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Masculinity and Emotional Vulnerability In Henry Mackenzie's The Man of Feeling

Abstract

Traditional masculinity in literature has always been a reflection of a social convention, of the necessity of manly behavior to be exerted by men, this classical view, and though it was the overwhelming case since the dawn of any written history, began to experience a radical shift during the eighteenth century in Europe, and particularly in England.

Multiple factors worked hand-in-hand to present the said shift, for instance, philosophical movements that worked on blurring the lines of gender roles when it comes to compassion and sympathy. Broader movements of the age emerged also, emphasizing on the role of emotions in a practical manner, and calling for it to be the main catalyst for human behavior and moral compass, unlike what rational movements, like the Enlightenment, established, as reason being the main motivator for actions and morality.

Literature, as an inseparable part of philosophy, and a direct application of it, went through this shift as well, as authors of the age began reflecting the moldable approach for masculinity, infusing it with unconventional traits that were traditionally attributed to femininity. A significant novelist, who made a huge impact, and presented a critical boost to this new change is the Scottish writer, Henry Mackenzie. Through his works and, most significantly The Man of Feeling, he depicted characters in a way that was considered a literary shock to the readers. This paper explores the context through which the concept of masculinity has evolved, and reflects on Henry Mackenzie's The Man of Feeling, showing instances that support this new masculine convention that opposes the socially classical, traditional approach.

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الذكورية والضعف العاطفي في رواية هنري ماكنزي رجل العاطفة

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الخلاصة

لطالما كانت الذكورية التقليدية في الأدب انعكاسًا للضوابط الاجتماعية، والتي تفرض ضرورة تبني الرجال للسلوك الرجولي، وقد بدأت هذه النظرة الكلاسيكية، وعلى الرغم من أنها كانت الحالة المهيمنة منذ فجر أي تاريخ مكتوب، تشهد تحولًا جذريًا خلال القرن الثامن عشر في أوروبا، وخاصة في إنجلترا. إن هذا التحول لم يأت من العدم، فقد عملت عوامل متعددة جنبًا إلى جنب لتقدمه، فالحركات الفلسفية، على سبيل المثال، عملت على طمس الخطوط الفاصلة بين الأدوار الجنسانية عندما يتعلق الأمر بالرحمة والتعاطف. كما ظهرت حركات أوسع في ذلك العصر، أكدت على دور العواطف بطريقة عملية، ودعت إلى أن تكون المحفز الرئيسي للسلوك الإنساني والبوصلة الأخلاقية، على عكس ما دعت إليه الحركات العقلانية، مثل التنويرية، بأن العقل هو الدافع الرئيسي للأفعال والأخلاق.

لقد مر الأدب، بوصفه جزءًا لا يتجزأ من الفلسفة وتطبيقًا مباشرًا لها، بهذا التحول أيضًا، إذ بدأ مؤلفو ذلك العصر يعكسون النهج المرن للرجولة، ويغرسون فيه سمات غير تقليدية كانت تُنسب تقليديًا إلى الأنوثة. ، الروائي المهم الذي كان له تأثير كبير، وقدم دفعة نقدية لهذا النهج الجديد هو الكاتب الإسكتلندي هنري ماكنزي، فبأعماله، ولا سيما "رجل المشاعر"، صوّر الشخصيات بطريقة عدت بمثابة صدمة أدبية للجمهور، كما سيتم مناقشتها بهذه البحث.

سيستكشف هذا البحث السياق الذي تطور به مفهوم الذكورية، ويتعمق في كتاب هنري ماكنزي "رجل المشاعر"، موضحة الأمثلة التي تدعم هذا التقليد الذكوري الجديد الذي يعارض النهج التقليدي الكلاسيكي اجتماعيًا.

كلمات مفتاحية: الذكورية، القرن الثامن عشر، ادم سميث، رقة العاطفة، هنري ماكنزي.

Henry Mackenzie, The Man Who Was Born to Feel

1.1 Early Life and Education

On the 6th of August, 1745, Henry Mackenzie was born into a respected middle-class family. His father is Dr. Joshua Mackenzie, a regional surgeon who turned into a successful physician in Edinburgh. Dr. Mackenzie was also a skilled musician, and his love for music and angling was highly enjoyed by his son Henry. When it comes to religious conventions, Dr. Mackenzie was of liberal and genial nature, especially when it comes to religious practices. This relaxed, and relatively open-minded nature were traits that influenced Henry Mackenzie's personality and views, as he would carry them throughout his life.

Mackenzie's mother was Margret Rose of Kilravock, a member of the distinguished Rose family that was connected to the Scottish nobility of the Highland family. Throughout his childhood, his mother instilled the love of music, literature and art in him, and that was inside and outside, as he also accompanied her in social gathering in elite circles, which shaped his manners and social empathy. The manners and tendencies that he gained from his mother were deeply rooted within his personality, and they became engraved deeper within after his mother's death when he was fourteen years old, making him cling to every lasting remain that reminded him of her. (Barker, 1974, 13).

Mackenzie's maternal grandfather was Hugh Rose of Kilravock, a member of the parliament and also a well-established storyteller and a musician, as his son was influenced by him. Hugh was very popular for his storytelling abilities, as he narrated tales of Scottish pride like those of Jacobite history, those stories were shared with public listeners, and Mackenzie was one of them, as it made him more intact with his Highland heritage and Scottish nationality. (Barker, 1974, 14).

When it came to his education, Henry Mackenzie attended Edinburgh high school, where he indulged in his already established fondness for literature, he developed knowledge for the classics and was taught Latin language and literature. Gradually, he grew to learn about his passion for drama and theatre, as it aligned with his tendency for art and literature. He showcased his early interest in theatre by being an active member in many theatrical acts performed by his school, as he participated in enacting lines of Virgil and other classical performances. This fondness for theatre grew through his introduction to Edinburgh Theatre by its manager, Mr. Callender, who offered him access to acts from behind-the-scenes during a time of high public interest in drama after the great success of the tragedy *Douglas* by John Home.

When Mackenzie reached the age for university, he started studying at the University of Edinburgh, and his love for literature and art continued to grow, yet now, he was more than a simple admirer of art, as he already has developed his literary tendencies, and began to indulge in debates concerning literature, sociology and moral discourse. He was also involved in discussions and debates that revolved around human emotions, reason, virtue and their expression.

Henry Mackenzie's early exposure to theatre was aligned with his maternal influence of loving literature and art, this evoked in him strong emotional responses and made him willing to express it more. His personal and close experience of *Douglas* through backstage reinforced his conviction of literature as a means for inspiration of feelings and compassion. He was emotionally mature before reaching his eighteenth year, as his domestic uprising along with his literary and artistic tendencies, fostered a will for it to be moved from his mind into the physical world. (Barker, 1974, 15).

1.2 Initial Literary Aspirations

When Henry Mackenzie reached eighteen years of age, at 1763, he began his attempts to reflect the emotional and artistic tendencies that grew within him day by day. He initially sought poetry as his means, and began publishing descriptive poems anonymously in *Scots Magazine* for almost three years. He wrote poems like *Happiness* and kept submitting more works to be published without mentioning his name. (Barker, 1974, 16).

The Pursuits of Happiness expanded on the notion of human's natural vanity, and was more complex and well-crafted than his previous works, as it was influenced by Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man*, and showcased sardonic humor, along with personal, emotional reflections that illustrates his evolving skills in writing tone and forms of expression. This work, and though was at the summit of his poetic innovation, did not rise to the hopes he was building upon, as it was not well-received by critics, and gained nothing but poor reviews and criticism, which put an end to Mackenzie's poetic endeavor. (Barker, 1974, 17).

After quitting poetry, Mackenzie was still in search of the field in which he can feel belonged, by the mid-1760s, and with the growing audience appeal for fiction, Mackenzie started to shift towards fiction writing. He moved to London in an attempt to have a fresh start, he indulged in studying English law that he found essential to learn as a resident of London.

Mackenzie was interested in the growing sentimental tendencies that was reflected in many literary works of the time, he highly admired works like *Julie, or the New Heloise* by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy* by Laurence Sterne, and *The Fool of Quality* by Henry Brooke. These works that are more emotion-focused were very relating to the overall emotional, sentimental zeal that Mackenzie has. (Barker, 1974, 18).

In his search for inspiration, Mackenzie went on reading many fictional works that could touch his creative mind, and indeed, the inspiration was there, as it laid within Oliver Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766), that sparked inspiration for his first novel. Goldsmith's novel carried balanced moral lessons with emotional appeal, it catered Mackenzie's idealism through its portrayal of virtue amidst adversity and vices. The admiration for Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield* will be seen through Mackenzie's later literary productions, through thematic and stylistic structure, and the direct focus on emotional sensitivity, virtue and moral dilemmas of the time. It can be said that this novel of Goldsmith was the needed push for

Mackenzie to produce his first and most successful novel, *The Man of Feeling*, which will be analyzed in this paper.

It is true that Henry Mackenzie was mostly interested in literary outputs and artistic productions, but this does not mean he did not involve in philosophical matter, as one of the most influential factors that shaped Mackenzie's literary innovation was the Theory of Moral Sentiment by English philosopher and economist Adam Smith, as it was along the pieces that he had encountered through his deep reading and intellectuality. (Barker, 1974, 19).

2. Intellectual Influences on Henry Mackenzie

2.1 Adam Smith's Sentiments as Moral Guide

Adam Smith, the renowned English philosopher who is well known for his theory in the *Wealth of Nations* (1776), produced another philosophical theory that is considered as the foundational work for his *Wealth of Nations*. In 1759, Smith wrote a book called *The Theory of Moral Sentiment*, in which he explained his stance in regards to human nature and moral judgment. Smith, alongside his contemporaries like David Hume declared that the human nature is the basic, universal, unchangeable foundation that social behavior can be derived from. (Heilbroner, 2024).

An essential aspect that Smith tackled through his book is the question for morality, as he views sympathy as the basis for human morality. In his book he stated "How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it, except the pleasure of seeing it." (Smith, 1975, 8).

Smith presents sympathy as the fundamental human trait that should govern his moral compass, and he admits that humans naturally tend towards self-interest, but this should not undermine their sympathy for each other. People should learn to gain satisfaction from the mere fact of others being happy, they should have a selfless behavior to underpin their moral actions, in order to contribute in the well-being of society. (Bonar, 1926, 334)

Another important idea that Smith emphasized is the inner awareness, he declared "The man within the breast, the abstract and ideal spectator of our sentiments and conduct, requires often to be awakened and put in mind of his duty, by the presence of the real spectator: and it is always from that spectator, from whom we can expect the least sympathy and indulgence, that we are likely to learn the most complete lesson of self-command." (Smith, 1975, 200).

Smith here declares that moral self-regulation is the most important moral guide to be emphasized. He calls this inner regulator “the man within the breast”, branding him as the ideal spectator of our behavior. This inner figure can guide us to reflect on our behavior and help assess our morality. This inner spectator can sometimes be “awakened” by external or “real” spectators who are the ones we expect the least of sympathy from. This lack of sympathy can provide a sharper lesson in self-restraint, as they would be harsh with us in a sense that will help us in advancing through our moral self-spectating. (Bonar, 1926, 343).

When we are about to act, the eagerness of passion will seldom allow us to consider what we are doing, with the candour of an indifferent person. The violent emotions which at that time agitate us, discolour our views of things; even when we are endeavouring to place ourselves in the situation of another, and to regard the objects that interest us in the light in which they will naturally appear to him, the fury of our own passions constantly calls us back to our own place, where every thing appears magnified and misrepresented by self-love. (Smith, 1975, 205).

Smith here explains how we, as human beings, are very weak when it comes to our control over emotions. Our “passion”, when stimulated, could affect our logical thinking and make us see and react only through the tunnel of emotions. Smith claims that violent emotions take the color from our views and reduce everything we try to do to the emotional motifs. Smith goes on emphasizing our powerlessness against our emotions, as even when we try to have the upper hand, it drags us back to its realm and forces us to act according to it.

Through the views of Adam Smith that he reflected in his Book *The Theory of Moral Sentiment*, we can get a grasp of the overall attitude that thinkers of the time are beginning to adopt. It is the tendency towards emotions rather than reason, and towards the heart rather than the mind, and that was the time when Sentimentalism began to grow as a widespread movement.

2.2 Traditional Masculinity and Sentimentalism

Prior to the Eighteenth century, the traditional view on masculinity, and the lack of emotional expression was evident in early Puritan periods, as puritans saw that people, especially men, are only on earth for spiritual purposes, they have to exert all sorts of moral discipline, leadership, and responsibility. The life of a puritan man does not have space for emotional weakness, and if it was necessary, it has to be presented against God, not human. This moral rigidity was represented in the puritan animosity towards all sorts of art, especially those of theatrical arts that depicted men

in a romantic, emotional and somewhat vulnerable manners, as seen in many of the Shakespearean plays of the time. For puritans, art, romance, and emotional expression were nothing but a distraction and diversion of people from their original and essential purpose in life, which is worshipping and strengthening their spiritual life. This extreme moral firmness, and the deprivation of any sort of earthly enjoyment or entertainment was enough to suppress any possibility for men to express themselves freely, and open up about their emotions, let alone endorsing them and expressing them in their actions and moral stances. (Dhaher and Maghtath, 2017, 437)

During the 18th century, the traditional view of men was that of a sturdy, emotionless being who is only expected to exert a behavior that aligns with the mere fact of his gender. This classical manly view of men was reflected in the literary outputs of the time, as it can be seen in Henry Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* for instance. The titular protagonist Fielding depicted in his novel is a masculine man who has physical strength and virtue. The masculinity illustrated by the character of Joseph Andrews is pious and robust, in a response to the traditional masculinity of the gentry, his version of masculinity values both physical valor and moral integrity, traits that are in alignment with the traditional masculine gender roles that were admired and practiced by the English society of the time.

It is true that Joseph Andrews has been illustrated in a manner that is nearly infallible, he does not come without some shortcomings. Even though Andrews represents the idealized form of masculinity, through Fielding's critique of the gentry and their principles we can see that he has his limitations, as such a character lacks the sustainability and adaptability for the new world. This version of masculinity that is somewhat romanticized is simply unrealistic, as it does not adhere to the actual dynamics of the times that requires people to reflect upon their own vulnerabilities.

The idealistic, more traditional view of masculinity, and though it is admirable and attractive by nature, it does not fit the constantly changing landscape of the time, whether it is socially or politically. We can see the significance of Fielding's masculine depiction of Andrews as it is a transitional phase of traditional gender view, where traditional masculinity is still admired and sought after, but it is being exposed as not compatible with the shifting landscape of eighteenth-century England. (Necastro, 2017, 1-5).

With the advent of thoughts and approaches towards traditional masculinity, the view of men towards themselves was also beginning to shift. And with this,

people's minds were ready to conceive and indulge in a philosophy that caters this new approach towards traditional, classic stances of gender roles and morality. Notions like Adam Smith's theory of Moral Sentimentalism, along with the cultural changes that were ongoing, in addition to the fact that people began to grow tired of the strictly rational notions of the Enlightenment, resulted in the emergence of Sentimentalism as a literary, philosophical tendency, that catered people's intellectual and artistic taste.

The term "Sentimentalism" gained its traction as a follow-up for the production of Lawrence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy* (1768), where "sentimental" just like Smith wanted it to mean, was used to evoke sympathy and sensitivity of emotions, rather than pure reason. Stern's book introduced an understanding of the term "sentiment" that is closer to that of Smith than the ongoing reasonable trend. (Jafarova, 2023,88).

Going towards late eighteenth century, the literary scene was going through a gradual, yet steady shift, from rigid reason and rationality towards a more sentimental zeal. Sentimentalism tended to reflect the personal, individual emotional experience of people, and was often tied to themes that evoked strong emotions like death, as it was seen in the works of the "Graveyard School" with works of Robert Burns that challenged the traditional norms. (Jafarova, 2023, 90).

Sentimentalism found a fostering ground in novel, as sentimental novels became very popular in the late eighteenth century Europe, and particularly England, as readers were savoring the new trend of engaging with the literary works emotionally. Despite having many sentimental works that began to have a more formulaic and melodramatic tone it, sentimental novels continue to grow as the new popular genre in eighteenth century literature.

Sentimentalism was more about moving readers emotionally in order to encourage their moral behavior. They were designed to underscore sympathy as an essential moral motif. Denis Diderot, the French philosopher, in his book *Eulogy of Richardson*, discussed how sentimental novels like Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* touches on human feelings more than reason, as readers were so moved by the death of Clarissa in a cathartic manner, that they were ready to forgive her of any sin or shortcoming that she had committed. (Rivero, 2019, 1)

It is essential to note the importance of the role of women writers to the growth of sentimental novels, as women writers were masters of exploring emotions, as they have deeper experience in it than that of male novelists. Writers like Frances Burney, Ann Radcliffe, and Maria Edgeworth had crucial role in shaping the platform for

later works to explore gender dynamics, and how women lived their emotional lives in a passive, submissive manner. (Rivero, 2019, 155)

Jane Austen could be the most important figure when it comes to the novel of sensibility, not only as a writer but also as a critic. For instance, her novel *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) was a direct engagement and combat between rationality and sensitivity, as she went on exploring the dangers of overt, uncontrolled emotional responses in relationships. Austen illustrated a playful representation of women's emotions when it comes head-to-head with her rationality.

Jane Austen also presented critical views over literary outputs of the time, as she did with Francis Burney's *Camilla* (1796), Austen was not a formal critic, as she was an admirer of Burney, but she induced her novel *Northanger Abbey* (1818) with intertextuality with Burney's *Camilla* to discuss themes that was presented in the novel. An example can be seen in Austen's view of the dangers of excessive emotional sensitivity that could lead to a shift from virtuous acts to selfish, and impulsive actions. (Rivero, 2019, 210-211).

3. The Man of Feeling and the Redefinition of Masculinity

3.1 Production, Reception, and Story

Henry Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling* is the work that marks the onset of Mackenzie's productions in the field of novel, after dwindling between poetry and other arts, Mackenzie took his odds towards the novelistic endeavor. The first mentioning of this work was by Mackenzie in a letter that he wrote to his cousin, Elizabeth Rose of Kilravock: "Of all the Garbs I ever saw Pride put on, that of her Humility is to me the most disgusting. Pray did my Aunt Lexie mention any thing to you of a young Gentleman one Harley [hero of *The Man of Feeling*] with whom She & I were a little acquainted at Fowlis? this last was a Sentiment of his." (Mackenzie and Rose, 1968, 76).

The Man of Feeling was written during the period of 1768 and 1770, and by 1771 it was ready to be published. It was so successful that even Mackenzie himself did not believe it, he wrote to his cousin: "The Reception which the public Indulgence has given it has exceeded my Expectations: the copies allotted for Edinr were all sold in about a Week's Time, & when a fresh Demand was made on London it was found that the whole Impression had been already exhausted." (Mackenzie and Rose, 1968, 83).

In a letter to his friend James Elphinston, Mackenzie shows his high hopes of his novel reaching the triumph of "moral and instructive purpose", as when it comes to reforming individuals, it is close to the writings of Enlightenment thinkers, with

the difference of his work being focused upon individual sensibility rather than rationality. He describes novels as “little histories” that carries records of “private life” in a stark contrast to the classical historical writings, that are mainly concerned with broader, mostly political matters, with disregard to the individual experience of emotions and sentiments. (London, 1997, 2-3).

The Man of Feeling follows the daily life of the protagonist Harley, an orphan who is raised by guardians who showed him nothing but indifference. As he is left without any form of parental observation, Harley becomes a passive, yet close observer of the world around him. When He reaches adulthood, he receives advises about seeking lease on his land to increase his small estate, which makes him decide to leave towards London, after bidding farewell to Miss Walton, his maiden aunt.

London, the rumbling city with deceitful people does not treat him well, as his naivety is taken advantage of. He faces the harshness of the city and is deceived multiple times, even by a mad woman whom he has mistaken as a guide to the city. Despite all these mishaps, Harley does not lose his moral sentiment, as he encounters a homeless prostitute, Emily Atkins, with whom he builds a bond, sharing his money with her, and helping her reunite with her long-lost father.

His will to secure a lease, which was his main motive to travel to London, unfortunately fails, so he goes on his journey home, with his sense of morality growing gradually. Upon reaching home, he encounters a former soldier, Edward, who happens to return from India, and learns that his son and daughter in law have died from heart-break. Harley, with great empathy, offers a small farm for the soldier to help him ease his devastation.

In the final chapter, Harley learns that Miss Walton, his secret love, is about to get married to Sir Harry Benson, and despite realizing the incorrectness of this news, this initial shock, along with his deep empathy with Edward that he has previously exerted, his health begins to deteriorate, to the point that he begins to believe in his close death. Upon his death, and realizing its inevitability, Harley decides to confess his love to Miss Walton, as she shares the affections with him, Harley dies in peace, having known that he is able to express his hidden feelings to his beloved before passing away. (Barker, 1974, 27-28).

3.2 Masculine Emotional Vulnerability in *The Man of Feeling*

As the plot summary shows, Henry Mackenzie has presented his protagonist as an emotional character. Unlike traditional male characters that are often motivated by valor, bravery or chivalry, the catalyst to Harley’s actions is that of sensibility and feelings. Harley’s actions and overall behavior reflects the ideals of

sentimentalism, which values emotions like nothing else, and grants it the upper hand in deciding what to do and what not to do. In this section, several instances of, not only Harley, but of other male characters will be presented, to illustrate the unconventional sentimentality that they exert.

- **Harley Weeping for The Grieving Woman**

Her eyes fixed on a little garnet ring she wore on her finger; she turned them now upon Harley. “My Billy is no more!” said she; “do you weep for my Billy? Blessings on your tears! I would weep too, but my brain is dry; and it burns, it burns, it burns!”—She drew nearer to Harley. — “Be comforted, young lady,” said he, “your Billy is in heaven.” (Mackenzie, 2004, 35).

In this passage we can see a different sort of tears being shed by Harley, those tears are now of compassion and sympathy, he is weeping for the loss of Billy, the love of the homeless beggar he encountered. Though he does not know Billy personally, but seeing his lover in her broken state made him shed tears. We can see that even Billy’s lover is not crying as much as Harley, as he is trying to comfort her and help her with her grievance, but collapsing while doing so.

- **Harley’s Heartbreak for the Woman**

She stretched out her hand to Harley; he pressed it between both of his, and bathed it with his tears. — “Nay, that is Billy’s ring,” said she, “you cannot have it, indeed; but here is another, look here, which I plaited to-day of some gold-thread from this bit of stuff; will you keep it for my sake?” (Mackenzie, 2004, 35).

This quotation which is taken from a very long quotation is a reflection of emotional vulnerability and excessive sympathy. The woman whose name was not explicitly mentioned, is portrayed as a tragic figure with nothing to project other than her grievance for the loss of her love, Billy. She is completely consumed by the memories of him, and her explicit expression of love, sorrow and fragility touches Harley profoundly.

What moved Harley even more is her will to hand him a ring that Harley staunchly refused to take, as the woman now went on trying to ease him up, calling him “little trembler” which shows the extreme level of sympathy he expressed. The woman gave him another ring to remind him of her. When the woman left, Harley stood in his place, astonished and did not leave the place without shedding final tears.

- **Harley Shedding Tears Over His Childhood Memories:**

“Oh, heavens!” he cried, “what do I see: silent, unroofed, and desolate! Are all thy gay tenants gone? do I hear their hum no more Edwards, look there, look there? the scene of my infant joys, my earliest friendships, laid waste and ruinous! That was the very school where I was boarded when you were at South-hill (Mackenzie, 2004, 84).

We can see how Harley is overwhelmed by nostalgic grief when he visits his old place after years of leaving, in expressing his grief, he does not hold back or try to get a grip of himself for the fact of being a man, but he flings off his emotions in a melodramatic way, not holding his tears back, and venting all his grief in a completely open manner.

• Harley Weeping for the Collapsed Schoolhouse

Just then a woman passed them on the road, and discovered some signs of wonder at the attitude of Harley, who stood, with his hands folded together, looking with a moistened eye on the fallen pillars of the hut. He was too much entranced in thought to observe her at all, but Edwards, civilly accosting her, desired to know if that had not been the school-house, and how it came into the condition in which they now saw it. (Mackenzie, 2004, 84).

We can clearly view Harley’s emotional vulnerability that is shown in his mourning for the loss of the old schoolhouse with which he had remaining memories, Harley is pictured with “moistened eyes” while approaching the collapsed pillars of the hut of his schoolhouse.

Harley’s expression of emotional distress was not of a traditional man who is pressured by his conditions to the break point, but it was an open, melodramatic form of expression that he exerted despite being around people, like Edwards and the women they have encountered and sought for inquiry.

• Harley’s Compassion for Edwards’ Grandchildren

The girl, who had only sighed before, now wept outright; her brother sobbed, but he stifled his sobbing. “I have told sister,” Said he, “that she should not take it so to heart; she can knit already, and I shall soon be able to dig, we shall not starve, sister, indeed we shall not, nor shall grandfather neither.” The girl cried afresh; Harley kissed off her tears as they flowed, and wept between every kiss. (Mackenzie, 2004, 87).

Through this passage, we can see a glimpse of the former, traditional masculine role represented by the little boy, who, despite crying, tried to calm himself down to give strength to his little sister, and help her get through their mourning. Though the scene is not depicted with Harley as its main focus, we can see his compassion

reflecting in his sympathy with the little girl, by kissing her and wiping her tears while weeping between every kiss.

• **Edwards' Tears for the Loss of His Family**

The old man had risen, and was leaning over his sleeping grandson, with the tears flowing down his cheeks. At first, he did not perceive Harley; when he did, he endeavored to hide his grief, and crossing his eyes with his hand expressed his surprise at seeing him so early astir. (Mackenzie, 2004, 89).

Edwards, the soldier who had lost his family as it was mentioned in the summary, is in his room with his sleeping grandchild. Harley, who stayed with him to offer his condolence, went to check on Edwards in his room believing he will be asleep in the early morning, yet Edwards was not, as he was breaking down in tears, mourning his loss, and contemplating the future of his grandsons. We can see that Edwards, who was introduced as a veteran soldier, and gives the expectation of a sturdy, harsh man, is also vulnerable and shedding tears alone.

• **Excessive Compassion Between Harley and Edwards**

He pressed him in his arms, and when he had given vent to the fulness of his heart by a shower of tears, "Edwards," said he, "let me hold thee to my bosom, let me imprint the virtue of thy sufferings on my soul. Come, my honoured veteran! let me endeavour to soften the last days of a life, worn out in the service of humanity; call me also thy son, and let me cherish thee as a father." Edwards, from whom the recollection of his own suffering had scarced forced a tear, now blubbered like a boy. (Mackenzie, 2004, 82).

This passage reflects the overall sentimental attitude that the characters of the novel approach, Harley is feeling excessive sympathy for the misfortunes Edwards' misfortunes, he offers to hug him and help him vent even more, he also offers to address him as a father, if Edwards can see him as a son, the exchange of compassion here makes Edwards weep even more, as he "blubbers like a boy" when seeing how much Harley is moved by his grief.

• **Harley's Profound Compassion with a Stranger Woman**

She fell back lifeless in her chair. Harley started from his seat, and, catching her in his arms, supported her from falling to the ground, looking wildly at the door, as if he wanted to run for assistance, but durst not leave the miserable creature. He offered to call a chair, saying that he hoped a little rest would relieve her. —He had one half-guinea left. "I am sorry," he said, "that at present I should be able to make you an offer of no more than this paltry sum." (Mackenzie, 2004, 47-48).

This incident is perhaps the pinnacle of Harley's overt compassion, as he encounters an unnamed woman who appears destitute, she collapses after drinking

a sip of the wine that Harley offered, and Harley rushes to help like his life depends on her. Mackenzie illustrates the suspense Harley felt, as he wants to leave, calling for help, but he is too concerned to leave the woman alone in her condition.

Finally, and after some help from the waiter, she regains her senses, and explains how she was starving for days, and the wine did not do her well in such condition, and Harley offers her a crust of bread that she “swallowed” out of extreme hunger, and regains more of her energy.

His compassion keeps bursting as he offers her a chair and keeps projecting his sympathy in all possible ways. Harley does not stop there, as he still feels that he did not help her enough, and his moral sympathy is not yet fulfilled. He decides to give her some money, and offers her all the money that he has left with him (which is half-guinea), while he is apologizing for not being able to support her more, but that “paltry sum” is everything he possesses.

• Harley’s Final Collapse over Miss Walton

I will not pretend to misunderstand you—I know your worth—I have known it long —I have esteemed it—What would you have me say? —I have loved it as it deserved.”—He seized her hand—a languid colour reddened his cheek—a smile brightened faintly in his eye. As he gazed on her, it grew dim, it fixed, it closed—He sighed and fell back on his seat—Miss Walton screamed at the sight—His aunt and the servants rushed into the room— They found them lying motionless together. (Mackenzie, 2004, 111).

Going towards the final chapters of the novel, we can see Harley experiencing and expressing a different type of tears, as now he is not shedding tears of nostalgic longing for his diminished schoolhouse or old hometown, he is not shedding tears of sympathy for the loss of old Edwards, nor he is weeping over the stranger woman who was deserted by her lover. Harley is now shedding tears over himself, as he was able to finally confess his love to Miss Walton, through a long, passionate conversation that he poured his feelings through. Harley, and through his declaration of love, apologizes for Miss Walton, for he is unworthy of loving such a person, to which she responds with utter negation, telling him that she knows his worth well, and goes on to confess her love to him.

This, however was more of a sudden rush of emotions, or an overdose that overwhelmed Harley, as his whole life was characterized by unfulfilled love and suffering, the emotional burden was too much for him to handle, and he died of emotional exhaustion.

This conclusion of Harley's life is an idealistic portrayal of a man who lived by passion, and died by it, as he consumed an excessive amount of it, he has become a martyr of emotions. Harley, who exerted overwhelming compassion and sympathy towards everything and every person around him, was not able to endure the emotional exhaustion caused by his unrequited love responding to him positively. With this, Mackenzie marked the long sentimental journey of emotional extremes, in the most sentimental way possible.

Conclusion

Henry Mackenzie was a Scottish poet and novelist, who was born into a family that infused him with passion for art and literature, he reflected this in his short poetic journey that ended with a setback, but made him shift towards fiction, through which he found his long-awaited success. Through his seminal work, *The Man of Feeling*, Mackenzie was able to reflect his inner passion and sympathy towards the others, in an intriguing, attractive literary manner.

Mackenzie's emotional tendencies did not grow in a vacuum, as they were byproducts of the sweeping wave of sentimentalism that was overwhelming Europe's philosophical and literary realms. Adam Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiment left its impact on Mackenzie, as his moral foundation of sympathy being the basic catalyst for human behavior, rather than reason, is what Mackenzie adapted and lived by. Smith's declaration of human fragility when it comes to their emotions, found its way to Mackenzie's intellectual mind.

The sentimental zeal that Mackenzie embraced was very evident in his most instrumental work, his novel *The Man of Feeling*. Through the interactions of the characters of the novel, and most importantly the protagonist Harley, the sentimental, overly compassionate, excessively sympathetic behavior is very clearly seen to be rising above every other catalyst that was traditionally motivating actions, such as reason and rationality.

The male characters of the novel reflect an emotionally vulnerable and fragile behavior that is unprecedented in literature. Despite the social conventions and expectations that were laid upon men, as representors of sturdiness, bravery and emotional rigidity, Mackenzie's characters do not shy away to expose their weakness, and express their emotions in an open manner.

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