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R. Peter Burnham

The Social Ethos
of Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling*



The Man of Feeling, published in 1771, is Henry Mackenzie's first and most famous novel. While I do not believe that there is a critic to be found who would presume to overpraise it abundantly, still it has its virtues and if read for no other reason than as an expression of the curious phenomenon of eighteenth century sentimentalism, it is an interesting book. The few critics who have dealt with the work generally associate it with the new humanitarianism that culminated in the reforms of the Victorians, and identify its author with his creation, Harley, the man of feeling.¹ Mackenzie's own statements encourage such an assumption. "Peace to your Joys at Kilravock!" he writes to his cousin Elizabeth Rose, "surely it is not from any blameable Feeling that I find myself sigh as I write it [*The Man of Feeling*]."² At another occasion he speaks of writing from the heart and adds that if his "Performances have any Merit, they owe it to this."³ Harold William Thompson entitles his biography of Mackenzie *The Scottish Man of Feeling*. Another critic finds Mackenzie to be "a solemn, stuffy person, precisely the type Sterne most detested. He allowed but one indulgence--luxuriating in tears and the damp atmosphere of lachrymose effusion."⁴ Such statements as this are probably true as far as they go, but they imply that Mackenzie did little or no distancing when he created Harley. I

believe, however, that when it is recognized that Mackenzie does not wholeheartedly identify with or agree with his man of feeling, we shall have gone a long way towards discovering the reason why *The Man of Feeling* is so curiously a halfway measure between the old static conception of society and the newer, soon to be fully developed dynamic and dialectic view of society that started with the philosophes and culminated in critics such as Ruskin and Arnold and in philosophers such as Hegel and Marx. It will be my purpose in this article both to show how the "new humanitarianism" of Harley is undercut by a rather complacent old fashioned Toryism of Mackenzie, and to explain how this disparity keeps the book from making certain basic conclusions that it should arrive at, but in fact does not.

To understand Mackenzie's social attitudes, we must first understand his hero Harley. Harold William Thompson characterizes him in this manner:

To be fair to Mackenzie, we must admit that in Harley he created a new and significant type of hero--the humanitarian who not only feels for the distresses of others but actually helps them--the humble, unselfish man as contrasted with the selfish, unfeeling person whom Mackenzie would call the Man of the world.⁵

In the contrast between "natural" benevolent unselfishness and worldliness we find the good and evil of the book. Harley possesses an extraordinary sensitivity to the suffering and hardship of his fellow-creatures, and his first venture into the world (his trip to London and back and the experiences that the trip occasioned) only deepen his sentimental and lachrymose response to the ways of the world. Few possess such a sensitivity and those who do acquired it in an environment and by a process that few could duplicate. Anglican divines such as Benjamin Whichcote, while not closing their eyes to the role played by evil and selfishness in the world, believed man to be naturally good when left to his own native impulses.⁶ Similarly, Shaftesbury maintained that in small towns and in the country natural benevolence was free to flourish unhindered by the unnatural vices of urban man.⁷ Within the novel Mr. Sedley describes the kind of education that the benevolent philosophers and latitudinarian Anglican divines had in mind when they spoke of man's natural goodness:

But as to the higher part of education, Mr. Harley, the culture of the mind--let the feelings be awakened, let the heart be brought forward to its object, placed

in the light in which nature would have it stand, and its decisions will ever be just. The world

Will smile and smile, and be a villain;
and the youth, who does not suspect its deceit, will
be content to smile with it. (p. 83)⁸

We are told Harley's *Bildung* conforms to this pattern. He grew up without paternal guidance or authoritarian restrictions next to nature in pristine Scotland. His education was desultory and self-regulated; he was free to let the natural impulses of his heart develop unchecked by any urban interference. For Miss Walton, as for Harley, "humanity was a feeling, not a principle" (p. 9). Thus cold logic interferes with one's true duty to humanity. Prudence (concerning monetary matters) likewise interferes with true benevolence. When Harley's London companions laugh at him for being taken by a sharper and for believing a whore's tale of misfortune (Emily Atkins for whom Harley pawns his watch to raise money for her succor), Harley concludes that "to calculate the chances of deception is too tedious a business for the life of man" (p. 36). Earlier, the beggar whom Harley met at the inception of his journey to London tells him he took up fortune telling as a bill of exchange for the alms people gave him. "I found," he says, "that people don't care to give alms without some security for their money; a wooden leg or a withered arm is a sort of draught upon heaven for those who choose to have their money placed to account there" (p. 13). In contrast to the man of feeling, then, the characteristic pose of the man of the world is selfish calculation: even in charity we see that it is by such devices as that of calculating the chances of deception that worldly men rationalize their selfishness.

A closer study of the man of the world is reserved for Mackenzie's second novel (of that name), where Sindall is seen as a loose living profligate debauching the innocent in the manner of Richardson's Lovelace. Somewhat ironically, in *The Man of Feeling* the villains that we actually see (because the focus in the novel is upon the confrontation of Harley and victims of the world's cruelty, most of the villainy we hear of is committed off stage--for example, the squire who perpetrates so much evil on Edwards is never seen) are hypocritical men of sentiment. The London sharper, we are told, was fluent on the subject of benevolence, so fluent in fact that he relieves Harley of close to £12 as they chat on the subject of benevolence and charity over a game of piquet.⁹ The other hypocritical sentimentalist is Respino, who appears in Sedley's story. But that the world is an evil place, antithetical to men of feeling and contemptuous to the virtuous, we

are never in doubt. The book is filled with references to the "unfeeling world" and its external selfish ways. Always worldliness is seen to be based upon an arrested moral sense and an inability to see into the real nature of our earthly duties to ourselves and our fellow man. The misanthrope, for example, lectures Harley on the disparity between appearances and reality, labeling honor and politeness "semblances" and virtue and friendship "realities." This idea is later picked up and reiterated by the anonymous narrator as he comments on Harley's return home accompanied by old Edwards, his grandchildren, and a few neighbors:

With this train Harley returned to the abode of his fathers: and we cannot but think, that his enjoyment was as great as if he had arrived from the tour of Europe with a Swiss valet for his companion, and half a dozen snuff-boxes, with invisible hinges, in his pocket. But we take our ideas from sounds which folly has invented; Fashion, Bon ton, and Vertù, are the names of certain idols, to which we sacrifice the genuine pleasures of the soul: in this world of semblance, we are contented with personating happiness; to feel it is an art beyond us.

(p. 70)

With the world consistently labeled a place filled with vain follies and peopled with self-serving egoists, and with the man of feeling's behavior consistently characterized as exemplary behavior, we could expect certain conclusions to be drawn. The Anglican divines maintained (in opposition to Hobbes) that the capacity for pity, tenderness and benevolence was chiefly what distinguished man from the beasts, and that since it was man's duty to live according to his nature, an active benevolence and the cultivation of the heart were the highest manifestations of man's religious impulse.¹⁰ Shaftesbury's position is similar to this.¹¹ While the divines and Shaftesbury write about charity in terms of God and a cosmological conception of man, Harley offers a social, not Christian, reason for benevolence and charity: "To give to the necessitous may sometimes be a weakness in the man; to encourage industry is a duty in the citizen" (p. 31). If Harley is acting in accordance to a social conception of man, and if the world blinds men to reality, as the narrator and some of the characters state, we should expect the book to be forthcoming with a statement explaining Harley's imperatives, a statement that would give a philosophical justification for his behavior. And so it does. When the honest school mistress who has been taking care of old Edwards' grandchildren

laments the fact that they have been deserted by their relations, Harley is quick to respond. "Madam," says Harley, "let us never forget that we are all relations" (p. 68). Presumably, then, to see into the nature of human reality, one would have to recognize that since the world divides men into classes, into rich and poor, haves and have-nots, it completely distorts the one true vision of reality. But it is at this point that we reach the crux of the problem of the social ethos of *The Man of Feeling*. When an author structures the theme of a book around the dichotomy of the world vs. elemental human responsibilities, it usually leads to one of two conclusions: either the book rejects the world and seeks a transcendental (usually Christian) solution, or it becomes a call to social action. Gower's *Confessio Amantis* and Langland's *Piers the Ploughman* are medieval examples of the former conclusion; Godwin and Charles Dickens are examples of men who use the analysis of society's ills and abuses to motivate men to action.

The Man of Feeling, however, steadfastly refuses to make the logical conclusion. It is neither a call to social action nor a religious treatise that excoriates the world and then rejects it for the eternal and absolute verities of religion. It does appear to come to the religious conclusion when Harley in his death throes tells the narrator he is leaving the world "to enter on that state which I have learned to believe is replete with the genuine happiness attendant upon virtue," but by following the gestalt of *The Man of Feeling* and by paying careful attention to the values of the narrator, this statement will be seen to carry little weight.

Let me first deal with the social aspect of the novel, and then, after the narrator's real attitude toward the world is made clear, with the religious question. The only dramatized alternative for Harley is the misanthrope, clearly an unsatisfactory alternative. The misanthrope, a former man of feeling who has become disillusioned, does offer some purposeful social criticism directed against the mode of education of the day (he feels it is too systematized and not directed to fulfilling the individual's unique needs), but the bulk of his harangue against the follies and stupidities of society can be attributed to his sour and disillusioned disposition. The narrator had warned us in the second chapter (i.e. chapter XII) about the necessity of people of feeling having a "certain respect for the follies of mankind," for otherwise the world would frustrate and destroy them with indignation and envy. Harley, entirely satisfied with his modest station in life (he is a "gentleman" but of modest means), therefore avoids being hardened into misanthropy.

Mackenzie's attitude toward social change becomes more evident toward the end of the novel. Before Harley meets Edwards the novel has had no opportunity one way or the other to display its author's attitude toward the major causes of social upheaval in the England of the 1760's--the Enclosure Acts and the industrial revolution. In 1770, one year before the publication of *The Man of Feeling*, Oliver Goldsmith's "Deserted Village" appeared. After lamenting the rise of the factory system and the consequent breakdown of village life that this urban phenomenon occasioned together with the Enclosure Acts, Goldsmith goes on to excoriate "luxury" and concludes his poem by asking Poetry to

Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain;
Teach him that states of native strength possess,
Tho, very poor, may still be very blest;
That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,
As ocean sweeps the labour'd mole away;
While self-dependent power can time defy,
As rocks resist the billows and the sky.

Even Goldsmith's idyllic paean to the virtues of country living, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, has a discussion on the changes in the kingdom wherein Primrose states, "I would have all men kings! I would be a king myself. We have all naturally an equal right to the throne: we are all originally equal."¹² No such dangerous beliefs as these find their way into *The Man of Feeling*, though the effects of the Enclosure Acts and rural upheaval are seen in the Edwards episode. Edwards had been turned out of the farm his family had had for generations because the new squire and his new London lawyer (insidious urban interference) have decided, contrary to the feudal duties toward one's tenants, that small farms are unprofitable on one's estate. Edwards and his son's family procure another more distant farm, but there they are plagued with crop failures and, even worse, with the arrest of Edwards' son when he strikes the justice's gamekeeper for maliciously killing his dog. The justice has him thrown into jail, and, after fining him, pursues his revenge by having young Edwards subjected to the impressment gang. Old Edwards, however, takes his place, serves in India, and now with Harley returns home to discover that his son and daughter-in-law have died of broken hearts, that the old schoolhouse is in ruins because it interferes with the squire's prospects, and that the village green has been ploughed up by orders of the squire.

Here indeed are abuses ripe for indignation and attack. A conservative mind, a Goldsmith or a Smollett, would mourn the

passing of the feudal order and rage against the age of luxury and "trade's unfeeling train." The social radical, a William Godwin or a William Blake, would attribute the injustice to abuses of the class structure and to a legal code that sought, not justice, but aggrandizement for the rich. But Mackenzie or his narrator, what does he say? Interestingly, and significantly, Mackenzie's comments on this aspect of the social upheaval of his day are confined to criticizing individuals and not the social structure. Mackenzie recognizes that evil exists, but he only allows Harley to exclaim, "Curses on his narrow heart...that could violate a right so sacred." Likewise, the chapter that discusses British imperialism in India mostly confines itself to criticizing individual soldiers who seek, not "the pride of honourable poverty," but riches. Harley does begin his discussion with Edwards by asking by what right Britain possesses the vast subcontinent of India, but this point is undercut by the title of the chapter, "The Man of Feeling Talks of What He Does Not Understand--An Incident." His comments on the stagecoach, which come closest to excoriating the new luxury in the manner of Smollett or Goldsmith, still refuse to offer an alternative to the problem or to see that society is a complex interaction of men. There is "an alarming crisis in the corruption of the state; when not only is virtue declined, and vice prevailing, but when the praises of virtue are forgotten, and the infamy of vice unfelt" (p. 57). The crisis, however, has been brought about by the "immense riches acquired by *individuals*" who "have erected a standard of ambition, destructive of *private* morals, and of public virtues" (italics mine). So again we see Mackenzie blaming individuals, and not the social structure, for the abuses and injustices of society.

Not surprisingly, then, we may conclude that Mackenzie, even at the early age of 26 before he becomes comptroller of the taxes for Scotland and the friend of Pitt, is a conservative by and large quite satisfied with the status quo. He feels abuses in society can be rectified at the individual level. If people would only be more compassionate, there would be less human suffering. A true enough belief, but hardly adequate for the complexity that urbanization and industrialization were beginning to create. While Mackenzie contributed to what is called the new humanitarianism, his effort is obviously a half-way measure. He supplies tears, not answers or analysis. He belongs to a different world than that of Blake, Godwin, Dickens, Ruskin, Arnold and all the other critics of the dehumanizing effect of industrialization. It is as if the *Aufklärung* with its faith in progress (however naive), its insights into the mechanisms of society (how-

ever inadequate), its environmentalism (however false), passed him by. One of course cannot blame Mackenzie for this "deficiency." My point is simply that Mackenzie is a product of pre-industrial society and not a harbinger of Romantic revolt. Though the *Aufklärung* was widespread, its ideas were new and it took a few generations for them (or opposing ideas they engendered) to become more than quaint theories. When they did arrive, of course, Europe was changed into a continent of republics and constitutional monarchies where the rights of men were recognized and the license of arbitrary tyranny checked. Hitlers and Stalins still came along, but contrary to what people believed of a Louis XIV, their power was recognized to be based upon naked force, not divine right. But this movement of history does not concern Mackenzie; as said, he belongs on the other side of the line that demarcates the modern world.

At any rate, we find that we must be somewhat skeptical about Harley's statement about the brotherhood of man. Clearly Mackenzie is no wild-eyed Jacobin seeking to bring about the millenium of a classless society. Still, he is on record as saying that the world is incompatible to the man of feeling.¹³ For Harley perhaps it is; but for his creator a different attitude can be discovered buried slightly below the denotative level of the words of the novel. To illustrate what I mean, let me turn to the Bedlam scene. Harley's friend suggests they partake in that favorite eighteenth century pastime, visiting the madmen of Bedlam. Harley objects, saying, "I think it is an inhuman practice to expose the greatest misery with which our nature is afflicted to every idle visitant who can afford a trifling perquisite to the keeper; especially as it is a distress which the humane must see, with the painful reflection, that it is not in their power to alleviate it" (p. 19). On the surface this seems to be quite a modern, quite a compassionate view. But what happens? Not only is Harley persuaded to go, but the narrator even indulges in some rather crude humor at the expense of one of the unfortunate madmen who thinks he is the Chan of Tartary--surely as unfeeling and condescending an attitude as one can take toward the insane.¹⁴

The fact is, for Mackenzie to fulfill the literary purpose of his book and construct scenes and situations that elicit tears from Harley and the gentle reader, he must consistently place Harley in situations where he confronts misery and suffering. That is why Harley ends up going to Bedlam. There he meets the unfortunate mad woman and therefore gets a chance to indulge in some "pleasing Anguish."¹⁵ When Harley meets the prostitute, Emily Atkins, we find that his initial purpose in

greeting her was a rather worldly one--though Mackenzie is most discreet in his description of sexual impulses. The fact that Harley is in London in the first place is the direct result of the same narrative mechanism as that of the Bedlam scene. Harley is unworldly and cares little for wealth and power. Yet he goes to London for the worldliest of reasons--to curry favor with connections in the government so that he can get a lease on some crown-lands. Harley's friends and guardians talk the reluctant man of feeling into taking the trip. They are the voice of worldly prudence who cause Harley to go against his principles. But observe that the dynamics of the book make it necessary for them to overrule Harley's objections. Mackenzie must consistently work *against* the man of feeling's principles if he is to be able to place Harley in a position to *demonstrate* his principles. Thus we see a double-standard at work between the authorial level and the level of the action.

The similes Mackenzie often employs to describe Harley's feelings toward the unfortunates of the lower class also reflect this curious double standard. For instance, Harley, his eyes brimming with tears, takes the hand of Emily Atkins, the fallen woman reduced to the degrading life of a whore "with as much respect as if she had been a duchess. It was ever the privilege of misfortune to be revered by him." This statement is out of keeping with the supposed value system of the man of feeling, for the reason that Harley feels compassion for the woman is because of their common humanity. Yet the narrator comments on the significance of Harley's compassion, not in human terms, but in terms of the class structure that such a universal, human compassionate attitude should make irrelevant. Or for another example, take the passage I quoted on page four that relates Harley's return home. Before entering town Harley had crushed Edwards to his bosom and asked him to "let me cherish thee as a father," and he had told the old school-marm that he felt we were all relations, but again his behavior is not described in terms of his human beliefs, but rather in class terms. We are told he returns as triumphantly as if he just arrived from the gentleman's tour of Europe with a Swiss valet. When Harley helped work in old Edwards' garden, the narrator, awed by the prospect of a gentleman doing manual labor, can only exclaim, "it was a scene of tranquil virtue to have stopped an angel on his errands of mercy" (p. 71). On other occasions Mackenzie even dispenses with comparisons and, letting the mask fall away, labels the laboring classes as "inferior" (p. 8).

The attitude that this "double standard" betrays is the Tory attitude. Far from being disgusted and deeply revolted

with the world, the narrator actually reveals that he adheres to a semi-feudal value system that is benevolent, to be sure, but benevolent in the condescending manner of a lord to his chattel. (When one analyzes the dynamics of old Edwards' blustering his tearful gratitude to Harley at the end of chapter XXXIV, one finds that Edwards' attitude is based on class feelings. Harley has as of yet offered him nothing more substantial than tears and sympathy, but that a member of the upper class deigned to take pity on a poor peasant is so affecting that old Edwards can only utter incoherent blessings upon Harley.) In fine, Mackenzie is a "gentleman" writing for a genteel audience in terms of the values they both share. His goal is not to offer his readers cosmic tragedy or social analysis; his goal is merely to titillate and entertain. Mackenzie, perhaps, could indeed be called an "idle singer of an empty day." It is, at any rate, this underlying Toryism, making itself felt as an undercurrent throughout the book, that tends to diminish the cosmic or transcendental significance of Harley's death. Just as before Harley was put in a position to be the recipient of the pleasing Anguish of sentimentalism, now the reader--presumably thoroughly initiated into the rites of sentimentalism--is put in a position to be the man of feeling at Harley's death. Again it is the tears to be elicited that are emphasized, and not the deep religiosity of Harley. Mackenzie uses Christian terms on this occasion because they are the world's coin, and such things as saying one is going to a far, far better place are always said on such solemn occasions. One feels this by reacting to the tone of the novel, not by reading the words.

I spoke earlier of the necessity of Harley seeing behind appearances and into the reality of the world. One critic also points out that Harley is confronted with this problem in London.¹⁶ There the sharper and the pimp appear to be virtuous while they are really evil, and Emily Atkins appears to be evil while she is in fact repentant. Applying this standard literary criterion of appearance vs. reality to the novel, we find that a disparity exists between what the words say and what the actual effect or impact of the words is. Returning to the novel for a second reading, we begin to see that Mackenzie has left a great deal of evidence of his true feelings throughout the book. To his aunt, who looks down upon the nouveau riche for being "mushroom gentry" with money but no breeding, Harley makes the worldly remark, "We blame the pride of the rich [for the "shame of the times"], but are not we ashamed of our poverty?" (p. 76). Here, of course, Harley is mouthing a worldly belief for the sake of argument, but earlier we saw dramatized that very worldly belief in Harley when he visited the baronet in London seeking assis-

tance. On the way to the baronet's, writes Mackenzie, "he began to ruminate on the folly of mankind, who affixed those ideas of superiority to riches, which reduced the minds of men, by nature equal with the more fortunate, to that sort of servility which he felt in his own" (p. 15). So Harley knows he should not feel intimidated by wealth; he knows that it is mere worldly folly to affix ideas of superiority to riches; and he knows that naturally all men can look one another in the eye without shame. But in what follows Mackenzie betrays a tone of jaded irony that can only be interpreted as some gentle (to be sure) scorn and mockery directed toward his man of feeling. Mackenzie here reveals that he is entirely cognizant of the impossibility of being totally untouched by the ways of the world:

By the time he had reached the Square, and was walking along the pavement which led to the baronet's, he had brought his reasoning on the subject to such a point, that the conclusion, by every rule of logic, should have led him to a thorough indifference in his approaches to a fellow-mortal, whether that fellow-mortal was possessed of six or six thousand pounds a year. It is probable, however, that the premises had been improperly formed: for it is certain, that when he approached the great man's door he felt his heart agitated by unusual pulsation. (p. 15)

Mackenzie has it both ways, of course: worldly logic is also satirized. This tone of slightly jaded irony is heard elsewhere in the novel. The title of the chapter wherein Harley discusses British imperialism is entitled "The Man of Feeling Talks of What He Does Not Understand." And the statement of the beggar that I quoted earlier, referring to "withered arms" and "wooden legs" being a sort of draught for worldly people to draw on in heaven for repaying of their charity, betrays, upon analysis, a rather sophisticated cruelty as its basis for humor.

Of course the tone never gets even remotely close to the point where the novel would be a satire against the sentimental mentality. Its presence, however, felt from time to time as one reads the novel, is another indication that Mackenzie is less than naive about the world, and in fact is on occasion rather an astute delineator of the complexities of the human soul. When Harley sees the beggar walking briskly down the road with bare feet, he exclaims, "our delicacies are fantastic; they are not in nature!" (p. 12). Despite the presence of the "noble savage" seen in the person of the old Indian

whom Edwards frees, and despite the narrator's Shaftesburean remark that benevolence is "instinctive in our nature" (p. 9), Mackenzie demonstrates that he knows society and nature have a wide gulf separating them. In a letter to his cousin he observes that "Rousseau, in his Enthusiasm for a State of un-cultivated Nature, inveighs against the Pow'r which Women in later Times have acquired"; but he goes on to add, "yet after all, we owe our Rousseaus to Society, & their Eloisas to the Empire of the Woman."¹⁷ And finally, concerning the novel's need for the world as it is, flawed and evil, so that tears may be elicited from Harley for its victims, we have this worldly passage from a letter to offer as Mackenzie's own comment on the dynamics of his novel:

I am happy that Edwards has pleas'd so much...Heroes amidst the Blaze of War, or the Glare of Courts, have been in every one's Hands; I have sought one unattended by those adventitious Circumstances; I have found him in a simple Farm-House; yet, I flatter myself, he is not less the Hero. The world thinks otherwise; 'tis fitting that it should: Virtue would lose half its Merit, if the world did not look more on the Ribbon of a George, than the Belt of a *Knapsack*.¹⁸

Perhaps this article belabors what one critic has stated succinctly: that *The Man of Feeling* is a book filled with a "curious type of hedonism."¹⁹ What this analysis does, however, is separate Harley and Mackenzie, and point out that there was some distancing involved in the creation of the man of feeling.²⁰ When we see that Mackenzie is rather worldly and the "compleat" Tory, the "curious type of hedonism" will be seen in a different historical perspective. Heretofore Harley has been seen as a contribution toward the "new humanitarianism." Perhaps he did indeed contribute to humanizing people, but it is probably more accurate to see the novel as an expression of the decadence (if so strong a word may be used for so modest and so genial a book) of the intellectual vigor of the Anglican divines' and Shaftesbury's (and his disciples such as Hutchinson and Adam Smith who directly influenced Mackenzie) conception of sentimentalism and benevolence, than it is to see *The Man of Feeling* as a symptom of a new spirit that would grow into Romanticism. The book points backwards, not ahead. But *The Man of Feeling* does not deserve to be condemned too strongly. It is a pleasant book and many a passage must be read with a pleasing grin and a benevolent heart. Since its author did not intend to write a philosophical treatise, but merely an entertaining book that would bring

sighs to the palpitating heart, one cannot fault it for lacking various literary elements that it never intended to have in the first place. I analyzed the book with an eye to its being a historical artifact. Only when it is judged from that perspective is it possible to use so harsh a word as "decadent" to describe the man of feeling.

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NOTES

¹See, for example, Kenneth C. Slagle's "Introduction" to *The Man of Feeling* (New York, 1958), p. x, where he states that the "world was learning humanity. In this respect the novel of sentiment is clearly related to the social consciousness inherent in the romantic movement." Harold William Thompson, *A Scottish Man of Feeling* (London, 1931), p. 114, observes that Mackenzie was bashful like Harley and like Harley felt himself to be an "alien" in the world.

²Horst W. Drescher, ed., *Henry Mackenzie: Letters to Elizabeth Rose of Kilravock* (Münster, 1967), p. 34. Subsequent references to this work will be designated *Letters*.

³*Letters*, p. 77.

⁴James A. Foster, *History of the Pre-Romantic Novel in England* (New York, 1949), p. 169.

⁵Thompson, p. 122.

⁶R.S. Crane, "Suggestions Toward A Geneology of the 'Man of Feeling,'" *English Literary History*, 1 (1934), 220.

⁷Anthony Ashley Cooper, the 3rd earl of Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times, Etc.* (London, 1900), I, 313.

⁸All references to *The Man of Feeling* refer to Slagle's edition in the Norton Library series.

⁹It seems to be a mark of honor for the sentimental hero to believe the best of his fellow man and therefore on occasion to get taken. Goldsmith's Dr. Primrose in *The Vicar of Wakefield* gets taken by the venerable looking gentleman, Ephraim

Jenkinson, and Fielding's Squire Allworthy believes the pious hypocrisies of Blifil.

¹⁰I am paraphrasing Crane, pp. 226-7.

¹¹Shaftesbury's position can be summarized in this manner: men are naturally gregarious and need the society of their fellows. Therefore to be self-centered and self-serving is to work against one's true source of happiness; it is to be *unnatural*. To act benevolently is the best means of creating self-enjoyment. But to be truly virtuous one must do a good deed or a charitable act for its own sake. To be virtuous because one is afraid of eternal damnation or because of one's vanity is not to be virtuous at all. Real virtue is doing a benevolent act for its own sake, for then the act is consistent with the good and benevolent God who has a boundless love for all men. In short, benevolence is an end in itself because its final object is consistent with a benevolent conception of God. (These observations are culled from Treatise IV of *Characteristics*, "An Inquiry Concerning Virtue or Merit.")

¹²This passage occurs in Chapter XIX. It should be observed that Primrose's vehemence is humorously undercut when he discovers he has been expatiating on human liberty to a butler who is putting on airs (cf. Harley's conversation with the footman/pimp who puts on the airs of a gentleman, also in Chapter XIX).

¹³Thompson, p. 44.

¹⁴Ralph E. Jenkins, "The Art of the Theorist: Rhetorical Structure in *The Man of Feeling*," *SSL*, 9 (1971), 8, believes there is a thematic reason why Harley goes to Bedlam. In a novel that contrasts the man of feeling with the man of the world, the man of the country with the man of the city, Harley's lack of formal education and aversion to business contrasts very favorably with several of the inmates such as the mathematician who "fell a sacrifice...to the theory of comets," the schoolteacher who went insane on the problem of the pronunciation of Greek vowels, and the businessman who passed up a chance to retire in comfort to the country only to lose all his money in a stock crash.

¹⁵The term "pleasing Anguish" is quoted by Crane, p. 205, from a 1754 essay by the Scottish moralist David Fordyce. Many critics compare this mad woman to Sterne's Maria, whose

madness was the result of her minister's not publishing her banns. See, for example, Thompson, p. 115.

¹⁶Dale Kramer, "The Structural Unity of 'The Man of Feeling,'" *Studies in Short Fiction*, 1 (1964), 194. Kramer's thesis is that the theme and the structure of the novel revolve around the sentimentalist's conception of a proper education and that Harley's London trip was part of that education.

¹⁷*Letters*, p. 59.

¹⁸*Letters*, p. 37.

¹⁹The phrase is Crane's, p. 229.

²⁰Here it is also appropriate to point out that the device of the discovered manuscript with which the novel begins does more than offer Mackenzie an excuse for the episodic structure of the novel--it also distances him from the action of the novel. The curate, a logical fellow who could find no better use for the manuscript than wadding for his gun, gives the remains of the manuscript to our anonymous editor and tells him the author of it was such a shadowy figure that he was known simply as "The Ghost." In chapter LV we learn that his first name is Charles and that he is a friend of Harley's. The only other thing we know for sure about the editor and the author is that they are men of feeling, too. But why, we may ask, would Mackenzie go to such elaborate pains in the narration of his tale unless he wished to distance himself from Harley and the action?