

Penny Foulkes

**An Introduction to *Louisa: or, Virtue in Distress* from the  
Chawton House Library Collection**

Plot Synopsis

*Louisa: or, Virtue in Distress*<sup>1</sup> opens with an account of events before the heroine's birth, which establishes the dangerous world into which Louisa is born. Her mother, lady Louisa, is rescued by a stranger, Lord W., who happened to overhear a plot by lady Louisa's brother, the earl of R., to kill both lady Louisa and her lover, Sir Harry. The plot unfolds, and whilst Lady Louisa escapes unscathed, Sir Harry is left fatally injured and soon dies, and so when lady Louisa later dies in childbirth, her daughter is left orphaned and in the care of Lord W.

When Lord W. dies, Louisa goes to live with Lord W.'s close friend, Mr. Traffic Worthy, where she is exposed to the serial womaniser Ned Worthy, and her struggle to maintain her virtue begins. The rest of the plot follows Louisa to both France and Ireland as she continues to evade Ned's grasp, and after a series of correspondences between Louisa and her friends, all the 'shining characters [are made] happy' (p.viii) and the contemptible characters either reform or are punished.<sup>2</sup>

*Louisa: or, Virtue in Distress* enters the literary marketplace at a time when the tastes and attitude towards the eighteenth-century novel had undergone a series of shifts until it was finally accepted as a respectable literary form. William Warner states that novels were once seen as 'irresponsible creations, conceived with only one guiding intention: to pander to any desire that would produce a sale', but by the 1720s novels had been transformed into 'one of

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<sup>1</sup> *Louisa: or, Virtue in Distress. Being the History of a Natural Daughter of Lady \* \* \* \** (London: A. and C. Corbett, and W. Flexney, 1760)

Subsequent references are taken from this edition and will be given in the text.

<sup>2</sup> It is of particular interest that the author consistently uses an upper case 'S' for 'Sir', but a lower case 'l' for 'lady'. I can only speculate that this may be due to the patriarchal society of the eighteenth century, although using a lower case 'e' for the earl of R. disrupts this theory.

the most high-profile, fashionable, and dynamic segments of the market.<sup>3</sup> There was a concern that novels could negatively influence susceptible minds, as Samuel Johnson indicates when he discusses the ‘power of example’. In their realism, novels created situations that readers could identify with and thus mimic the characters, and this means that ‘the best examples only should be exhibited; and that which is likely to operate strongly, should not be mischievous or uncertain in its effects.’<sup>4</sup> This then creates a strong link between realism and the claim of moral function. With this in mind, the novel’s popularity and acceptance was largely due to the writer’s employment of the Horatian ideal of *utile dulce*, which satisfied Johnson’s desire for a positive ‘power of example’.<sup>5</sup> Jane Spencer states that ‘[t]he combination of romantic wish-fulfilment [*dulce*] and inflexible morality [*utile*] was very popular, and helped to rescue the very word *novel* from its association with lewd tales.’<sup>6</sup> By applying *utile dulce* to their work, authors were able to ensure that it satisfied the reader’s imagination whilst also promoting morality.

In the Preface to *Louisa* the author makes reference to this principle in order to defend the novel form, which also acts as a defence of the work. The author states that novels are written ‘with a view of entertaining as well as amending the age we live in’ (pp.v-vi), and this immediately suggests that *Louisa* should be read as a didactic fiction, which ensures that the novel will gain approval. Yet despite the author’s efforts, from the response of the two main review journals in the century it appears that *Louisa* was not favourably received. The *Monthly Review* comments that ‘we laid it down rather with a smile of contempt than contentment’, and the *Critical Review* labels it as ‘the most insipid and tasteless of all novels’.<sup>7</sup> These cannot be representative of the whole of society, but since they are the only reviews of *Louisa* that I have found, they are certainly a good indication of the type of reception the novel would have received. With close attention to the actual text, alongside an analysis of its social significance and publishing history, I will attempt to determine the factors that prompted *Louisa*’s reception to be so unforgiving.

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<sup>3</sup> William Warner, ‘The Rise of the Novel in the Eye of Literary History’, in *Licensing Entertainment: The Elevation of Novel Reading in Britain, 1684-1750* (Berkeley: University of California, 1998), 1-44, p.6

<sup>4</sup> Samuel Johnson, *The Rambler* No. 4, Saturday 31 March 1750, <<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/toccer-new2?id=Joh1Ram.sgm&images=images/modeng&data=/texts/english/modeng/parsed&tag=public&part=4&division=div1>>, para. 10 of 19

<sup>5</sup> Latin: ‘The useful with the beautiful’ (Horace, *Ars Poetica*)

<sup>6</sup> Jane Spencer, ‘The Terms of Acceptance’, in *The Rise of The Woman Novelist* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 75-106, p.89

<sup>7</sup> *Monthly Review*, XXII (April 1760), p.329 and *Critical Review*, IX (April 1760), 318-319, p.319

When approaching any novel, the author's identity plays an important role in the way in which the text is read and interpreted. Michel Foucault states that 'the name of the author remains at the contours of texts – separating one from the other, defining their form, and characterising their mode of existence.'<sup>8</sup> The fact that *Louisa* is anonymous complicates any reading and means that the first task when approaching *Louisa* should be to gather an understanding of the author's identity.

The only indication in the text as to the author's identity is found in the Preface, when he or she appeals to the critics: 'Sirs! Pity a poor author who writes for the bread that perishes!' (p.vii). To reveal this necessity actually compromises the work, for John Brewer comments that '[l]iterature for profit could not be unsullied and unbiased'.<sup>9</sup> This offers an initial explanation of *Louisa*'s disdainful reviews, yet for women writing for bread was one of the most acceptable motives for entering the literary world. Janet Todd explains that women 'had to be virtuous and domestic, writing either from financial necessity, unsupported by the proper guardians of femininity such as husband or father, or from desire to teach virtue to the unformed.'<sup>10</sup> Whether male or female, *Louisa*'s author avoids any public disapproval by publishing anonymously, as Robert J. Griffin explains when he states that anonymity 'guaranteed integrity because it freed writers from social and political condemnations.'<sup>11</sup> Authors were often encouraged to reveal their name in later editions once their novel had proven popular, an example of which could be Horace Walpole, whose identity was only revealed in the second edition of *The Castle of Otranto*, leading one to speculate that this was prompted by the success of the first edition. However, no further editions of *Louisa* were printed, which is not surprising in light of the hostile reviews, and the author's name was never revealed.

The fact that the author is writing for bread would suggest that he or she is relying upon the success of *Louisa* in order to live, however this necessity is made less urgent by the fact that he or she reprehends the critics, who are among those most likely to influence the

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<sup>8</sup> Michel Foucault, 'What Is an Author?', in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. by Vincent B. Leitch et al. (London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001), 1622-1636, pp.1627-1628

<sup>9</sup> John Brewer, 'Authors, Publishers and the Making of Literary Culture', in *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1997), 125-166, p.144

<sup>10</sup> Janet Todd, 'The Modest Muse: Women Writers of the Mid-Eighteenth Century', in *The Signs of Angellica: Women, Writing, and Fiction 1660-1800* (London: Virago Press, 1989), 125-145, p.126

<sup>11</sup> Robert J. Griffin, 'Introduction', in *The Faces of Anonymity: Anonymous and Pseudonymous Publication from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Century* ed. by Robert J. Griffin (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 1-17, p.7

text's reception. The author states that the judgements of '[o]ur modern critics [...] are not of any great consequence' (p.vi), but then in order to regain the critics' favour the author continues to state that they are 'worthy gentleman' and apologises for showing them 'so little respect' (p.vii). This criticism may have largely influenced the *Critical Review's* response to *Louisa* since its review appears to take the author's comment as a personal attack, and employs a sarcastic retaliatory tone: 'Our criticisms then are of no great consequence, because *you have observed*'.<sup>12</sup> *Louisa's* author asserts that 'I have observed that they [the critics] have recommended novels, which, had they allowed themselves leisure to peruse, their praises would, I am persuaded, have greatly dwindled' (p.vi).

Before publishing such criticism, the author must have been aware of the negative effect that it was likely to provoke since he or she shows understanding of the review system. The fact that he or she includes the criticism regardless of its effect encourages one to question whether the author's assertion that he or she is writing 'for the bread that perishes' is actually true. If this were the case, one would expect the author to be more cautious in the way in which he or she presents *Louisa* to society. It is important to note that although reviews are an integral part of any research into a novel, one must keep in mind William St. Clair's scepticism for them, since he comments that reviews 'cannot be assumed to be representative records of the actual reception of the reviewed text by its many other readers.'<sup>13</sup>

The extent of the author's understanding of the literary world is revealed in the Preface, in which he or she discusses the 'despicable light the world may look upon novels' (p.v). The author even criticise 'the author of one of our modern novels' (p.ix), whose work is 'one continued scene of cruelty and horror; and rather inspires the mind with terror, than with any pleasing sensations' (pp.ix-x). From this criticism of a fellow author *Louisa's* author proves to be a confident participant in the literary world; however the fact that *Louisa* is anonymous may have given its author the courage to be more bold in what he or she says. Having researched the novels published prior to *Louisa*, I venture to speculate that the work which *Louisa's* author is referring to may be Tobias Smollett's *The Adventures of Ferdinand*

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<sup>12</sup> *Critical Review*, IX, p.318

<sup>13</sup> William St. Clair, 'Reading and its Consequences', in *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1-18, p.6

*Count Fathom*. In the Dedication Smollett anticipates the criticism the work will receive and states:

Let me not therefore be condemned for having chosen my principle character from the purlieus of treachery and fraud, when I declare my purpose is to set him up as a beacon for the benefit of the unexperienced and unwary, who from perusal of these memoirs, may learn to avoid the manifold snares with which they are continually surrounded in the paths of life.<sup>14</sup>

This attitude is entirely opposite to that held by Johnson, for Smollett intends to instruct by showing how *not* to act: a negative ‘power of example’. Whilst *Louisa*’s author obviously views this novel as a despicable creation, the *Monthly Review* states that ‘with whatever crudities it may be chargeable, [...] it carries with it strong marks of genius in the author, and demonstrations of his great proficiency in the study of mankind.’<sup>15</sup> In this respect, *Louisa* must be utterly destitute of ‘genius’ if even a more unconventional novel that is ‘one continued scene of cruelty and horror’ can receive praise from the critics.

In addition, the author’s educated position is suggested further by the *Latin* epigraphs on the title page which function in two ways; to mark the work as learned, and to position it within the male literary tradition. Janine Barchas states that ‘[t]o even those readers who [...] cannot decipher its literal meaning, the mere presence of mottoes on the title pages announces (arrogantly and often deceptively) the novel’s scholarly qualifications.’<sup>16</sup> Although the Latin epigraphs reflect the nature of the plot and warn of the dangerous society that the heroine must contend with, their mere existence and that which they symbolise is less important than their content.<sup>17</sup> Todd asserts that ‘Latin was regarded as a male preserve, a code that separated the sexes, and which enshrined the masculine civic and heroic virtues unattainable by women.’<sup>18</sup> In this way, the implications of the Latin epigraphs, which position it within the

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<sup>14</sup> Tobias Smollett, *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom* (London: T. Johnson, 1753), p.vi

<sup>15</sup> *Monthly Review*, VIII (March 1753), 203-214, p.207

<sup>16</sup> Janine Barchas, ‘The Title Page: Advertisement, Identity and Deceit’, in *Graphic Design, Print Culture and the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 60-91, p.90

<sup>17</sup> ‘Nullum numa ebest, si sit prudential. JUV.’ translates: ‘Where there is prudence, a protecting deity is not far away.’

‘Quod quisque vitet, nunquam homini satis, Cautum est in horas. HOR.’ translates: ‘Man is never watchful enough against dangers that threaten him every hour.’

<sup>18</sup> Janet Todd, ‘The Mid-Eighteenth Century: Sentiment and Sincerity’, 101-124, p.120

male tradition, seem to be at odds with the genre of the novel, which aligns it within the female tradition.

*Louisa* falls under the classification of a sentimental novel, which would lead one to believe that it is written by a female, as Spencer states that '[t]he tender feeling and delicacy of expression seen as the hallmarks of feminine writing also characterised sentimental writing in general'.<sup>19</sup> The sentimental tradition, which developed out of Richardson's novels of moral sentiment enabled women to write whilst still conforming to the virtuous and domestic role that was expected of them. James R. Foster has asserted that '[t]he majority of English novels at this time [1750-1800] were written by women, and these had received their literary inspiration from the moral and sentimental Richardson.'<sup>20</sup> Spencer proceeds to comment:

Richardson's concentration on female characters and on feeling, and his exemplary morality, meant that he wrote as women were ideally supposed to write [...] It is not surprising, then, that Fielding's and Richardson's successors tended to divide along sexual lines [...] women being more likely to follow Richardson.<sup>21</sup>

If I am correct in speculating that *Louisa* was written by a female writing in the sentimental tradition most acceptable for women, one would expect the novel's critical reception to be more favourable. The fact that it isn't suggests that its flaws lie within the actual plot and writing of the novel rather than in the author's choice of genre.

John Richetti states that the sentimental novel of the mid-century 'depicts women who, in their aspirations to moral purity, precisely reject luxurious consumption and resist masculine efforts to use them as commodities in the marriage market or in the looser circulation of pleasures.'<sup>22</sup> In this respect, and when considering the physical characteristics of the novel as outlined in Appendix A, *Louisa* appears to be a standard example of the novels published in the mid-century; however not all novels of this kind received such scathing reviews. For instance, the *Critical Review* speaks favourably of Frances Sheridan's

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<sup>19</sup> Jane Spencer, *Ibid.*, p.77

<sup>20</sup> James R. Foster, 'The Abbé Prevost and the English Novel', in *PMLA* 42:2 (June, 1927), 443-464, p.443

<sup>21</sup> Jane Spencer, *Ibid.*, p.90

<sup>22</sup> John Richetti, 'Women Novelists and the Transformations of Fiction', in *The English Novel in History 1700-1780* (London: Routledge, 1999), 196-242, p.198

*Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph*, published a year after *Louisa* in 1761. It asserts that the novel 'may deservedly claim a place in our esteem with the histories of *Clarissa* and *Sir Charles Grandison*.'<sup>23</sup> Interestingly, when the *Conclusions of the Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph* was published in 1767 the *Critical Review* was less enthusiastic and commented that '[t]he story, it must be confessed, is plaintive, and some of the incidents are extremely affecting; but being destitute of variety, they are apt to become tiresome.'<sup>24</sup>

Considering the proximity of the *Conclusions of the Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph's* publication to *Louisa's*, and the fact that attitudes are unlikely to have changed, one may confidently suppose that it was also *Louisa's* lack of variety that was its downfall. *Louisa* strictly adheres to the conventions that are becoming associated with the sentimental novel, showing no innovations in its plot line, and in fact draws from previous novels. One such incident is when Ned Worthy 'conceal'd himself in her [Louisa's] chamber' in order to 'come to the enjoyment of her person' (p.72), which is reminiscent of the scene within Richardson's *Pamela* where Mr. B conceals himself in Pamela's closet. In this way, *Louisa* appears to deserve the *Critical Review's* label as an 'insipid' novel since there is little to distinguish it from the other sentimental novels in the century.

*Louisa* is especially typical of the sentimental novel when considering R. F. Brissenden's claim that '[v]irtue, indeed, for the sentimental novelist, is always virtue in distress' because this is the main focus of *Louisa's* plot, as stated on the title page.<sup>25</sup> The complete title reads: *Louisa: or, Virtue in Distress. Being the History of a Natural Daughter of Lady \* \* \* \**, and two issues arise out of this; that of 'history', and the implications of 'natural daughter[s]'. Firstly, according to J. Paul Hunter, the term 'history' in the title of an eighteenth-century novel often 'represents an assertion of authenticity, sometimes an outright denial of fiction, [...and] underscore[s] claims about moral and philosophical reliability as well as factual accuracy.'<sup>26</sup> There are no other claims within the text that this narrative is based upon a true story, however the moral claims that the term 'history' also entails are reinforced in the Preface where the author states that he or she hopes that 'a man may glean something from it, that may be advantageous to him' (p.vi). In addition, *Louisa* is advertised

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<sup>23</sup> *Critical Review*, XI (March 1761), 186-198, p.186

<sup>24</sup> *Critical Review*, XXIII (April 1767), 274-278, p.274

<sup>25</sup> R. F. Brissenden, 'The Novel of Sentiment', in *Virtue in Distress: Studies in the Novel of Sentiment from Richardson to Sade* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1974), 96-139, p.127

<sup>26</sup> J. Paul Hunter, 'Bibliography and the Novel', in *Modern Language Studies* 9:3 (Autumn, 1979), 68-84, p.77

in the *London Evening Post* as: ‘A story founded on facts. Wherin many scenes are laid open of the families of the Earl of R □ , Lord F □ , Lord W □ , etc. etc. etc.’<sup>27</sup> The hyphens represent the characters’ full names and are a further indication that the author claims to be depicting actual people. This reality effect aids *Louisa*’s aim of instructing the reader for it allows the characters to fall within the comprehension of the average reader and encourages them to mimic the characters, and thus act virtuously.

Further, the phrase ‘natural daughter’ suggests that the novel will explore issues of illegitimacy. The reader is aware that Louisa is illegitimate and actually never knew her father because he died before she was born, yet this aspect of the plot is not in fact explored. At the end of the century, in 1799, Mary Robinson used the same phrase in the title of her novel: *The Natural Daughter*. This is one of the texts that Lisa Zunshine states is ‘openly obsessed with bastardy’, and with this in mind, it strikes me as odd that *Louisa* should practically ignore the implications of the phrase.<sup>28</sup> Zunshine argues that the considerable wealth of the aristocrats shielded them from any potential effects that an illegitimate child might bring. This in turn means that ‘[w]ith its relative lack of conflict, the upper-class legitimacy had [...] little dramatic potential for writers’.<sup>29</sup> Based on this reasoning, since Louisa’s parents are members of the aristocracy (*Sir Harry* and *lady Louisa*), her illegitimacy would have had little dramatic effect, which offers an explanation as to why *Louisa*’s author felt it unnecessary to develop this aspect of the plot.

Instead, the emphasis is placed on the fact that Louisa is an orphan and when her guardian, Lord W., dies she is left without an older, wiser figure to guide and protect her. Ruth Perry discusses such absences when she states that ‘absence was more poignant for heroines [than for heroes] for they were more vulnerable to the designs of libertine men’.<sup>30</sup> It is the dangerous nature of society that the author dwells on in *Louisa*. Louisa’s mother, lady Louisa, ‘had the irreparable misfortune to lose her father, and in less than two months her aunt, lady Mary M. expir’d’ (p.41) Having already lost her mother ‘when she was in her infancy’ (p.14), these subsequent losses left lady Louisa to the perils of society. This

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<sup>27</sup> *London Evening Post* Issue 5055, Thursday March 27, 1760

<sup>28</sup> Lisa Zunshine, ‘Introduction: Cultural Narratives of Illegitimacy’, in *Bastards and Foundlings: Illegitimacy in Eighteenth-Century England* (USA: The Ohio State University, 2005), 1-22, p.6

<sup>29</sup> Lisa Zunshine, *Ibid.*, p.4

<sup>30</sup> Ruth Perry, ‘The Importance of Aunts’, in *Novel Relations: The Transformation of Kinship in English Literature and Culture, 1748-1818* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 336-371, p.347

misfortune is then repeated in the following generation when Louisa is orphaned and must defend her virtue against the advances of Ned Worthy. Crucially, it is only in their neglected and exposed situations that both women can demonstrate the heroic quality of virtue in distress.

Brissenden states that '[t]he emergence of the theme of virtue in distress in the widest sense grew out of an awareness of the distance which separated moral idealism and the world of practical action'.<sup>31</sup> *Louisa's* Preface suggests that the issue of 'practical action' will be addressed within the text, however I would argue that *Louisa* fails to bridge the gap between moral idealism and the reality of the depraved society due to the author's desire for poetic justice which gives a neat but unrealistic ending. In the Preface the author states that novelists 'should have a thorough knowledge of men and things, that he may delineate his characters agreeable to life; for when an unnatural stroke appears, it deadens the rest of the picture' (p.viii). Yet this desire for realism seems to have been abandoned by the end of *Louisa* since the reader is given the conventional happy ending, which 'applaud[s] virtue' and 'explode[s] vice' (p.v). All females find a husband – even Louisa's maid, Jenny, is to be married 'one day next week' (p.200) - and equally, 'heaven has at length punish'd the wretch [Ned Worthy] for his attempts' (p.207) on Louisa, and her distasteful uncle, the earl of R., has reformed so that Louisa 'now look'd upon [him] as her only parent' (p.211).

Although this ideal ending is morally sound, it does not fulfil the *utile* principle outlined in the Preface since much of the realism is lost, and Johnson indicates that a moral claim is reliant upon realism for the message to be successful. I would argue that at this point *Louisa's* author is driven by a compulsion to satisfy the reader and give the characters their happy ending, which means that *dulce* is allowed to dominate. This supports Emma Clery's claim that she makes when discussing Warner's theory, stating that '[a]ttempts to "elevate" the novel in terms of aesthetics or morality in the eighteenth century was simply a mask for the primacy of the pleasure principle.' The author defends this ending in advance by stating that although the manner of making the 'shining characters happy [...] has sometimes been censured' (p.viii), he or she believes that 'the humane and generous heart, is pleased to find that their virtuous troubles are, in the end, crowned with peace and happiness' (pp.vii-ix). Yet, instead of acting as a convincing defence, this actually further undermines the realistic aspect

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<sup>31</sup> R. F. Brissenden, 'Virtue in Distress: The Emergence of a Theme', 65-95, p.77

of the novel since it draws attention to the author's control over the character's lives in a narrative which professes to be a true 'history'. In this way, *Louisa* is unconvincing as both a didactic fiction and a novel based upon a true history.<sup>32</sup>

The final aspect left to consider is *Louisa's* publishing history. I have been able to gather little information concerning the publishers. W. Flexney is not listed in H. Plomer's *Dictionary of the Printers and Booksellers*, however from the 'Corbett' entries I have been able to deduce that A. and C. Corbett are probably mother and son. Following his father's death, it is likely that Sir Charles took over the business and kept his mother as a partner. Plomer informs us that Sir Charles Corbett 'continued the publication of the *Whitehall Evening Post*, which his father had started in 1747.'<sup>33</sup> Considering this, one would expect A. and C. Corbett to use this to their advantage and gain as much publicity for *Louisa* as possible by placing adverts in this newspaper, however this is not the case. My search of the *British Newspapers 1600-1900* database has shown that the *London Evening Post* actually advertises *Louisa* more than the *Whitehall Evening Post*. If *Louisa* could not even hope for support from its publishers who have a vested interest in the novel, then it should expect even less from outside sources.

Unlike other works such as Penelope Aubin's *A Collection of Entertaining Histories and Novels* (1739) for which Richardson wrote a Preface recommending the work, *Louisa* enters the literary world with no literary support. In the Preface *Louisa's* author makes a plea to Richardson hoping that 'if *Louisa* has any merit, [he will] recommend her to the world, since the recommendation of such a man as Mr. Richardson, must make every person desirous to peruse it' (p.xi). However, as far as I am aware, a recommendation never appeared and the *Critical Review* asserts that 'even the recommendations of Mr. Richardson [...] will never procure this production of yours a place but in a circulating library'.<sup>34</sup> Although aspiring to be an elevated fiction and clearly targeting the more sophisticated readership, as is evident from the use of Latin epigraphs and the employment of titled characters, *Louisa* fails to reach this audience, which offers a plausible explanation for the unforgiving reviews.

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<sup>32</sup> Emma Clery, *The Novel in the Literary Marketplace*, Lecture 9, University of Southampton, 28.04.10

<sup>33</sup> H. R. Plomer, *A Dictionary of the Printers and Booksellers who were at Work in England, Scotland and Ireland from 1726 to 1775* (Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 1932), p.62

<sup>34</sup> *Critical Review*, IX, p.319

Appendix A: Bibliographical Description

<p><b>Author</b></p> <p>(and attribution as it appears on title page, or note of pseudonym or anonymity)</p>	<p>Anonymous.</p>
<p><b>Title</b></p> <p>(as it appears on title page)</p>	<p>Louisa: or, Virtue in Distress. Being the History of a Natural Daughter of Lady * * * *.</p>
<p><b>Imprint</b></p> <p>(Place of publication: publisher, year of publication as they appear on title page)</p>	<p>London: Printed for A. and C. Corbett at their State-Lottery-Office, opposite St. <i>Dunstan's</i> Church, <i>Fleet-Street</i>; and W. Flexney, under <i>Gray's-Inn</i> Gate, <i>Holbourn</i>. MDCCLX. (1760)</p>
<p><b>Physical description</b></p> <p>(details relating to all copies, e.g. number of vols., number of pgs, size, price – sometimes shown on title page, quality of paper and printing, illustrations, etc.)</p>	<p>First edition, one volume, 212pp., 12mo., no mention of price (but advertised in the MR as 3s. and the CR as 2s. within the same month)</p> <p>Mid-quality paper. Several pages at the start and end of the novel are shorter than others; may be an indication that the novel was later rebound, or possibly owing to the fact that the pages were badly cut by the reader who bound it themselves.</p>
<p><b>Physical description</b></p> <p>(details relating only to this specific copy, e.g. binding &amp; decoration, binding anomalies, annotations etc.)</p>	<p>No title on spine – possibly aimed at people with only a few books in their library.</p> <p>Marbled boards with contemporary calf spine and corners - standard binding of this period.</p>
<p><b>Provenance</b></p> <p>(e.g. bookplates, inscriptions)</p>	<p>Contains a bookplate which states that it is from the library of John Charles Hardy, and also with an additional bookplate of John Atkinson, Newbiggen.</p>

<p><b>Details of advertisements</b></p> <p>(you can summarise if there is a long list e.g. genre, price range, a few characteristic or notable titles)</p>	<p>The novel is followed by a page of information about Corbett’s state lottery office, and 3 further pages of advertisements of novels published by W. Flexney A. and C. Corbett.</p> <p>The novels printed for W. Flexney are all within the lower price range (six-pence) but vary widely in genre. Those printed for A. and C. Corbett are more expensive (9s. bound) and are also a mixture of genres.</p>
<p><b>Paratext</b></p> <p>(title page epigraph, subscription list, dedication, preface, introduction, etc. noted or summarised)</p>	<p>Title page contains 2 Latin epigraphs.</p> <p>No dedication or subscription list, but an interesting preface with printers ornaments.</p>

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