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MALE AND FEMALE CHARACTERS' CRYING IN JANE AUSTEN'S SENSE AND SENSIBILITY (1811) AND MARIA WIRTEMBERSKA'S MALVINA, OR THE HEART'S INTUITION (1816)

Published in 1816, "Malvina, or the Heart's Intuition" by Maria Wirtemberska appeared but five years after the publication of Jane Austen's "Sense and Sensibility" (1811). My paper stipulates that Wirtemberska's "Malvina" was to a large extent inspired by Austen's novel although no straightforward evidence exists to suggest that the Polish writer was familiar with the works of the English author. Austen's novels were not rendered into Polish in the nineteenth century: the first translation was published as late as 1934. But novels by Western European authors were read by educated Poles in their original language versions, or in French translations and adaptations. It is crucial to view Wirtemberska's romance as a specimen of the same genre as Austen's works because several parallels emerge in terms of the novel's structure, motifs and characters. My paper looks at the ways in which the motif and images of crying are used in Austen's and Wirtemberska's novels. The two works seem a good choice for this kind of comparative analysis as they tackle various aspects of sensibility, a phenomenon which invoked mixed feelings among the novelists' contemporaries, excitement and a sense of moral jeopardy included.

KEY WORDS: *romance, sentimental novel, sensibility, language of feelings, women writers*

The romance situates itself in close proximity to the sentimental novel, in which emotion tends to be conveyed through the protagonists' bodily symptoms, visible to the naked eye, rather than through words. As John Wiltshire observes, "sensibility in the eighteenth-century novel is manifested less in language than in tears and blushes, palpitations and sighs" (1994: 219). Eighteenth-century novels were often obsessed with "the almost clinical chronicling of sighs, tears, fainting and insanity, the physical manifestations of passion" (McMaster 2009: 84). Particularly influential for the encroachment of feeling

was one eighteenth-century non-fictional work: Robert Whytt's *Observations on the Nature, Causes and Cure of the Diseases which are commonly called Nervous, Hypochondriac or Hysterical* (1764). The book "studied physical acts such as laughter or crying that can be excited in another and provided physiological evidence to support a moral theory that it was 'through sympathy that human beings are basically able to communicate with each other'" (Todd 2006: 19). Naturally, human communication "through sympathy" involved both women and men, following the tradition of Lawrence Sterne's *Sentimental*

Journey (1768) or Henry Mackenzie's equally, if not more, sentimental *Man of Feeling* (1771).¹

If Maria Wirtemberska's *Malvina, or the Heart's Intuition* (Polish title: *Malvina, czyli domyślność serca*, 1816) can be demonstrated to display certain affinities with Jane Austen's 1811 *Sense and Sensibility* (Ożarska 2015), then it seems feasible to examine the details of both novelists' reliance on the motif of male and female characters' crying in the novels at issue. It must be noted that although crying features prominently in both novels, the effects which it enables both novelists to achieve differ, linked as they are with their overall concepts of the novel form.

Before I elaborate on the shedding of tears in Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*, let me offer what might sound a platitude: in the novel, out of the two co-protagonists, it is Marianne who cries abundantly. Elinor is only seen to cry three times throughout the entire text: all three are moments of heavy emotional load to her. One of them comes after she learns about Lucy and Edward's engagement. Even then "she [weeps] for him, more than for herself [and is s]upported by the conviction of having done nothing to merit her present unhappiness, and consoled by the belief that Edward had done nothing to forfeit her esteem" (Austen 1994: 134).² "Elinor was mourning in

secret over obstacles which must divide her for ever from the object of her love", the reader is told (134). Next, Elinor sheds "tears of joy" when told of her sister's imminent recovery from the dangerous illness (307). One last occasion which brings tears, again of happiness, to Elinor's eyes is when she finally finds, to her relief, that Lucy Steele is not married to Edward, but to his brother (353).

These three examples are few indeed in comparison to the roughly twenty occasions when the reader is confronted with Marianne's tears, much more often shed in distress than for joy. This is because "Elinor ... finds herself *in loco parentis* ... [and] is the masculinised daughter, forced by these psychological dynamics to introduce values traditionally associated with the male into this domestic circle" (Wiltshire 1994: 26). That is to say, in the world of Elinor and Marianne, men do not cry, and this truth is emphasised by the fact that neither Edward Ferrars nor Colonel Brandon are ever allowed to cry. Although generally quite discerning, when overwhelmed by circumstances, Edward is usually rendered conveniently speechless, too dumbfounded for words and perhaps for crying, too. Even Willoughby, who is as close to the Man of Feeling, however imperfect and incomplete, as the novel allows, only blushes when announcing to Marianne his sudden departure (73), and needs the support of strong drink to stay calm when seeking Elinor's forgiveness at a later point (314). Yet even that emotional commotion does not prevent him from commenting on his "wife's style of letter-writing ... – delicate, tender, truly feminine" (321), to enable him to further distance himself from what he considers womanly displays of sensibility.

¹ Interestingly, *A Sentimental Journey* is actually referenced by Maria Wirtemberska in her *Malvina* as she praises not only Sterne's eponymous concept of a sentimental journey, but also his wit (both in her main text and a footnote; 76), while neither of these two works is ever mentioned in Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*.

² All quotations from *Sense and Sensibility* come from the following edition: Austen, Jane. *Sense and Sensibility*. Penguin Books: London, 1994, and will be denoted by page number only.

As a very embodiment of sensibility, Marianne does not shun tearful emotional expression under numerous more or less dramatic circumstances. The first of these occurs early on, as the Dashwood ladies are evicted from their house and forced to seek another home. Although the narrator uses the plural in the sentence: “Many were the tears shed by *them* in their last adieus to a place so much beloved” (25, emphasis mine), this is followed by the invocation to Norland, uttered by Marianne, alone, which suggests that the many tears are largely hers and not her sister’s. Then the modesty of Barton Cottage draws tears from Marianne who cannot help comparing it unfavourably with their previous home, but those tears are “soon dried away” (26). However, their sincerity cannot be doubted; the reader’s feeling is that so far Marianne’s tears are often rather conventional, i.e. brought on not only by her genuine state of mind, but also inspired by models of behaviour propagated by the overly emotional heroines of her books. This could be said of Marianne’s emotional response to being jilted by Willoughby, the inspiration possibly coming from Richardson’s *Clarissa* as well as from unspecified minor romance fiction (Wiltshire 1994: 43-44). Notwithstanding the above, the reader tends to sympathise with Marianne in her predicament:

her eyes were red and swollen; and it seemed as if her tears were even then restrained with difficulty. She avoided the looks of them all, could neither eat nor speak, and after some time, on her mother’s silently pressing her hand with tender compassion, her small degree of fortitude was quite overcome, she burst into tears and left the room (80).

The subsequent Chapter Sixteen opens with the following telling passage, which –

with its extravagant reliance on unreal conditionals – communicates external origins of some of Marianne’s actions:

Marianne would have thought herself very inexcusable had she been able to sleep at all the first night after parting from Willoughby. She would have been ashamed to look her family in the face the next morning, had she not risen from her bed in more need of repose than when she lay down in it. But the feelings which made such composure a disgrace, left her in no danger of incurring it. She was awake the whole night, and she wept the greatest part of it. She got up with a headache, was unable to talk, and unwilling to take any nourishment; giving pain every moment to her mother and sisters, and forbidding all attempt at consolation from either. Her sensibility was potent enough! (80)

Afterwards, Marianne spends “whole hours at the pianoforte alternately singing and crying; her voice often totally suspended by her tears” (81); she cries on finding the horse-rider approaching Barton to be Edward, and not Willoughby (84); or finds herself unable to participate in the routinely tedious social intercourse of small talk and vanity, “too much oppressed even for tears” (172). When less oppressed, she sobs at her writing pad (173) or bursts into tears on receiving Willoughby’s letter (175–76). This is explicitly contrasted with Elinor’s understanding “that such grief, shocking as it was to witness it, must have its course ... till this excess of suffering had somewhat spent itself” (176). As Marianne laments her fate, “her voice [is] entirely lost in sobs” (178), isolating her from real life around her and making her impervious to her sister’s parallel grief.

These unbridled emotional effusions do not meet with understanding from the less sentimentally inclined or the less con-

cerned with the well-being of *Sense and Sensibility's* most sentimental heroine. Mrs. Jennings, for instance, believes that Marianne “had better have her cry out at once and have done with. The Parrys and Sandersons luckily are coming tonight ... and that will amuse her” (185). Marianne weeps and weeps “with agony” (195) at Mrs. Dashwood’s ignorance of the situation and fondness for her younger daughter’s former admirer. What is interesting, however, is that on finding Willoughby to be married, Marianne first “receive[s] the news with resolute composure; ma[kes] no observation on it, and at first shed[s] no tears; but after a short time they would burst out, and for the rest of the day, she [is] in a state hardly less pitiable than when she first learn[s] to expect the event” (211). Marianne’s eyes fill with tears on several other occasions, but when Elinor discloses to Marianne the news of Edward’s engagement, she “listen[s] with horror, and crie[s] excessively. Elinor [is] to be the comforter of others in her own distresses, no less than in theirs” (253).

However, the leaving of London, the site of Marianne’s moral agony, does not bring relief to her. “Nor could she leave the place in which Willoughby remained, busy in new engagements, and new schemes, in which she could have no share, without shedding many tears”, the reader is told (294). At her destination, the narrator ironises, “in such moments of precious, invaluable misery, she rejoice[s] in tears of agony to be at Cleveland” (295). Even the final homecoming to Barton, following Marianne’s recovery, is not free from tears (335). Being told about Willoughby’s penitential confession provokes Marianne’s sobbing (340), as she feels increasingly disturbed by a more thorough enquiry on the subject (341). A final dif-

ference is illustrated as the heroines learn about Edward’s ultimate availability on the marriage market and Lucy’s marriage to Edward’s brother. As already indicated, Elizabeth sheds a few tears of relief, and is then “oppressed, ... overcome by her own felicity;—and happily disposed as is the human mind to be easily familiarized with any change for the better, it require[s] several hours to give sedateness to her spirits, or any degree of tranquillity to her heart” (356). In response to this very situation, Marianne can once again “speak her happiness only by tears” (356). In view of all this, it is somewhat strange to say that “Austen’s novels allow limited transparency of the feeling body” (Todd 2006: x) in order to communicate unrestrained emotion. Austen’s characters’ crying is a most visual symptom.

Less commonly known than the plot of Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility*, the plot of Maria Wirtemberska’s *Malvina* (translated into English in 2001) is more complicated. An adolescent Polish noblewoman is married off to a rich old man. When Malvina’s spouse conveniently dies as a result of alcohol abuse and reckless horse-riding, her only comfort is reading romances and gothic tales, which enables her to fantasise about love, chivalry, and perfect male companions. The young widow returns to her family home to live with her younger sister, Wanda, and a dearly loved aunt, both enthusiasts of romance fiction. All of a sudden, a handsome young man called Ludomir appears to help save a peasant child during a providential fire in one of Malvina’s villages. He joins the ladies’ household for a while, and Malvina instantly takes to him, but Ludomir is unwilling to talk about his parentage. Having barely expressed his affection for the heroine, he leaves, and a note she finds

tells her that he deems himself unworthy of her. Malvina pines after her beau, but is sent to Warsaw for the winter season to be duly diverted. At a ball, she meets Ludomir who appears a changed man, failing to recognise her or relate to their shared experiences. Malvina is confused when the Warsaw Ludomir proposes to her. His grandfather, Prince of Melsztyn, approves of the marriage.

Thanks to her intuition, Malvina gradually comes to realise that her admirer is but a look-alike of the Ludomir she met before. The Warsaw Ludomir is not free from moral weaknesses absent in the original, although he bears the same name and surname. The mystery thickens, another dramatic fire occurs in Malvina's presence to let her catch a glimpse of the genuine Ludomir (or so she imagines), allowing the heroine to be guided by her intuition again. Then the mystery is finally unravelled: years ago, the Prince of Melsztyn banished his only daughter for her wrong choice of a marriage partner. He was never informed that she had borne twins before her own and her husband's deaths. One of the twins (the original Ludomir No. 1) had been stolen by a party of travelling Gypsies. Ludomir No. 2 was the other twin, both having been given the Christian name of their late father, unlikely as this sounds. Following a properly emotional anagnorisis scene, the happy ending comes complete with a double wedding – Malvina marries Ludomir No. 1, and her sister Wanda – Ludomir No. 2. This is how Malvina's intuition ultimately wins, having rewarded her with the appropriate spouse.

As this synopsis of the *Malvina* plot shows, the text features several stock romance motifs. It is peopled with a heroine and hero of sensibility (the protagonist's

name duly appearing in the very title), originally representing various social strata, as well as a male tyrant – Malvina's first husband. The love story is wrought with obstacles bringing pain and suffering to the worthy heroine, who will nevertheless be ultimately granted the inevitable happy ending. The plot progresses through the natural cycle of the seasons, starting from the spring, when the lovers first meet. It embraces the motif of "virtue rewarded" and expresses a preference for rural life as opposed to the corrupt city (Zawadzka 1997). Last but not least, it draws on a contrast between two sisters (Kleiner 1981: 171): the sentimental, intuitive Malvina and the sparkly Wanda.³ In Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* Marianne cries the most; in *Malvina* this activity is most often performed by the eponymous heroine.

To begin with, although Malvina's marriage is arranged and consequently loveless, when her tyrant husband is eliminated from the scene, the protagonist is far from rejoicing. "[F]orgetful of the fact that she ha[s] shared so little happiness with this man, [she] shed[s] heartfelt tears over his terrible and untimely death"

³ On the multiplicity of character pairs, see Greenfield (2009, 92): "*Sense and Sensibility* features three pairs of sisters – Elinor and Marianne, Nancy and Lucy Steele, and Lady Middleton and Mrs Palmer; three brothers who disinherit their siblings – Mr John Dashwood, Colonel Brandon's older brother, and Robert Ferrars (the last two steal their brothers' fiancées); two women who disinherit men – Mrs Smith and Mrs Ferrars; two insufferably indulgent young mothers – Mrs John Dashwood (Elinor and Marianne's sister-in-law) and Lady Middleton; and two flawed but sympathetic older mothers – Mrs Dashwood (Elinor and Marianne's mother) and Mrs Jennings, who becomes Mrs Dashwood's surrogate". In *Malvina*, we have two sisters, two Ludomirs, two mother figures to Ludomir No. 1 – Telimena and the miller's wife, and Malvina's aunt and Father Ezechiel (a father figure to Ludomir No. 1 as well) as parent figures to replace Malvina's dead biological parents. Only the Gypsy seems to have no counterpart.

(Wirtemberska 2001: 21).⁴ Naturally, this shows her to be kind-hearted, sympathetic and forgiving, and strongly highlights her unquestionable virtues from the very beginning of the story. Shortly afterwards, having barely met but soon to be parted from her Ludomir, on hearing his indirect complaint of his unhappiness, she sobs into her veil bitterly (37), and Ludomir has to implore her to stop. At this point she realises her feelings for Ludomir and utters the fateful words: "Ungrateful One" (a label which, although it is a cause of distress to both lovers for the time being, will become a private buzzword for them when the couple are happily married in the end). On leaving the scene, she discards her veil, subsequently picked up by her lover, who rather pompously declares: "May I never part with it except with my life" (38). This is actually one of the earliest and most important crying scenes as it introduces two of the novel's major symbols: the veil and the mistaken concept of ingratitude.

In his letter to Telimena, whom at the time he deems to be his birth mother, Ludomir recounts the final parting from Malvina and rather straightforwardly fashions himself into a Man of Feeling. He admits to crying unabashedly and plentifully: "blinded by tears" at first, he "pursue[s] her with [his] eyes, he then [falls] to the earth and shed[s] a torrent of bitter tears" once again (41).⁵ The letter contains an abundance of exclamation marks, in the properly sentimental spirit. In the follow-

ing chapter, the crying action is paralleled by the heroine, who sheds "bitter tears" over Ludomir's letter (43) and her "profusion of tears" (43–44) makes it impossible for her to continue reading. But she is quickly sent to the capital for the winter season in view of the fact that her "official mourning" of her husband's demise is over (47). Malvina is considered to be in desperate need of diversion after Ludomir's leaving: "she lost all sleep and hardly ate; her face was even paler than usual and her frequent fainting fits frightened Krzewin's other residents" (47). This could hardly be more reminiscent of the words used by Austen to depict Marianne's pining after her Willoughby.

With a "tear-stained" face (48), Malvina embarks on her journey through snowy Mazovian plains, stressing how much she hates snow which clearly represents emotional coldness and separation from her relatives and home. At a Warsaw ball, she confesses herself more inclined to weep than to dance (58). She manages, however, to contain her tears: "Malvina is capable of weeping in silence, of suffering alone and rejected" (59). While other people's unhappy fates never fail to move her to visible and audible tears (as is the case with the farewell letter of Thais, written before her death, shortly after giving birth to the two Ludomirs, 102), her own confusion and lack of fulfilment throw her into what looks like bodily illness.⁶ This happens first when Ludomir No. 1 leaves her, and another time – much later, after glimpsing

⁴ All quotations from *Malvina* come from the following edition: Wirtemberska, Maria. *Malvina or the Heart's Intuition*. Translation with an Introduction by Ursula Phillips. Polish Cultural Foundation: London, 2001, and will be denoted by page number only.

⁵ Like father, like son: Prince of Melsztyn is also shown to be "moved to tears" as he broods about his daughter's last days and – by implication – his cruel treatment of her (146).

⁶ *Sensibility*, Janet Todd (2006, 19) reminds us, was "associated particularly with women, it spoke through the body, deemed to be authentic in its palpable expression of feeling, and it could easily promote frailty, even sickness, in those regarding themselves as excessively sensitive and virtuous". In this sense it served to validate certain (psycho)somatic complaints as indicators of sound moral standing and ensuing sensitivity.

both Ludomirs at the same time (No. 2 for a farewell before his going to war, and No. 1 whose distraught gestures and shabby appearance bring to mind the apparition said to haunt Wilanów palace grounds). As was the case with Austen's Marianne, the illness brought on by intense emotional upheaval effects the heroine's displacement: a hurried trip from Wilanów back to Warsaw and then a removal to her home village of Krzewin.

Yet Wirtemberska's narrator informs her readers quite explicitly that "Malvina was not the perfect heroine of a romance, but a real human being, and therefore not perfect at all" (66). What exactly is this statement meant to communicate? Is it meant to mock the commonness of the young lady, as was the case with another Austenian heroine, Catherine Morland (*Northanger Abbey*, 1818)? Or is it meant to say that Malvina's eponymous intuition sometimes fails to keep up with her sentiments? Probably both of these, but there is yet another meaning which seems rather revealing. It is a fact that – given all the confusing circumstances, the two Ludomirs, etc. – Malvina unsurprisingly experiences "contradictory feelings" (73), which makes her sometimes act like Austen's prudent Sense, and sometimes – like pretentious Sensibility. As if in corroboration of this fact, the following comment drops from the narrator's pen: "Did Malvina's instincts deceive her in all this, and did her lively imagination perhaps delude her?" (106). When in her Sensibility mode, Malvina follows her instincts and cries profusely; when in her Sense(s), she demonstrates a capacity to use her rational mind. One example is the message sent to her by Ludomir No. 2 who complains about her coldness towards him, at which

point Malvina is at a loss "whether to be angry or aggrieved" (95), whether to feel offended or take pity on him, and as a result she ends up blaming herself. The reason why she is so confused is that she tries to resolve the issue rationally rather than use her heart's intuition. Needless to say, the latter somewhat misleads her by the end of the novel's Volume 1 as Malvina fails to recognise her true Ludomir, i.e. No. 1, in the figure of a heroic fire-fighter, and instead mistakes his less worthy twin brother for him. As long as her common sense controls her, there is little space for crying or other bodily sensations as means to convey her emotional states. But at the same time, the heroine is not immune to moving stories of love and madness, which elicit from her "the sensibility of her heart" (87), still unaccompanied by crying. Yet it seems that the sentimentality of Wirtemberska's novel intensifies as the plot approaches its happy ending. Soon before Malvina is to meet her Ludomir No. 1 again for the final resolution, a clear connection is established between her tears and romantically inclined intuition:

Her memories of her brief moments of happiness, memories of certain days when she had cried bitterly, her touching anxieties and obscure forebodings, created for her a kind of happiness, in keeping with her romantic imagination, and which she jealously guarded from the others deep down in her heart (158).

The novel's take on the Man of Feeling, Ludomir No. 1, in turn, muses on the somewhat Rousseauian upbringing he received: "solitary wandering through the wild neighbourhood of our home [was] my only pastime" (167). This, he believes, has made him not only physically fit but also augmented his sentimental nature:

But such an untamed upbringing, so much time spent in the lonely wilds, so many hours when I saw nothing at all around me but forsaken wilderness and solitude, made powerful impressions on my young mind and reinforced perhaps my incurable propensity for melancholy, which – without all this – I had brought into the world along with my first breath (168).

In this way, Ludomir No. 1 is shown to be capable of what Claire Lamont has termed “an ardent appreciation of beauty in ... nature” as well as “refined but strongly felt emotions” (vi), both phenomena perceived as thoroughly constructive at the time. Utterly selfless, a product of natural education, he undertakes to make another exit from the scene, permanent this time, as long as he mistakenly believes Malvina to be in love with Ludomir No. 2, now officially recognised as his twin brother. Yet, on seeing Malvina, he can persist in his resolution no longer; an extensive conversation ensues in which, on his knees, he affectedly declares his feelings. Interestingly, throughout this scene, it is Malvina who sobs and cries (188), not her male counterpart. It is only in the final line of the scene (and the chapter) that, after the couple ascertain where they stand and discuss Ludomir No. 2's nascent affection for Wanda,⁷ Ludomir No. 1 is allowed to “bathe [Malvina's] hand with tears of joy and clasp her to his heart” (194). The only plausible resolution now is to throw a double wedding for the two sisters, somewhat along the lines of Austen's ending in *Sense and Sensibility*.

⁷ Ludomir No. 2 and Wanda are more compatible than No. 2 and Malvina, sharing the same tastes and personal characteristics – again much like Austen's Marianne and Willoughby. Wanda is moreover “less demanding of perfection in a lover than her sister, and also more confident than she of her talents in keeping him constant in future” (198).

It has been said that *Sense and Sensibility* is, “a novel over which hangs an air of depression”, not least because “two of the main male figures are themselves lacking in spirits, having their own unhappy, disillusioned and secret pasts” (Wiltshire 1994: 51). It would seem that a similar dose of frustration is shared by the readily deluded Malvina and Ludomir No. 1. His twin brother is perhaps the least unhappy as he is a somewhat Willoughbyan figure, except that his mistakes are less serious and can be easily rectified, given the constructive influence of virtuous young ladies. When all the love-related obstacles and tribulations are finally overcome, Malvina's Ludomir No. 1 proves – by crying properly – to be a true man of feeling, an embodiment of a female fantasy.

One of the reasons why both novels end on a happy double-wedding note is that they present a spectrum of “characters, both male and female, possessing varying degrees of sense and sensibility” (Auerbach 2004: 101). But before Austen gently mocks her lovable newly married Marianne for being “born to an extraordinary fate” (372), she lets Elinor indulge in a crying session at last:

Elinor could sit it no longer. She almost ran out of the room, and as soon as the door was closed, burst into tears of joy, which at first she thought would never cease. Edward, who had till then looked any where, rather than at her, saw her hurry away, and perhaps saw – or even heard, her emotion; for immediately afterwards he fell into a reverie, which no remarks, no inquiries, no affectionate address of Mrs. Dashwood could penetrate, and at last, without saying a word, quitted the room (353).

This is perhaps more realistic than Wirtemberska's vision of a utopian male who acts according to feminine rules of

love- and courtship-related behaviour. If Austen's male characters are ever brought to the verge of crying, or its substitute, i.e. blushing, they do so because they are villains who have understood their errors, like Willoughby, too late.

Although the two novelists clearly differ in the intensity and focus of their didacticism, all the four love stories are edifying, displaying full success at the end of the day. The four couples, having shed their fair share of tears, all arrive at what has been termed "companionate marriage" (Stone 1979). Jane Austen, it has been stated, "turns transformation into growth through a psychologically-realized process, resulting in a marriage between hero

and heroine based in love that is egalitarian as well as unconditional" (Juhasz 1988: 251). The same may be said about Maria Wirtemberska. Hence, in general, crying, as used by the two novelists, appears but a necessary step on the road to romance-style happiness. The major difference, however, is that Austen allows only her heroines to cry, whereas with Wirtemberska – it is both male and female characters who are presented in the act of shedding tears. But, ultimately, while Austen constructs a narrator who is capable of irony at the expense of her crying heroine, Wirtemberska cannot help but be very serious about her protagonist's tears: humour is certainly not her forte.

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