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ÚSTAV ANGLOFONNÍCH LITERATUR A KULTUR

**“Historical Romance” or a “Tale of Virtue and of Pity”? *Thaddeus of Warsaw* as a “New Species of Writing”**

DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCE

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## **Abstrakt v češtině**

Cílem této diplomové práce je interpretace a kategorizace málo známého románu *Thaddeus of Warsaw* skotské autorky Jane Porter. Román se vyznačuje použitím mnoha žánrových konvencí, mezi nejvýznamnější z nichž můžeme zařadit konzervativní román nebo národní příběh, historický román a sentimentální román. Centrální román je postupně interpretován skrze optiku těchto tří žánrů a dále porovnán s dalšími relevantními romány z tohoto období, *Self-Control* od Mary Brunton, *The Old English Baron* od Clary Reeve a *The Wild Irish Girl* od Lady Morgan. Cílem tohoto srovnání je kontextualizace románu Jane Porter a pozorování podobností nebo rozdílů ve zpracování určitých témat či motivů. Nejdůležitějšími motivy je životní zkouška, ve které vyjde najevo charakter hrdiny, kontinuita, univerzálnost až jakási parabolická povaha historie, důraz na ctnosti a použití sentimentálních konvencí pro zobrazování pocitů postav. Této analýze předchází interpretace dvou autorčiných předmluv, z nichž novější (1831) tvrdí, že román, k němuž je připojena, je historický román vydaný ještě před tím, než se objevilo *Waverley* Sira Waltera Scotta, který je běžně pokládán za zakladatele tohoto žánru. Starší předmluva vydaná současně s románem v roce 1803 naopak zařazuje Porter mezi autory konzervativních románů namířených proti myšlenkám francouzské revoluce. Tento nesoulad mezi oběma předmluvami navzájem a navíc mezi textem románu, byl impulsem pro analýzu obsaženou v této práci.

## **Abstract in English**

The aim of this thesis is to interpret and categorize the lesser known novel *Thaddeus of Warsaw* by the Scottish author Jane Porter. The novel is characterised by the use of several genre conventions – most importantly those commonly found in the conservative anti-jacobin novel or national tale, historical novel and novel of sensibility. Porter’s novel is interpreted from all three perspectives and also compared to other relevant novels from roughly the same period: *Self-Control* by Mary Brunton, *The Old English Baron* by Clara Reeve and *The Wild Irish Girl* by Lady Morgan. The comparison aims at the contextualization of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* and the observation of similarities and differences in the approach to certain themes or motives. The most important motives is that of a trial that shows the character of the protagonist in action, continuity, universality and even a certain parabolic nature of history, an emphasis on virtue and the use of sentimental conventions to portray the emotions of characters. This analysis is preceded by an interpretation of two authorial prefaces. The new one (from 1831) claims that the work it comments on is a historical novel published even before Sir Walter Scott’s *Waverley*, usually considered the first historical novel. The older preface published alongside the novel in 1803 however characterizes Porter as a conservative, anti-jacobin author. This discrepancy between both prefaces and the main text of the novel formed an impulse for the analysis in the thesis.

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## Introduction

*Thaddeus of Warsaw* presents a challenge as far as its placement into genre is concerned. The novel has not only been excluded from the canon of historical novels and Scottish romanticism, it also consists of two almost mutually exclusive parts. The first ten chapters are concerned with history, war and politics (traditionally male domains), while the rest of the novel is played out in an entirely domestic and (it might even be said) women-dominated setting. The body of the novel itself is not the only place where such divisions occur. These divisions are caused and informed by the author's assertions in the prefaces which will either agree or disagree our reading of the main text. Before we dive into the task of analyzing the more challenging of Jane Porter's two most often discussed novels, *Thaddeus of Warsaw* (the other, less equivocal and confusing one is *The Scottish Chiefs*) let us pause on its threshold. This threshold is formed by something that Gerard Genette calls a paratext:

More than a boundary or a sealed border, the paratext is, rather, a *threshold*, or - a word Borges used apropos of a preface - a 'vestibule' that offers the world at large the possibility of either stepping inside or turning back. It is an 'undefined zone' between the inside and the outside [...].<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of these paragraphs is to briefly define the technical parameters of the prefaces with which we will be concerned in this chapter.

A preface (one of the many kinds of paratext; one that we are most interested in) is one way in which the author presents the main text in a book. Genette further distinguishes between a peritext and an epitext which are both hyponyms of paratext and together form it. Peritext is directly annexed to the main text and forms one volume with it, whereas epitext is in other words the context produced by the media around the book (interviews, letters, diaries).

Genette locates the paratexts also temporally: there are those that appear simultaneously with the text – these are original paratexts and there are also such that appear later – he calls these

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<sup>1</sup> Gerard Genette, *Paratexts, Thresholds of Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1-2.

delayed. The senders of the prefaces are either the author or someone else – in the first case we call a preface authorial and in the second case allographic. At the other end of the communication scheme is the addressee of the preface, which, unlike with many other paratextual elements (title and name of the author are theoretically addressed to everyone in the world) are addressed specifically to the “readers of the text”<sup>2</sup> and even then, not all of these supposed readers actually do read the preface.

We have spoken theoretically about the paratexts, now let us identify the kinds of prefaces in *Thaddeus of Warsaw*. In the edition that is being used in this thesis there are three prefaces, whose date of publication ranges from 1803 to 1844. However, we will only focus on the two longest and most relevant ones, “Preface to the First Edition” from 1803 (for clarity’s sake referred to as the old preface) and “The Author, to Her Friendly Readers” from 1831 (referred to as the new preface). What we will consistently call the old preface here is the original one in Genette’s terminology; and the new preface is delayed. They are however both authorial, written by Jane Porter herself. In the old preface, Porter situates her “new species of writing”<sup>3</sup> (this should instead be enclosed in at least double quotation marks because this is how Samuel Richardson refers to his *Clarissa*) in one line with the moralistic didactician<sup>4</sup>. After 28 years, Porter has written a new preface for the republication of the novel within “The Standard Novel” series. In this preface she is trying to mould the almost thirty year old work into a slightly newer and in the meantime established form of historical novel according to the example of Sir Walter Scott. It will be decided on the following pages, whether she has succeeded in this rebranding.

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<sup>2</sup> Genette, 9.

<sup>3</sup> Porter, i, New Preface. The number refers to the appendix that contains both prefaces in full. The new preface is taken from the following edition of the novel: Jane Porter, *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, (London: H. Colburn and R. Bentley, 1831), Web, HathiTrust, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc2.ark:/13960/t7gq74c7x>.

<sup>4</sup> Perhaps this reference to Richardson is connected to the fact that the novel as a hybrid genre was at that time under frequent suspicion of being immoral and Richardson’s work was seen amongst the most respected and respectable exemplars.

We might even now create three very broad categories of the evaluation of the novel as it developed through the 214 years of its literary life. The first category identifies the novel according to the old preface as belonging to the genre of a conservative, pious, didactic anti-jacobin novel with a very prominent focus on history in the first volume. In the new preface Jane Porter tries to fit *Thaddeus of Warsaw* into the mould of Sir Walter Scott's historical novels, furnishing it with notes and longer prefaces according to his example. The third category created by the contemporary approaches and the endeavours of many literary critics who are trying to include Jane Porter's oeuvre back into a canon<sup>5</sup> considers the novel from the previously mentioned points of view and adds other generic labels for consideration. Beside the sentimental procedures and themes that can be discovered behind the portrayal of the characters' inner life, the historical novel, the national tale and the anti-jacobin novel are all labels that can serve as useful tools for analysis of this novel in a period of transition. The genre labelling is in itself a challenging undertaking, because in Porter's time, words like "novel" and "romance" had different meanings and connotations from the meanings with which we fill these labels when we use them today. In each of the three chapters dealing with the main text of the novel, we will propose a reading of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* in light of the given genre and compare it with other relevant novels. *Thaddeus* as an anti-jacobin novel or a national tale will be compared with Mary Brunton's *Self-Control* in Chapter 2. As a historical novel, it will be compared to *The Old English Baron* by Clara Reeve in Chapter 3 and as a novel using the conventions and techniques of the novel of sensibility with *The Wild Irish Girl* in Chapter 4. Let us now proceed to the introductory mapping of the three generic poles.

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<sup>5</sup> There are many different canons, into some of which it would be easier to include *Thaddeus of Warsaw*. Some might prove less amenable.

## Chapter 1

### The anti-jacobin novel and the national tale

The end of the eighteenth century was a turbulent time in the history of the novel. Paradigms were shifting, old forms and morals were being broken and new life was being breathed into what some felt was a waning form.<sup>6</sup> In her classical study *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas* Marilyn Butler has helped to form and analyse the politically oriented labels with which we may categorize the novel in the period between 1770 – 1800 that J. M. S. Tompkins characterizes in the following words: “Between the work of the four great novelists of the mid-eighteenth century and that of Jane Austen and Scott there are no names which posterity has consented to call great.”<sup>7</sup> Precisely into this period we may situate the birth of *Thaddeus of Warsaw*. If we take stock of Butler’s arguments we may say that she urges a political reading of a Jane Austen’s novels however little precedent there might be for it and however well-hidden the political implications are in the novels: “The novel of Jane Austen’s day [...] was also seen as relevant to contemporary issues, and since these issues were unusually deep and clear-cut, inevitably partisan. Indeed, at the period when Jane Austen began to write, literature as a whole was partisan.”<sup>8</sup> Based on her mapping of the period between the beginning of the century and the publication of Austen’s novels we may conclude that the text of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* coincides with what she terms the anti-jacobin novel. It is therefore possible to say with Andrew Monnickendam, who has also analysed this issue, that both the novels of Jane Austen and of Jane Porter “belong decisively to one class of partisan novels, the conservative.”<sup>9</sup> The conservative characteristic of anti-jacobin novels coincides

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<sup>6</sup> This is an argument with which J. M. S. Tompkins opens her study of the popular novel between 1770 and 1800. *The Popular Novel in England 1770-1800*.

<sup>7</sup> J. M. S. Tompkins, *The Popular Novel in England 1770-1800*, (London: Methuen and Co Ltd, 1932), 7.

<sup>8</sup> Marilyn Butler, *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 3.

<sup>9</sup> Butler, 3.

with *Thaddeus of Warsaw*'s emphasis on virtue (more on this later in the analysis of the text of Porter's prefaces):

Two of her (Austen's) first completed novels, *Sense and Sensibility* and *Northanger Abbey* (both of them in draft by 1798)<sup>10</sup>, display broadly the typical attitudes of the feminine type of conservative novel. [...] The key virtues are prudence and concern for the evidence; the vices are romanticism, self-indulgence, conceit, and [...] other subtle variations upon the broad anti-jacobin target of individualism.

Here we touch upon another similarity between the anti-jacobin novel and another genre distinction which is also potentially applicable to *Thaddeus of Warsaw*. In his contribution to the *Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Romanticism*, Monnickendam identifies the five authors writing in a genre typical for Scottish romanticism, the national tale. One of those authors is also Jane Porter, a representative "of what is often referred to as conservative romanticism."<sup>11</sup> He also helpfully addresses the question of historical and contemporary meaning of generic labels (that has already been raised once) when he thinks about their connotations:

The term tale is equally tendentious. Scott's 1829 'General Preface' uses tale and novel as interchangeable terms, so we must accept that the tale's fantastic side does not diminish its social or political message. The novel's questionable status as a work of art is based on the widespread eighteenth-century suspicion that it might inflame its reader's imagination or blur the boundary between fact and fiction: one way of rectifying this situation is to write fiction with such a strong didactic function that these dangers never occur.<sup>12</sup>

In the last article of his description of the national tale we see Monnickendam falling into one line with Butler's description of the conservative anti-jacobin novel. The difference between their conclusions (and the respective generic labels allocated to the analysed novels) lies perhaps in the fact that the authors analysed by Butler in her chapter *The Anti-Jacobins* and

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<sup>10</sup> *Thaddeus of Warsaw* might have been written also around this time. It was published in 1803 by the then 27 year old Porter, after she has been persuaded to do so by her family members (see new preface, p. 1).

<sup>11</sup> Andrew Monnickendam, *Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Romanticism*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011) 100, ProQuest ebrary, Web, 22 April 2017.

<sup>12</sup> Monnickendam, 100

by Monnickendam only share one subset, namely Elizabeth Hamilton. Because of the fact that Monnickendam focuses exclusively on Scottish authors, the emphasis on the national and romantic strands of their works is with him greater than with Butler who focuses on the political aspects.

### **The historical novel**

The genres of national tale and anti-jacobin novel are therefore those that are evoked by a reference to the old preface of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* which will be later analysed at length. If we however turn to the new preface we have to account for a new label, the historical novel. The discussion of the historical novel as a genre is complicated by the blurriness of its definition and the near impossibility of a precise classification. Which books should we designate as historical novels and which ones not? Many accounts of the development of the historical novel take Sir Walter Scott's novels as either their starting point or their defining moment as claimed by Georg Lukács in his influential *The Historical Novel*. However, there have been many works of fiction with historical topics, beginning with Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*, continuing with Sophia Lee's *The Recess* and ending with Clara Reeve's *The Old English Baron*. All these works pay attention to the matters of history and combine it with other themes and preoccupations, such as slavery, sensibility and the gothic. The hypothesis on the development of the historical novel as employed here is therefore not going to make use of the theory of Lukács, neither so much of that of Jerome de Groot (even though his account of the genre in *The Historical Novel* is certainly more nuanced in general, however not so much in the period discussed here). The approaches of Fiona Price and Thomas McLean seem to me more useful. The first pays attention to other forms of history writing than those which present history in accordance with Lukács and Scott as "history as

progress”<sup>13</sup> and the second pays much attention to the place Porter might take in the canon of the historical novel and seriously analyses her claims at being the first who wrote a historical novel.

We may allow some little space to both briefly introduced strands of understanding historical fiction to sound their own notes here. If Porter fits anywhere in the account of the development of the historical novel as presented by De Groot (he does not in fact mention her) she might be subsumed under the gendered genre of historical romance. As such her work would be deemed less valuable in the vision of the literary criticism of Scott’s time as presented by De Groot: “Scott is generally credited with ‘making respectable the denigrated feminized genre of romance by infusing it with the masculine, empirical essence of real history.’”<sup>14</sup> It must be however noted, that De Groot also pays attention to both the problematic nature of the historical generic labels as well as to the slippery and ambiguous form of historical novel as written by Scott:

Nield also demonstrates neatly how throughout the nineteenth century what we might call the Historical Novel was often, problematically and pejoratively, referred to as “Historical Romance”. This type of fiction was generically flexible and intransigent; in subject matter not worthy of the rationalist and civilizing idea associated with the high realist novel.<sup>15</sup>

Price addresses precisely the issue of gendering of certain genres which are then judged less valuable: “If the boundaries between history and fiction were policed in gendered terms (it) led to women writers’ work being considered insufficiently historical”<sup>16</sup> and to being “criticized for failing to reproduce Scott’s sense of the past.”<sup>17</sup> In her effort to reclaim Porter and other female historical novelists, Price continues with the following statement:

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<sup>13</sup> Fiona Price, “A Great Deal of History: Romantic Women Writers and Historical Fiction“, *Women's Writing*, 19:3, 262, Ebscohost, 1 Nov 2016, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09699082.2012.666413>.

<sup>14</sup> Jerome de Groot, *The Historical Novel* (London: Routledge, 2009) 20.

<sup>15</sup> De Groot, 6.

<sup>16</sup> Price, (2012) 262.

<sup>17</sup> Price, (2012) 262.

“This has in turn arguably led to the undervaluing of other, earlier forms of historical fiction, forms which differ from the Waverley novels in offering a range of perspectives on the operation, meaning and interpretation of history.”<sup>18</sup> In “Resisting the Spirit of Innovation”, an article on Porter’s other relatively well known novel, *The Scottish Chiefs*, Price throws the differences between Porter’s and Scott’s understanding of history into relief by mentioning “an appropriate narrative that brings ‘past into relationship with the present’ (and) involves stressing community.” A little further on, she specifies this relationship as one where “Christian notions of heroism [...] construct a tradition of continuous heroism and self-sacrifice.”<sup>19</sup> In the same article she also usefully connects Porter’s work to the generic labels of conservative anti-jacobin novels or national tales previously discussed here: “For Porter, this readjustment of the national role of history formed the reply to post-French Revolutionary radicalism.”<sup>20</sup> We will further qualify this assertion in the analysis of the new preface.

### **The cult of sensibility and the sentimental novel**

Another generic label it is necessary to address that was very influential in Butler’s vision of the period just before the end of the eighteenth century is the novel of sensibility. The sensibility or sentiment in *Thaddeus of Warsaw* does not have the meanings and connotations that it has in works that would be considered early representatives of the novel of sensibility (*Vicar of Wakefield*, *Clarissa*). In these works, the function of sensibility (according to Janet Todd’s book *Sensibility: An Introduction*) was to “show people how to behave, how to express themselves in friendship and how to respond decently to life’s experiences.”<sup>21</sup> Initially, according to R. F. Brissenden’s study *Virtue in Distress*:

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<sup>18</sup> Price, (2012) 262.

<sup>19</sup> Fiona Price, “Resisting ‘the Spirit of Innovation:’” The Other Historical Novel and Jane Porter“, *Modern Language Review* 101.3 (2006), 639, Academic Search Complete, Web, 1 Nov 2016.

<sup>20</sup> Price (2011), 642.

<sup>21</sup> Janet Todd, *Sensibility, An Introduction*, (London: Methuen, 1986) 4.

the role of the feelings, especially in the formation of moral judgments, was particularly emphasised. [...] [F]eeling was necessarily the primary element in the process which led to the formation of a moral sentiment.<sup>22</sup>

The aim to which sensibility in this sense is used in the two examples (mentioned above) of such novels is pedagogical. They were supposed to teach people correct models of emotional response. From the literary-historical point of view it seems that sensibility has been problematized by excesses and hints of connection to sexuality already in 1768 in *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy* by Laurence Sterne. Todd perceives the publication as a turning point: “Before Sterne [...] sentimental [...] suggested richness in moral reflection; after his use, it tended more often to apply to sensibility and its emotional and physical manifestations.”<sup>23</sup>

After this brief excursion into the history of the novel sensibility and sentiment we can return to Butler’s vision of the period in question as it is manifested in *Thaddeus of Warsaw*. Focusing on Austen and recapitulating the political aspects of sentimentalism relevant to her mapping of the terrain, Butler sees the sentimentalism as a radical political inheritance: “the sentimentalists came to be read as moral relativists who threatened to undermine established religion and society.”<sup>24</sup> This is therefore what the era of sensibility and sentiment passed on from the political point of view. Authors of subsequent generations processing this mental legacy were “in the most literal sense [...] reactionary.”<sup>25</sup> Among these reactionary authors we may class Porter, Austen and other novelists identified in Monnickendam’s article (Mary Brunton, Susan Ferrier, Elizabeth Hamilton and Christian Isobel Johnstone).

However, the reflection on and reference to sensibility and sentimentalism (in the sense of a fashionable trend) is not as absent from *Thaddeus of Warsaw* as might seem on the

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<sup>22</sup> R. F. Brissenden, *Virtue in Distress*, (London: Macmillan, 1974), 24.

<sup>23</sup> Todd (1986), 9.

<sup>24</sup> Butler, 8.

<sup>25</sup> Butler, 8.

basis of the previous paragraph. Butler admits that the cult of sensibility had yet another function and traces its further literary influences in the novels written in the wake of its rise and subsequent fall: “With few really good novels to its credit, the movement known as sentimentalism is nevertheless fascinating for the contribution it makes towards the representation of the inner life, and its active engagement of the reader’s imaginative sympathy.”<sup>26</sup> I am mentioning the novel of sensibility as one of the generic labels available for the description of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* because what the cult of sensibility has taught novelists, was to pay attention to the emotional and inner life of the characters. The portrayal of the characters’ inner life in *Thaddeus of Warsaw* is of course less nuanced and protracted than that of Richardson’s *Clarissa*, but it retains the same purity of moral reflection. Thaddeus Sobieski himself is certainly very much a Richardsonian type of a sentimental hero for whom sentiment leads to moral reflection and right action. He is comparable to *Sir Charles Grandison* as Todd reads him<sup>27</sup>, because Richardson’s aim, as well as Porter’s was to instil and teach morality supported also by the adherence to Christian principles. This brings us full circle back to Porter’s quotation of Richardson with which we began this mapping of the generic labels. By means of declaring *Thaddeus of Warsaw* “a new species of writing” Porter signals her adherence to the moralistic, didactic principles of Richardson’s also when portraying the emotions of her characters.

## **Analysis of the prefaces**

### **The new preface (1831)**

After we have established the generic poles between which this novel can be situated we can go on to analyse the text of the prefaces themselves. The first theme that must be discussed are the various names which Porter herself gives to her text, such as “historical

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<sup>26</sup> Butler, 7.

<sup>27</sup> Todd (1986), 75.

romance”<sup>28</sup>, “biographical legend”<sup>29</sup>, “tale of virtue and of pity”<sup>30</sup> which are inevitably different from (and yet may aim at the same meanings as) those that I have given to the generic poles. The problem of the difference between “historical romance” and a historical novel has already been discussed with reference to De Groot. “Biographical legend” is Porter’s reference to the new class of novel “uniting the personages and facts of real history or biography with a combining and illustrative machinery of the imagination,”<sup>31</sup> as she says in the new preface. This tallies with de Groot’s “good working definition of the historical novel,”<sup>32</sup> one where “authentic characters” are incorporated “within a factual-led framework”<sup>33</sup> which results in “stories about them which will communicate as much as is necessary of the past.”<sup>34</sup> De Groot also adds that “It certainly is what many theorists have argued Scott was doing, in so far as his analysis of recognizable human character within a specific set of circumstances is what supposedly makes him innovative.”<sup>35</sup> We can however see that in the new preface (written in 1831), Porter is claiming to be doing the same thing. Finally, I take the last of Porter’s labels, “tale of virtue and pity” as a representative of both the anti-jacobin novel and the national tale, the word virtue referring to the conservative values promoted in the didactic national tales as defined by Monnickendam. The word pity has connotations with an until now not yet discussed take on the national tale as defined in the book *The Romantic National Tale and the Question of Ireland* by Ina Ferris, who contemplates the pragmatics of sympathy (this is where I see the connection with pity) and the colonial context (in relation to Ireland.) These are therefore the terms with which Porter characterizes her work in the new preface and their relation to the generic labels.

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<sup>28</sup> Porter, iv, NP.

<sup>29</sup> Porter, iv, NP

<sup>30</sup> Porter, i NP.

<sup>31</sup> Porter, i, NP.

<sup>32</sup> De Groot, 19.

<sup>33</sup> De Groot, 19.

<sup>34</sup> De Groot, 19.

<sup>35</sup> De Groot, 19.

We have already lightly touched upon the daring and to many also a surprising claim at taking precedence before Scott in the genre of a historical novel. Porter claims firmly, that he did her “the honor to adopt the style or class of novel of which “*Thaddeus of Warsaw*” was the first.”<sup>36</sup> She has an ally in McLean who takes up her cause in his article “Nobody’s Argument: Jane Porter and the Historical Novel” and investigates the reasons why we might want to take her claims seriously. The emergence of Scott’s historical novels which became a great success not only on the British but also on the European literary scene accounts for the sudden change in Porter’s evaluation of her own work. McLean paints the following picture of the literary fame of the Porter sisters in the first half of their literary career:

The Porters had been among the most successful novelists of the first two decades of the nineteenth century. They published regularly, and their works regularly reached third or fourth editions. But in the 1820s their star seemed on the wane; the novels were less frequent, and financial security eluded them.<sup>37</sup>

Their contribution to the development of the novel genre has been overshadowed by the Great Unknown and it is not surprising that we can see Jane trying to defend her own position in the turbulent waters of literary history. This explains why she would be deeply ironic in singing praises of Sir Walter in the new preface: “Indeed the social taste of the times has lately fully shown how advantageous the like conversational disclosures have proved to the recent republications of the celebrated ‘Waverley Novels’.”<sup>38</sup> If we feel that it is an issue of money being raised here by the mention of the republications, which must have been financially very advantageous to Scott, it is a correct assumption, confirmed also by the following: “(I am) feeling, indeed, particularly pleased to adopt, in my turn, a successful example from the once Great Unknown”<sup>39</sup> McLean persuades us of the mutual borrowing of

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<sup>36</sup> Porter, xi.

<sup>37</sup> Thomas McLean, “Nobody’s Argument: Jane Porter and the Historical Novel”, *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 2007, 7:2, (Indiana University Press), 91, Web, Ebscohost, 8 Nov 2016, <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?authtype=shib&custid=s1240919&direct=true&db=edsjsr&AN=edsjsr.40339581&site=eds-live&scope=site&lang=cs>.

<sup>38</sup> Porter, i NP.

<sup>39</sup> Porter, i NP.

style and ideas for subject matter between Scott and Porter by quoting excerpts from the private correspondence between the Porter sisters in which Anna Maria complains about the unfairness of the (then still) anonymous author of *Quentin Durward*: “He evidently uses *our* novels as a sort of store house, from which [...] he draws unobserved whatever odd bit of furniture strikes his fancy for his own pompous edifice. [...] I quarrel with the self-interestedness of *valuing* the hints we give him, yet never owning that he does.”<sup>40</sup> We can see that Porter feels to a certain extent entitled to copy the way in which he provides his novels with new notes and more elaborate prefaces as she claims in the new preface, when he has previously borrowed ideas for the main text of the novel.

Porter also goes on to elaborate on what the words “the tale of virtue and pity” mean for her when she describes the feelings that led her to take up the pen: “(*Thaddeus of Warsaw*) was written in her earliest youth; dictated by a fervent sympathy with calamities which had scarcely ceased to exist [...] with all the simple-hearted enthusiasm which saw no impediment when a tale of virtue or of pity was to be told”<sup>41</sup> She illustrates the workings of her sympathy on the simple recollection of a few incidents that occurred to her and to the members of her family in her childhood. One of the incidents is the encounter with the Polish emigrant, that the family has come to call Il Penseroso, reported in a simple touching style of nostalgic memories of one’s childhood. This pensive ex-military is referred to by an allusion to John Milton’s poem of the same name (as they called him “when speaking of him to ourselves”<sup>42</sup> in the Porter family). This makes an artistic creation out of the particular man from Porter’s memory, he is identified by the name of an artwork and furthermore used as one of the models for another literary creation, Thaddeus Sobieski, whose story eventually is not one of obscurity and penurious death, but a good old happy ending. We can see Porter doubly

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<sup>40</sup> Anna Maria Porter, Letter to Jane Porter, 18 June 1823, Letter POR 819, Huntington Library Papers of Jane Porter. Quoted in McLean, 89.

<sup>41</sup> Porter, i, NP.

<sup>42</sup> Porter, ii, NP

distancing herself in these two steps from the actual suffering individual in St. James' Park which is a good illustration of how sympathy works in general in *Thaddeus of Warsaw* and in relation to politics.

A little bit further in the new preface, Porter also reports the encounter of her brother, Robert Kerr Porter with Tadeusz Kosciuszko, a very well-known and eminent person at that time. She claims that it is not surprising that she founded "the story of heroism" on the "actual scenes of Kosciuszko's suffering, and moulded out of his virtues."<sup>43</sup> However, Kosciuszko was too well known to figure as a hero of Porter's story and she has therefore chosen a fictional character that would reflect the lives of the eminent historical characters. Moreover this would result in her being able to tell his story "as she wished."<sup>44</sup> Just as we have seen Porter removing her creation, Thaddeus, from the particular "interesting emigrant"<sup>45</sup>, so we see her removing him from Kosciuszko, even though she mentions his life as a source of inspiration. These steps tell us that the reading of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* as a national tale is going to be complicated by these removals, detachments and ultimate ineffectiveness of the sympathy being evoked for the fate of Poland.

That is why, if we attempt to describe *Thaddeus of Warsaw* in terms of the national tale genre and focus on sympathy (or pity, as Porter calls it), the novel eludes definition. Ferris reads the national tale through the postcolonial lens and she focuses on Irish national tales, so she naturally dwells on different motives and comes to different conclusions than Monnickendam with his Scottish concerns. Just as the situation introduced in *Thaddeus of Warsaw* is difficult to grasp with regard to nationalism and national tale, so does Porter as an author elude categorization and that causes critics some uneasiness: "For all our paeans to hybridity and interstitial figures, we still prefer only Irish writers to write of Ireland, Scottish

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<sup>43</sup> Porter, iii, NP.

<sup>44</sup> Porter, iii, NP.

<sup>45</sup> Porter, ii, NP.

writers to describe Scotland,”<sup>46</sup> states McLean. He even goes so far as to say that she “fails the authenticity test” because she was “not born in Scotland or Ireland and her writing career took place in London.”<sup>47</sup> Monnickendam also mentions the problems with the description of the national identity of the five writers of national novels that he discusses: “It is worthwhile retaining the idea that the national tale and its authors are deeply involved in questions of identity, but these are often quite slippery to get a grip on.”<sup>48</sup> It is also interesting that in his contribution to *Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Romanticism* Monnickendam chooses to discuss *The Scottish Chiefs* as a representative of Scottish romantic national tale, and not *Thaddeus of Warsaw*. The question however stands: what can the novel tell us about the national matters, not only Polish, but also British?

At the same time, there are some statements in the new preface that cannot but be read politically, such as the following concern with the French revolution. This is however not the case with the main body of the novel. This discrepancy will be explained by a reference to the theory of Gerard Genette. A piece of historical context to keep in mind is that *Thaddeus of Warsaw* was written after the shock of the French revolution and when the Revolutionary wars expanded the legacy of the revolution into the whole of Europe. The sense of a (French) threat to the national security and perhaps even the British way of life has raised a wave of British patriotism that might almost be termed hysterical. The contemporary political situation at the time of writing the novel is hinted at in a rather cryptic passage, to be found, interestingly, in the new preface:

It was finished amid a circle of friends well calculated to fan the flame which had inspired its commencement, some of the leading heroes of the British army just returned from the victorious fields of Alexandria and St. Jean d'Acre; and, seated in my brother's little study, with the war-dyed coat in which the veteran Abercrombie breathed his last grateful sigh, while, like Wolfe, he gazed on the boasted invincible standard of the enemy, brought to him by a British soldier,—with this trophy of our own native valor on one side of me, and on the other the bullet-torn vest of another

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<sup>46</sup> McLean, 94.

<sup>47</sup> McLean, 94.

<sup>48</sup> Monnickendam, 101.

English commander of as many battles,—but who, having survived to enjoy his fame, I do not name here,—I put my last stroke to the first campaigns of Thaddeus Sobieski.”<sup>49</sup>

The fact that the events of the siege of Acre and battle of Alexandria are mentioned in the new, but not at all in the old preface, is to be accounted for by the flow of time. Only that has revealed the historical significance of these events which became more conspicuous after almost 30 years have passed. It is very interesting that in 1831 Porter deems it important to paint the scene of herself writing the pages of this novel in a circle of friends into which, presumably, she counts also Sir Sidney Smith to whom *Thaddeus* was later dedicated. The fact that Porter was trying to gain the favour of Sir Smith, as Graeme Morton suggests, explains why she had chosen these two particular battles from the whole of Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars.<sup>50</sup> The mentions of the “war-dyed coat” of General Abercromby and “the bullet-torn vest of another English commander” seem to be rather bizarre and overly exalted details but are supposed to suggest that the reason why she wrote about the heroic struggle of the Poles for their national liberty was inspired and influenced by the models of domestic bravery shown in the Revolutionary wars. This is very suggestive of the ideal role of Great Britain that Porter thinks her country should play in the European political sphere and also very helpful in explaining some of Thaddeus’ notions about the British character appearing in the story itself which would otherwise seem unfounded and undeserved. At the beginning of the story, Thaddeus actually subscribes to the thought current in Europe prior to the French revolution according to which England was the only European land where some degree of liberty and political representation of the people and rights of citizens was granted, which was seen as an exception among other European states with absolutist, almost tyrannical rulers. The extent to which this really was a sentiment universally expressed or valid outside of

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<sup>49</sup> Porter, iii, NP.

<sup>50</sup> Graeme Morton, “The Social Memory of Jane Porter”, *Scottish Historical Review* (91:2, 2012), 317, Web, 4 April 2017, <http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=1eca1205-afdb-464a-a69d-5a40c4dd7bf5%40sessionmgr103&vid=3&hid=121>.

Britain is unclear. Porter is here certainly indebted to the eighteenth century notions of Britain as the land of liberty, expressed among other genres in the nature poetry of the late eighteenth century.<sup>51</sup> This might be the only point where Thaddeus' beliefs (in general informed by idealism and benevolent opinion of mankind's goodness) are shown as naïve and are subsequently proven wrong during his stay in England.

### **The old preface (1803)**

Where the new preface consisted of various themes and topics that Porter addresses, there the old preface is conspicuously focused and limited to one theme and that could be concisely expressed in one word: principles. We read the word for the first time in the second sentence of the preface: "Therefore, before the reader favors the tale itself with his attention, I beg leave to offer him a little account of the *principles* [italics mine] that actuated its composition [...]"<sup>52</sup> The fact that the word appears in such a prominent place in the preface tells us something about the importance that young Porter, a debuting author, probably accorded to it. To account for the principles behind the writing of the novel is the reason why she writes this preface. The great emphasis Porter lays on the theme of principles is something that would undoubtedly class her with Monnickendam's conservative, didactic national-tale authors, had she not written the new preface that complicates the picture. *Thaddeus of Warsaw* is confirmed as a didactic project in the following quotation, where Porter (in accordance with Butler who takes Mrs. West as her example) suggests that it is difficult for the young and the impressionable to form "judgements of others"<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Such as some parts from *The Seasons* by James Thomson or *Windsor Forest* by Alexander Pope.

<sup>52</sup> Porter, i, Old Preface. The number refers to the appendix that contains both prefaces in full. The old preface is taken from the following edition of the novel: Jane Porter, *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, Gutenberg, Web, <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/6566/pg6566-images.html>.

<sup>53</sup> Butler, 101. See the similarity between „the mistakes [...] my young contemporaries make [...] in their estimates of human character“ and Butler's claim that: „Like other conservative moralists Mrs. West denigrates the individual's reliance on himself. She shows for example how dangerous it is to trust private intuition or passion in forming judgements of others.“

(T)hat the mistakes which many of my young contemporaries of both sexes continually make in their estimates of human character, and of the purposes of human life, require a line of difference between certain splendid vices and some of the brilliant order of virtues to be distinctly drawn before them. [...] I wished to portray characters whose high endowments could not be misled into proud ambitions, nor the gift of dazzling social graces betray into the selfish triumphs of worldly vanity,- characters that prosperity could not depress, from pious trust and honorable action. The pure fires of such a spirit declare their sacred origin. [...] The eye fixed on it is what divine truth declares it to be ‘single!’<sup>54</sup>

We may determine the sort of Porter’s didacticism even closer in the passage quoted above when we consider the loaded terms “sacred origin” and “divine truth.” It is clear that the virtues, “honorable action” and the spirit of the characters that she talks about are only made possible by and are defined by the tenets of Christian religion. Further on, Porter compares the Christian heroes of her novel with the “pagan men, worshippers of false gods”<sup>55</sup> Alexander of Macedon and Julius Caesar. She suggests that the trials through which both her heroes and these once virtuous men had to go through were not dissimilar, but that the heroes of “‘a better revelation’ pass through it ‘pure and undefiled’”<sup>56</sup> This seems to suggest that the fortitude and virtuous behaviour evinced by Thaddeus throughout the larger part of the novel are directly due to his being a committed Christian. The whole text places much more emphasis on the extent to which Christian doctrine rather than his feelings is the prevailing principle governing Thaddeus’ action. For a conservative novelist according to Butler, it is irresponsible and dangerous (with serious political consequences) to rely on the feelings produced by “the unconscious mind.”<sup>57</sup> Opinions formed on the characters of others must always be confirmed by the “objective Christian morality.”<sup>58</sup> Also the role of Biblical text as an authoritative guidance for all situations in life is very prominent throughout the novel.

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<sup>54</sup> Porter, i, OP.

<sup>55</sup> Porter, i, OP.

<sup>56</sup> Porter, i-ii, OP.

<sup>57</sup> Butler, 103

<sup>58</sup> Butler, 103.

This emphasis on the Christian doctrine in the new preface confirms the placement of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* in the category of the anti-jacobin novels. Butler agrees: “In very general terms the conservatives [...] were in favour of [...] the Christian religion.”<sup>59</sup> After the universal and abstract reflection on virtues and vices, Porter begins to consider also the political situation of her time: “[...] perhaps, at no period of the world more than the present were these divers principles in greater necessity to be considered, and, according to the just conclusion, be obeyed.”<sup>60</sup> Why now more than ever? “On all sides of us we see public and private society broken up, as it were by an earthquake.”<sup>61</sup> Porter is speaking of the horror of the French revolution and the shock that the notions of man’s innate goodness have received “in the [...] terrible regicidal revolution of France”<sup>62</sup>, where “the noblest and the meanest passions”<sup>63</sup> were so mixed up in “the human bosom”<sup>64</sup> that it was impossible to distinguish them. However, both Butler (in regard to conservative novelists) and Porter (as one of them) agree on the appropriate way to test the passions and impressions produced by other characters; objectivity is important and its sounding board is the Bible:<sup>65</sup> “We have, however, one veritable touchstone, that of the truest observation, ‘ye shall know a tree by its fruits.’”<sup>66</sup>

Porter’s main goal according to the old preface is to “show (her) hero amidst scenes and circumstances ready to exercise his brave and generous propensities, and to put their personal issues to the test on his mind.”<sup>67</sup> In order to show a virtuous hero who is tested and tried, she could have set him amidst the scenes of French revolution, but Porter decided otherwise: “I shrunk from that as a tale of horror, the work of demons in the shapes of men.” She refuses to even portray the French Revolution because in her eyes it denies any kind of

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<sup>59</sup> Butler, 95.

<sup>60</sup> Porter, i, OP.

<sup>61</sup> Porter, i, OP.

<sup>62</sup> Porter, ii, OP.

<sup>63</sup> Porter, i, OP.

<sup>64</sup> Porter, i, OP.

<sup>65</sup> Butler, 97. “[...] Maria has to lay aside her intuitive first preference for Neville in favour of sounder objective tests: by their deeds shall you know them.”

<sup>66</sup> Porter, ii, OP.

<sup>67</sup> Porter, ii, OP.

order created by both God and man. As their manifesto in the Prospectus to their journal, *The Anti-Jacobin*, (quoted by Butler) suggests, the rejection of tradition and the accumulated knowledge of centuries is in the eyes of the anti-jacobins one of the characteristics of the revolutionaries: “that wild and unshackled freedom of thought which rejects all habit, all wisdom of former times, all restraints of ancient usage.”<sup>68</sup> It is a most compelling argument of Porter’s partisanship, that she characterizes the creed of the revolutionaries in the following words:

It sprung from a tree self-corrupted, which only could produce such fruits: the demon hierarchy of the French philosophers, who had long denied the being of that pure and Almighty God, and who in the arrogance of their deified reason, and [...] published their profane and polluted creed amongst all orders of the people.<sup>69</sup>

People who can think in this way are no longer people for Porter and she will not represent their country in historical conditions created by them in her moralistic novel: “Therefore when I sought to represent the mental and moral contest of man with himself, or with his fellow-men, I did not look for their field amongst human monsters, but with a natural and civilized man.”<sup>70</sup> The third partition of Poland is a more suitable historical time for Porter’s “natural and civilized man” because here she can find characters and society “preserved in an earlier stage of historical development”<sup>71</sup> which makes them much more interesting given that they live in no ancient past, but only about ten to fifteen years before the date of publication. McLean claims further on that for Porter, however, this is a stage of history that may well be preferable to the present<sup>72</sup> because “the recent struggle in Poland seemed to afford [...] the most suitable objects for [...] moral aim, to interest by sympathy, while it taught the responsible commission of human life.”<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Butler, 94.

<sup>69</sup> Porter, ii, OP.

<sup>70</sup> Porter, ii, OP.

<sup>71</sup> McLean, 96.

<sup>72</sup> McLean, 96.

<sup>73</sup> Porter, ii, OP.

## **Reconciling claims in the prefaces with the analysis of the main body of the novel**

When proceeding further with the thesis, the reader will notice that some of the claims made in the preface are different or have different accents than the analysis of the novel itself shows. In other words what the author claims in the preface she does not deliver in the text. This has to do with the prefatorial situation of communication where Genette identifies the space of the preface and the claims and statements made within that space as strategic, serving this or that purpose of the author. The author also “presents, and sometimes, comments on his work”<sup>74</sup> and includes something that Genette calls the author’s “statements of intent”<sup>75</sup> These statements can contain various themes, among the most relevant in our case are those of genre definitions. In the preface, the author tries to ensure “a proper reading” by pointing out how to do that and what meanings to focus on: “The way to get a proper reading, is also [...] to put the (definitely assumed) reader in possession of information the author considers necessary for this proper reading.”<sup>76</sup> There are therefore reasons why we may choose to take the author’s assertions in the prefaces with a grain of salt and subsequently to differ in our interpretation of the novel; there is always some hidden agenda behind the assertions. Genette mentions that there are certain approaches that “refuse to grant the author any control over the ‘real meaning’”<sup>77</sup> but even the French poet Paul Valéry “did not claim to have no personal interpretation of his work; he refrained only from imposing his interpretation on his readers because he did not believe it had been shown to be the most accurate one.”<sup>78</sup>

However, most of nineteenth century novels begin with rather authoritative and direct prefaces which “constitute one of the instruments of authorial control.”<sup>79</sup> Porter’s preface also contains these strategic statements; consider for example the attempt at rebranding Thaddeus

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<sup>74</sup> Genette, 163.

<sup>75</sup> Genette, 221.

<sup>76</sup> Genette, 209.

<sup>77</sup> Genette, 221.

<sup>78</sup> Genette, 221.

<sup>79</sup> Genette, 221.

of Warsaw as a historical novel because it was advantageous for both reasons both of money and continued success in the publishing world. Genette comments on such tricks in the following words: it [...] consists of forcing on the reader an indigenous theory defined by the author's intention, which is presented as the most reliable interpretive key."<sup>80</sup> In our case, it is mostly the old preface where such interpretive keys can be found that have informed our reading of the novel further on (see the emphasis on principles). The new preface on the contrary contains some interpretive keys which it is possible to connect with the political situation current at the time of writing and in the limited context and space of the preface, such arguments work. As a part of her rebranding project, Porter seems to want to imbue her work with much greater political relevance than the reading of the text of the novel allows for – see the discrepancy between the models of domestic bravery paralleled by the Polish heroism that fit with the context of the revolutionary wars that raged around 1803 and the role of Sir Sidney Smith in them in the new preface. To interpret the text of the novel according to this key becomes so difficult and entangled that we have chosen for a reading which focuses on the role of history in terms of emphasis on continuity and universality. In doing so, however, we can testify to Genette's claim "that it won't be that easy to" "circumvent this inhibiting signpost", meaning the author's interpretive key hanging "over your reading, compelling you to take a position, positive or negative, in relation to it."<sup>81</sup>

Preface can furthermore also contain a closer definition of the work in terms of "institutional characterization" and literary history. Some prefaces could even be called poetic manifestos, such as Wordsworth and Coleridge's preface to *Lyrical Ballads* mentioned by Genette. And indeed, the works of the early romantic period are especially prone to such statements, because unlike classical works with more firmly fixed form, these appear in "the undefined fringes where some degree of innovation is practiced [...], when writers seek to

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<sup>80</sup> Genette, 222.

<sup>81</sup> Genette, 224.

define such deviations in relation to an earlier norm whose authority still carries weight.”<sup>82</sup> It is again in the rebranding new preface where such statements about genre occur, trying to describe and acquaint the reader with the novelty of the work’s construction, a somewhat paradoxical manoeuvre that deserves this title for the following reasons. There is no mention of the newness of the design of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* in the old preface and its innovativeness and hybrid character are again only seen retrospectively and when the circumstances of the literary market and the evolutions of the literary history make it advantageous or important to account for them. However, in 1803, Porter was apparently certain what group of authors she belonged to. This was made clear by her adherence to the values of the anti-jacobin authors.

It is fascinating, what we can glean from the comparison between the old preface and the new one in this respect (consideration of the romantic period). The almost thirty years intervening between the writing of the prefaces have deeply influenced Porter’s self-presentation as an author. Where she is content to join a pre-existing group of already established authors who deal with well-defined moral themes in the old preface, there we can see much more emphasis on the centrality of the author in the new preface. She insists on the relevance and propriety of her interpretive keys with consistence that causes anyone who wants to read her novel differently considerable effort to withstand her authority. This is especially pertinent in her newly created insistence on the illustration of the political relevance of the historical novel to the time of its publication, a staple of the historical novel that has in the meantime seen its flourishing and a repeated use of this motif in the by then very famous Scott. In this way, we can see the influence of fashion on the writing of prefaces and on the presentation of the authorial persona in them.

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<sup>82</sup> Genette, 224.

## **The plot of *Thaddeus of Warsaw***

Before we move on to the analysis of the novel according to the three generic poles, we may offer a short summary of the plot. The novel is clearly divided into two parts of unequal length both of which are dealing with very different concerns. Schematically, we could say that the first ten chapters of the novel are very similar to what literary critique at large accepts as a historical novel. The second, much longer part from is a protracted novel of the seriously moralistic national tale or anti-jacobin genre. Let us however start from the beginning. Thaddeus Sobieski is born to one of the first noble families in Poland. His mother Therese has had him by a mysterious Englishman she met in Italy and who has consequently left her before he knew he had a son and he was raised by her and his grandfather, Palatine Sobieski, the offspring of one of the former kings of Poland, John Sobieski. We meet Thaddeus on the eve of his entrance into public life; he joins the army of his grandfather in a defensive fight for the Polish freedoms, recently granted by the 3<sup>rd</sup> May Constitution. He is presented as someone promising to manifest a virtuous and patriotic character, however, it is clear that this potential will bloom into full perfection only later on through the action of the novel.

We follow the Polish army through various battles, one of the more memorable ones is the victory at Zieleme (Zielence) where Thaddeus captured an English volunteer with the Russian army. They grew closer and became friends after Pembroke Somerset saw the error of his ways and principles in a motif strikingly similar (even if the roles are reversed) to the capture of Colonel Talbot by Edward Waverley in *Waverley*. The domestic enjoyments of the Sobieski family circle (with Pembroke as their guest) are often juxtaposed with the public sphere of influence in which the men are concerned with the affairs of the state. The situation in Poland deteriorates and as the king is forced to give in to the demands of the Russians and Prussians, the patriots headed by Sobieski and later (after his imprisonment) by Thaddeus and

Kosciuszko rebel and with the rest of the army continue to fight. In this situation, Pembroke leaves Poland for England because of the unexpected command of his father to return. The situation of the Polish army is worsening and they cannot do anything but march around the country and try to prevent the attacks of the Russians on their most important cities. Because they are heavily outnumbered, they manage to free Warsaw only to find Cracow besieged and so forth. In one of the following battles, Palatine Sobiesky is killed and shortly after is funeral Thaddeus flies to the relief of his home, Villanow to save his mother who lives there. In an affecting scene, she mercifully dies of grief before the Russian soldiers take the palace, but before that she makes Thaddeus promise that he will not stay in Poland if it is completely dominated by Russia. He obeys her dying words and leaves Poland from Dantzic (Gdansk) to England.

This is where the first historical part of the novel ends. Once he arrives in London, he is immediately assailed by need and poverty (because he has not brought anything of much value from Poland) and seeks some cheap lodgings which he finds at Mrs Robson's. In order to prevent too much attention to fasten on his internationally known name, he calls himself Mr. Constantine. He becomes familiar with her family, her grandson William and granddaughter Nanny. William whom he befriended becomes sick and dies and as a consequence, Thaddeus' long battle with sickness and poverty begins. He has to pawn his personal ornaments that he brought from Poland and maintain himself by painting sketches. His attachment to the family of Mrs Robson and his sense of honour make him pay the bills for the apothecary's care and the funeral expenses for little William. His cares are aggravated by his growing certainty that Pembroke Somerset whose friendship might have been a comfort to him is proving a false friend and does not want to have anything to do with him. In the following months in London, Thaddeus will be encountering him on the street and trying

to get his letters delivered to Somerset, but it will always only result in disappointment – both in trying to contact him and in the character of his friend.

This loss of a friend seems to be shortly compensated by the discovery of another. On the streets of London, Thaddeus meets General Butzou, once a subject of his grandfather and later a distinguished preserver of the life of Stanislaw August Poniatowski, the Polish king. Butzou as well as Thaddeus have however left all this honour and renown behind in Poland and he is found begging on the street. Thaddeus takes him home and looks after him in his last days marked by sickness and senility. Apart from being a relic of Poland and as such someone who can share the miseries of exile with Thaddeus, he is also another burden, for whose medicine and ultimately also funeral he must pay. In the meantime however, he meets another person who joins the circle of his friends; it is Lady Tinemouth whom he saves from being attacked by a ruffian in Hyde Park. She then introduces him to her select and small but polite circle of females (Lady Sara Ross is one of them and despite the fact that she is married, she falls in love with Thaddeus) and ultimately procures some employment for him. That is to teach German at Lady Dundas' to her two daughters, Diana and Euphemia. Through this introduction the narrator is allowed to critically comment on the manners of the London high society and by this time, the novel is firmly established in a domestic, female-dominated setting of parlours and salons.

The London society in the Dundas' household is however presented as a mixture of arrogant fops, empty-headed sentimental dolls and impolite bluestockings. As Thaddeus comes to give lessons in German, the sentimental Euphemia falls in love with him, thus causing a jealous competition with Lady Sara Ross and a constant annoyance to Thaddeus. The only person in this household worth his attention proves to be Miss Mary Beaufort, cousin to Pembroke Somerset and her aunt Dorothy Somerset. Thaddeus first meets them in another dramatic moment; he throws a child that he has rescued from a burning house into

their lap as they pass the place of the fire in their coach. Mary immediately recognizes his virtue and high birth even though to her he is only a poor exile and treats him with dignity, thus earning his good opinion. This does not escape Euphemia and as the London part of the novel gradually draws to a close, the tension is resolved in a fight in which Euphemia asserts that Thaddeus has declared his love for her and Mary defends him from accusations that would reflect on his honour. Simultaneously, they also find out that because of the debts incurred by taking care of his now dead friend General, Thaddeus ends up in Newgate prison (partially because of the Dundases who forget to pay him for the German lessons and because he is too proud to beg.) Mary's character is shown in all its compassion and virtue by inquiring at his lodgings after him and subsequently persuading Pembroke Somerset to pay Thaddeus' debt. This he unwillingly does but does not come to see Thaddeus because he does not believe the defence of his character given by Mary and aunt Dorothy.

Because Thaddeus goes by his alias, it is not until they meet face to face in the Wolds, where Thaddeus follows his friend Lady Tinemouth (banished by her cruel and divorced husband from London) that he finally speaks with Pembroke Somerset. They explain the circumstances that prevented them from coming together until now – Pembroke is not a hard-hearted, faithless friend as has been Thaddeus' conclusion, but he has been imposed upon by his tutor Mr. Loftus who has had an interest in preventing the Somerset family (especially the father, Sir Robert Somerset) from knowing that they ever spent time in Poland. When Pembroke hears about the tragedies in Thaddeus' life, he offers him his friendship and the protection of his family again. They even discuss Mary Beaufort whom Thaddeus would marry by this time, if his poverty did not prevent him and he receives Pembroke's encouragement on that subject. Their hopeful plans are however thwarted by the obstinacy of Sir Robert who is adamant in his opposition to the idea that his son would become friends with a Pole. In the meantime, Thaddeus' most confident friend and protector, Lady

Tinemouth dies of a burst blood vessel and Thaddeus, who does not yet know of the obstacle formed by Sir Robert is temporally comforted by the idea of Pembroke's friendship.

After the heart-broken Pembroke tells him of the choice his father has put before him (either give up Thaddeus or him, which has enormous implications for the honour of Pembroke who considers himself indebted to Thaddeus for his life), Thaddeus decides to make the decision for easier for his friend and decides to leave for America. He writes one last letter to Pembroke with acknowledgements of his affection to Mary and disappears from Lady Tinemouth's house. However, he faints on the way, burdened as he is by all the accumulated misfortunes that happened to him and as he lies on the side of the road, he is fortuitously picked up by the carriage of Sir Robert who takes him into one of his mansions and takes care of him, not knowing that it is the friend of his son that he has forbidden him to see and that Thaddeus is his own son. However, when Thaddeus, on taking leave of his rescuer, of whom he also thinks is his greatest enemy, declares his name, Sir Robert has no other option but to admit that he is his father. In an extremely affecting scene, he explains why he left Thaddeus' mother and the extremely happy Thaddeus therefore finds that Pembroke is his half-brother. After successfully resolving a series of misunderstandings about the nature of the regard they have for each other caused by their excessive delicacy, Mary and Thaddeus finally come to an understanding and later marry. Thaddeus gains a part of the estate of Sir Robert and all of Mary's substantial heirloom and in this way, all the property that he lost in Poland is returned to him in England and he can return to his proper position of a benevolent landowner which was his by birth, right and virtue.

## Chapter 2

### The conservative principles and their illustration

After having analysed the prefaces and identified the genres which are seen as poles between which the novel moves and which it combines, we can now move on to the analysis of the main text of the novel that will be divided into several themes. *Thaddeus of Warsaw* will be compared with other novels from the same period in order to be placed in a relevant context. In this chapter we will analyse *Thaddeus of Warsaw* as a conservative novel according to the description given by Butler and as a national tale which is another generic term that is partially synonymous with Butler's definition as found in the readings of Scottish and Irish national tales by Monnickendam and Ferris respectively. Finally, we will also compare Porter's novel to Mary Brunton's *Self-Control* which is governed by the same principles. The most profound and interesting quotation from the novel that identifies Porter without any doubt as a conservative, Christian moralist is the following:

She [Lady Sara Ross] had no conception, or, at best, a faint one, that a breach of the marriage-vow could be an outrage on the laws of Heaven. The word Sin has been gradually banished [...] when the new philosophy, having accomplished its total outlawry, denounced it a rebel to decency and the freedom of man. [...] Guilt against Heaven fades before the decrees of man; his law of ethics reprobates crime; but crime is only a temporary transgression, in opposition to the general good; it draws no consequent punishment heavier than the anger of the offended parties. Morality neither promises rewards after death, nor denounces future chastisement for error. The disciples of this independent doctrine hold forth instances of the perfectibility of human actions, produced by the unassisted decisions of human intellect on the limits of right and wrong. They admire virtue because it is beautiful. They practice it, because it is heroic. They do not abstain from the gratification of an intemperate wish, under a belief that it is sinful; but in obedience to their reason, which rejects the commission of a vicious act, because it is uncomely. In the first case, God is their judge; in the latter, themselves. [...] How do they dwell on the principle of virtue, and turn it in every metaphysical light, until their philosophy rarifies it to nothing! Some degrade, and others abandon, the only basis on which an upright character can stand with firmness. The bulwark, which Revelation erected between the passions and the soul, is levelled first; and then that instinctive rule of right, which the modern casuist nominates the citadel of virtue, falls of course.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Porter, 239-240.

The occasion on which this oration of the narrator is delivered is the crisis in which Lady Sara Ross, a married woman deeply in love with Thaddeus, finds herself when she hears about her unloved husband's arrival back to England and contemplates quitting his roof and asking Thaddeus for protection. The narrator muses on the reasons that led to her allowing to get into this situation and hints at the fact that Lady Sara is in this case a symbol of a widespread social norm. The narrator traces the progress of how the world she is creating (temporally very close to hers) went about rejecting the objective (Christian) standard of morality and accounts for the consequences of this rejection for both the individual and the society. She contrasts two opposing philosophies or systems of thought against each other: the Christian system of morality as revealed in the Bible and the enlightenment philosophy (here called the "independent doctrine") characterized by the belief in human perfectibility and man's inherent tendency towards the right, the capacity of human reason to discern right from wrong and choose the former, on the basis of nothing more substantial than a love of virtue for its own sake and for its beauty. The word "sin" is seen as an obstacle to human freedom because it sets an absolute, immovable dividing line between what is right and wrong. In the eyes of the narrator, Christianity offers a better system for guidance of the individual's decisions in the area of ethics and morality which she deems part and parcel of the Christian doctrine arising out of the Bible and does not require further specification. That is why she talks about ethics and morality as disciplines connected with the enlightenment philosophy. Christianity on the other hand counts on concepts of the last judgement and divine justice which offers the chance of punishing the guilty more severely and longer than in their lifetime. This gives those who consider disturbing society's peace the motivation to think about the eternal consequences of their actions, because it is not just the society who will disapprove.

What Porter is presenting here in her sequel to the exclamation against “the demon hierarchy of the French philosophers”<sup>84</sup> from the old preface is what Butler sums up in the following words: “Appealing to objective Christian morality, they [the conservative writers] present the unconscious mind in the worst possible terms, as wayward, selfish and self-destructive.”<sup>85</sup> An individual consciousness presented in these terms is not a reliable guiding principle for the characters according to the authors around *The Anti-Jacobin* among whom Butler names Mrs. West, Mrs. Hamilton, Robert Bisset and others. In other words: “Scepticism about human claims to virtue, however specious, real pessimism about the validity of individual human insights, are the hallmarks of the conservative writer.”<sup>86</sup> Caution and an emphasis on external evidence when judging new acquaintance, especially in romantic matters should be the practical steps that demonstrate the characters’ scepticism and pessimism.

An illustration of this principle is to be found at the very beginning of the novel, when Therèse Sobieski is explaining the circumstances of her son’s birth to him and when she is correcting his supposition that his father is dead. She gives a very brief, but telling account of how she was raised which had a significant influence on the development of the situation she is explaining in the letter: she had not been acquainted with society until she met Mr. Sackville because she had been tending her sick mother. In her own words: “The little I had learned of society being drawn from books, and uncorrected by experience, I was taught to believe a perfection in man, which, to my affliction, I since found to be but a poet’s dream.”<sup>87</sup> This little excerpt is significant because it tallies exactly with what Butler says the anti-jacobin novelists were against: “submitting [...] to the example of books, or, worst of all,

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<sup>84</sup> Porter, OP, ii.

<sup>85</sup> Butler, 103.

<sup>86</sup> Butler, 94.

<sup>87</sup> Porter, 4.

passion.”<sup>88</sup> The story of Thaddeus’ mother may therefore be read as a warning against trusting your own intuition too much when forming judgments of others. This is a typical motif in the conservative novel written by a female author with a female lead because it concerns the most important decision a woman will make in her life – “who will [she] marry?”<sup>89</sup>

On the basis of her belief that granted the possibility of looking for perfection in man and being willing to find it at first sight, Therése makes a mistake which deprives her of her peace: “He was the first man for whose society I felt a lively preference. I used to smile at this strange delight, [...] for the emotions which agitated me were undefinable: but [...] enchanting; and unheedingly I gave them indulgence.”<sup>90</sup> What constitutes an alarming part of this narrative detail is the prominent role given to emotions as a guide for action and behaviour and not some kind of external evidence or an investigation into the circumstances of Mr. Sackville. Who are his family? What is his background? Is his identity under which he made their acquaintance real? All these are questions that a young woman should have asked herself before she allows herself to fall in love with someone. The whole story is being reported from the position of acquired wisdom because it contains such asides as: “I am thus particular in the relation of every incident, in the hope that you, my dear son, will see some excuse for my great imprudence, [...] . However, my fault went not long unpunished.”<sup>91</sup> Thaddeus’ mother has learned her lesson and as it is intended as a warning, the story narrated by her acquires even greater weight and authority than if it were retold by the narrator because she has overcome her only youthful imprudence and lived the rest of her life in virtue. She is unequivocally presented as a saint and an angel further in the novel.

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<sup>88</sup> Butler, 95.

<sup>89</sup> Butler, 107.

<sup>90</sup> Porter, 5.

<sup>91</sup> Porter, 6.

## **Lady Sara, Euphemia and Mary**

This is not the only story illustrating the conservative values, Porter takes every chance that presents itself to create sets of contrasting characters and in the description of their having met a new acquaintance (it is usually women reacting to Thaddeus) she chooses different targets for her critique. When Thaddeus meets Lady Sara Ross, the first of the three women to become romantically involved with him during the story, she evinces her particular sort of folly and reasons for censure which are different from Euphemia's. Mary Beaufort in the end forms the only praiseworthy example amongst them. Lady Sara is at fault when forming her acquaintance with Thaddeus because she is married and therefore should not try to make him fall in love with her. However, from the very first moment she sees him, she "resolved [...] to make a dead set at him"<sup>92</sup> and make him fall in love with her, merely because she was used to excite admiration anywhere she went. She is furthermore guilty of not really knowing him and forming her own picture of him that suits her ("She expected to receive from one of his cast a tenderness, a devotedness; in short, a fervent, wild, and romantic passion which would feed on her sighs and its own fires to eternity."<sup>93</sup> She creates a version of him that she likes and in this way violates his identity.

When things come to a crisis with Lady Sara and she really decides to seek him out in his home and to declare her love for him, the necessity of having an outside standard of morality proves especially important because at that moment, even the virtuous hero is tempted for a moment. "Thaddeus felt a dimness spread over his eyes. So much loveliness, such love, such disinterestedness, for a moment obliterated every other impression on his heart; but recovering himself in an instant, he tore himself from her clinging arms, [...]"<sup>94</sup> But he recalls his principles, the objectivity of religious moral standard which does not depend on

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<sup>92</sup> Porter, 170.

<sup>93</sup> Porter, 169 –170.

<sup>94</sup> Porter, 294.

his own sense of what is moral or right: “Would you tear from me all that renders life bearable? Would you take from me a blameless conscience, and drive me to end my miserable days by a deed of desperation?”<sup>95</sup>

Furthermore, he paints a picture of what their future would look like which is basically a summary of many a conservative novel plot that include characters led by their intuition and their individual moral standards: “I, being no longer worthy of your esteem, you would hate me; you would hate yourself; and we should continue together, two guilty creatures abhorring each other.”<sup>96</sup> Another concise delineation of the future of two fallen lovers of this kind, more famous than Thaddeus’, is that of Austen’s narrator in *Mansfield Park*. This is what the life of Henry Crawford and Maria Rushworth looked like after they eloped together:

“She hoped to marry him, and they continued together till she was obliged to be convinced that such hope was vain, and till the disappointment and wretchedness arising from the conviction rendered her temper so bad, and her feelings for him so like hatred, as to make them for a while each other’s punishment, and then induce a voluntary separation.”<sup>97</sup>

At the end of the episode after Lady Sara faints from the shock of seeing General Butzou lying on a bed and taking him for a corpse and after Thaddeus takes the opportunity to pacify her and bring her into her carriage where he persuades her of the wrongness and impracticability of her decision, Lady Sara acknowledges the reason that has led to her making this mistake: ““O, why had I not a mother, a sister, to love and pity me! Should I have been such a wretch as now?””<sup>98</sup> What she laments is the lack of guidance by another woman who would direct her thoughts from such a desperate attack on Thaddeus’ honour and

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<sup>95</sup> Porter, 295.

<sup>96</sup> Porter, 296.

<sup>97</sup> Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park* (Penguin Classics: Cambridge 2011), 430-43, Literature Online, Web, 1 April, 2017, [http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqi:res\\_ver=0.2&res\\_id=xri:lion&rft\\_id=xri:lion:ft.pr:Z001576874:0&rft.accountid=35514](http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqi:res_ver=0.2&res_id=xri:lion&rft_id=xri:lion:ft.pr:Z001576874:0&rft.accountid=35514).

<sup>98</sup> Porter, 297.

integrity long before such crisis. Butler adds that “Women novelists in particular [...] stressed the importance of submitting to the guidance of a wise elderly mentor [...]”<sup>99</sup>

The point where Euphemia steps off the road delineated by the conservative novelist is different than that of Lady Sara – less serious and more foolish and ridiculous. She is guilty of adding “romantic gloss on truth”; critique of this is what Butler calls “a characteristic partisan position of the time.”<sup>100</sup> As well as Lady Sara, neither she knows any details about Thaddeus except for the fact that he has been introduced to their family by Lady Tinemouth, which gives him some recommendation. Moreover, he appears before her in a position socially inferior from her own, because Euphemia and her sister Diana are rich heiresses and women of fashion, whereas our hero is ungenerously viewed by them as someone has to depend “on his wits for support.”<sup>101</sup> Being in such a position should spare Thaddeus her attentions, but it does not because Euphemia

argued herself into a belief that he must be a man of rank from some of the German courts, who having seen her somewhere unknown to herself, had fallen in love; and persuaded Lady Tinemouth to introduce him as a language-master to her family, that he might be enabled to appreciate the disinterestedness of her disposition. This wild idea having once gotten into her head, received instant credence.<sup>102</sup>

She does not check this nonsensical idea by any inquiries into his background or character (much like *Therése Sobieski* at the beginning of the story) and treats Thaddeus as if he were a gentleman (in which station he does not appear before her) merely because it suits her fancy in order to be able to fall in love with him and not out of any generosity or recognition of his merit. The narrator portrays her as a bad example because from her point of view, it is “dangerous [...] to trust private intuition or passion in forming judgements of others. It s far

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<sup>99</sup> Butler, 95.

<sup>100</sup> Butler, 93.

<sup>101</sup> Porter, 266

<sup>102</sup> Porter, 195.

better in her opinion to go to the external evidence [...]”<sup>103</sup> which is exactly what Euphemia does not do.

The way in which she gets at any information about Thaddeus’ background is different from Mary’s because the exemplary Miss Beaufort observes the exile closely in order to find out about his past and even discreetly asks his friend and confidante Lady Tinemouth what she knows about him, motivated by her consideration for people in distress. Euphemia however does not make any conscious effort at investigating and the only time she accidentally discovers anything about Thaddeus (when she and Mary meet the Count and General Butzou taking a walk in the park and the latter calls the former by his title) she uses to plague him with very direct and unpleasant questions. Euphemia also lacks the elderly mentor, because her mother does not notice that she has worked herself into imagining that she is in love. Diana does, but she does not care to direct Euphemia’s emotional responses and guide her emotional education: “Without suspecting the object, Diana soon discovered that her sister was in one of her love fits. Indeed she cared nothing about it [...] .”<sup>104</sup>

Unlike Euphemia and Lady Sara who fulfil the function of a warning, Mary is a perfect example. Porter’s narrator aims to structure the novel so “that [...] ethical analysis and the processes of judgement” are thrown into relief<sup>105</sup> and she achieves that especially on the description of Thaddeus’ and Mary’s behaviour. The plot of the novel is organized in such a way that it often happens that when a new character is supposed to be introduced, the narrator often throws them into the middle of a scene and lets them show their temperament in action rather than giving her judgment on them and their history first. Euphemia is the only exception to the rule, because Miss Egerton gives Thaddeus a satirical description of the Dundas family before he gives his first lesson in Harley Street. However, this introduction

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<sup>103</sup> Butler, 101.

<sup>104</sup> Porter, 203.

<sup>105</sup> Butler, 102.

also happens in the middle of action, so to speak, and the narrator does not stop it in order to deliver his remarks on the character. She lets Euphemia's action concur with Miss Egerton's description and only then does she comment.

The same procedure is applied to Mary's introduction; she enters the story in the most inconspicuous manner: "The morning after the fire a little bevy of fashionable butterflies were collected in this way, at one corner of Miss Dundas's study."<sup>106</sup> She forms a member of this little bevy, however she is soon distinguished by her action and her words. She first defends an absent person from the gossip and insults of Miss Dundas' friends and then she is the only person who treats Thaddeus with politeness, she draws Diana's attention to his arrival so that he would get some attention when she's amusing herself with company. When Euphemia appears in the library to attend her German class, Thaddeus is drawn to Mary's sensible way of speaking:

"My acquaintance with Lord Berrington is trifling, [...] yet I am so far prepossessed in his favour, that I see little in his appearance to reprehend. However, [...] perhaps the philanthropy I this morning discovered in his heart; the honest warmth with which he defended an absent character, after you left the room; might render his person as charming in my eyes, as I certainly found his mind."

Thaddeus had not for a long time heard such sentiments out of Lady Tinemouth's circle; and he now looked up to take a distinct view of the speaker.<sup>107</sup>

What also further distinguishes Mary's way of thinking and is recorded in this quotation is her tendency to judge people on the basis of their actions as these reveal others' character, not according to their appearance. In her assessment of Lord Berrington, she emphasizes his inner characteristics and not his looks, which is what Euphemia comments on. When Mary gets to know Thaddeus better and when she admits her love for him to herself, she also confesses that what attracts her to him is his virtuous character: "It is not his personal graces [...] they have not accomplished this effect on me! No; matchless as he is [...] my heart tells me, I would rather see all that perfection demolished, than lose one beam of those bright

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<sup>106</sup> Porter, 222.

<sup>107</sup> Porter, 228.

charities which first attracted my esteem.”<sup>108</sup> Mary is therefore consistent in the kind of emphasis that she puts on the reasons that determine how she judges others.

Correspondingly with this overture given to Mary in her words and actions, the narrator then goes on to disclose her past and to describe the environment that she comes from. We learn that she is a rich heiress, that her parents have died and that she is the niece of Sir Robert Somerset and therefore closely connected to Pembroke’s family, as well as about her education in the conversation salons organized by her mother:

On these nights her Ladyship's rooms used to be filled with the most eminent characters which England could produce. There, the young Mary Beaufort listened to pious divines of every Christian persuasion. There she gathered wisdom from real philosophers; and in the society of our best living poets, cherished an enthusiasm for all that is great and good.<sup>109</sup>

Mary is therefore introduced as virtuous, pious, wise and charitable. Moreover, by having a calm and contemplative nature, she habitually reflects on all that she experiences and this reflection then governs her actions: “By having learnt much, and thought more, she proved in her conduct that reflection is the alchymy which turns knowledge into wisdom.”<sup>110</sup> When Mary meets Thaddeus she neither decides to use him for her own amusement (as Lady Sara did initially) nor to imagine things about him that cannot possibly be true (as Euphemia) but, paying him the respect that his apparent virtue demand, she observes him from distance and tries to protect him from the insults and teasing of the fops around Miss Dundas. In the chapter about sensibility we will discuss a highly significant moment when Mary decides not to jump to conclusions about Thaddeus and Lady Sara’s behaviour in the theatre but waits for external evidence to confirm whether to esteem him or not. More importantly, she does not let her initial sympathy for him cloud her judgement and she waits to be persuaded that she really has a reason to like him. All these three ladies are judged according to the conservative measures and the only one who is not found wanting earns the love of Thaddeus.

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<sup>108</sup> Porter, 311.

<sup>109</sup> Porter, 230.

<sup>110</sup> Porter, 231.

## **Thaddeus – male conservative concerns**

It is however not only the female characters who illustrate the narrator's political views. Thaddeus is also given a chance to learn to judge claims made about other nations in accordance with reality and not to rely on report, word-of-mouth and books. However, his opportunity, as is to be expected from a man with some political agency, has a much greater scope than the domestic and social concerns of the women. Here we touch on the question of the two types of division of the anti-jacobin novel made by Butler. She recognizes "the feminine female conduct novel [...] with its domestic plot familiar since the days of Richardson" and "a picaresque variant [...] usually though not invariably written by a man, and with a male protagonist."<sup>111</sup> Porter combines both these kinds of plot because the novel contains a lot of travelling, first in Poland, than the journey from Poland to Britain where Thaddeus sees its different parts. However if we focus also on the female characters, they are certainly also concerned with the themes of love and marriage. Our hero's idea that is not based on strictly empirical evidence but which is nevertheless cultivated as a maxim in his family shared by both the grandfather and the grandson is an idea of Britain as a land of justice and liberty, where the civil rights of people are neither trampled upon by absolutist rulers nor threatened by other nations. This is evidenced on Thaddeus' initial reaction to having taken Pembroke Somerset as a prisoner and learning that he is not a Russian (as he might have every reason to suppose from encountering him as an enemy in the field), but an Englishman: "An Englishman! and raise his arm against a country struggling for liberty!"<sup>112</sup> From a subject of this country they would never have expected to see him "oppose that freedom here that he would have asserted in his own nation."<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Butler, 106-107.

<sup>112</sup> Porter, 37.

<sup>113</sup> Porter, 38.

It is rather surprising to find the Sobieski men hold such an opinion after the dishonourable behaviour of the son-in-law of one of them and the father of the other. This discrepancy therefore leads us to suppose that there must have been another strategic reason for using this idea – namely to illustrate the “strong liking for the actual”<sup>114</sup> of the conservatives. Introducing this motif of Britain as a land of liberty already in Poland where the assumptions of the Sobieskis remain unchallenged allows the narrator to counter them with the reality of the British social life which is much less becoming when the action moves to London. Thaddeus meets with a specimen of impertinence from the waiters and guests of the hotel already on his first night in London and his idea of the British national character is much lessened by his encounter with the officers in St. James’ Park. They speak of him and his shoemaker so carelessly loudly that he can hear them and at last one of them dares to ask him directly where he got his boots in what is a display of singularly bad manners. On being addressed like this Thaddeus delivers the best put down in the novel:

“Pray, sir, where did you get your boots?”

“Where I got my sword, sir,”<sup>115</sup>

and walks off, wondering how it is possible that these two officers can be representatives

of a nation which on the Continent is venerated for courage, manliness, and generosity? Well, I find I have much to learn. I must go through the ills of life, to estimate myself thoroughly; and I must study mankind in themselves, and not in their history, to have a true knowledge of what they are.<sup>116</sup>

Thaddeus must therefore learn to know the British in reality and not according to the inevitably imprecise and polished ideas presented in books. This is one of the moments of disillusionment that sets him up on the road leading to “a clear-sighted assessment of human weakness”<sup>117</sup> which is proved by the subsequent portrayal of the British society in all its

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<sup>114</sup> Butler, 93.

<sup>115</sup> Porter, 112.

<sup>116</sup> Porter, 112.

<sup>117</sup> Butler, 94.

shapes and forms. Thaddeus discovers much impertinence, indelicacy, rudeness, want of charity and foolishness in characters such as the Dundas family, Lascelles, Mr. Vincent, various pawnbrokers, picture sellers and officers from Newgate prison. He however also meets with real worth and sensibility, religiosity, prudence and love in Mrs. Robson, Lady Tinemouth, Mary Beaufort, her aunt Dorothy and Dr. Cavendish. This realistic portrayal of all the levels of society serves as an antidote to idealistic depictions of any nation.

There is one more discrepancy between Thaddeus' Polish perception of national matters and the British point of view. As well as in the previous case, the issue is introduced already in the first, historical part of the novel. In his letter to his mother Pembroke records why Thaddeus does not seem interested in any of the Polish ladies: "My mistress is my country," replied he; "at present I desire no other. For her I would die; for her only I would wish to live."<sup>118</sup> When he hears this, Pembroke calls Thaddeus "an enthusiast" which from both their reactions we recognize as not entirely positive appellation. Pembroke tries to explain it: "but there are many in my country, who, hearing these sentiments, would not scruple to call you mad."<sup>119</sup> This dialogue sets up a contrast with a scene later in London when Thaddeus is at the Hummums and is addressed by a man who (having overheard the waiter calling Thaddeus' name) is curious for the news from the Continent. After speaking to him for a while, the man remarks that he hopes Thaddeus had stocked his purse well before leaving his country and the agitated and incensed Count expresses his opinion which could easily compete with the previously quoted one as far as the height and intensity of patriotic feeling is concerned:

"No, sir! Not one of those men; and least of all, would I have drawn one vital drop from her heart! I left in her bosom all that was dear to me; all that I possessed; and not

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<sup>118</sup> Porter, 50.

<sup>119</sup> Porter, 50.

until I saw the chains brought before my eyes, that were to lay her in irons, did I turn my back on calamities I could no longer avert or alleviate.”<sup>120</sup>

Such impractical patriotism that forgets oneself in one's country does not mean anything to his interlocutor and when Thaddeus leaves, he is again called a “poor enthusiast” and the man adds: “It is a pity that so fine a young man should have made so ill a use of his birth, and other advantages!”<sup>121</sup> An enthusiast is therefore in these two situations someone who has bought rather too much into an idea and who adheres to it to such an extent that it seems impractical and self-harming to those around him. The British are therefore in these two situations shown as much more prudent, cold and reserved where their patriotism is concerned. However, Thaddeus' enthusiasm is never criticized by Porter as too idealistic or unsupported by reality (as his ideas about the British national character have proven to be). All the same, he never manages to inspire others to the same level of selfless love for their country, because by the time that Thaddeus attains any sort of social power (by being accepted into the Somerset family) the novel has moved on to very different concerns from those that were animating its first half with the reverberations of the Polish tragedy. At this point in the story when he is at the Hummums, he is a very poor and wretched exile whose main concern is to find a roof over his head and not to be reminded of all that he has lost.

The third comparison between Poland and Britain that furthermore illustrates the conservative leanings of the author is that between Thaddeus' Sobieski estates in Poland and the beginning of the story and the Beaufort estate that he obtains when he marries Mary. The similarity of these estates (to such an extent that they are presented as almost the same) creates a narrative arc that makes the impression that it does not really matter, where Thaddeus will live and that he cannot do otherwise than to be a noble, generous and charitable landlord to his tenants. In order to prove this reading, let us compare the description of the

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<sup>120</sup> Porter, 113.

<sup>121</sup> Porter, 114.

Sobieski and Beaufort estates and the people who live on them: “[...] Such a landscape, intermingled with the little farms of these honest people, whom the philanthropy of Sobieski has rendered free[...] reminded me of Somerset. Villages repose in the green hollows of the vales; and cottages are seen peeping from amidst the thick umbrage of the woods which cover the face of the hills.”<sup>122</sup> Even Pembroke notices the parabolic similarity between the estate where he himself grew up and the one to which he has been accepted.

Beaufort, the hereditary seat of Mary’s family that gets to be held by Thaddeus after his wedding is described in the following words:

[...] the august towers of [Mary’s] own native domain appeared on the evening horizon, and soon afterwards she alighted at the mansion itself, having passed along a central avenue of ancient oaks amid the congratulatory cheers of a large assemblage of her tenantry on horseback and on foot, planted on each side, to bid a glad welcome to their “liege lady and her lord.”<sup>123</sup>

The similarities between those two accounts of the ancestral seats consist mainly of the emphasis on the tenants of the landlords who are benefited by being subjects to the landlord and rejoice at their masters’ fortunes or weep with them. If the mention of freeing the tenants in the first quotation describing the domains of the Palatine is not sufficient to illustrate this claim, let us also recall Pembroke’s description of the relations between the Sobieskis and their tenants: “The cheerful faces of the farmers, and the blessings which I hear them implore on the family, when I am walking in the fields with the young count have even drawn a few delighted drops from the eyes of your thoughtless son.”<sup>124</sup>

The reason why both the Polish and the English tenants of Thaddeus might have every reason to be glad that he is their master and to bless him is explained elsewhere. When Thaddeus comes to England and finds lodgings with Mrs. Robson, he also meets her grandson William who is initially scared of him but later grows fond of him. When Thaddeus is taking

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<sup>122</sup> Porter, 46.

<sup>123</sup> Porter, 449.

<sup>124</sup> Porter, 43.

his leave of them to return for his luggage to the Hummums, he wants to give William a silver coin, because he in Poland he was used to giving out his and his grandfather's money to every distressed person or child he met. However, he realizes that he can now no longer be as generous as he used to be and instead gives the child a kiss. The extraordinary generosity that he practiced in Poland is explained and described in a specific way: "Heir to the first fortune in Poland, he scarcely knew the means by which he bestowed all these benefits; and with a soul as bounteous to others, as Heaven had been munificent to him, wherever he moved, he shed smiles and gifts around him."<sup>125</sup> On asking his grandfather how it is possible that he has deserved these riches, he is alerted to the fact that he did not: "you will find, that your Creator hath bestowed wealth upon you, not for what you have done, but as the means of evincing how well you would prove yourself His faithful steward."<sup>126</sup>

We may connect this explanation of the Palatine with the fact that after having experienced the tragedies in London, Thaddeus is raised to almost the same social and financial position as the one he held in Poland. It therefore seems as if the plot of the novel did not really tend to any development in this respect – everything is taken from Thaddeus in a tragedy that functions as a trial of his integrity and virtue and when he passes it, all the riches inherited from his mother's side and that he lost in the ruin of Poland are returned to him through his inheritance on his father's side. The interpretation of all the London misfortunes as a trial is supported by such remarks as the following one of Palatine Sobieski: "[...] indeed the trial is a severe one: prosperity, like adversity, is an ordeal of conduct. Two roads are before the rich man; vanity or virtue: you have chosen the latter, and the best [...]"<sup>127</sup> At the moment that this conversation is taking place between Thaddeus and his grandfather, the former has already passed the ordeal of conduct in prosperity (he has not become vain or

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<sup>125</sup> Porter, 109.

<sup>126</sup> Porter, 110.

<sup>127</sup> Porter, 109.

selfish) and at the moment that he is remembering this conversation (because it is part of a flashback initiated by wanting to give William the coin) he is entering into the other part of the trial – in adversity. Such a reading focused on the abstract virtue of generosity and of heavenly trials supports the conservative message: virtue cannot be accepted as real at first sight, it has to be tested by external evidence.

### **The conservative narrator and the narrative situation**

In order to ensure that the reader comes to the same conclusions about these characters as the narrator wishes to impart, she uses a certain device: presenting the thoughts of two characters in such a way that they coincide with her views. There are moments when the reader thinks that the following are the observations of the narrator only to find out that she ascribes them to Thaddeus, as in the following excerpt:

It is, when sunk in sorrow; when adversity loads us with divers miseries; and our wretchedness is complete; it is then, we are compelled to acknowledge, — that though life is brief, there are few friendships which have strength to follow it to the end. Such were the reflections of the Count Sobieski, when he arose in the morning from his sleepless pillow.<sup>128</sup>

In this particular instance the effect might be caused by insufficient distinction between the individual thoughts of the characters and the general narratorial voice, but there are more cases in which this device used for the purpose of fixing the opinion that the reader forms about the characters and the proceedings and preventing any alternative reading causes peculiar situations.

By using Thaddeus' mind to give clarity to scenes it might otherwise be difficult to interpret, the narrator creates rather unrealistic effects with regard to the previous characterization of the character. He is able to read the mind of the women around him and to penetrate deep into the motivation behind their actions which is contrary to his modest, unassuming, firmly virtuous and honourable thoughts. This is exemplified on the night when

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<sup>128</sup> Porter, 152.

the Thaddeus comes to Lady Tinemouth's after he has exchanged his Polish clothes for an English dress and Miss Egerton teases him for it, saying that he did it to please her. Lady Sara becomes jealous and shows signs of being affected by his presence:

Lady Sara received him with a palpitating heart, and stooped [...] to hide the blushes which were burning on her cheek. No one observed her confusion. Thaddeus could not be so uninformed. The frequent falling of her eye when it met his, the unequivocal intonation of her voice, and sometimes the framing of her speech, often alarmed his sensibility, and made him retreat into himself.<sup>129</sup>

In order to present the situation clearly to the reader, Thaddeus is given these knowing thoughts by the narrator. They disagree with his virtue which at other times deems it unthinkable that a married lady could harbour a passion for him. Thus when Lady Sara shoots to him one of "her responsive glance[s], wild with ecstasy, [...] he could not, he would not, suppose it meant anything to him; and ashamed of even the idea having entered his head, he crushed it at once, indignant at himself."<sup>130</sup>

The same device of the narratorial voice intruding upon Thaddeus' thoughts is used when Euphemia's foolish attempts at ensnaring the count are described. Her attempts at creating artificial sentimental tableaux with herself and her tutor as the main actors are viewed as so much foolishness by him. Her question whether he has a sentimental friend, "a creature in whose existence you forget your own" is regarded as "extravagant behaviour" and as a consequence, being unused to it, he regards her "as little better than insane."<sup>131</sup> Moreover, as well as the narrator, he also has moral reservations about the freedom and forwardness with which Euphemia expresses her sentiments. In a similar scenario as with Lady Sara, this is connected to his ability to penetrate the real motivations and shades of feeling of Euphemia that he subsequently condemns: "There was an indelicacy in this absolutely wooing conduct of Miss Euphemia, which, notwithstanding her beauty and the softness that was its vehicle,

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<sup>129</sup> Porter, 185.

<sup>130</sup> Porter, 183.

<sup>131</sup> Porter, 201.

filled him with the deepest disgust. He could not trace real affection, either in her words or manner [...] <sup>132</sup>.

As the plotline concerned with the company at Harley Street progresses and as Thaddeus becomes more domesticated and at the same time domestic<sup>133</sup> focalization is increasingly denied him in the scenes describing his attendance on the Misses Dundas and he is being described through Mary Beaufort. She serves as another channel through which the narrator imparts her observations and their tone always agrees with those of Thaddeus. As her interest in Thaddeus slowly evolves into love, she, as the other ladies, has to account for and react to his interactions with them. She does this with a penetration similar to that shown by Thaddeus which mainly means that the narrator is using her as a sort of oracle:

Had Euphemia been more deserving of Constantine, Miss Beaufort believed she would have been less reluctant to hear that she loved him. But Mary could not avoid seeing that Miss E. Dundas possessed little to ensure connubial comfort, if mere beauty and accidental flights of good humour were not to be admitted into the scale.<sup>134</sup>

By presenting the proceedings in this way, through the virtuous characters that she emulates, the narrator makes sure that the reader is presented with a united front of argument and with only one “correct” way to judge the characters even to the bottom of their hearts.

On the whole, Porter, as well as Austen on whom Butler focuses can certainly be classed with the conservative writers of the 1790, who are - even if they published their works later - still reacting to the partisan and political strife of the preceding decade. But this is not the only category into which we can place her work, *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, as we will see in the following chapters, even though this is the one that most consistently and strongly influences the novel. In comparison with the conservative novelists that Butler looks at (such as Mrs. West) Porter is a bit less stern and more imaginative. Not only does she combine the

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<sup>132</sup> Porter, 258.

<sup>133</sup> What we mean by this will be explained in the chapter focused on history where the novel is divided into two parts, one concerned with the public, historical themes and another, that we are describing now, where Thaddeus only moves in the female-dominated salons.

<sup>134</sup> Porter, 261.

typical feminine plot with the male wandering, but she also adds the historical matter into the mix which distinguishes her from the picture of the conservative novelists that Butler paints. Here they come across as rather boring, unimaginative and dry: Mrs. West “cannot find feeling and suffering interesting in themselves, as they are for most novelists of other periods”<sup>135</sup>.

Porter goes about her reaching her conservative goals in a different way. One of them is mentioned already in the old preface:

[T]hat the mistakes which many of my young contemporaries of both sexes continually make in their estimates of human character, and of the purposes of human life, require a line of difference between certain splendid vices and some of the brilliant order of virtues to be distinctly drawn before them.<sup>136</sup>

She does not illustrate that through the already mentioned scepticism or pessimism about human nature, but through a circumspect idealism tempered by Christianity. The protagonist himself is one of the elements where this is to be seen, because Thaddeus is certainly not a character drawn on the basis of a belief in the impossibility of human perfectibility (which characterizes the conservative novelists). Apart from being somewhat naïve and uninformed about the ways of the world, he is a paragon of perfection. Every other character (from the servants at the Hummums and Mrs. Robson to Sir Robert Somerset and Lady Tinemouth) that he encounters in the novel, immediately recognizes his inner worth whatever position (the Polish count or the humble tutor of German) they see him in: “he stood by the table, with such an air of princely greatness, that the candid heart of Pembroke Somerset soon whispered to him, ‘Sure nothing ill can dwell in such a breast!’”<sup>137</sup> Such a character is offered for contemplation, shown from all sides and in various situation through which the reader can learn how virtue acts in all these different scenarios. It is especially due to the fact that Porter stages these situations all of which together compound a trial of character, that she can still be

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<sup>135</sup> Butler, 102.

<sup>136</sup> Porter, OP, i.

<sup>137</sup> Porter, 351.

called a conservative writer even though her protagonist is nearly perfect. The virtue of the character is not put in front of to the reader to be admired and to be believed in on the word of the narrator; it has to be proven through the plot.

### **National tale**

As has already been stated in the introduction to this chapter, the terms in which the Scottish national tale is analysed by Andrew Monnickendam partially overlap with those used by Marilyn Butler. In this way, we want to set *Thaddeus of Warsaw* into a slightly different and more marginal Scottish context because until now we have discussed the novel as mainly from the point of view focused on its role in the British literary canon. This is connected to our concern with genres and canons, some of which will be more amenable to the addition of Porter's novel and some less. Whereas we will sometimes have problems to find parallels between Monnickendam's constitutive elements and *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, Porter's other novel, *The Scottish Chiefs* proves less difficult to categorize as the national tale.

Monnickendam's conservative and didactic national tale is constituted by four elements: "landscape, language, romance and Ireland."<sup>138</sup> He also adds that the genre is often seen from a perspective where Scott occupies the centre and Jane Porter and Mary Brunton, (an author with whose novel, *Self-Control* we will be dealing later), at the periphery. Out of these four elements that Monnickendam mentions, two of them do not play any role in *Thaddeus of Warsaw* and that is language (the diversity of languages existing in Scotland and language policy) and Ireland. Monnickendam states this as well in his reading of *The Scottish Chiefs* where he admits that Porter "avoids [the question of language] completely by using what is basically a pseudo-epic style."<sup>139</sup> She does this in *Thaddeus of Warsaw* as well, even though there is an added reason for that as well – the plot and place do not require the author

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<sup>138</sup> Monnickendam, 100.

<sup>139</sup> Monnickendam, 100.

to deeply consider the questions of language. This is illustrative of a principle that we will encounter more often in our discussion of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* as a national tale – the novel does not fit Monnickendam’s analysis in many cases, such as the fact that Ireland, which for him functions as a comparison and illustration of the unequal power relation between England and its Celtic neighbours is not mentioned at all. Also, the then politically current and relevant Act of Union which functions as a context framing device for *The Wild Irish Girl*, is avoided by Porter<sup>140</sup>. However, there are some points it is interesting to analyse from this point of view, such as nature and romance.

Let us therefore begin with landscape. Monnickendam states, that it “should be the essential ingredient of a description of a national setting.”<sup>141</sup> On the few occasions that landscape is described in *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, (as most of the novel takes place in London) the focus is rather on the characters viewing, admiring and almost consuming the nature. Nature is never seen and enjoyed for its own sake, it is always used to exemplify or emphasise a different point, unconnected with it. This enjoyment of nature is characteristically conservative, tempered by the Christian idea that the admiration and love for Creation should never exceed the homage paid to the Creator. Butler claims that the conservative novelists thought “worship of nature” to be “deplorable”. Note the word “worship” which has exactly these borderline-idolatrous and therefore potentially dangerous connotations. For Porter, amongst other authors, worship of anything else than God was almost criminal. This can be illustrated on Pembroke’s enjoyment of the Polish nature in the lands of Masovia which belonged to the Palatine:

The numberless chains of gently swelling hills, which encompass it on each side of the Vistula, were in some parts chequered with corn fields, meadows, and green pastures covered with sheep, [...] Surely there is nothing in the world, [...] that has such power over the workings of the human heart as the mild sweetness of nature. [...] It is then that the spirit of peace settles upon the heart, unfetters the thoughts, and elevates the

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<sup>140</sup> Joep Leerssen, *Remembrance and Imagination*, (Cork: Cork University Press, 1996) 37.

<sup>141</sup> Monnickendam, 104.

soul to the Creator. It is then that we behold the Parent of the universe in his works; we see his grandeur, in earth, sea, and sky: we feel his affection, in the emotions which they raise; and, half mortal, half etherealised, forget where we are, in the anticipation of what that world must be of which this lovely earth is merely the shadow.<sup>142</sup>

In this passage nature is admired not for its own sake and its own beauty, but for the healing and auspicious influence it has on man. The power of nature over human heart is acknowledged, but when it approaches the dangerous line dividing auspicious influence from worship, there it is contained and directed into a different channel. The overpowered heart experiences peace and turns to the Creator, interpreting the natural beauty as his work which is merely a shadow of his grandeur. Furthermore in beholding this beauty we are made sensible of his love for us and with eschatological hope look forward to enjoying the full consummation of his love and the perfected nature.

There is a similar scene of contemplation of nature at the end of the novel, as that with Pembroke has been placed at its beginning. This time, Mary is the consumer and the nature is around Deerhurst. She needs to find peace in nature in order to relax from the apprehensions caused by her introduction of Thaddeus (with whom she is ardently in love by this time) as Count Sobieski, now that he is not in the position of the humble Mr. Constantine anymore.

A bright sun tempered the air, and gilded the yellow leaves which the fresh wind drove before her in a thousand glittering eddies. This was Mary's favourite season. She found its softness infuse the tenderest thoughts into her soul. The rugged form of Care seems to dissolve under the magic touch of beautiful Nature. [...] Exhausted by the anguish of this suspense, she resolved to resign her future fate to Providence; and, turning her gaze on the lovely objects around, soon found the genius of the season absorb her wholly.<sup>143</sup>

We may trace the same trajectory with Mary as with Pembroke. Both are in a situation where they have been through some strain, a stressful, threatening situation<sup>144</sup> and are allowing the beneficent influence of Nature to soothe their ruffled nerves. Once calm, they are able to turn

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<sup>142</sup> Porter, 45.

<sup>143</sup> Porter, 417.

<sup>144</sup> It depends on their respective gender what the stressful situation might be – with Pembroke it was his participation in the battle at Zieleme and with Mary it is the tension between her and Thaddeus now that he is in a position to ask for her hand.

their minds to God and stop worrying about the future. This is therefore a prescription on how to enjoy Nature without being too arduous about it and straying into a deistic territory occupied by such scarecrows (as seen by the conservatives) as Rousseau.<sup>145</sup>

In the discussion of romance in *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, we might trace the romantic development of the happy couple. As has already been mentioned, Thaddeus in Poland has no time to admire the ladies and fall in love, he is more concerned with military, public and political matters that command his attention. When he sails to England, he is so downcast, wretched and worried about what he will eat the next day that it is not until he meets Lady Tinemouth and Miss Egerton and spends a few hours in their salon that he even remembers that the company of ladies was something he thought pleasant once. Until he meets Mary Beaufort however, all the women in his circle are either matrons (Lady Tinemouth), engaged (Miss Egerton), married (Lady Sara) or entirely unsuitable (Euphemia). Due to the presentation of Mary's and Thaddeus' characters, they are the only people who are fit for each other. However, because of the unpropitious circumstances in which they meet and the inequality of their social positions it seems for a long time that they will be unable to consummate their love in marriage even if they have both admitted it to themselves.

As very virtuous and innocent characters, both of them need an external impulse to make them realize that their feelings for each other are now much warmer than what could be termed by that convenient word "esteem." The reader is let into Mary's secret first – her realization is instigated by Euphemia's admission of her fancied love for Thaddeus and by her own reaction, Mary recognizes that "she nourished for this amiable foreigner 'a something than friendship dearer.'"<sup>146</sup> However, seeing him in the company of other women who try to attract him, she shrinks from being classed with them and having him suppose that her feeling for him is in any way similar to theirs. A trait that most characterizes Mary's love for

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<sup>145</sup> Butler, 110.

<sup>146</sup> Porter, 260.

Thaddeus is delicacy and she is so unwilling to threaten it in any way that she frequently misinterprets his meaning and almost persuades him into thinking that she was only interested in him as she would be in any unhappy exile, so that in the end, Sir Robert must come between them and make them understand each other. Thaddeus also recognizes the depth of his affection for Mary by the jealousy he feels when Lascelles insinuates that he got a piece of netting as a gift from Mary, while he actually took it from her the previous evening: “it was not until reason demanded of his candour, why he felt a pang on seeing Mary's purse in the hands of Mr. Lascelles, that with a glowing cheek he owned to himself, he was jealous.”<sup>147</sup> This delicacy and innocence with which both characters approach marriage corresponds with the one of the commonplaces of conservative fiction according to Butler: “Favourite themes are sexual passion (to which they are hostile) and the institution of marriage (which they define in a way that minimizes its connection with the sexual act).”<sup>148</sup>

In order to function metaphorically in a national tale, the romance which is one of its constitutive elements must be concluded by marriage. This marriage is usually interpreted in heavily symbolical terms, it even gets its own term “the Glorvina solution”<sup>149</sup> and as it connects two members of different ethnic groups within one state (Horatio and Glorvina, Waverley and Rose, Ivanhoe and Rowena) “historical and legal right to the land are reconciled.”<sup>150</sup> In other words, as Juliet Shields succinctly puts it, national tales “invite allegorical readings, employing marriage as a metaphor for political unification.”<sup>151</sup> It would therefore be possible to read Thaddeus’ and Mary’s marriage in this way because it is

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<sup>147</sup> Porter, 288.

<sup>148</sup> Butler, 108.

<sup>149</sup> Robert Tracy, “Maria Edgeworth and Lady Morgan,” *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 1995:17, Ebrary, Web, 6 April 2017,

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/cuni/reader.action?ppg=178&docID=202198&tm=1491478429139>.

Quoted in Ina Ferris, *The Romantic National Tale and the Question of Ireland*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 60, ProQuest ebrary, Web, 22 April 2016,

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/cuni/reader.action?ppg=178&docID=202198&tm=1491478429139>.

<sup>150</sup> Juliet Shields, “From Family Roots to the Routes of Empire: National Tales and the Domestication of the Scottish Highlands,” *ELH*, (72:4, 2005), 919, 5 April, 2017, [www.jstor.org/stable/30029995](http://www.jstor.org/stable/30029995).

<sup>151</sup> Shields, 922.

sufficiently overlaid with metaphorical and symbolical meanings. However, to read it as politically relevant in the same way as we read the marriage between Edward Waverley and Rose Bradwardine in the aftermath of the Jacobite rebellion or as the marriage of Horatio M. and Glorvina in the run up to the Act of Union of 1801 would make no sense. There is no reading of a union between an ancient British noble house and a descendant of Polish kings that would be politically relevant for the year 1803. But the symbolical meanings surrounding this marriage may be interpreted as connected to the already mentioned parabolic way of restituting to Thaddeus the means by which he can perform generosity towards the less fortunate that he has deserved due to his virtue and his conduct during the ordeal.

Ferris offers a useful definition of the national tale that might conclude our discussion of the *Thaddeus of Warsaw* as a work pertaining to this genre. She makes a distinction between fictions that take “national matters or manners for its subject” and “a fiction that locates itself in a contentious zone of discourse in order to articulate the grievances of a small people.”<sup>152</sup> Unlike *The Scottish Chiefs*, our Porter novel lends itself only with difficulty to interpretations in terms defined by the second kind of fiction. As we will argue at greater length in the chapter on sensibility, Porter does not articulate the Polish grievances with a view of procuring any greater political agency or representation to them. The dissolution of a Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (a small people perhaps culturally, though certainly not where geographical dimensions of the country before the Partitions are concerned) caused by aggression of their more powerful neighbours<sup>153</sup> is to her an affecting, tragic story which forms a suitable background against which she can situate her matchless hero and his trials of character. *Thaddeus of Warsaw* is therefore rather a work in which national matters and

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<sup>152</sup> Ferris, 50.

<sup>153</sup> This dynamic is something that Ferris notes in her use of the quote by Niilo Idman in the introductory remarks on the national tale as one of the generic poles. Were the scenario Idman describes to be transplanted onto *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, then Poland would be the small in the sense of - as Ferris states elsewhere - “trampled down” nation and Russia the larger and oppressive nation. Quoted in Ferris, 49.

manners form its subject than a national tale in Ferris' sense, that would "constitute an equivocal 'pleading,'"<sup>154</sup> for the political rights.

One of these discussions of national matters which at the same time forms the most politically relevant passage in *Thaddeus of Warsaw* occurs when Mrs. Robson and her new lodger are confronted with the attitudes of Mr. Vincent, the apothecary who has treated Thaddeus' fever. He hints to Mrs. Robson that he is concerned with how he is going to be paid for his services and, slightly offended on behalf of Thaddeus, she assures him that he, despite being an émigré will be able to do that. To this he reacts in the following way: "I meant no offence, [...] but really, when we see the bread that should feed our children, and our own poor, eaten up by a parcel of lazy French drones, [...] we should be fools not to murmur."<sup>155</sup> It is winter of 1794 and this is a very realistic detail that makes this a passage in which Porter seems to comment on the contemporary political and social situation. However, in one of her moralistic expositions, the narrator again transforms this political theme to a question of virtue and morality. She aims her satirically scolding finger on his profession; the way in which he performs his profession of an apothecary compares unfavourably with the text in the Bible that is most relevant for him, the Parable of the Good Samaritan. As well as Lady Sara Ross he calls himself a Christian but it never occurs to him "that piety extended farther than going to church"<sup>156</sup> and sleeping through the sermon. This is why he never applies the parable to himself: "it was so difficult to make him comprehend who was his neighbour, that the object of the argument might have been sick, dead, and buried before he could be persuaded that he had any claims on his care."<sup>157</sup>

This is not the only sin of Mr. Vincent, based on a nationalist prejudice, he is also more willing to serve the English than foreigners:

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<sup>154</sup> Ferris, 51.

<sup>155</sup> Porter, 120.

<sup>156</sup> Porter, 121

<sup>157</sup> Porter, 121.

“To have been born on the other side of the British Channel spread an ocean between the poor foreigner and Mr. Vincent's purse, which the swiftest wings of charity could never cross. ‘He saw no reason,’ he said, ‘for feeding the natural enemies of our country. Would any man be mad enough to take the meat from his children's mouths, and throw it to a swarm of wolves just landed on the coast?’”<sup>158</sup>

Through Mr. Vincent, Porter presents some very good reasons for not helping the French emigrants which would be accepted amongst her literary colleagues of the same political persuasion in their fight against the revolutionary threat. However it is other considerations that weigh more with her and that she is aiming at in this portrayal of the apothecary. As ever, (more on this principle illustrated on the reading of history that avoids politics in the chapter on historical novel) Porter is less interested in contemporary politics than she is in portraying timeless virtue unrelated to political or social situation in which it finds itself, whether she does that through staging exemplary characters in difficult situations or, as here, through a critical exposure of meanness and hypocrisy. Universal charity extended to all one's neighbours is valued more highly than correct political affiliation and shrewdness. We can therefore see that even at a point where *Thaddeus of Warsaw* is most politically relevant to contemporary concerns of the era when it was written, it is a highly irregular and unusual national tale. If we return to Monnickendam's definition of the Scottish tales as “an example of what is often referred to as conservative romanticism”<sup>159</sup> we may assert that *Thaddeus of Warsaw* is much more defined by its conservatism than by its romanticism.

### ***Self-Control***

Of all the novels that we are comparing to *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, *Self-Control* by the Scottish Evangelical reformer and writer, Mary Brunton is the most similar. Like *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, by which (there is some evidence in the novel to suggest this) it has been influenced, *Self-Control* is a novel that it is possible to approach from many different angles. Perhaps the only angle that would not prove fruitful would be to read it as a historical novel, because of

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<sup>158</sup> Porter, 122.

<sup>159</sup> Monnickendam, 100.

the simple fact that it is not set in the past and does not deal with its meaning. Apart from that, it is partially a conservative novel as well as a national tale, into which category it fits much more easily than Porter's novel, mostly because of the fact that Brunton's descent and writing career are both unequivocally situated in Scotland, unlike Porter's. Adding her Scottish heroine Laura Montreville from Glenalbert to the mix, Brunton passes the "authenticity test"<sup>160</sup> that McLean mentions. All of these factors explain why such experts on Scott's predecessors as Monnickendam and Price much rather focus on *The Scottish Chiefs* than on *Thaddeus of Warsaw*. In its characterisation as a national tale, we can also not pass up the opportunity to compare the by far most typical and established example of the genre in our corpus, Lady Morgan's *The Wild Irish Girl*.

*Self-Control* also deals with the sentimental legacy and uses the same sentimental vocabulary of bodily manifestations in order to describe the innermost feelings of its characters. Brunton also does not miss the opportunity to make a distinction between the real sensibility and its irresponsible, self-indulgent or socially destructive counterpart which gets criticised. In connection to the sentimental theme, it might also be mentioned that there is much about Laura's fate that suggests a similarity with the typical plot of "virtue in distress". Whereas we speak of Thaddeus' predicament in London (elaborated further in chapter 3) as about loss of political agency and male disenfranchisement, Laura's life and virtue are threatened in a very real and literal way. Todd's division of sentimental plots with a male and female heroine differing exactly by virtue of the impossibility of a male hero's rape and abandonment (typical features of distress in case of a female virtue) is very relevant here.

We will however mostly discuss the conservative and national principles that influenced the writing of this novel. Let us begin the comparison by stating that in *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, Porter comes across as a writer who is much more influenced by the idealism of

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<sup>160</sup> McLean, 94.

the timeless romance than the realistic and sober-minded Brunton writing about her own time. This can be explained by Porter's use of the historical theme which makes her characterize Thaddeus rather more like a hero of a historical romance with all the attendant ideal virtues. Laura has some very good and sound principles that she assiduously tries to practice and very often succeeds, but she is not a paragon of virtue. She answers very well to the type of heroines, identified by Butler in Austen's and Mrs. West's works, who strive, "though often fallibly, for a clear-sighted assessment of human weakness, including [their] own."<sup>161</sup> Laura needs to learn about the world more than Thaddeus does, he only needs to prove his character in a trial, but does not need to learn to judge people (only nations), because, as we have already observed, he is often being used as another channel through which the narrator presents her opinions.

The principles that the narrator promotes for the benefit of the reader as well as the similarities between the two novels are best expressed by a reference to a discussion on literary heroes between Laura and the daughter of her landlady in London, Miss Julia Dawkins. The question is which male character Laura most admires and they first alight upon Tom Jones who is much praised by Miss Julia as "a delightful fellow – so generous – so ardent."<sup>162</sup> However, Laura thinks that his "constitutional warmth"<sup>163</sup> would make him a difficult husband and what Miss Julia considers Tom's generosity, she calls squandering money. The point is that Laura believes true generosity is possible for everyone, not only for those who are liberally supplied with money and that it consists in "a thousand little acts of self-denial."<sup>164</sup> Such an idea of generosity is more practicable in the reality of daily lives, because if it was only limited to what is presented in romances, it would be "in danger of total

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<sup>161</sup> Butler, 94.

<sup>162</sup> Mary Brunton, *Self-Control*, (Cambridge: Chadwick-Healey, 1996) Literature Online, Web, 7 April 2017, 134.

<sup>163</sup> Brunton, 134.

<sup>164</sup> Brunton, 134.

extinction”<sup>165</sup>. Captain Montreville then suggests Sir Charles Grandison as a potential model for a suitor to his daughter, but she considers him too formal. Finally, being allowed to identify her favourite, she names – who else but Thaddeus Sobieski: “Truly generous and inflexibly upright, his very tenderness has in it something manly and respectable.”<sup>166</sup> Her father also gives what we would consider a fair and precise judgment of the character in the following words: “your favourite has the same resemblance to a human character which the Belvidere Apollo has to a human form. It is so like man that one cannot absolutely call it divine, yet so perfect, that it is difficult to believe it human”<sup>167</sup> Thaddeus is indeed a man no father would be reluctant to give his daughter to and the narrator apparently approves of the conservative, didactic, sometimes even religious tone in which the book is written. Captain Montreville hits the nail on the head when he identifies this inclination towards the ideal as the thing that draws Laura to this particular character most strongly and we will further discuss how this propensity to imagined perfection has served the heroine.

It is interesting to compare Thaddeus with the two male protagonists of *Self-Control*, the physically attractive and captivating but wicked and immoral Colonel Hargrave and the pious, just, responsible and worthy Mr. De Courcy. Already in the fact that Brunton needs two male characters where Porter uses only one, we can see the greater realism of her novel mentioned above. Thaddeus is completely morally irreproachable, brave, honourable, pious and handsome to boot. Colonel Hargrave’s “person was symmetry itself, his manners had all the fascination that vivacity and intelligence joined to the highest polish can bestow” but he is unprincipled, selfish and morally corrupt. About De Courcy’s appearance we know almost nothing, except that he has “expressive black eyes,”<sup>168</sup> but there is a great emphasis on his inner characteristics. The narrator takes several pages to enlarge on his education and the way

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<sup>165</sup> Brunton, 135.

<sup>166</sup> Brunton, 136.

<sup>167</sup> Brunton, 136.

<sup>168</sup> Brunton, 378.

in which he was instructed in the Christian faith causing him to become “industrious in his pursuits, and simple in his pleasures.”<sup>169</sup> The fact that one of the protagonists is so beautiful on the outside and the other on the inside and that both kinds of virtue are not united in one of them, as in the case of Thaddeus, causes Laura’s mistake in judgement which sparks off most of the plot.

Laura’s one fallibility that she needs to be cured of during the novel is her imagination which is too strong and governs her conduct and thoughts too exclusively. She imagines Hargrave to be as perfect on the inside, as he is on the outside and does not realize that her fault in judging his worth is the same that she deplores in him – he values her only for her physical beauty:

It never occurred to Laura, that she was, as much as Hargrave, the captive of mere externals; and that his character would never have deceived her penetration, had it been exhibited in the person of a little redhaired man, with bandy legs, who spoke broad Scotch, and smoked tobacco.<sup>170</sup>

Martha Musgrove connects this inability of Laura’s to judge Hargrave clearly to her unwillingness to deal with her sexuality that attracts her to his appearance which however gains ascendancy and acquires a means of expression through her paintings: “she paints the young officer, who is ruled by desire and addicted to stimulation, as the Spartan hero Leonidas.”<sup>171</sup> Her inaccurate judgment of Hargrave is expressed at the very beginning of the novel in the following words that make the extent of Laura’s mistake absolutely clear:

Yet it was not Hargrave whom Laura loved; for the being on whom she doated had no resemblance to him, except in externals. It was a creature of her imagination [...]. This ideal being, clothed with the fine form, and adorned with the insinuating manners, and animated with the infectious love of Hargrave, what heart of woman could resist?<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Brunton, 181.

<sup>170</sup> Brunton, 189-190.

<sup>171</sup> Martha Musgrove, “Relocating Femininity: Women and the City in Mary Brunton’s Fiction“, *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 20: 2, 2007, 236, Ebscohost, Web, 8 April, 2017.

<sup>172</sup> Brunton, 14.

What Laura needs to be taught throughout the novel is that she must let reason govern her steps rather than imagination which is, along with the unconscious mind and in accordance with the conservative precepts portrayed as unstable, dangerous and wanton.

In the representation of the passionate and sexually motivated love that at first existed between Laura and Hargrave, Brunton can be identified as a more forward, more realistic and less conservative of the two novelists, however in her refusal to portray the a male or female paragon of perfection, she is the more conservative one. To stage characters without any faults gives a dangerous precedent to the impressionable readers of novels who are (as is attested by many such descriptions of youth filled by reading valueless and sometimes downright subversive literature in *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, *Waverley*, *Self-Control* and other novels) thus taught to adhere to the revolutionary ideas of human perfectibility and have false expectations of the people surrounding them. Porter on the other hand shrinks from portraying male sexual passion and the love between Thaddeus and Mary is as chaste and delicate as it remains ideal, according to the already mentioned persuasion of the conservative novelists that the connection between a sexual act and marriage must be minimized.

Let us now choose a particular concept that occurs in both (or all three national tales – including *The Wild Irish Girl*) and compare them. There is a very similar sentiment expressed in the first quotation from *Thaddeus of Warsaw* (delivered on the occasion of Lady Sara's failure to be true to her marital vows) in this chapter, that apart from other thoughts, promotes the idea that it is impossible for people to be consistently moral without the aid of Christian doctrine. Laura thinks in a similar way when she reflects on Hargrave's attack on her virtue which has opened the extent of her mistake in the judgment of his character to her:

Why had she indulged in dreams of ideal perfection? Why had she looked for consistent virtue in a breast where she had not ascertained that piety resided? Had she

allowed herself time for consideration, would she have forgotten that religion was the only foundation strong enough to support the self-denying, the purifying virtues?<sup>173</sup>

Brunton puts the argument even more strongly and more concisely than Porter does. Without the Christian piety, it is impossible that anyone could remain morally pure all their life. Butler puts it in the following words: “In very general terms the conservatives knew all along what they were in favour of: reason, experience, and the Christian religion.”<sup>174</sup> Experience is also something Brunton is after in her plot which is focused on making the inexperienced and naïve Laura well versed and self-sufficient in the ways of the world, in society and around men: “The mind of Laura had been early stored with just and rational sentiments [...] but it was necessary that experience should give the stamp that was to make them current in the ordinary business of life.”<sup>175</sup>

As well as *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, *Self-Control* also contains a critique of the conventions of sensibility. Brunton’s narrator makes the cult appear ridiculous in the person of the already introduced Miss Julia Dawkins: “The curious contrast of the reader's manner, with her appearance, of the affected sentimentality of her air, with the robust vulgarity of her figure, struck Laura as [...] irresistibly ludicrous.”<sup>176</sup> It seems that the robust Julia (with her almost speaking name, given as it was to a number of sentimental or sometimes downright radical misses) cannot afford to give herself sentimental airs without being comical, unlike the willowy and pretty Euphemia whose physique allows her to languish on sofas all day looking ornamental without being detected as ridiculous by the company at large (only by the discerning Thaddeus). A more refined critique is aimed at the sentimental shows put on by Lady Pelham, Laura’s aunt with whom she lived after her father’s death. She sometimes uses her sensibility as an excuse for her bad temper caused by the unfeeling treatment she has received from her daughter who has married against her wishes and grew estranged from her.

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<sup>173</sup> Brunton, 43.

<sup>174</sup> Butler, 95.

<sup>175</sup> Brunton, 43.

<sup>176</sup> Brunton, 105-106.

At other times she flaunts her sensibility as something of an intrinsic value that confers worth and should excite admiration for it from people who witness it. Laura's own take on sensibility is influenced by her inclination to value everything that is in some way useful to others: "Her own sensibility she had been taught to consider as a weakness to be subdued, not as an ornament to be gloried in; and the expansion of soul which opens to all the sorrows and to all the joys of others, she had learnt to call by a holier name---to regulate by a nobler principle."<sup>177</sup>

Usefulness is one of Brunton's favourite themes, she cannot describe the daily routine of one of her characters without judging whether they are inclined to spend it usefully or not, neither does can she miss the opportunity of describing the utilitarian organization of someone's house or estate. Laura is in the habit of trying to fill the hours of her day by useful and regular activities: "The methodical sequence of domestic usefulness, and improving study, and healthful exercise, afforded calm yet immediate enjoyment."<sup>178</sup> With the view of being useful to him, she even persuades her father that he must allow her to go with him to London, where he will attempt to secure her annuity. Her plan is to try to contribute the family finances by selling her pictures. This occupation that some women in her class might shirk for not being genteel enough, she takes up with joy because it might make her useful to her father and this is the highest goal in her life. When she sends presents to the children of Mrs. Douglas after having secured her annuity, she thinks more of them being useful than pleasing to the sight. The most usefully organized place in the novel is De Courcy's estate called Norwood. Laura appreciates and with approbation sees that its "furniture, though not without magnificence, was unadorned and substantial, grandeur holding the second place to usefulness."<sup>179</sup> This critical and judicious look thrown on the organization and running of

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<sup>177</sup> Brunton, 339.

<sup>178</sup> Brunton, 128.

<sup>179</sup> Brunton, 402.

large houses and estates is reminiscent of Elizabeth Bennet's viewing of Pemberley. The park at Norwood is however less grand and not only used and designed for pleasure because

[t]he park might, indeed, have better deserved the name of an ornamented farm; for the lawns were here and there diversified by corn fields, and enlivened by the habitations of the labourers necessary to the agriculturist. These cottages, banished by fashion far from every lordly residence, were contrived so as to unite beauty with usefulness; they gave added interest to the landscape even to the eye of a stranger, but far more to that of De Courcy, for he knew that every one of them contained useful hands or grateful hearts: youth for whom he provided employment, or age whose past services he repaid.<sup>180</sup>

Brunton considers usefulness as such an important virtue that she sacrifices grandeur and display of wealth and good taste in a park to it. This similarity between the values of Laura and De Courcy is so great that we must agree with Colonel Hargrave who did not want to introduce his former friend to Laura because he thought that their tastes agreed to such an extent that they would be bound to fall in love with each other. This emphasis of the narrator is almost non-existent in *Thaddeus of Warsaw*. The protagonist is indeed also seen to manage his daily routine according to a division of labours that is rational and provides for his livelihood, but the reader of Porter's novel is left at leisure to apply this lesson to his own life, whereas Brunton's reader would have to be obtuse to miss this emphasis.

A concept that occurs in all three novels and is employed differently in all of them is the sympathy of souls, a connection between two individuals so closely linked that they can almost communicate without words. The word is in all seriousness used to describe the relationship between Glorvina and Horatio in *The Wild Irish Girl* as indicative of the elevated character of the focalizer describing all the action in the novel:

“As it is, I feel a certain commerce of the soul---a mutual intelligence of mind and feeling with her, which a look, a sigh, a word, is sufficient to betray---a sacred communion of spirit, which raises me in the scale of existence almost above mortality;

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<sup>180</sup> Brunton, 411.

and though we had been known to each other by looks only, still would this amalgamation of soul (if I may use the expression) have existed.”<sup>181</sup>

Given the narrative situation, the author has no chance and perhaps is also not inclined to qualify or criticize this notion. Morgan is definitely not inclined to elaborate on the proper marriage and the realistic expectations that both parties entering it should have in order for it to be successful and happy. Her concerns are much more romantic and for both her extraordinary protagonists, nothing short of an extraordinary romance will suffice.

This is exactly a kind of view to which Brunton is opposed when she lets Captain Montreville remark that he hopes that Laura does not “cherish the romantic dream, that sympathy of souls and exactly concordant tastes and propensities, were necessary to the happiness of wedded life.”<sup>182</sup> Of this dream Laura gradually becomes disenchanted as she lets her life be reigned by reason rather than imagination and in place of the previous definition of sympathy of souls which concurs with Morgan’s, Brunton’s narrator introduces another, more suited to her realistic and sober view of life in marriage:

Between Laura and De Courcy, almost from the first hour of their acquaintance, there seemed (to use the language of romance) a sympathy of souls;---an expression which, if it has any meaning, must mean the facility with which simple, upright, undesigning minds become intelligible to each other.<sup>183</sup>

This is therefore the only definition of sympathy of souls that Brunton allows for.

Porter’s concept of the communication between souls is much more informed by the sentimental idea that true and deep feelings can only be expressed non-verbally, that they must be visible on the body. However, she allows for situations in which emotions are inexpressible even by looks, sighs, tears, fainting and other sentimental signs:

Who is there that can enter into the secret folds of the heart, and know all its miseries?  
Who participate in that joy which dissolves and rarefies man to the essence of heaven?

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<sup>181</sup> Sidney Morgan, *The Wild Irish Girl*, (London: Chadwick-Healey, 1999) 255, Literature Online, Web, [http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res\\_ver=0.2&res\\_id=xri:lion&rft\\_id=xri:lion:ft.pr:Z000040132:0&rft.accountid=35514](http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&res_id=xri:lion&rft_id=xri:lion:ft.pr:Z000040132:0&rft.accountid=35514).

<sup>182</sup> Brunton, 44.

<sup>183</sup> Brunton, 204.

Soul must mingle with soul, and the ethereal voice of the spirit must speak, before these can be comprehended.<sup>184</sup>

Her mention of man rarefied to the essence of heaven also informs us that there are some secrets of the soul that are impenetrable while we are still in the flesh and that only God as a spirit can know these. Moreover, the only instance when such a theoretically framed and eschatological communication of souls is achieved in the novel (even though this also happens through the exchange of looks) happens between two men and is therefore not at all connected with marriage. The love of Mary and Thaddeus is too reasonable and temperate for such a communion. It is between Thaddeus and Pembroke that such communication happens and ensures their mutual recognition at the end of the novel: “There is an intelligence in the interchange of looks, which cannot be mistaken; it is the communication of souls, and there is no deception in their language.”<sup>185</sup>

Although we have called Glorvina a much more romantic and extraordinary character who deserves a more exalted picture of marriage than Laura, there is something about these two women that invites a comparison. Their simplicity and their nature unspoiled by much contact with the fashionable world is emphasised through the focalisation of their lovers who are acquainted with the world and the sort of women that it produces: “Unprepared to find, in an obscure village in Scotland, the most perfect model of dignified loveliness, Hargrave became the sudden captive of her charms; and her manner, so void of all design – the energy – the sometimes wild poetic grace of her language [...]”<sup>186</sup> This artlessness is connected to the national concerns which makes them a product of the Scottish or Irish nature and the best possible versions of peculiar national character. This is Horatio’s version of his admiration for Glorvina:

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<sup>184</sup> Porter, 248.

<sup>185</sup> Porter, 351.

<sup>186</sup> Brunton, 87.

Where can she have acquired this elegance of manner!---reared amidst rocks, and woods, and mountains? deprived of all those graceful advantages which society confers---a manner too that is at perpetual variance with her looks, which are so *naïf*---I had almost said so wildly simple---that while she speaks in the language of a court, she looks like the artless inhabitant of a cottage<sup>187</sup>.

Porter and Brunton, both conservative novelists differ in the targets that they deem most important for the promotion of their principles. Porter considers the staging of a perfect character in the middle of a trial as the best way to present hers, whereas Brunton chooses for a setting that is more co-temporary to the time of writing the novel and she presents characters more realistically. They are never the shining stars that Porter shows, they have periods of greater and lesser brightness and they even throw shadows. On the other hand, Brunton is less strict in portraying sexual passion between her two protagonists, whereas Porter shrinks from connecting the marriage between Thaddeus and Mary to their sexuality and we never witness other thoughts of these two characters than chaste ones. Brunton is also sharper and more topical in her critique, whereas Porter's criticism of the British society is veiled by the intervening years between the setting of the novel and its publishing. Thaddeus' London is a little bit less recognizable than Laura's. However, both of them are definitely in distress there, which is one of the themes connected to the novel of sensibility that is also commented on in both novels. Finally, we show the difference between Lady Morgan's, Brunton's and Porter's novel on the concept of "sympathy of souls". The first author uses it without qualifications and reserves in the sense which is saturated and informed by the romantic theories, the second rejects this ideal sense as a necessary basis for marriage, however she employs it in a more ordinary and practical sense of minds being able to communicate and finally, Porter's idea is informed by the sentimental ideology of inexpressibility of certain emotional processes.

### Chapter 3

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<sup>187</sup> Morgan, 214-215.

As has already been suggested, the analysis of the elements connected with the genre of the historical novel will be discussed in terms mainly delineated by the arguments of Price and McLean. These arguments can be summed up in the following words: both the nature of history as presented in *Thaddeus of Warsaw* and the way in which Porter investigates, deals with and uses history are different from the nature and way presented by Scott. The concerns, and themes we will be dealing with in this chapter are closely connected to what will be discussed in the following chapter on the national tale and anti-jacobin novel genre. This is in fact the most influential of all the generic poles and it explains and accounts for most of the inconsistencies and problems that we might have when attempting to determine the novel's genre.

### **Structure of the novel**

First, we must explain that the novel can be divided into two distinct parts, the first part (much shorter) is the one we will be dealing with in this chapter and which predominantly contains the historical themes and material. It is therefore especially the first ten chapters that offer the opportunity, as McLean states, "to see literary history in transition"<sup>188</sup>. As the plot description makes clear, after Thaddeus' arrival in England, the historical themes and the public, political sphere connected with it recedes into the background and the novel gets dominated by the domestic cares of the sentimental man of feeling who is withdrawn from the society and only cultivates his influence in the private circle of his like-minded friends. The trajectory of the text is therefore as follows: we first meet Thaddeus in the history-infused and history-shaped atmosphere of Poland. How the picture of Poland and its history is constructed will be analysed shortly. We watch his historical fall from grace caused by forces larger than, and independent of him (meaning the political events shaping the maps of Europe which were in their turn influenced by the

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<sup>188</sup> McLean, 98.

philosophically-cultural products of the French revolution). Or, as Porter herself would want to have it, the force larger than our hero is the will of God who apparently (as Thaddeus recognizes in his Christian resignation) must have suffered an independent nation to be enslaved. The fall in the public sphere is also connected to loss on an economical plane – as the sole heir of the estates inherited by his grandfather, Thaddeus leaves behind him the only source of his income ravaged by the war and his ancestral home burnt to the ground.

His fall from grace continues as he faces all the unpleasantness to be expected in the situation of someone who has no money, no profession and has been raised in an environment where he considered all of these as automatic. This, however, is a different kind of fall from grace. Seen through his Christian lenses, Thaddeus (strongly seconded by the narrator) interprets all these misfortunes as trials. Both the fall of Poland and his exile, as well as its consequences – uprooting, poverty and loneliness are tests of his character. However, I would argue in connection with the division of the two parts, these are tests of a fundamentally different kind. First Thaddeus' character is tested by his fall in the public sphere and by the public and historical tragedy of his country's loss of independence and then he is tested in the private, domestic setting of his new home and a small community of friends and acquaintances while battling with poverty and sickness. The transition and the fact that the novel moves on to different concerns can be illustrated on the fact that Thaddeus completely gives up on the idea of having any political agency after his arrival from Poland. He does not come to England on a diplomatic mission, sent as an ambassador from the Polish king (whom he privately meets just before he sails from Dantzic) in order to rally the support of a nation “where liberty had so long been the palladium of its happiness”<sup>189</sup> and which is in the first part of the novel consistently presented (on the basis of a word of mouth) as a country that

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<sup>189</sup> Porter, 38.

one might reasonably expect to interfere in behalf of an independent nation whose rights, just than granted by an enlightened constitution, are being usurped.

Thaddeus, however, does not have any larger public agenda when he sails to England. He has no goal whatsoever, besides resigning himself to his fate and being able to live his life freely, not as an enslaved subject of a hated and tyrannical sovereign. That is why he becomes absorbed in the small joys and sorrows of domestic life immediately after he arrives. His horizon contracts and he no longer has the chance to be actively involved in making history, to be the subject of the newspaper headlines (along with his namesake, Tadeusz Kosciuszko) all over Europe. He becomes a politically disenfranchised subject, similar to the men of feeling who give up their masculine power in order to practice virtue, benevolence and sensibility. This transition from the public, active and male-dominated sphere to the domestic, passive and female-dominated one is best illustrated on the basis of an etymology of a particular word: *virtue*.

If we consult the etymology in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, we see that the word is originally a Latin compound, constituted by the words *vir* (meaning man) and *-tus* (a suffix forming nouns). The meaning of *virtus* is the following: “manliness, valour, worth, merit, ability.”<sup>190</sup> We can therefore see that connotations with male characteristics abound in Latin, as well as in the Old French, Middle French and Anglo-Norman word *vertu*, which was associated with the characteristics of exemplary knights. The *Oxford English Dictionary* also significantly states that “the specific sense ‘chastity (especially of a woman)’ is not paralleled in French until later: 1677”<sup>191</sup>. This is how the word (also in its adjectival form – *virtuous*) is often used in the sentimental literature – denoting sexual purity. For example in *A Sentimental Journey*, the word *virtue* occurs ten times and in six out of these ten, the word is explicitly or

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<sup>190</sup> “Virtue,” Etymology, *Oxford English Dictionary*, Web, 13 March 2017, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/223835?rskey=olSHru&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid>.

<sup>191</sup> “Virtue,” *Oxford English Dictionary*.

implicitly connected to sexual continence which comes to be constructed as a specifically feminine virtue, even though Yorick also does not hesitate to talk about his virtue in connection to his sexuality. This only underscores the fact that Thaddeus' virtue follows the same trajectory in between volume one and two of the novel as the word in the dictionary and that to call Thaddeus a species of a man of feeling is not unjustified.

As we have already noted, the fall of Poland which closes the historical part of the novel does not yet mark the end of all of Thaddeus' trials. Porter wants to put her protagonist through all the motions of a test of virtue, as she anticipates already in the Old preface: "What flattered Alexander of Macedon into a madman and perverted the gracious-minded Julius Caesar into usurpation and tyranny, has also been found by Christian heroes the most perilous ordeal of their virtue."<sup>192</sup> What the author means by the "what" introducing the sentence is the snare of ambition and arrogance accompanying fame and respect paid to men of renown in service to their country. She tumbles Thaddeus from the "summit of mortal fame"<sup>193</sup> in order to show that the Sobieskis "when under a reverse dispensation, national misfortunes pursued them, and family sorrows pierced their souls, the weakness of a murmur never sunk the dignity of their sustaining fortitude, nor did the firmness of that virtue harden the amiable sensibilities of their hearts"<sup>194</sup>. The twofold structure of the novel is in fact directly subordinated to this motif of a double trial.

### **Use of history – universality of virtue**

The governing principle of trial brings us to the question of how the nature of history is presented in *Thaddeus of Warsaw*. As well as in the sensibility-dominated second part of the novel, even more prominently in the historical first part, what is stressed here about history (and what, simultaneously distinguishes Porter's understanding of history from

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<sup>192</sup> Porter, OP, i.

<sup>193</sup> Porter, OP, i.

<sup>194</sup> Porter, OP, ii.

Scott's) is a sense of it that Price calls "history as continuity"<sup>195</sup> but what I would rather, even more strongly call history as parable. It is clear that with the overall framing of a dual trial undergone by Thaddeus, the events in Poland lose their immediate, contemporaneous, political meaning and are read as illustrations of virtue and vice. The reader is supposed to distil the moral lesson from history presented in this way. Where Scott was commenting on a particular historical situation in the Postscript of *Waverley* when he was talking about the necessity of complete change that has "render[ed] the present people of Scotland a class of beings as different from their grandfathers as the existing English are from those of Queen Elizabeth's time"<sup>196</sup>, he was describing a specific historical change in a specific country with consequences it was possible to observe even in his day.

The attempts to read Porter's historical parable politically do not work out quite so well. One instance of this is the analysis of Porter's use of history by Morgan Rooney in his dissertation:

In response to perceived threats against Britain in the form of radicalism from within and imperialism from without, Porter's *Thaddeus of Warsaw* and *The Scottish Chiefs*, I argue, imaginatively activate Burkean historical discourse to further an aggressive nationalist agenda. Porter's novels focus in detail on moments in history that she in turn develops to comment on her own. Poland in the 1790s in *Thaddeus* and Scotland at the turn of the fourteenth century in *The Scottish Chiefs* stand as analogues for an imagined Britain threatened by a combination of internal and external (revolutionary) forces.<sup>197</sup>

I cannot speak for the other Porter novel, *The Scottish Chiefs*, because it is not my intention to discuss it, but *Thaddeus of Warsaw* does not seem to further any aggressive nationalist agenda. What Rooney perhaps does here is that he allows Porter's claims from the

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<sup>195</sup> Price (2011), 639.

<sup>196</sup> Sir Walter Scott, *Waverley*, (Cambridge: Penguin Classics, 2011) 492, Literature Online, Web, 21 April 2017, <https://literature.proquest.com/searchFulltext.do?id=Z001593455&childSectionId=Z001593455&divLevel=0&queryId=2985550024011&trailId=15AF5D439B5&area=prose&forward=textsFT&refno=PCS20300&queryType=findWork>.

<sup>197</sup> Morgan Rooney, *The Struggle for the Authority of History: The French Revolution Debate and the British Novel, 1790-1814*, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, Web, 13 March 2017, <https://search-proquest.com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2443/docview/192926007?accountid=12045>.

preface to interpret the novel as more political than the text actually warrants. Porter's narrator seems to endorse the enlightened Polish constitution of 1791, which, both according to the novel and according to historical research has been the cause of the invasion of Poland by Russia. Because, unlike Scott, Porter sets her novel in Poland, it is much less clear-cut what sort of political messages she wants to impart. It is also not clear how to analyze the image of Poles that Porter constructs; should we read them as examples to the English in their patriotism or as warnings? It seems much more useful and it produces more consistent results to read the historical parts as a moralist illustration of virtue and vice in all the different and often trying circumstances of both public and private disturbances. This is the way in which McLean also sums up the way in which Porter differs from Scott: "in focusing on the actions of virtuous individuals in periods of historical disruption"<sup>198</sup>.

Rooney however further also comments on the historical particularity of fourteenth century Scotland in *The Scottish Chiefs* which he finds no more successful than the depiction of Poles from the 1790s. In case of the other Porter novel, his reading is more in tune with what I am attempting to sketch about the universal, continuous nature of history "but the overall effect of the novel, [...] <sup>199</sup>is less a faithful rendering of historical particularity than an idealising of a historical personage for the purpose of creating a moral tale whose relevance to the present is unmistakable". In order therefore to avoid these inconsistencies, I choose to reject a political reading of the novel's historical first volume and focus instead on the parabolic quality of this writing about history. Rooney moreover argues that the reason why Porter's novels fail to convey the sense of the "specifically historical, that is, derivation of the individuality of characters from the historical peculiarity of their age"<sup>200</sup> is because of their trying very hard to be relevant to contemporary politics, to partake in the political debate

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<sup>198</sup> McLean, 88.

<sup>199</sup> Rooney, 203.

<sup>200</sup> Georg Lukács, *The Historical Novel* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1962), 19. Quoted in De Groot, 22.

around the turn of the century. I will try to argue that *Thaddeus of Warsaw* fails to do so because of the focus on virtue, morality and didacticism.

To proceed and illustrate this claim on the novel, the following passage, delivered by Thaddeus' grandfather in prison where he was taunted by the eventuality of a bleak outcome of his grandson's rebellion seems suitable:

[...] that, if his grandson were to lose his head for fidelity to Poland, he should behold him with as proud an eye mounting the scaffold, as entering the streets of Warsaw with Russia at his chariot wheels. "The only difference would be," continued Sobieski, "that, as the first cannot happen until all virtue be dead in this land, I should regard his last gasp as the expiring sigh of that virtue, which, by him, had found a triumph even under the axe. And for the second, — it would be joy unutterable to behold the victory of justice over rapine and murder! But, either way, Thaddeus Sobieski is still the same; ready to die, or ready to live, for his country — and equally worthy of the eternal halo, with which posterity will encircle his name."<sup>201</sup>

We observe that Palatine Sobieski declares Thaddeus' virtue to be paramount and indubitable. It cannot be influenced by any historical circumstances, however trying and unpropitious they may be. Along with his belief in the virtue of his grandson (a collective term standing for various other characteristics such as courage, integrity and patriotism) he also believes in the virtue of all the people of Poland (the rebelling peasants, the army, the officers from noble families commanding them) who would not inactively look on Thaddeus' execution. From the political point of view, such a comment cannot be successfully explained with regard to the contemporary situation, but it is eminently useful as an illustration of a concern with morality and virtue that the narrator tries to present as universal and valid in every country and every historical period. The timelessness of such virtue is hinted at by the narrator also in the emphasis on the words "the eternal halo" and "posterity". Like her predecessor Richardson, Porter's fictional world is also highly informed and influenced by the Christian hope that almost all characters appeal to and count on.

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<sup>201</sup> Porter, 66.

As the tragedy of the first volume reaches its end, the parabolic nature of the Polish history is more and more distinguishable, again, as suggested above in connection to the idea of a trial imposed by God to test the resignation and trust of his child. After having lost his mother and grandfather and after having seen his home Villanow burnt to ashes, Thaddeus leaves Poland with a stop at Dantzic, where he composes himself a little: “He felt a calm arising from the conviction, that his afflictions had gained their summit; and that, however heavy they were, Heaven had laid them on him as a trial of faith and virtue”<sup>202</sup>. He goes through one more moment of despair on board of a ship bound for England where all the other travellers excitedly point out places of interest on the distant shore. For them, England is a home, whereas for Thaddeus it is a friendless desolation compared to Poland that he just left: “Two months ago, I had a mother, a more than father, to love and cherish me; I had a country, that looked up to them and to me; now, I am bereft of all; I have neither father, mother, nor country, but am going to a land of strangers.”<sup>203</sup> The narrator allows him some space to feel his losses but also reports that he afterwards “raised his fixed and confiding eye to that power which poured down its tempests on his head. Thaddeus felt as a man, but received consolation as a Christian.”<sup>204</sup> Even the response of our hero is therefore parabolic in that it serves as an example that the reader should be guided by.

There seems to be however one substantial obstacle standing in the way of this parabolic or apolitical reading and it is moreover something that Porter introduces her novel with: the description of the historical and political situation around the year 1791. At the heart of this paradox is the already mentioned Polish Constitution of May 3 which is prefaced by Palatine Sobieski as having a “happy tendency”<sup>205</sup> and praised by the author in one of her

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<sup>202</sup> Porter, 93.

<sup>203</sup> Porter, 97.

<sup>204</sup> Porter, 98.

<sup>205</sup> Porter, 24.

footnotes as containing “many wise laws.”<sup>206</sup> But this same constitution is confirmed to be an offspring of the French constitution both by the author and the scholarly writing on the Partitions of Poland. One of the changes that strongly resembles the French tendencies was the fact that since the ratification of the Constitution, Polish nation was seen to be formed by all three estates. This was seen as dangerous, revolutionary and jacobinical by the conservative court in St. Petersburg.<sup>207</sup> The pro-Russian tutor of Pembroke Somerset, Andrew Loftus sees the Polish constitution as a specific manifestation of “that levelling power which pervades all Europe,”<sup>208</sup> thus referring to the revolutionary thoughts that were spreading out of France.

Porter herself gives enough evidence in the old preface to warrant an educated guess about her political affiliations. The strong terms in which she describes her attitude towards the revolutionary thought in the preface speak for themselves. All the more surprising is therefore her endorsement of the almost republican Polish constitution. By doing that, Porter is playing with a political fire and she expresses some of the anxiety connected with such a position at the very beginning of the novel when she describes the governance of the Sobieski estates and the reforms the Palatine has carried out in order to improve the living conditions of his peasants. He “laid before them the deed of their enfranchisement: but before he signed it, he expressed a fear that they would abuse this liberty, of which they had not had experience, and become licentious.”<sup>209</sup> The peasants dispel his fears by promising to live in accordance with a kind of protestant working ethic (one of a series of interesting idealizations of Poland and its people that Porter creates in the novel). This is evidence of an anxiety which would be very common and understandable both in landowners and in the conservative middle-class.

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<sup>206</sup> Porter, 46.

<sup>207</sup> Viktor Sautin, *Evropské velmoci a dělení Polska*, Diploma thesis, 98, Web 21 March 2017, <https://is.cuni.cz/webapps/zzp/detail/68532>.

<sup>208</sup> Porter, 53.

<sup>209</sup> Porter, 2.

Another way in which Porter constructs her history as continuity in order “to promote a narrative of ongoing, disinterested patriotism”<sup>210</sup> and at the same time a way in which she prevents the events in the novel from being associated with thoughts of revolutionary expansion is to stress “Christian notions of heroism [...] and self-sacrifice.”<sup>211</sup> Thaddeus is naturally an exemplary knight of this order: “he knew no honour in slaughter; his glory lay in defence; and, when that was accomplished, his sword would return to its scabbard, unstained by the blood of a vanquished or an invaded people.”<sup>212</sup> Even though Thaddeus defends an almost revolutionary constitution, he will not try to impose the Polish constitution on the neighbouring states or overthrow their existing social order. The reforming measures adopted by Poland finally give the citizens some civil liberties and the narrator describes them as desirable. Moreover, the project of Polish defence is presented as an endeavour in accordance with Christian principles: “The best affections of man having put the sword into the hand of Thaddeus, his principles as a Christian did not remonstrate against his passion for arms.”<sup>213</sup>

This political fire is therefore neutralized by means of an emphasis on history as continuity (as we return to Porter’s drawing on Burke’s thought) and even more so, on history as parable. Paradoxically, the one point that is highly relevant for the political situation of Porter’s time and also seemingly contradictory if we look at her opinions as a whole provides also for an explanation of the otherwise context-free parabolic and universalistic reading that we are describing here. Price illustrates this on *The Scottish Chiefs* in the following way: “Christian tradition makes the historical model of Wallace’s heroic struggle more acceptable, more archetypal, and suggests the continuity of history, but it also directs the mass identification with the cause of liberty in a particular non-revolutionary and disinterested

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<sup>210</sup> Price (2011), 640.

<sup>211</sup> Price (2011), 640.

<sup>212</sup> Porter, 27.

<sup>213</sup> Porter, 37.

way.”<sup>214</sup> This is why Price calls her article “Resisting the ‘Spirit of Innovation’” because she traces the ways in which Porter tries to quench the potential revolutionary fire that might inflame her readers and make her reviewers condemn her as a Jacobin.

### **The construction of Poland and its history**

We may begin the discussion of the descriptions of Poland and its history by stating that it is highly idealized. There is a further parallel between *The Wild Irish Girl* and *Thaddeus of Warsaw* in the fact that both novels locate the real, authentic characters of a given country (Ireland and Poland) as not belonging “to the same time-scale as the other characters”<sup>215</sup>. McLean agrees with this description and mentions the similarity between both novels as well: they “locate Poland [Ireland] in an earlier, feudal stage of history.”<sup>216</sup> As a defender of Porter’s position and her importance in literary history, he does not forget to claim Porter’s primacy in using this element:

These passages complicate Garside’s contention that ‘it was Lady Morgan who first established the motif of the alien English visitor,’ [...] Before Horatio journeyed to Ireland, or Neville visited Italy, or Waverley made his way to Scotland, Somerset fell under the spell of another European nation preserved in an earlier stage of historical development.<sup>217</sup>

It is natural that it is especially Pembroke who portrays Thaddeus’ family and everyone whom he meets at Villanow as characters from a history book: “In these moments his heart bowed down before them; and all the pride of a Briton distended his breast, when he thought that such as these men are his ancestors were.”<sup>218</sup> This idealization and this move of Polish customs and surroundings into the chivalric past is especially pertinent because the past that Porter is writing about is rather recent as far as historical novels are concerned. It is therefore an almost necessary effect that makes the Poles more interesting and more worthy material to

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<sup>214</sup> Price (2011), 644.

<sup>215</sup> Leerssen, 37.

<sup>216</sup> McLean, 96.

<sup>217</sup> McLean, 96.

<sup>218</sup> Porter, 41.

write about. Pembroke ages also the hereditary seat of the Sobieskis when he arrives there: “[W]e entered it and were presently surrounded by a train of attendants in such sumptuous liveries, that I found myself all at once carried back into the fifteenth century, and might have fancied myself within the courtly halls of our Tudors and Plantagenets.”<sup>219</sup>

Apart from Pembroke’s moves back in time, it is also the narrator who does the same thing by using a certain term to describe the Sobieskis: a patriot. Leerssen usefully makes a sort of tour de force through the European history of the term. He defines the word as originally meaning “either compatriot or else a citizen of a country (as opposed to ‘subject of a sovereign’”<sup>220</sup> and distinguishes two kinds of meaning in the further developments of the term. One of them is applicable to the social and political divisions in the English society around the time of the Glorious Revolution: “the term patriot was ‘often applied to one who supported the rights of the country against the King and court. [...] A Patriot is in a way, a Whig, a defender of the rights of parliament against those of the crown.”<sup>221</sup> This is surely not a definition applicable to the Sobieski family, because even though they were very much involved in the reforms around the Constitution carried out by the diet and active in all of its resolutions and councils during the war, this diet is not presented as an opposition to the king. On the contrary, “the absolute or arbitrary power”<sup>222</sup> that Leerssen talks about and against which this type of Patriot is in opposition is definitely not the power of the sovereign Stanislaus Poniatowski, but that of the “proud woman of the North”<sup>223</sup> (meaning the Russian empress Catherine)

Leerssen however talks about yet another, “less party-political meaning [...] one which concentrated on the notion of disinterested service to one’s country. [...] Indeed, the leading

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<sup>219</sup> Porter, 47.

<sup>220</sup> Leerssen, 14.

<sup>221</sup> Leerssen, 14.

<sup>222</sup> Leerssen, 15.

<sup>223</sup> Porter, 92.

light in this type of Patriotism seems to have been a kind of *political philanthropy* [...]”<sup>224</sup>.

This is exactly how Porter tries to paint the Sobieski men and their friends:

He beheld, in the palace and retinue of Sobieski, all the magnificence which bespoke the descendant of a great king; and a power which wanted nothing of royal grandeur but the crown, which he had the magnanimity to think and to declare was then placed upon a more worthy brow. Whilst Somerset venerated this true patriot, the high tone his mind acquired was not lowered by associating with characters nearer the common standard. The friends of Sobieski were men of tried probity; men who, at all times, preferred their country's welfare before their own peculiar interest.<sup>225</sup>

We can easily pick out similar motifs in both passages: Palatine Sobieski is called a true patriot because he can forgo the honour of a crown that he could usurp for himself because he sees that other men seem to be better fit to wear it (at least according to Porter’s fictional version of history). Furthermore, he associates with fellow noblemen who are examples of Leerssen’s *disinterested service to one’s country* and *political philanthropy*. The seriousness with which this duty was taken by him as well as Thaddeus is also illustrated on a passage in the story where the Palatine is injured when defending the Polish army getting over a mountain pass. Thaddeus who rides at the back finds him senseless under other dead soldiers, calls the surgeon and wants to join his grandfather who is borne away on a stretcher. The brave man however recovers enough to remind him of his duty to the soldiers and commands him to stay with them because he must not be allowed to shirk his duty even for his “dearest interest.”<sup>226</sup>

Another, even more affecting and idealistic illustration of the patriotism of the Sobieskis occurs when the war council composed of noblemen faithful to the king try to decide on their next move when they hear that “the Russians [...] were pouring into the

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<sup>224</sup> Leerssen, 15.

<sup>225</sup> Porter, 41.

<sup>226</sup> Porter, 34.

country like a deluge”<sup>227</sup> in reaction to the Kosciuszko Uprising. The number of soldiers in the army is decreased and they lack weapons and other equipment.

In this exigency [...]Thaddeus Sobieski, who had been a silent observer, rose from his seat [...] and taking from his neck, and other parts of his dress, those magnificent jewels [...] he knelt down, and laying them at the feet of his Majesty, said in a suppressed voice, “These are trifles; but such as they are, and all of the like kind which I possess, I beseech your Majesty to appropriate to the public service.”<sup>228</sup>

This is another one of Porter’s idealizations of the Polish manners because according to scholarly historical writing, the political situation that culminated with the Partitions of Poland was caused by the inability of the Polish noblemen to give up their Golden Liberty and assign any law-making and constitutional powers to the parliament.<sup>229</sup>

Porter uses the word patriotism on another noteworthy occasion – at the very beginning of the novel, she describes the adoption of the constitution in glowingly positive terms, such as “a constitution was given to Poland to place her in the first rank of free nations.”<sup>230</sup> In a few lines she continues with the description of the historical and political situation: “But this reign of public and domestic peace was not to continue. A formidable, and apparently friendly, state envied the effects of a patriotism it would not imitate [...]”<sup>231</sup> Thus, the adoption of the constitution is equated with patriotism which in its turn, defined in this context comes to mean passing laws that limit the absolute power of the king and nobility and ensure equal civil rights to all three estates. The conservative Russia under Catherine is therefore defined as an unpatriotic state that can only assert itself through the subjugation of other free states. This assumption is confirmed by Thaddeus’ musings on the difference between the motives of the Russian soldiers and officers and the spirit that drives the Polish army: “he could only imagine how that spirit must shrink from reflection, which animates the

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<sup>227</sup> Porter, 69.

<sup>228</sup> Porter, 69.

<sup>229</sup> Sautin, 12.

<sup>230</sup> Porter, 2

<sup>231</sup> Porter, 2.

self-condemned slave to fight, not merely to fasten chains on others, but to rivet his own the closer.<sup>232</sup> The Russians must, in Thaddeus' eyes be aware of their enslaved state, their lack of freedom and that should ideally (but this proves false) make them less motivated to fight and therefore less likely to win.

Another way in which Palatine Sobieski is constructed as a Patriot are his agricultural improvements. Leerssen lists this among the ways in which a philanthropic patriotism tried to contribute to the improvement of the society and bases this idea on Jonathan Swift's praise of "whoever could make two Ears of Corn or two Blades of Grass grow upon a Spot of Ground, where only one grew before."<sup>233</sup> The way in which the Palatine governs his estates are described in this way: "He threw down their mud hovels and built comfortable villages; he furnished them with seed, cattle, and implements of husbandry."<sup>234</sup> These changes are implemented on the basis of trust in the industriousness of the peasants. In this way, he manages to instil the sense of responsibility for their welfare into them. There is yet another small detail that defines Sobieski as a patriot – he is not directly involved in the government of Poland except for his position as a personal friend of the king. Porter mentions this when she introduces the Palatine as the descendant of the great king John Sobieski: "Another generation saw the spirit of this lamented hero revive in the person of his descendant, Constantine, Count Sobieski [...] in a comparatively private station, as Palatine of Masovia [...]"<sup>235</sup> In comparison with his forefather King Sobiesky, Thaddeus' grandfather does not have to bear the whole burden of governing Poland, he does not have public duty and office lying on his shoulders.

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<sup>232</sup> Porter, 37.

<sup>233</sup> Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, (Cambridge: Chadwick-Healey, 1996) 169, Literature Online, Web, 6 April 2017, [http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res\\_ver=0.2&res\\_id=xri:lion&rft\\_id=xri:lion:ft.pr:Z000047221:0&rft.accountid=35514](http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&res_id=xri:lion&rft_id=xri:lion:ft.pr:Z000047221:0&rft.accountid=35514). Quoted in Leerssen, 16.

<sup>234</sup> Porter, 1.

<sup>235</sup> Porter, 1.

All of these definitions coalesce to reinforce the idea that Porter's Poland represented by Sobieskis is removed further into the past from the historical period in which the novel really takes place. This is confirmed by how Leerssen actually defines the meaning of the word Patriot at a time of the second and third partitions of Poland: "[...] slowly but surely a Patriot, during the last decades of the century, could come to mean, quite simply, a republican revolutionary – a supporter either of the American Revolution or of the French one."<sup>236</sup> We can see that the way in which Porter constructs the patriotism of the Sobieskis has nothing to do with the politics of the end of the century. Their patriotism is again much more timeless, virtuous and unconnected to a party. It is defined in such terms that were relevant a few decades earlier (Leerssen's "non-governmental political philanthropy"<sup>237</sup>) and as such constitute yet another move back into the past, a joint effort of both Pembroke Somerset and the narrator.

### **The juxtaposition of the domestic and the military**

What further characterizes the novel in the first historical volume (we can see this only as a setup for the larger structure of the novel and its division into two parts) is the connection between the privately domestic, familial and emotional setting and the public, military and virile setting. The first is usually associated with and introduced by the character of the Countess Therese Sobieski, whose life's story we learn in the opening pages of *Thaddeus of Warsaw*. The story begins at Villanow on the eve of the departure of the male part of the family – Thaddeus, the Palatine and their domestics and retinue – from the family circle presided by the Countess. Figuratively speaking, we see Thaddeus issuing out of her arms into the public world to begin his promising career of public service (as was expected of him) with the army. The military and the domestic clash unpleasantly in the eyes of the mother when we

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<sup>236</sup> Leerssen, 17.

<sup>237</sup> Leerssen, 16.

first see Thaddeus from her perspective: “She sighed as she gazed on her son, who stood at some distance, fitting to his youthful thigh a variety of sabres which his servant, a little time before, had laid upon the table.”<sup>238</sup> Just before Thaddeus enters society, he plunges deeper into the domestic territory by means of his mother’s letter which recounts her youth, her past and the way in which her son came to the world. She tells him the little she knows about his father, exhorts him not to follow his dishonourable example and offers a different model of male virtue, her son’s namesake, Tadeusz Kosciuszko. When Thaddeus and his mother are supposed to take leave of each other, they are both (being highly endowed with sensibility) so affected by the goodbye that she faints and it takes a story about the kidnapping of king Poniatowski to dispel the clouds that had gathered on Thaddeus’ brow because of “the parting agony of his mother.”<sup>239</sup> The domestic sensibility of the bond between a mother and a son is thus suppressed by the male-oriented military activity.

One might suppose that it will be the last time Countess Sobieski is mentioned in this history as we leave her at Villanow at the beginning of the campaign but that proves not to be true. Her domestic cares for her father and her son are many times juxtaposed with the momentous political and military events of volume one, thus adding a more realistic sense of history not being reduced to movements and manoeuvres of the army, but containing a substance of more or less ordinary lives still going on. The first instance where the familial and the public are laid side by side after this first farewell we have described and the respite from fighting which included Pembroke’s visit to Villanow occurs after the second partition. The diet has been forced to sign the document confirming the cession of most lands belonging to the Commonwealth and as the wheels of history keep on grinding towards their goal, the narrator casts a glance on the Countess and her contracting world: she was “awaiting with awful anxiety the termination of those portentous events, which so deeply involved her own

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<sup>238</sup> Porter, 2-3.

<sup>239</sup> Porter, 14.

comforts with those of her country. Her father was in prison, her son at a distance with the army.”<sup>240</sup> The typically female point of view is an enrichment that gives depth to an otherwise schematically idealistic depiction of the war.

The connection between her family members and the affairs of the country as a whole threatens to prove fateful to the Countess. The people that the country at large in its emergency celebrated as heroes and to whose banner they flocked were her dearest possession and the characteristics that made them even dearer and more admirable to her and to everyone were those that simultaneously put them in greatest danger:

The Countess had again to bid adieu to a son, who was now become as much the object of her admiration, as of her love. In proportion as glory surrounded him, and danger courted his steps, the strings of affection drew him closer to her soul [...]. Her anxious and waiting heart paid dearly in tears and sleepless nights, for the honour with which she was saluted at every turning, as the mother of Thaddeus: that Thaddeus, who was not more the spirit of enterprise, and the rallying point of resistance, than he was to her, the gentlest, the dearest, the most amiable of sons.<sup>241</sup>

In this quotation we see all the aspects of Thaddeus’ character – both its public and its domestic side which are consistent with each other and remain so throughout the whole novel, even in London when he no longer has the opportunity to exert his influence in the public sphere as in Poland. Therese Sobiesky retains her importance until the bitter end of the war, because the last action in which Thaddeus is engaged is the defence of Villanow, after the death of his grandfather, now only the abode of his mother. Her symbolic presence is felt to the last when, minutes after his mother’s death and as his ancestral home goes up in flames, Thaddeus bitterly remarks: ““See what a funeral pile Heaven has given to the manes of my dear mother!”<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> Porter, 65.

<sup>241</sup> Porter, 70.

<sup>242</sup> Porter, 83.

## Depth-providing devices

We must also account for the three devices used at the beginning of the novel; the letter from Therese Sobieski, the story of the kidnapping of Stanislaus Poniatowski and the letters from Pembroke Somerset and his tutor Andrew Loftus. Both the first two of those devices are problematic from the narrative point of view, especially the first story which dives deep into the history of one of the characters before her position and relations to other characters are established enough. The letter to Thaddeus with the enclosed letter from Robert Sackville, his father, however serves to give depth to the personal history of those abruptly introduced characters which is especially necessary with the Countess because in the historically and politically infused volume one she will not play a very prominent role except for the juxtaposition of the domestic with the public that has already been discussed. Her story also serves as a conservative and didactic warning to young girls, the supposed readers of this novel, but that has already been discussed in the previous chapter. The theme of fatherhood introduced in the letter also serves as a kind of framing device which links the beginning and the end of the novel. It sets up a plotline of unsolved mystery which remains so until the end of the book and it is therefore one of its structuring principles.

As the letter of the Countess gives depth to the domestic sphere of the Sobieski family, the story of Stanislaus' kidnapping gives depth and more context to the history of Poland by diving deeper into it. The historical events follow one another in quick succession and Porter does not choose to dwell on the descriptions of political situation that Scott includes in *Waverley*. Neither does she give as much background information about the upbringing and education of Thaddeus as the reader of *Waverley* is provided with about Edward. Characters' background and political situation are sketched in these brief exposés. In this story, Porter acquaints the reader with the history of the political obstacles that Poniatowski had to face in the lead-up to the first partition of Poland. By recording a story featuring his enemies and

their violence against the royal person, she allows the voices of the opposing party (the conspirators of the Bar Confederation) to be heard, however briefly it happens and however much they are put forth as villains and traitors by the narrator. What she furthermore also achieves is to portray the king's character more deeply and to persuade the reader that what his friend Sobieski claims about him is true:

He is not merely a king whom you follow to battle because he will lead you to honour: the hearts of his people acknowledge him in a superior light; they look on him as their patriarchal head; as a being delegated by God to study what is their greatest good; to bestow it; and, when it is attacked, to defend it.<sup>243</sup>

In the same way the nature of the friendship between the king and the Palatine is also illustrated, and the narrative arc of general Butzou, the preserver of the king's life is introduced, which will become important later on.

The third such insertion comes in the form of Pembroke's letters. We have already mentioned some of its effects, such as the construction of Polish society as one at an earlier stage of development, but apart from that, the letters serve the already mentioned aim of providing more context and depth to Pembroke's character. In a style typical for him (slightly more comically-satirical than the serious and elevated manner in which Thaddeus is recorded to think and speak) he addresses his mother, thus introducing his family background in its turn. Pembroke himself is presented as a sentimental man:

The cheerful faces of the farmers, and the blessings which I hear them implore on the family, when I am walking in the fields with the young count [...] have even drawn a few delighted drops from the eyes of your thoughtless son! I know that you think I have nothing sentimental about me [but y]ou see, mamma, that I both remember and adopt your lessons."<sup>244</sup>

as well as a Christian: "It is then that the spirit of peace settles upon the heart, unfetters the thoughts, and elevates the soul to the Creator. It is then that we behold the Parent of the

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<sup>243</sup> Porter, 23.

<sup>244</sup> Porter, 43.

universe in his works.”<sup>245</sup> In the first letter, Pembroke takes the role and the task of a tourist guide upon himself and makes a sketch of the lands of the Palatine as well as his seat, Villanow “in the usual descriptive style! You know there is only one way to describe houses and lands and rivers; so no blame can be thrown on me for taking the beaten path, where there is no other.”<sup>246</sup> This passage is typical for Pembroke because of the levity that characterizes his style in both his writing and speaking.

Where his first letter was focused on the objective descriptions of people and scenes on the outside, there the second letter goes under the surface and overflows with admiration for Thaddeus whose behaviour during the national crisis forms the main subject of the letter. Pembroke describes especially Thaddeus’ conduct towards the ladies and all his other admirers and discloses why Thaddeus’ heart is shielded from the shafts of love – it is because his whole being is completely occupied with patriotic love for his country. There is also an attempt to sketch some of the political complexities involving the Polish state as well as the role of the Sobieskis in them and how this influences Thaddeus in particular. Inserted in this second epistle is another letter from his tutor, Andrew Loftus. In it, we find out that the first letter to Pembroke’s mother has never been delivered because it has been detained by him. In giving the reasons for this detainment connected to his involvements at the court of St Petersburg and around the general of the army sent out to conquer Poland, Count Branicki, Loftus is allowed (as well as the ringleaders in the conspiracy against the Polish king) some space to introduce the other side of the argument. He reports the reactions of the Russian nobles at court to the reforms of the Polish parliament: “When Poland had the insolence to rebel against its illustrious mistress, you remember that every man of rank in St. Petersburg was highly incensed”<sup>247</sup> because from their point of view “the great Catherine [...] deigned to

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<sup>245</sup> Porter, 45.

<sup>246</sup> Porter, 44.

<sup>247</sup> Porter, 54.

offer her protection” to the “paltry country”<sup>248</sup> where Pembroke now resides. In the eyes of the sympathizers with the Russian case, Catherine is a mighty monarch of the old, traditional, absolutist kind threatened by the already mentioned “levelling power which pervades all Europe”<sup>249</sup> which in case of their inactivity might result in their seeing “Poland in the hands of a rabble.”<sup>250</sup>

Porter who is otherwise consistent in her portrayal of the Polish cause to such a degree that it could be called one-dimensional, shows us briefly that there are always multiple points of view at one historical event. However authoritative her narrator is and however much she tries to restrict the possible interpretations of the action in accordance with the way she constructs her image of Poland, she still includes this different point of view. But the words and political opinions are discredited by the actions and the character of the one who utters and holds them. Loftus is later revealed to be one of the biggest villains and one of the weakest and most contemptible characters in the story because the reader finds out that it has been him who has been preventing Thaddeus and Pembroke from getting in touch in London. Even in volume one however, there is judgment passed on him by his charge himself who, after reading his letter, feels like laughing at the vanity of his preceptor and being mad about his error of judgment caused by a misrepresentation of the Polish affairs which he sums up in the following way in his reply to Loftus: “I understood from you and Branicki that you were leading me against a set of violent, discontented men of rank, who, [...] under the name of freedom, were introducing anarchy throughout a country which Catharine would graciously have protected. All this I find is false.”<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> Porter, 54.

<sup>249</sup> Porter, 53.

<sup>250</sup> Porter, 55.

<sup>251</sup> Porter, 57.

## **Erring young men – Edward Waverley and Pembroke Somerset**

The discussion of the way in which Porter presents the arguments of the two enemy sides in the Polish-Russian war brings us to a comparison of the way in which the uncertainty, doubts and suspense attendant on people involved in a civil conflict are presented. This is especially apparent with characters who all of a sudden find themselves on a different side of the barricade than the one they thought they would stand on. A good example of this in Scott's oeuvre is Edward Waverley whose situation (both when he held an English officer prisoner and when he was himself held prisoner) will be compared with Pembroke's. Let us first describe the positions in which Pembroke and Edward appear after their first battles. The similarities in the situations in the prison camp after the battles of Zieleme and Prestonpans are as follows: both protagonists, Thaddeus and Edward have by their mercy saved a brave officer on the enemy side. Not only that, they have even saved the lives of Pembroke and Colonel Talbot that their other, less considerate and hastier followers would have taken. The prisoners are secured and taken away before a conversation between the protagonist and his friend-to-be.

So far both novels follow a similar model, but if we consider the sides that the prisoners are on, we will discover important differences. Scott creates a highly complex situation as far as the loyalties of Waverley are concerned by having him change sides already before the battle. The protagonist through whose eyes we are viewing all of the action is therefore the one who has been prevailed on to volunteer in the service of an absolutist monarch. Pembroke is only a secondary character and while his reasons for volunteering "in the cause of insulted Russia"<sup>252</sup> are the same as Waverley's: "his youth, and having thought little on the subject"<sup>253</sup>, combined with a partisan education ("the principles of Mr. Loftus, my

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<sup>252</sup> Porter, 57.

<sup>253</sup> Porter, 38.

governor, are strongly in favour of the court of Petersburg<sup>254</sup>) and his passion for the army, his doubts as to which side he should be on are resolved much more easily and quicker than those of Scott's hero. The doubts are overcome almost immediately after Pembroke's being taken prisoner and as soon as the Sobieskis find out that he is not a Russian, but an Englishman. The idea of England as a land of liberty supported and promoted by all its inhabitants is so firmly established in the minds of the Poles that they impute Pembroke's support of the Russian cause to folly because otherwise an Englishman would never "oppose that freedom here which he would have asserted in his own nation."<sup>255</sup>

Waverley's situation is very different because in Scott's representation of the Jacobite rebellion, much emphasis is put on it being a civil conflict and the troubles caused to a country and a people involved in such a conflict are one of the main themes of the novel. If we could assign with the narrator who is on the right side and who is not, in *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, Pembroke would not be in the right to volunteer and Thaddeus is presented as involved in a rightful defence of one's country. In *Waverley* however, the prisoner is on the right side and the one in charge of him has made an error of judgment, but be that as it may, the situation in *Waverley* is much less clear-cut. It is clearly the intention of Scott's narrator to show the ambiguities and doubts caused by such heart-breaking scenes as the dying sergeant from Waverley's troop in the hovel by the road or the death of his former commander, Colonel Gardiner or the brave last stand and subsequent solicitude of Colonel Talbot for the fate of Sir Everard's nephew. Waverley's changing of colours involves his whole family who suffer the consequences. Pembroke escapes these trappings by being abroad and his military experience thus rather resembles a spree of a young and careless man (Waverley's trip to Donald Bean Lean's cave began in the same way but ended very differently) especially because of its being kept secret from his parents.

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<sup>254</sup> Porter, 38.

<sup>255</sup> Porter, 38.

### *The Old English Baron*

This novel by Clara Reeve has been chosen for discussion because of the similarity between its presentation of the nature of history and that in *Thaddeus of Warsaw*. Both novels also concur in their dissimilarity as far as Scott's version of history is concerned. The background to this claim is provided by Price again, who, as with *The Scottish Chiefs* emphasises the continuity of history in those minor works with historical themes. According to her, novels by Clara Reeve, Thomas Leland and Horace Walpole (along with Porter, as shown in her other article I am discussing) present continuity as "the best chance of preserving freedom"<sup>256</sup> whereas "[f]or Lukács, it is Sir Walter Scott who creates the historical novel by representing abrupt political transition as inevitable development."<sup>257</sup> She soon specifies what she means by continuity in the case of these three novelists – it is "the notion of inherited liberties."<sup>258</sup>

These liberties are highly important for the *The Old English Baron* which is more often associated with the genre of the gothic novel. With its more famous predecessor and a work that Reeve explicitly draws on in her preface, *The Castle of Otranto*, it shares a plot that is, generally speaking, concerned with a re-establishment of ancient lineages and estates that were previously usurped by people who have no right to them. This was both one of the suppressed anxieties of the era as well as a topic relevant for the contemporary politics, as Price explains: "For Walpole and the historical novelists of the mid-eighteenth century, the transition from Stuart to Hanoverian rule eventually made possible by the Glorious Revolution was the event that shaped historical fiction." Price sees Reeve as anxious about the civil liberties and the correct "distribution of power" within the state governed by George III whom she saw as leaning towards absolutism. Another reason for anxiety was the possibility

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<sup>256</sup> Fiona Price, "Ancient Liberties? Rewriting the Historical Novel: Thomas Leland, Horace Walpole and Clara Reeve", *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 19, Web, Wiley Online Library, 16 March, 2017.

<sup>257</sup> Price (2011), 19.

<sup>258</sup> Price (2011), 19.

of a break with the current Hannoverian line of succession caused by the still lingering shadows of the Jacobean revolts. Such a historical development might result in an abrupt political transition that would threaten the liberties in another way. Therefore, Price claims that these novels evoke rupture of the correct lines of succession only to contain it within their plot. We will compare the formulaic plot of these novels which express these ideas with the plot of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* in order to see how the question of inheritance is resolved in both cases.

The main focus of the novel is therefore the question of the ruptured line of succession which is ultimately re-established along with the transfer of the estate that pertains to this legacy into the hands of its rightful owner. The first part of the story is introduced by Sir Philip Harclay, a Christian knight who has spent his life in Palestine. Upon his return home to England, he discovers that the friend of his youth, Arthur Lord Lovel is dead. He travels to Castle Lovel in order to learn some details of his friend's death and is invited to talk to the current owner, Lord Fitz-Owen, who bought the estate from Arthur's brother, Walter Lovel who inherited the property after his brother's death. The Lord Fitz-Owen also married the sister of Walter Lovel and they are therefore kinsmen which will later prove important for the plot. Before Arthur Lovel died, he left behind his pregnant wife who did not long survive him, but not before she gave birth to their son. On his visit, Sir Philip notices a promising youth of low birth among the domestics of Lord Fitz-Owen, called Edmund Twyford. He offers him his protection and a place in his household, but Edmund, out of love and gratitude to his master and his family refuses Sir Philip's offer. He departs, having ascertained that nothing remains of his old friend's estate that has not been sold into the hands of comparative strangers.

Price suggests that in the three novels that she discusses, *William Longsword*, *The Castle of Otranto* and *The Old English Baron*, the correct (meaning the most ancient) line of

succession is impossible to prove without the interference of supernatural elements. Reeve's novel is very insistent in connecting the appearances of the ghosts of Lord and Lady Lovel with the intervention of divine justice into human affairs in order to help establish the legacy to its rightful owner and to avenge the (as it turns out) violent death of Lord Lovel. An important role in the discovery that Edmund Twyford is in fact the rightful heir of Castle Lovel is played (as well as in *The Castle of Otranto*) by a suit of armor. Reeve however avoids the ludicrous and grotesque elements that Walpole employs and the suit is only found in a secret cabinet with a blood stain at the breast-plate. Edmund's "return to power is ensured by ghostly intrusion,"<sup>259</sup> as Price puts it.

We would now like to compare the role of providence insofar as it orders the actions in the novel. It is connected with the supernatural elements in *The Old English Baron* where the divine hand governs the appearance of the ghosts in order to help Edmund prove his identity and pass the ordeal of spending the night in the wing where his father is buried. The legitimacy of Edmund's claim is confirmed by his supporters, but even his adversaries have to eventually recognize the justice of his claims, because such wondrous circumstances have to be the working of divine will. Edmund's reliance on the invisible hand at work behind the scenes helps him to bear the injustice of his enemies in the family of his patron and to wait patiently with the declaration of his claim. Edmund's supporters piously consider themselves as executing the designs of Providence in bringing about its purposes. One quotation will illustrate all these claims. The following words have been uttered by Sir Philip Harclay at the beginning of the trial of Edmund's claims by the group of just Barons: "You will hear things that will surprise you as much as they do me [...]. and you will unite with us in wondering at

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<sup>259</sup> Price (2011), 19.

the ways of Providence, and submitting to its decrees, in punishing the guilty, and doing justice to the innocent and oppressed.”<sup>260</sup>

In the historical part of *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, divine providence is not shown as being concerned with the fates of individuals and with restoring rightful lines of succession, because it is shown to suffer “a brave people and a virtuous monarch”<sup>261</sup> to become subjected to a usurping enemy power. When they are deprived of political power, however, even the Polish parliament has no other choice than to resign the country “to our children and the justice of Heaven.”<sup>262</sup> For the active Polish noblemen this is the last recourse, because before this fateful hour, they have been masters of their own fate with political agency, whereas Edmund’s claim could only be confirmed by the divine intervention, because as a supposedly low-born peasant he had none. It is inexplicable to the virtuous and pious heroes of *Thaddeus* as well as to the reader who concurs with the narrator’s reading and presentation of the events that it could have been the will of Heaven to allow for the end of Polish sovereignty, but they resign themselves to its “mysterious decrees.”<sup>263</sup> Their behaviour as well as that of the king after this last calamity echoes the trajectory sketched in the discussion of the trials of Thaddeus’ virtue. At the moment when their cause is lost and when Poland no longer exists as an independent state, they no longer try to oppose the divine will.

As well as in Porter’s novel, we may find some clashes of the historical matter with the sentimental conventions in *The Old English Baron*. Reeve never manages (or perhaps it is not her aim) to command a sufficient breadth of scope to convincingly sketch some wider historical background (her novel is situated into “the minority of Henry the Sixth, King of

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<sup>260</sup> Clara Reeve, *The Old English Baron*, (Cambridge: Chadwyck Healy, 1996) 45, Web, Literature Online, 26 March, 2017, <http://literature.proquest.com/searchFulltext.do?id=Z000044043&childSectionId=Z000044043&divLevel=0&queryId=2981111552166&trailId=15A718D604C&area=prose&forward=textsFT&queryType=findWork>.

<sup>261</sup> Porter, 72.

<sup>262</sup> Porter, 64.

<sup>263</sup> Porter, 84.

England, when the renowned John, Duke of Bedford was Regent of France”<sup>264</sup>). This background is given at the very beginning of the story and then the narrator quickly narrows down his focus to Sir Philip Harclay. The European matter enters the story once again in the form of the Hundred Years’ War when “the great Duke of Bedford [died] [...]. He was succeeded by Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York, as Regent of France, of which great part had revolted to Charles the Dauphin.”<sup>265</sup> These are however the only occasions when the political, public history intrudes on what could essentially be called a small sentimental community of people connected by the ties of blood and loyalty between masters and servants whose main goal is to live together in peace, honour and love. The greatest enemies are therefore not the French who defy the English claims on the French throne, but the disturbers of domestic peace in the family of Baron Fitz-Owen.

Todd identifies “a fantasy of service as familial and feudal”<sup>266</sup> which informs and explains some of the ways in which the Fitz-Owen family is described. In the first part of the manuscript on which the novel is supposedly based, the difference between members of the family and servants disappears because the servants (such as Father Oswald or Edmund) are treated with as much kindness and confidence as if they were tied by blood to the Baron. His sons, on the other hand, especially Robert, the oldest one is commanded to obey his father’s wishes. The service of all the serfs at the Lovel estate is presented as “an ideal sentimental community and the servant ties as filial and parental. [...] In the fiction of Sterne the tie of master and man overtops in sentimental display anything lovers can produce.”<sup>267</sup> Perfect harmony reigns in the family of the Baron upon Sir Philip’s arrival at Castle Lovel but it is later disturbed when some members of the family attempt to slander the honour and the good character of Edmund and manage to plant an aversion to him in Sir Robert. Todd connects

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<sup>264</sup> Reeve, 1.

<sup>265</sup> Reeve, 32.

<sup>266</sup> Todd, (1986), 13.

<sup>267</sup> Todd (1986), 13-14.

this picture that Reeve creates to sentimentalism expressing “a longing not only for a domestic close-knit family but for a community firmly linked by sentiment and familial structures.”<sup>268</sup>

It is therefore much more Reeve’s aim to re-establish this domestic peace that is threatened in the family of the Baron and to contain the rupture caused by the false succession to the inheritance of Arthur Lord Lovel than to present any descriptions of “‘authentic’ characters within a factual-led framework, and write stories about them which will communicate as much as is necessary of the past”<sup>269</sup> which is what de Groot calls a “good working definition of the historical novel”<sup>270</sup> of Scott’s type. The only chance that Reeve has to present historical circumstances of the Hundred Years’ War and how the French campaigns are led is not taken up by the narrator. She avoids this necessity through the device of the manuscript. At certain points in the story where the time moves forward more swiftly or where it is necessary to transport the characters from France to England the narrator inserts a note on the manuscript on which the story is written, such as: “From this place the characters in the manuscript are effaced by time and damp. Here and there some sentences are legible, but not sufficient to pursue the thread of the story.”<sup>271</sup> Sometimes these breaks occur precisely at the points where the narrator would otherwise be expected to describe the campaigns in France and the attendant historical circumstances.

Even when the family business collides with the historical incidents, the narrator chooses to focus on the petty quarrels of Edmund’s enemies with him and makes the military actions subordinate to their plots against him:

“There is a party to be sent out to-morrow night, to intercept a convoy of provisions for the relief of Rouen; I will provoke Mr. Edmund to make one of this party, and

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<sup>268</sup> Todd (1986), 16.

<sup>269</sup> De Groot, 19.

<sup>270</sup> De Groot, 19.

<sup>271</sup> Reeve, 33.

when he is engaged in the action, I and my companions will draw off, and leave him to the enemy, who I trust will so handle him, that you shall no more be troubled with him.”<sup>272</sup>

Reeve does not concern herself with the strategic importance of Rouen and with setting down the exact time and circumstances of the engagement with the French according to available historical record, as both Scott and Porter would do. She uses the scenery of a well-known conflict (echoing the question of the right lines of succession and a right of inheritance, this time on a European scale) in order to pursue her theme and her small group of heroes. We see that the sentimental concern with familial ties which is mostly contained in the second part in *Thaddeus of Warsaw* is the predominant theme here contaminating even the most historical parts of the novel.

Edmund’s claim to the legacy is judged just and rightful by the Barons and after the rupture in the line of succession caused by the unlawful ambition of Walter Lovel is healed and contained, he is now the uncontested owner of the estate and the heir of the house of Lovel. The family line running from Arthur to Edmund which has for a time deviated into the family of Walter and thus, by extension to the Fitz-Owens, is re-established. Now the baronial court must consider the details of the financial transaction which accompany a transfer of property. The two arguments set against one another are: “who is to repay [Baron Fitz-Owen] the money for” the purchase of “the castle and the estate of the house of Lovel”<sup>273</sup> and “who is to pay the arrears of [Edmund’s] estate which he has unjustly been kept out of these one-and-twenty years?”<sup>274</sup> Fortunately, in a move that does justice to both the financial demands and the considerations of his posterity (joining his descendants with the virtuous part of Lovel family represented by Arthur’s son, just as he had previously been connected to the destructively ambitious part, represented by Walter) Baron Fitz-Owen can settle these

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<sup>272</sup> Reeve, 35.

<sup>273</sup> Reeve, 184.

<sup>274</sup> Reeve, 184.

questions and demands by giving his daughter Emma to Edmund, after having been assured that she also has a regard for him. In this way, he connects his descendants to Edmund's family and ensures that through his daughter they will share the inheritance of the estate after all. The only young woman in the story is therefore strategically used in order to settle the finer financial points of the inheritance, as the following quotation illustrates: "[...] he proposes that, in lieu of arrears and other expectations, my father shall give his dear Emma to the heir of Lovel, in full of all demands."<sup>275</sup> This is the way in which, according to Price, the proto-historical novels speak into the contemporary affairs of their day – by placing emphasis on the inherited liberties and securing them for the next generations through reverting the lines of succession to the correct channel sanctioned by the hand of Providence and at the same time, preventing a violent overthrow of the existing power by reconciling the potentially embittered opposing sides through marriage.

The role that Emma plays at the end of the story in connection to money and inheritance and the slighted rights of long-lost relatives is to a certain extent similar to the role played by Mary Beaufort at the end of *Thaddeus of Warsaw*. As a long-lost and neglected son of Thérèse Sobieski and Robert Somerset, once Thaddeus is finally recognized and accepted by his father, the scenario that should ensue according to the formula given in the novels that Price discusses would be that Thaddeus succeeds Pembroke as the heir of Somerset. Thus, the rightful line of succession would be re-established again. However, Porter presents us with a different story. What further aggravates this already complex situation for Sir Robert is that acknowledging Thaddeus publicly as his first-born son would mean taking the Somerset estate away from Pembroke who has grown up there with the thought that one day he will inherit it as a matter of course. Thaddeus chooses to retain his original identity (symbolized

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<sup>275</sup> Reeve, 195.

by his surname that he refuses to surrender) passed onto him by his mother which is all that he has left of the inheritance of the house of Sobieski.

Seeing that he cannot do right by Thaddeus by repaying his neglect with his estate and establishing a new line of succession of the Somerset family with him as its head, Sir Robert gladly observes that his ward Mary, a rich heiress with her own estate and fortune to command and to bestow (that he manages in her name) and his first-born son love each other. With this slight but important variation, the scenario suggested by Price is not fulfilled. Sir Robert's involvement with Thaddeus' life as well as the involvement of Edmund's father Arthur in *The Old English Baron* is characterized most of all by absence which is even more conspicuous and baffling given the fact that unlike the second father and son pair, the father of Thaddeus is not dead. His absence from the lines of succession in which Thaddeus is involved is further symbolized by the solution by which, rather than doing right by his son himself, he uses Mary and her property to do that. Consequently, Thaddeus retains his mother's maiden name and it is the second son, Pembroke who further carries the Somerset line. We see Porter offering a different solution to a situation which is similar in both *The Old English Baron* and in *Thaddeus of Warsaw*. She plays with the conventions of the novel dealing with a question of rightful succession by discarding them and pursuing a path which is in keeping with the firm, virtuous and honourable character of her protagonist.

## **Chapter 4**

### **The sentimental legacy**

The chapter is called "The sentimental legacy" because *Thaddeus of Warsaw* was written long after the period that Todd identifies as the most representative for the novel of sensibility: "the cult of sensibility was largely defined by fiction from the 1740s to the

1770s.”<sup>276</sup> However, in another study of hers, Todd also claims that “all the women writers continued to employ some sentimental elements within their novels and all stayed largely within the confines of the feminine romantic plot.”<sup>277</sup> The novel of sensibility therefore functions as a kind of frame or background against which it is useful to place *Thaddeus of Warsaw* in order to contextualize it. I distinguish between three kinds of legacy; (meaning a set of techniques, themes, scenes and concerns typical for sentiment) firstly a political one, secondly a technical legacy which helps us to identify the procedures and techniques forming the stock repertory of sentimental novels and thirdly an emotional legacy defined by Butler concerning the heightened interest in a “representation of the inner life.”<sup>278</sup>

### **Political legacy**

The end of the era of sensibility was infamous. It has been used as a target in the revolutionary 1790s, an era of heightened politicization of cultural and public life, both by the supporters of the French revolution as well as its decided adversaries. It is however important to note, as Todd says, that the initial reaction to the revolution in England had been far from negative: “The early Revolution had been welcomed by many groups: aristocratic liberals, middle-class reformers, sentimental ladies, and young poets.”<sup>279</sup> The shaking off of the yoke of the absolutist rule pleased these groups, but as its “goals [became] more radical and bloody” the political climate in England changed and its government “came to define itself in increasingly patriotic and anti-French terms.”<sup>280</sup> The critique of sentimentalism from the revolutionaries was voiced by Mary Wollstonecraft in her response to Burke’s conservative book *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, written in a nostalgic and sentimental style. In her adherence to the radical values, Wollstonecraft “argued against a blind following of

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<sup>276</sup> Todd (1986), 4.

<sup>277</sup> Janet Todd, *The Sign of Angellica*, (London: Virago Press Limited, 1989) 234.

<sup>278</sup> Butler, 8.

<sup>279</sup> Todd (1989), 196.

<sup>280</sup> Todd (1989), 196.

tradition. She pointed out the rottenness in the British social and political system. Human nature could be improved with political change, [...] individuals were essentially equal and each had a rational right to determine his or her own destiny.”<sup>281</sup> The sentimental technique and style were connected to this political position occupied by Burke and therefore got criticised as well.

The radicals were not the only ones attacking sensibility. Both Todd and Butler agree that the new conservatives (according to Todd) and the anti-jacobins (according to Butler, both denoting the same group) under the impression of the terror of the Jacobin regime strategically associated the discredited and already controversial sensibility with the political extremes of revolutionary France. As Todd sums up, “the new conservatives managed to impose sensibility on radicalism and suggest that both were somehow French.”<sup>282</sup> Even the earlier writings of the sentimentalists was seen as preferring individual feeling to the propriety of tradition as a guide to action and as such the authors “came to be read as moral relativists who threatened to undermine established religion and society.”<sup>283</sup> Ellis sums the whole situation up by observing that the cult of sensibility in the 1790s was being “simultaneously attacked by the radicals and the conservatives.”<sup>284</sup> His opinion on the political controversy around sentimentalism’s demise partially concurs with that of Butler, who states that “both man’s moral nature and his mental processes were the subject of much general intellectual inquiry, and some controversy, in the middle of the century.”<sup>285</sup> Butler mentions some controversy, Ellis, however, goes much further in detailing exactly what the nature of that controversy was. It is not necessary to go into much detail but he states that there was always already some ethical and moral ambiguity at the heart of sensibility and that the controversy

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<sup>281</sup> Todd (1989), 198.

<sup>282</sup> Todd (1989), 199.

<sup>283</sup> Butler, 8.

<sup>284</sup> Markman Ellis, *The Politics of Sensibility* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 220.

<sup>285</sup> Butler, 7.

(which is constituted by a debate “centred on the ethics of fiction and novel writing”)<sup>286</sup> “is constitutive of the Revolution controversy and not just a symptom of it.”<sup>287</sup> In other words the politically tense situation of the revolutionary years was only highlighting the unstable and hybrid nature of sentimentalism.

## Technical legacy

### Sensibility and the body

One of the sentimental themes that are relevant for *Thaddeus of Warsaw* is the connection of sensibility to bodily functions. Markman Ellis mentions the ideas of eighteenth century medical scientists who use “metaphors of sensibility” when studying

nerve functions, models of the nervous system, accounts of the ‘circulation’ of the blood and theories of the physiological organisation of the body as a whole [...] On these foundations is built the repertoire of conventions associated with the sentimental rhetoric of the body: fainting, weeping, sighing, hand-holding, mute gestures, [...] blushing and so on.<sup>288</sup>

Ellis then goes on to compare the function of blushing in Henry Brooke’s *Fool of Quality* and in *A Sentimental Journey*. In Brooke, blushing is elevated “into a version of the moral sense or principle of virtue” because it “demonstrates [a character’s] sensibility; and his sensibility demonstrates some principle within him, that disapproved and reproached him for what he had committed.”<sup>289</sup> The authors of the cult of sensibility use this connection as a shortcut. Instead of describing the emotional states of their characters they equalize the physical manifestations with the states.

This convention is used also in the description of Thaddeus’ feelings but only when it is clear from the context what this manifestation means. When Thaddeus meets Lady Sara Ross, it occurs also during one of the many instances when he has been very close to

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<sup>286</sup> Ellis, 192.

<sup>287</sup> Ellis, 198.

<sup>288</sup> Ellis, 19.

<sup>289</sup> Ellis, 20.

contacting or meeting Pembroke Somerset. Lady Sara speaks to Pembroke from the window in one of her attempts to attract Thaddeus' attention. He recognizes the voice of his former friend and stares towards the window, which Lady Sara mistakenly interprets as having awoken his interest. The sign that she uses for interpretation is his fixed look and a sigh: "The Count took his seat with a sigh and Lady Tinemouth did the same."<sup>290</sup> The reader should however be able to glean from the context that Thaddeus is sighing because of being disappointed by his friend's unfaithfulness.

Ellis goes on to talk about the novel's "generic quality of subversive instability and narrative inclusivity"<sup>291</sup> which makes it much less straightforward and more ambiguous than "the empiricist discourse of science"<sup>292</sup>. He shows this on Sterne's sentimental novel where we encounter a complex system of signifying blushes between complicitous characters,<sup>293</sup> specifically on the episode where Yorick is in his hotel room with the *fille de chambre*. According to the scientific paradigm, the body cannot lie, the psychological processes are mirrored in the physiological ones but this produces "alternative interpretations that oscillate but will not be resolved."<sup>294</sup> Porter never goes into such lengths, her characters might interpret the sentimental signs wrongly, in fact a lot of them do, but the narrator never leaves the reader in doubt as to the right interpretation. As a conservative writer of a moralistic novel, she holds the reins of meaning firmly in her hands.

### **Man of feeling**

Another trope of the cult of sensibility is that of a man of feeling misunderstood and rejected by the world that does not grasp his worth. We can see some similarities between this type of a hero and Thaddeus, even though this only happens in the second part of the novel, in

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<sup>290</sup> Porter, 171.

<sup>291</sup> Ellis, 21

<sup>292</sup> Ellis, 21.

<sup>293</sup> Ellis, 21.

<sup>294</sup> Ellis, 21.

the London episodes. Todd describes the novels with a man of feeling as the protagonist as grappling “with the philosophical and narrative problems of what to do with the man of feeling who has, in an unfeeling world, avoided manly power and assumed the womanly qualities of tenderness and susceptibility but who cannot be raped and abandoned.”<sup>295</sup> One of the ways in which the novels work the solution to these narrative problems into their structure is using a device of a test or a trial. Todd adds: “the real element and test of sentiment is in poverty, which becomes the proper situation for the man of feeling, just as sexual assault became the right test for the woman.”<sup>296</sup> However, the novels that she is analyzing differ considerably from Porter’s in that they create sentimental tableaux that stop the action in order for the reader to dwell on them and the emotions they create and to react to them. These scenes are not framed by any larger device and do not serve any other goal than to be enjoyed and to provide an emotional education for the reader. In *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, there is a sense of disasters being piled on the head of the protagonist as a trial of his sensibility and his virtue. The trials do elicit sympathy in the readers, but they are also supposed to convince them of how worthy and virtuous the protagonist is. In other words the technique that Porter uses is the same, but its goal is different.

One of the most consistent ways in which Thaddeus’ worth is undervalued by the world is that while being constantly presented as a model of virtue, delicacy and faithfulness, all these excellent characteristics do not at all help him in his dreary situation of an exile in London, except for providing mental support and consolation. Sometimes, these qualities even hinder him from earning some money. There are a few scenes where Thaddeus has to overcome the pride of a Polish nobleman in order to obtain the money that will pay for his rent and food. He stands in front of pawn-shops and print-shops, undergoing an inner struggle whether it is below his dignity or not to enter and try to do business with the people inside:

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<sup>295</sup> Todd (1986), 89.

<sup>296</sup> Todd (1986), 97.

“the sight of a respectable person, before whom he was to present himself as a man in poverty, as one who in a manner appealed to charity, all at once overcame the resolution of Sobieski, and he debated whether or not he should return.”<sup>297</sup> Thaddeus has so many honourable scruples that originate in the knowledge of his own worth that he is extremely unfit for business and for a fight for survival in this world.

The theme of poverty reaches its climax in another trope of sentimental fiction – the debtor’s prison. There are similar affecting scenes to be found in other sentimental novels, such as *The Vicar of Wakefield*. The situation of Primrose and Thaddeus is similar because both their imprisonments are due to the cruelty and hard-heartedness of their creditors. Thaddeus’s debts to an apothecary result in his incarceration in Newgate. The affecting nature of the scene where he is taken into prison is heightened by the contrast between Thaddeus and the officers who are arresting him. Their insults and coarseness and Thaddeus’ quiet dignity and resolve with which he manages the situation bring a very well-known comparison to the reader’s mind. Thaddeus’ position and behaviour in the prison is reminiscent of the position of Jesus Christ during his trial: “The brutal questions of the people in office, re-echoed by taunts from the wretches who had brought him to the prison, were of a strain so much beneath his answering, that he stood perfectly silent during the business.”<sup>298</sup> We might interpret this comparison as the climax of the whole strain of a novel about a man of feeling whose inner worth does not translate into the terms by which the world distributes power, honour and riches.

### **Repetition of deaths**

Another plot element that will certainly contribute to the goal of the novel of sensibility (creating scenes where the reader can consume and indulge in emotions induced by

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<sup>297</sup> Porter, 128.

<sup>298</sup> Porter, 309.

literature) is the deaths of characters that have been close or dear to the hero. We can subsume this motif under a more general idea of repetitions, “so [...] common in sentimental fiction”<sup>299</sup> which contribute to the same goal, as Todd mentions. After he has lost his grandfather and mother in Poland, Thaddeus witnesses three more deaths in England. Each of these deaths is significant through being connected to the overall arc of a trial that structures the plot. Each time that we see Thaddeus overcoming some difficulty or gaining a friend, death comes to test his Christian resignation and his trust in Heaven (these are considered some of the most important virtues by Porter.) The first death is that of little William Robson who has been “literally his only earthly comfort; for he saw that in him he could still excite those emotions of happiness which had once afforded him his sweetest joy.”<sup>300</sup> But this comfort is soon denied to Thaddeus as one of the first pangs that he has to suffer: “But, alas! fate seemed averse to lend anything long to the unhappy Thaddeus, which might render his desolate state more tolerable.”<sup>301</sup> Not long after that he finds General Butzou begging in the streets of London and takes him to his lodgings where Butzou dies about half a year later. The emotional impact of this death is even greater: “Dear, dear General! exclaimed he, grasping his hand, “my grandfather, my mother, my country! I lose them all again in thee!”<sup>302</sup> The pattern that these deaths are forming begins to emerge and is confirmed in the third instance as well.

The third death comes towards the end of the novel, after Thaddeus has been released from prison and is no longer suffering such poverty. He is going to the country to visit Lady Tinemouth where he finally meets Pembroke Somerset. Even before the death of Lady Tinemouth, he promises Thaddeus the support of his father and the love of Mary Beaufort, which again corresponds with the pattern introduced above. At the moment when the woman

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<sup>299</sup> Todd (1986), 125.

<sup>300</sup> Porter, 134.

<sup>301</sup> Porter, 134.

<sup>302</sup> Porter, 302.

who has been like a mother to him dies, Thaddeus thinks: “Heaven has still reserved thee, my dear Pembroke, to be my comforter! In thy friendship [...] I shall find an affection, similar with those which are gone for ever: my friend, my brother! you are the last cord that binds me to the world.”<sup>303</sup> There is a sense of fatality in these words, corroborated by the narrator who adds: “he had now another sorrow to add to his accumulated load.”<sup>304</sup> There is, however, dramatic irony at play at this point when the reader knows more than Thaddeus and realizes that even this last cord of Pembroke’s friendship on which Thaddeus relies will have to be severed in his resolve to go to America<sup>305</sup>. The series of deaths functions as a repetition of trials and misfortunes that test Thaddeus’ integrity and at the same time create sentimental scenes where the sympathy of the readers is engaged and where they are led to feel for Thaddeus.

### **Emotional inheritance**

When discussing the emotional inheritance we will especially pay attention to the way in which the inner life of characters is portrayed. The three main characters to be studied in this way will be Thaddeus, Mary Beaufort and Euphemia Dundas. Sensibility takes on three different forms in each one of them. Todd speaks about the gendering of sensibility in Richardson and other writers of sentimental fiction (novels about the man of feeling) and distinguishes categories of male and female sensibility. As far as female characters are concerned, Todd has a neat label for the specific nature of their sensibility; a “Richardsonian equation of female body with sensibility.”<sup>306</sup> She further describes it in the following words: “In physical expressiveness, women are pre-eminent in the novels.” The signs of sensibility

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<sup>303</sup> Porter, 376.

<sup>304</sup> Porter, 375.

<sup>305</sup> Thaddeus does not want to involve his friend in a dilemma of choosing between his father and him. Sir Robert forbade Pembroke to see Thaddeus or he would disown him as a son. Because Pembroke considers himself indebted for his life to the Count, he sees that as a grave violation of his honour that his father forces him to.

<sup>306</sup> Todd (1986), 79.

“may be developed in them more intensively than in men. Men wipe their tears and calm themselves by walking to a window or by otherwise concealing their state, and their gestures often remain unprobed.”<sup>307</sup> As has been already stated in the paragraphs about the technical legacy, the body’s candour remains unquestioned in *Thaddeus of Warsaw*. There is however a difference connected to gender according to Todd in the extent to which sentiments are dwelt on and analyzed in all their mutability and subtle developments. This is much more protracted and intense in chapters where Mary is focalizing and where we have the chance to follow her thoughts and feelings. Fainting is also only reserved for her and it is caused by a great fear that was suddenly relieved and replaced by joy. Thaddeus faints only in the first, historical part of the book after physical exertion and being wounded. However this may be, there is no difference between the candour of Thaddeus’ and Mary’s body as far as expressing sentiments is concerned, their inner emotional life is mirrored on the surface of their bodies as if they were transparent. This courtesy is extended to almost all good characters that form the small circle of Thaddeus’ London friends and acquaintances. Even unlawful passions of morally reprehensible characters such as Lady Sara Ross are real and honest in how they are demonstrated through the body. The only character with completely artificial sentimental gestures is Euphemia.

### **Thaddeus**

Thaddeus’ sensibility is sincere and serious, leading to moral judgments, which however is not fully present from the early beginnings, only latently, as a possibility: “you have the spirit of your ancestors, and I shall live to see you add glory to the name.”<sup>308</sup> This spirit (further contextualized by Porter in one of her later added notes about John Sobiesky, a Polish king, who broke the siege of Vienna by the Turks) is lying dormant waiting to be either confirmed by Thaddeus’ actions or put aside as an unfulfilled hope. We have already

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<sup>307</sup> Todd (1986), 78.

<sup>308</sup> Porter, 27.

mentioned the similarity of Thaddeus to Charles Grandison, but this as yet unfulfilled potential introduced at the beginning of the novel is something in which they differ. Todd claims that according to Richardson “major characters should be drawn in such a way as to illustrate exemplary traits” and that it is therefore possible to announce these traits “before and after their exponents appear. Sir Charles in particular is constructed as exemplary before he even opens his mouth [...]”<sup>309</sup> Here, Porter is rather more subtle or perhaps, given her conservative stance, less prone to claim that her characters are exemplary without having first put them to the test.

Thaddeus is established as someone endowed with an innate sensibility at the very beginning of the novel, when he is leaving home to join the military campaign beside his grandfather. The enthusiasm of youth makes him smile excitedly but at the same time it grieves him to tears when he has to say goodbye to his mother: “with a glowing countenance he advanced, smiling through his tears, towards her.”<sup>310</sup> It is noticeable that the emotions are primarily recorded in their outward manifestations such as facial expressions or sighs: “The parting grief of his mother hung on his spirits; and heavy and frequent were his sighs.”<sup>311</sup> There is however nothing about Thaddeus’ physical manifestations of sensibility that would be insincere or forced, their strength is appropriate and their occurrence natural to the occasion.

Later on in the book when Thaddeus lives in London under an assumed name, the secrets of his past life and station become the object of attention of curious females and he has to shield his delicate sensibility from the prying eyes of the unworthy (such as Euphemia): “Though the count’s sensibility was very irritable, and when suddenly excited he could not always conceal his emotion, yet he possessed a power of look which immediately repressed

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<sup>309</sup> Todd (1986), 72.

<sup>310</sup> Porter, 28.

<sup>311</sup> Porter, 28.

the impertinence of curiosity and insolence.”<sup>312</sup> Beside the equation of his body with his sensibility, this quotation further illustrates that the fact that Thaddeus wore his heart on his sleeve, or rather his face, is a stable feature of his sensibility that does not change throughout the book. It is only the stimuli that cause the sentiments which are not shared as liberally and are not reacted to as freely as they were in Poland. The rich moral sentiments that primarily characterize Thaddeus’ sensibility and guide his actions are so closely connected with a sense of his own worth and personal pride that they often prevent him from earning his subsistence, as has already been noted.

### **Mary**

Mary's sensibility is almost always shown side by side with Euphemia's which forms a powerful contrast. This is achieved through a clever device of having them both live in the same house for the season. Thus we often see the two ladies together, being subject to the same stimuli (usually centered around Thaddeus) and reacting very differently. The descriptions of Mary's sensibility are also usually limited to their external manifestations, as in the case of Thaddeus. The first instance of it occurs shortly after Mary and Thaddeus see each other for the first time and it becomes clear who the mysterious rescuer of the children caught in a burning house the night before was, to which event Mary and her aunt Dorothy were witness. A contemplation of the sufferings incident to the fire and the thought of how much misery the mother of the children was spared by Thaddeus' heroic deed naturally calls the tears to Mary's eyes:

“Am I so happy as to meet the lady [...] who so humanely assisted the poor sufferers and received the child from my arms?”  
“It was, indeed, myself, Mr. Constantine,” returned she, a tear swimming over her eye, which in a moment gave the cue to the tender Euphemia.”<sup>313</sup>

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<sup>312</sup> Porter, 223.

<sup>313</sup> Porter, 233.

We should note that Mary's tears spring from a natural source, because she has been present during the dramatic situation and witnessed first-hand the horror from which Thaddeus saved the children, whereas Euphemia enjoys this spectacle of delicate horror from a safe distance and cries only because from Mary's "cue" she understands that this is an appropriate occasion to shed some tears.

Mary's sensibility is however not only natural, but also very close, like Thaddeus' to the serious moral reflection and judgment. The twofold operation of both sense (ratio) and sensibility (feeling) that Brissenden speaks about when discussing "the formation of a moral sentiment"<sup>314</sup> (see the Chapter 1) is with her still in balance. Mary feels keenly and spontaneously, but she also rationally examines her feelings and holds them in check by waiting for the confirmation of external evidence. This is best to be seen in the episode in which Mary, Maria Edgerton, Lady Sara Ross and Thaddeus spend an evening watching a play by Kotzebue, *Sighs*. Mary has already been intrigued by Thaddeus' dignity, courteousness, inner worth and an aura of mysterious past that envelops him and she observes him with attention to learn more about his true identity. Because her sentiments partially determine her inclinations she admits to herself that there is some "regard which he already possessed in her bosom."<sup>315</sup> Therefore, it makes "a cold shiver run from the head to the foot of Miss Beaufort"<sup>316</sup> when she registers that Thaddeus and Lady Sara Ross share confidences and sighs during the play. But she does not let these emotions govern her and "with a palpitating heart she ask[s] herself a few questions" and consequently decides "to observe him narrowly and be well convinced of his worth"<sup>317</sup> before she allows herself to like him.

Another characteristic of Mary's sensibility is that it leads her in the decision-making process. It determines the right course of action, especially when there are demands made on

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<sup>314</sup> Brissenden, 24.

<sup>315</sup> Porter, 249.

<sup>316</sup> Porter, 249.

<sup>317</sup> Porter, 249.

her compassion and generosity. The most sentimental scene with Mary as its centre occurs when it is announced at Harley Street that Thaddeus is in prison. Mary learns about this from Euphemia who, to add drama to the scene, supplies it with a little detail that is not entirely true: “[...] he [Mr. Lascelles] saw Mr. Constantine with two bailiffs behind him walking down Fleet Street! And besides, I verily believe he said he had irons on.” [...] “In irons!” ejaculated Mary, raising her tearless eyes to heaven.”<sup>318</sup> The falsity of the little detail is soon discovered and Euphemia, “half angry at being obliged to contradict herself”<sup>319</sup> tells her that the detail was an instance of “poetical language”<sup>320</sup> that Mary did not understand. The relief that Mary feels makes her lose consciousness. In this case we can see that the seriousness of Mary’s care for Thaddeus is only rivalled by the strength of her feeling for him and is in stark contrast to the mindlessness of Euphemia who adds ominous details just to heighten the effect of the situation. After recovering from her faint, Mary sets out to determine how to help Thaddeus and eventually also succeeds in this effort. We can therefore see that she does not only consume emotion, like Euphemia, but that her sentiments really lead her to action.

## **Euphemia**

Euphemia’s version of sentiment is shown as characteristic for the second phase of the development of the cult of sensibility. Todd does not suggest any definite dates that would pin down the period, she only distinguishes between sensibility found in different authors:

Clearly, instruction aimed at active virtue in life, the implied purpose of part I of *David Simple* and the stated aim of *Pamela*, is no longer the aim of sentimental fiction. It is not even an education in sympathy that is primarily provided but rather a course in the development of emotional response, whose beginning and end are literary.<sup>321</sup>

The fact that the beginning and the end of Euphemia’s sentiments is literary is very important and this is what makes her sentiment different from Mary’s. The narrator is very explicit in

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<sup>318</sup> Porter, 313.

<sup>319</sup> Porter, 314.

<sup>320</sup> Porter, 314.

<sup>321</sup> Todd (1986), 93.

making this distinction shortly after Euphemia has been presented to the reader for the first time:

Weak in understanding, she had fed on works of imagination, until her mind loathed all other kind of food. Not content with devouring the elegant pages of Mackenzie, Radcliffe, and Lee, she flew with voracious appetite to sate herself on the garbage of any circulating library that fell in her way. The effects of such a taste were exhibited in her manners. Being very pretty, she became very sentimental. She [...] talked, as if her soul were made up of love and sorrow. Neither of these emotions she had really ever felt; but, in idea, was always the victim of some ill-fated passion.<sup>322</sup>

We can see that Euphemia is so much influenced by the literary sentiments because she has no natural understanding or emotions to feel that would have source in her own self. Therefore, all the sentiments that it was at that time fashionable to express, she only imitates in accordance with the models that she finds in novels. As Lynn Festa mentions, “feeling is increasingly depicted as product not process [...] and ossifies into a set of conventional gestures and fashionable expressions.”<sup>323</sup> One of these gestures Euphemia consciously decides to produce the day before she meets Thaddeus for the second time in order to impress him through delivering “sentiments in his hearing which should charm him with their delicacy and generosity.”<sup>324</sup> It is this deliberateness and this premeditated, mechanical and conventionalized way of delivering sentiments that betrays their artificiality and literariness.

Since she delights in artificiality, Euphemia is also very skilled in constructing sentimental tableaux. She chooses to view Thaddeus and Mary who both took part in saving the already mentioned children from the fire as sentimental heroes and her dearest, closest friends:

‘Come here, Mr. Constantine,’ cried she, extending her other hand to his. Wondering where this folly would terminate, he gave it to her; when, instantly joining it with that of Miss Beaufort, she pressed them together, and said, “Sweet Mary! heroic

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<sup>322</sup> Porter, 194.

<sup>323</sup> Lynn M. Festa, *Sentimental Figures of Empire in Eighteenth-Century Britain and France*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), ProQuest ebrary, Web, 19 Feb. 2015, 21.

<sup>324</sup> Porter, 195.

Constantine! I thus elect you the two dearest friends of my heart. So charmingly associated in the delightful task of compassion, you shall ever be commingled in my faithful bosom.<sup>325</sup>

The narrator calls the scene created by Euphemia who “had mounted her romantic Pegasus, [...] too sentimental to close.”<sup>326</sup> We see her manipulating the circumstances of a polite conversation between people who have just met each other in order to create a scene overflowing with sentimentality so that she can enjoy the sensations and elevate her dull German lesson with the lustre of the exalted and the extraordinary. The fact that she forces two people who do not know each other to join hands is certainly neither delicate nor generous (as she had resolved before.) We may also notice the conspicuous words that Euphemia uses, these are also overly exalted; Mary is *sweet* and Thaddeus *heroic* and both of them are *charmingly* associated in a *delightful* task in her *faithful* bosom. Todd notices this as well: “In general, vocabulary in a sentimental work is conventional, repetitive, mannered and overcharged.”<sup>327</sup> In short, we see Euphemia manipulating and ascribing sentimental meanings to a scene so that she might wring yet more delicate feelings out of it.

Furthermore, Euphemia’s sensibility is also undermined by associations with money.

Festa also mentions this problem in her reading of *A Sentimental Journey*:

The market in sentiment exposes the potentially impersonal origins of personal feeling: if sentimental consumers in effect purchase feelings, how does one make such feelings one’s own? Sterne and his imitators had to wrestle with the fact that sentimental value, far from being inalienable, was up for sale.<sup>328</sup>

This has to do with the origin of Euphemia’s sentiments: they are not her own, flowing out of her innermost being, called up by natural impulses, on the contrary, they are entirely literary. These sentiments originate in books that she or her family has bought with their *nouveau riche* money or that she has acquired in the circulating libraries. As such they are subject to money transactions. One could almost say that Euphemia buys her feelings. In the aftermath of the

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<sup>325</sup> Porter, 233

<sup>326</sup> Porter, 233.

<sup>327</sup> Todd (1986), 5.

<sup>328</sup> Festa, 69.

fire episode, Miss Dorothy Somerset is relating how Mary took care of the victims and adds that she is “certain that Mary will not allow these poor creatures a long lament over the wreck of their little property.”<sup>329</sup> Euphemia jumps at the opportunity of having once again a share in the emotions caused by the “poor creatures” and with her characteristic vocabulary cries: “How charmingly charitable, my lovely friend [...] let us make a collection for this unfortunate woman and her babes.”<sup>330</sup> Her riches allow her to buy her share in the delight of helping the poor without actually having to enter into any sort of personal interaction with them and this also devaluates her sentiments. How different is this from Thaddeus’ generosity, who, when he could not give money to people anymore, at least offered his consolation, affection and attention to them. Euphemia embodies everything that is reprehensible, degraded and negative about sentimentalism; she is a caricature of the excesses of the cult. Porter is using the narrator’s voice and sometimes also Thaddeus as a focalizer in order to expose and criticize the underlying problems of sentimentalism: the danger of artificiality, the tendency to excess and to focus on the wrong targets.

What I have shown in this chapter is the difference between the use of sentimental tropes in *Thaddeus of Warsaw* and other sentimental novels written in the heyday of the cult. To sum up these developments we may conclude with Ellis that “the strategies and conventions of the sentimental novel are turned in on itself”<sup>331</sup> by the writers of the 1790s and further (Porter amongst them). We can see that she has no other means at her disposal to convey the inner emotional processes of her characters than the vocabulary of sentimental signs produced by the body, but in infusing them with and subordinating them to an explicitly Christian doctrine she in fact returns or comes very close to the idea of sentiment as a kind of

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<sup>329</sup> Porter, 234.

<sup>330</sup> Porter, 234.

<sup>331</sup> Ellis, 220.

moral compass<sup>332</sup>, in her case always checked and supported by the tenets of religion and empirical evidence, as we have seen with Mary. Further changes to sensibility that we can trace back to Ellis' quotation are to be seen illustrated on the example of Euphemia: the tropes of sensibility as popular culture in its less moral and more fashionable version are displayed and used in order to criticize the transformations it has undergone in the process of popularization and politicization. In this process it has lost its purity and exclusiveness and revealed its dangerous tendency to be affected, misplaced and to lead to morally reprehensible conduct.

### ***The Wild Irish Girl***

Let us first ask ourselves why we deem it important to look for sentimental elements in a work that has "A National Tale" in its subtitle and ostensibly therefore belongs to a different genre. The similarity between the *The Wild Irish Girl* and *Thaddeus of Warsaw* is to be sought in the fact that it would be possible to categorize both novels as belonging to the national tale genre. We are not going to read *Thaddeus of Warsaw* through the colonial concerns according to which the Irish national tales are rightfully read by Ferris, who has already been mentioned in the discussion of the prefaces. The key term that has been used in the Chapter 1 as well and which may be utilized again here, is sympathy. Morgan's national tale, read through these colonial concerns is much more firmly grounded in a specific political context which it is possible to pinpoint in history when she speaks about "severe pressure in sites of asymmetrical power relations and at historical junctures when notions of national identity become unmoored [...]"<sup>333</sup> The urgency of her call for sympathy is therefore greater.

Porter does make an appeal, a call to action or for sympathy, but a less topical or specific one, one that is less rooted in the particular conflicts and problems of a given nation.

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<sup>332</sup> As it figures in e. g. *The Adventures of David Simple* by Sarah Fielding.

<sup>333</sup> Ferris, 48.

Porter is calling to the implied and universally shared sympathy among European nations insofar as they are all members of the human race, she is not so much concerned with specifically Russian usurpation of Polish independence. McLean expresses this again very concisely: “Though Porter certainly hoped “to procure sympathy” from Britons for the fate of Poland, her interests were universal rather than national: she desired her protagonists to be, like Sir Charles Grandison and Pamela Andrews, virtuous models for her readers.”<sup>334</sup> What we can see at work here is an attempt to create sympathy, a sentiment to dwell on, one which is in the end impossible to transfer into reality. The sympathy roused in the heart of many of Porter’s readers cannot be as effective as that which Lady Morgan summoned on behalf of Ireland in the heart of the “loosely English reader”<sup>335</sup> who might have much more direct impact on the government of a part of his country (after the Act of Union in 1801) which however has always been in the position of the exotic Other, on the periphery.

Ending the short excursion into the national tale genre here, we can now focus on the conventional tropes that we associate with the cult of sensibility and that are present in the story which makes it worthwhile to investigate *The Wild Irish Girl* from this point of view. Even secondary literature concerned with the novel registers the presence of sentimental signs, even though it does not expressly associate them with the genre. The sentimental elements are one of the reasons why Joep Leerssen calls its form “ill-fitting”, its narrative “ramshackle” and its characters “performing puppets.”<sup>336</sup> Further on, he also mentions the blend of genres that constitute this work: “The narrative, the fiction is a love story. As we have seen, it is the story of faltering voices, trembling hands, faintings and throbbings.”<sup>337</sup> Even though he does not identify these elements as sentimental, we can consider them as an enumeration of sentimental signs. In more than one sense, sensibility can be called a legacy,

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<sup>334</sup> McLean, 99.

<sup>335</sup> Ferris, 46.

<sup>336</sup> Leerssen, 55.

<sup>337</sup> Leerssen, 55.

by the time of the publication of *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806), it has simply become one of the novelistic conventions.

### **Sentimental signs**

“Sensibility” and “sentiment” are words often used in *The Wild Irish Girl* but their meaning and the context in which they are placed characterizes them as different concepts than those defined by Todd and Ellis who focus on the novel of sensibility in its heyday. In a sense we are past the era of sensibility which (as a faculty of human feeling) is initially so overindulged in and so numbed by the protagonist that it can be said to hardly exist anymore and has to be re-awoken. Later on in the novel, it is coupled to concerns of national character and romanticism. In *The Wild Irish Girl*, the equation of the body with sensibility is revealed as one of the most powerful tropes of the cult because even in this novel, where sensibility is on the wane, this convention is still assumed without questioning or doubt. All the characters, from the Earl of M. through his son, the Prince of Inismore and his daughter down to the guides and peasants that Horatio encounters on his tour, everyone’s tears, sighs and all the other conventionally physical sentimental signs denote and characterize their inner feelings. The stock repertory again includes blushing, acceleration of the pulse, tears, sighs and moments when the feelings are so intense and profound that they cannot be expressed by words.

The last item in the repertory is noted by Leerssen as well and connected to the genre of the sentimental novel:

“It seems that in such a scheme (which is also to be encountered in the sentimental novel of the later eighteenth century, e.g. Mackenzie’s *The Man of Feeling*) language functions as the expression of *knowledge*, while the expression of *feeling* must take a non-verbal, pre-discursive form.”<sup>338</sup>

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<sup>338</sup> Leerssen, 58.

This is another expression of a previously used concept that we have called the equation of a body with sensibility. Sometimes, however, the only response to or reflection of very strong feelings is stunned silence and immobility: “This was a golden respite to feelings wound up to that vehement excess which forbade all expression, which left my tongue powerless, while my heart overflowed with emotion the most powerful.”<sup>339</sup> Morgan describes a state that Todd subsumes under various types of “pedagogy of seeing and of the physical reaction that this seeing should produce” – the physical demonstrations of feeling can vary, but sometimes “the inexpressible nature of the feeling should be stressed”<sup>340</sup> which is precisely what is being done here.

The sensual capacity of the male protagonist is presented as exhaustible in *The Wild Irish Girl* in contrast to *Thaddeus of Warsaw*. Each succeeding blow of fate and each expression of gratitude is felt with the same keenness by Thaddeus and demonstrated by either his tearful or beaming eyes. His sensibility is feeding out of his virtue so much that it can never be blunted or made unresponsive. For Horatio M. however, who has an “innate rectitude, and [is] ennobled by the purest principles of native generosity”<sup>341</sup> it is possible to corrupt this natural inclination towards virtue and enjoy so much sensual stimulation in his youth that he talks about his mental state in the following words: “my taste impoverished by a vicious indulgence, my senses palled by repletion, my heart chill and unawakened, every appetite depraved and pampered into satiety; I fled from myself [...]”<sup>342</sup> His sensibility is therefore dulled by an overindulgence on stimuli. This is why he almost welcomes his banishment to Ireland; he wants to escape dull monotony, because “the present relaxed state of my intellectual system requires some strong transition of place, circumstance, and manners,

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<sup>339</sup> Morgan, 165-166.

<sup>340</sup> Todd (1986), 126.

<sup>341</sup> Morgan, Lady (Sydney), *The Wild Irish Girl; A National Tale* (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey 1999) 3, Literature Online, Web, 27 Feb 2017 [http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res\\_ver=0.2&res\\_id=xri:lion&rft\\_id=xri:lion:ft.pr:Z000040132:0&rft.accountid=35514](http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&res_id=xri:lion&rft_id=xri:lion:ft.pr:Z000040132:0&rft.accountid=35514) .

<sup>342</sup> Morgan, 22–23.

to wind it up to its native tone, to rouse it to energy, or to awaken it to exertion.”<sup>343</sup> This is therefore a new development in the theory of sensibility because all the characters in the previously mentioned and analysed novels (whether by me or in the secondary literature) either were or were not endowed with sensibility naturally. The third option left to some fashionable characters was to pretend a sensibility they did not in fact feel. But for a sensibility to become exhausted or dulled was unheard of.

### **National character**

What we could also call a modification in the cult of sensibility or perhaps a stock sentimental figure paired with a new concern is the already mentioned connection to national character. Because of sensibility’s connection to the nervous system and to physicality, notions of national sensibility do not seem so far-fetched:

notions of different characters or temperaments, each particular to a given political-ethnic community called a nation, had been current from the Middle Ages onwards [...] [W]ith Herder and in the shadow of approaching Romanticism, each *Volk*, or nation came to be considered as a specific personality.<sup>344</sup>

In this quotation we see both the elements that we have defined at the beginning of this chapter as modifications of sensibility in *The Wild Irish Girl*: the concerns of nation and of Romanticism. When sensibility or sentiment is mentioned by Morgan, this is often used to characterize the Irish as whole and what is typical of them: “they are of a class in society to which the modification of the feelings are unknown, and to be sensibly alive to *kindness or to unkindness* is, in my opinion, a noble trait in the national character of an unsophisticated people.”<sup>345</sup> The same principle is repeated when Horatio meets Murtoch, the poor cotter driving his emaciated cow back from the market. It is perhaps possible to say that the national characteristics will be most represented and concentrated in this particular individual who could not be much exposed to foreign influences. This confronts Horatio’s prejudiced idea of

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<sup>343</sup> Morgan, 29.

<sup>344</sup> Leerssen, 21.

<sup>345</sup> Morgan, 41.

Irish peasants as “intemperate, cruel, idle [and] savage”<sup>346</sup> (which, as Bridget Matthews-Kane suggests is an English construction of the Other that allows them to “obtain a sense of self-worth” and “provide a convenient foil by which the colonizers can define themselves.”<sup>347</sup>) with the reality (or perhaps another ideal construction created for other reasons) of people who are actually “tenderly alive to the finest feelings of humanity.”<sup>348</sup>

We could perhaps stretch the idea of a national sensibility or character even further and talk about a typical national religion. There is an interesting analysis of the Catholic religion given by the Protestant focaliser Horatio in terms of an opposition between the sensibility and ratio:

What a religion is this! How finely does it harmonize with the weakness of our nature; how it seizes on the imagination; how interesting its forms; how graceful its ceremonies; how awful its rites.--- What a captivating, what a *picturesque*, faith! Who would not become its proselyte, were it not for the stern opposition of reason---the cold suggestions of philosophy!<sup>349</sup>

Horatio describes the Catholic religion as peculiarly suited to the Irish character and perhaps in more general terms even to the sentimental character (see the emphasis on the notion of *weakness* in our nature,<sup>350</sup> its changeability and the fact that it engages the senses.) This tallies with a description of Irish character given by Thomas Crofton Croker: “An Irishman is the sport of his feelings; with passions the most violent and sensitive, he is alternately the child of despondency or levity; his joy or his grief has no medium [...]”<sup>351</sup>. This view of Irish national character in general informs many of the descriptions of most characters, e. g. Horatio’s

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<sup>346</sup> Morgan, 75.

<sup>347</sup> Bridget Matthews-Kane, “Gothic Excess and Political Anxiety,” *Gothic Studies*, (2003, 5:2), 12, Ebscohost, Web, 27 February 2017, <http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/eds/detail/detail?vid=1&sid=83cb55c0-e6a7-42eb-b89d-7b7f72622c73%40sessionmgr104&hid=117&bdata=Jmxhbm9Y3Mmc2l0ZT1lZHMtbGl2ZS5zY29wZT1zaXRl#AN=13838818&db=a9h>.

<sup>348</sup> Morgan, 75.

<sup>349</sup> Morgan, 153-154.

<sup>350</sup> Todd (1986) mentions the special sentimental meaning some words have acquired in the era of sensibility: “The word ‘weakness’, for example, moves from Johnson’s dictionary definition of ‘want of judgement ... foolishness of mind’ to suggest a pardonable excess of some quality in which a sentimentalist might have pride, like tenderness or pity.” (Todd (1986), 5.)

<sup>349</sup> Thomas Crofton Croker, *Research in the south of Ireland, illustrative of the scenery, architectural remains, and the manner and superstitions of the peasantry. With an appendix containing a private narrative of the rebellion of 1798*, (London, 1824), 12. Quoted in Leerssen, 21.

observation of the tears of the Irish peasant rapidly succeeding his whistling of joyful tunes or Glorvina's observations on the national music that is always moves from one extreme to another.

## **Romanticism**

Perhaps we could talk about the new development of sentimental elements in the area of exhausted and overindulged sensibility also in this paragraph because it is faintly reminiscent of the Byronic heroes who have some propensity to virtue but have lost their freshness, naivety and poignancy of feeling in their youth (through unspecified accidents) and now go on through life as perceptive but slightly bored observers of people and scenes. Nothing can restore the enthusiasm and novelty of the sensual perception of young men coming out into the world for the first time to encounter their fate. It is only something sublime, something extraordinary and exalted that can manage this feat in the case of Horatio M. The sentimental scenes in which he is involved with Glorvina are of this sort. Her freshness, originality, artlessness and virtue intrigues him and forces him to compare the fascination he feels for her to the bland reaction he had to his previous conquests.

As a sort of mild libertine, a lover and seasoned flatterer of women, Horatio has known conventional courtship, love and passion. He knows his way around women and how to pay compliments. With Glorvina however, he finds he cannot seduce her into another one in the string of his love affairs:

As it is, I feel a certain commerce of the soul---a mutual intelligence of mind and feeling with her, which a look, a sigh, a word, is sufficient to betray---a sacred communion of spirit, which raises me in the scale of existence almost above mortality; and though we had been known to each other by looks only, still would this amalgamation of soul (if I may use the expression) have existed.<sup>352</sup>

In this passage we may identify the use of sentimental signs again: "a look, a sigh" but this time they do not serve as a shortcut to an inner feeling but as a means of a transcendental

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<sup>352</sup> Morgan, 255.

communication between souls. The aim of this communion is much more elevated than it is in *Thaddeus of Warsaw* where it is wholly free of these exalted overtones we have come to associate with Romanticism. The communication between Thaddeus and Mary is much more constrained by the dictates of conventionality and propriety, the communication is much more physical, conducted through the medium of words or sentimental signs. This kind of sublime amalgamation has something unearthly about it.

This is not the only instance of a sentimental scene's contagion with romantic concerns. Another such modification is the frequency with which sentiment is caused by or associated with wild and picturesque natural scenery. The first instance of this is when Horatio sees the Castle of Inismore for the first time. He observes the scenery, then participates in the mass in the castle chapel and with a sigh readies himself for departure from this charming place: "Slowly departing, I raised my eyes to the Castle of Inismore, sighed, and almost wished I had been born the Lord of these beautiful ruins."<sup>353</sup> The sigh is caused by scenery described a few pages earlier:

Towards the extreme western point of this peninsula, which was wildly romantic beyond all description, arose a vast and grotesque pile of rocks, at once forming the scite and fortifications of the noblest mass of ruins on which my eye ever rested. Grand even in desolation, and magnificent in decay---it was the Castle of Inismore!<sup>354</sup>

We can observe a curious mixture of genres and styles in the character of Horatio: someone whose appreciation of nature and scenery is expressed in typically Romantic terms and employing moods of the period: the sublime, a cross between trembling fear and wonder or awe when beholding the force of nature and grasping the effect of time on the work of human hands, the appreciation of whatever is wild, irregular, gothic and grotesque. All this is with him expressed through the conventional medium of a sentimental sigh.

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<sup>353</sup> Morgan, 158-159.

<sup>354</sup> Morgan, 136.

We have seen that the conventions of the sentimental genre used in *Thaddeus of Warsaw* have developed even further in *The Wild Irish Girl* where there are new concerns attached to sensibility, such as notions of national character expressed through the sentimental signs and romantic admiration for nature as well as women which is much more exalted and otherworldly than in any other novel analyzed here. In a motif that faintly foreshadows the Byronic heroes, the natural and innate sensibility is also exhaustible and ultimately corruptible by high living and immoral indulgence. However, some motifs are present in both novels, such as the emphasis on the inability to express some of the deepest feelings even through candid bodily manifestations or the higher capacity for sensibility in women.

## **Conclusion**

We have begun our analysis of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* in a confusion caused by the many genres and generic markers that are intermixed in the novel and by the claims in the prefaces which have in some cases proved irreconcilable with the main text of the novel. We may now answer the question posed in the introduction: Has Porter succeeded in rebranding her conservative anti-jacobin novel into the mould of a historical novel? No, she has not. Not because she has not tried hard enough in the preface or because the text would not sufficiently support her claims, but because from our point of view and in our methodology, it has proven more interesting and fruitful to analyse all the genres as equally relevant and not to try to decide which has contributed the most. There is however one observation that has surfaced during the research and that is connected with the genres: we may call *Thaddeus* an anti-jacobin novel, a national tale and a historical novel, but not a novel of sensibility. Porter merely uses the techniques and conventions of the genre to portray the emotional life of her characters; however, she does it for her conservative purposes – to record the human conscious mind in the process of decision-making. Because this is an ideal, abstract goal, she does not attempt the realistic, psychological sketch of characters in historical circumstances

that is Scott's forte; her historical circumstances are more informed by ideal and universal virtues and heroism.

A structuring device that proves to be very prominent from whichever generic point of view we took is the motif of a trial. The conservative narrator uses trial to prove to the reader that her untypically (for a conservative novelist) perfect protagonist's behaviour which is announced as a potentiality at the beginning is proven by his actions even under difficult circumstances. The trial is double: the more historical and public first volume of the novel deals with a trial in prosperity where Thaddeus proves that he will not become vain, arrogant and ambitious even if he is the hero and the point of political resistance of his whole fatherland. His financial situation also does not tempt him to accumulate the riches whose sole inheritor he is, but we see him distributing them with a generous hand. The London episodes in the longer second part of the novel record how Thaddeus deals with a trial by poverty, loneliness, depression, scorn and misunderstanding by the world at large. From the sentimental point of view the trial is especially pertinent in these London scenes – it shows us Thaddeus as a disenfranchised male endowed with sensibility. He loses political and worldly male power but is rich from the moral and spiritual perspective.

A comparison of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* with the three other novels shows several similarities: all four use the convention of the equation of body with sensibility to describe human emotions and all three novels (Porter's, Reeve's and Morgan's) that even remotely deal with history, do it in a very different way from Scott. Porter and Reeve agree on the use of history influenced by the notion of continuity and Porter and Morgan both portray the most interesting, exotic and valuable characters as removed further into the past from the contemporary life lived by the mainstream society. The realistic and contemporaneously oriented Brunton coincides with Porter in her focus on conservative principles informed by

Christianity. Unlike Porter, she avoids staging perfect characters but does not shirk from the portrayal of sexual passion between man and woman.

The most marked difference between my reading of *Thaddeus of Warsaw* and other analyses consists in the fact that they read the novel with more emphasis on the political meanings available at the time of its publishing. I think that what the text resists (however much the preface seems to invite and support such interpretations) is a political reading with relevance for the years around the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars – and consequently, I have also tried to resist such reading. Porter's first novel is not a typical national tale voicing grievances of small nations – a parallel between the Polish and Scottish people is uneasy and unconvincing at best. What is comparatively easy to interpret through the lens of a national tale in *The Wild Irish Girl* and *Self-Control* resists identification in *Thaddeus*. This is why the novel is generally speaking much less analysed and read by various researchers interested in this period than Porter's second work, *The Scottish Chiefs* and this is also why I have attempted to categorize and describe this fascinating, many-faceted and highly endearing work of art.

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