

Reading Characters and Characters

Reading

Jelige: hoíche

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Methodology	4
<i>Adeline Mowbray</i>.....	11
Conclusion.....	20
Works Cited	21
Appendix A	23
Appendix B.....	34

Introduction¹

Characters in literature play a significant role, serving as conduits for conveying archetypes and universal patterns of human behaviour.² Phelan proposes that characters can be images of possible people, which he calls mimetic characters (2).³ Thus, they are not “modelled on human beings” but “are based on perceived, accepted, or imagined personalities of actual people” (Phelan and Rabinowitz, “Characters” 132). These mimetic characters must have a pivotal role in understanding the attitudes, opinions and norms of the time the works was written in. Therefore, examining their characterisation and reading habits can provide insights into the perception of various reading materials and practices of the time of the composition of the novels. Realistic fiction relies on the presentation of characters to convey an illusion of autonomy while concurrently serving the broader intentions of the implied author.⁴ Phelan and Rabinowitz argue that the success of realistic fiction lies in the authors’ capacity to create a semblance of characters acting independently, yet consistently aligning with the overarching narrative purpose (113). This delicate equilibrium between character autonomy and authorial control infuses the narrative with authenticity and purpose. Richardson contributes to this discourse by emphasizing the grounding of realistic characters in perceived, accepted, or imagined personalities of real individuals (132).

Ben Knights posits that readers’ inclination towards stable characters fulfils a psychological need, as literary characters become projections of aspirational identities. Stability, coherence through time, and a recognizable identity become important attributes, offering readers a platform to judge characters benevolently and perceive them as an unassailable core immune to external influences (see Knights). This perspective underscores the intricate symbiosis between readers and characters, highlighting the latter as conduits for psychological fulfilment and introspection within the contextual framework of a novel. Twentieth-century approaches to characterisation offer a dichotomous division of character

¹ This study is SUPPORTED BY THE ÚNKP-23-2 NEW EXCELLENCE PROGRAM OF THE MINISTRY FOR CULTURE AND INNOVATION FROM THE SOURCE OF THE NATIONAL RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION FUND.

² I would like to thank Dr Tamás Fekete for introducing me to QualCoder and Laurence Anthony’s programs and for his help.

³ Phelan in his book proposed a framework for characters in literary fiction, consisting of three coexisting elements: the mimetic aspect, portraying character as a potential person; the thematic aspect, depicting character as a representative of a broader group or set of ideas; and the synthetic aspect, portraying character as a construct embedded within the narrative’s broader framework. See: James Phelan, *Reading People, Reading Plots: Character, Progression, and the Interpretation of Narrative*. University of Chicago Press, 1989.

⁴ Here the implied author refers to Booth’s definition. Authors have a “second self” that write the book. The implied author is an image of the author that a work implies. See Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric Fiction*. University of Chicago Press, 1983.

types. E. M. Forster in *Aspects of the Novel* created a framework consisting of round and flat characters (see Forster), while Wood refers to opaque and transparent characters because “Spatial metaphors, of depth, shallowness, roundness, flatness, are inadequate. A better division—though not perfect, either—is between transparencies (relatively simple characters) and opacities (relative degrees of mysteriousness)” (Wood 129). The dichotomous classification of characters into strictly good or bad, flat or round, and opaque or transparent categories oversimplifies the intricate web of motivations, emotions, and conflicts that define these mimetic characters.

Recently, Ulrike Tabbert and Juhani Rudanko have focused on linguistic and stylistic elements, including the use of negation, transitivity, and narrative perspective to see how linguistic choices contribute to the characterization of female protagonists in James Hadley Chase’s crime fiction. In their analysis they combined linguistic and stylistic analysis to place characters on the flat/round continuum (see, Tabbert and Rudanko). Drawing from the idea that linguistic choices contribute to characterization, this current analysis hopes to uncover a connection between characterisation and the reading habits of the examined characters. In 2023, Eugenia Lukin, James Cooper Roberts, David Berdik, Eliana Mugar and Patrick Juola explored the use of adjectives and adverbs in author attribution. In their analysis, they created six groups to describe the adjectives used in their examined works, such as colour, size, opinion, age, shape, and other (see, Lukin, et al.). My analysis will use a similar methodology, but specifically focusing on the way adjectives are used to describe characters.

Readers place characters in the framework of their existing knowledge about actual and fictitious types based on their horizon of expectations. Wolfgang Iser’s implied reader and Umberto Eco’s model reader illustrate how readers bring their expectations and assumptions to the narrative. Their readers make connections between character types and character while reading because “this process [of reading] formulates something that is unformulated in the text and yet represents its ‘intention’” (Iser 287; also qtd. in Eco 18-19). Wayne Booth’s implied reader and Joe Bray’s insights into female readers highlight the reflective nature of readers within novels. Bray has already highlighted this reflective nature of the specifically female reader in the novels of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, whose “reading of books is connected, though never straightforwardly, to the many complicated and diverse ways in which she reads the world” (Bray 1). Readers’ interpretations are not isolated; they are interconnected with their real-life practices and opinions. Reader-response theorists focused on real-life readers. However, in this analysis, I will shed light on readers within novels, as they

reflect on and mirror real-life practices and opinions, like the implied reader of Booth (see, Booth).

The aim of this essay is to reveal a potential connection between how a character is characterised and how the character's reading habits are represented. In my qualitative analysis, I investigate character construction in the selected texts, stepping away from character categorization based on flatness, opaqueness, or goodness; instead, I will concentrate on the adjectives used to describe the characters. Furthermore, this analysis advocates for a departure from the simplistic dichotomy of "good" and "bad" characters that seems to be the prevailing view for character types. In order to explore reading habits, I took a similar approach of looking at words associated with reading and connecting them to characters. My working hypothesis is that there is a connection between reading and characterisation in novels. Furthermore, my purpose is to demonstrate that reading in fiction is a cross-textual and significant element of the period that is worth examining.

Methodology

In a broader context, this research is centred around reading and readers. Within this expansive subject, the greatest emphasis is placed on the characters and their reading habits in the novels of English female writers published between 1770 and 1820, as well as the relationship between character traits and reading practices, and the materials they read.

The selected corpus comprises ten novels, two from each decade, selected to represent both well-known and lesser-known works. The corpus was collected from digital repositories such as the Eighteenth-Century Collections Online (ECCO), Project Gutenberg, Internet Archive and HathiTrust Digital Library, as well as printed works such as *The Concise Oxford Chronology of English Literature*. The hundreds of results from these sources were then narrowed down to two novels per decade. This strategy provides a better understanding of the broader literary landscape, capturing both widely recognized texts and those that may have not received enough critical attention. The corpus used in this study includes texts that are easily accessible online, and were downloaded from the Project Gutenberg, Internet Archive or ECCO and HathiTrust Digital Library. From the 1770s I have chosen *The Old English Baron* (1778) by Clara Reeve (first published as *The Champion of Virtue* in 1777) and *Evelina: Or The History of A Young Lady's Entrance into the World* (1778) by Frances Burney. Sophia Lee's *The Recess, or a Tale of other Times* (1783-5) and Charlotte Smith's *Emmeline; or The Orphan of the Castle* (1788) have been chosen from the 1780s. The two novels from the 1790s are Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and Elizabeth Inchbald's *A Simple Story* (1791). From the 1800s *Belinda* (1801) by Maria Edgeworth and *Adeline Mowbray* (1804) by Amelia Opie were selected. Lastly, from the 1810s Selina Davenport's *An Angel's Form and a Devils Heart* (1818) and Jane Austen's *Emma* (1816) will be compared. I have made a subjective decision of including authoresses only once. This was done in an attempt to include lesser known authoresses and works that currently do not appear in the English literary canon. Consequently, the corpus of ten documents includes both canonical and non-canonical works. Porter suggests that the canon not only reflects what people read but also influences readership, leading to a dynamic interplay between scholarly study and public reading habits (24). After looking at the graphs from a pamphlet from the Stanford Literary Lab, I have concluded that my corpus has a variety of authors who are either prestigious, popular, part of the canon or not. Frances Burney is part of the group of writers in the canon "made of authors from whom commercial publishers are still expecting to make profits two or three generations after their

initial success” (Algee-Hewitt, et al. 5). Radcliffe, Reeve, Smith, Opie, Edgeworth are “writers with high popularity scores . . . but quite low on prestige” (5). Sophia Lee, Inchbald, and Davenport are not shown on the graphs. Jane Austen is the highest-prestige author out of my corpus based on Pamphlet 11 (see Algee-Hewitt, et al.). This approach broadens the scope of this qualitative analysis, promoting diversity and offering a more inclusive representation of female authors. Although, in some cases, the lack of online availability limits this attempt.

For this pilot study, I have decided to only look at one novel from my corpus, which is *Adeline Mowbray* by Amelia Opie as a proof of concept. Focusing on a single novel in the pilot study allows for a detailed examination of the methodology’s effectiveness, and helps to identify potential challenges and to refine the approach before scaling it up to the entire corpus.

For my qualitative research, I first prepared the text: it was transformed into a standardized text format, ensuring uniformity and facilitating systematic analysis. Then, using TagAnt, a multi-language segmenter and Part-Of-Speech (POS) tagger developed by Laurence Anthony, I tagged the novel. This makes the upcoming coding process more efficient because the program determines which words are adjectives. The next step is to look at the adjectives used to describe the characters and identifying words related to how and what characters read. For this, I use QualCoder, where I connect these words to the appropriate characters and characterisation category set up by me. QualCoder is an open source software for qualitative data analysis developed by Colin Curtain, to code the text. It is a standard qualitative data analysis support software suite, and it is crafted to assist researchers in handling and coding extensive datasets. Additionally, QualCoder offers tools to aid researchers in recognizing patterns and themes present in the data. As the subject of examination is characterisation, the first step is to find adjectives in the examined texts that directly relate to characters. As a result, expressions such as “fine eyes,” “happy disposition,” or “heartfelt tenderness” are not included in my analysis. However, unworthy as in “unworthy child,” “delicate woman,” or “amiable man” were included. Phrases such as “deep thinker” were kept together. Neither are adjectives describing environments or periods of time included. When referring to inabilities or unconsciousness, the negations were also kept; for example, “not able,” “not conscious,” or “not married.” This was done in an attempt to provide a more realistic image of the characterisation, as the true meaning of the word is not lost.⁵ Due to the large number of characters in the novel, the analysis does not include characters either, if they are described with appropriate adjectives only once.

⁵ By coding only the adjective “able,” the results would show a higher number of occurrences for adjectives related to positive traits than negative traits.

Adjectives such as “young” and “old” have been omitted from my list of characteristics, for I cannot describe them as either positive or negative adjectives. Ultimately, I will have a set of adjectives that define each character.

A parallel investigation involves searching for words associated with reading and learning in the texts. These terms are then linked to specific characters, establishing a list of words consisting of character traits and reading habits. This also helps to create the connection between characterisation and reading. Here it is important to note, how certain words were chosen for the analysis. Initially, this examination only consisted of words strictly relating to reading such as: “read/reading,” “books” and “novels.” However, throughout the coding procedure, it became evident that other nouns and verbs must be used for a more thorough analysis. As a result, words such as “letter,” “study,” “education,” “epistle,” “write” and “learn” together with their different varieties also became part of the set of words. However, in the case of “learn” the word is only coded when it refers to learning through reading, and gaining knowledge, rather than understanding an event happening within the novel. The inclusion of “writing” within the reading category is justified by their inherent interconnectedness.

The analysis entails coding the novel based on the deployment of adjectives in connection with characters and words associated with reading. The subsequent creation of categories serves a pragmatic organizational purpose. The analysis considers the co-occurrence of words to discern nuanced meanings, highlighting the intricate relationships between terms. The overall research framework seeks to illuminate the intricate interplay of linguistic elements, character types, and reader categorizations within the chosen novel, offering a nuanced understanding of the proposed connection between characterisation and reading habits in the novels of English female writers between 1770 and 1820. Throughout the coding process, QualCoder allows for the creation of categories to sort the codes. Thus, five categories, namely, bad characteristics, positive characteristics, undecided adjectives, the name of different characters, and reading were created. However, for the analysis, I have created twelve categories for characterisation and one to describe reading. These categories include subcategories based on the meaning of the words; thus, they include adjectives with “negative,” “positive,” and “undecided” meaning. Appendix A includes a list of all the adjectives, reading-related words in their appropriate categories, and characters (named and unnamed alike). Here is a list of the different subcategories, and their definition:

1. Traits:

- a. Negative Traits: personal qualities or attributes that are undesirable or detrimental, e.g. “dangerous,” “unnatural,” and “wrong.”
 - b. Positive Traits: desirable personal qualities or attributes, e.g. “able,” “delicate,” “fair,” and “spotless.”
 - c. Undecided Personality Traits: traits that are neither clearly positive nor negative in meaning, e.g. “bold,” “coy,” “silent,” and “superstitious.”
2. Emotional States:
 - a. Negative Emotional States: negative emotional states or feelings, e.g. “afraid,” “distressed,” “lonely,” and “sad.”
 - b. Positive Emotional States: positive emotions and feelings, e.g.: “amused,” “enthusiastic,” “glad” and “pleased.”
 - c. Undecided Emotional States: adjectives that may not clearly indicate positive or negative emotions, e.g. “alone,” “bashful,” “hasty,” and “timid.”
3. Intellectual States:
 - a. Negative Intellectual States: negative cognitive or intellectual attributes, e.g. “confused,” “dumb,” “mistaken,” and “senseless.”
 - b. Positive Intellectual States: positive cognitive or intellectual attributes, e.g. “deep thinker,” “learned,” “intellectual,” and “smart.”
4. Physical States:
 - a. Negative Physical States: negative physical conditions or health-related aspects, e.g. “exhausted,” “injured,” “sick,” and “unwell.”
 - b. Positive Physical States: positive health-related aspects, e.g. “active,” “fair,” “muscular,” and “neat.”
 - c. Undecided Physical States: adjectives describing physical conditions that are neither clearly positive nor negative, e.g. “asleep,” “round,” “tall,” and “thin.”
5. Social/Behavioural Traits:
 - a. Negative Social/Behavioural Traits: undesirable social behaviours or interpersonal qualities, e.g. “friendless,” “not punctual,” “unaccompanied,” and “insolent.”
 - b. Positive Social/Behavioural Traits: desirable social behaviours or interpersonal qualities, e.g. “acquainted,” “charming,” “talkative,” “respectable.”
6. Morality Traits:
 - a. Negative Morality: unethical or morally objectionable traits, e.g. “guilty,” “prejudiced,” “unworthy,” and “vile.”

- b. Positive Morality: ethical or morally commendable traits, e.g. “benevolent,” “faithful,” “moral,” and “virtuous.”
- 7. Contrasting States: states that highlight the negative aspects, e.g. “different,” and “unexpected.”
- 8. Miscellaneous States:
 - a. Negative Miscellaneous Traits: other negative characteristics that do not fit into the above subcategories, e.g.: “blind,” “dark,” “unfashionable,” and “unwilling/not willing.”
 - b. Positive Miscellaneous Traits: other positive characteristics that don’t fit into the above subcategories, e.g. “clean,” “dear,” “real,” and “superior.”
- 9. Harmonious States: states that reflect balance and well-being, e.g. “blessed,” “relieved,” “safe,” and “satisfied.”
- 10. Relationship Status: adjectives related to relationship status, e.g. “married,” and “not married.”
- 11. Socioeconomic Status: adjectives related to socioeconomic status, e.g. “celebrated,” “poor,” “privy,” and “rich.”
- 12. Dependency: adjectives related to dependency, e.g. “accustomed to,” “affected,” “dependent,” and “unexposed.”
- 13. Reading:
 - a. Positive Reading: words that describe the act of engaging with a piece of writing, or the creation of a text, e.g. “book,” “kind letter,” “learn everything,” “receive a letter,” and “understand.”
 - b. Negative Reading: words describing the destruction or avoidance of engaging with a piece of writing, e.g. “book offensive to good morals,” “intercepted letters,” “learn nothing,” and “unproductive studies.”

I included the subcategory “undecided adjectives,” for words that have highly context-related meaning. The criteria for these categories and sub-categories are a mix of valence (positive or negative nature), context (emotional, social, intellectual, etc.), and miscellaneous traits that may not fit neatly into specific categories. The dichotomy in the categories is based on meaning, not the judgement of the characters. The writer of this analysis does not wish to judge whether relationship statuses and degrees of dependency are negative or positive, thus they represent a category of their own, containing words that were put into the category “undecided adjective” in QualCoder. Furthermore, to account for different meanings of words,

some words appear in more than one category to ensure truthful representation. For instance, “vile” is in the group of Negative Social/Behavioural Traits and the Negative Morality subcategory. However, where words appearing in either the Positive or Negative Miscellaneous Traits, subcategories only appear once. When the number of occurrences in connection with each character is assigned to words such as “vile,” the number represents all occurrences rather than a number based on the context. As a result, their frequency in the group Social/Behavioural Traits and the group Negative Morality will be the same.

Corpus linguistics is a pivotal tool in deconstructing characterisation in these novels. It allows for an analysis of large volumes of textual data, providing a comprehensive view of language use within the selected novels, which is crucial for identifying patterns and trends that may not be apparent in smaller datasets. This can help reveal commonalities or variations in the ways characters are portrayed based on the adjectives used to describe them and reading habits across different novels and authors. While my analysis involves qualitative coding and categorization, the use of corpus linguistics complements this by providing quantitative support, which ensures replicability. Finally, the analysis involves comparing character profiles with the identified reading-related terms. I will be utilizing quantitative methods to analyse the frequency of specific character traits and reading-related terms in the novel. This analysis can help identify meaningful associations between character attributes and behaviours, shedding light on how authors construct and convey personality traits, interests, and motivations through language. This comparative analysis aims to discern patterns, correlations, and potential insights into the relationship between characterisation and reading habits in the selected novels. To visualize my results, I will primarily use Excel and Voyant Tools, which helps to create collocation diagrams and collect data, which allows for the distant reading of texts and a broad quantitative analysis. This approach enables the statistical analysis of the texts, identifying frequent words, expressions, and structures.

Instead of good and bad or evil characters, this methodology will show character types based on their descriptions, and as such, they can be put into groups (for easier communication, based on these adjectives. As a result, there will be characters, who are more fully described through their emotional states than their social states. Through this meticulous methodology including both qualitative and quantitative approaches, such an analysis can not merely to contribute to the scholarly discourse on digital literary studies but also to offer a new insight into the literary world of female authors during the examined period. What I seek here to find are connections between the reading habits of novelistic characters and their personalities. I

anticipate that the results of the research will reveal a clear connection between reading and character portrayal in the examined texts, highlighting the significant elements that span across texts based on the selected works in the period 1770-1820.

Adeline Mowbray

Amelie Opie was committed to radical politics in the 1790s, associated with the likes of William Godwin, Thomas Holcroft, Elizabeth Inchbald, and later Mary Wollstonecraft; as a result, her work *Adeline Mowbray* tackles Jacobin concerns. At first, the novel was interpreted as a critique of the radical theories of the 1790s. Opie's novel received praise for addressing important social concerns, but feminist criticism later condemned her, not for her own "female speech," but based on her perceived reputation as a "flirt" and her romantic involvement with Godwin while he was courting Mary Wollstonecraft (Eberle 124). Opie's actions drew criticism from scholars like Claire Tomalin, who accused Opie of a "steady campaign of denigration" against Wollstonecraft (Tomalin 236). Consequently, the novel has been read as a reflection on the relationship of Wollstonecraft and Godwin, as well as a critique of Godwinian philosophical and social values. The novel unravels the dichotomy between theoretical knowledge and its practical application, and the didactic potential of literature amidst societal anxieties. Through the character of Adeline, Opie explores the perils of adhering blindly to abstract theories, exemplified by Glenmurray's anti-marriage stance, which ultimately leads to Adeline's tragic downfall. "But she had not lived in the world; therefore, scarcely knew how repugnant to it her opinions were; nor . . . could she care sufficiently for its good opinion, to be willing to act contrary to her own ideas of right, rather than forfeit it . . . And then it was too late . . . But Adeline and thou are both the pupils of affliction and experience" (Opie 268-69). Drawing parallels with real-life figures like William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, the novel underscores the complexities of personal beliefs versus public perception, where even well-intentioned actions can have unforeseen consequences. The end of the eighteenth century saw a great emphasis on motherhood, as seen in the works of Wollstonecraft or Mary Hays. Opie had earlier written about a father-daughter relationship in *The Father and Daughter* (1801) and now focused on mother-daughter relations in *Adeline Mowbray*. According to Anne McWhir, who edited the Broadview Edition of the novel in 2010, the book is about "false learning" (McWhir 12). Despite being acknowledged as a "learned lady," "sensible woman," and being "wise," Editha Mowbray appears to have gained little wisdom from her reading. As Mrs Pemberton says, "Thy daughter's faults originated in thee! her education was cruelly defective" (Opie 267).

In this pilot study, I will lay emphasis on the named characters of *Adeline Mowbray* for whom I was able to ascribe a relatively high number of words. As a result, my focus will be on

the characteristic features of Adeline, Mrs Mowbray, and Glenmurray. Table 1 shows that Adeline is the most vividly described character, but the others are approximately on the same level.⁶

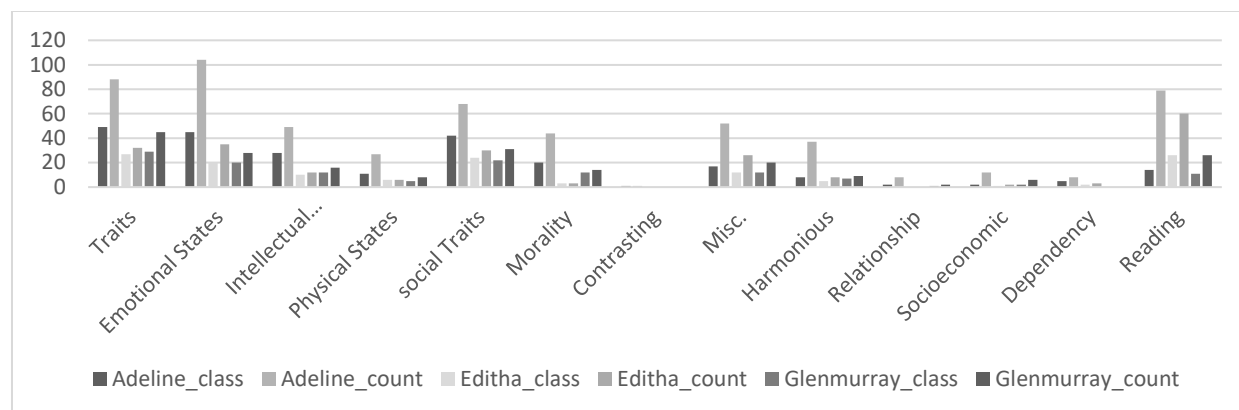


Table 1 shows the word frequency of adjectives used to characterise Adeline, Editha, and Glenmurray, as well as the frequency of words describing their reading. “Name_class” refers to how many different words are used for the character within the category, while “Name_count” refers to the sum of all the appearances of the words that are used for the character within that given category.

Table 1 also reveals that Opie characterised her characters mostly through their “Traits,” “Emotional States,” and “Social Traits.” This aligns with the novel’s purpose to highlight societal expectations and their consequences upon young women. Throughout the coding process, the adjectives relating to secondary characters were also coded. They show a similar tendency as the protagonists, namely, to have a high number of adjectives describing their emotional states. However, their characterisation includes significantly less words (between 15 and 79); thus, for this pilot study, their results will not be further discussed. To see the word frequency of these characters, see Appendix B.

Throughout the coding process, I connected 249 different words to the protagonist of the novel, Adeline Mowbray, and altogether 607 words. Of these 607 words, 468 are adjectives. These numbers offer a great starting point for looking at the way Opie characterised Adeline. The frequency of adjectives describing her range from 1 to 23 occurrences. Of these, the most frequent adjectives are: “dear” (23), “happy” (18), “silent” (13), “poor” (11), “dead” (8), “pale” (7), “eager” (7), “sure” (7), “dearest” (7), and “surprised” (7). Five of these words appear in the Emotional States category, three in the Physical States, two in the Harmonious States,

⁶ In the tables Mrs Mowbray is referred to as Editha.

Intellectual States, Traits and Miscellaneous Traits categories, and one in the Social/Behavioural Traits and the Socioeconomic category. From this, it seems like the word that most describes Adeline is “dear,” thus Miscellaneous Traits must be her most descriptive category. Tables 2.1 and 2.2 show the distribution of adjectives and reading related to Adeline.

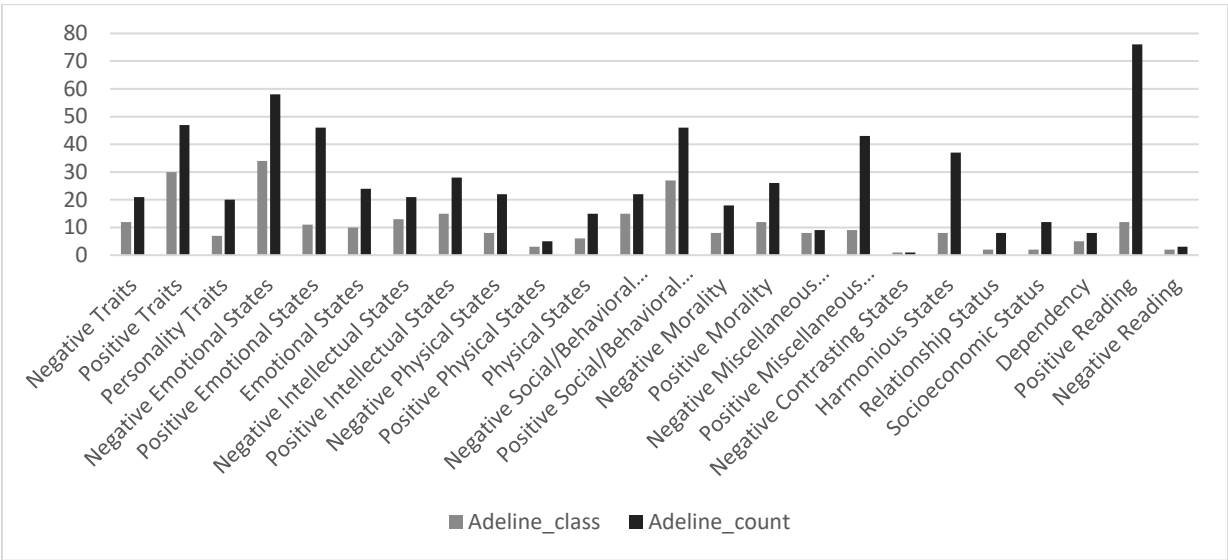
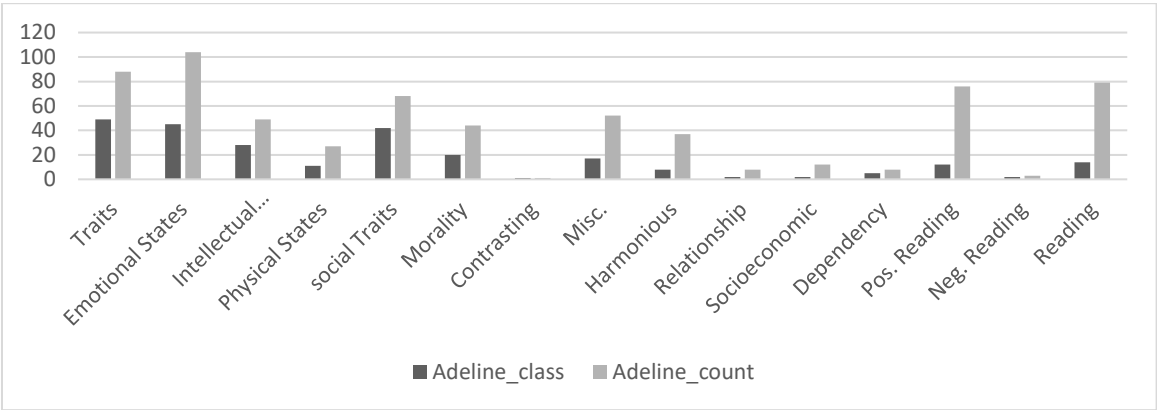


Table 2.1 shows the distribution in the categories, while Table 2.2 shows the characterisation of Adeline in the subcategories. “Adeline_class” refers to how many different words are true for the character within the category, while “Adeline_count” means the sum of all the appearances of the words that are true for the character within that given category.

Yet, these tables show that Adeline is predominantly described through her emotional states and her reading habits. This means that although the most frequent word appears twenty-three times, the descriptions of her emotional states are more vivid. From Table 2.1 it is also clear that her emotional states are negative most of the time. Her Negative Emotional State is more vividly depicted than her positive. Thirty-four different negative and eleven different positive

words are used to describe her, but her positive adjectives are repeated more frequently. The most used adjectives in Negative Emotional States for Adeline are: “unhappy” (6), “mad” (5), “guilty” (3), “lost” (3) and “agitated” (2). The most used positive adjectives are “happy” (18), “eager” (7), “pleased” (6), and “astonished” (3). Thus, we can conclude that Adeline is an emotional character in terms of her description. Furthermore, four of the most frequently used words to describe Adeline are also in the Emotional States category. But what about her reading? As Table 2.2 shows, Opie used positive words to describe her reading. The most frequently used words include “letter” (37), “write” (19), “book” (5), “study” (3), and “learn” (2). This list shows a wide variety of reading-related words. The three authors she has read include Voltaire, Scuderi, and Montesquieu: “Adeline had, therefore, read Rousseau’s *Contrat Social*, but not his *Julie*; Montesquieu’s *Esprit des Lois*, but not his *Lettres Persannes*; and had glowed with republican ardour over the scenes of Voltaire’s *Brutus*, but had never had her pure-mind polluted by the pages of his *Candide*” (Opie 92). What the coding process does not show is that Adeline also enjoys her eventual lover’s, Glenmurray’s writings. “One author in particular, by a train of reasoning captivating though sophistical, and plausible though absurd, made her a delighted convert to his opinions, and prepared her young and impassioned heart for the practice of vice, by filling her mind, ardent in the love of virtue, with new and singular opinions on the subject of moral duty” (Opie 52). The reason why this is not part of the coding is because it is not explicitly said that she read his works, and the analysis relies on linguistic features.

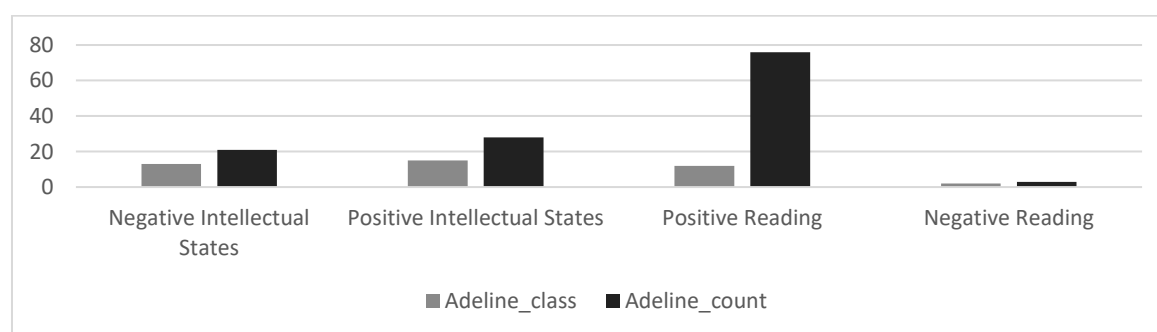


Table 2.3 shows the number of words describing Adeline’s reading and her intellectual state.

From Table 2.3, it is evident that Adeline’s reading is described positively. Despite her “cruelly defective education” she is “sure” (7), “clever” (3), “learned” (3), “sensible” (3), “wise” (2), “apt”, “certain”, “deep thinker”, “literary”, “not mistaken”, “qualified”, “rational”, “sane”, “skilled” and “wiser”. The words describing her Negative Reading include “learn nothing” (2) and “cruelly defective education” (1). Her intellects seem to be in line with these descriptions:

“unconscious” (6), “ignorant” (2), “mistaken” (2), “not conscious” (2), “blind” (1), “confused” (1), “delirious” (1), “disinterested” (1), “dumb” (1), “not aware” (1), “not ingenuous” (1), “silly” (1) and “unmindful” (1). This supports the description that Mrs Pemberley gives of Adeline when talking to Mrs Mowbray, because Adeline’s education was “cruelly defective” (Opie 267). However, there is discrepancy between the number of words related to her Negative Intellectual State and her Negative Reading. Moreover, there is no linear relationship between her positive intellect and her reading, because the difference between her Negative Reading and Positive Reading is not to the same extent as the difference between her Positive and Negative Intellectual States.

For Mrs Mowbray, I have coded 218 words of which 148 are adjectives. Editha’s characterisation is not as clear as her daughter’s. Similarly, to Adeline, Mrs Mowbray’s most repeated adjective used to describe her is “dear” (10), but the frequency of adjectives describing her range from 1 to 10. Other frequently used adjectives include “miserable” (6), “dearest” (5), “affectionate” (4), “great” (3), “happy” (3), and “good” (3). Two of these adjectives appear in the Emotional States, Social/Behavioural Traits, and the Miscellaneous Traits categories, one appears in the Traits and Harmonious States categories. When looking at Tables 3.1 and 3.2, it is evident that, in her case, the most frequent words and her most descriptive categories are in line with each other. She has an almost equal amount of words describing her Traits (32), her Emotional States (35), and her Social/Behavioural Traits (30).⁷ Even so, based on numbers, she is, just like her daughter, described mainly through her Emotional States. Of these, the negative adjectives are the more prevalent. Scholarship regards her as “an aspiring salon intellectual, a woman trying to make a profile for herself by cultivating a reputation for genius, neglecting household work, and consuming theories and controversies that she can try out as her own” (Lupton 84).

⁷ These numbers include the repetition of the words.

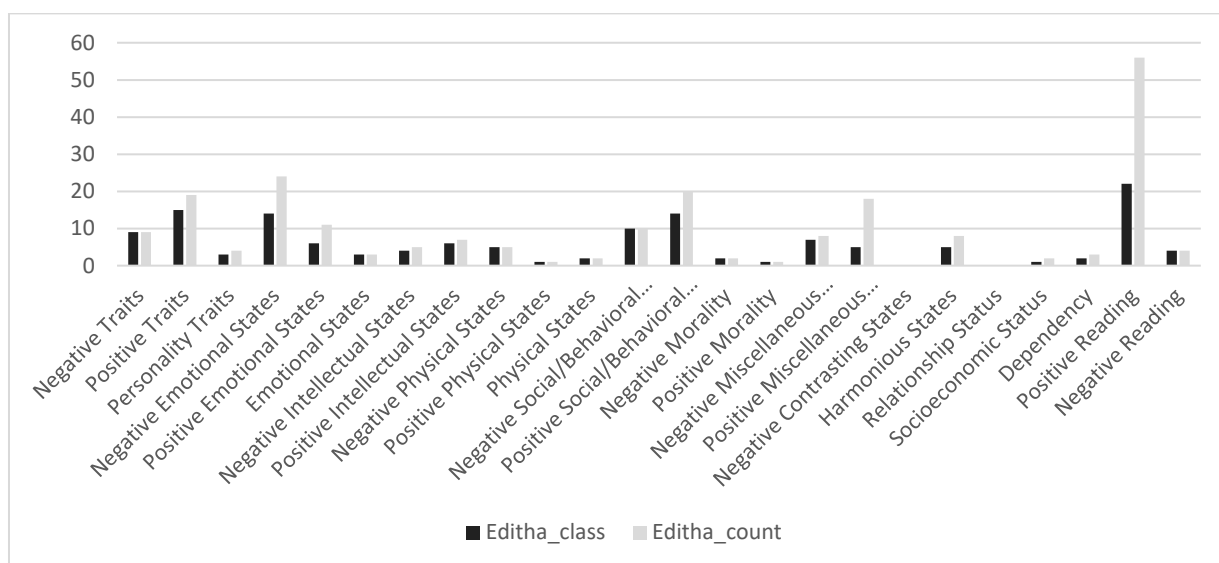
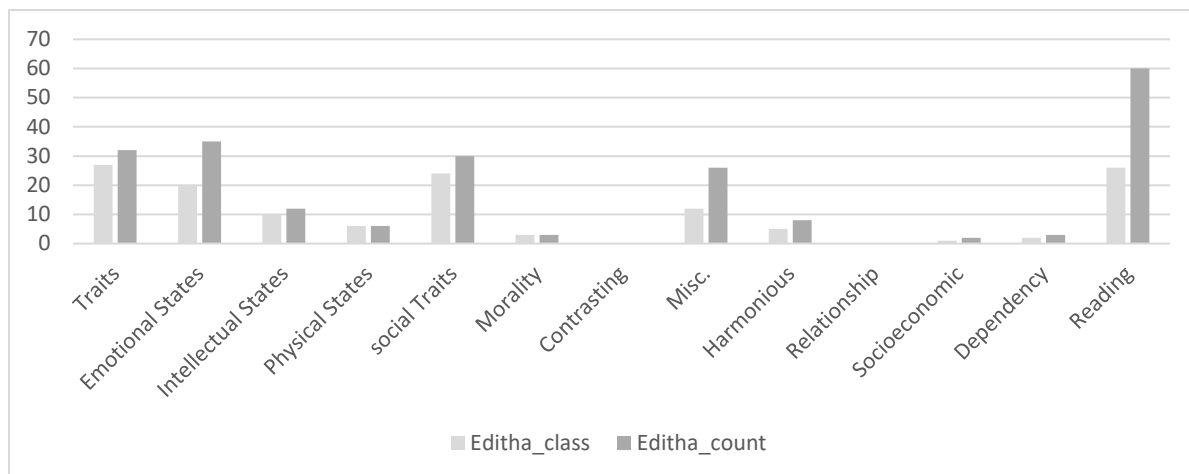
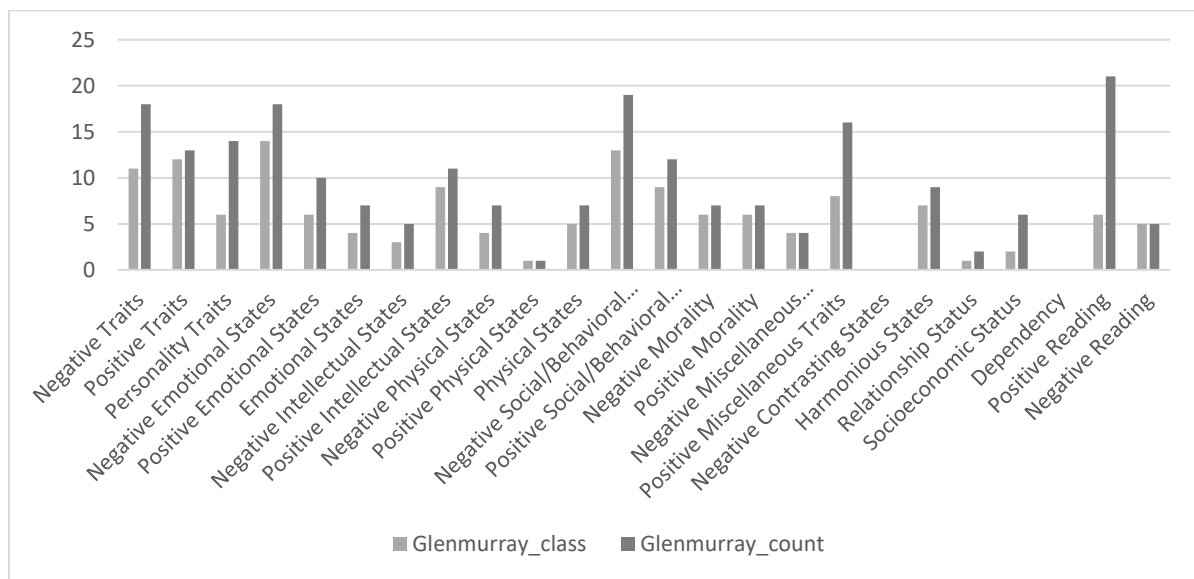
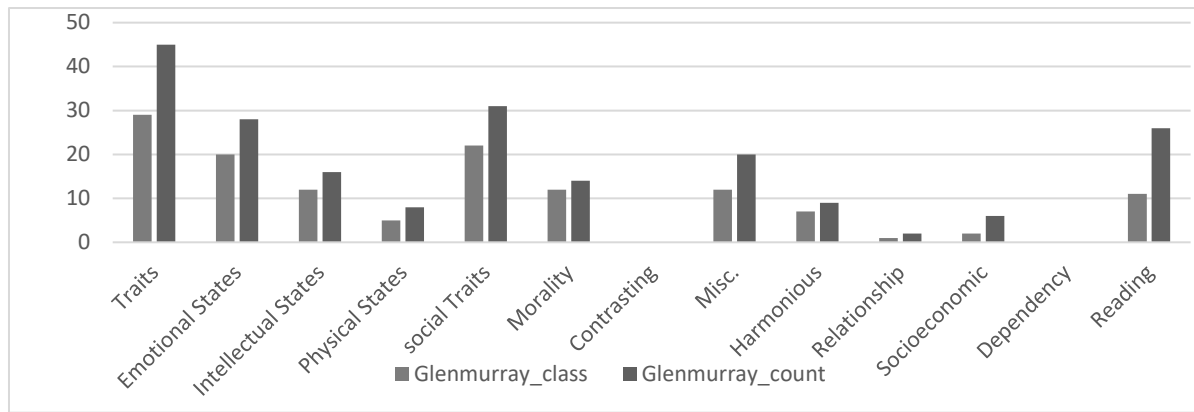


Table 3.1 shows the distribution in the categories, while Table 3.2 shows the characterisation of Editha in the subcategories.

Looking at the occurrences of adjectives related to intellectuality, there seems to be a lack of evidence to support her intellectuality assumed by critics. However, considering the 88 words connected to reading changes this perspective. Furthermore, it helps to emphasize her descriptions as a “learned” lady. Opie used 26 different words to describe Mrs Mowbray’s readings and reading habits, 22 of these are positive. Despite being referred to as a “learned lady,” the number of adjectives related to her emotional states and social/behavioural traits are significantly higher than those related to her intellectual states. For Christina Lupton, the “central characters are a mother and a daughter whose propensity to read badly sets the plot in motion” (Lupton 84). Despite reading the works of the “best poets,” and loving “systems of morals and metaphysics,” and “theories in politics” she still fails to give Adeline knowledge on how to read these works. Editha learns theories of life and morals, but does not consider the

human side of these theories. Yet the distant reading of the text does not show these results. Linguistically, their poor reading is not apparent: “Mrs. Mowbray was, if I may be allowed the expression, a showing-off woman, and loved the information which she acquired, less for its own sake than for the supposed importance which it gave her amongst her acquaintance, and the means of displaying her superiority over other women” (Opie 53). This sentiment can be seen in the data, when consulting Editha’s Social/Behavioural Traits, where we can see that Mrs Mowbray is “vain” (1). But what about her Positive Reading? The words that appear more than once in connection with her seem to re-emphasize her status as a “learned lady,” with words such as “letter” (15), “study” (11), “book” (5), “learn” (4), “philosophy” (3), “write” (2). Even the words appearing only once show the same result, “best poets” (1), “delightful books” (1), “education” (1), “essay” (1), “history” (1), “library” (1), “literature” (1), “novels” (1), “pamphlet” (1), “plays” (1), “poetry” (1), “read/reading” (1), “receive a letter” (1), “systems of morals and metaphysics” (1), and “theological tract” (1). Of authors, Locke is the only one named: “To oblige her, my good man and I began to read one Mr. Locke on the conduct of the human understanding; which my daughter said would teach us to think” (Opie 50). This must be an ironic remark by Opie, because even in the middle of the century Locke’s *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* was well known, one of Sterne’s central references in *Tristram Shandy*. There is no obvious connection between the number of adjectives describing her intellects and her readings. However, when considering the meaning and frequency of the words, there seems to be a connection.

The last character under scrutiny is Frederick Glenmurray, who, out of the three characters analysed thus far, has the most words in the Negative Reading subcategory. During the coding, I have connected 219 words to Glenmurray; 26 of these are reading related words. The most repeated adjective to describe him are “silent” (9), “jealous” (5), “mad” (4), “weak” (4), “dear” (4), “uneasy” (4), and “celebrated” (4). Three of these words appear in the Traits category, suggesting that this will be his most descriptive category. Two of the most frequent adjectives appear in the Emotional States category, and one among the Social/Behavioural Traits, the Miscellaneous Traits, and the Socioeconomic Traits category. Looking at Table 4.1 supports the presumption that Glenmurray is most characterised by his “Traits,” consisting of 11 negative, 12 positive, and 6 undecided adjectives:



Tables 4.1 and 4.2 shows the distribution in the categories, while Table 3.2 shows the characterisation of Glenmurray in the subcategories.

These words are included in this category: “silent” (9), “mad” (4), “weak” (4), “elegant” (2), “incapable” (2), “inclined” (1), “inexperienced” (1), “odd” (1), “sceptic” (1), “speculative” (1), “able” (1), “candid” (1), “deserving” (1), “dignified” (1), “earnest” (1), “great” (1), “handsome” (1), “ingenuous” (1), “requisite” (1), “right” (1), “romantic” (1), “absent” (1), “dangerous” (1), “deceitful” (1), “disreputable” (1), “forgetful” (1), “tenacious” (1), “worse” (1), and “wrong” (1). Throughout the novel, Glenmurray learns that the topics he writes on only work in theory. Marriage according to him is “absurd, unjust, and immoral” and “odious and unnecessary a ceremony” (Opie 65). In his characterisation, this is reflected by the description of him twice as a man who is “not married.” Consequently, Adeline earns this marker too. His controversial writings mirror his Negative Reading, which include words such as “cursed books” (1), “fatal letter” (1), “not understanding” (1), “unnecessary book” (1), and “vile books” (1). The adjectives defining his intellectuality include: “certain” (2), “sensible” (2), “absurd” (2),

“ignorant” (2), “clever” (1), “deserving” (1), “ingenuous” (1), “philosophic” (1), “philosophical” (1), “rational” (1), “sure” (1), and “incoherent” (1). The word “absurd” is used both to describe him, and he also uses it to describe marriage. Here, there also seems to be a discrepancy between the way his intellects are described and his “reading.” This could be a sign of irony regarding the way the author views the character. My quantitative analyses contribute to traditional character analysis and what they potentially reveal about the author-character relationship. The methodology inadvertently reveals how the author emotionally relates to their own characters – perhaps this is an original research claim in itself.

Adeline Mowbray is the most vividly described character in *Adeline Mowbray*. The results highlight the richness of Adeline’s character, particularly in emotional states and reading-related descriptors. The dominance of words related to reading in Adeline’s characterization suggests a significant connection between her intellectual engagement and the portrayal of positive emotional states. The data shows that while Adeline often experiences negative emotions, she also demonstrates a strong interest in reading. However, there is also a discrepancy between characters’ intellectual attributes and their reading. While characters may exhibit negative intellectual states, their reading habits do not always reflect this negativity, indicating a nuanced portrayal of character psychology. Mrs Mowbray is portrayed as an aspiring salon intellectual. Despite its low frequency in the “intellectual states” category, her “positive reading” habits emphasize her as a “learned lady.” However, her emotional and social traits overshadow her intellectual states. Among the other characters, Frederick Glenmurray’s character is exactly described by his traits. He opposes traditional views on marriage, reflecting his controversial writings.

Conclusion

My research delved into the intricate relationship between characters and their reading habits in *Adeline Mowbray* by Amelie Opie. This pilot study moves beyond simplistic character dichotomies and explores the nuanced connections between character traits, reading practices, and the materials characters engage with. The emphasis on a qualitative analysis is complemented by the incorporation of corpus linguistics methodologies, providing a comprehensive view of language use within the selected novels. The methodology employed in this research involves coding adjectives related to character traits and words associated with reading, allowing for a detailed examination of character profiles. The categorization of adjectives into positive, negative, and undecided subcategories, along with the exploration of reading-related terms, facilitated a nuanced understanding of character portrayal. The methodology combined elements of corpus linguistics, qualitative coding, and categorization to analyse character portrayal and reading habits in the examined novel. While this is still just a case study it may slightly objectify our opinions about the characters, showing that there is room for future similar analyses in narratology.

This pilot study showed that there is interesting information that we can gather using such methodology. In the future, by expanding the size of the corpus, the analysis will hopefully show either a closer connection between adjectives used to describe intellectuality and words describing reading, or an over-arching pattern of the above-mentioned discrepancies will emerge. Since *Adeline Mowbray* was randomly chosen from the corpus to be the first novel that I examined, I believe that, by including the other nine novels from the designated time, I will have a better overview of the period, and of the modes of characterisation and representation of reading. Furthermore, I will be able to arrive at a more complex understanding of the connection between reading and characterisation in the novels.

Works Cited

- Algee-Hewitt, Mark, et al. *Canon/Archive. Large-Scale Dynamics in the Literary Field*, Stanford Literary Lab, 2016.
- Bray, Joe. *The Female Reader in the English Novel: From Burney to Austen*. Routledge, 2009.
- Eberle, Roxanne. "Amelia Opie's *Adeline Mowbray*: Diverting the Libertine Gaze; Or, the Vindication of a Fallen Woman." *Studies in the Novel*, vol. 26, nos. 1/2, 1994, pp. 121–52. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/29533001>. Accessed 13 Jan. 2024.
- Eco, Umberto. *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods*. Harvard UP, 1994.
- Forster, E. M. *Aspects of the Novel*. London: Edward Arnold, 1927.
- Iser, Wolfgang. *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*. Johns Hopkins UP, 1997.
- Knights, Ben. *From Reader to Reader: Theory and Practice in the Study Group*. Hemel, Hempstead, 1992.
- Lukin, E., J. C. Roberts, D. Berdik, et al. *Adjectives and Adverbs as Stylometric Analysis Parameters*. *International Journal of Digital Humanities* 5, 2023, pp. 233–45, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42803-023-00065-y>.
- Lupton, Christina. *Reading and the Making of Time in the Eighteenth Century*. Johns Hopkins UP, 2018.
- Moretti, Franco. *Distant Reading*. Verso, 2015.
- McWhir, Anne, and Amelie Opie. "Introduction." *Adeline Mowbray, or, the Mother and Daughter: A Tale*, Broadview Editions, 2010, pp. 9–34.
- Opie, Amelia Alderson. *Adeline Mowbray, or, the Mother and Daughter: A Tale*, edited by Anne McWhir, Broadview Editions, 2010.
- Phelan, James. *Reading People, Reading Plots: Character, Progression, and the Interpretation of Narrative*. University of Chicago Press, 1989.
- Phelan, James, and Peter J. J. Rabinowitz. "Characters." *Narrative Theory: Core Concepts and Critical Debates*, edited by David Herman, Ohio State UP, 2012, pp. 111–18.
- Porter, J. D. *Popularity/Prestige*, Stanford Literary Lab, 2018.

- Richardson, Brian. "Characters." *Narrative Theory: Core Concepts and Critical Debates*, edited by David Herman, Ohio State UP, 2012, pp. 132-38.
- Tabbert, Ulrike, and Juhani Rudanko. "Aspects of Characterisation in James Hadley Chase's Crime Fiction: multiple perspectives." *English Studies*, vol. 102, no. 3, 2021, pp. 362–83, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0013838x.2021.1911106>.
- Tomalin, Clare. *The Life and Death of Mary Wollstonecraft*. London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1974.
- Wood, James. *How Fiction Works*. New York, Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2008.

Appendix A:

Negative Traits:

- absent
- arrogant
- cruel
- dangerous
- deceitful
- disgraced
- dishonest
- disreputable
- faulty
- forgetful
- idle
- ill-natured
- incapable
- infamous
- mad
- not able/unable
- spoiled
- tenacious
- ugly
- unnatural
- unprepared
- useless
- weak
- worse
- wrong
- foolish

Negative Emotional States:

- afraid
- agitated
- agony
- angry
- anxious
- ashamed
- confused
- contemptuous
- delirious
- despairing
- disappointed
- disgusted
- displeased
- distressed
- disturbed
- forlorn
- frantic
- fraught
- grave
- guilty
- helpless
- impatient
- insane
- insensible
- irritated
- languid
- loath
- lonely
- lost
- mad

- melancholy
- miserable
- mortified
- not aware
- not cheerful
- not pleased
- not re-assured
- not sorry
- penitent
- piqued

- reluctant
- sad
- senseless
- sorry
- terrified
- unhappy
- wounded
- wretched
- indignant
- insinuating

Negative Intellectual States:

- absurd
- blind
- confused
- credulous
- delirious
- disinterested
- dull
- dumb
- ignorant
- incoherent
- inconsistent
- mistaken
- not aware
- not conscious
- not ingenuous
- not poetical
- silly
- thoughtless
- unconscious
- unmindful
- unobservant

Negative Physical States:

- destitute
- emaciated
- exhausted
- faded
- faint
- ill
- ill-disposed
- indisposed
- infirm
- injured
- lifeless
- not conscious
- not fit
- pale

- sick
- unconscious

- unwell

Negative Social/Behavioral Traits:

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| • audacious | • obstinate |
| • conceited | • offensive |
| • deceitful | • officious |
| • despotic | • prejudiced |
| • disagreeable | • provoking |
| • disgraced | • rude |
| • dishonest | • selfish |
| • displeased | • soi-disant |
| • disreputable | • subordinate |
| • egotism | • suspicious |
| • embarrassed | • treacherous |
| • fallen | • unaccompanied |
| • friendless | • unattached |
| • hard-hearted | • ungenerous |
| • haughty | • ungrateful |
| • ill-natured | • unheard |
| • indifferent | • unkind |
| • insolent | • unwelcome |
| • jealous | • vain |
| • mischievous | • vile |
| • not amiable | • villainous |
| • not punctual | • violent |
| • notorious | • vulnerable |
| • obnoxious | • wicked |

Negative Morality:

- | | |
|-------------|-------------|
| • culpable | • disgraced |
| • deceitful | • dishonest |

- disreputable
- fallen
- guilty
- illegitimate
- improper
- prejudiced
- self-condemned
- treacherous

- unblest
- unjust
- unworthy
- vile
- villainous
- violent
- wicked
- wrong

Negative Contrasting States:

- different
- unexpected

Negative Miscellaneous Traits:

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------------|
| • blind | • uncultivated |
| • dark | • undeceived |
| • destitute | • unfashionable |
| • dull | • unfortunate |
| • immoveable | • unknowing |
| • ridiculous | • unknown |
| • strange | • unobserved |
| • susceptible | • unseen |
| • uncommon | • unwilling/not willing |

Positive Traits:

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| • able | • delicate |
| • active | • deserving |
| • ambitious | • determined |
| • apt | • devoted |
| • beautiful | • dignified |
| • candid | • diligent |
| • convinced | • disposed |

- earnest
- elegant
- excellent
- fair
- fascinating
- firm
- frank
- friendly
- great
- handsome
- humble
- impressed
- ingenuous
- judicious
- liberal
- neat
- not neglectful
- prepared
- proud
- prudent
- ready
- requisite
- resolute
- right
- romantic
- sane
- sanguine
- satisfied
- serious
- skilled
- spotless
- sweet
- trusty
- venerable
- wise
- witty
- zealous

Positive Emotional States:

- amused
- astonished
- calm
- content
- delighted
- eager
- elated
- enthusiastic
- fascinating
- glad
- grateful
- gratified
- happy
- mild
- pensive
- pleased
- relieved
- sanguine
- satisfied

Positive Intellectual States:

- apt
- certain
- clever
- deep thinker
- deserving
- ingenuous
- intellectual
- interested
- judicious
- learned
- literary
- not mistaken
- philosophic
- philosophical
- qualified
- rational
- sane
- sensible
- skilled
- smart
- sure
- wise
- wiser

Positive Physical States:

- active
- fair
- muscular
- neat

Positive Social/Behavioural Traits:

- acquainted
- admired
- affectionate
- amiable
- angelic
- charming
- civilized
- compassionate
- compliant
- congenial
- devoted
- dignified
- disposed
- elegant
- enamoured
- exemplary
- fair
- faithful
- familiar
- friendly
- gallant
- gay

- generous
- genteel
- gentle
- good
- graceful
- handsome
- humble
- kind
- kind-hearted
- light-hearted
- lovely
- loyal
- modest
- motherly

- patient
- polite
- professional
- respect
- respectable
- sincere
- solicitous
- sweet
- talkative
- tender
- thoughtful
- unprejudiced
- useful

Positive Morality:

- benevolent
- faithful
- grateful
- heroic
- honest
- honourable
- innocent
- lawful
- legitimate
- moral
- noble-minded
- not guilty

- over-scrupulous
- pious
- prudent
- pure
- pure-minded
- right
- sincere
- true
- unprejudiced
- virtuous
- worthy

Harmonious States:

- alive
- blessed

- calm
- free

- happy
- independent/not dependent
- lucky
- pleased
- relieved

- safe
- satisfied
- sufficient
- undiminished
- well

Positive Miscellaneous Traits:

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| • brown | • not blind |
| • clean | • real |
| • dear | • remarkable |
| • dearest | • sophisticated |
| • eccentric | • spotless |
| • extraordinary | • superior |
| • fashionable | • true |
| • feminine | • unoffending |
| • fortunate | • willing |
| • loveliest | |

Undecided Emotional States:

- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| • alarmed | • love-sick |
| • alone | • nervous |
| • bashful | • shocked |
| • breathless | • surprised |
| • desperate | • timid |
| • fearful | • uneasy |
| • forsaken | • wakeful |
| • hasty | |

Undecided Physical States:

- | | |
|--------------|---------|
| • asleep | • dead |
| • awake | • deaf |
| • breathless | • hasty |
| • corpulent | • round |

- tall
- thin

- tired
- weary

Undecided Personality Traits:

- blunt
- bold
- coy
- inclined
- inexperienced
- odd
- plain
- quiet
- repentant

- sceptic
- seduced
- severe
- silent
- speculative
- strict
- superstitious
- unquestionable
- vulgar

Relationship Status:

- married
- not married

Socioeconomic Status:

- celebrated
- poor
- privy
- rich

Dependency:

- accustomed to
- affected
- deluded
- dependent
- unexposed
- unprotected

Positive Reading:

- arithmetic
- best poets
- book
- book against duelling

- daily reading
- delightful books
- educated
- education
- essay
- finish reading
- friendly letter
- history
- kind letter
- learn
- learn everything
- letter
- letter of pardon
- library
- lighter works
- literature
- Locke
- long letter
- magazines
- market bill
- metaphysical questions
- Montesquieu
- newspaper
- novels
- own book
- pamphlet
- philosophy
- plays
- poetry
- pretty books
- read/reading
- receive a letter
- romance
- Rousseau
- Scuderi
- sending letters
- study
- systems of morals and metaphysics
- theological tract
- understand
- Voltaire
- write

Negative Reading

- book offensive to good morals
- can't write
- cruelly defective education
- cursed books
- dangerous novels
- destroy/throw it on fire
- does not like to learn
- fatal letter
- fatal studies
- hasty letter
- intercepted letters
- learn nothing
- miscarried letter
- no letter
- not a woman of great reading
- not in Sir Patrick's library
- not reading
- not understanding

- opened letter
- pretending to read
- putting down a letter or book
- take a piece of writing away from someone
- unanswered letters
- unnecessary book
- unnoticed letters
- unopened letter
- unproductive studies
- unwritten letter
- vile books

Characters:

- Adeline
- Adeline and Glenmurray's child
- Arthur/Glenmurray's servant
- Berrendale's parents
- Charles Berrendale
- child/ tawny boy
- Colonel Mordaunt
- doctor of Glenmurray
- Dr Norberry
- Drury
- Editha Woodville/mrs mowbray
- Emily/Mr Maynard's sister
- Emma Douglas
- Evans
- fair people
- female writer
- Glenmurray
- guests
- Hannah Norberry
- humans
- Lady O'Carrol
- Langley
- lover
- Major Douglas
- Mary Warner
- Mary's son
- men
- Miss Douglas
- Miss Editha/the daughter
- Miss Woodville
- Mistress of Berrendale
- Mr Davis
- Mr Maynard
- Mr Mowbray
- Mr Pemberton
- Mr Woodville
- Mrs Beauclerc
- Mrs Berrendale
- Mrs Douglas
- Mrs Mowbray's steward
- Mrs Norberry
- Mrs Pemberton
- Mrs Woodville/grandmother
- others
- peasant
- Savanna

- servant
- Sir Patrick O'Carrol
- Sir Patrick's servant
- society
- William/Savanna's husband
- woman Mordaunt knows
- women
- younger sister of Mr Maynard

Appendix B

