loudly and early asserted her independence, who had challenged her right to be considered- she, who was to give the law to the man to whom she gave her hand- she, who would have chosen a husband more by his power of gracing her triumph than with any consideration of the relative duties to which she pledged herself;- she, who was all taunt, all sarcasm, when presumption stimulated her to unsheathe the weapons of her wit, was now induced [...] to become a partaker in a nefarious concealment. (vol. 2, p. 76)

As this narration suggests, in Heraline marriage not only fails to provide happiness, but it also robs the heroine of the power that she could have had as a spinster. In view of this outcome, Heraline's power and masculinity serve the purpose of displaying marriage in its

most pernicious light. Owing to the basic inequality existing between men and women in the marriage state, becoming a wife always signals negation; even Heraline's seemingly concrete, consistent self-confidence proves to be tenuous within marriage. Convention dictates that a woman should marry, but it is little more than a matter of luck as to whether her husband treats her well, and this in any case is a matter in which a wife has no say. Indeed, even a marriage such as that of Elizabeth and Darcy in Pride and Prejudice is unsteady, because the wife's power is determined by her husband's will and whim.

Laetitia Matilda Hawkins's depiction of a brash, independent, and at times arrogant heroine represents a development of the Austen novel, and individualises her within the post-Austenian sub-genre. Ultimately, however, Hawkins's delineation of the 'baroness in potentia' tends towards the same critique of marriage and male power that permeates Mary Ann Kelly's novels. Over time, Heraline grows yet more oppressed as a wife, as Wantston coerces her to live in London, allowing the separation of estate from title against which the first page of the novel warned. It is only on Wantston's death that Heraline can begin to reorder her affairs, and to lead a wiser, more moral life. The gender politics at work in this story might seem ambiguous at a cursory glance. Early in the text, the heroine's autonomy and confidence appear in a positive light. Yet Heraline later fails to use this independence wisely, hastily marrying a man who mistreats her. This action could be used to critique Heraline's initial possession of independence, and to argue that she should not have had the freedom to choose her partner. It is the shackles of marriage, however, that crush Heraline, because it is as a wife that she is denied the freedom to rectify her mistakes. Marriage thus enables Heraline, perhaps the most spirited and capable heroine of the sub-genre, to be abused. In this way whilst Hawkins's creation of a heroine with as much masculine power as

female sensitivity makes for an unusual and engaging tale, its primary significance lies in the political points made by Heraline's misery as a feme covert.

Anne Raikes Harding

[H]owever well I might work up some reminiscences of past days, neither Mr Murray, Mr Colburn, nor any other publishing Mister, would be willing to give me any thing for my work, unless introduced and patronized by some one or two, high in power, from whose notice the work would gain more celebrity, and more merit, than from my labours; and through whose influence Mr Publisher would make it pay him.

Anne Raikes Harding³⁸

Anne Raikes Harding was a prolific Moral-Domestic writer, producing six novels of three- and four-volume length between the years 1818 to 1828. The most striking element of Harding's oeuvre is its inflection in every aspect by the author's own needs, experiences, and thoughts upon the book trade. Writing was for all women novelists of the time a collaborative process, involving interplay between pressure from critics, perceptions of genre, and competition with fellow authors. Whilst many women were anxious about their position in the publishing scene, however, Harding came to use the novel as a space in which to discuss the commercial, economic, and cultural factors to which she was subject. The extremity of her financial considerations is responsible for this practice, as it forced Harding to engage more fully with the external factors governing the reception of her works, and to be comparatively open about her experiences. As a result, Harding represents

³⁸ Anne Raikes Harding, *Dissipation. A Tale of Simple Life* (London: A. K. Newman, 1827; CME 3-628-47438-8), vol. 1, p. vii. All further references are to this edition and are given in the text.

an interesting example of a 'jobbing' writer, whose novels offer additional insights into the contemporary publishing scene.

Harding's life and work influenced one another; she was the only post-Austenian writer to ask for the assistance of the Royal Literary Fund, and the need to make money is discernible in her fiction at both a meta-textual and a thematic level. In order to attract readers, for example, Harding constantly altered the packaging of her texts, hereby drawing attention to the tendency of readers and reviewers to judge novels superficially. Although the messages that she conveys are similar in all of her novels, some bear the reserved label 'Tale', whilst one appears as a 'Novel', and yet another is playfully sub-titled 'Not a Novel'. Furthermore one of Harding's novels actually contains a preface in which the non-fictional factors influencing the reception of novels is discussed, and in which the harsh life of the female author is laid bare and bemoaned. With such explications of her negotiations in the book trade, Harding gives expression to the conventionally silenced perspective of the woman writer. Within her fictions, Harding correspondingly demonstrates an effort to centralise habitually peripheral voices. This tendency represents a development of the Austenian story; in focusing on dissipated and doomed heroines, Harding picks up the kind of characters who exist on the fringes of Austen's novels, and tells their stories more fully. Harding creates an inclusive ethos in her fiction, which reorders the composition of the Moral-Domestic as well as the Austen novel.

Because life and writing were so intimately connected for Harding, certain details of her own outsider status contextualise her fiction. Harding's difficulties began with the death of her husband, a Bristol merchant, in 1805, an event which left her poor and alone.³⁹

³⁹ The following short biography of Harding is drawn from three sources: The Feminist Companion to Literature in English: Women Writers from the Middle Ages to the Present, ed. by Virginia Blain, Patricia

Harding's sense of isolation was intensified by the fact that one of her daughters was mentally disabled, and would be dependant throughout her life. For many years, Harding managed to remain solvent by running a school, producing religious tracts, and publishing letters in periodicals. Yet she became destitute when she was cheated by her lawyer and lost a great deal of money. As a result, in the 1850s Harding was forced to approach the Royal Literary Fund, exposing her privation and seeking pecuniary aid. In a letter dated 18 November 1851, Harding introduces herself as a respectable, hard-working woman whose life has been one of loneliness and trial.⁴⁰ She recalls her husband's early death as a day on which she was 'robbed of all I best loved, and nearly all I possessed', and left alone 'to bring up my children (one of them to this day an invalid) respectfully and usefully'. Harding states that she was dumbfounded when the lawyer 'in whose hands the whole of my little property was placed, and whose duty it was to watch over and guard my interests, was ruined'. This lawyer decamped, with Harding's capital of around one thousand pounds. Since that time, she has found the effort to survive 'almost beyond my strength either mentally or bodily'. In describing her want as well as her sense of segregation, Harding flouts convention somewhat, surpassing the boundary of what a respectable lady ought to reveal, and bringing her private life into the public sphere. The indication is that necessity, and perhaps the ostracism of her position too, gave Harding a certain freedom, with which she exposed her problems and opinions. This trait illuminates her two post-Austenian novels, Dissipation (1827) and Experience (1828), which discuss the conditions of female

Clements, and Isobel Grundy (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 486; Dictionary of National Biography, From the Earliest Times to 1900, ed. by Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee (London: Oxford University Press, 1921-1922), vol. 8, p. 1219; Harding's letters to the Royal Literary Fund, as contained in Archives of the Royal Literary Fund, reel 47, file 1281.

⁴⁰ The reader of Royal Literary Fund correspondence must, of course, always take into account that its supplicants intended to give an impression of destitution, which may have led to exaggeration. Nonetheless, certain facts about Harding's life, as well as her unconventional tone, can be accepted from these letters.

authorship whilst also fictionalising the experiences evident in Harding's Royal Literary Fund correspondence noted above. These novels display a particular relationship with Mansfield Park, with Harding's commercialism being responsible for several of the key additions that she makes. These texts invoke a self-consciousness that de-mystifies the activity of novel-writing, and which facilitates Harding's delineation of characters that the reader might expect her to overlook.

Dissipation. A Tale of Simple Life (1827)

Nowhere is Harding's playful, commercial attitude to her writing more in evidence than in the preliminaries to Dissipation. Harding's choice of title courts critical approval, as the sub-heading 'A Tale of Simple Life' recalls existing moral and instructive texts, and implies that the trait of dissipation will be censured throughout the novel. Harding quickly draws attention to the deceptive potential of a novel's title, however, by including a bold preface that comments quite radically on the hard life of the woman writer, and contradicts the signs of Dissipation's title page. This 'Introduction' is a ten-page tale, which frames and discusses the main text of Dissipation, and which is autobiographical in part. In this vignette a deserving mother, Mrs Willoughby, struggles with her sick daughter Josephine, and decides upon novel-writing as a method by which to pay for her medical bills. Mrs Willoughby appears immediately to be Harding's mouthpiece; like the author, she is both the carer of a disabled child and a jobbing writer. Mrs Willoughby produces a manuscript for sale, which she and her daughter ponder whilst exchanging views on the contemporary book trade. Josephine fears that her mother will face unfair competition from men, for

example, and makes reference to the impact that the recent influx of male novelists had upon women writers:

When you read this volume the other day (pointing to a popular work that lay on the table), you observed, that it was a mighty easy way of earning money, and required but little exercise of time or talent; now I know that you have abundance of anecdote and memoranda in your common-place book, to furnish materials for better tales than any he has written; yet they say he is to have a very large sum for his three volumes. (Dissipation, vol. 1, p. vi)

With this comment, Josephine advances a dismissive, resentful perspective on male novelists of the 1820s. Her hostility may even be read as an attack on Walter Scott in particular, whose Woodstock; or, The Cavalier was a three-volume work published in the preceding year.

Mrs Willoughby also laments women's stifled position amongst male writers. She elaborates upon the external factors obstructing the female author's success, stating:

We are humble individuals, living in a retired manner, remote from the metropolis and the world of fashion: however well I might work up some reminiscences of past days, neither Mr Murray, nor Mr Colburn, nor any other publishing Mister, would be willing to give me any thing for my work, unless introduced and patronized by some one or two, high in power, from whose notice the work would gain more celebrity, and more merit, than from my labours; and through whose influence Mr Publisher would make it pay him. (vol. 1, p. vii)

In this representation of writing, Mrs Willoughby de-mystifies the process by which a popular novel is produced; even if a writer is not motivated by financial reward, such factors as reputation and contacts are as crucial to commercial success as are creativity and talent. Critically, male writers are pre-disposed to surpass women in this climate; men are sanctioned to trumpet their talents and to pursue contacts, whilst women are encouraged to shy away from a public persona. Mrs Willoughby clearly begrudges male writers, viewing the novel as a female sphere that ought to be protected as such; whilst men have many

professions and opportunities by which to make money, women do not. Indeed, there are very few means in society by which a woman such as Mrs Willoughby might respectably support herself:

unwilling as the widow was to draw down observation as an author, or push herself into notice as a literary character, something must be done – the doctor's bills *must be paid* – the health of her children was very delicate, the indulgences required for them numerous, and their expenses daily increasing, while her income knew no increase. Josephine said, and said truly, that it was better to work than to want, or have debts, and her mother thought writing the most respectable and least laborious sort of work she could pursue; she therefore turned to her memoranda and remarks made in former and gayer days, marked a selection, stitched two quires of paper together, fastened the door of her little closet, trimmed the fire, drew the table closer, put on her spectacles, mended her pens, and thus commenced author. (pp. ix-x)

The manuscript that Mrs Willoughby writes comprises the main story of Dissipation, which begins as Chapter One and ends in volume three. Volume four of the novel marks a return to the tale of Josephine and Mrs Willoughby, who resume their discussion of the story at hand. In allowing the fictional writer of Dissipation to give her view on the conditions of female authorship, Harding creates a peritextual space that gives voice to experiences that are glossed over elsewhere.

In Dissipation itself, Harding tells another habitually neglected story. Virtually every character in Dissipation has a template within Austen's fiction, sometimes with striking echoes. The kinds of characters that appear on the peripheries of Austen's texts, however, are brought to the centre of the action in Harding's novel. In particular, Dissipation contains two opposed heroines, who resemble Austenian pairings such as Elizabeth and Lydia Bennet in Pride and Prejudice, and Fanny Price and Mary Crawford in Mansfield Park. Yet where Austen prioritised the caring, virtuous, and respectable member of such twosomes, and placed her counterpart in the shade, Harding centralises instead the

dissipated, in some ways disagreeable, heroine. In Dissipation, Clara Hardcastle is a charming and virtuous young woman, whilst her friend Rachel Henderson is a more ambiguous and troubled individual. In the opening chapters, Clara appears as a heroine styled on Elizabeth Bennet. Whilst staying with her grave aunt Susan, and awaiting the completion of the vicarage at Hanby where her brother George is to become minister, Clara exercises her keen eye for the comic misconceptions of others. She remarks on her host's attitude of

sighing and groaning, moping and moaning – sorrowing for sins never committed, and lamenting depravities never felt, all day long, as though – ‘Go forth, and be miserable!’ were the first and most impressive command, and – ‘Be wretched on earth, and I will make you happy in heaven!’ the first and greatest of promises. Oh, I am out and out weary of it! When, George, shall we leave this abode of whining and long faces? (vol. 1, p. 12)

In further similarity with Elizabeth, Clara is sensible as well as light-hearted, reserving her sternest criticism for Mrs Welsted, a local woman who prides herself on her charity and frugality, whilst living as a glutton who cannot regulate her own household. Set against Lady Susan on the one hand and Mrs Welsted on the other, Clara is an appealing, obvious heroine, and would certainly take centre stage in an Austen novel. Yet Harding deposes the Austen heroine, focusing instead on Rachel Henderson. In contrast to Clara, Rachel is an impressionable, romantic girl, who at points appears perversely to invoke her own downfall. Rachel's attributes include philanthropy and energy, but she is ‘not domestic, nor was she fashionable, and, strange to say, was unmarried at twenty, and apparently without the prospect of entering that desired pale’ (vol. 1, p. 85). Rachel is introduced to the reader as a Quaker who befriends Clara, but she quickly becomes the focus of both the local community and the narrator when her head is turned by an infamous rake. Whilst Rachel would not be out of place in an Austen novel, her centrality would be. She shares

similarities with Lydia Bennet of Pride and Prejudice, for example, but instead of being pushed to the margins of the story, she exists at its heart. This shift in emphasis enables Harding to scrutinise rather than to conjecture about life after youthful dissipation.

Rachel's suitor, Edward Thornton, has disgraced his Quaker family by becoming a 'gambler, dissipated and profligate, to say nothing of being a sceptic' (vol. 1, p. 183).

Within the first volume of the novel, Rachel is convinced of Edward's reform, and marries him against the earlier advice of her family and friends. For a time the couple are happy at Clovers farm, but as the months pass both Edward and Rachel tire of hard work and the monotony of village life, and seek pleasure in visits to London.

Edward neglects his finances over a period of months, and on his return to Clovers farm he is confronted by two men, who demand repayment for debts incurred in London. Rachel's mother, her stern brother John, and the Hardcastles arrive to witness this distress. Mrs Henderson is so overpowered that she faints and dies in her daughter's arms, whilst John states that he will never help the Thorntons financially, and is attacked by Edward as a result. After much furore, the creditors are finally satisfied; Mrs Henderson leaves two thousand pounds to her daughter in her will, to which Rachel allows Edward access. Edward might be expected to learn from the errors of his lifestyle at this stage, having narrowly evaded jail, but instead his behaviour worsens. On returning to London, his actions alienate Rachel:

His visitors, male and female, were of a description she would, three years before, have shrunk from, with unqualified disgust – that her husband depended on his luck at the hazard table for his liberty: an execution in the house was no longer a strange thing; and Edward's frequent arrests ceased to disturb her amusements. Quarrels and jealousies were continuously springing up between them, and mutual recriminations produced all but mutual hatred. (vol. 1, p. 222)

Such depictions of a heroine confronted early in her marriage by a neglectful husband are standard within the post-Austenian sub-genre. What is more singular in *Dissipation*, however, is that Harding's heroine actually worsens this situation with her own dissipation. Rachel possesses, and then tosses aside, a degree of financial power which the trapped wives of many post-Austenian tales would cherish. Owing to her careless attitude, Rachel has signed a document allowing Edward to use all of her two thousand pounds, a sum over which she could, by her mother's stipulation, have had control. On seeing her husband's wasteful, immoral ways, the wounded Rachel visits Brighton to seek solace and pleasure. When she returns, she solicits the help of her old friends, the Hardcastles, but finds them dubious. Confronted at this point with the fruits of her flippant attitude and frivolous lifestyle, the heroine claims to repent:

I am by the cruel persecutions of an unnatural brother, and by my own folly, reduced to beggary, or at least to poverty. What then? I shall no more be frightened out of my senses by Edward's violence, shocked by the indecencies of his companions, insulted by his mistresses, nor witness to his midnight vices and debaucheries: thus released, I shall return to the simplicity of my early days.

(vol. 2, p. 12)

This speech elicits sympathy from the reader, as it represents a woman immobilised by marriage, having suffered physical and psychological coercion at the hands of her husband. George Hardcastle is less understanding of Rachel, however, as he 'recollected her habits of self-satisfied idleness' too well, and feels that she is not to be trusted (vol. 2, p. 14). This seemingly harsh pronouncement is proven right over time; when the Thorntons' debts are cleared, and Edward seeks to redeem himself with a life at sea, Rachel once again pursues a fashionable life for which she cannot pay. It is only after she is sent to prison, requiring Clara's final assistance, that Rachel accepts the errors of her ways and changes her habits forever. On being widowed,

years rolled over the altered character of Rachel Thornton: she still loved to be seen and known in active employ; but she now in truth visited the sick, fed the hungry, clothed the poor, raised the distressed, and taught the ignorant, under the influence and direction of tried and truly Christian friends, and fraught by that pure religion which had now its seat in her heart. (vol. 3, p. 249)

The story ends as Rachel tells an acquaintance, Mrs Willoughby of the framing narrative, to write the tale of her chequered life, so that it might serve as a warning to others.

Dissipation is striking for its depiction of an unhappy marriage, and for the degree of misery into which it portrays its heroine as falling. This novel's most individual and significant detail, however, is its centralisation of a type of character that the reader might expect to be peripheral. In depicting Rachel Henderson as the main protagonist, Harding turns away from the conventional Austenian heroine, and elucidates the problematic, ostracised female character whose story Austen, in keeping with convention and propriety, is reluctant to tell. This move expands the territory of the novel, depicting unusual feminine experiences of prison and dejection. It also contributes to a political statement about the need to include, in fiction and society at large, the perspectives of those who are outsiders in various ways.

Experience. A Tale for all Ages (1828)

Experience is Harding's last novel of the 1820s, and her final post-Austenian work.⁴¹ Like the heroine of Dissipation, the heroine of Experience is something of an outcast, as her disposition and conduct differentiate her from her acquaintances. In contrast to Rachel Henderson, however, Georgette Dal Castro is neither impressionable nor dissipated; rather, she is an impressively decisive and proud character. A striking resonance exists between

⁴¹ Anne Raikes Harding, Experience. A Tale for All Ages (London: A. K. Newman, 1828; CME 3-628-47617-8). All further references are to this edition and are given in the text.

Georgette and Fanny Price of Mansfield Park. With these heroines, both Austen and Harding construct a ‘Cinderella story’ around a poor relation, who is abused and belittled by her supercilious hosts, before gaining moral as well as material ascendancy. Harding extends her story, however, by dealing characteristically in extremes; Georgette’s victimisation is more intensely executed than is Fanny’s, and the assertive, confident register which she comes to adopt expands upon her forebear’s modest self-esteem. In describing her heroine, Harding writes that ‘Georgette was so perfectly new, so fresh, so simple, yet so collected – all she said or did was so original’ (vol. 3, p. 176). Dissipation opens with Madeline Caerphillon, a beautiful but mean-spirited heiress, and her relation Percival Alphington, discussing Georgette. Whilst Madeline torments her, Percival treats her with kindness, performing a role similar to that played by Edmund Bertram in Mansfield Park by trying to integrate Georgette more fully into family life. We learn from Madeline’s superior, mocking remarks that Georgette is treated by the earl and countess of Caerphillon as something better than a servant but markedly less than a daughter. Although this young Spanish woman has lived with the Caerphillons for many years, the precise relation in which she stands to the family is a constant cause of confusion. Since her arrival, Georgette has spent much of her time in the maids’ work room carrying out menial household duties. Nonetheless, she has managed to become accomplished in music and painting through her friendship with Edith, Madeline’s less favoured but benevolent sister. Georgette also possesses a seemingly natural self-sufficiency and strong morality, which belie the lowly position in which she is kept, and irritate her hosts.

When a large party of company arrives at the Caerphillons’ estate, Georgette’s poise and improving beauty attract notice, and encourage many guests to question the earl over her lineage. For example Sydney Dunbar, a comic character who has spent some time

abroad, wants to speak to Georgette about Spain. Harding's humorous, enjoyable description of this character recalls Austen's idiom, and is worth reproducing:

Sydney had travelled through Greece, with a head full of lord Byron and his exploits; some body had told him that he personally resembled that unfortunate nobleman - his vanity told him he possessed the talents and genius likewise - his sister and his mirror told him he had a finely-formed throat - and every body told him how exquisitely becoming the Albanian dress was to his lordship. Behold Sydney then, with an open throat, falling collar, short curled hair, and full Albanian costume; affecting a little lameness, talking mystically of disappointment and sorrows, and uttering poetical rhapsodies, the best of them borrowed from the late bard.' (*Experience*, vol. 1, pp. 35-6)

All that Sydney can deduce about Georgette is that she is a cousin, or some such relation, who is rarely admitted into company. The governess Miss Roubel knows more, having witnessed the fact that 'no West Indian slave is used half as bad, but Georgette never complains, for she is Spanish, and very proud' (vol. 1, p. 100). Despite the degradation of her dependent life, Georgette maintains her own principles; this heroine is not tempted to emulate her hosts, however unhappy she becomes. In fact, she is disgusted by the shallow Madeline and her wicked, sycophantic maid, Williams. The following exchange exemplifies Georgette's stoical refusal to submit to individuals whom she cannot respect:

Indeed nothing provoked either of them so much as the unfeeling *nonchalance* with which Georgette bore all their taunts, gibes, and insults: on one occasion, Madeline so far forgot herself, as to slap the pale cheek of her victim; for an instant, both cheeks blazed; but quickly subduing her anger, she coolly offered the other cheek, saying - 'When thy enemy smites thee on one cheek, offer to him the other.'
(vol. 1, p. 166)

Over the course of the novel we learn that this self-confidence stems from Georgette's noble birth, which Lord Caerphillon has selfishly sought to conceal. Georgette was taken from her native land at such a young age that she only has vague recollections of her good parents, although these are sufficient to render her convictions unshakeable. Georgette's 'proud heart clung to the Dal Castro family, with an internal feeling of almost abhorrence for the haughty

family of Caerphillon' (vol. 1, p. 170). The final mysteries encircling Georgette are cleared after the arrival of Major Kenyon, a man who knows something of Spanish history, and encourages Percival to believe that Georgette is the daughter of the earl of Caerphillon's sister and a member of Spanish royalty whom she married.

After further investigations, Percival

had little doubt of who Georgette really was; but why was she kept in the humbling, mortifying situation he had for two years known her to fill? Kenyon spoke of her parents as honourable and respectable – was it possible the earl would sacrifice this child to enrich his own?
(vol. 1, p. 151)

Percival is 'resolutely determined to rescue the young Georgette from the fangs of oppression, and ascertain her right to a place in the ranks of her family' (vol. 1, p. 161). The earl admits that Georgette is his niece, but states that she is 'the child of shame, and it were a pity to drag into light the only blot of an ancient and noble house' (vol. 1, p. 160). The countess of Caerphillon demands a fuller account of Georgette's past at this point, and is told that she is illegitimate, as her parents' marriage is inadmissible owing to their devotion to different Churches. These concerns are eventually dismissed, and Georgette's position is elevated. With her new power and respect, she begins, as did Fanny Price, to have a positive effect on those around her. Madeline, however, is not improved by the heroine. As Georgette's rise eclipses Madeline, the latter's vanity and meanness only strengthen, and she plots to cause Georgette embarrassment in various ways. On seeing her cousin at leisure one day, for example, Madeline appears indignant: "Georgette," exclaimed Madeline, angrily, on seeing her composedly take out her portfolio and pencils, "Georgette, why do you linger in this room? Williams has work for you below." (vol. 2, p. 16) The heroine shocks Madeline by replying, 'with calm disdain', that "[t]he reign of Williams, and of Madeline too, has ceased" (vol. 2, pp. 16-17). Under these

circumstances, Madeline feels her own perfections to be called into question. Her sister and cousin attract the attentions on which she once had a monopoly. Madeline sees Sydney's attachment to Edith, and Percival's admiration for Georgette, and considers her own unfair behaviour. Yet whilst she realises that 'her former conduct toward the unacknowledged orphan had been cruel and oppressive', Madeline continues to view 'the dark-eyed girl with a malicious hatred', and 'resolved to let no opportunity of humiliating or insulting her pass' (vol. 2, pp. 69-70). With this mean attitude, Madeline appears to be beyond help.

In some of the novel's darkest scenes, Madeline falls dramatically from grace, deteriorating into sexual transgressions, and eventually being ostracised. Madeline's fate provides a final connection with Mansfield Park when she marries the stupid but rich Mountstewart with little thought for love. Her actions parallel those of Maria Bertram, who marries Rushworth for money and security. Both Maria and Madeline are shallow and complacent, and cannot remain faithful in their boring, cold marriages. Whilst Georgette is a happy wife, and her husband serves in parliament, Madeline cannot resist 'the flattery of designing villainy' (vol. 4, p. 202). Madeline's adultery leads her husband to challenge her lover to a duel, in which he dies. The earl of Caerphillon offers Madeline an independent living on her disgrace, but she refuses this, choosing instead to place herself under the protection of her husband's killer. Madeline's behaviour leads to her isolation, as '[e]ven in circles of lax morality, this was condemned as "too bad"' (vol. 4, p. 206) The fate of Madeline does not differ dramatically from that of her counterpart in Mansfield Park, but it nonetheless adds an interesting, detailed representation of female viciousness to the text; Madeline's actions are more cruel and deliberate than are Maria's, and they are rendered more intimately. Harding is unafraid of depicting such a depraved, hopeless female character, which further illustrates her traversal of the novel's boundaries.

Like Mansfield Park, Experience denigrates a complacent, immoral upper-class family, and charts the rise to personal influence and material power of a lowly relation. Of most interest in Experience is the heroine's outsider status, which supports the concern with marginality that pervaded Harding's life and writing. Georgette is yet more of an outcast than is Fanny Price, owing to her assertiveness as well as to her status as non-British. Indeed, whilst Georgette is of a superior moral fibre to Rachel Henderson, she is that heroine's counterpart in her difference from the conventional heroine. The centralisation of such characters reflects the inclusive nature of Harding's fiction, owing to which she clarified experiences left obscure in much Austenian as well as Moral-Domestic fiction.

Susan Edmonstone Ferrier

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that there is no passion so deeply rooted in human nature as that of pride.

Susan Edmonstone Ferrier⁴²

It reminds one of Miss Austen's very best thing in every page.

William Blackwood⁴³

Susan Edmonstone Ferrier produced some of the post-Austenian sub-genre's latest and most skilled texts, evincing clear connections with the Victorian novel as well as with Jane Austen and a number of Moral-Domestic writers. Ferrier was one of the most distinguished

⁴² Susan Edmonstone Ferrier, The Inheritance (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1824; CME 3-628-47877-4), vol. 1, p. 1. All further references are to this edition and are given in the text.

⁴³ Letter from William Blackwood to Susan Ferrier, late 1823 - early 1824, regarding Ferrier's The Inheritance (1824). Included in Memoir and Correspondence of Susan Ferrier. 1782-1854. Collected by her Grand-Nephew John Ferrier, ed. by John A. Doyle (London: Murray, 1898; repr. London: Eveleigh, 1929), p. 174.

women writers of the late Romantic period; she achieved impressive success with the reading public as well as considerable encouragement from the reviews. This support combined with literary merit to elevate Marriage (1818), The Inheritance (1824), and Destiny (1831) above the productions of many of Ferrier's fellow novelists. What is yet more interesting and distinctive about Ferrier is the simple fact that, in addition to being deftly drawn, her stories are highly comic. Apart from Francis Burney and Jane Austen, few women writing in the period dared to be humorous. It is true that comedic scenes and ironic asides pepper much Moral-Domestic fiction; there are many examples of this in the present chapter, and even Hannah More's Coelebs In Search of a Wife can be seen to have a tongue-in-cheek quality. Yet owing in part to the pressure to be instructive rather than entertaining, most of Ferrier's contemporaries refrained from centralising a humorous mode and purpose. As a result, Ferrier's amusing satires, which retain their appeal today, are somewhat anomalous, marking something of a break with standard, expected female narratives. A further way in which Ferrier diverges from women writers relates to her friendship with prominent literary men of the day, including William Blackwood, Sir Walter Scott, and Henry Mackenzie. Ferrier was respected, and furthermore engaged with, by these figures, and by consequence she contradicts part of the statement about the conditions of female authorship, made by Ellen Moers, which opened this chapter. Moers states that women writers developed an 'easy, almost rude familiarity' with one another's works, a claim that Ferrier's novels bear out.⁴⁴ Yet Moers also argues that women needed to do so in response to the fact that they were 'isolated in their own homes' and, unlike men, could not 'search out predecessors for guidance'.⁴⁵ Whilst this image of the stifled,

⁴⁴ Moers, p. 43.

⁴⁵ Moers, p. 43.

struggling woman writer holds true in many cases, Ferrier breaches it. Blackwood for one recommended that Ferrier circulate her works amongst critics and readers. She did so, and received both debate and encouraging advice. Writing to Mrs Connell in 1824, Ferrier reports of The Inheritance that ‘both Sir Walter Scott and Mr Mackenzie took it by the hand at the very first, which of course gave it a lift.’⁴⁶ Whilst such a statement could suggest Ferrier’s subservience to male opinions, it reveals that she created a vigorous, improving discourse around her work, breaking the mould of the female writer who passively awaited judgement. In her humour as well as in this discursive approach to writing, Ferrier went some way towards advancing the history of the woman writer. This renders her a fitting final contributor to the post-Austenian sub-genre.

With regard to Ferrier’s relationship with her female counterparts, The Inheritance and Destiny contain a number of strong resonances with Jane Austen. These are novels in which a heroine’s virtue is tested and rewarded, and in which social snobs, gossips, and hypochondriacs are satirised. In keeping with her fellow post-Austenian writers, Ferrier also adapts certain aspects of the Austen text. She treats marriage with greater suspicion than did Austen, for example, whilst her idiom moves slightly away from irony and towards a more burlesque form. Ferrier’s most significant and individual departure from Austen occurs at the level of theme, however, as she foregrounds questions of social class and social mobility with renewed emphasis. In Austen’s novels, rank and wealth are central concerns, with many heroines facing the prospect of degraded financial circumstances. Yet marriage often provides stability for the heroine, confining downward social mobility to the

⁴⁶ Memoirs and Correspondence of Susan Ferrier, pp. 179-80. Blackwood and Scott read and commented on Ferrier’s novels prior to their publication, as their correspondence, and the above comment from Ferrier to Mrs Connell, reveals. There are also many favourable Reviews of Ferrier’s novels, some of which compare her with the best of contemporary male novelists. Some of these appeared in the Edinburgh Evening Courant, and can be viewed in British Fiction, 1800-1829, <<http://www.british-fiction.cf.ac.uk/reviews/inhe24-33.html>>.

realm of possibility. Ferrier, in contrast, takes the threat of poverty to the next level, depicting heroines whose social class fluctuates to extremes. Within these plots, Ferrier explores the complex relationship between class, identity, and gender in detail, suggesting linkage with succeeding writers, such as Charles Dickens, who were concerned with Britain's changing class structure. Bolstering this connection is the fact that, for all her analysis, Ferrier's representations of class and social change remain somewhat ambiguous, and are left open to future debate.

The Inheritance (1824)

Ferrier's first post-Austenian novel of the 1820s, The Inheritance, seems to have struck its contemporary audience as innovative, with one reader remarking that, for herself and her family, the 'strain of religion and morality through it is refreshing, not wearisome like some of the late novels; in short we are all charmed with it'.⁴⁷ What rendered this novel enjoyable was its fusion of a sound moral message with humour and an emphasis on social class. This combination connects The Inheritance with Pride and Prejudice, as it leads Ferrier to examine various feelings that held Austen's interest, such as vanity and pride. The opening of The Inheritance sets up this relationship by echoing that of its forbear; Ferrier begins with the line '[i]t is a truth universally acknowledged, that there is no passion so deeply rooted in human nature as that of pride' (The Inheritance, vol. 1, p. 1). Both Pride and Prejudice and The Inheritance are deeply critical of excessive pride, depicting it as an impediment to judgement and humanity. Yet Ferrier's portrayal of pride differs from Austen's in important ways. In The Inheritance, Gertrude St Clair is born of downward social mobility, and experiences further changes to her class identity as the story

⁴⁷ Letter from Mrs Graham to Susan Ferrier, Memoir and Correspondence of Susan Ferrier, p. 181.

unfolds. In telling her story, Ferrier's definition of dangerous pride becomes narrower than Austen's. Whilst Pride and Prejudice critiques those who take pride in their wealth, it also mocks characters such as Mr Collins who take pride in supposed religious gravity, and adherence to propriety. In The Inheritance, in contrast, pride is only troublesome when it pertains to social status and money. This more pointed focus questions the correlation between rank, virtue, and power, which in turn represents something of a challenge to the existing social order.

The Inheritance opens with Gertrude St Clair's history. Gertrude's father, Thomas St Clair, was the youngest son of a family in which lineage was of pivotal importance; the narrator states that 'family pride had been cherished time immemorial by the noble race of Rossville' (vol. 1, p. 2). When Thomas married Sarah Black, a beautiful girl of obscure origin and no fortune, the prejudice of his family led to his disinheritance and banishment to France. Initially Thomas deplored his family's actions, but pride soon proved to be contagious, as whilst in France Thomas came to resent Sarah for her poor origins. Sarah also grew blighted by pride; although her marriage brought Thomas down the social ladder, it represented a rise for Sarah, which separated her from her family and environment. For both individuals, then, changes in class destabilised identity. This representation could be read as an argument against social mobility. Yet the experiences of the St Clairs' daughter suggest, over the course of the novel, that many members of the ruling class do not deserve their status, and would benefit from change. When Thomas dies relatively poor, for example, Gertrude and her mother are obliged to go to Scotland to live with Thomas's estranged brother, the current Lord Rossville, whose lack of a child renders the heroine a potential heiress. The Rossvilles suffer owing to social class, but for reasons that reverse

Sarah and Thomas's plight; where class fluidity uprooted Gertrude's parents, the Rossvilles lead a useless, tedious life, because of the rigid nature of the hierarchy in which they live.

Lord Rossville and his sister, Lady Betty, perform serious roles in Ferrier's text, as their unfitness to rule critiques the static social system. These characters also contribute to Ferrier's characteristic humour, however, as their pride and ignorance are rendered in an exaggerated manner. Lord Rossville, for example, is an excessively proud and cantankerous man, who is habituated to seeing his wishes accorded with. Ferrier renders him ridiculous by mocking his bulky physical presence and speech, and stating that his 'mind was already full, as full as it could hold, of little thoughts, little plans, little notions, little prejudices, little whims, and nothing short of regeneration could have made him otherwise' (vol. 1, pp. 24-5). His perversity is illustrated by his consistent desire to disrupt any plan in which he is not involved. The narrator sums up Lord Rossville dryly, stating that:

he had his good points, for he wished to see those around him happy, provided he was the dispenser of their happiness, and that they were happy precisely in the manner and degree he thought proper. (vol. 1, pp. 24-25)

The indication is that Lord Rossville has been made idle by his wealth. His sister, the vacuous Lady Betty, likewise exemplifies ruling-class folly, although the wry narrator states that her 'character does not possess materials to furnish so long a commentary' (vol. 1, p. 25). This spinster is self-consumed and isolated from general society. She works constantly from a bottomless basket of fabric and needlework whilst her pet, 'a fat, pampered, ill-natured lap-dog', never leaves her (vol. 1, p. 26). Lady Betty also spends much of her time engrossed in 'all the novels and romances which it is presumed are published for the exclusive benefit of superannuated old women, and silly young ones' (vol. 1, p. 26). Ferrier ridicules Lady Betty's novels, and also distances her own work from

such frivolous reading material, by giving a derisive list of titles: 'the Enchanted Head – the Invisible Hand – the Miraculous Nuptials, &c, &c, &c' (vol. 1, p. 26) Lady Betty is secure in her social station, and this causes her to lead a somewhat futile life. The suggestion implicit in Lord Rossville and Lady Betty's existence is that some shift in the social order would be advantageous.

The reader might expect Gertrude to perform this refreshing function. Yet the integration with the Rossvilles to which Gertrude owes her elevated fortunes also makes her somewhat haughty, and compromises her judgement. Her evaluation of Lord Rossville's nephews, Colonel Delmour and Edward Lyndsay, reveals this negative influence. Delmour appeals to Gertrude for a long time because he is handsome, fashionable, and lively, despite the fact that Lyndsay is clearly the more worthy man. Lyndsay is unconcerned by Mrs St Clair's relations, the Blacks, whilst Colonel Delmour views them as beneath him. Nonetheless, Gertrude overlooks Lyndsay, and grows attached to Delmour. When Gertrude encounters her mother's estranged family, her identity suffers a state of flux. The Black family consists in Mrs St Clair's affectionate brother, his wife and brood of children, an eccentric Uncle named Adam, and two aging, Christian sisters. Pulled between her wealthy relatives and suitor on the one hand, and her more humble family on the other, Gertrude shows signs of confusion and resentment. Little affection, or even similarity of disposition, has existed between Gertrude and Mrs St Clair for some time, but the gap between them is dramatically widened at this point. Gertrude is surprised by the comparative vulgarity of the Blacks, and she struggles to reconcile the different components of her lineage. Colonel Delmour intensifies this discomfort, when he treats Gertrude's relations, who are his social inferiors, not with malice but with a customary lack of respect. Gertrude feels a mixture of

shame and hurt at this action, but even so she aligns herself with the Rossvilles more than the Blacks.

Gertrude's marriagability soon becomes a topic of debate at Rossville Castle.

Delmour loves Gertrude, but in the manner of a young and flippant man, whilst Lyndsay, who 'set an example of all the moral virtues without pride, and dared to be as conspicuous for all the Christian graces without false shame', harbours a more enduring affection (vol. 1, p. 182). Lyndsay is one of the few characters in The Inheritance who is not proud, and does not judge others against a yardstick of superficial credits and attributes. Despite his superior virtues, Lyndsay continues to be eclipsed by Delmour. Gertrude's choice is irrelevant to Lord Rossville, however, who intends for his niece to marry another relative, the politician Mr Delmour (Colonel Delmour's older brother), for reasons pertaining to his own security. When Gertrude refuses to acquiesce in Rossville's plans, he threatens to disinherit her, and eventually banishes her. This forces Gertrude to rely on the charity of the Black sisters, the relations so recently snubbed by both Colonel Delmour and herself.

This first move down the social scale causes Gertrude shame, but it fails to alter her values. Whilst staying at 'the simple dwelling of the Miss Blacks', Gertrude sees many people less fortunate than herself, as her relations administer aid to the local poor (vol. 2, p. 66). These experiences should remind Gertrude that wealth and rank are tenuous, and that to place great importance on these things is risky. Yet the Blacks' philanthropy continues to be 'a species of virtue Gertrude felt no inclination to imitate' (vol. 2, p. 69). The narrator states:

[She] loved to expatiate in thought, on deeds of romantic, sentimental excellence; her money, and her tears, and her emotion, were always ready to bestow; but when she herself was brought into contact with real genuine human wretchedness, she shrunk with horror and disgust from the encounter. (vol. 2, p. 69)

Gertrude misses the luxury and admiration created by her status at Rossville Castle. Thus, when Lord Rossville dies, having failed to amend his will, Gertrude is excited at becoming a wealthy woman once again.

Having travelled back up the social scale, Gertrude and her mother go to London for some time, where they lead an extravagant lifestyle. When she returns to Scotland, however, Gertrude suffers a further threat to her social standing, this time in the shape of a mysterious, rough-mannered American named Lewiston. Lewiston hounds Mrs St Clair, lurking around Rossville castle and demanding five hundred pounds from Gertrude. Although Mrs St Clair refuses to inform her daughter of the circumstances owing to which they are thus indebted, there is secrecy surrounding Gertrude's birth, and the possibility emerges that Lewiston is her father. From this point onwards, Gertrude suffers in Lewiston's presence; he is the opposite of the upper-class identity which she has come to inhabit, and yet she is inextricably linked to him. The power of Lewiston's lower-class status to undermine Geraldine is accentuated by the fact that he is physically invasive, encroaching on the heroine's space and senses. It is eventually revealed that Mrs St Clair miscarried in France before Thomas's death, and that she adopted Gertrude from a servant. She now believes that Lewiston is her daughter's true father. With this knowledge, Gertrude surrenders her claim to the Rossville title and estate. In addition to this financial reduction, the discovery of Gertrude's apparently low birth threatens her sense of self. Gertrude has prided rank so highly, that she has neglected to cultivate the more enduring qualities that might have given her stability. Her problems are compounded when she is treated differently by others owing to her demise. Colonel Delmour, for example, had professed his undying love for Gertrude when she was fortunate, but he shuns the heroine when she is at her most needy, refusing to marry her on account of her hardship.

Eventually, however, Gertrude's downward social mobility provides her with lessons and friends that augment the quality of her life. Characters such as Lyndsay and Uncle Adam support Gertrude, irrespective of her ability to return the favour. Adam, for example, is an eccentric character who sees beyond rank and wealth; he chooses to live in a house that is smaller than his means would allow, and befriends and assists Gertrude in a number of ways. Similarly Lyndsay forgives and finally marries the heroine. Gertrude becomes a more virtuous, stable character when she no longer relies upon her social class. Thus, when she experiences a final shift in her financial circumstances, her world is not thrown into disarray, and the reader believes that Gertrude will use her means wisely. The heroine discovers that Lewiston is a lost brother of Thomas St Clair. This means that Gertrude has a right to the estate that she has recently given up, and, by the end of the novel, she becomes Lady Rossville again. Having learned to cherish Christian values, 'Gertrude, as the wife of Edward Lyndsay, lived to bless the day that had deprived her of her earthly inheritance', and to appreciate 'the true uses and advantages of power and adversity' (vol. 3, pp. 358-359).

The Inheritance is a novel about the dire consequences of investing personal pride in wealth. The tale is critical of the fact that '[t]o the worldly mind there is always something depressing in the transmission from grandeur to mediocrity' (vol. 2, p. 66). Thus, the heroine's moral journey is complete when she has learned to see others not for the social position that they occupy, but for their feelings, character, and conduct. In doing so, she comes to accept that to move up the social ladder should not be an all-consuming goal. This representation may appear ambiguous in terms of Ferrier's politics, as it seems to argue that social mobility is dangerous, and that fluctuations within class identity threaten the individual's sense of self. Yet one of the most enduring images created in the novel is that of the idle Lord Rossville and Lady Betty, and their stagnant, complacent life. Their

representation strongly implies that the ruling classes ought to be revitalised and questioned by the very social mobility that destabilised Gertrude. The uncertainty created by this paradox resonates with Victorian novelists' portrayals of the changing class system. There are parallels between Gertrude St Clair and Pip of Dickens's Great Expectations that support this reading. When Gertrude witnesses her suitor's denigration of her relations, and later when she is confronted with the apparently impoverished Lewiston, her habituation to an upper-class lifestyle clouds her judgement regarding these people, and leaves her feeling a sense of shame at her own lesser descent. Similarly Pip suffers class confusion when propelled up the social ladder, becoming embarrassed by the lower-class characters to whom he should perhaps feel indebted, including Joe Gargery and Magwitch. For both Gertrude and Pip, a rise in fortune impairs the head and the heart. Ultimately, however, this does not mean that either Ferrier or Dickens is against social change. Rather, the indication is that individuals should be able to move more freely within the social class system, but that they should also have enough virtue, kindness, and sense to remain grounded. The message of The Inheritance is thus at once moral and political; the novel gives final ascendancy to a female of humble origins, who has come to embrace Moral-Domestic values

Destiny; Or, the Chief's Daughter (1831)

In similarity with The Inheritance, Destiny; Or, the Chief's Daughter examines the theme of social mobility, and exemplifies Ferrier's creative, satirical style. Yet Destiny contains a greater breadth of characters than did The Inheritance, which renders this novel at once more

inclusive in the experiences that it portrays and increasingly undecided in its outcome.⁴⁸ In Destiny, Ferrier expands the familiar emphasis on the heroine to include the struggles of several quite different protagonists. We see a patriarch's emotional as well as worldly downfall, for example, and a woman rejected in love. Of additional importance is the character of a young man who has to suffer a literally negated identity, having disappeared from his family and been presumed dead. In each of the plots in which these characters appear, Ferrier's interest is in the way in which degraded circumstances affect an individual's character. Her divided sympathies make for a variegated and ambiguous text.

The novel begins with a depiction of the Highland Chief of Glenroy, a central character who loses social standing over the course of the novel. The emphasis placed on the Chief represents one of the most immediate ways in which Ferrier alters the conventional composition of the novel. In much women's fiction of the period, for example, the defective patriarch is represented as a persecuting figure, and he is certainly peripheral in terms of his capacity to elicit identification from the reader. Yet this character becomes a sympathetic focaliser in Destiny. Unparalleled in wealth and rank, Glenroy is largely benevolent, but also stuck in his ways; like Lord Rossville of The Inheritance, this ruler is so used to receiving unconditional deference that his ability to be self-critical and self-aware is weakened. Life at Glenroy's mansion is one of complacency, as no one challenges its inhabitants' drinking, neglect of charitable duties, and nominal religion. Glenroy's first wife died young, giving birth to their daughter Edith. As an older man, the Chief marries Lady Elizabeth Waldegrave, an engaging London widow whose daughter, Florinda, is about Edith's age. This second, hasty marriage is extremely unhappy, however, as Elizabeth enjoys London society and

⁴⁸ Susan Ferrier, Destiny; or, the Chief's Daughter (Edinburgh: Cadell, 1831; CME 3-628-47415-9). All further references are to this edition and are given in the text.

perennial activity, whereas ‘Glenroy saw much good company at his hospitable mansion, yet it was only during a short period of the year; for the Highlands may be said to open for the season as the King’s Theatre shuts’ (Destiny, vol. 1, pp. 13-14). In contrast to Elizabeth’s predilection for travel, the Chief cannot envision leaving Scotland; he ‘despised every part of the globe except Scotland; hated all music except that of the bagpipe; had little enjoyment in any society but that of his friends and followers, and when he spoke of the world, meant only his own county and clan’ (vol. 1, p. 13). It is not only the different customs of husband and wife that separate them, but their mutual disinclination to accommodate change; ‘[t]ime rolled on, but did nothing to smooth the asperities of Glenroy and his Lady. Pride was the ruling passion of both; and unhappily there was no mutual object on which they might concentrate this pronounced principle.’ (vol. 1, 19) Elizabeth will not accept the Scottish climate, and so her presence threatens the uniformity of life at Glenroy, coming to undermine its ruler.

In addition to Glenroy and Elizabeth, Destiny has a younger generation of protagonists, consisting in five children who mature over the course of the novel, and who feature prominently. Edith is Glenroy’s affectionate first child, who loves all of her playmates, and becomes a virtuous and consistent young woman. Her brother Norman is of a similar disposition, whilst Florinda is a beautiful but slightly more spirited, selfish girl. Glenroy is also entrusted with his brother-in-law’s son, Reginald, a spoiled but gallant young man, whose relationship with Florinda is fraught with tension. The final youth present is Ronald, the good-hearted son of Glenroy’s comparatively poor neighbours, Captain and Mrs Malcolm.

The journeys of gain and loss in which the characters above appear comprise a serious side to the text, which deals with questions of pride and wealth. Ferrier tempers this

gravity, however, by including a number of comic characters. In depicting certain of Glenroy's flatterers, Ferrier builds a gentle satire of the stale lifestyle that can result from complacent wealth. In particular, Glenroy's ally and supposed advisor, the Laird of Benbowie, has grown lazy and disconnected from society:

Amongst sundry of his adherents, whose persons and manners were particularly obnoxious to the Lady Elizabeth, the most offensive was the Laird of Benbowie, a friend and clansman of the Chief's, who, from having been all his life in the habit of paying visits at the castle, had gradually become domesticated there, to the infinite annoyance of its mistress. The Laird of Benbowie was an elderly man, of the most ordinary exterior, possessing no very distinguishing traits, except a pair of voluminous eyebrows, very round shoulders, a wig that looked as if it had been made of spun yarn, an unvarying snuff-coloured coat, and a series of the most frightful waistcoats that ever were seen. Benbowie's mental characteristics were much upon a par with his personal peculiarities. He was made up of stupidities. He was sleepy-headed and absent. He chewed tobacco, snored in presence, slobbered when he ate, walked up and down in creaking shoes, and drummed upon the table with a snuffy hand. (vol. 1, pp. 15-16)

This humorous picture of Benbowie does not invest the reader with much faith in his capacity to advise Glenroy. Indeed, Benbowie does not deter Glenroy from choosing M'Dow to become minister of the local Church. M'Dow is a second comic character who defers to Glenroy. He is selected for his position because his inactivity and wilful ignorance compliment life at the mansion. Of the two clergymen who had been recommended to Glenroy,

the one was the present pastor, the Reverend Duncan M'Dow, and the other was of the evangelical side; a party whom Glenroy, although professing Christianity, held in the utmost abhorrence. Not that he knew well what they *did* profess; he only guessed it was something he did *not* practice. He had a vague, confused apprehension, that an evangelical was sort of compound of a Popish priest, a stiff-necked Presbyterian, a sour-faced covenanter, a lank-haired seceder, a meddling Jesuit, a foul-tongued John Knox, a what not, that had evil in its composition. (vol. 1, p. 44)

The sarcastic narrator remarks upon Glenroy's aversion to such religious extremism, that '[b]eing a moderate man, he, like all moderate people, was violently opposed to the admission of any person of that description within the parish' (vol. 1, p. 41). As a result he selects M'Dow, a big, bungling man whose primary goals at Glenroy are to eat well and to continue his quest to find a wife, the latter of which is a source of humour throughout the novel. M'Dow is described as a 'large, loud-spoken, splay-footed man, whose chief characteristics were his bad preaching, his love of eating, his rapacity for augmentations, (or, as he termed it, *owgmentations*,) and a want of tact in all *bienséances* of life' (vol. 1, pp. 45-6). Ferrier's depiction of M'Dow bolsters the sense of life at the mansion as staid and unregulated; even the man employed to set a Christian example does nothing to jeopardise the negligent, indulgent practices of his patron.

Destiny contains a final comic character, who functions slightly differently to Benbowie and M'Dow in that he strives to change Glenroy's lifestyle; Inch Orran acts as a hinge between the humorous element of Destiny and its more weighty plots. Inch Orran Castle once belonged to Glenroy, but it currently represents the only part of Destiny's landscape that is not owned by this protagonist. The Chief is confident that he will receive the deference of its occupant, and regain ascendancy. Inch Orran, however, expresses disgust at Glenroy's drinking and idling, and is unafraid of him. Inch Orran is described as 'a little meagre, sickly-looking man, with a sharp, bitter face, a pair of fiery, vindictive eyes, and a mouth all puckered up, as if to keep all the many cutting things which would otherwise have got out' (vol. 1, p. 67). He is also a misogynist, who refuses to allow his wife any domestic control because 'such was his contempt for the sex in general, and for his portion in particular, that he deemed a woman quite incompetent to regulate a household' (vol. 1, p. 79). The menace with which this description is loaded is soon

fulfilled, as Inch Orran states that neither Glenroy nor his son will ever inherit his property. He further humiliates the Chief by making his disapproval commonly known, and insulting him directly. The pecuniary damage and moreover the personal insult advanced by Inch Orran instigate a decline in Glenroy's mental and physical wellbeing. Glenroy has never needed to develop a character independent of his rank, and so such affronts as that inflicted by Inch Orran bother him greatly. He becomes increasingly lonely from this point onwards; he has separated from Elizabeth, who goes to live in London when Florinda gains an unexpected inheritance, and Reginald goes to study and travel abroad.

This down-spiral in Glenroy's life is mirrored by Ronald Malcolm's experiences. Inch Orran intends for the relatively poor Ronald to inherit the means to which Glenroy believes his own son is entitled. Ronald goes to live with Inch Orran for a time, experiencing a rise in his standard of living. When he refuses to give up his family on a more permanent basis, however, Ronald suffers the withdrawal of Inch Orran's offer, and finds himself once again the inferior of his friend Edith. Deciding to make his living as a sailor, Ronald leaves Scotland to go to sea. When news reaches Glenroy that Ronald has drowned in a shipwreck, the Malcolms and Edith mourn him, although the reader is informed that Ronald in fact survived the shipwreck, and made it to the coast of Africa where he was enslaved. Ronald suffered greatly from this degradation, but faith and self-control enable him to procure his freedom, and to make his way back to Scotland. On his return, he is informed by a local woman, who does not recognise him, that the Malcolms have overcome their son Ronald's death, and have prospered from Inch Orran's sympathetic patronage. In the mistaken belief that he is forgotten, and surmising that his reappearance will compromise his family's comfort, Ronald flees Scotland, destitute and dejected, to seek his fortune elsewhere.

Edith Glenroy is another character who struggles with changed circumstances during Destiny, and who is sympathetically portrayed. Before leaving Scotland, Reginald stated his attachment to Edith, and promised to marry her. As the months pass, however, his letters become few in number and distant in tone. When her brother Norman dies, Edith is distraught, and Reginald's renewed presence brings only temporary relief as he grows markedly cold towards her. It transpires that Reginald has recently met with Florinda in Italy, and has formed an attachment with her, the result of which is that, after much confusion, Reginald leaves Scotland and marries Florinda. Alone with her sick father, bereaved of Ronald and Norman, and deserted by her childhood friends, Edith is struck by the changes that have taken place in her life. Glenroy cuts a particularly pathetic figure in her eyes, demanding the respect with which he was formerly treated, and missing the liveliness of Norman and Reginald. Of all the characters experiencing transitions in Destiny, however, Edith proves best equipped to manage this situation. Unlike her father, Edith has never taken the love and respect shown to her for granted, and does not judge her acquaintances in terms of their wealth. Her fortitude is tested to the utmost when her poor father dies. Glenroy's title and wealth are entailed strictly on the male heirs, leaving the Malcolms in the difficult situation of telling Edith that she has plummeted down the social scale, and must go to live with her mother's relatives in England. Much is made of the shock that it will be for a Chief's daughter to become dependent, particularly as her host lives close to Florinda and Reginald.

Whilst Edith bears witness to the extravagant lifestyle led by Florinda, she feels neither resentment nor alienation at her own altered state. In contrast to Gertrude of The Inheritance, Edith does not need to learn lessons in humility, as she remains steady in strife. She even finds herself in the position of advising Florinda, who comes to represent the

pernicious side of upward social mobility. Florinda's valuation of money and expensive pursuits has rendered her shallow; because her interests do not pertain to any of life's deeper values, such as those relating to family and friendship, her thirst for pleasure is insatiable, and she lives in a constant state of frustration and disappointment. In addition to financial frivolity, Florinda is careless with regard to her reputation, and provokes rumours that she has had an affair with a rake named Lord Herbert. Public speculation about this adultery leads Reginald to injure himself in a duel, before he becomes a neglectful, impotent partner. Husband and wife exemplify the negative results of a proud, money-driven lifestyle; their obsession with luxury and fashion spoils them, and renders them selfish. The only characters to find happiness and achieve wisdom in this novel are Edith and Ronald, which may be construed as a fairly radical outcome, given that the former is a humble and very young woman, and the latter is a lower-class man. Whilst trying to help Florinda, Edith discovers that Ronald is alive and residing in England. Ronald is reunited with his happy family, and declares his love for Edith. The two marry, and achieve prosperity in Scotland.

As the latest post-Austenian novel, it is perhaps unsurprising that Destiny moves away from the sub-genre's emphasis on the theme of marriage. Whereas many post-Austenian works depict unhappy marriages, Ferrier's novel sees the unfortunate union pushed once again to the fringes of the text. Indeed, Florinda and Reginald's discontent constitutes a sub-plot, secondary to the tale of Edith's eventual contentment with Ronald. This is because Ferrier's themes are increasingly ambitious, and she is able to foreground her concern with social class in addition to highlighting the problematic nature of marriage for women. In both The Inheritance and Destiny, the fulfilled characters are those who reject the notion that wealth correlates to worth. Within the journeys and plots leading to

this outcome, Ferrier develops an alert social conscience, a concern with humanity and human relationships, and a desire to improve life. These elements of her oeuvre represent anticipations, albeit on a small-scale, of the Victorian novel, which filter between generations of writers in literary history.

Concluding the Post-Austenian Sub-Genre

This chapter opened with the ‘sounding board’ of female-authored fictions, described by Ellen Moers as conditioning and encircling women writers, which invites the study of female-authored texts of varying ambition, impetus, and nature. The notion that erstwhile-neglected, and apparently trifling, works are important in the female tradition offers a powerful rationale for reinstating lesser-known writers in women’s studies and the history of the novel. Many engaging critical works have appeared within this framework, yet our knowledge of women’s literature of the 1820s and 1830s remains in progress. To which novelists, for example, might we turn when determining the effects of the male invasion of the novel that occurred in the early nineteenth century? Multiple political and cultural movements, relating to British nationalism and female education, emerged in the society of this time, but what did women have to do with such developments? Finally, histories of the British novel experience problems in bridging the gap between Jane Austen and later, ‘great’ Victorian writers. Were the 1820s and 30s really what Richard D. Altick has labelled a ‘fallow interval’, or ‘interregnum’?⁴⁹ Was the emergence of the Victorian novel

⁴⁹ Richard D. Altick, *Victorian People and Ideas*, p. 2.

an enigma? Or have the connections between these periods simply eluded us, owing to critical prejudice against certain types of fiction? Fitting into the project of recovery legitimated by Moers's study, the four writers examined in this chapter answer elements of the questions above. Whilst Mary Ann Kelty, for example, may not be an artist or polemicist on the scale of Virginia Woolf, her novels delve nonetheless into the psyche of the heroine, suggesting a paving of the way for future writers for whom the unconscious was a site of female anger towards patriarchy. Additionally, the humour and skill of Kelty's contemporary Laetitia Matilda Hawkins remind us that, despite the impression given by disproportionate critical attention, Austen was far from alone in producing engaging female-centred fictions in the early nineteenth century. Anne Raikes Harding similarly impresses the reader with unexpected and resonant depictions of female dissipation, whilst Susan Ferrier emerges as a comedienne of manners, as well as a champion of the theme of social class, who could conceivably have impacted upon successors from Dickens to the Brontës.

Kelty, Hawkins, Harding, and Ferrier all surprise the reader's expectations, producing not trivial, inconsequential fictions, but rather works that stretch various narrative and thematic norms. Many post-Austenian heroines, for example, diverge from what the reader of Romantic fiction might expect; Rachel Henderson of Harding's Dissipation is morally lapsed, whilst the misery in which many of these writers' stories result frustrates expectations of closure and justice. In a sense, the cracks discernible in the angelic, virtuous heroines depicted in literature from Samuel Richardson, to sentimental writers, and to Hannah More, become insurmountable in the 1820s, and lead their creators to breach inherited boundaries, pushing the female-authored novel forward in important ways. Whilst Kelty, Hawkins, and Harding alter the heroine and her fate, Ferrier notably

breaks the mould of the demure, apologetic female writer, because she dares to be competent as well as entertainingly funny. Collectively, the post-Austenian writers contributed to a pattern of change occurring within the female tradition at the levels of form, register, and outcome. They did so in ways that were undeniably subtle, and which often involved double or ambiguous meanings. Yet as Ellen Moers's ideas imply, literary exchange and growth are often born of such minor shifts in nuance, whose significance can easily be overlooked. Ann H. Jones summarises this notion in Ideas and Innovations, explaining why the appearance of Victorian fiction has yet to be adequately theorised. Jones argues that 'fertilizing streams' comprised of multiple, perhaps neglected, texts, feed in to new literary movements.⁵⁰ Because such texts do not seem significant by many conventional standards, the links between the Romantic and Victorian periods have been invisibilised. The appearance of Jane Austen within the fictions of Kelly, Hawkins, Harding, and Ferrier exemplifies this point. As we have seen, in the relationship between these writers, Austen is expanded in a number of ways; through the Moral-Domestic genre, Austen is elongated, feeding into future generations of writers within the female tradition.

⁵⁰ Ann H. Jones, Ideas and Innovations: Best Sellers of Austen's Age (New York: AMS Press, 1987), p. 1.

IV

*The Conversion Sub-Genre of Moral-Domestic Fiction***Constructing Britain's National Tale:
Women's Late Romantic Writing**

The project of feminist criticism of the 1970s and 1980s offers a rationale for the recovery of an array of lesser-known, female-authored texts, which may have contributed to an erstwhile neglected female literary tradition.¹ The works of many women writers are still obscure, and their impact is yet to be fully theorised. This thesis responds to a particular dearth in existing accounts of women's late-Romantic writing. It argues that the female-authored, Moral-Domestic novels of the 1820s and 1830s constitute a prominent literary force, by which parallel social and cultural movements can be illuminated.²

Within this framework, Chapter Three used the post-Austenian sub-genre of Moral-Domestic fiction to modify existing views on the links between Romantic and Victorian novels. To reiterate, critics including Richard D. Altick have outlined the tendency to define the 1820s and 1830s as a 'fallow interval' in the history of the novel, assuming that the Victorian text burst onto the literary scene, in an eruption by which its

¹ Catherine Belsey and Jane Moore, 'Introduction: The Story So Far', *The Feminist Reader*, ed. by Catherine Belsey and Jane Moore (London: Macmillan, 1997), pp. 1-15.

² This aim of the thesis was introduced and explained in Chapter One, and guided the readings undertaken in Chapters II and III. The Moral-Domestic genre is inextricably linked to its cultural and political climate. Its elucidation, therefore, can shed light on women's contributions to contemporary issues and broader social change.

female forbears were rendered redundant.³ Ann H. Jones, in contrast, states that literary and historical progression can be born of apparently minor texts and happenings which may have passed under the radar of literary historians.⁴ Drawing upon Jones's ideas, the post-Austenian works of Mary Ann Kelty, Laetitia Matilda Hawkins, Anne Raikes Harding, and Susan Edmonstone Ferrier were interpreted as an important fertilising stream in the pre-Victorian period. Its elucidation filled some of the gaps in our understanding of the relationship between Jane Austen's narratives and subsequent generations of writers; the post-Austenian sub-genre manipulates the Austenian closing, happy marriage, for example, in ways suggestive of many Victorian writers, and their unresolved questions regarding the status of women in changing, nineteenth-century Britain.

Further impasses exist in late-Romantic literary criticism, however, which are not enlightened by the post-Austenian sub-genre. Various ambiguous aspects of the contemporary cultural scene might benefit from the study of other Moral-Domestic styles, even if this correspondence has yet to be realised. The question of how national identity was constructed in early nineteenth-century Britain, for example, might be illuminated by reference to the prevalent fiction of the time. In Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837, Linda Colley argues that a national identity, characterised by pride, unity, and adherence to Protestant Christianity, came to be naturalised as Britain's

³ As discussed in Chapter I, there is a tendency in some literary histories to view the late-Romantic novel both as distinct from its predecessors of the 1790s, and as internally fractured. Striking something of an accord with Richard D. Altick's Victorian People and Ideas (London: Dent, 1973), Gary Kelly's survey of Romantic fiction, English Fiction of the Romantic Period 1789-1830 (London: Longman, 1989), characterises the fictional scene of the 1810s and 1820s in terms of a series of transient genres, including the national and moral tales. The existence of the Moral-Domestic genre offers an alternative to this image.

⁴ Ann H. Jones's Ideas and Innovations: Best Sellers of Austen's Age (New York: AMS Press, 1986) is relevant to the aims of this thesis, as it elevates the importance of lesser-known writers, and legitimises their reconsideration.

destiny in the period under consideration.⁵ According to Colley, the ‘thought-world’ of the nation was the key factor in forging this sense of Britishness, and was shaped by ideological materials, including biased historical accounts and anti-European commentaries. The broad mood hereby created encouraged Britons to gain a clear sense of an ‘us’ to which they belonged, whilst simultaneously identifying a negative national and religious ‘Other’. Colley’s argument that the mindset of the nation, rather than verbal or physical coercion, was of principal importance in this process of construction is persuasive. Yet there is a gap in her account, owing to her relative inattention to women’s writing. Colley acknowledges that any society is both reflected in and influenced by its popular literature. As women’s moral and domestic novels proliferated in the years targeted by Colley, they must have played a role in generating the national ideology of the reading public. Whilst she discusses the activities and writings of Hannah More, Colley does not examine the Moral-Domestic genre. The nature of the relationship between women writers and the contemporary bolstering of British nationalism therefore requires explanation. Female authors may have been oppressed by nationalism, for example, or they may have found ways of making it empowering. They impacted upon nationalism in some way, and have fresh insights to offer with regard to its influence.

In addition to the question of British nationalism, the relation of women’s moral writing to other aspects of late-Romantic Britain warrants research. One such area is the

⁵ Linda Colley’s *Britons: Forging The Nation, 1707-1837* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2005) is relevant to many of the issues and themes discussed throughout this thesis. Colley focuses upon movements that operated on the consciousness and mood of early nineteenth-century Britain. These included domesticity, altruism, and nationalism. Colley views these ideological aspects of social life as having been crucial in the emergence of the Protestant, British frame of mind. Indeed, the increasing prominence of British nationalism corresponds to the rise of conversion fiction, which, on the surface at least, bolsters the sense of a homogenous nation, and a specific account of ‘our’ history which aimed to reinforce the nation’s Protestant character.

perceived invasion of the novel by male authors that occurred in the 1820s. Critics including Peter Garside have used publication figures to deduce that women were, in a sense, being 'edged out' of the novel by men in the 1820s and 1830s.⁶ The statistics employed in these claims are valid in indicating that the influx of male writers placed considerable pressure on women. Figures are not qualitative, however; they do not convey the specific nature of women's responses to this phenomenon. Thus, whilst male writers at this time were doubtlessly making inroads in the nautical and historical novels, women writers' thoughts on this situation are to be found in the content, rather than in the number, of their productions. We are as yet unsure, for example, of what, if any, changes women were making to the form and status of the novel as a result of male writers. Did they continue to offer humble prefatory apologies for their efforts at this time, or did they experiment in order to compete with male writers?

A particular series of texts is relevant to the above questions, and others in addition. These texts form the conversion sub-genre of Moral-Domestic fiction. Novels depicting the experience of religious conversion constitute the most numerous and internally consistent of Moral-Domestic sub-genres, accounting for around eighteen texts, by eight different authors, produced between 1820 and 1833.⁷ The conversion novel had its inception in the early 1820s, and reached its height in the years 1825-1828, before tapering off in the 1830s. Key conversion writers, including Grace Kennedy and

⁶ Peter Garside documents the testing and intimidating climate for women writers brought about by the increase in male authors over the course of these years. In 1815, Garside's statistics indicate, only 6% of novels have been identified as male-authored, compared with 33% in 1825. These publication figures are displayed and interpreted in *The English Novel 1770-1829: A Bibliographical Survey of Prose Fiction Published in the British Isles*, 2 vols, ed. by Peter Garside, James Raven, and Rainer Shöwerling (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), vol. 2, p. 73.

⁷ The 'Checklist of Moral-Domestic Fiction, Written by Women and Published in Britain, 1820-1834', the appendix to the thesis, provides full bibliographical details, as well as suggested categories and sub-categories, for Moral-Domestic texts.

Amelia Bristow, stepped clearly into Moral-Domestic territory, contributing some highly readable texts to the movement. They centre on a virtuous and eventually wise heroine, for example, who has to choose a pious life over a frivolous one, in a plot of trial and endurance. The familiar, Moral-Domestic aim of stabilising Protestant orthodoxy is also present in these works. Indeed, the act of converting offers very strong reinforcement for the homogeneity of Protestant Britain; characters in this sub-genre are so taken with the Protestant community, that they are prepared to turn their backs on family, habit, and ancestry, in order to assimilate. The theme of conversion facilitated various inroads in the sphere of the novel, however, which expanded upon the Moral-Domestic mainstream. Owing to their focus on religious transitions, conversion writers came to breach the boundaries of conventional female-authored narratives in provocative ways. They dealt with male protagonists, for example, and depicted intense scriptural dispute. Perhaps most unusually, they adjusted the role of the heroine within both the community and the novel. Indeed, there is something inherently revisionist in the act of conversion; in spite of its apparent orthodoxy, this act legitimises an attitude of questioning, and an ensuing process of rejection. This broad ethos enlarged the novel's form, and proved liberating for its predominantly female creators.

A Short Story of Conversion Writing

The early texts of the conversion sub-genre appeared in 1820 and 1821. These works represent the starting point for some of the genre's key developments, whilst they also exemplify many of the attributes with which the theme of conversion would continue to

be loaded. The anonymously published The Priest (1821), for example, adds authority to the popular, moral text. In its delineation of the apparent errors of Catholicism, this novel picks up on the religious distinctions that are depicted in most Moral-Domestic novels.⁸ Instead of differentiating between vital Christianity and nominal Christianity, however, this conversion novelist foregrounds the division of Protestants from non-Protestants. This leads to a detailed, grave examination of scriptural issues. The aim of this analysis is to create a unified sense of Protestant Britain with which the reader is aligned, but it also had the effect of empowering the writer, owing to its intellectual, serious nature. The Priest was followed in the early 1820s by two important conversion works by an anonymous author, The Vicar of Iver (1821)⁹ and The French Protestant (1822).¹⁰ The Vicar is a short, one-volume description of the qualities that an English clergyman ought to possess. In similarity with The Priest, this tale polices a boundary between a domestic, British heroine, and a tyrannical religious Other. In this representation, the writer asserts the capacity of the novel to comment upon important, public issues; in bolstering British Protestantism, it participates in one of the time's most powerful social movements. Whilst such conversion texts of 1820-1822 move away from commonplace modes of story-telling, Grace Kennedy's Father Clement (1823) proved to be the sub-genre's seminal text.¹¹ Set in Scotland, Father Clement depicts the Clarenham family's painful but rewarding conversion from Catholic to Protestant Christianity. Kennedy's seemingly conservative fortification of a unified, ideal Protestantism enables her to write a text that is at once creative and political. Because

⁸ Anon, The Priest (London: Baldwin, 1821; Corvey CME 3-628-48294-1).

⁹ Anon, The Vicar of Iver (London: Westley, 1821; Corvey CME 3-628-48912-1).

¹⁰ Anon, The French Protestant Anon (London: Westley, 1822).

¹¹ Grace Kennedy, Father Clement; A Roman Catholic Story (Edinburgh: William Oliphant, 1823). All further references are to this edition and are given in the text.

conversion could legitimately target a range of people, Kennedy's novel could focus on unexpected characters, situated in unusual stories. This novel prioritises an aging, misguided priest, whose character surpasses the reader's expectation of stock heroines and heroes. In addition to examining masculinity, Kennedy uses the theme of conversion to experiment with portrayals of womanhood, by taking advantage of the Moral-Domestic genre's anti-radical feminism. Whilst her attraction to orthodox Protestantism evaded censure, the female convert does, after all, resist a range of inherited beliefs, about identity, family, and the community.

Father Clement may be seen to have encouraged both imitation and response, being followed by a period of expansion, spanning the years 1825-1830, in which a number of yet more experimental conversion texts appeared. In 1826, for example, Charlotte Anley's Miriam; or, The Power of Truth. A Jewish Tale shifts the focus from the Catholic to the Jewish Other.¹² 1826 also sees the publication of Sophia de Lissau, the first novel in Amelia Bristow's vital conversion trilogy.¹³ Bristow signals her participation in contemporary nationalism by preferring Christianity to Judaism, in novels that represent the former as an inviting, homogenising faith. It becomes clear over the course of Bristow's trilogy, however, that this communitarian impetus facilitated an individualised voice. In delineating the habits and customs of an obscure religious group, Bristow uses the novel as a space in which to evince her knowledge, and to sway the reader. Selina Bunbury's conversion *oeuvre* also begins in 1826. Her collection The Pastor's Tales is opinionated and thematically expansive, portraying,

¹² Charlotte Anley, Miriam; or, The Power of Truth. A Jewish Tale (London: Hatchard and Son, 1826). All further references are to this edition and are given in the text.

¹³ Amelia Bristow, Sophia de Lissau (London: Gardiner and Son, 1826). All further references are to this edition and are given in this text.

amongst other topics, the apparently insurmountable problems inherent in Anglo-Irish relations.¹⁴ Further variety occurred later in the 1820s, as the anonymously published The Hebrew, a Sketch in the Nineteenth Century (1828) suggests. The Hebrew deviates from the moral tale's customary protagonists and modes of narration, by taking the reader's attention away from the heroine, and directing it towards the unresolved anguish of a young male convert.¹⁵ Owing to the difficult, piecemeal nature of the process of conversion itself, such novels tended to be deliberating and meandering in their way of telling. This is increasingly the case as the years pass, as Eliza Bray's The Protestant (1828) implies, in its merging of the moral tale with a dramatic, theatrical manner of story-telling.¹⁶ This text accounts for Protestant resistance to perceived oppression at the hands of Catholics during the reign of Queen Mary. It conveys some scenes of violence and torture, as well as diverging from the story at points to delve into historical specificities. Other unusual conversion texts appear in the 1830s, such as Mrs Mainwaring's The Suttee; or, The Hindoo Converts, and some similar texts by male authors, although by 1834 the sub-genre had experienced its heyday.¹⁷

As the above synopsis suggests, the conversion sub-genre constitutes a numerous and colourful body of fiction, which should not be overlooked in either the female literary tradition or the emergence of a religious national identity in Britain during the Romantic period. The author studies and textual analyses that comprise this chapter aim

¹⁴ Selina Bunbury produced five fictions over the course of the 1820s. Whilst her *oeuvre* is numerous, it is not consistently aligned with conversion, and is also specifically rooted in Ireland. Bunbury does not, therefore, receive individual attention in this chapter. Her works of the 1820s are: The Pastor's Tales (Edinburgh: Oliphant, 1826); Cabin Conversations and Castle Scenes (London: James Nisbet, 1827); The Abbey of Innesmoyle (Dublin: William Curry, 1828); My Foster Brother (Dublin: R. M. Times, 1829); Retrospections (Dublin: William Curry, 1829).

¹⁵ Anon, The Hebrew, a Sketch in the Nineteenth Century (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1828).

¹⁶ Anna Eliza Bray, The Protestant; A Tale of the Reign of Queen Mary (London: Henry Colburn, 1828; CME 3-628-48418-9).

¹⁷ Mrs Mainwaring, The Suttee; or, The Hindoo Converts (London: A. K. Newman 1830).

to illuminate this point; they explore, in chronological order, the myriad ways in which the theme of conversion opened up the novel, as well as the role of its woman writer, within a most self-conscious, reflecting society. Owing to the attributes anticipated above, the conversion sub-genre might appear as autonomous and distinctive. One of the most important points to note about the conversion novel, however, is that for all its specificities, it nonetheless testifies to the mutuality existing amongst women writers within the history of the novel. The conversion sub-genre cannot be separated from either its forbears or its successors, and nor should it be. As set out in Chapter One of this thesis, the notion of isolated writing, out of which elevated and 'great' literary movements emerged, ought to be challenged. Women's writings, both in the early nineteenth century and in surrounding periods, are interconnected in the female literary tradition. Correspondingly, there is a strong relationship between conversion fiction and the Moral-Domestic mainstream, in which the former is indebted to the latter. Thus, whilst the works of Grace Kennedy and Amelia Bristow in the 1820s may seem remote from those of Barbara Hofland or Mary Brunton in the 1810s, a process of evolution actually occurred between the two. To refer once again to Ann H. Jones's view of incremental literary development, the conversion sub-genre did not appear in a vacuum. Rather, various themes that existed, albeit marginally, in the Moral-Domestic genre, are centralised in the conversion novel. Of particular note here is the theme of national and religious difference. This theme is arguably embryonic in the 1810s, but is able to come more fully to fruition in the conversion sub-genre of the 1820s and 1830s, as certain texts occupy the space between the two periods. Such transitional works tended to appear around 1820 and 1821, acting as hinges between early Moral-Domestic fiction and the conversion writers to be discussed later in this chapter. Such works highlight the

process of evolution that is inherent in the female tradition, and provide valuable contextualisation for the conversion sub-genre.

The Evolution of the Conversion Novel: Mary Jane Mackenzie

All Moral-Domestic novels sought, at least in part, to naturalise Protestantism as the cornerstone of British familial and social life, and were in this way geared towards stability and homogeneity. This apparently conservative aim afforded a surprising degree of creative and political freedom, however. Writers seem to have realised this potential increasingly through the 1810s, 1820s, and 1830s. The conversion novel reflects one of the final stages of this process; the act of conversion constitutes the most definitive praise of British Protestantism, yet its delineation also expands the philosophical and intellectual possibilities of women's writing. In doing so it develops upon, rather than leaps away from, instigating Moral-Domestic texts. One text bridging the years between the seeds of the conversion sub-genre and its later fruition is Mary Jane Mackenzie's Geraldine; or, Modes of Faith and Practice (1820). Mackenzie's novel is an entertaining and highly readable contribution to the Moral-Domestic genre. Its primary significance here, however, is its intertextuality. Geraldine may be seen to invoke a range of themes and styles. Yet interestingly, it was actually praised in 1820 for its separation from other texts. The following excerpt from the Monthly Review of Geraldine, printed shortly after the novel's appearance in August 1820, reflects this attitude:

Geraldine is a novel of a style and character altogether varying from any particular work which we could mention. It is neither of a sentimental nor a romantic tendency, but it is something much better, because it is both instructive and entertaining. Evidently written in the spirit of the new school of Mrs. Hannah More, softened down by Mrs. Brunton, it yet possesses a manner peculiar to itself; a more sociable feeling for the humanities and sweetnesses of life; with an air of freedom and worldly tact, even in treating the most serious topics, which persuades us to be in love with them against our will.¹⁸

Geraldine was Mackenzie's first fictional publication, and it appeared on the cusp of the Moral-Domestic genre's most experimental phase. Nonetheless, it received popular success and such warm critical praise as that cited above. Its achievements were seen to derive partly from Mackenzie's blending of the 'sweetness of life' with 'the most serious topics', but mainly from the text's status as 'altogether varying' from precursors. In contrast to this view, however, Mackenzie herself states indebtedness to mixed sources. Rejecting the definition of literary originality implicit in the Monthly Review, Mackenzie's preface to Geraldine celebrates the unavoidable reciprocity involved in novel-writing. Mackenzie comments that, amongst authors, 'the charm of novelty is still sought with avidity', but that the novel is so prolific that uniqueness is impossible.¹⁹ Fictional progression, she suggests, results from 'the dexterity with which [writers] contrive to work up old materials' (Geraldine, vol. 1, p. iv). She states that writers should be 'applauded' for their use of existing works, 'for the gloss, beauty, and variety with which they invest them' (vol. 1, p. iv). Mackenzie situates literary innovation within a chain of reproduction, appropriation, and evolution. It is within this very framework that Mackenzie contributes to the conversion sub-genre.

¹⁸ Monthly Review, 2nd Ser. 92, August 1820: 412-18. This review is reproduced in full in British Fiction, 1800-1829, <<http://www.british-fiction.cf.ac.uk/reviews/gera20-49.html>>.

¹⁹ Mary Jane Mackenzie, Geraldine; or, Modes of Faith and Practice (London: Cadell, 1820; CME 3-628-47784-0), vol. 1, p. iv. All further references are to this edition and are given in the text.

Amongst the most resonant of Geraldine's intertextual themes is an emerging concern with nationalism. This theme exists not in Geraldine's central plot, but rather in its peripheral characters and background imagery. At the centre of this novel is Geraldine Berrisford, a young heroine whose beauty and accomplishments expose her to negative influences, but whose eventually happy marriage satisfies the reader's conventional expectations. Against this positive story, however, a grave, and somewhat confused series of events occurs. This sub-text undermines the witty, morally standard tale that Geraldine initially appears to be. In it, a range of national and religious Others are associated with sin, as travel gives rise to negative results. In this darker side of Geraldine, several deaths occur, which are connected, whether metaphorically or physically, with the desertion of the British homeland.

Geraldine's cousin, Fanny Mowbray, is the most interesting of the novel's peripheral characters. The vignette in which she appears does not rival the heroine's 'coming of age' tale in terms of focalisation or textual space. Nonetheless it is intriguing in its preoccupation with nationalism; Fanny is increasingly punished for national transgressions. Fanny is a complex character, who is initially praised within the narrative. This privileged position throws her later downfall into relief. In the early stages of the novel, for example, Fanny resembles some of Jane Austen's livelier protagonists, and at points supersedes the heroine of the present novel in the reader's favour. A series of strong parallels exist between Geraldine and Austen's Mansfield Park (1814), which help to establish this point. In similarity with Mansfield Park, Geraldine features a young heroine, Geraldine Berrisford, who is displaced to an alien environment at a young age. Like Fanny Price, Geraldine is a cautious Christian, who exists on the peripheries of the home to which she is transferred. As the principle focaliser of the

novel, she functions additionally to emphasise the relatively lapsed moral behaviour of her new family. Geraldine is not as poor as Fanny Price, yet as a child she has received so grave an education that she responds to the Mowbrays, her fashionable but morally reprehensible hosts, with a quiet disapproval that recalls Fanny's reaction to the Bertrams. In further similarity with Mansfield Park, Geraldine is divided in its attitude towards this heroine by the existence of a second female protagonist. This is where Fanny Mowbray becomes significant. Fanny Mowbray is a witty character, who is chastised for her lack of regard for others, but who entertains narrator and reader alike. In this respect, she resembles Mary Crawford of Mansfield Park; just as Austen seemed to like Mary, despite her opposition to the values of both Fanny Price and Mansfield Park, Mackenzie appears, at times at least, to prefer Fanny Mowbray to Geraldine Berrisford.

Further bolstering Fanny's likeability is the similarity between her struggles in the marriage market and those endured by another of Austen's characters, Elizabeth Bennet in Pride and Prejudice (1813). In the first volume of Geraldine, Fanny's manoeuvring mother succeeds in marrying her eldest daughter, Georgiana, to a wealthy colonel in India. Yet as the Mowbray estate, The Woodlands, is entailed on a male relation, Mrs Mowbray strives to marry Fanny off to Lord Glenmore, a man who is rich, but not excessively appealing to Fanny. Fanny's resistance to Glenmore recalls Elizabeth's rejection of Mr Collins, as both heroines rely upon the help of their sympathetic fathers. Mr Mowbray uses humour when discouraging his wife from forcing Fanny into marriage, telling her that 'if Caliban were in existence, and had fifteen thousand a year, you would think him a very suitable husband for Fanny' (vol. 1, p. 157). Mr Mowbray's dry wit and affection in such scenes align him with Mr Bennet,

whilst Fanny's subjection to both the unwanted proposal and the machinations of her mother recall the heroine of Pride and Prejudice. Fanny is aware of the pressure placed upon her to marry. She recognises that, as a single and potentially dependent young woman, she ought to find a husband. Nonetheless, like Elizabeth she wants to marry for love:

‘I cannot help thinking – I am sure I don't know where I got the notion, - that if an oath of allegiance is taken, if one makes a solemn promise to love, honour, and obey, it ought to be to someone whom we can love, can honour, and, if it comes to such an extremity, whom we can obey.’
(vol. 1, p. 155)

This comment evinces both Fanny's confident sense of her own needs, and the rationality with which it could conflict; here she accentuates her desire to respect her partner, but is plainly aware that, realistically, she may have to forfeit this right. Fanny fully appreciates the injustice of her dilemma as a single woman, in accord with so many other heroines in the female-authored literature of the period. As time passes, however, Fanny Mowbray responds to her helplessness in a manner that differentiates her from most Romantic heroines, including Elizabeth Bennet. She refuses to dwell on feelings of depression, for example, expressing an admirable aversion for self-pity, but more importantly a cool ability to assess her best interests. Fanny claims to be rational rather than romantic, and by nature prefers to face her plights with humour. She also expresses unwillingness to compromise her family's position. As a result, she weighs up Glenmore's proposal, despite the exemption granted by her father. Fanny recognises clear-sightedly that ‘there is no possibility of reigning alone, and independently’ (vol. 1, p. 152). She must, by consequence, consider marriage, even if it is void of respect, because ‘the notion of love and a cottage is still more appalling’ (vol. 1, p. 152). In this remark, Fanny is akin to Charlotte Lucas of Pride and Prejudice. Neither character wins

the status of central heroine in the text in which she appears, yet their shared outlook is refreshingly unpretentious. Fanny's detached, jovial attitude to marriage may appear mercenary, or perhaps cold, at a first glance, but when viewed in light of her limited options, it is both realistic and quite brave.

Mackenzie's warmth for the witty second female protagonist of Geraldine is clear. This fondness serves to render Fanny's ultimately harsh fate unexpected, if not inconsistent. Before her marriage, Fanny enjoys the friendship of the inhabitants of The Woodlands, and exerts a powerful influence over their visitors. She suffers a miserable demise on the fringes of the text, however, becoming a powerless wife, who loses her characteristic vivacity, before ending the novel a detested adulteress. This outcome is worthy of scrutiny, because its causes are atypical within the Moral-Domestic mainstream. Many writers, including Mary Ann Kelyt and Anne Raikes Harding, represented unhappy, regretful wives such as Fanny, yet they did so with a view primarily to critiquing marriage. Mackenzie, however, connects Fanny's suffering less to her relationships with men, and more to her relationship with France.²⁰ As a child and as a young woman, Fanny has travelled and been schooled in France, where she enjoyed lively, gay company. From the offset, Mackenzie works to represent her stable, pious characters as physically fixed in Britain, and her potential sinners as being inclined towards travel. In this context, Fanny's socialisation signals danger. Mackenzie's association of British purity with moral purity is consistent with the backlash that

²⁰ The Moral-Domestic heroines who suffer owing to a bad marriage appear mainly in the post-Austenian sub-genre, the topic of Chapter III. The figure of the unhappy wife is common across women's Romantic writing, however. Persecuted wives vary in the degree of their subjection, ranging from the misunderstood Ellen Seymore of Mary Ann Kelyt's Osmond (1822), to the physically beaten Sophia of Amelia Bristow's second conversion novel, Sophia de Lissau (1826). Fanny Mowbray breaks the mould of the persecuted heroine, because Mackenzie indicts travel and a mixed national identity in her unfortunate union. This alters the stock situation in which wives respond to marital abuse.

emerged at the turn of the century against Revolutionary France. Owing to fears regarding the spread of revolution, Britain's national borders were strictly policed, as much figuratively as literally, with one result being the construction of foreign nations as polluting, or contagious. Mackenzie's correlation of Frenchness with negative change substantiates this point, revealing that the key social concern of nationalism had a powerful hold on the novel in 1820. Indeed the comment that Fanny "combine[s] so bewitchingly, French vivacity and English simplicity" proves prophetic (vol. 1, p. 104). Fanny finally rejects Glenmore's advances, and falls in love with Mr Spenser, whom she marries. This decision triggers a rapid deterioration in her life, as well as a breakdown in her capacity for endurance. Along this journey, Fanny's most disastrous choices and actions are powerfully linked to her penchant for travel; Mackenzie seems to be at pains to forge a connection between the two. Fanny associates diversion and liveliness with France, and monotony with England. This is clear in a conversation with her father regarding education. Mr Mowbray informs Fanny that she "entered into society much earlier than I liked in France; and I think it wiser not to follow up the system in England" (vol. 1, p. 86). In response, Fanny tells her father that "it must be the dense atmosphere of England that has inspired you with such a barbarous thought" (vol. 1, p. 86). Critically, it is in seeking the excitement that she associates with France that Fanny falls into error.

Spenser is a very neglectful husband, yet as a wife, Fanny has to realise and accept that she is powerless to influence him. She is depressed as Spenser socialises for days on end, gaining a reputation as a rake and a gambler. This situation is unjust, but it is not, the narrator insists, mortifying; as long as Fanny remains at home she is grounded enough in the domestic sphere not to exacerbate her lot. She also gains some small

comfort from the pretence of happiness that she is able to adopt. Commenting upon her husband's flirtation with her cousin, for example, Fanny says "[d]o not waste your pity on me, Geraldine, I am not made to be condoled with and pitied", and insists that she "will keep up the farce" (vol. 2, p. 219). Fanny eventually reacts against Spencer, however, eloping with an infamous rake named Sir Henry Ireton. In so doing, she leaves Britain for Paris. Her adultery, and the abandonment of the family home in which it results, destroy Fanny's personal pride, as well her sense of identity. As an adulteress living abroad, Fanny is depicted 'drinking deeply of the cup of mortification and misery', feeling forlorn and disgraced (vol. 3, p. 233). In addition to such descriptions, the narrator's shunning of Fanny furthers the sense in which she is an outcast. The centre of dialogue and comedy early in the text, Fanny is portrayed using only scant descriptions after her flight. A character emphasising the notion that Fanny is a polluting presence on her travels is her estranged husband, who is figuratively infected by his increased contact with her. Spencer attempts to address his wife's adultery by going to Paris, and challenging Ireton to a duel. Spencer suffers from this move as though it were a contamination; he dies in the duel, after being shot through the heart. It is Fanny who suffers the ultimate fate as a result of her transgression, however. Disgusted at her own behaviour, she refuses to accompany Ireton when he flees following the duel. Yet she lacks family, home, and national identity as a result of her actions, and grows depressed and desperate. The indication is that, without nation, Fanny has no clear sense of purpose. She dies in France, a final emblem of the country's polluting potential, when she commits suicide by poisoning herself.

In this story of Fanny Mowbray, Geraldine connects sin with travel, and sinful behaviour with a national Other. Fanny's Frenchness may not cause her adultery and

suicide, but the situation of these acts abroad accentuates their identity as non-British. In deserting Britain, Fanny becomes an unnatural woman, finally taking her own life. The warning implicit in this protagonist's fate is that to relinquish Britishness is to turn against fidelity and the sanctity of life, and to risk both family and personal identity as a result. Fanny's death is not the only aspect of Geraldine that contributes to this construction of Britishness. Rather, anti-French feeling encircles the text, if not always through its central characters, then in its surrounding images and references. The fashionable Mowbrays, for example, are chastised by the narrator throughout the novel, in a series of asides, for their close acquaintance with French customs. During a trip taken by the family to London, a series of footnotes are provided, which detail the lamentable differences that exist between French and British culture. This definition of the national Other through appendices has the effect of uniting the reader with the British narrator; the French are so alien as to require explanation. The French are also constructed as superficial and flippant, owing to the fact that the Mowbrays' French governess, Mademoiselle Dubourg, encourages her pupils to acquire hollow accomplishments. A trip taken by the Mowbrays, as well as Geraldine herself, finalises this depiction of the family's perilous leaning towards the Continent. The family travels to France and Italy, where they visit Geraldine's father, in a trip that tests the piety and reserve of all present to various degrees. The Mowbrays display their most reprehensible traits when abroad, suggesting a connection between their negative characteristics and the periods of time that they have spent travelling. The narrator states of Mrs Mowbray that 'her long residence on the Continent had destroyed even the outward reverence for sacred things, which might have endured had she remained in England' (vol. 1, p. 75). Unlike Fanny, however, Mrs Mowbray, her husband, and Geraldine are able ultimately

to resist immorality to a sufficient degree that they can return to the safe space of Britain.

Further characters suffer for their international associations. One of Geraldine's suitors, for example, is debarred from his secure place in a narrative of love and courtship, owing to actions occurring when he temporarily leaves Britain. Montague travels to Greece, and becomes so enamoured of a foreign girl named Matilda that he forgets his attachment to the morally superior heroine, and becomes engaged. A powerful, persuasive female sexuality is hereby relegated to the Continent, as the desire embodied in Matilda steals the heroine's happiness. With this Greek location, the kinds of temptations familiarly warned against in the Protestant Bible are defined as non-British. Somewhat differently, Fanny's older sister Georgiana suffers health problems, as well as maddening loneliness, when her marriage takes her to India. Here the confident and beautiful Georgiana falls ill, and writes worrying letters to her parents, 'in wretched spirits', in which she seems no longer to know herself (vol. 2, p. 230). National difference is also implicated in the destabilisation of Geraldine's father, one of the most impotent men in the novel. This unsatisfactory character travels when he ought, in accordance with his patriarchal authority, to be exerting influence over his daughter. Mr Berrisford cannot cope with his wife's death in the first chapter of *Geraldine*, and for 'six months he rather indulged, than struggled with his grief' (vol. 1, p. 75). He subsequently leaves the heroine under the care of the feckless Mowbrays, whilst he spends much of his time in Italy, before dying in Europe. He is one of many characters to have died 'off-stage', outside the safe spaces of both Britain and Mackenzie's text.

The principle focus of Mary Jane Mackenzie's 1820 novel is the story of Geraldine Berrisford. This tale praises the heroine's eventual domestic fixity, and it does

so with humour and skilful dialogue. The present analysis has focussed not upon this central story, however, but rather on Geraldine's darker sub-text. In this part of the novel, a series of characters, some of them comparatively minor, are punished for their deviation from cultural and moral mores. Through an accompanying theme of travel, these positive norms are aligned with British nationalism. As part of this process, suspicions against the influence of the national Other build momentum, with Britishness emerging as a kind of belief system, faithful, honest, and stable, to which the reader ought to strive unswervingly to adhere. Characters such as Fanny Mowbray and Mr Berrisford do not transgress as a direct result of travel, yet over the course of the novel their downfalls are connected, detail by detail, with the national Other. Fanny Mowbray's flight from Britain, for example, flags her rejection of both her husband's authority and the institution of the family. As we have seen, Mackenzie uses figurative images, and spatial boundaries, to construct Britain as a safe, knowable sphere, by pitching it against a dangerous and unpredictable foreign nation which must be avoided. This rejection of the national Other might seem so anxious and conservative as to eliminate revisionism from Geraldine. Yet in defining and defending British nationalism, Mackenzie was tapping into an element of the moral tale that was empowering. As noted above, Linda Colley has described patriotic thought and activity as constituting one of the most prominent discourses in contemporary society, and she suggests that women's relation to nationalism during and after the Napoleonic wars gave them authority. Harriet Guest has also theorised the way in which the 'feminization of patriotism' enabled women writers such as Hannah More to gain an acceptable yet powerful voice in public affairs.²¹ Guest does not examine the Moral-Domestic genre in

²¹ Harriet Guest, Small Change: Women, Learning, Patriotism, 1750-1810 (Chicago: University of

the late-Romantic literary scene, but she nonetheless provides a framework within which to read Mackenzie's nationalism as empowered.

A final point to note about the national plots of Geraldine discussed above is that they lack coherence. Indeed the gravity of the lessons that Mackenzie teaches to her 'travellers' seem disproportionate; it is unclear, for example, why Fanny suffers whilst her parents, who admire and associate with the French, and who are culpable in their daughter's socialisation, do not endure a similar fate. In addition, Mackenzie's definition of Britain's religion lacks detail. The faith of Geraldine's Britain is Protestant Christianity, but the religion of her dangerous national Other is less certain. Such grey areas can be explained by recourse to the point with which this section opened.

Mackenzie's nationalism, and her assertion of Protestantism as Britain's rightful secure religion, are themes in progress in the present work, which would become more central and more clearly defined in the conversion novel. The occurrences leading to ostracism in this text build upon the general anti-French ethos of the Moral-Domestic tale of the 1810s, but they are nonetheless imprecise. In the works of such writers as Amelia Bristow, however, they would become dominant, being clarified in relation to central protagonists rather than peripheral ones. Several conversion writers may be seen to pick up the secondary elements of Mackenzie's text, placing them at the heart of the novel.

The Fruition of the Conversion Novel: Grace Kennedy

In its depiction of Catholics who convert to Protestantism, Grace Kennedy's Father Clement; A Roman Catholic Story (1823) reflects the transition that occurred within Moral-Domestic fiction, in which the conversion sub-genre developed out of the existing theme of national and religious difference. Father Clement picks up the cultural Other denigrated by Mary Jane Mackenzie, yet portrays its eventual assimilation, as opposed to its ostracism. In depicting outsiders as converting to 'our' British faith, Father Clement celebrates a homogenous version of Protestant Britain with perhaps more force than did Geraldine; Kennedy's homeland does not need to eject alien influences, being strong enough to re-admit them. In this positive construction of Britain, Kennedy relies heavily on the implementation of a dichotomy, in which a non-Protestant religion, associated with Rome and the Continent, gains a relationally negative identity. This generates a communitarian, conservative ethos; the novel does, after all, preach the 'correction' of differences that might otherwise divide British society. Somewhat paradoxically, however, the goal of bolstering British Protestantism proves extremely facilitating in Father Clement. The depiction of conversion required that religious scripture, personal psychology, and inherited beliefs were examined with increased coherency, and in greater detail. This move sanctioned the woman novelist to be politically vocal, participating in the movement to strengthen nationalism. It also enabled expanded creativity. New twists of plot appear in Father Clement, for example, owing to the complex nature of the cultural and historical influences to which a convert is exposed. This novel also has a varied focus, as a direct result of the theme of conversion, with Kennedy conveying the plights of multiple characters. Many of these

are without a template in existing Romantic-era fiction. Indeed, Father Clement himself is a troubled, aging Catholic priest, who induces both sympathy and condemnation from the reader. Through these and other representations, Father Clement exemplifies many of the sub-genre's key traits, and comes to appear as one of the seminal conversion texts of the 1820s.

Father Clement is set in Scotland in the seventeenth century, during the time of the exiled House of Stuart. It centres on the lives of two families, the Montagues and Clarenhams, who exist on friendly terms. Lady Montague and Mrs Clarenham are cousins, yet their adherence to different versions of Christianity situates them in a dichotomy, in which the Protestant Montagues are favoured. The reader is interpellated to identify with the Montagues. Their dialogue is given more space in the text than is the Clarenhams', and they are associated with images connoting freedom and hope. For example, Lord and Lady Montague, along with their teenage children Ernest, Adeline, and Maude, reside at The Hall, a building described as physically spacious and light. Correspondingly, the Montagues' chaplain, a Presbyterian named Lowther, is on hand to offer advice, but is emphatically not an oppressive figure. Much is made of the fact that Lowther refuses to translate scripture for his pupils. Instead, he trusts the Bible to announce its own truth, and to encourage its readers to act morally. The Clarenham family's lifestyle contrasts with that of their neighbours. Mrs Clarenham and her children Basil, Catherine, and Maria, live at Hallern Castle, a dark and claustrophobic home. At the beginning of the text, their Roman Catholic chaplain, Mr Ellison, possesses an omniscient power feared by the Montagues, as he sees, hears, and influences everything that transpires at Hallern Castle. He is superseded in his role some time later by Father Dormer Clement, originally Basil's academic and philosophical tutor. Clement

is a kind mentor, but he too proves to be misled in his Catholic teachings. Unlike Lowther, Clement prepares the pieces of scripture to which his pupils are exposed, and encourages a rigorous routine of prayer, confession, and self-regulation. This necessity to reiterate Catholic dictums argues that the faith is not sound enough to 'speak for itself'. Requiring an intrusive advocate, Catholicism appears inappropriate for the liberal, truth-seeking Britons favoured by Kennedy. With such dichotomous images and characters, Kennedy avoids the use of invasive narrative statements, and impresses the reader with a sense of Britain's positive, natural connection with Protestantism.

Over the course of the novel, the negation of Catholicism grows yet more pronounced, as the Montagues and Clarenhams mix, and the former group gains ascendancy over the latter. This process culminates in the conversion of certain Clarenham characters. The Montagues, and critically the Protestantism for which they stand, promise a sense of belonging to Basil, Catherine, and Maria Clarenham. They also offer personal liberty. This irony, in which to convert both communalises and individualises the subject, represents the crux of conversion's appeal. Indeed, multiple quiet freedoms are achieved following the initial desire to convert. In going against the religion of their elders, for example, the Clarenhams will come to support Protestant homogeneity within Britain, but they will also undermine patriarchal authority, and the notion of inherited status, by turning against their own faith. Father Clement sees the hierarchy of the Clarenhams overturned; instead of respecting their parents' wishes, and adhering to the age and gender norms governing both the institution of the family and society at large, Kennedy's youths carve their own destinies.

This independence has particular repercussions for the female characters of Father Clement, who are offered an anti-radical form of feminism by Protestantism.

Maria Clarenham, for example, is led by her intelligence and curiosity to question Father Clement, especially when she is forbidden direct access to the Bible. As she matures, Maria is encouraged by the Montagues to exercise her powers of discrimination. Lowther gives Maria a Bible, and fosters in her a positive self-concept from which to begin a journey towards truth. Lowther states that everyone, including women, should be allowed to judge autonomously and critically. In becoming a Protestant, Maria may be sanctioned to assert an individualism that would otherwise be scorned. Female characters in Romantic fiction tended either to be praised for their obedience or chastised for their disobedience. The act of conversion, however, provided a way out of this binary for the heroine, enabling her to break existing moulds. Caroline Gonda's examination of the restrictions imposed upon women, both as writers and as characters, refers to such an exception. In Reading Daughters' Fiction 1709-1834, the defence of Christianity is depicted as the only cause owing to which a daughter or wife might deviate from patriarchal authority. Gonda argues that, in fiction as much as in society, if

daughters once put their own selfish desires before duty to parents, claiming that the sacrifices demanded of them were too great, they soon degenerated into monsters of indiscipline and ingratitude; nothing could excuse a daughter from the performance of filial duty, unless she felt her soul to be imperilled by it.²²

Here Gonda identifies the threat to a woman's soul as being one of the few grounds on which she might assert autonomy. The female convert, represented in Father Clement by Maria Clarenham, qualifies this point, exemplifying just how empowering Gonda's excuse for daughterly disobedience could be. Owing to her conversion, Maria stretches the type of heroine habitually portrayed in moral, Romantic fiction; Maria does not need

²² Caroline Gonda, Reading Daughters' Fictions, 1709-1834: Novels and Society from Manley to Edgeworth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 15.

a father's kindness, or an incredible, lucky marriage, in order to be happy. Instead, she re-defines the beliefs and identity imposed upon her. As a result, she makes decisions about her future, and is able to influence others. Indeed, Maria eventually chooses her husband, and alters the views of his parents. Her suitor's father is a lapsed Catholic, but nonetheless forbids his son from marrying outside of Catholicism. The determined Maria, however, is eventually able to exercise her will.

In keeping with Kennedy's use of binaries, Maria has a counterpart in Father Clement, in the shape of her non-converting sister, Catherine Clarenham. Like Maria, Catherine generates feminist meaning. She does so, however, through a very different narrative route. Whilst Basil and Maria Clarenham are liberated by Protestantism, Catherine is hostile to her neighbours, and resists conversion. Catherine is destined for a nunnery, and is a steadfast adherent to Catholicism. According to the narrator, this restricts her intellectually as well as personally, and it is implied that, whilst Maria is to be admired, Catherine is to be pitied. Catherine is unaccustomed to stretching her mind, for example, and is willing to forfeit love, courtship, and motherhood, in the name of an errant faith. She appears to be in a state of subjection, treated partly as a child, and partly as a prisoner. On the surface, this plight recalls the persecuted heroines of much Romantic women's writing. Like Gothic heroines, for example, Catherine is to be imprisoned, effectually, on the stipulation of her elders. In an expansion of this normative plot, however, Catherine is complicit in her fate; she does not listen to the Montagues, and actually looks forward to becoming a nun, and later to becoming an Abbess.²³ With this insertion, Kennedy renders the typical villains of existing genres

²³ Conversion heroines existed outside the perimeters defining many existing types of heroine. A particular style of heroine surpassed in the conversion novel is that of the physically restricted or verbally

defunct; Catherine has been so successfully socialised into the Catholic way of life, that there is no need for the male villain of the Gothic genre. Kennedy's creativity with themes of psychological trickery and ideological coercion, therefore, enables her to manipulate and replace various novelistic staples.

Whilst the stories of Catherine and Maria give rise to a feminist polemic in Kennedy's novel, the character of Father Clement is also more complex than he initially appears. What is immediately discernible about this male character, who combines many diverse traits, is that he represents unusual territory for the female novelist. It is always stressed that Clement's narrow upbringing, rather than his personal choices, have led him into religious error, suggesting that he is to be pitied instead of condemned. As a result, Clement elicits a mixed reaction, appearing as a figure that troubles the reader more so than do the easily recognised heroes and villains of other Moral-Domestic writers. Kennedy depicts this character struggling increasingly with his faith over the course of the novel, experiencing irreconcilable doubts, and exhibiting some alarming behaviour. When the Montagues question Maria Clarenham regarding her Catholicism, for example, Clement's intelligence prevents him from denying the discrepancies within his faith. Long sections of dispute ensue, which add both intellectualism and ambiguity to the novel. Clement's habituation to his religion imposes great limitations on his ability to change, which leads Kennedy to depict his use of mental and physical tactics to curb his misgivings. Heightening his suffering, he carries out daily self-mortification, wearing splintered pieces of wood beneath his clothes, and sleeping on boards. He also

controlled woman. Such heroines abound in the female-dominated terror style of Gothic novel, and are exemplified by Ann Radcliffe's protagonists. Catherine Clarenham differs from these characters in that she is ideologically rather than physically or verbally coerced.

takes to lying in a coffin later in the text, with the aim of both punishing himself and reminding himself of his mortality.

After living this mean existence for some time, Clement falls seriously ill, and the Catholic priest Warrenne arrives to read him the last rites. Warrenne asks for reiterated commitment to the Church of Rome, but Clement will say only that he is devoted to the 'Church of Jesus Christ' (Father Clement, p. 355). His eventual death is involving, but also vague; Father Clement's conversion is unclear, and comes too late, as he dies before enjoying the freedoms that Protestantism might bring. This ending is somewhat depressing, but it also represents another example of the revisionism at work in Kennedy's writerly practices. The youths of this text succeed to convert where Clement, an older character who would perhaps be given authority in other novels, as well as in society at large, fails. The reader is thus left to ponder the possibility that the younger generation might, against conventional age hierarchies, take precedence in a given community. As was the case with Maria's empowerment, then, the failure of Clement carries the suggestion of social change. In the delineation of this character, Kennedy develops politically and artistically, depicting an intriguing, unusual degree of psychological conflict that requires diverse imagery and perspectives in its rendition. Indeed, religious conversion constitutes such a seismic shift for the individual, that considerable creativity must accompany its telling.

Father Clement is an expansive novel, which manifests certain liberating elements of conversion. In what is something of a paradox, the woman writer, the subject of intense scrutiny regarding propriety in the period, is able boldly to make political and artistic inroads, owing to her religious aims. Conversion to Protestantism, for example, results in an outsider joining 'our' status quo, but it also requires that this

individual act autonomously in order to do so. From this starting point, a whole series of arguments for independence can be made, because this higher aim is unquestionably a safe, homogenising one. Indeed with a view to uniting with the Montagues, Kennedy's heroine was able to reject patriarchal authority in favour of her own sense of what would make her happy. Likewise at the authorial level, Kennedy could evade certain of the tropes and limitations prevalent in the contemporary literary marketplace, owing to the conservatism of the theme of conversion. Her text is authoritative and politically alert, although its support of Protestant orthodoxy protected it from censure. Thus, the conversion sub-genre's higher calling of Protestantism empowered both Maria Clarenham and Grace Kennedy to reject the bonds imposed by patriarchal society, in a manner for which other, less overtly moral, writers, would probably have been silenced.

The notion that Kennedy gained confidence and success owing to her conversion fiction is supported by her text Philip Colville; or, a Covenanter's Story. Unfinished (1825). The existence of this work suggests that Kennedy found respectability and freedom following Father Clement. Philip Colville met with an eager publisher and reader, for example, despite the fact that Kennedy died before completing it. Its editorial section, written by an interested second party, also states Kennedy's value. Philip Colville depicts the religious discrepancies that abound in Britain in the 1600s, with a view to celebrating Protestant successes in conflicts. What exists of Philip Colville lacks a domestic focus, but advances morality and a deep concern with faith. With this representation, the editor notes, Kennedy participated in broad social movements, such as nationalism and patriotism: 'This would have been a most useful work, for even our most esteemed historians have either slurred over the odious deeds of that day, or they

have misrepresented them.’²⁴ The editor continues by urging readers to tell their children the story of Phillip Colville, so that they might appreciate ‘our now happy land’ (p. 272). It is perhaps owing to her contribution to the hegemony central to this belief system that Kennedy became fairly prolific and revered. Indeed, in literary catalogues and commentaries Kennedy has received attention where many of her conversion and Moral-Domestic contemporaries have not, and has even been attributed with works that, it has since been proven, she did not write. For example, she has been claimed as the author of the anonymous works The Acceptance (1810) and The Decision (1811).²⁵ This might suggest that Kennedy was comparatively well-known in the contemporary literary climate, and that the anecdotes and reviews that she generated, as well as her own novels, were picked up in later years.

Despite the points noted above, Kennedy should not be individualised too far. She was not the last conversion writer, nor was she alone in her skilful use of this theme. Indeed, a final and very significant point to note about Father Clement is that it testifies to the intertextuality fostered by the theme of conversion. In contrast to the notion that experimental, creative writers produced their works in isolation, conversion writers such as Kennedy and her followers expressed mutual awareness; whether in terms of solidarity or criticism, these authors consistently referred to one another. This facet of conversion fiction is consistent with Ellen Moers’s notion, discussed at length in relation to post-Austenian fiction, that women writers of various periods and genres have had recourse to a ‘sounding-board’, comprised of female voices and texts. Father Clement is

²⁴ Grace Kennedy, Phillip Colville; or, a Covenanter’s Story. Unfinished (Edinburgh: W. Oliphant, 1825; CME 3-628-48434-0), p. 272. All further references are to this edition and are given in the text.

²⁵ The bibliographical histories of these two novels can be found in The English Novel, p. 310 and p. 336 respectively.

significant here. This text itself supports a questioning, discursive ethos; as noted above, Kennedy's Protestants as well as her Catholics are involved in debates, which both adds a meandering element to the conventional mode of story-telling, and supports a general mood of enquiry and modification. Outside of Father Clement, Kennedy is further significant in regard to intertextuality, as her text looks both backwards and forwards. Kennedy is indebted to Mackenzie's Geraldine, for example, expanding and elaborating upon its theme of nationalism, by identifying Britain's faith with new strength. Father Clement also opened up a very clear dialogue both with and amongst future writers. One novelist who saw fit to offer a debate with Father Clement was Mrs Robertson, whose Florence; or, The Aspirant appeared in 1829.²⁶ The relationship between Kennedy's work and Robertson's is clear. Indeed, this novel is one of the publications that have been attributed to Kennedy, perhaps owing to confusion over its references to Father Clement.²⁷

Florence's importance lies in the fact that it takes issue with Kennedy's critique of Catholicism, and actually defines itself as a re-telling of Maria Clarenham's story. In Robertson's novel, two Protestants, Mrs Stanhope and her daughter Florence, visit a Catholic church, and are overwhelmed at its unguarded, positive atmosphere. Through a series of open exchanges, Florence comes to view Catholicism as 'the one true Church' (Florence, vol. 1, p. 10). In supporting her heroine's choice, Robertson fuses Catholicism with the qualities of independent thought and liberty that Kennedy defined as Protestant. She hereby exposes the fallacious nature of Kennedy's depiction of

²⁶ Mrs Robertson, Florence; or The Aspirant (London: Whittaker, Treacher, and Co., 1829; CME 3-628-47797-2). All further references are to this edition and are given in the text.

²⁷ The English Novel, for example, originally attributed the anonymous Florence to Grace Kennedy (p. 687). The supplementary 'The English Novel, 1800-1829: Update 1' (Apr 2000-May 2001), however, corrects this mis-attribution, <<http://www.cf.ac.uk/encap/corvey/articles/engnov1.html>>.

Protestantism as naturally superior; the fact that this image was born of cultural construction, rather than being innate, is thrown into relief by its manipulation in Florence. For example, when the staunch Protestant Admiral Stanhope asks her if she is aware that 'no loyal subject would be a Catholic, and that no Catholic can be a loyal subject', the heroine replies 'I am aware of the reverse; of all men living, [Catholics] have been the most loyal' (vol. 3, p. 309). She goes on to insist that to discriminate against Catholics is hypocritical: 'Protestants say that they introduced the fashion of thinking for ourselves - I mean to follow it.' (vol. 3, p. 310) Late in the work, Stanhope burns a number of Florence's Catholic books, and mistakenly includes Father Clement, which the heroine indignantly takes from the fire, not out of respect, but rather because Kennedy's work is 'not worthy to mingle its flames or its ashes with those of such precious matter' (vol. 3, p. 311). In such scenes as those above, Robertson retains all of Kennedy's arguments, but she reverses her signifiers, so that she praises Catholicism rather than Protestantism. In this novel, for example, it is the Protestants who seek to restrain the heroine from thinking for herself, whilst her Catholic friends enlighten her.

In portraying Catholicism as the light to which the heroine is drawn, and the faith by which she is freed, Florence goes against the Protestant message that is integral to the bulk of the conversion sub-genre. Nonetheless this novel is important in this section, firstly because it illustrates the diversity afforded by the theme of conversion, and secondly because its existence, as a riposte to Grace Kennedy, reveals that conversion novelists worked within a debating, progressive, and female-centred environment. In this sphere, authors such as Kennedy and Mrs Robertson spoke out about important social issues, involving religion, and the role of daughters within the family and community. They challenged one another, without reference to male writers and thinkers, and made

inroads in the literary marketplace of the 1820s. Such links and parallels as those that exist between Father Clement and Florence problematise the idea that women writers were being 'edged out' of the late-Romantic literary scene by the influx of male authors. Rather than blending into the fictional landscape, conversion writers were busily carving a formidable path, in which future writers could have a voice.

Diversity in the Mid-1820s Conversion Novel: Charlotte Anley

Conversion fiction was at its most prolific in the years between Grace Kennedy's Father Clement (1823) and Mrs Robertson's Florence (1829). Amongst the most interesting novels appearing in this period was Charlotte Anley's Miriam; or, the Power of Truth. A Jewish Tale (1826). The preface to Anley's novel supports the notion that the conversion sub-genre was written to be taken seriously. She argues that her work is imbued with 'Christianity: THE GOSPEL', and that its aim is to improve the mind of the 'young reader' (Miriam, p. ii). Anley also suggests the wide-reaching nature of the theme of conversion, stating that the present story is based upon a mixture of fact and anecdote, and draws upon 'the "Cottage Magazine," where the narrative is briefly detailed with great simplicity and elegance, of an American Jew, converted to Christianity by the death of his only child' (p. v). Such prefatory comments imply that Miriam will follow Father Clement, in testifying to the contemporary relevance of conversion to the reader's life, and in reinforcing a sense of Christianity's rightness as Britain's denominated faith.

In further similarity with Father Clement, the story of Miriam gains credibility through its creative adaptation of literary norms. This tale frustrates the reader's expectations of the heroine, owing to its portrayal of an unusual range of characters by whom she is outlived. In this story, Miriam makes three important additions to existing narratives portraying conversion. Firstly, this text deals with Judaism, rather than with divisions within British Christianity. Anley becomes the purveyor of a more specific, obscure knowledge of the cultural Other as a result of this focus. Secondly, Miriam centres upon the father-daughter relationship. It does so in such a way that key aspects of conventional gender roles and identities are scrutinised and reversed; as Imlah and Miriam Dirvan experience doubts regarding Judaism, the daughter comes to take precedence over the father. Thirdly, Miriam is the story of one young woman's growing authority, on a road to maturity and self-definition that is linked to her interactions with Protestantism. Unlike Maria of Father Clement, however, Miriam Dirvan does not achieve an unequivocally happy ending. A closer reading reveals that, in regard to this final point in particular, Anley's unusual heroine required the creation of a new kind of story in which she could be situated.

Miriam is set in the eighteenth century, in the 'sweet village of Glencairn' on the northern borders of Westmoreland (p. 1). Its inhabitants are poor but industrious, and they live in a close-knit community. The rich Jew Imlah Dirvan and his daughter stand apart in this setting, living in a relatively secluded mansion, from which most company is viewed as a threat to the sanctity of their home. In this early representation, Miriam signals its contrast with the Moral-Domestic mainstream. In the novels of Barbara Hofland, as well as those of Mary Jane Mackenzie, for example, a religious or national Other residing in Britain comprised a polluting element, against which Protestant

characters strived to police themselves. Yet in Miriam, it is Imlah who feels the need to draw a line between himself and the rest of Britain. Imlah ‘seemed to live a sullen alien from mankind’, and is described as a ‘strange misanthrope’ (p. 2). He believes that, owing to their status as Jews, he and his daughter are ridiculed. This depiction of Imlah’s revulsion towards Protestantism actually has the effect of making this faith appear more stable than did Mackenzie’s Geraldine, because it accentuates both Jewish insecurity and the notion that non-Protestants do not belong in Britain.

Imlah’s acrimony and suspicion serve a creative as well as a nationalist function in Miriam, however, as they add interesting psychological elements to the text. The pivotal figure of Imlah immediately strikes the reader as atypical. This isolated, hostile, non-British male is a peculiar protagonist for the female-authored novelist, as the following account reveals. We learn that Imlah has spent much of his life in Germany, attempting to gain influence for the Jewish people. Through Imlah, Anley provides a detailed explanation of international attitudes towards the Jewish people, as they have appeared over the centuries. The narrative makes reference to the persecution of the Jews by Richard I, and the removal of many Jewish communities from England. We learn that Imlah belongs to the Jews of Hanover, who would not be granted equality until 1848, many decades after the time in which the novel is set. We also learn that, whilst in Germany, this protagonist lost his wife and son. Imlah ‘was one of an ancient and powerful family, now reduced to a few scattered remains’ (pp. 3-4). Rejected by society, Imlah grew to rebuff others before they could rebuff him. He has never belonged anywhere, and has often been deprived of his rights. Imlah eventually moved to Scotland, isolating himself, as well as his daughter, from much of society. The representation of Imlah suggests that to be Jewish is to possess an unstable sense of self,

and a fluctuating social standing. As becomes clear as the novel progresses, by opposition with the Jews, the Britons amongst whom Imlah is currently situated gain security and self-confidence from their Christianity.

In similarity with Imlah, Anley's second key character, Miriam, is an unusual heroine. This empowered but ultimately tragic woman evades the life-events characteristic of most female Romantic protagonists. Miriam begins the novel a young Jewess, who exudes the 'joy of innocence', and loves her father dearly (p. 3). Over the course of her life, however, Miriam seeks company away from her father, and grows attracted to Protestantism. Conversion is long in coming, as a result of Anley's desire to accentuate the serious nature of the decision to convert. It is nonetheless the key event of the heroine's life, towards which the preceding chapters of the novel are geared. The narrator states early on, for example, that Judaism will eventually prove unworkable for Miriam. This is partly because Protestantism is, according to the present sub-genre, the true faith of the British nation in which she resides. Judaism is also faulty, however, because it is an archaic faith which degrades women. Owing to the narrator's definition of Judaism as an old-fashioned belief-system, Protestantism emerges as critical, modern, and, most important of all, empowering to women. In the conversion of Miriam we see, once again, that the ostensible conservatism of the goal to convert enables the writer to convey a range of possibilities. If she converts to Protestantism, Anley's heroine will join the positive, stable local community from which her faith has erstwhile debarred them. Yet the execution of this apparently homogenising act requires, paradoxically, that Miriam exercise the kind of individualism that generated anxiety in Britain in the post-Revolutionary years. As a young woman, Miriam begins to take walks and make visits away from the mansion, and is often unaccompanied by her father. At this time she

encounters the poor but virtuous Stuart family, who come to play a vital role in her religious and personal awakening. Imlah has met Mrs Stuart, and he respects her as the proud but kind head of this family. He proves less susceptible to her positive influence, however, than does his daughter.

Whilst certain of the Stuart children are less pious than others, Miriam is struck by their happy, hard-working life. Indeed, one of the first occasions on which Edith, Helen, and Jessie Stuart appear in the novel is at a May Day dance, an event connoting a strongly British national character, as well as a joyful, community-oriented ethos. The Stuarts continue to contrast positively with Miriam's father as the story continues, particularly when they endure financial trials and health problems with dignity and unity. In striking difference from the bitterness with which Imlah responded to his trials on the Continent, for example, the young Jessie Stuart endures her dangerous illness with resilience and cheerfulness. On visiting Jessie, Miriam sees the Christian child sitting and reading the Bible, and perceives that whilst Jews fear death, Christians can face it cheerfully. For Jessie, Protestantism facilitates an evasion of the bitterness and sense of alienation to which Imlah may be seen to fall prey. Indeed, Mrs Stuart says of her poor daughter: "I believe my child will rise justified with Christ to everlasting joy! His grace alone has taught her how to die." (pp. 51-2) Protestantism grants most freedom to Miriam, however. This heroine begins the text trapped in her father's mansion, possessing little sense of her place in the world, and little considering her own opinions. Yet she comes ultimately to disobey her father, and more importantly to avoid the state of marriage to which even the empowered Maria Clarenham of Father Clement succumbed. She is sanctioned to do so by becoming a Christian. This action is one of few in a woman's life whose importance supersedes the pressure to carry out filial and

marital duties. In volume two of this work, Imlah draws upon religious stipulation, as well as the importance of ancestry, in order to urge his daughter to marry Aben Ezra, the son of a powerful acquaintance, Menasseh Ben-Israel. In this plan, Miriam is a pawn in her father's desire to retrieve prestige and power. When converting to Protestantism, she is authorised by Anley to challenge her father's will, putting her own desires, needs, and view of what is right, first. She rejects Aben Ezra, signalling a pull away from patriarchal control.

A further female character supporting the feminist message implicit in Miriam's conversion is Helen Stuart. The existence of this character leads Anley to alter certain tropes of the moral tale in ways that give power to women. Like many Romantic-era heroines who need to be guided down the correct moral or cultural path, Miriam looks to a stock mentor figure. What is unusual in this depiction is that Miriam is not advised by a male clergyman, or an experienced, older woman, alone. Rather, Miriam accepts and is influenced by 'Helen's little Bible' (p. 97). The clergyman Mr Howard encourages Miriam's conversion, yet Helen also performs a pivotal role, as she supports the heroine's independent reading and decision-making. Together, Miriam and Helen engage in lengthy, rigorous debate regarding the differences between Christianity and Judaism. Supporting the notion that conversion novelists could depict intelligent, authoritative heroines, in this tale 'Miriam was surprised to find Helen so well furnished with arguments from ancient scriptures' (p. 115). Anley also depicts her female characters as being in a state of dialogue over religion, as Miriam engages in 'combat with Helen' (p. 102). In *Miriam*, Helen represents the socially marginalised, in her gender and social rank. It is, therefore, revisionist of Anley to award her such influence. Bolstering Helen's adoption of a masculine degree and type of power, Imlah is

increasingly feminised over the course of the text. Like most conversion novels, Anley's includes long, often unresolved, sections of scriptural analysis. In such pieces, the misguided, deluded patriarch recalls the heroines, rather than the male characters, of anti-Jacobin novels of the past. Indeed Imlah is almost a Quixote figure, incapable of reading his life accurately, and unable to handle responsibility. In this way, Helen and the heroine supersede the novel's central patriarch. Whilst Miriam rejects her father's orders, Helen encroaches on the role played by Lowther in Father Clement. Both of these female characters arguably breach the conventional status that a young, unmarried woman would be expected to hold in the novel.

The characterisations above seem to overflow with promises of female independence. Yet a striking turn of events leads Miriam to an extremely harsh fate. After a series of arguments between the heroine and her father concerning religion, the former falls ill. She dies, without fulfilling her potential. Although this downfall seems disheartening, it can be construed as empowering in a number of ways. In having Miriam die whilst her less-deserving father lives, Anley boldly represents her heroine as a Christ-like figure. Miriam may be seen to die for the sins of her father, who has the chance to move on after his daughter's death. There is also a sense in which, through Miriam's death, Anley critiques the opportunities that existed for women in society. In order to continue to exercise the independence that she sought and deserved, Miriam would have required outlets outside of those to which marriage would have given her access. To become either a wife or a dependent single woman would have led to uncharacteristic submission to patriarchy on Miriam's part. Her death, therefore, might be interpreted as the disappointing, but really the only feasible, end to her efforts towards self-definition. Whatever its precise meaning, the fact of Miriam's heroic death

is further important because it breaks the mould of the female-authored Romantic tale. This event disrupts the reader's expectation of a happy end for the convert, especially when the exit of the heroine is followed by a return to Anley's unconventional male protagonist.

Certain female-authored texts of the Romantic period featured male narrators and protagonists, but these were a rare breed. In representing a male character, and a hostile one at that, surpassing her heroine, Anley participated in a small but interesting series of narratives in which a few women writers adopt a similar focus. As Chapter Two revealed, Barbara Hofland is one such writer, using a male mouthpiece in Tales of the Priory (1820). This represented a deviation amongst the normative female focalisers of both her own works and those of other Moral-Domestic authors appearing in 1820. Henrietta Maria Bowdler's Pen Tamar; or, The History of an Old Maid (1830) constitutes another exception to the rule of female centred-novels by women, standing out for its emphasis of a male perspective. Pen Tamar is an extremely interesting novel, whose religious preface criticises previous women writers' use of William Godwin's ideas. Bowdler claims to uphold orthodox familial roles, but in representing her wary bachelor as being reformed by a good-hearted Christian spinster, she accentuates the worth of a social outsider.²⁸ Whilst the stories that they tell are quite different, and are chronologically distant, then, the unusual use of a male perspective leads Hofland, Bowdler, and Anley alike to depict a man who is in some way indebted, or inferior, to a single woman. Anley is perhaps the most forceful of these three writers in her portrayal of female strength. Imlah is a Jewish hero, who outlives the novel's saving female, but

²⁸ Henrietta Maria Bowdler, Pen Tamar; or, The History of an Old Maid (London: Longman, 1830; CME 3-628-47271-7)

who needs to appreciate his daughter's better judgement in order to attain contentment. He mourns his daughter in solitude for two years after her death, but is finally able to overcome religious and personal turmoil by conversion to Christianity. He reads the Bible, and for the first time sees the truth of Protestantism. In a turn against his avowed misanthropy, he converts, and becomes a 'zealous and successful missionary', working in Syria, Turkey, and Palestine (p. 379). In so doing, he owes his daughter his life, in an aggrandisement of the heroine which almost atones for her untimely death.

In portraying the conversion of two Jews to Protestant Christianity, Charlotte Anley contributed to the forging of British nationalism that was a key facet of contemporary ideology and activity. Indeed, the heroine of Miriam initially exists between Germany and Britain, a fact that exacerbates her loneliness at this stage. All the time that she remains a Jewess, she seems to lack the national identity that Anley constructs as crucial to a happy, steady life. Miriam's problems result partly from the history of abuse, at the hands of many nations, with which Imlah associates his Judaism. It is also claimed by the narrator, however, that she feels uncomfortable because she does not participate in the faith that is central to the nation in which she resides. In order to be fulfilled, therefore, and to belong to the novel's favoured community, Miriam must become British, via becoming Christian. In this representation, Anley fully fuses nationalism and religion, so that the one appears to be the given accompaniment to the other. Thus, whilst she remains Jewish, the heroine cannot be British; instead, she floats between families and places, and is forever walking around the village, as if searching for her true home. It is only when she fully accepts Christianity that Miriam is allowed to claim Britain as this home. In making this point, Anley creates an image of the Jewish as a 'lost' people, 'God's alienated people', whilst Protestant Britons have personal

stability, represented by their fixedness in physical space (p. 383). The assumptions put into place here resonate with the process of cultural construction occurring in society at large, and to which Linda Colley refers. Critically, Anley's novel not only contributes to this impetus, but also takes advantage of the political as well as the artistic potential with which it is loaded. As we have seen, the nationalist message facilitates in Miriam an argument in favour of the individual abilities and rights of both the heroine and her female creator. Anley uses conversion to create an innovative cast of characters, in the shape of Imlah, Miriam, and Helen. This requires concurrent alterations at the level of narrative; Anley's tragic heroine dies without any of the trappings of the life that the reader might have expected for her, whilst the novel moves on to portray a renewed focus upon the father who is given a second chance. Thus, Anley shifts the components of the novel, suggesting new thematic territory and writerly techniques. Miriam possesses yet less closure than did Father Clement, asking questions and implying possibilities, which would be taken up by later writers.

A Conversion Career: Amelia Bristow

The writers already discussed in this chapter published one or two conversion novels each. Yet the theme of conversion provided women writers with much more than one-off commercial success; the thematic material, as well as the writerly authority, associated with conversion offered the opportunity to sustain a literary career. Amelia Bristow exemplifies this point, producing a substantial oeuvre as a result of her

involvement with conversion. Bristow's works resonate with those of other conversion writers, and reiterate many of the sub-genre's key traits. Breaking away from her sister novelists, however, Bristow's texts are pervaded by a self-consciousness, whose implications are multiple, and which resulted from Bristow's particular affinity with conversion. Unlike Mackenzie, Kennedy, and Anley, Amelia Bristow had converted from Judaism to Christianity over the course of her own life. As a result, she may have realised the radical potential of conversion more fully than did other writers, and used it to her best advantage. She was certainly able, for example, to introduce personal, autobiographical elements into the conversion novel, blurring the division between fiction and reality in consequence. In this way, she exemplifies the extent to which the Romantic woman writer's life could be inextricably linked to her works. Bristow thus recalls Barbara Hofland, who thematised her experiences as a widow. Like Hofland, Bristow uses the novel to negotiate cultural and economic factors. Yet in doing so, Bristow takes control of a particularly interesting identity, as she depicts her Judaism as useful, rather than stigmatising; this background appears as an untapped resource, through which the writer could both earn a much-needed income and dictate her quite singular knowledge to the public. Bristow's conversion trilogy illustrates this point. What is immediately striking about Sophia de Lissau (1826), Emma de Lissau (1828), and The Orphans of Lissau (1830) is their meta-textuality. Bristow manipulates fictional packaging in order to amalgamate factuality and subjectivity in the information that she conveys. As was the case with Hofland, an analysis of the mutual dependence of Bristow's biography and fiction enables us to reconstruct a very interesting late-Romantic, female career.

Bristow's hard life illuminates both the themes that dominated her fiction and the confident voice with which she publicised them.²⁹ Bristow was born in 1783, and died around 1845. She lived most of her adult life with her husband in London, where she had to work hard in order to avoid poverty. She undertook various haberdashery jobs alongside her writing, although failing eyesight proved prohibitive in old age. Supplementing this work, she applied to the Royal Literary Fund for pecuniary aid throughout the later years of her career, in a lengthy correspondence beginning in 1827 and ending in 1845. Perhaps the most relevant aspect of Bristow's personal life is her conversion from Judaism to Protestant Christianity, as both her Royal Literary Fund correspondence and her fiction imply. This attribute attracted notice in the first of her letters to the Fund, with the panel's notes revealing that its male, Anglican directors referred to Bristow as 'a converted Jewess'. The Fund's positive response to Bristow might, therefore, be construed as support for her conversion. This in turn would substantiate the notion, argued throughout this chapter, that religious unity was a priority in contemporary society. The second point that strikes the reader of this correspondence is that, in her self-definition, Bristow states that she has undergone many financial struggles in her life. The first of her letters, dated May 1827, discusses poor health and insurmountable medical debts. Bristow gives a humble yet authoritative description of her fictions. She claims to have produced these works with a view to both atoning for her own poverty and assisting in the moral elevation of a certain section of the reading public. She states:

²⁹ The biography of Bristow is drawn from information contained in Bristow's correspondence with the Royal Literary Fund, available in *Archives of the Royal Literary Fund*, vol. 18, reel number 596. Of additional use was the entry for Bristow in *The Feminist Companion to Literature in English: Women Writers from the Middle Ages to the Present*, ed. by Virginia Blain, Patricia Clements, and Isobel Grundy (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 137.

I cannot pretend to the possession of literary fame, or splendid abilities; my humble talent has been exercised for the benefit of lower classes only, and in my little works I have chiefly aimed at usefulness, and to promote the cause of piety and virtue.

Bristow was her family's principal earner, she claims, because her husband was prevented by illness from working. Despite suffering from rheumatism herself, Bristow has taken on the responsibility of paying bills and managing the household budget. Her account of the way in which she has handled this situation, and strived to overcome her struggles, is important, as it reveals Bristow to have exercised a degree of strength, independence, and autonomy, which exceeded contemporary notions of femininity. The type of womanhood with which Bristow is aligned is autonomous and open, as one of her latest remarks to the men of the Fund reveals. In a final letter, she states that 'the society you preside over is formed on the benevolent principle of extending pecuniary relief to authors having the misfortune to require it'. In reminding the men of the Fund that they have a duty to her, Bristow may be seen to define herself as a conventionally helpless, beleaguered female. Yet her comment is also candid and bold, as she uses it to tell the Fund what to do, and to construct herself as a worthy object of payment.

Of final significance in regard to Bristow's letters is the fact that, in describing her efforts to use writing to combat poverty, she provides a valuable, first-hand insight into the restrictions placed upon women writers in the contemporary literary world. Bristow explains that The Faithful Servant (1824) has yet to earn her any money, as it must remain with the editors until she can afford to pay the expenses that the publishing house has incurred on her behalf. In addition, her second novel, Sophia de Lissau (1825), has not found a publisher. This is not, Bristow stresses, due to any fault with the work; rather, all of the London publishing houses are full. This comment might be taken

to address male writers, and to criticise their increasing occupation of the fictional marketplace, as the competition that they evoked has caused Bristow difficulty. Bristow states finally that, as a result of her struggles and distress, she is three quarters in arrears with her rent, and owes further debts to her apothecary. Of herself and her husband she claims that ‘our apartments are on the second floor at a rent of £18 per annum, and that neither imprudence nor want of rigid economy has contributed to our difficulty’. By 1843, Bristow is unable to leave her apartment, and tells the men of the Fund that, if they wish to see her desperate state for themselves, they will have to come and visit her. For such unconventional self-exposure and perseverance, Bristow received a total of £90. The accuracy of the events and feelings described by Bristow in the letters above should be interpreted with caution; their nature as pleas suggests that some exaggeration regarding the applicant’s state of want might have taken place. Nonetheless, this correspondence is useful in that it has many echoes in Bristow’s fiction. Certain experiences described in these letters, for example, reappear in Bristow’s work. Moreover, the fact that she publicised her life to the men of the Fund illuminates the confident narrative voice, as well as the representations of spirited, autonomous womanhood, uniting her fictions.

Each of the texts that Bristow produced alongside her Royal Literary Fund letters contributes something different to her developing literary voice, and reveals the impact that her life had on her career. Bristow’s works included The Faithful Servant (1824), Sophia de Lissau (1826), Emma de Lissau (1828), The Orphans of Lissau (1830), and The Twin Sisters (1834). Her contribution to the conversion novel consists in the de Lissau trilogy published in the middle of this *oeuvre*. This series of related novels deals with the Jewish descendents of the town of Lissau in Prussian Poland. Bristow’s first

conversion novel, Sophia de Lissau (1825), is particularly striking in this *oeuvre* for its text-book style of packaging. The title of this text is as follows: ‘Sophia de Lissau; or, a Portraiture of the Jews of the Nineteenth Century: Being an Outline of the Religious and Domestic Habits of this Most Interesting Nation. With Explanatory Notes.’ The space of the preliminaries is always significant in women’s Romantic fiction; with title and preface, women signalled which genre they wished to be associated with, and appealed to the reader and the critic in a certain way. In the period in which Bristow was writing, the term ‘Novel’ had gained many negative connotations. Owing to the scorn attracted around the turn of the century by Gothic texts, which often described themselves as ‘Mysteries’ or ‘Romances’, moral writers tended to favour appellations such as ‘Tale’ or ‘Sketch’, whose respectability could be bolstered with adjectives including ‘simple’ and ‘educational’. In her very unusual title, however, Bristow uses conversion to move away from a range of existing fictions, including both the frivolous Gothic novel and the more conservative moral styles that appeared by reaction. Sophia certainly avoids negative connotations, invoking the reputable terms ‘religious’ and ‘domestic’. Her use of ‘portraiture’, however, and the claim that her work will prove ‘interesting’, implies new factuality, accuracy, and confidence for the moral text.

The preface to Sophia furthers these points, stating that the text will convey details of the lifestyle and habits of the Jewish people, which are esoteric, but which are useful to ‘the *Christian Observer*’ (Sophia, p. 1). Bristow’s work is, she insists, not ‘written merely to amuse; it has a higher end in view; and is offered to the attention of those, who with the writer, “pray for the peace of Jerusalem”’ (p. 4). Many Moral-Domestic writers invoked a similar claim of usefulness, but there is a sense in which the ‘usefulness’ to which Bristow refers is not just religious, but also historically and

geographically enlightening. Indeed, the index with which the preface ends, and which divides the proceeding text according to quality related chapters, aligns Bristow's role more with that of a male historian or anthropologist, than with that of a novelist. By invoking such a long, descriptive title, and by including this structuring preface, Bristow uses the preliminaries differently to most women writers. The result is that, in announcing a focus upon the minutiae of Jewish life, Bristow assumes a valuable textual identity for Sophia.

In addition to its packaging, the story of Sophia itself is significant here. The act of conversion appears only on the margins of this work, yet its characters and themes inform Bristow's later, more sophisticated writing so significantly, that Sophia warrants attention. The first three chapters of Sophia convey an historical and geographical setting that is relevant to the trilogy as a whole; Bristow describes the eighteenth-century division of Prussian Poland, and the ensuing expatriation to England of certain Jewish communities. Central to this migration is the devout de Lissau family, the two heads of which are Solomon, a kind and honest merchant, and his wife Anna, an intelligent woman, who has been rendered gloomy by religious zeal. They have four sons, Leopold, Asaph, Joseph, and Julius, and two daughters, Emma and Sophia. Owing to an unspecified religious stipulation, Emma spends her childhood with her grandparents, although she retains a close and amicable relationship with her parents. On one of the family's annual meetings, however, a mysterious event occurs that displeases Emma's parents, after which Emma inexplicably vanishes. This disappearance is not explained until the end of the novel, and is only fully elucidated in the subsequent de Lissau text, Emma de Lissau (1828), which deals with Emma's controversial decision to convert to Christianity. The present story of Sophia is dedicated to Anna's youngest daughter.

Sophia questions Judaism, but never fully rejects her inherited faith. She is seen to suffer as a result, especially when she is encouraged by her mother to marry a devout Jew. This man turns out to be a gambler, who beats Sophia so badly that her limbs are broken.

Emma de Lissau (1828) is Sophia's stylistically and thematically more complex sequel. This novel brings the story of Sophia's sister from the background to the foreground, explaining the reasons for Anna de Lissau's dismissal of her eldest daughter, and subsequently following the course of Emma's life. When Emma is sent to stay with her grandparents, she is considered an unusually bright and observant child, who has a naturally sweet yet sensible nature. Her uncle Eleazor believes that Emma is rational enough to read without becoming impertinent or misguided, and subsequently feeds the child's hunger for knowledge. He gives her the Old Testament, and allows her to read it alone. It is not until she is encouraged by a Christian, however, that Emma truly benefits from her solitary reading. Emma is sent to board at the school of Mrs Russell, a benevolent exemplar of the Christian faith, who combines zeal with prudence, and advocates a life that is at once spiritual yet socially grounded. The de Lissaus instruct Mrs Russell not to allow Emma to mix with Protestant pupils, or to expose her to Christian teachings. The teacher follows these wishes, yet cannot help but give Emma the parting gift of the New Testament after her first year at school, lamenting that any young mind should be limited by an archaic faith. After reading the Bible alone, and exercising her own judgment to discern its worth, Emma states 'I AM A CHRISTIAN'.³⁰ This act of reading and thinking leads to self-definition, and to the rejection of parental authority.

³⁰ Amelia Bristow, Emma de Lissau (London: Gardiner, 1828; CME 3-628-47560-0), vol. 1, p. 121. All further references are to this edition and are given in the text.

Independent reading, as we have seen, was not uncommon within the conversion sub-genre, but it was quite singular in women's Romantic fiction generally. Reading was a contested pastime in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with the male discourse that surrounded the novel insisting that female readers required regulation. Thus, heroines such as Father Clement's Maria, and Emma in the present text, exhibit the positive potential of Christianity for the female convert. Bristow's second heroine grows in thoughtfulness and autonomy the more that she reads.

In addition to her status as a reader, Bristow's heroine is further striking for her position, throughout much of the text, as a prisoner. Within conversion fiction, Christianity promises a sense of belonging, whilst it also facilitates individualism for many of its participants. Emma, however, receives neither of these rewards for some time. In fact, she is physically imprisoned following her election of her new faith. Whilst she has gained spiritual independence through Christianity, Emma is literally segregated when her mother and the Rabbi Colmer discover her New Testament. This pair brutally punishes the convert, in a plot that is without template in such moral fiction. Emma is abducted and beaten, before being forced to live in a tiny room above her father's study, without the knowledge of her family. A theme of female isolation, which draws comparison with that depicted by Mary Ann Kelly in the post-Austenian sub-genre, hereby emerges in Emma, and it is one that will pervade Bristow's *oeuvre*. Many heroines, created in a range of female-authored genres and sub-genres, are destroyed by self-doubt when they are placed in isolation. Often, women writers in the Moral-Domestic movement used this situation to critique the limited capacities with which their patriarchal socialisation had equipped heroines. Chapter Three, for example, demonstrated that when Kelly's heroines were left alone by their immoral husbands, the

fragility of their self-concepts were exposed. Both Ellen Seymore and Catherine Dorrington verged on madness when, left alone in courtship and marriage, they lacked a yardstick or a mentor with which to evaluate their feelings and views. This was not their fault, Kelty insisted, but rather the consequence of their habituation, instigated by the men in their lives, to be weak and self-berating. Bristow picks up the trope of the isolated heroine, but sees her Emma pass this test. This converting heroine lives a mean, solitary existence, yet remains steadfast; she is not tempted to revert to Judaism, and she does not question her own moral axioms. She does so owing to Christianity. This representation arguably indicts patriarchal assumptions about, and power over, women more forcefully than did Kelty's. Had Emma suffered without a mentor, or her family, for example, she might have justified the subjection of women to regulation in society; she might have appeared too fragile to exist autonomously. Instead, she survives, and becomes a poignant emblem of women's reason and strength.

With Emma de Lissau, then, Bristow re-works the suffering heroine typical of many Romantic novels, including those of the post-Austenian sub-genre of Moral-Domestic fiction. In this appropriation, she supports the argument that a productive form of dialogue existed amongst the movement's female authors. Emma's resolute conversion alters the imagery and the outcome of the novel, as well as portraying a forward-looking style of femininity. Because she is often alone, Emma is conveyed through dramatic, highly visual scenes, rather than through her speech. This lends a stagy facet to the text, as the novel's sporadic scenes of quite graphic violence epitomise. One such scene involves Emma being forbidden the meagre comfort of seeing a bird, popularly viewed as a symbol of freedom and hope. The Rabbi kills Emma's pet bird, her only source of company, in front of her, and she watches it die

during her imprisonment. Further revealing of the changes that Bristow made at the level of the novel's form, Emma's eventual rescue does not follow the path of joy and vindication that the reader might expect. When she is eventually discovered in the garret by Sophia and Leopold, for example, she is welcomed by most of the family, but her reception is not warm enough to atone for her harsh treatment, as her father and siblings initially attempt to restrict Emma's religious freedom.

When an infectious disease later grips the de Lissaus, and many other families in the Jewish community, Emma contracts the illness, and death seems inevitable. This event, unfortunate as it is, awards Emma some degree of sway with her family. Her father makes a final attempt to convert Emma to Judaism. Yet in this meeting, it is Solomon who comes to express uneasiness with his faith. This reversal of conventional gender roles occurs in many conversion texts, including Anley's Miriam. We learn in a frank exchange, which adds a philosophical element to Emma's story, that Solomon is a broken man after losing two of his sons, and that he struggles to retain self-control. He quizzes Emma about how she has endured so much pain with so little anger and frustration, and how she can contemplate death without fear. The fact that he worries for the souls of his sons, as well as for his own, suggests that Judaism offers less truth and certainty than does Christianity.

Emma has moral and arguably intellectual ascendancy over her family, but in further similarity with Miriam Dirvan, she fails at this stage to persuade her father to convert. Nonetheless, she recovers from her illness, albeit with a permanently weakened disposition and a ravaged appearance. Once again, the conversion sub-genre offers us a heroine boldly connected with Christ. Emma is vulnerable to Anna, who torments her eldest daughter by comparing her with the blooming and obedient Sophia. The convert

does not express anger or hurt, however, but rather feels pity for her mother, and wishes that she could save her. It is not until Anna dies, that Emma is rewarded with total freedom of religious expression. Throughout her tale, then, Emma appears as a different kind of heroine. She is not beautiful, for example, and does not marry, in adaptation of conventional womanly roles. Despite the motherly goodness that she exhibits towards both her sister and her own mother, Emma de Lissau remains in the reader's mind for her independence. Indeed, her story suggests that, despite her approbation of a unified, stable Britain, Bristow was suspicious of the cornerstone role assigned in the nation to the family. Anna is a warped, anti-mother figure, whilst Emma is very much on her own in life. The implication of this representation may be that the domestication of women within the family was not so positive, nor so essential, as many contemporary thinkers and commentators believed. The family home, familiarly a sanctuary in the novel, becomes the twisted location of the protagonist's persecution in Emma de Lissau, a figurative prison for women.

Bristow's final de Lissau novel, The Orphans of Lissau (1830), represents the high point of her career.³¹ It also gives many elements of the conversion sub-genre their most powerful manifestation. In the preface to The Orphans, Bristow testifies once again to the authenticity of her de Lissau narratives, stating that this particular account was found in the diary of a deceased relative. Bristow goes on to dismiss English Jews as degenerate, but to praise their European counterparts; however misguided their choice of religion may be, these Jews are devoted to what they believe is right, and cannot, therefore, be accused of nominal religion, the sin viewed as heinous in the Moral-

³¹ Amelia Bristow, The Orphans of Lissau (London: Gardiner, 1830). All further references are to this edition and are given in the text.

Domestic mainstream. The preface continues by likening the role of its author to that of the Christian redeemer or philanthropist, who strives to prevent her fellow human beings from undervaluing the Protestant faith. The Orphans itself melds story-telling and cultural information more deftly than did its predecessors. In Sophia, for example, the factual character of the conversion novel arguably sat somewhat uneasily alongside novelistic conventions, and compromised the fluidity of the narrative. In The Orphans, in contrast, serious debate and history compliment the story at hand. Bristow's omission of the index page and explanatory notes used in her first de Lissau novel supports this notion of a newly embraced form of fiction.

The first chapter of The Orphans is an historical account, complete with dates and place names, of the town of Lissau and its inhabitants. We learn that in the early eighteenth century, an epidemic disease erupted in the Jewish quarter of the Polish town of Lissau, resulting in the death of many people, and the departure of the remaining families to a nearby forest. In this temporary village, the head of the community is the honourable Rabbi Samuel David, who has a wife, Ella, and a daughter, Clara. Shortly after the nomads settle themselves, danger resurfaces. The widowed Clara gives birth to a daughter, Gertrude, at the same time as her closest friend, also a widow, gives birth to a son, Raphael. Both women die of post-natal infections, and as the two mothers were close friends in life, Clara's parents take in both children. When the epidemic passes, the community returns to Lissau, and the two orphaned children grow up together. Gertrude is delicate, gentle, and retiring, whilst Raphael is spirited and energetic. Despite their vastly different personalities, Gertrude and Raphael share a great deal of mutual affection. Indeed, whilst Raphael is sent away for his education, and Gertrude remains in Lissau and becomes unusually pious, on Raphael's return, they marry. Here we see

Bristow expanding the scale and the range of protagonists dealt with in her previous works. Instead of a single heroine, she examines a pair of potential converts. In contrast to the pairings depicted by many Romantic writers, Bristow looks not at sisters, or young lovers, but instead at a married couple, and the changing way in which they relate to one another. Over the course of their marriage, Gertrude becomes dissatisfied with her husband's religious practices, doubting his commitment to the Jewish faith. It transpires that Raphael has been in contact with an English family, and has been supplied with a copy of the New Testament by a young lady. This portrayal of a woman's influence mirrors the reversal of gender roles depicted in many conversion texts. The fact that a Protestant woman can sway Raphael accentuates the feminist potential running through Bristow's praise of religious change.

As Raphael considers converting, Samuel retires from his position as the head of the community, and goes on a pilgrimage to Israel. He leaves Rabbi Jonathan of Warsaw in charge. The narrator warily states of this man that '[n]ever, perhaps, had our adorable Lord a more inveterate enemy' (*The Orphans*, vol. 1, p. 46). Warsaw epitomises bigotry and cruelty; he directs most of his energy towards the detection and punishment of Christian sympathisers, and encourages Gertrude to scrutinise her faith to the extent that it makes her mentally unstable. When Raphael witnesses his wife's belief in Warsaw, he thinks again of 'the more excellent way of Christian instruction' (vol. 1, p. 58). Some time later, a fire tears through Lissau, which destroys the wealth and homes of all of the inhabitants, except those of the greedy Rabbis, who are secretly responsible for the disaster. The fire also takes many lives, including that of Gertrude and Raphael's son. This is the final straw for Raphael, and he converts to Christianity. In an example of Bristow's growing complexity as a thinker and as a writer, however, the discrepancies

that exist within Christianity come to light in Raphael's conversion. Having met with an amiable and helpful priest, Raphael becomes a Roman Catholic. The suggestion is that the hero has been led along the wrong Christian path, and would need to adapt to Protestantism in order truly to see the light. He does not get this chance, however, as Warsaw's suspicions are roused, and Raphael is interrogated. His guilt discovered, Raphael is beaten to death by the Rabbis, in an extremely violent scene, which surpasses anything depicted in either Sophia or Emma. In divergence from novelistic tendencies towards closure, there is no justice for Raphael. Instead, owing to his lack of an appropriate faith, he is buried under some stones, a final mark of his ambiguous identity.

Whilst a stable identity eludes Raphael, Gertrude is similarly let down by her failure to appreciate Protestantism. Gertrude cannot cope with either her husband's conversion or the manner in which he dies, and leaves Lissau for England. With a past characterised by frustrations and tragedy, however, Gertrude suffers what can only be described as a mental breakdown. In this fate, Bristow's theme of female isolation reappears. Gertrude's response to the solitude that the death of her husband brings, however, contrasts with Emma de Lissau's reaction to the parallel loss of her mentor. Gertrude's madness and death reveal her impotence, whereas Emma proved to be her own best friend. These two very different outcomes nonetheless argue a similar point, that Judaism fosters an unstable sense of self. Gertrude has been raised to be obedient, and is subsequently duped by the wicked Rabbi Warsaw. Her fate serves in this way to imply the necessity of female autonomy. Both Emma de Lissau and The Orphans of Lissau defend woman's use of her own intellect and judgment. The difference is that the latter text illustrates this point not by sanctioning a thinking, independent woman, but rather by articulating the terrible consequences for a woman who is neither allowed nor

accustomed to experience life for herself. In this ending, what renders Orphans most unusual and challenging is the fact that neither of Bristow's protagonists finds redemption. Many Moral-Domestic and conversion novels portray an unhappy ending, but not with the same totality as Bristow's. In Emma de Lissau, for example, the whole de Lissau family fails to gain the happiness promised by conversion, yet at least the heroine herself finds contentment. Likewise, in Anley's 1826 conversion novel, the heroine dies, but her father lives happily. In Orphans, Bristow takes the unhappy ending, which frustrated the reader's expectations of convention, to the next level, as neither of her protagonists converts. In this way, Bristow suggests that the conversion novel can take any form.

In her conversion trilogy, Amelia Bristow uses the novel to contribute to British nationalism. Interpellating a Protestant reader, Bristow defines the de Lissaus as outsiders, who must convert to Christianity in order to gain not only acceptance, but happiness and stability of self as well. In this representation, Bristow makes certain assumptions that foreshadow the Victorian text. She perhaps paved the way, for example, for a normalisation of philanthropy and social awareness as British traits. Ironically, however, out of this very conservative meaning, an ultimate version of anti-radical feminism emerges. Bristow's use of the conversion theme enabled her to empower her heroines (the Christian ones, at least) to complicate the way in which their lives turned out. This, in turn, empowered Bristow to change the way in which the stories of such lives could be told, and to what ends. Indeed, whilst she strikes a chord with many Moral-Domestic writers, Bristow is not afraid to make points that appear controversial in the context of this movement, such as her critique of the family, and her appropriation of Mary Ann Kelty's use of the isolated heroine. In doing so, she suggests

that the Moral-Domestic genre involved a degree of openness, or debate, in which women novelists improved upon one another's themes, with a view to creating inroads to be picked up by future writers. The relationship that Bristow creates with writers such as Kelty and Hofland therefore resonates with that existing between Robertson and Kennedy, discussed in section three of this chapter.

Moving away from the straightforward moral tale, Emma includes detailed debates between the father and the heroine, through which Bristow presumes to be the authority on the merits and disadvantages of Judaism, Catholicism, and Protestant Christianity. Such philosophical questioning regarding the meaning of life adds intellectual depth and learnedness to the novel. Sophia, similarly, adds historical, geographical, and cultural specificities to the text, and appears almost anthropological. The Orphans sees many of these traits culminate, being both Bristow's most readable work, and the work that demonstrates the extent to which she had made a successful career in conversion. Once again, reference to Bristow's own status as a convert seems relevant, as it demonstrates, finally, the interconnectedness of the woman writer and her work. Writing certainly represented a liberating space for Amelia Bristow. After all, with her novels, she found a way of turning certain of her dubious personal qualities into advantages. Her status as a former Jewess could have led to social marginalisation, but instead it became a resource, which legitimated Bristow's possession of a confident, empowered voice, and which challenged the norms of the female-authored narrative.

The Final Years of Conversion Fiction: 1830 and Beyond

The conversion sub-genre of Moral-Domestic fiction generated some distinctive, memorable writers. Together, they constituted a unified, female-centred response to some of the most important issues in contemporary Britain. The conversion novel of the 1820s cannot be overlooked when accounting for the forging of British nationalism, for example, as writers used the contemporary backlash against the French Revolution as a way to involve themselves in this issue. Additionally, the conversion sub-genre reflected the changing status of women within the family, and commented upon the contemporaneously important question of children's education. Yet however rooted conversion fiction seems to be in the cultural context of the 1820s, its themes and concerns would reappear in female-authored fiction beyond this decade. The connections made above, both between conversion writers and other Moral-Domestic authors, provide a starting point for this notion, although they do not account for the sub-genre's sustained effects. In the 1830s and beyond, we see that the work carried out by writers such as Kennedy, Anley, and Bristow had consequences for women's writing. These consequences are not always easy to discern; supporting Ann H. Jones's theory of incremental literary references and progress, conversion as it appeared in the 1820s seeped into the 1830s in manifold, sometimes obscure, ways. Many texts of these later years experiment so far with this theme, that conversion comes to give way to other topics, characters, and points of focus. In such texts, the figure of the convert moves full circle, back towards the marginal spaces that it inhabited in Mary Jane Mackenzie's embryonic *Geraldine* (1820). Whilst these later works might not strike an instant accord with the sub-genre's key contributors, therefore, they reveal its longevity. The act of

conversion created a revisionist ethos in the 1820s sub-genre. This seemed to suggest, to future novelists, new directions in which themes of national and religious change might be taken. Two texts exemplify this out-spiralling process. The first, Anna Eliza Bray's The Protestant; A Tale of the Reign of Queen Mary (1828), reveals the way in which, towards the end of the 1820s, conversion increasingly took a backseat to a multiplicity of themes, even as it facilitated them. The second, Mary Leman Grimstone's Character; or, Jew and Gentile: A Tale (1833), sets up the identity of the conversion novel for the 1830s. In this context, conversion features as a malleable, changeable style for the Moral-Domestic genre's final decade of prominence.

The Protestant; A Tale of the Reign of Queen Mary (1828) is a conversion tale, which also signals progression.³² This apparent paradox occurs in the text's encroachment upon the territory of the historical novel. Amelia Bristow used Poland's history in her works, but she did so with a view to claiming a factual status for her writing. Anna Eliza Bray, in contrast, writes an ornate, deliberately theatrical account. In doing so, she may be seen to comment upon the nature of historical discourse. Much of this chapter has discussed the naturalisation of British identity that occurred in the period under consideration. History played a crucial role in this process; the Romantic period was an historicising age, in which interpretation, often masquerading as fact, constructed the status quo as a given destiny. As Iain McCalman, amongst others, has argued, historical awareness and self-consciousness were pivotal in the Romantic zeitgeist. The reflective mood hereby created had a profound effect on the Victorians, inflecting their belief in the knowable nature of the world, and their penchant for the scientific

³² Anna Eliza Bray, The Protestant; A Tale of the Reign of Queen Mary (London: Henry Colburn, 1828; CME 3-628-48418-9).

categorisation of all kinds of matter.³³ In keeping with the careful, pointed use of the past identified by McCalman as prevalent in Bray's time, The Protestant omits any acts of Protestant violence in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Instead, this tale emphasises the misdemeanours of a group of Catholics, who are made to appear as alien usurpers to government and power, in this context. As was the case for Kennedy in Father Clement, the depiction of Catholicism versus Protestantism enables Bray to evade specific novelistic tropes. For example, the staple figure of the individualised male tyrant, familiar from the Gothic genre amongst others, is not necessary in The Protestant. Bray's barbaric and fanatical Catholics prove far more intriguing as the faces of villainy in this text.

The Protestant is set during the reign of Queen Mary, in a hamlet named Wellminster, near Canterbury. In this setting, several good Protestant families are being forced out of their homes by power-hungry Catholics. Owen Wilford, the Protestant pastor, struggles admirably to retain his position, yet he suffers at the hands of his cruel Catholic counterparts. Wilford's family, consisting in his wife, his children (Edward and Rose), and his trusty servant Abel Allen, are dignified and pious throughout this extended period of persecution. These Reformers are threatened for questioning the Church of Rome, yet they retain their fortitude, refusing to convert to Catholicism. Early in the text, Wilford is imprisoned for heresy, and his wife is abused. When Owen's 'eloquent and zealous' faith come to the attention of the powerful Suffragan Bishop of Dover, a Spaniard, Friar John de Villa Garcina is told to "take charge of [Owen's] flock, and lead back they stray sheep into his holiness's fold" (Protestant, vol. 1, p. 35).

³³ Iain McCalman argues in An Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age: British Culture 1776-1832 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) that the Romantic ethos was one in which a unified present was aimed at, through a construction the Protestant faith as a central part of the shared history of all citizens.

It would be emptying for the couple to concede, but they remain adamant that Protestantism will emerge as Britain's true faith, and are prepared to lose their lives for their cause. The implication is that, whilst the Catholics may have power, the Protestants can taste their future vindication, and are able, therefore, to withstand torment. A range of Catholics are depicted in this text, and they vary in the degree of their errors. Sir Richard Southwell, for example, is a dangerously misguided Catholic mouthpiece, yet Thornton, the Bishop of Dover, represents the utterly tyrannical face of Catholicism. Whilst Southwell is 'a bigot, but not cruel' (vol. 2, p. 4), Thornton embodies the 'coldness, affected humility, and inflexibility of feeling, that make up the character of a hypocrite' (vol. 1, p. 13). The villainy of these latter characters culminates at the end of the novel, when the Wilfords and their friends, including children and elders, are tied at stakes in a pit, and told that they are to be burned to death for their faith. Although these characters are saved at the last moment by the announcement of Queen Mary's death and the ascension of Queen Elizabeth, the reader is left with this violent image, which signifies the text's broader turn away from the dynamics of the sub-genre's mainstream. Many conversion texts depict Protestants attempting to convert others, for example, yet in Bray's tale, the Protestants are the least secure characters; they are under such constant threat, that they do not have the chance to consider saving the souls of their foes. In representing Protestant life as less rosy in this way, Bray complicates religion. She arguably adds a degree of realism to this text, even as its stagy plot of good versus evil suggests a fairytale-like plot of good versus evil. By depicting her Protestants as defensive rather than active, Bray suggests that, by 1828, the conversion sub-genre was increasingly open to experimentation.

Bray's 1828 text is particularly striking for its extension of two elements of the conversion sub-genre of Moral-Domestic fiction. Firstly, The Protestant emphasises the relationship between the novel and historical discourse. Based upon a period in Britain's religious history that was important in Romantic society, this tale includes chapters that reproduce sections of contemporary historical texts. The novel's final depiction of Protestants threatened with execution, for example, is anticipated in the first volume of The Protestant, when Bray interrupts her own narration to refer to existing accounts of the events, and individual Catholic figures, to which she refers. She states:

And having said so much in this chapter about these worthies, Harspfield and Thornton, as well as Bishop Bunner, we think that we cannot conclude it better than by giving a brief extract from "Fuller's Church History," wherein that admirable author gives a slight but expressive sketch of their several characters.' (vol. 1, p. 342)

The narrator goes on to cite Fuller's description of the barbarity with which Bunner prepared to burn his Protestant enemies, stating that "[n]o sex,, quality, or age, escaped him whose fury reached [...] a lad of *eight years old*" (vol. 1, p. 343). The inclusion of this apparently factual detail accentuates the close relationship between the female-authored conversion novel of the late 1820s and the version of Protestant history that was attaining a factual status in late Romantic Britain. A final point to note about Bray's advanced conversion text is that it exemplifies the increasing capacity of the sub-genre to give rise to empowered young heroines. The Wilford's daughter, Rose, initially escapes prison, yet later in The Protestant she too is arrested, and subjected to torture owing to her faith. She is offered freedom by the sympathetic Southwell, on the condition that she will at least try to appreciate Catholicism. Rose's refusal to relinquish her faith is memorably brave:

'Do not,' cried Rose, - 'do not, if you would release me with a hope to work upon my mind to think as you do. I have embraced the Reformed

Faith on a conviction of its truth; and one chief point of it is, never to deceive our neighbour. Leave me here.' (vol. 3, p. 18)

Rose's strength in the face of torment testifies to the power and autonomy awarded to young women within the seemingly orthodox movement to bolster the sense of Protestantism as the nation's proper religion in the Romantic period.

Whilst The Protestant suggests that, in 1828 the theme of conversion led to increasing experimentation, a survey of the sub-genre in the 1830s reveals a definite tailing-off. Nonetheless, all of the conversion texts that do appear in these years are extremely interesting, and arguably feed into the Victorian novel in various ways. In 1833, a writer renowned for her jobbing status, Mary Leman Grimstone, is drawn to the theme of conversion. This in itself suggests that the sub-genre offered possibilities to women writers of manifold intentions and needs. Whereas conversion enabled Bristow to vent her personal experiences, for example, and Kennedy gained artistic freedom from the conversion novel, Grimstone achieved commercial success owing to this movement, because it was both readable and adaptable. Character; or, Jew and Gentile: A Tale maintains the unabashed commercialism that characterises Grimstone's career.³⁴ In addition to economic benefit, conversion secured political comment and artistic experimentation for this writer. In a very striking preface, Grimstone states that her goal is to 'invite thinking rather than to give my own thoughts – to invite that train of thinking that will make us more liberal, more considerate towards each other' (Character, p. iii). This aim may be used to characterise conversion as a whole, in terms of both its effect on the individual, and the woman novelist. In the story that follows this

³⁴ Mary Leman Grimstone, Character: Or, Jew and Gentile (London: Charles Fox, 1833; CME 3-628-47769-7). All further references are to this edition and are given in the text.

preface, Grimstone adopts a creative narrative voice, to depict an array of characters, generations, and vignettes. In Character, the themes of national difference and religious assimilation appear more marginal than is the case in the majority of conversion texts. Grimstone is interested in a Jewish heroine, and the way in which religion can either open up or impede relationships. Nonetheless, the range of characters that Grimstone invokes is significant, as it reveals the extent to which conversion enabled writers of the 1830s to move yet further outside the norms of female-authored fiction.

In the beginning of this novel, the narrator focuses upon a cantankerous old man, Mr Coverley, who ponders life with his good friend, Dr Clare. This is an unusual perspective with which to open a text. This pair has hindsight and wisdom, with Coverley frequently expressing a sense of fatalism, which results from the fact that he has experienced the best years of his life. Clare is also interesting for his quite radical political leanings. Through Clare, Grimstone can place questions of social class on her novelistic agenda. Coverley and Clare debate the social class system, for example, and disagree about current attitudes towards the poor. Coverley puts forward the orthodox view that the poor should remain so, whilst Clare argues more persuasively that social reform is necessary. According to Clare, criminals are rarely innately bad, but are rather the inevitable products of social inequality. Clare states that 'bad education, private and public, domestic and social, makes villains. Hanging cuts off the distempered limb, but does not touch the disease' (vol. 1, p. 23). Implicit in this remark are some quite radical notions. Clare implies that punishing criminals is wrong, and masks the true causes of crime and poverty; punishing an individual does not eradicate the social inequalities by which he or she was rendered desperate in the first place. With Coverley and Clare, and their disputes, we see that, by the 1830s, the revisionist potential of the theme of

conversion had stretched beyond its liberation of women, and its suggestion that the young can outwit the old. In Character, Grimstone uses this impetus to suggest the rights of the lower social classes too.

In addition to Coverley and Clare, Character has a second generation of characters, whose lives occupy much of the action. Many Romantic novels feature different generations of characters. In contrast to most of these, however, none of Grimstone's second set of characters is inexperienced. Nor are they initially inclined to fall in love. In dissimilarity with the youths of Kennedy's Father Clement, Coverley's nephew, Mr Ralph Beaucaire, is married with a child, and his friend, Agnes, is a sage but youthful widow. Agnes is an unusually sarcastic, intelligent character, whose wit, and tendency to intimidate others, recall Germaine de Stael's heroine in Corinne (1807). Whilst Corinne is unable to achieve happiness in the space of the novel, however, Grimstone depicts Agnes's successful negotiation of public life as well as the marriage market. After the early death of her first husband, Agnes seems disinclined to marry again, owing to the examples of bad marriages by which she is surrounded. Agnes is bold when speaking against the confines often placed upon women in relationships with men. She mocks male attitudes towards female conduct, clearly viewing them as remote from lived experience. When she considers courting, for example, Agnes slights convention, joking:

‘I must not even hint such an idea, lest I should fright propriety, which is, in England, manners, morals, and religion. I must learn to be precise and pretty behaved, and give up all my crazy ways, if I would win favour with my country people.’ (vol. 1, p. 67)

In this portrayal of Agnes, Grimstone seems to move on from other Moral-Domestic writers, including those of the conversion sub-genre, in that this heroine criticises

marriage quite openly, whilst remaining active in doing something about her plight. Instead of indicting marriage by negative example, Grimstone has an approved character openly state her aversion to customary family life. Indeed, where Charlotte Anley had to represent her heroine Miriam, who actually resembles Agnes in cleverness and autonomy, as dying in order to finalise her freedom, Grimstone can envision a society in which Agnes continues her search for liberty, whilst retaining friends and family. Indeed, Agnes marries one of the kindest and most accommodating men in the novel, and leads a happy life as an equal partner.

In a further instance of narrative growth, Character depicts the tangled love lives of a third generation of characters. Marmion, Beaucaire's son, falls in love with a beautiful Jew named Esther. Against novelistic convention, he breaks her heart, and ruins himself in a related plot, although he is never evicted from the narrator's sympathies for this behaviour. It seems as though Grimstone is presenting the flipside of the stories of bad marriage portrayed in the post-Austenian sub-genre. Whereas Kelty and her contemporaries drew their stories predominantly from the female, wifely perspective, Grimstone expands the novel, to deal with the male point of view in marriage. It is also important to note that this third set of characters contains the novel's concern with a religious Other. As noted above, in the 1830s, the conversion writer could create a space in which this theme would be accompanied by others of equal, if not greater, significance. Thus, Character provides a final example of the breadth and scope that the theme of conversion could nourish. The freedom facilitated by Character's multiple themes fed into Grimstone's final work of the period under consideration, Cleone. A Tale of Married Life (1834). Fittingly, this novel reproduces the

commercialism and boldness of its predecessor, but moves away from conversion completely.

The theme of conversion evolved from 1820 to 1834. As we have seen, the sub-genre had the potential to resonate into future trends, even if it did not wholly create them. In particular, such works as those by Grimstone push narrative boundaries in order to create the kind of ‘unlikely’ heroes and heroines that would appear in the broad social spectrum of Victorian literature. A Victorian text with which the conversion sub-genre suggests resonances is George Eliot’s Daniel Deronda (1874-6). This highly complex text uses religious difference, amongst other themes, to explore questions of personal history, identity, and community, in the changing context of nineteenth-century Britain. Whilst the works of Anley and Bristow may not be defined as Eliot’s direct forerunners, these Jewish tales belong to a tradition that contextualises writers including Eliot. Essentially, conversion writers worked within existing Moral-Domestic perimeters, invoking the moral tale of the persecuted heroine, but suggesting new textual possibilities. We have seen the way in which bold, prominent writers such as Bristow were actually indebted to single texts, such as that by Mary Jane Mackenzie, in quiet but significant ways. In view of this point, the connection between the works discussed in this chapter and Daniel Deronda does not require such a great leap of faith on the part of the reader as its initial mention might suggest.

The conversion sub-genre is best described as a movement, a broad and extremely varied one, which facilitated the anti-radical feminism discernible throughout the Moral-Domestic genre. Despite the diversity illustrated by the author studies above, conversion novels all depict heroines turning against patriarchy, in a manner made respectable by their simultaneous acceptance of Protestantism as the right faith of

Britain. Amongst the most significant points to carry forward about the conversion sub-genre is that it contributes to a long and encompassing female tradition, a part of whose elucidation is a key aim of this thesis as a whole. The conversion sub-genre commented upon history, religion, and nationalism, and thus gave its writers the authority to speak publicly on issues of political importance. It also gave them the freedom to experiment artistically, by bringing a greater degree of psychological investigation into the novel. Ultimately, the conversion sub-genre offers a counter to the argument that women were being edged out of the late-Romantic novel. Far from bowing out of the sphere of the novel, women writers were increasingly occupying and altering this space.

V *Conclusion*

There appears to be a rule that wherever literary women achieve real distinction with an apparently new departure, there is a female literary model of less distinction in their past.

Ellen Moers.¹

Moral-Domestic fiction experienced a denouement in the 1830s. By the close of this decade, it had ceased to exist as a numerous and internally consistent genre. Yet the end of the central Moral-Domestic movement did not signal the death of its themes and questions. Rather, the genre's moral gravity, the alternative space that it provided for female citizenship, and its psychological depth would resound for years to come. The echoes existing amongst Moral-Domestic writers, as well as the connections between these authors and seemingly distant literary periods and styles, support the notion that intertextuality determines women's writing; the Moral-Domestic genre has proven to be an integral part of the 'sounding board' of female voices and experiences. The dialogue existing between Barbara Hofland, Mary Ann Kelty, and Grace Kennedy, for example, testifies to the richness of these writers' works, whilst it also draws upon predecessors, from Samuel Richardson to Mary Hays, who reverberate by consequence into later decades. Owing to the very fluidity of such literary transmissions, however, the Moral-Domestic genre's impact has not been fully exhausted. As a result, this final chapter is an interrogative as well as a meditative space. In addition to summarising the insights already gained from the Moral-Domestic genre's elucidation, I point out some further

¹ Ellen Moers, *Literary Women* (London: Women's Press, 1978), p. 20.

potential resonances of the movement, which appear beyond the chronological boundaries determining this thesis.

* * * *

The retrieval of Moral-Domestic fiction participates in the feminist project to recover 'lost' women writers, outlined by scholars including Isobel Grundy, Ann H. Jones, and Ellen Moers. Over the course of the preceding chapters, the genre has proven worthy of this act of rediscovery. Moral-Domestic novels constituted a sizeable and creative genre, whose existence challenges popular images of the late-Romantic literary marketplace as disparate and formulaic. Indeed, we have seen that Moral-Domestic fiction is relevant to a number of outstanding questions regarding this cultural context. The Moral-Domestic movement enabled its female authors to participate in parallel as well as future cultural movements relating to British nationalism, for example, and it documents their experiences of the society in which they lived. This genre has proven especially enlightening with regard to the gendered division of the private and public spheres in early nineteenth-century Britain. Harriet Guest and Kathryn Gleadle are amongst the critics who have pointed out that the role played by home-oriented, moral women was less than straightforward, and could in fact encroach upon political concerns and activities in complex ways. The Moral-Domestic texts discussed above have supported this notion. Extending the domestic identity of women, Moral-Domestic heroines and authors could become philanthropists, conduct writers, and moral advisors, who straddled the home and the political stage. Barbara Hofland's career remains one of the

best illustrations of this form of anti-radical feminism. We saw in Chapter Two that Hofland and the heroines that she delineated are able to access the worlds of social work, paid employment, and patriotism precisely because they embrace a maternal, domestic version of womanhood. As the mother of her own children, but moreover as one of the Christian women accepted as the mothers of Britain's future in the period, Hofland could legitimately judge and influence the behaviour of others, in ways that both elevated her own standard of living and helped to shape the character of the nation. For Hofland, to domesticate her fictional voice was to gain authority and a degree of independence.

The seemingly paradoxical role played by domesticity in Hofland's writing has been a feature of many of the above discussions of Moral-Domestic fiction, which relied in turn upon a fusion of different approaches to history and society. Many of the ways in which domestic women played with meaning, manipulating the roles allotted to them, are suggested in Kathryn Gleadle's comment that

we must question how far most women would have cast themselves unproblematically into the wholly dependent and subordinate domestic roles exhorted of them in the Evangelical discourse of domesticity. Women could attach very diverse meanings to the home and their role within it.²

Gleadle's suggestion that domestic women could take control of meaning both directs and is illuminated by the reading of Moral-Domestic fiction. The way in which Hofland managed the theme of the family is illustrative here. In Barbara Hofland's *oeuvre*, the family is defended as the stable cornerstone of British society. Working within these conservative perimeters, however, Hofland adapts this institution, by defending families in which blood ties are insignificant, and in which patriarchs are sidelined. With her

² Kathryn Gleadle, *British Women in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p. 79.

non-traditional families, Hofland portrays single women acting as mothers to orphans, who create an improved life following the death, or in the absence, of a husband. In these representations, the safe image of the family comes to challenge aspects of the social order; by ensuring the safety of orphans who fall on hard times, Hofland resists inherited status and rank. Asserting the relevance of these images of maternal identity and the family to women's lived experiences, Hofland herself provided for her family when widowed, by writing and working.

Alongside the family, philanthropy is an important feature of the Moral-Domestic genre, which has the broader significance of promoting women's inhabitation of the private and the public spheres. Moral-Domestic fiction is, as we have seen, closely allied with historical depictions of philanthropy as it operated in society as a whole. Accounts exist, for example, of charitable activities undertaken by women in nineteenth-century society, which placed pressure upon parliament and influenced legal changes. Motivated by commendable missionary aims, Christian women could elevate the morality of people at home in Britain and abroad. In the name of philanthropy, women could breach the domestic sphere, and become influential. Kathryn Gleadle recognises that, for middle-class women, unpaid social work offered both self-validation and practical power, whilst never breaching the limits of acceptable femininity. Gleadle remarks that 'philanthropy was a central component of the lives of women of this strata, drawing upon women's community, social, political, economic and religious affiliations'.³ Philanthropy might appear at odds with any movement to liberate women, as it represents an appropriation of female labour, which might diffuse any potentially disruptive energy. Yet the female charity-giver could gain a quasi-professional status

³ Gleadle, p. 63.

that was empowering. Gleadle argues that ‘women’s involvement in social work highlights the inability of conventional definitions of work to capture the richness and significance of women’s occupations’.⁴ The philanthropists portrayed in Moral-Domestic fiction qualify this notion, with the charitable act figuring as at once altruistic and potentially individualistic. In ‘Elizabeth and her Boys’, the final short story in Tales of the Priory (1820), for example, Barbara Hofland depicts a heroine who gains monetary reward, self-respect, and power over others, following her apparently selfless decision to open her home to orphans and young beggars.

Nationalism is another factor uniting Moral-Domestic fiction and powerful elements of its cultural context. British patriotism was a mobilising force in the period under consideration. Importantly, it also prioritised women, primarily as the domestic heart of the nation, but also more powerfully as its moral guardians. Through Christian acts and advice, women staked a respectable but nonetheless formidable presence, which could extend as far as the global stage. A number of literary critics and historians have pointed out that patriotism was significant in this way in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Anne K. Mellor, for example, assigns women a particularly active role in shaping British politics, depicting female involvement in practices normally associated with men, including pamphleteering, publishing essays, and petitioning parliament.⁵ Linda Colley has also been notable throughout the reading of Moral-Domestic fiction for her theorisation of the way in which a specific notion of Britishness enabled female citizens of the nation to judge and influence others. Anne Stott identifies the implications of these ideas for women when stating that ‘Linda Colley has noted that

⁴ Gleadle, p. 64.

⁵ Anne K. Mellor, Mothers of the Nation: Women’s Political Writing in England, 1780-1830 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).

a number of female patriots in the 1790s were “staking out a civic role for themselves”, demonstrating “that their domestic virtues possessed a public as well as a private relevance”.⁶ Many of the conversion novelists discussed in Chapter Four add strength to this notion. Charlotte Anley’s Jewish heroine in Miriam; or the Power of Truth (1826) makes a lasting impression here. Miriam Dirvan appears to subordinate her own needs to those of the community when taking food to the poor in her village, yet in doing so she encounters the Christians who encourage her conversion to Protestantism. This event, in turn, leads her to become truly British. It also results in her empowerment; Miriam Dirvan eventually rejects her father’s authority in favour of her own moral choices. Furthermore, her later death as a martyr leads her repentant father to become a Christian missionary abroad. Thus, in affirming a homogenous image of Christian Britain, which was so powerful that Miriam would turn her back on her family in order to assimilate it, Charlotte Anley utilised acceptable, feminine spheres of Christianity and philanthropy to assert substantial rights as a writer. The conversion sub-genre reveals that she was not alone in doing so; in moralising and domesticating their authorial voices, the contributors to this body of fiction made critical contact with their power to shape the mindsets of others.

* * * *

⁶ Anne Stott, ‘Patriotism and Providence: the Politics of Hannah More’, in Women in British Politics, 1760-1860 The Power of the Petticoat, ed. by Kathryn Gleadle and Sarah Richardson (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), pp. 49-50.

This thesis demonstrates that a close and complex correspondence exists between the late-Romantic Moral-Domestic movement and the role of women in contemporary society. The preceding chapters have also indicated, however, that resonances occur between women's Moral-Domestic fiction and future developments in the social and political worlds. This continuation testifies to the Moral-Domestic genre's contribution to the 'sounding board' of women's ideas and writings. Yet the longevity of the movement exists in manifold and sometimes small-scale channels, in which the process of evolution renders the Moral-Domestic themes being extended obscure. Certain aspects of the genre can be identified nonetheless as having fed into enduring social and novelistic concerns in nineteenth-century Britain. The moral campaign represents one such aspect, featuring as a site in which the Moral-Domestic genre's links with the future are mobilised, and which suggests the expansive nature of the effects to which it gave rise.

In the 1820s and 1830s, Christian women placed direct pressure on Parliament, voicing opinion on topical issues from slavery to Catholic emancipation and Jewish civil rights. Kathryn Gleadle and Sarah Richardson are again useful here, commenting in their introduction to Women in British Politics, 1760-1860. The Power of the Petticoat that 'women's predominance in the domestic environment could legitimate their involvement in campaigns which were centred around a moral imperative, such as the campaign against *Sati* and the Corn Laws, for minority rights'.⁷ With reference to the practice of *Sati* referred to by Gleadle and Richardson, in a minority of Hindu communities, a widow of this period would be burned on the funeral pyre of her husband. In the early to mid-nineteenth century, Evangelicals campaigned against this

⁷ Gleadle and Richardson, p. 9.

ritual, pamphleteering and petitioning the British government to use their power in India to encourage its cessation. Evangelical women were especially supported in this endeavour, with individuals including William Ward, a leading missionary in India, drawing attention to campaigns against Sati. Whilst they held the orthodox aim of spreading Christianity, the women involved in such campaigns surpassed their role as images of Protestant, British goodness, and became a force of organised pressure. The conversion sub-genre of Moral-Domestic fiction substantiates the idea that British, Christian women gained power by acting against Sati. In The Suttee; or, The Hindoo Converts (1830), for example, Mrs Mainwaring depicts missionary work in India.⁸ At the same time, the British government spoke out against Sati. This suggests the close, influential relationship between Moral-Domestic writers and broader social issues.

Of greater significance to this conclusion, however, is the fact that it is within this framework of female missionary and philanthropic activities that conversion literature feeds into literary scenes of the future. Of note here is a body of similar works that appeared in the 1840s and 1850s. Conversion novels, such as The Suttee and those of the 1820s discussed in Chapter Four, may be seen to have inflected questions of religious difference, which remained of pivotal importance in Victorian Britain. In particular, Jewish civil rights were both contested and supported throughout the nineteenth century with the appearance in 1810 of the 'London Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews'. Nadia Valman acknowledges that women writers played a part in shaping this concern, and she argues that the potential of fiction to illuminate

⁸ Mrs Mainwaring, The Suttee; or, The Hindoo Converts (London: A. K. Newman, 1830; CME 3-628-48149-X).

this particular Jewish context has not been fully mined.⁹ Valman states that ‘despite the striking number of religious, domestic and historical novels about Jews produced by women writers for a female audience during this period, these texts have rarely been connected with the political context of their production’.¹⁰ According to Valman, between 1830 and 1858 there were fourteen attempts to remove disabilities preventing Jews from taking parliamentary office. Valman states that women writers fictionalised this process, in works about conversion.

One interesting novel to which Valman refers is The Jewess: A Tale from the Shores of the Baltic (1843), by Elizabeth Rigby, a Tory Anglican who produced this conversion text at the start of her career as a periodical journalist.¹¹ This short tale is more assertive yet less involved in its narrative than were its conversion predecessors, and it moves into scenic settings. The Jewess nonetheless bears the imprint of Amelia Bristow’s *oeuvre*, particularly The Orphans of Lissau (1830), in that it features a married couple. In this tale, Rigby praises a Jewish heroine named Rose, who warms to Christianity, whilst excluding her husband, who adheres steadfastly to Judaism. The nature of Rose’s conversion is ambiguous, however, suggesting that Rigby moves away from the Moral-Domestic sub-genre, even as she expresses its longevity. The Jewess is less concerned with representing religious assimilation, for example, and more intent on defending the virtues that the heroine possesses both before and after her exposure to Christianity. Valman defends the Jewish people, describing a heroine who exemplifies ‘her people’s wrongs and their habit of passive endurance’ (The Jewess, p. 16). Yet

⁹ Nadia Valman, ‘Women Writers and the Campaign for Jewish Civil Rights in Early Victorian England’, in Women in British Politics, 1760-1860.

¹⁰ Valman, p. 95.

¹¹ Elizabeth Rigby, The Jewess: A Tale from the Shores of the Baltic (London: John Murray, 1843). All further references are to this edition and are given in the text.

Rose is also praised by the character of old Maddis for qualities that align her with Christianity, when he says “she has sorrowed enough for that rosy cheek, and Jewess though she be, nobody better deserves to become a Christian. I’m not sure she is not one already” (pp. 128-9). In this representation, Rigby resists the conversion scene that was, for previous writers of the sub-genre, prerequisite to the heroine’s redemption. The narrator states finally that ‘we cannot quite vouch for the truth of good Maddis’s surmise’, even though Rose remains with the Christian woman who had assisted her through trials (p. 129).

Nadia Valman discusses the way in which Rigby’s moralisation of the novel is also a politicisation in this case. She does not, however, examine the significant conversion fictions of the years preceding The Jewess. If the Jewish novels of the 1820s and 1830s, to which Rigby doubtless owed some form of debt, are reinstated, a series of echoes may be seen to link the Moral-Domestic genre, the Victorian novel, and broad social concerns pertaining to religious difference and social rights. The Jewess substantiates the idea that Moral-Domestic fictions, in this case the works of Bristow, Anley, and Kennedy, became a fertilising stream into later social and literary movements. The close proximity in which Moral-Domestic fiction, lived experience, and literary styles and concerns of enduring importance existed is thus established. Fittingly then, conversion fiction, the latest Moral-Domestic sub-genre and the final body of works discussed in this thesis, epitomises some of the key ways in which religion and domesticity furthered the female-authored novel in nineteenth-century Britain. Building on the work done by previous women writers, Moral-Domestic contributors expanded the territory of the female author, and fed into Victorian culture.

* * * *

Over the course of this thesis, the female-authored Moral-Domestic genre, 1820-1834, has been enjoyed for its quality, creativity, and humour. It has also been read as an avenue for political expression. The gendering of the separate spheres that is familiarly discussed in relation to late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Britain, for example, becomes increasingly blurred in relation to Moral-Domestic writers. The central aim of this thesis has been to ascertain what it meant to domesticate the late-Romantic novel. The following 'Checklist' quantifies the genre, and establishes that women writers did moralise and domesticate fiction in the 1820s and early 1830s. Yet it is the qualitative readings of Moral-Domestic texts, careers, and changes carried out in the preceding chapters that reveal what the creation of a domestic novelistic voice did for women and literature in the period. We have seen that to adopt a moral, domestic stance in the contemporary climate was to build a voice with which proceeding women writers might interact. Given the complexity of domesticity, Moral-Domestic affiliation enabled the expression of creativity, and the creation of a space in which women could discuss important issues and exert an influence. To domesticate the female-authored novel was, therefore, to politicise this device, and to elevate its creators.

With this final point regarding the discursive nature of Moral-Domestic fiction, this thesis comes full circle. The ways in which Moral-Domestic writers opened up the potential of their subject matter are, we have seen, manifold. The piecemeal, fluid manner in which literary transmission occurs also pluralises the genre's meanings and

potential connections. As it passed through the hands of Anne Raikes Harding, Susan Edmondstone Ferrier, and Amelia Bristow, the Moral-Domestic genre became a place of dialogue, exchange, and appropriation, which is so consistent with Ellen Moers's 'sounding board' of female voices that it is difficult to exhaust the import of its themes and resonances. Far from producing their works without ambition or creativity, Moral-Domestic writers existed in a state of constant debate, with one another and with surrounding authors and readers. For these reasons, the conclusion to this study of Moral-Domestic fiction is as much an opening as it is an ending.

Appendix

Checklist of Moral-Domestic Fiction, Written by Women and Published in Britain, 1820-1834

I

The following checklist provides bibliographical entries for each of the Moral-Domestic novels published by women writers in the period 1820-1834. The dates defining the period under consideration correspond both to the area of interest and to the availability of material. The 1820s and early 1830s are the most diverse and interesting years of the Moral-Domestic genre. 1834 is also the final year covered by the Corvey Microfiche Edition of novels, my main source for examining the texts.

There are a number of grounds on which texts have been excluded from the following checklist. Such omissions include:

1. Works in which the didactic aim supersedes other novelistic elements to the degree that they would not have been part of the 'popular' novel market.
2. Juvenile literature and tales for youth.
3. Moral-Domestic works by male writers.

The entries take the following form:

1. Author. Square brackets have been used if this information is not present on the title page.
2. Full title, as it appears on the title page.
3. Place and date of publication and imprint publication details.
4. Pagination and format.
5. Holding library (normally Die Fürstliche Bibliothek zu Corvey, 'Princely Library at Corvey'): Corvey Microfiche Edition ISBN number; entry number for EN2.
6. Notes of interest, including details of any relevant dedication, preface, or subscription list that is present, and briefly describing the novel, indicating the sub-genre in which it participates, or its most interesting facets.

The following abbreviations have been used:

BL	<u>British Library</u>
CME	<u>Corvey Microfiche Edition</u>
ECB	<u>English Catalogue of Books 1801-1836</u> , ed. by Robert Alexander Peddie and Quintin Waddington (London, 1914; New York: Kraus Reprint, 1963)
edn	edition
EN2	<u>The English Novel 1770-1829: A Bibliographical Survey of Prose Fiction Published in the British Isles. Volume 2: 1820-1829</u> , ed. by Peter Garside, James Raven, and Rainer Schöwerling (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)

- EN3 Peter Garside, Anthony Mandal, Verena Ebbes, Angela Koch, Rainer Schöwerling, The English Novel 1830-1836: A Bibliographical Survey of Prose Fiction Published in the British Isles:
<http://www.cf.ac.uk/encap/corvey/1830/>
- ill. illustrated
- RLF The Royal Literary Fund, 1790-1918: Archives (London World Microfilms, 1984): references are to reel and case number
- ser. Series
- vol.(s) volume(s)
- x CME Not in the Corvey Microfiche Edition

II

1820

1.

BEAUCLERC, Amelia.

DISORDER AND ORDER. A NOVEL. IN THREE VOLUMES. BY AMELIA BEAUCLERC, AUTHOR OF MONTREITHE, OR THE PEER OF SCOTLAND; ALINDA, OR THE CHILD OF MYSTERY; THE DESERTER; HUSBAND HUNTERS, &C.

London: Printed at the Minerva Press for A. K. Newman and Co. Leadenhall-Street, 1820.

I 258p; II 264p; III 275p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47133-8; EN2 1820: 16.

* The familiar plot and overt didacticism of Disorder and Order align it with the strongly Evangelical works of the Moral-Domestic genre's inception. Disorder and Order also strikes resonances with Jane Austen's Sense and Sensibility (1811), in its depiction of a heroine who must reject her first romantic love.

2.

[DRISCOLL, Miss].

NICE DISTINCTIONS: A TALE

Dublin: Printed at the Hibernia Press Office, 1, Temple-Lane for J. Cumming 16, Lower Ormond-Quay; and Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Browne, London, 1820.

Vii, 330p. 8vo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-48223-2; EN2 1820: 7.

* Driscoll's preface refers to the competition evoked by male writers such as Walter Scott. Nice Distinctions shares similarities with texts of the post-Austenian sub-genre.

3.

HOFLAND, [Barbara].

TALES OF THE PRIORY. BY MRS HOFLAND. IN FOUR VOLUMES.

London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Browne, Paternoster-Row, 1820.

I 298p; II 317p; III 361p; IV 309p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-51040-6; EN2 1820: 33.

* Barbara Hofland was a prolific, commercial contributor to the Moral-Domestic genre. Although her *oeuvre* altered quite radically, in step with the movement, all of Hofland's works share certain progressive themes.

4.

[KING, Frances Elizabeth].

THE RECTOR'S MEMORANDUM BOOK, BEING THE MEMOIRS OF A FAMILY IN THE NORTH.

London: Printed for the Editor, and sold by Messrs. Rivington, St. Paul's Church Yard, and J. Hatchard, Piccadilly, n.d. [1820].

272p. 18mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-48602-5; EN2 1820: 41.

* Resonating with the Evangelical movement, King's text renounces slavery in places. Yet such typically Moral-Domestic themes are subjected to the scrutiny of multiple voices. A detailed 'Notice by the Editor' (p. 2) and an 'Introductory Letter' (pp. [3]-11) establish Mr Wilson as the author of the manuscript.

5.

[LESTER, Elizabeth B.].

TALES OF THE IMAGINATION. BY THE AUTHOR OF THE BACHELOR AND THE MARRIED MAN, THE PHYSIOGNOMIST, AND HESITATION. IN THREE VOLUMES.

London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Browne, Paternoster-Row, 1820.

I 227p; II 261p; III 252p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-48863-X; EN2 1820: 45.

* Tales of the Imagination consists of 'Genius' (vol. 1) and 'Enthusiasm' (vols 2 and 3). Both tales reproduce the customary Moral-Domestic plot in which trials are endured and virtues rewarded.

6.

[MACKENZIE, Mary Jane].

GERALDINE; OR, MODES OF FAITH AND PRACTICE. A TALE, IN THREE VOLUMES. BY A LADY.

London: Printed for T. Cadell and W. Davies, in the Strand; and W. Blackwood, Edinburgh, 1820.

I vii, 293p; II 285p; III 296p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47784-0; EN2 1820: 49.

* Geraldine was received very well in 1820, for its blending of a correct, moral aim with well-drawn characters. Mackenzie replaces the overt didacticism of her Moral-Domestic forbears with a more subtle, illustrative mode of instruction.

7.

[MORE, Olivia].

THE WELSH COTTAGE.

Wellington, Salop: Printed by and for F. Houlston and Son. And sold by Scatcherd and Letterman, Ave-Maria-Lane, 1820.

Ix, 223p, ill. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-48883-4; EN2 1820 53.

* In keeping with the majority of Moral-Domestic fictions depicting the figure of the old maid, the spinster of The Welsh Cottage is an empowered woman, whose existence argues against the 'current acceptance of the term Old Maid', which 'implies a malicious being' who possesses 'but few resources for felicity' (pp. v-vi).

1821

8.

HAWKINS, Laetitia Matilda.

HERALINE; OR, OPPOSITE PROCEEDINGS. BY LAETITIA-MATILDA HAWKINS. IN FOUR VOLUMES.

London: Printed for F. C. and J. Rivington, Waterloo Place, Pall-Mall, and St. Paul's Churchyard: and T. Hookham, Old Bond Street, 1821.

I iv, 362p; II 362p; III 349p; IV 408p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-4751-4; EN2 1821: 44.

* Hawkins' works of the 1810s were The Countess and Gertrude (1811) and Rosanne (1814). These feature coherent plots and proper morals. Heraline, on the other hand, displaces Moral-Domestic tropes, such as that of trials endured, to new scenes. Such experimentation problematises some domestic values.

9.

HERON, Mrs.

CONVERSATION; OR, SHADES OF DIFFERENCE. A NOVEL. IN THREE VOLUMES. BY MRS. HERON.

London: Printed for A. K. Newman and Co. Leadenhall-Street, 1821.

I 236p; II 238p; III 219p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47886-3; EN2 1821: 47.

* Conversation is part of the post-Austenian sub-genre. The matriarchal figure's subordination of moral integrity to material gain, her hypochondria, and her hysterical outbursts, are reminiscent of Pride and Prejudice's Mrs Bennet.

10.

KELLY, Mrs.

THE FATALISTS; OR, RECORDS OF 1814 AND 1815. A NOVEL. IN FIVE VOLUMES. BY MRS. KELLY, AUTHOR OF THE MATRON OF ERIN, &C.

London: Printed for A. K. Newman and Co. Leadenhall-Street, 1821.

I ii, 275p; II 265p; III 291p; IV 294p; V 301p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-48008-6; EN2 1821: 52.

* The Fatalists is less flexible in its moral tone than many other Moral-Domestic works of the 1820s. A straightforward plot in which stoicism and virtue are eventually rewarded bears out Kelly's intention, as set out in her preface, to 'blend useful instruction with innocent amusement' in a 'Christian' work (p. ii),

11.

[KELTY, Mary Ann].

THE FAVOURITE OF NATURE. A TALE. IN THREE VOLUMES.

London: Printed for G. and W. B. Whittaker, Ave-Maria-Lane, 1821.

I iv, 366p; II 414p; III 383p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47503-1. EN2 1821: 54.

* Mary Ann Kelty's experimental tales are of central importance to the post-Austenian sub-genre. The Favourite was well-received in its own time, and tracks Eliza Rivers' negotiation of the pressure to make a good marriage. She ponders more openly than do Austen's heroines the justice of various social norms.

12.

[LESTER, Elizabeth B.].

THE WOMAN OF GENIUS. IN THREE VOLUMES.

London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, Paternoster-Row, 1821/1822.

I (1821) 227p; II (1821) 230p; III (1822) 207p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-48975-X; EN2 1821: 55.

* The Woman of Genius centres on Edith Avondale, a revitalised version of the familiar persecuted heroine. Edith writes philosophical and fictional works, gaining some sanction as a public artist. This heroine suggests that the respected Moral-Domestic novel could, in the 1820s, depict empowering female roles.

13.

[MOORE, Alicia].

THE SISTERS: A NOVEL, IN FOUR VOLUMES.

London: Printed for Baldwin, Craddock, and Joy, Paternoster-Row, 1821.

I 284p; II 236p; III 244p; IV 248p. 8vo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-48748-X; EN2 1821: 60.

* The Sisters places the typical Moral-Domestic heroine in situations that are more frustrating than those depicted in the 1810s. The pious Felicia is jilted by Evanmore, whose new bride then elopes with an infamous rake. This representation of a disastrous marriage enables Moore to explore mental turmoil and unhappiness.

14.

TAYLOR, [Ann].

RETROSPECTION: A TALE. BY MRS. TAYLOR, OF ONGAR, AUTHOR OF 'MATERNAL SOLICITUDE', &C. &C.

London: Printed for Taylor and Hessey, Fleet Street, 1821.

230p, ill. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-48944-X; EN2 1821: 70.

* Retrospection is a sermonising tale told from the perspective of an elderly woman who is reflecting on her youth. There are interesting parallels between Taylor's work and the Quixote fictions of earlier anti-Jacobin and anti-sentimental writers.

15.

[?TAYLOR, Jane].

PRUDENCE AND PRINCIPLE: A TALE. BY THE AUTHOR OF "RACHEL" AND "THE AUTHORESS."

London: Printed for Taylor and Hessey, Fleet Street, 1821.

vii, 213p, ill. 12mo.

BL 1152.E.8; EN2 1821: 71.

* Prudence and Principle celebrates straightforward morality in a plot of virtue rewarded. The text is almost tract-like in its didactic register, as the narrative voice intervenes to discuss the value of philanthropic activities.

1822

16.

[BARBER, Elizabeth].

DANGEROUS ERRORS: A TALE.

London: Printed for Lupton Relfe, 13, Cornhill, 1822.

vii, 254p, ill. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47395-0; EN2 1822: 37

* Elizabeth Barber represents Christian values and norms as unequivocally just. This reveals that, despite the general trend towards diversification in the genre of the 1820s, the didacticism characteristic of the 1810s often retained its appeal.

17.

[HARDING, Anne Raikes].

THE REFUGEES, AN IRISH TALE. BY THE AUTHOR OF CORRECTION, DECISION, &C. &C. IN THREE VOLUMES.

London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, Paternoster-Row, 1822.

I 287p; II 301p; III 354p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47459-0; EN2 1822: 37.

* Harding's Correction (1818) and Decision (1819) reflect the thematic limitations of their fictional climate, being somewhat formulaic in plot and moral register. Harding became an important post-Austenian writer in the 1820s, however; The Refugees is an exploratory text, dealing with cultural and linguistic differences.

18.

HILL, Isabel.

CONSTANCE, A TALE. BY ISABEL HILL, AUTHOR OF 'THE POET'S CHILD,' A TRAGEDY.

London: John Warren, Old Bond Street, 1822.

vii, 279p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47689-5; EN2 1822: 42.

* In her introduction (pp. iii-vii), Hill refers to a feminine ideal that is both admirable and imitable. Interestingly, the ending of Constance undercuts conventional morality and domesticity somewhat. The heroine of Constance endures bereavement and poverty without receiving the rewards that the reader may have deemed sufficient.

19.

HOFLAND, [Barbara].

TALES OF THE MANOR. BY MRS. HOFLAND. IN FOUR VOLUMES.

London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Browne, Paternoster-Row, 1822.

I 344p; II 309p; III 342p; IV 309p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-51039-2; EN2 1822: 43.

* In Hofland's second collection of tales multiple voices frame several short moral fictions. A series of narrators are involved in their own story, and tell one another tales. This layers fiction, fact, and interpretation, creating an interesting meta-text.

20.

JOHNSTON, Mary.

DOMESTIC TALES; CONTAINING THE MERCHANT'S WIFE AND HER SISTER. BY MARY JOHNSTON, AUTHOR OF 'THE LAIRDS OF GLENFERN; OR, HIGHLANDERS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.'

London: G. and W. B. Whittaker, Ave-Maria-Lane, 1822.

220p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-51080-5; EN2 1822: 48.

* The tales in this collection tend to be dominated by an intrusively didactic narrator. The need for young ladies to gain a domestically useful education is prioritised over their acquisition of accomplishments.

21.

[KELTY, Mary Ann].

OSMOND, A TALE. BY THE AUTHOR OF 'THE FAVOURITE OF NATURE:' IN THREE VOLUMES.

London: Printed for G. and W. B. Whittaker, Ave-Maria-Lane, 1822.

I iv, 312p; II 327p; III 396p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-48317-4; EN2 1822: 51.

* The representation of marriage in this post-Austenian tale challenges the validity of existing sources of female happiness. In *Osmond* Ellen's marriage proves unsatisfactory, leading to an exploration of the divided female self. This feature anticipates Victorian concern with the female psyche.

22.

[STODDART, Lady Isabella Wellwood].

TALES OF MY AUNT MARTHA; CONTAINING I. THE LAIRD, A SCOTTISH TALE; II. THE SISTERS, AN ENGLISH TALE; III. THE CHATEAU IN LA VENDEE, A FRENCH TALE.

London: William Fearman, Library, 170, New Bond-Street, 1822.

I xxiv, 344p; II 372p; III 341p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-48868-0; EN2 1822: 72.

* Stoddart is another moral author reclaiming the figure of the old maid as an image of female autonomy. This may be seen to reverse the masculinisation of the novel that many believed was occurring in contemporary society.

1823

23.

ANON.

JUSTINA; OR, RELIGION PURE AND UNDEFILED. A MORAL TALE. IN TWO VOLUMES.

London: Printed for A. K. Newman and Co. Leadenhall-Street, 1823.

I 272p; II 277p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-48011-6; EN2 1823: 6.

* Justina tells of a stoical and domestic heroine who risks losing her potential suitors to a livelier rival. In dealing with the possibility that the Moral-Domestic heroine may not be attractive to prospective husbands, Justina tacitly questions contemporary ideals of womanhood.

24.

[BARBER, Elizabeth].

INFLUENCE AND EXAMPLE; OR, THE RECLUSE. A TALE. BY THE AUTHOR OF "DANGEROUS ERRORS".

London: Printed for Lupton Relfe, 13, Cornhill, 1823.

Iv, 236, ill. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47883-9; EN2 1823: 22.

* Influence and Example is less experimental in its plot than many other Moral-Domestic texts of the 1820s, as it voices unequivocal support for a number of Evangelical principles, and focuses on the merits of philanthropy.

25.

CRUMPE, Miss [M. G. T.].

ISABEL ST ALBE: OR VICE AND VIRTUE. A NOVEL. IN THREE VOLUMES. BY MISS CRUMPE.

Edinburgh: Printed for Archibald Constable and Company; Hurst, Robinson, and Co.

London; and John Cumming, Dublin, 1823.

I vi, 293p; II 260p; III 230p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47354-3; EN2 1823: 30.

* Female-authored Moral-Domestic texts make a variety of references to male writers' impact on the novel. Isabel St Albe represents one response, with its grateful acknowledgement to Walter Scott. Crumpe thanks Scott for his 'approbation and encouragement' in her dedication, dated Limerick, 24 February 1823 (p. v).

26.

HOFLAND, [Barbara].

INTEGRITY. A TALE. BY MRS HOFLAND, AUTHOR OF TALES OF THE PRIORY, TALES OF THE MANOR, AND A SON OF A GENIUS, &C. &C.

London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Browne, Paternoster-Row, 1823.

264p, ill. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47664-X; EN2 1823: 42.

* Integrity is the first in a spate of one-volume Moral-Domestic titles that Hofland produced throughout the 1820s.

27.

[KENNEDY, GRACE].

FATHER CLEMENT; A ROMAN CATHOLIC STORY. BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE DECISION," &C.

Edinburgh: Published by William Oliphant, 22 South Bridge Street; and Sold by M. Ogle, and Chalmers & Collins, Glasgow; J. Finlay, Newcastle; Beilby & Knots, Birmingham; J. Hatchard & Son, T. Hamilton, J. Nisbet, Ogle, Duncan & Co., B. J. Holdsworth, F. Westley, and Knight & Lacey, London, 1823.

370p. 18mo.

BL 1509/3275; EN2 1823: 51.

* Father Clement is a key early conversion text. Conversion fiction escaped the critics' hostility owing to its celebration of Protestantism, yet it also explored less conventional themes. Members of Kennedy's Clarenham family convert from Catholic to Protestant Christianity, in a tale of psychological and historical depth.

28.

[WALKER, Anne].

RICH AND POOR.

Edinburgh: William Blackwood, and T. Cadell, London, 1823.

401p. 8vo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-48570-3; EN2 1823: 81.

* Rich and Poor promotes Presbyterianism, whilst it also engages in a mode of social satire that recalls Susan Ferrier. Much of Walker's narrative dissects Lady Amelia's allegiance to both nominal and true Christianity, and her interactions with a range of contrasting secondary characters, such as Dr Pelham, a bon-vivant clergyman.

1824

29.

BARBER, Elizabeth.

TALES OF MODERN DAYS. BY ELIZABETH BARBER, AUTHOR OF "DANGEROUS ERRORS" – "INFLUENCE AND EXAMPLE."

London. Published by Sherwood, Jones, and Co., Paternoster-Row, 1824.

ix, 340p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47102-8; EN2 1824: 17.

* Barber's preface to these simple moral tales defends women's fiction: 'so many writers of distinguished merit have given an air of stability and superiority to works of fiction' (p. iv) that 'a fable has turned the tide of national feeling' (p. vii).

30.

[BRISTOW, Amelia].

THE FAITHFUL SERVANT; OR, THE HISTORY OF ELIZABETH ALLEN. A NARRATIVE OF FACTS.

London: Printed for Francis Westley, 10, Stationers' Court; and Ave-Maria Lane, 1824

xii, 216p. 12mo.

O 24, 1; EN2 1824: 18.

* Bristow is a key contributor to the conversion sub-genre. She was herself a converted Jewess, as her RLF correspondence details. The Faithful Servant celebrates endurance and duty.

31.

CAREY, Joanna.

LASTING IMPRESSIONS: A NOVEL, IN THREE VOLUMES. BY MRS. JOANNA CAREY.

London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, Paternoster-Row, 1824.

I v, 367p; II 382p; III 370p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47214-8; EN2 1824: 22.

* Lasting Impressions shares more with the texts of the Moral-Domestic genre's 1810s heyday than with its more complex and troubling counterparts of the 1820s. Carey's preface warns that as Lasting Impressions celebrates virtue and modesty, a reader anticipating the marvellous, incredible, or supernatural, will be disappointed.

32.

CHARLTON, Mary.

GRANDEUR AND MEANNESS; OR, DOMESTIC PERSECUTION. A NOVEL. IN THREE VOLUMES. BY MARY CHARLTON, AUTHOR OF THE WIFE AND MISTRESS, ROSELLA, &C. &C.

London: Printed for A. K. Newman and Co. Leadenhall-Street, 1824.

I 331p; II 318p; III 324p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47254-7; EN2 1824: 23.

* Grandeur and Meanness exemplifies the popular appeal of the 1820s Moral-Domestic style. Writers such as Charlton wrote occasionally but not exclusively in the genre. This publication presents a subdued version of morality and domesticity, yet the suffering heroine is aligned with other protagonists of the genre.

33.

[FERRIER, Susan Edmonstone].

THE INHERITANCE. BY THE AUTHOR OF MARRIAGE. IN THREE VOLUMES.

Edinburgh: William Blackwood, and T. Cadell, London, 1824.

I 387p; II 415p; III 359p. 8vo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47877-4; EN2 1824: 33.

* Ferrier is a skilled and satirical post-Austenian writer. Echoing Pride and Prejudice, The Inheritance begins: '(i)t is a truth universally acknowledged that there is no passion so deeply rooted in human nature as that of pride.' (vol. 1, p. 1). Moving beyond Austen, Ferrier's heroine may be lower-class, and feels distress and shame.

34.

[HAWKINS, Laetitia-Matilda].

ANNALINE; OR, MOTIVE-HUNTING.

London: Printed for James Carpenter and Son, Old Bond Street, 1824.

I 346p; II 307p; III 310p. 8vo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47061-7; EN2 1824: 46.

* The heroine of Annaline is witty and lively, yet she is not wholly faultless, being prone to jealousy and sullenness, and reflecting Hawkins's diversity as a writer. This novel emphasises female difficulties in negotiations of the marriage market.

35.

HOFLAND, [Barbara].

DECISION. A TALE. BY MRS. HOFLAND, AUTHOR OF INTEGRITY A TALE, PATIENCE A TALE, THE SON OF A GENIUS; TALES OF THE PRIORY; TALES OF THE MANOR, &C. &C.

London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, Paternoster-Row, 1824.

272p, ill. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47665-8; EN2 1824: 48.

* Decision tells the familiar Moral-Domestic story of financial hardship. Yet whereas Brunton's Laura Montreville of Self Control (1811) overcame poverty by painting, Hofland's heroine becomes involved in a typically male industry, selling iron in the expanding manufacturing world.

36.

HOFLAND, [Barbara].

PATIENCE. A TALE. BY MRS. HOFLAND, AUTHOR OF INTEGRITY A TALE; THE SON OF A GENIUS, TALES OF THE PRIORY, TALES OF THE MANOR, &C. &C.

London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, Paternoster-Row, 1824.

289p, ill. 12mo.

BL N. 219; EN2 1824: 49.

* Hofland's Patience is more formulaic than many of the texts that comprise her 1820s one-volume spate. In keeping with the Evangelical emphasis of the early Moral-Domestic genre, an openly didactic narrator praises the heroine's self-sacrifice in this tale, as well as her willingness to defer gratification to the afterlife.

37.

[KELTY, Mary Ann].

TRIALS; A TALE. BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE FAVOURITE OF NATURE," &C. &C. IN THREE VOLUMES.

London: Printed for G. and W. B. Whittaker, Ave-Maria Lane, 1824.

I 328p; II 315p; III 314p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-48828-1; EN2 1824: 58.

* This unusual post-Austenian novel sees Caroline's marriage repeatedly tested as her husband is pursued by a woman suspected of being sexually rapacious. The father-daughter relationship, as well as the bond between husband and wife, is scrutinised, and results in the suggestion of feminist meaning.

38.

[?TAYLOR, Jane].

SINCERITY: A TALE. BY THE AUTHOR OF "RACHEL," &C.

London: Published by Knight and Lacey, 24, Paternoster-Row, 1824.

Iv, 176p, ill. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-48702-1; EN2 1824: 91.

* Of interest in this conventional moral tale is the depiction of female solidarity. Sincerity criticises vanity and jealousy, and promotes female friendship over marriage.

39.

[WOODROOFFE, Anne].

SHADES OF CHARACTER; OR, THE INFANT PILGRIM. BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE HISTORY OF MICHAEL KEMP."

Bath: Printed for the Author; and sold by Relfe, Cornhill, and Hatchard, and Seeley, London; and by all other Booksellers, 1824.

I 474p; II 621p; III 390p. 8vo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-48649-1; EN2 1824: 99.

* In Shades of Character Woodrooffe's interest in children is clear. A Moral-Domestic heroine is present in one of the children's mothers, although her experiences are somewhat overshadowed by those of the youths, and their religious discussions and growth.

1825

40.

[BUSK, Mrs. M. M.].

TALES OF FAULT AND FEELING. BY THE AUTHOR OF "ZEAL AND EXPERIENCE."

London: T. Hookham, Old Bond-Street, 1825.

I 314p; II 333p; III 303p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-51147-X; EN2 1825: 17.

* Tales of Fault and Feeling contains nine short fictions (the last two of which are in verse). The tales centre on trials and adversities, although they vary in setting and period. For example 'Arthur Errington' charts the problems involved in romance and marriage, whilst 'Miriam' is a historical and political narrative.

41.

[CADELL, Cecilia Mary].

MASSENBURG. A TALE. IN THREE VOLUMES.

London: Printed for T. Cadell, Strand; and W. Blackwood, Edinburgh, 1825.

I iv, 328p; II 359p; III 308p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-48135-X; EN2 1825: 18.

* Owing to her orthodox aim of illustrating 'the domestic calamities that proceed from vicious pursuits', Cadell is able to produce a daringly tragic tale (pp. iii-iv). Eliza's decadent father commits suicide. On discovering this, the heroine suffers, appearing with the 'wandering, vacant, glance of a MANIAC' (vol. 3, p. 308).

42.

[HARDING, Anne Raikes].

REALITIES, NOT A NOVEL. A TALE FROM REAL LIFE. IN FOUR VOLUMES. BY THE AUTHOR OF CORRECTION, DECISION, REFUGEES, &C.

London: Printed for A. K. Newman and Co. Leadenhall-Street, 1825.

I viii, viii, 284p; II 254p; III 263p; IV 243p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-48456-1; EN2 1825: 39.

* Realities is an experimental Moral-Domestic text, which layers a number of inset stories against a central plot. A preface is dated August 1825, Bath.

43.

HOFLAND, [Barbara].

MODERATION. A TALE. BY MRS. HOFLAND, AUTHOR OF INTEGRITY A TALE, PATIENCE A TALE, DECISION A TALE, THE SON OF A GENIUS; TALES OF THE PRIORY; TALES OF THE MANOR, &C.

London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Browne, and Green, Paternoster-Row, 1825.

253p, ill. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47662-3; EN2 1825: 42.

* Moderation's principle characters are three sisters. One sister is vain and temperamental, whilst another is overly grave. Existing between these extremes is a patient and virtuous, yet interesting, heroine, named Emma.

44.

[KENNEDY, Grace].

PHILIP COLVILLE; OR, A COVENANTER'S STORY. UNFINISHED. BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE DECISION," "FATHER CLEMENT," &C. &C.

Edinburgh: Published by W. Oliphant, 22, South Bridge; and sold by M. Ogle, and Chalmers and Collins, Glasgow; J. Finlay, Newcastle; Beilby & Knotts, Birmingham; J. Hatchard and Son, Hamilton, Adams & Co., J. Nisbet, J. Duncan, B. J. Holdsworth, and F. Westley, London: and R. M. Tims, and W. Curry, jun. & Co. Dublin, 1825.

272p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-48434-0; EN2 1825: 49.

* This unfinished work is by a key conversion writer. Revealing the authority to be gained from religious themes, a final editorial section states: '(t)his would have been a most useful work, for even our most esteemed historians have either slurred over the odious deeds of that day, or they have misrepresented them' (p. 272).

45.

[LESTER, Elizabeth B.].

FIRESIDE SCENES. BY THE AUTHOR OF THE BACHELOR AND MARRIED MAN, &C. &C. &C. IN THREE VOLUMES.

London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Browne, and Green, 1825.

I 312p; II 283p; III 300p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47551-1; EN2 1825: 52.

* The tales included in Fireside Scenes are domestic in both ideology and setting. Whilst it contains standard, unquestionable moral messages, this text's religiosity is weaker than that manifest in many other Moral-Domestic works of the period.

46.

[WALKER, Anne].

COMMON EVENTS: A CONTINUATION OF RICH AND POOR.

Edinburgh: William Blackwood, and T. Cadell, London, 1825.

382p. 8vo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47276-8; EN2 1825: 83.

* The narrative of Common Events picks up where Walker's Rich and Poor (1823) left off, with Lady Amelia eventually marrying a truly, as opposed to nominally, religious suitor. Like its prequel, Common Events blends social satire with faith.

1826

47.

{A}[NLEY], {C}[HARLOTTE].

MIRIAM; OR, THE POWER OF TRUTH. A JEWISH TALE. BY THE AUTHOR OF "INFLUENCE."

London: John Hatchard and Son, Piccadilly, 1826.

Vii, 384p. 8vo.

BL N. 1243; EN2 1826: 10.

* Miriam is part of the conversion sub-genre. Its depiction of conversion from Judaism to Christianity possesses historical authority, and contributes to the fusion of Protestantism and patriotism occurring in British cultural consciousness.

48.

[BRISTOW, Amelia].

SOPHIA DE LISSAU; OR, A PORTRAITURE OF THE JEWS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: BEING AN OUTLINE OF THE RELIGIOUS AND DOMESTIC HABITS OF THIS MOST INTERESTING NATION, WITH EXPLANATORY NOTES, BY THE AUTHOR OF "ELIZABETH ALLEN; OR, THE FAITHFUL SERVANT."

London: Printed for the Author, by Gardiner & Son, Princes Street, Cavendish Square, and Simpkin & Marshall, Stationers' Court, 1826.

269p. 18mo.

BL 696.c.9; EN2 1826: 20.

* Sophia de Lissau is the first text in an important conversion trilogy by Bristow. The other texts in the trilogy are Emma de Lissau (1828) and The Orphans of Lissau (1830). In packaging Sophia as a 'Portraiture', with 'Explanatory Notes', Bristow claims a factual, enlightening identity for the female author and text (pp. 259-69).

49.

HALL, Mrs. A. C.

OBSTINACY. A TALE. BY MRS. A. C. HALL.

London: Printed for Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, Paternoster-Row, 1826.

338p, ill. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47622-4; EN2 1826: 42.

* Obstinacy is markedly darker in tone than many of its contemporaries. Frank is forced to learn caution as few of his friends deserve his trusting nature. Likewise the heroine suffers for her philanthropy, when a malicious girl plots to ruin her.

50.

HOFLAND, [Barbara].

REFLECTION. A TALE. BY MRS. HOFLAND, AUTHOR OF INTEGRITY, A TALE; PATIENCE, A TALE; DECISION, A TALE; MODERATION, A TALE; THE SON OF A GENIUS; TALES OF THE PRIORY; TALES OF THE MANOR; &C, &C.

London: Printed for Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, Paternoster-Row, 1826.

267p, ill. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47661-5; EN2 1826: 46.

* In Reflection a preference for country society over lively, town life is conveyed.

51.

[KELTY, Mary Ann].

THE STORY OF ISABEL; BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE FAVOURITE OF NATURE," &C. &C. &C. IN THREE VOLUMES.

London: Printed for Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, Paternoster-Row, 1826.

I xii, 367p; II 325p; III 332p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-48676-9; EN2 1826: 48.

* Isabel is the protagonist of this post-Austenian text. Yet it is the somewhat peripheral narrator, her friend Miss Delmond, who possesses typical Moral-Domestic traits. Miss Delmond anticipates Victorian heroines such as Jane Eyre and Lucy Snow, who lack wealth or beauty, but who are psychologically complex.

52.

MOSSE, Henrietta Rouviere.

GRATITUDE, AND OTHER TALES. IN THREE VOLUMES. BY HENRIETTA ROUVIERE MOSSE, AUTHOR OF LUSSINGTON ABBEY, HEIRS OF VILLEROY, OLD IRISH BARONET, PEEP AT OUR ANCESTORS, ARRIVALS FROM INDIA, BRIDE AND NO WIFE, A FATHER'S LOVE AND A WOMAN'S FRIENDSHIP, &C.

London: Printed for A. K. Newman and Co. Leadenhall-Street, 1826.

I xv, 304p; II 278p; III 315p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-48346-8; EN2 1826: 59.

* Mosse is one of a number of 'jobbing' authors whose sporadic adoption of the Moral-Domestic genre proves its popularity. The adversity discussed in her RLF correspondence might also explain Mosse's attraction to a genre that enabled her to portray suffering.

53.

[OLIVER, Mrs. N. W.].

SEPHORA; A HEBREW TALE, DESCRIPTIVE OF THE COUNTRY OF PALESTINE, AND THE MANNERS AND CUSTOMES OF THE ANCIENT ISRAELITES. TWO VOLUMES.

London: J. Hatchard and Son, 187, Piccadilly, 1826.

I viii, 280p; III 280p. 8vo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-48647-5; EN2 1826: 60.

* Sephora's place in the Moral-Domestic genre of the 1820s is important but also ambiguous. The action occurs in Palestine, and Christianity's primary function is not to discredit a religious Other. Sephora incorporates a number of prominent domestic and moral lessons, and is associated with the conversion sub-genre,

1827

54.

[BUNBURY, Selina].

CABIN CONVERSATIONS AND CASTLE SCENES. AN IRISH STORY. BY THE AUTHOR OF "EARLY RECOLLECIONS," "A VISIT TO MY BIRTH-PLACE," &C. &C.

London: James Nisbet, Berners Street, 1827.

173p, ill. 18mo.

BL N.27(3); EN2 1827: 19.

* Selina Bunbury is an interesting contributor to the Moral-Domestic genre as her works blend didacticism and religious discussion with Irish concerns and scenery. The present work is one of Bunbury's short, almost tract-like stories.

55.

[HARDING, Anne Raikes].

DISSIPATION. A TALE OF SIMPLE LIFE. IN FOUR VOLUMES. BY THE AUTHOR OF "REALITIES," "CORRECTION," &C.

London: Printed for A. K. Newman and Co., 1827.

I x, 290p; II 264p; III 252p; IV 292p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47438-8; EN2 1827: 38.

* A prefatory story about a single woman and her disabled daughter reflects and publicises Harding's own struggles. This is a key post-Austenian work.

56.

HOFLAND, [Barbara].

SELF-DENIAL. A TALE. BY MRS. HOFLAND, AUTHOR OF INTEGRITY, A TALE; PATIENCE, A TALE; DECISION, A TALE; MODERATION, A TALE; REFLECTION, A TALE; THE SON OF A GENIUS; TALES OF THE PRIORY; TALES OF THE MANOR, &C. &C.

London: Printed for Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, Paternoster-Row, 1827.

254p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47660-7; EN2 1827: 41.

* Self-Denial is an implicitly Christian tale, which links domesticity with the security of female identity. In this text, the home is the scene of women's empowerment and happiness, rather than a site of limitation and confinement. In contrast to many of Hofland's fictions, however, the present tale is interested in the wealthy.

57.

[WEST, Jane].

RINGROVE; OR, OLD FASHIONED NOTIONS. BY THE AUTHOR OF "LETTERS TO A YOUNG MAN," "A TALE OF THE TIMES," &C. &C. IN TWO VOLUMES.

London: Printed for Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, Paternoster-Row, 1827.

I 413p; II 427p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-48609-2; EN2 1827: 78.

* In keeping with the Moral-Domestic genre's positive appropriation of the figure of the old maid, Ringrove portrays an elderly, single woman who fosters in the young and wayward Emma an identity that avoids restricting concerns like beauty.

1828

58.

[BRAY, Anna Eliza].

THE PROTESTANT; A TALE OF THE REIGN OF QUEEN MARY. BY THE AUTHOR OF 'DE FOIX', 'THE WHITE HOODS,' &C. IN THREE VOLUMES.

London: Henry Colburn, New Birmingham Street, 1828.

I 344p; II 326p; III 281p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-48418-9; EN2 1828: 21.

* The Protestant is a conversion tale, which follows the fate of a good Protestant family as they stoically endure brutal treatment at the hands of Catholics. The Protestant contributes to a contemporary interest in history that was important to the fusion of British nationalism and Protestantism.

59.

[BRISTOW, Amelia].

EMMA DE LISSAU; A NARRATIVE OF STRIKING VICISSITUDES, AND PECULIAR TRIALS; WITH EXPLANATORY NOTES, ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE JEWS. BY THE AUTHOR OF "SOPHIA DE LISSAU," "ELIZABETH ALLEN," &C. &C. IN TWO VOLUMES.

London: Published by T. Gardiner and Son, Princes Street, Cavendish Square. Sold by Hatchard and Son, Piccadilly; Simpkin and Marshall, Stationers' Hall Court, 1828.

I viii, 269p; II viii, 258p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47560-0; EN2 1828: 23.

* In this conversion fiction Emma de Lissau converts to Christianity despite the disapproval of her Jewish family. This action substantiates conservative, Protestant orthodoxy. It also, however, evinces anti-radical feminism; the heroine is sanctioned to reject all sources of authority, except of course the Christian.

60.

[BUNBURY, Selina].

THE ABBEY OF INNISMOYLE: A STORY OF ANOTHER CENTURY. BY THE AUTHOR OF "EARLY RECOLLECTIONS," "A VISIT TO MY BIRTH PLACE," &C.

Dublin: William Curry, jun. and Co. 9, Upper Sackville-Street, 1828.

333p, ill. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47001-3; EN2 1828: 25.

* Selina Bunbury's novel points out certain perceived problems of the Catholic community. It is set in Ireland during the reign of Elizabeth, and blends the Moral-Domestic style with a keen interest in both national and regional character.

61.

CADDICK, Mrs. [H. C.].

TALES OF THE AFFECTIONS: BEING SKETCHES FROM REAL LIFE. BY MRS. CADDICK.

London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green; and T. Sowler, Manchester, n. d. [1828].

V, 199p. 8vo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47182-6; EN2 1828: 27.

* Caddick's preface defends the female author, bemoaning the lot of women in the 1820s. The short stories in this collection feature pious, caring heroines. The first tale is set in Bristol and sees the dutiful Catherine support a wayward brother.

62.

[HARDING, ANNE RAIKES].

EXPERIENCE. A TALE FOR ALL AGES. BY THE AUTHOR OF CORRECTION, REALITIES, DISSIPATION, &C. IN FOUR VOLUMES.

London: Printed for A. K. Newman and Co., 1828.

I 260p; II 241p; III 256p; IV 233p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47617-8; EN2 1828: 46.

* Experience is one of Harding's post-Austenian productions. There are parallels between the situation of Georgette, the 'poor relation' who comes to have a positive influence on her hostile relatives, and Fanny Price of Austen's Mansfield Park.

63.

[HOFLAND, Barbara].

KATHERINE. A TALE. IN FOUR VOLUMES.

London: A. K. Newman & Co. Leadenhall-Street, 1828.

I 247p; II 231p; III 234p; IV 240p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-48004-3; EN2 1828: 51.

* Katherine marks Hofland's departure from her 1820s series of one-volume Moral-Domestic titles, and her movement towards a more lengthy and psychologically intense fiction. In this tale, a heroine is under-valued by her lover, but has to conceal her dejection.

1829

64.

[CORP, Harriet].

TALES CHARACTERISTIC, DESCRIPTIVE, AND ALLEGORICAL. BY THE AUTHOR OF "AN ANTIDOTE TO THE MISERIES OF HUMAN LIFE," &C. &C. WITH A FRONTISPIECE.

London: Printed for Baldwin and Cradock, 1829.

vi, 222p, ill. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-51144-5; EN2 1829: 28.

* Tales contrasts with the general trend in the 1820s towards experimentation within Moral-Domestic fiction, as it retains the Evangelicalism of the genre's early years. Corp's RLF correspondence implies that financial necessity encouraged her return to writing, following an absence of over a decade.

65.

[GREY, Elizabeth Caroline].

THE TRIALS OF LIFE. BY THE AUTHOR OF "DE LISLE." IN THREE VOLUMES.

London: Edward Bull, Holles Street, 1829.

I 319p; II 285p; III 279p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-48829X; EN2 1829: 40.

* Whilst The Trials of Life is a Moral-Domestic fiction, Grey also produced a novel of mixed genres, De Lisle; or the Sensitive Man, in 1828. Grey is one of a group of popular novelists who testify to the malleability and broad appeal of the genre.

66.

HOFLAND, [Barbara].

BEATRICE, A TALE FOUNDED ON FACTS. BY MRS. HOFLAND. IN THREE VOLUMES.

London: Printed for Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, Paternoster-Row, 1829.

I 324p; II 354p; III 312p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47675-5; EN2 1829: 47.

* In Beatrice social class is a problematic element of identity. Beatrice is a vulnerable child, taken in by a farmer, who is only partially aware of her origins. This plot may be seen to anticipate Victorian anxieties about the effects on individuals of various sources of instability, including increased social mobility.

67.

[MACKENZIE, Mary Jane].

PRIVATE LIFE; OR, VARIETIES OF CHARACTER AND OPINION. IN TWO VOLUMES. BY THE AUTHOR OF "GERALDINE," &C. &C.

London: Printed for T. Cadell, Strand; and W. Blackwood, Edinburgh, 1829.

I 361p; II 391p. 8vo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-48365-5; EN2 1829: 57.

* In this post-Austenian fiction a heroine and her widowed mother suffer emotionally and financially. These women overcome their troubles by cultivating warm

relationships with others. Interestingly, Private Life depicts male interactions and experiences frequently and convincingly.

68.

[ROBERTSON, Mrs.]

FLORENCE: OR THE ASPIRANT. A NOVEL, IN THREE VOLUMES.

London: Whittaker, Treacher, and Co. Ave Maria Lane, 1829. I 296p; II 293p; III 311p. 8vo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47797; EN2 1829: 52.

* Previously attributed to Grace Kennedy, Florence is actually a response to that writer's conversion text Father Clement (1823). Florence is an extremely interesting work, which suggests that intense dialogue conditioned women's writing in the period. Reversing Kennedy's story, Robertson's heroine converts to Catholicism.

1830

69.

ANON.

THE BIBLICALS, OR GLENMOYLE CASTLE, A TALE OF MODERN TIMES.

Dublin: T. O'Flanagan, 26, Bachelor's-Walk, 1830.

iv, 292p. 12mo.

BL 1119.d.40; EN3 1830: 4.

* In The Biblicals the author makes reference to Grace Kennedy's important conversion text of 1823 by stating that 'The following narrative was written in the year 1827, and was suggested by that interesting fiction, "Father Clement"' (p. [iii]).

70.

BEST, Eliza.

ST. JAMES'S; OR, A PEEP AT DELUSION. A NOVEL. BY ELZA BEST. IN TWO VOLUMES.

London: Printed for the Author, and sold by A. K. Newman and Co. Leadenhall Street, 1830.

i xi, 291p; II 304p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47120-6; EN3 1830: 23.

* St. James's melds Moral-Domestic concerns with those of the society novel, and is concerned with gender. Best argues that male writers were matched by women, as 'the names of Scott, Byron, Porter, and Mitford, have graced the modern catalogue of authors' (p. xi). The novel pays attention to both the male and female spheres.

71.

BOWDLER, H[enrietta] M[aria].

PEN TAMAR; OR, THE HISTORY OF AN OLD MAID. BY THE LATE MRS. H. M. BOWDLER.

London: Printed for Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, Paternoster-Row, 1830.

ix, 244p, ill. 8vo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47271-7; EN3 1830: 24.

* In the preface to this posthumously published work Bowdler claims that she wrote it as early as 1801. This contextualises Moral-Domestic fiction, testifying to its close relationship with anti-Jacobin fictions of the 1790s and the turn of the century.

72.

[BRISTOW, Amelia].

THE ORPHANS OF LISSAU, AND OTHER INTERESTING NARRATIVES, IMMEDIATELY CONNECTED WITH JEWISH CUSTOMS, DOMESTIC AND RELIGIOUS, WITH EXPLANATORY NOTES. BY THE AUTHOR OF "SOPHIA DE LISSAU," "EMMA DE LISSAU," &C. IN TWO VOLUMES.

London: Published by T. Gardiner & Son, Princes Street, Cavendish Square; sold also by the Author, South Vale, Blackheath, 1830.

I ii, 268p; II 278p. 12mo.

BL N.726; EN3 1830: 27.

* Throughout her conversion trilogy, Bristow invoked isolation, in different ways, to defend female independence. The heroine of *Emma de Lissau* (1828) is unbeaten by solitary confinement, proving her strength. Yet Gertrude of *The Orphans* cannot cope alone, indicting the stunting effect of her prolonged subjection to patriarchal control.

73.

[BUNBURY, Selina].

ELEANOR. BY THE AUTHOR OF "A VISIT TO MY BIRTHPLACE," "THE ABBEY OF INNISMOYLE," &C. &C.

Dublin: W. Curry, jun. & Co. Sackville-Street, W. Carson, Grafton-Street, 1830.

113p. 18mo.

BL 4413.f.41(1); EN3 1830: 31.

* *Eleanor* is a didactic fiction, concerned with the traits that a good, respectable woman ought to possess. Bunbury argues that domesticity, sensitivity to others (particularly men), and piety, are amongst women's most valuable traits.

74.

JEWSBURY, Maria Jane.

THE THREE HISTORIES. THE HISTORY OF AN ENTHUSIAST. THE HISTORY OF A NONCHALANT. THE HISTORY OF A REALIST. BY MARIA JANE JEWSBURY.

London: Frederick Westley and A. H. Davis, Stationers' Hall Court, 1830.

322p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-51079-1; EN3 1830: 65.

* Each of the stories in this collection complicates simple morality and unequivocal values. In the tale of Julia, a naughty and indulged child must be schooled out of her bad ways. The fact that Julia lacks moral instinct in some situations even after her schooling questions the familiar emphasis placed on education.

75.

[LEWIS, Mary Gogo].

THE JEWISH MAIDEN. A NOVEL. BY THE AUTHOR OF "AMBITION, &C." IN FOUR VOLUMES.

London: Printed for A. K. Newman and Co., 1830.

I 249p; II 246p; III 254p; IV 238p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47986-X; EN3 1830: 70.

* This novel tells the story of a dutiful Jewish maiden. Of interest in this work is its female writer's confident delineation of male interactions. In addition, many of the Jewish heroine's most positive traits are linked to her heritage, which contrasts with the accentuation of Protestant supremacy at the heart of the conversion sub-genre.

76.

[LOUDON, Margracia].

FIRST LOVE. A NOVEL. IN THREE VOLUMES.

London: Saunders and Otley, Conduit Street, 1830.

I 380p; II 367p; III 433p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47498-1; EN3 1830: 71.

* In similarity with Barbara Hofland, Margracia Loudon begins with the typical adversity plot of the Moral-Domestic novel, and is interested in the way in which poverty and changes in wealth influence identity.

77.

MAINWARING, Mrs {M.}.

THE SUTTEE; OR, THE HINDOO CONVERTS. BY MRS. GENERAL MAINWARING, AUTHOR OF MOSCOW, OR THE GRANDSIRE, AN HISTORICAL TALE, &C. IN THREE VOLUMES.

London: Printed for A. K. Newman and Co., 1830.

I viii, 288p; II 281p; III 256p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-48149-X; EN3 1830-77.

* Mainwaring's text reveals a significant correspondence between women's writing and their social activities in the period. Many female Evangelicals petitioned government against Sati in India in the period. This novel is in part a thematisation of this process, upon which contemporary historians have commented.

1831

78.

[FERRIER, Susan Edmonstone].

DESTINY; OR, THE CHIEF'S DAUGHTER. BY THE AUTHOR OF "MARRIAGE," AND "THE INHERITANCE." IN THREE VOLUMES.

Edinburgh: Printed for Robert Cadell, Edinburgh; and Whittaker and Co., London, 1831.

I 337p; II 407p; III 399p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47415-9; EN3 1831: 27.

* Ferrier's post-Austenian fiction incorporates a varied, lively plot, and an ambitious investigation of female identity.

79.

SHERWOOD, [Mary Martha].

ROXOBEL. BY MRS. SHERWOOD, AUTHOR OF "LITTLE HENRY AND HIS BEARER," &C. &C. IN THREE VOLUMES.

London: Printed for Houlston and Son, 65, Paternoster-Row; and at Wellington, Salop, 1831.

I viii, 380p, ill.; II 513p, ill.; III 464p, ill. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-48688-2; EN3 1831: 64.

* Roxobel has an extremely religious preface, which defends the novel as a means by which to communicate a Christian education that might otherwise be unpalatable to the 'youthful reader' (pp. [v]-viii). With Roxobel, the renowned children's author Sherwood extends her audience to include adults as well as young people.

1832

80.

[CADELL, Cecilia Mary].

THE REFORMER. BY THE AUTHOR OF "MASSESBUNG." IN THREE VOLUMES.

London: Published by Effingham Wilson, Royal Exchange, 1832.

I 331p; II 352p; III 311p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-48524-X; EN3 1832: 16.

* The Reformer contains an intriguing concern with masculine identity and social life, and reveals the way in which Moral-Domestic fiction was growing increasingly diverse in the 1830s. Lord Haverfield is talkative and amusing in company, yet bored and discontented when alone. The story outlines the problems of a shallow life.

81.

[?ST. JOHN, Lady Isabella or ?M'LEOD Miss E. H.].

GERALDINE HAMILTON; OR, SELF-GUIDANCE. A TALE. IN TWO VOLUMES.

London: Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street. (Late Colburn and Bentley.), 1832.

I 306p; II 356p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47763-8; EN3 1832: 73.

* Geraldine Hamilton follows a troubled heroine, through the death of her beloved guardian and uncle, her subsequent temptation to join the fashionable world of her estranged father, and her final, sensible persuasion of this man to be a competent landlord.

1833

82.

[BUNBURY, Selina].

TALES OF MY COUNTRY. BY THE AUTHOR OF "EARLY RECOLLECTIONS," "A VISIT TO MY BIRTH PLACE," "THE ABBEY OF INNISMOYLE," &C. &C.

Dublin: William Curry, jun. and Company; Simpkin and Marshall, London; sold also by Seeley and Sons, J. Nisnet, and J. Hatchard And Son, London, 1833.

vii, 301p. 16mo.

BL N.1484; EN3 1833: 14.

* Bunbury's allegiance to Moral-Domestic fiction testifies to the experimentation of the genre in the 1820s and beyond; her works always involve thematic mixture. In the present text, the didactic aim of inculcating correct morality exists alongside a concern with differences in national character.

83.

[CATHCART, Miss].

ADELAIDE; A STORY OF MODERN LIFE. IN THREE VOLUMES..

London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green & Longman, Paternoster-Row; Richard Nichols, Wakefield, 1833.

I iv, 312p; II 266p; III 279p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47014-4; EN3 1833: 16.

* Adelaide implies a condemnation of women's wit and intellect, and in this way goes against the liberal, progressive stance adopted by many Moral-Domestic fictions, such as Lester's Woman of Genius (1821). Julia is a clever, witty, and playful woman (although not the novel's heroine) who suffers a brain disorder.

84.

GRIMSTONE, [Mary] Leman.

CHARACTER; OR, JEW AND GENTILE: A TALE. BY MRS. LEMAN GRIMSTONE, AUTHOR OF "WOMAN'S LOVE," &C. &C. IN TWO VOLUMES.

London: Charles Fox, 67, Paternoster-Row, 1833.

I iv, 261p; II 256p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47769-7; EN3 1833: 30.

* Grimstone's preface substantiates the idea that the female writer had an increasingly confident voice in the 1830s. Grimstone states that her aim is to 'invite thinking rather than to give my own thought – to invite that train of thinking that will make us more liberal' (p. iii).

85.

STICKNEY, Sarah.

PICTURES OF PRIVATE LIFE. BY SARAH STICKNEY.

London: Smith, Elder, and Co., Cornhill, 1833.

xiip. 348p. 12mo.

BL N.1481; EN3 1833: 72.

* It is interesting that the pious Stickney produced this grave work, which recalls the earliest Moral-Domestic texts, at the end of the genre's life. The writer's opening 'Apology for Fiction' (pp. [v]-xii) constructs her as 'a member of a religious society' whose writing 'keeps steadily in view the development of moral truth' (p. vi).

86.

[THOMSON, Katherine].

CONSTANCE. A NOVEL. IN THREE VOLUMES.

London: Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street. (Successor to H. Colburn.), 1833.

I iv, 338p; II 348p; III 330p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47321-7; EN3 1833: 7.

* Constance is a fairly straightforward and entertaining contribution to the late Moral-Domestic genre. The orphaned Miss Seagraves go to live with their aunt and uncle, who turn out to be an amusing, if disgruntled, pair.

1834

87.

GRIMSTONE, [Mary] Leman.

CLEONE, A TALE OF MARRIED LIFE. BY MRS. LEMAN GRIMSTONE, AUTHOR OF "WOMAN'S LOVE," "CHARACTER," &C..

London: Effingham Wilson, Royal Exchange, 1834.

I viii, 368p; II 342p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-47773-5; EN3 1834: 31.

* Cleone's bold preface laments women's lack of power; the writer longs for the time when 'woman might, as she ought, speak and act as a free agent' (p. v). In similarity with many late Moral-Domestic texts, Cleone reveals the fracturing, the breakdown even, of the genre, owing to its thematic diversity.

88.

HOFLAND, [Barbara].

THE CAPTIVES IN INDIA, A TALE; AND A WIDOW AND A WILL. BY MRS. HOFLAND. IN THREE VOLUMES.

London: Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street. (Successor to Henry Colburn.), 1834.

I 327p; II 320p; III 338p. 12mo.

Corvey: CME 3-628-27676-3; EN3 1834: 37.

* The Captives epitomises the expansion that occurred in the Moral-Domestic genre in the 1830s, in which it moved away from the mainstream, and gradually entered territory that removed it from its origins. Hofland dealt more with non-British culture in this text, for example, than she had done before.

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