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**Model Selves and Immodest Parasites.**

The Debut Novel of Frances Burney: *Evelina:*  
*Or the History of a Young Lady's Entrance Into the World.*

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## **Acknowledgements**

It was about eight years ago that I lost my best friend to depression. I recently read something that immediately made sense. It goes like this; when a loved one dies, exactly 40 candles fire in your bosom, each following day one goes off, and eventually comes the last day and the last candle stands intact, continues to be lit forever. Countless days have passed since that day and I can still feel that last candle silently burning my insides. No ache remains, but I'm still suffering. We were seventeen that year and I was too young to know anything about mental conditions. You were the brightest young woman with countless opportunities lying ahead of you, aspirations that kept you going, wits that you'd go by. You had had enough, though. Life got even tougher after you had gone, but I am not giving up.

*This one is for you.*

## Abstract

The aim for the composition of this dissertation is thoroughly elaborate the debut book of Fanny Burney entitled *Evelina, or the History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World*, (Burney, 1778) which belongs to the eighteenth-century novels of sensibility tradition. The attempt primarily has been made to illuminate the issues of namelessness of women and their perpetual search for identity, innocence as a personality trait, patriarchy and its magnanimous effects on both fictional and non-fictional realms and the two types of delicacy that are prevalent in the work; in addition, male imprudence, the clash of model selves, parasites and paragons and how Burney treats them, and last but not least, male condescension are discussed, too. Even though the novel focuses on Evelina and her progress in her new, less protective environment; the confirmative features of those of the secondary figures are additionally employed. The truly admirable chivalry of Orville, and how he practices gallantry to perfection have been analyzed in depth, especially in comparison with the other male characters that appear in the book. There are also a number of pertinent references to other novels produced in the same period, all of which this specific reader deems instrumental to the exploration of the discursive focus. Furthermore, a body of secondary readings by various authors have been consulted in an attempt to accurately examine the aspects that render the work one of the most eminent in its time of publication, as well as provide a strong basis for the entirety of the book in question. Accordingly, there are allusions to the authoress' familial bonds to which she gave utmost priority, her arduous quest for approval for her creations, her subtle resentment for her father, her relationship with her siblings in her childhood, the formidable literary circle into which she was introduced thanks to her father's prudently climbing the social ladder and its mighty contribution to her career and her friendship with Hester Thrale, since they all served to construct and shape her presence in the professional scene.

## Key Words

Innocence, paragon, parasite, patriarchy, condescension, namelessness, search for identity.

## **The familial background of the authoress, her personality, her rise as an author that echoes the rise of the novel as a genre.**

**"Nothing is so delicate as the reputation of a woman; it is at once the most beautiful and most brittle of all human things" (203).<sup>1</sup>**

Even though contemporary readers would dominantly reject the idea that stories have the power of changing people for the worse, it was not the case in the eighteenth century. Burney was well-aware of the surgent effect of reviews on the reputation of a published work.<sup>2</sup> (Thaddeus, 2000) If the reviewers deemed a book detrimental to the sanctity of a society, the readers would avoid that specific production. Eighteenth century was typically when literary works were designed to dictate since the prevailing idea then was that human beings were inherently flawed, but hope still persisted as they were also believed to be teachable. However, it is better to delve into the early ages of the authoress before dealing with the prevailing atmosphere of the time during which she was set to publish her first novel.

In her childhood, Burney would spend hours copying her father's manuscripts, and as someone who took great pleasure from reading, she was unavoidably affected by the study of his works. The prevalent belief is that people come to resemble very much the person whose prose they copy.<sup>3</sup> Yet Frances Burney did not choose to write her dedication in a way that echoed the words of her father's, which was as the draft read: "it may, with utmost truth be said, that it was composed in moments stolen from sleep, from reflection, and from an occupation which required all my attention, during more than twelve hours a day, for a great part of they year." Instead, Burney humbly calls her debut novel "*the trifling production of a few idle hours*". (10) Plus, not only is the author male but he is also young, implied from the way (s)he addresses the reviewers in the 3rd page of the book: "*Remember Gentlemen, you were all young writers once*".

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<sup>1</sup> Burney, F., 1778. *EVELINA or THE HISTORY OF A YOUNG LADY'S ENTRANCE INTO THE WORLD*. 10th ed. Project Gutenberg. From this point onwards, the quotations will be coupled with their corresponding page number.

<sup>2</sup> Thaddeus, 37.

<sup>3</sup> Thaddeus, 40.

The stepmother of Frances Burney had three children from her previous marriage. Even though it was common for families to have relatively higher numbers of members compared to the families of today, Burneys were an exceptional family; in that, they managed to stick together thanks to father Burney and his strong personality.<sup>4</sup> (Sabor, 2007) When Frances was born, her parents were yet to tie the knot. Her bastardy echoes in her first book, which mainly deals with a young lady's struggles to gain recognition by her biological father.<sup>5</sup>

Sabor recounts how Samuel Johnson, who himself had no family had a special liking for all members of this exceptionally closely-knit family, declaring that he loved the breed that he had the opportunity to get to know himself, and the rest he still loved because he knew all members loved one another, regardless.<sup>6</sup>

Even though Fanny and her dearest sibling Susan were infatuated with writing the daily events in the comfort of their own rooms late at night when they were no longer needed by their father to assist him as if they were his secretary, making copy of material and preparing his manuscripts for the printer. Even though keeping journal ran in the family of Burney, it was not impossible to tell the style of one sibling from the other. That one distinctive feature between the two was that Susan was more interested in recounting the events, interpreting the façade such as the following excerpt taken from her personal diary as she commented on the performance and the musicality of Rinaldo's, whereas the younger sister was drawn more to the essence of the personality of the singer in question.<sup>7</sup>

I never heard him so *well* in voice or in better Spirits ... He played all sorts of tricks with his voice running up & down as high or low as he could –I knew his compass to be such that he could sing *Tenor* songs but I did not before *suspect* he could vie with Agujari & Danzi [two well-known sopranos] to their *alt-itudes* –will you believe me when I assure

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<sup>4</sup> Sabor, 7.

<sup>5</sup> Sabor, 95.

<sup>6</sup> Sabor, 7.

<sup>7</sup> Sabor, 15-16.

you, with great truth, that in one of his runs he ran fairly up to the highest F of the Harpsichord.<sup>8</sup>

The sisterly inimitable love of Susan and Fanny that the latter kept closest to her heart even during the times they spent separated and that which Hester Thrale was envious of caught the attention of Pacchierotti, too as he sang them praises: 'it was as if there was but one Soul - but one Mind between you - You are two in one' (ED I, Ixxiv).<sup>9</sup>

It was usual for Burney kids to partake of a mild rivalry which was defined by their attempts to impress and please their father. Although they were all bright individuals who managed to rise to the topmost ranks of London society with their wits and the mutual support they offered to the members of their family, they had deficits and the moments they reached the rock bottom, too. James, for instance became a lieutenant to the *Adventure*, which set for the South Seas under Captain Cook. Later on, he published what he had witnessed during his travels, having had a knack for mathematical calculations, he also included charts he drew himself and added a noteworthy depth into his accounts of the whole exploration which was compiled into five volumes. He even taught himself an indigenous language so he could communicate with the islanders. Yet, he committed acts of insubordination which resulted in years of obligatory stay on land and he would receive half the money he used to make.<sup>10</sup>

The Burney house in Poland Street was next to that of a wig-maker, on one occasion that the family remembered even years afterwards, the young members of the family found some old wigs and played a game of imitation until the wig fell into a tub of rainwater, young Fanny, aged ten was ready to face the wrath of the grumpy wig-maker by declaring, "What signifies talking so much about an accident. The wig is wet, to be sure, and the wig was a good wig, to be sure; but

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<sup>8</sup> Quoted by Linda Kelly in *Susanna, the Captain and the Castrato: Scenes from the Burney Salon, 1779-80* (London: Starhaevn, 2004), 47.

<sup>9</sup> *The Early Diary of Frances Burney, 1768-1778*, ed. Annie Raine Ellis, 2 vols. (London: George Bell, 1907).

<sup>10</sup> Sabor, 16-17

it's of no use to speak of it any more; because what's done cannot be undone".<sup>11</sup> Sabor notes "the wig is wet" became an inside joke among the Burneys, like a secret code between the members, the wigs often feature in the authoress' works<sup>12</sup>, the scene where Captain Mirvan and Sir Clement Willoughby plot against Madame Duval also has a rather graphic description of her wig falling off, leaving her in a horrible state, in which the French lady is only concerned about her valuables and how she could save them. (181)

Fanny Burney is not the only member of the family who achieved fame. Charles was held responsible for missing books from a university library. Deemed to be the clever young man who had developed a special appreciation for books, entered Cambridge by winning a scholarship, which would otherwise be impossible as his father would not afford it. Cambridge University was never able to recollect the very rare editions of books that they believed he would sell in London. This act of mere stupidity cost him dearly as he was expelled from the school and even after many years the loss of those books are still yearned and discussed. Undeterred, he continued to seek opportunities to earn his degree, with the help of his father, who was initially appalled even by his sight and would not exchange words with him, he was readmitted to school at a far away land, Aberdeen. Yet, the tide did not really turn as later in life his plague lasted and the Bishop of London severely rejected to ordain him. Adamantly still, Charles decided to open his very own boarding school in Greenwich and it proved to be a success shortly.<sup>13</sup>

As discussed briefly in an attempt to build a formidable foundation to her actual argument in her essay, Greenfield alludes once again to the relationship of the authoress with her own father, whom has appeared a great number of times in this dissertation work. She makes use of the famous incident of her burning all her writings she had composed since she was ten, on her fifteenth birthday, solely out of her desire to avoid losing her father's respect since she thought he

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<sup>11</sup> Dr Burney preserved the story, *Memoirs of Dr Charles Burney, 1726-1769*, 142-3. Fanny also recorded the incident in her *Memoirs of Doctor Burney* (London, 1832), II, 168-71. Her work is the source for this quotation.

<sup>12</sup> Sabor, 9.

<sup>13</sup> Sabor, 16.



did not hold novels in high esteem, knowing that he only had one novel in his library. Interestingly, she makes this explanation in the dedicatory part of her last novel, *The Wanderer*, speaking directly to her father, she writes, "I felt ashamed of appearing to be votary to a species of writing that by you, Sir ... I thought condemned." One of the books she tossed into the bonfire that day included "The History of Caroline Evelyn", the antecedent of Evelina. She seems to enjoy dearly the act of drawing attention to her father's obliviousness to "Caroline Evelyn": "You, dear Sir, knew nothing of its extinction, for you had never known of its existence".<sup>14</sup>

The authoress did not want her father to read the novel, but also truly abhorred being disobedient to him. Thus, she asked for permission to keep the contents of the novel a secret from him.<sup>15</sup> She describes the exchange in one of her writings: "When I told my father, I never wished or intended, that ... he ... should see my essay, he forbore to ask me its name. ... He made no sort of objection to my having my own way in total secrecy and silence to all the work. ... He is contented with hearing I shall never have the courage to let him know its name."<sup>16</sup> Similarly, Evelina cannot avoid censorship when it comes to the letters she sends to Villars, she has to impose a certain limitation to the language that she exposes to him. In the letter she expresses her desire to go to London, she overtly praises Villars so he would grant her the permission she requests. In a way, she attempts to persuade him to end his own authority over her.<sup>17</sup>

She remarks twice that her father does not even know the book's name. She also announces that she would erase her own name from the book. During the time of the book's publication it was especially common among female writers to write anonymously, yet she had another plan in her mind. She suggests that namelessness also had a personal importance back in the day. She explains how proud she had been that both Johnson and Burke were very pleased with her debut novel and that, they "condescended to stand for the champion of my ... small work ... ere they

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<sup>14</sup> Frances Burney, "Dedication to Doctor Burney", in *The Wanderer; or Female Difficulties* (London: Pandora Press, 1988), p. xxii.

<sup>15</sup> Greenfield, 303.

<sup>16</sup> *The Early Diary*, II, 164.

<sup>17</sup> Greenfield, 310.

knew that I bore, my Father! your honoured name", hinting at her recognition of the fact that, following the explanation of Gilbert and Gubar, a woman is the mere product of her father, therefore she plays "her role as her father's daughter" with all her actions in the outside world and a woman's inconsiderate treatment of her family name is "always ... improper because it is not ... her own, either to have or to give."<sup>18</sup> In Burney's case, anonymity was a way to promote herself. Plus, she avoided the usurpation of her pen in that, she never made a direct political statement; she deftly refrained from providing answers to political questions. She was exceptionally diffident and meek and she never wanted to take the risk of being offensive to any particular social group, especially those who hold power.<sup>19</sup>

She adopted a mischievous approach to the authority of her father. In the famous ode to her father in *Evelina*, she openly dedicates the text to him, yet his name does not appear in the verses. By so doing, she denies him the right to give her a name. In addition, by concealing the name of the novel from him, she doubly subverts his authority. Her novel is not the only medium she suggests the idea that a woman wishing to own her writing should be nameless, free from her father's language, she does so in her autobiographical accounts, too.<sup>20</sup>

“To Nobody ... will I write my Journal! Since To Nobody can I be wholly unreserved. ... No ecret can I conceal from No-body ... No-body's self has not power to destroy. ... From this moment, then, my dear Girl—but why, permit me to ask, must a female be made Nobody? Ah! My dear, what were this world good for, were Nobody a female?”<sup>21</sup>

Greenfield praises the above text for the confusion it has deftly created and the witty language use it has adopted. She argues that Burney's writing implies an assumed ambivalence for Nobody.

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<sup>18</sup> Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *No Man's Land 1: The War of the Words* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), p. 237.

<sup>19</sup> Sabor, 96.

<sup>20</sup> Greenfield, 304.

<sup>21</sup> *The Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney, 1768-1773*, ed. Lars E. Troide (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), I, 2.

On one hand, it suggests nothing beyond its literal meaning; that is to say, absence. On the other hand, she treats Nobody as a female figure who is still there in spite of having no body or name; and unlike her father, she can trust this Nobody with her writing<sup>22</sup> because "Nobody's self has not power to destroy". Implicit also is the fact that, Burney is actually addressing herself when she addresses Nobody. In fact, she refers to herself in one of her journal writings, "[to myself, that is to Nobody!]."<sup>23</sup> Considering her previous destructive attempts towards her own writing, this is a clear indication that referring to herself as Nobody, as well as addressing her journals to Nobody liberated her from her constraints. She had to ignore all exterior factors that would otherwise define her identity and instead, start writing on a clean sheet and emerge from her prose as no other but herself.

Burney's stories are a case in point in that they underline her having had to distance herself from her father and his language, so she could become a writer herself. Her creation, *Evelina* also highlights a young woman's achieving authorship through her abandoning the patrilineal territory, within the borders of which she is never a free agent.<sup>24</sup> Burney's very first book is very instrumental in that Burney discusses her feelings about authorship and paternal line because she refers to the protagonist as "nobody". Her being nobody derives from the fact that her biological father rejects her, leaving her with no title and no social given identity to carry with honor.

It is no secret that the novel's subtext insists on subverting the patriarchy and attributing the potency to name and make textual production to the mother, and this reflects the author's personal ardour to undermine her author father. Even though Burney's relationship with her father assumes more relevance with regard to her career, there is a remarkable autobiographical source that suggests that Burney could barely read or write until she was ten, it coincided with the year her mother passed and she suddenly "began scribbling, almost incessantly, little works of

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<sup>22</sup> Greenfield, 304.

<sup>23</sup> *The Early Diary*, 1, 338. The brackets indicate that Burney probably substituted this passage later in life.

<sup>24</sup> Greenfield, 305.

invention."<sup>25</sup> This loss that characterizes the initial years of the author was likely the reason she started to write, as Doody notes, there "seems to be a connection between Frances's first great spurt of writing and the death of her mother"<sup>26</sup>; thus, the book associates authorship with the deceased mother of the protagonist.

Greenfield argues that Burney wrote *Evelina* at a time when the novel as a genre was considered to be a female product that targeted a female audience, and also, its content appealed to women.<sup>27</sup> In light of this factual revelation, Burney's insistent emphasis on female authorship in her debut novel can be interpreted as a reference to the genre's feminine status. Current theory often defines literary creation as a paternal, phallic act, but such a metaphor did not apply to the late eighteenth-century novel era. *Evelina* was introduced into an environment that considered the genre in question as the representation of female language and subjectivity; similarly, the protagonist's background story suggests that women have a unique capability to bend words to narrate their story and create identity. It is likely that Burney associated *Evelina*'s familial romance with the process of novelistic production, she was probably under the influence of the prevalent literary climate; for both stories that involve the heroine's history and the stories Burney told about the book's production, which this dissertation work has recently discussed, demonstrate similar contemporary attitudes about the emergence of the genre.<sup>28</sup>

One correspondence between the novel and the heroine is that like *Evelina*, the novel as a genre was treated like an unwelcome, illegitimate child. Because it is not the ascendancy of any previous literary tradition, it was also seeking parental recognition; it was not properly owned, it

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<sup>25</sup> Frances Burney, *Memoirs of Doctor Burney, arranged from his own Manuscripts, from Family Papers, and from Personal Recollections*, 3 vols (London: Edward Moon, 1832) II, 123. Quoted in Doody, 21 and Epstein, 23.

<sup>26</sup> Margaret Anne Doddy, *Frances Burney: The Life in the Works* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1988) pp. 22.

<sup>27</sup> Greenfield, 316.

<sup>28</sup> Greenfield, 317.

was orphaned.<sup>29</sup> Burney alludes to the issue in her Preface, making an intriguing comparison between the writers of novels and bastard siblings: "*In the republic of letters, there is no member of such inferior rank, or who is so much disdained by his brethren of the quill, as the humble Novelist*". (12) Association has been made between the heroine lacking a father and her namelessness, the same applies to the plague of the novel's name problems. It is worth noting that, for a very long time, the words "romance", "history", and "novel" were used interchangeably.<sup>30</sup>

It also worth referring back to the loathsome attitude any novel written back in the day would probably attract. Burney knew it all and she was prepared, too, as she was addressing the Critics that would read her book as: "*The power of prejudice annexed to nomenclature is universal. ... in nothing is the force of denomination more striking than in the term Novel; a species of writing ... rigidly excommunicated, from its appellation*" (10). Evelina is pushed towards the margin at the social gatherings, she is treated as an outsider; as discussed in detail before, she is always under the threat of being taken for an inferior, in addition, she has to be more than careful to avoid danger, regardless, trouble crosses her way oftentimes. Viewed from this perspective, the novel's being an orphan excluded it from the literary community, mistreated and undermined it as inferior, and cruelly bombarded it with criticism.

On the other hand, novel gave birth to many female writers. Because it was an illegitimate form, it did not require a traditional education that was typically denied to women, a large group of women had the opportunity to write novels. However, the emergence of the professional female writer coincided with the increasing importance of keeping women inside their house, doing domestic work only, performing no public activity at all. Moreover, they were not even expected to bring home money.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, it was more accessible for women to write, yet the women who did write, bent the rules for proper femininity.

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<sup>29</sup> Greenfield, 317.

<sup>30</sup> Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel 1600-1740* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), p. 25.

<sup>31</sup> Greenfield, 318.

Perplexed and startled by this contradiction, the authoress strictly kept her debut work a secret before its publication, but at the same time, she was genuinely excited since it would be her first printed book, it would mark her rise in the public sphere as an individual. In her journal she memorably exclaims: At the latter end of January, the literary world was favoured with the first publication of the ingenious, learned, and most profound Fanny Burney!" and later she describes that year as the first year of her appearing in public.<sup>32</sup>

It is with pleasure that further parallels are drawn between the heroine's stepping into the world and her creator's exposing herself to public. She describes the protagonist making "her first appearance upon the great and busy stage of life" and embarking on "her Entrance into the world". Therefore, it is possible to place novel, author and the protagonist side by side in analogous positions, for all are striving to penetrate the walls of a feminized space exclusively reserved to women. This act of attempted transgression is harmonious with the novel genre itself, since the form granted women a new and more desirable space in the public literary world for the first time ever.

Rekindling the bonfire episode, Burney claimed that her father is to blame for the destruction of the ascendant novel, "*Caroline Evelyn*," as she threw a tantrum and set fire to the book; also, in *Evelina*, it is the biological father of *Evelina* that burns the marital document, which as a result, ends the devastated mother.<sup>33</sup> Greenfield writes, the continuation of the bonfire episode involves Burney unsheathing her pen and beginning to write the story of the daughter, instead.<sup>34</sup> However hard Burney had previously tried to embrace the censorship of her father, *Evelina* rose out of the "ashes of *Caroline Evelyn*" and "struggled herself into life". In the book, the mother is referred to as "*ashes*" twice (162, 403), a clear association with the burnt marriage certificate, out of the ashy grave of whom, *Evelina* comes to being. She rises against her father's attempts to annihilate her, seeks her identity and finds it, exchanges letters to keep a written record of her own history.

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<sup>32</sup> *Diary and Letters*, I, 1, 3.

<sup>33</sup> Greenfield, 318.

<sup>34</sup> Greenfield, 318.

Fanny Burney long-sought after her father's approval of her literary skills, and her introduction into the literary circle, of which her father was already a much revered member. Even though she withheld her work, she desperately wished to hear her father's words of admiration for the novel.<sup>35</sup> After finally gathering the news of her father's having read it, she wrote, "the approbation of all the world put together would not bear any competition, in my estimation, with that of my beloved father."<sup>36</sup> It was no surprise that she was thrilled to hear that Dr. Johnson also adored her work. Her response to his admiration is famous: "it almost crazed me with agreeable surprise—it gave me such a flight of spirits, that I danced a jig."<sup>37</sup>

Similar to the heroine Evelina, whose letters are meant for her "father" Villars, who is the temporary replacement of the actual father Belmont, the book *Evelina* is meant for a male audience. Burney dedicates the book to her father, composes a letter to "Gentlemen" (9) critics in the beginning of the book, and celebrates not a single female author but a series of male writers in her Preface.<sup>38</sup> The plot revolves around Evelina's demand for paternal justification: Villars writes to Lady Howard that he has "*sometimes thought of presenting Evelina to her father, and demanding the justice which is her due*" (155-156); the deceased Lady Belmont resents her husband for being "*hardened against every plea of justice*" (405); and Mrs Sewlyn utters words of bravery to Evelina, "*justice demands you should appear henceforward in no other light than that of Sir John Belmont's daughter*" (457). Correspondingly, Burney refers to her book's reception when she uses the word "justice". In her letter to the "Gentlemen" and the "Authors of *The Monthly and Critical Review*," she writes "*to your Justice alone I am intitled, and by that I must abide*" (11). Moreover, her Preface conclusion reads "*Whatever may be the fate of these letters, the editor is satisfied they will meet with justice?*" (14).

The same way Evelina dreams of her father's one day accepting her as his own, Burney's literary creation reflects her desire to be claimed and named by male authors and readers, who would

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<sup>35</sup> Greenfield, 319.

<sup>36</sup> *Diary and Letters*, I, 7.

<sup>37</sup> *Diary and Letters*, I, 18.

<sup>38</sup> Greenfield, 319.

eventually acknowledge her irreplaceable contribution to the masculine literary lineage. From an objective point view, her enthusiasm is quite reasonable. The novel as a genre paved the way for women's yielding their own matrilineal products, but gaining the approval of important men was still a prerequisite for a woman to consider herself a success.<sup>39</sup>

*Evelina* gained much more reverence from the male authorities than its authoress had ever dared hope, but paternal recognition brings with it certain drawbacks. Once the name of Burney was out as the creator of *Evelina*, Dr. Burney started to interfere with her business. He and "Daddy" Crisp prevented her from publishing her succeeding work, *The Wiltings*. Even though, it is with utmost certainty that Dr. Burney meant the best for the fame and development of his daughter, for it also affected his own; his very close supervision and keen scrutiny of her works and career obviously put too much pressure on her. As she was writing *Cecilia*, he pushed her too much to finish it in a more hasty manner, which resulted in her falling ill. It is not thanks to his interference but in spite of it that, the novel proved to be a success and its author gained an even greater fame.

Consequently, she was offered a place at court and at her father's urging, she cancelled all her other plans and accepted it. During the five years she spent at the court, she had no time to foster her literary skills or make any progress in her career. Having long had to live with an unhealthy mind, it took her fourteen years to summon the inspiration to write and publish a book again.

Marriage and finally gaining her father's acknowledgement confiscated Evelina's freedom and the power to compose a written text, a similar destiny struck Burney, too. Fame and male approval stripped her fully naked of her anonymity, her literary independence. Like her heroine, paternal acceptance ultimately deprived Burney "of all right to act for myself."<sup>40</sup>

It is only common among youngsters to dream of the day they will finally achieve liberty, yet human beings are inherently in quest for companionship, togetherness in evading or conquering the obstacles that life pushes their way. Burney was also aware of this very lifelike tendency, and she dealt with it in her works. However, there are almost always exterior forces at play that

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<sup>39</sup> Greenfield, 319-20.

<sup>40</sup> Greenfield, 320.



render it even more challenging a task to accomplish, in that individuals not only deal with their intrinsic need for fully surrendering to a beloved stranger but also much more formidable structures that are none other than the components of the outside world.

Burney dextorously published her debut novel with an implied male identity only to gain appreciation from the reviewers for the quality and the originality of her writing that easily earned her the respect of the public. However, after revealing her identity, she gained the support of the most influential leading figures of her contemporaries, regardless of their gender. It is worth noting that what enabled her to gain an irreplaceable spot in the literary scene was not only her prudently constructed persona which was defined as feminine but also the fact that she was in harmony with the dominant cultural opinion of the most admirable figures of the time. Furthermore, she was the embodiment of the perfect authoress of letters with her wittiness and her interpretation of femininity that was characterized by conservation. As is known, the success of her book.<sup>41</sup>

Around the time that Burney published her first book, she probably aimed for appearing in the list of Muse. Cambridge Dictionary defines it as "one of the nine goddesses who were believed to give encouragement in literature, art or music in Ancient Greek or Roman stories". It served the purpose of singling out the individuals that appeared in the list praises, as well as creating a pantheon of female writers, which was only natural given that accomplished females were the badge of honor that the British took a pride in back in the day and achieving and bright women were the fuel to their attempts at asserting their advent civility.<sup>42</sup>

Women writers whose productions would scathe the pride of the nation were shunned and excluded from the recognition that the list would earn them for their writing was deemed to be inappropriate. For example, as stated in Sabor's book, Susanna Centlivre and Aphra Behn failed

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<sup>41</sup> Sabor, 112.

<sup>42</sup> Sabor, 112.

to grant them a place because they were 'notorious for the indecency of their plays'. Moreover, novelists never made an appearance as a part of this elect community.<sup>43</sup>

The fact that a novel was published anonymously meant it was probably composed by a woman<sup>44</sup>, which abominably led the influential reviewers of the time to utter words that were more abrupt and demeaning in nature in comparison with the words directed at their male counterparts, as revealed by *The English Novel*.<sup>45</sup> Unabashed, they would suggest the lady to relinquish her career in writing and consider pursuing a path that involves needlework, which would, in their opinion suit her talents better.

As discussed further by Sabor, critics gradually became less biased and the quality of an outcome started to enjoy more public appreciation, nonetheless a novelist or a fiction writer had to have one more skill that would render them a figure to be openly celebrated. For instance, *In the Female Advocate*, the praise was bestowed upon Sarah Fielding not solely because she was excellent at 'tracing the secret mazes of the Heart', but also because she was an educator. Making it into the much-desired list of Duncombe was less of a challenging task to achieve if the enthusiastic authoresses in question wrote in certain genres, refraining determinedly from yielding novels, which were yet to gain acknowledgement as reputable productions of art.<sup>46</sup>

In order to authentically demonstrate the literary identity of Fanny Burney, it is essential that this paper alludes to Hester Thrale, a fellow friend of the author. The reference point here is Lorna J. Clark's *A Celebration of Frances Burney* (Clark, 2007). Love is an unfathomable hunger to meet the needs of another, the desire to fulfill the requests of that special individual. It was only unconventional for a woman to be both in love with someone and marry him because back in the day the prevailing belief was that the married couple should form a practical alliance, which did

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<sup>43</sup> Sabor, 113.

<sup>44</sup> Sabor, 114.

<sup>45</sup> Reviews of *The Unfortunate Union* (1778) and *The History of Melinda Harley, Yorkshire* (1777), in *The English Novel 1770-1820*, I, 269, 254.

<sup>46</sup> Sabor, 114.

not necessarily involve romance. Additionally, men's assumed superiority over women rendered their unity utterly devoid of emotions. Catering for the lack of tenderness, sensitivity and intimacy denied to her, for which she desperately longed was traditionally fulfilled by another female. The absence of that person in her immediate environment inevitably forced her to invite an outsider into her life.<sup>47</sup> The publication of *Evelina* earned Fanny Burney a unique friendship with Hester Thrale, who was yearning to replace her deceased mother with another person close to her heart since she was deprived of domestic affection having agreed to marry a man of her father's choosing. She did not succeed in having an affectionate homely environment; even though she had twelve children, her daughter decided to avoid her company at all cost. This unloving girl, however would enable her to meet the dearest of all companies.<sup>48</sup>

Thrale was desperate to have a close confidant by her side. However, finding that person was not simple. The genteel people whom Samuel Johnson brought to Thrale's house were predominantly men and the scanty number of women who attended the gatherings were not impressive, in her opinion. Their becoming friends was destined to happen when Dr. Burney, the father of Fanny Burney was giving music lessons to her unloving daughter that the two ladies' made acquaintance. Even though Thrale was a social superior Burney, their shared ridicule and witticism and Thrale's interest in writing made the two become bosom friends. Father Burney was a commendable man and even had a considerable influence on Fanny's writing. In the beginning of her first novel, *Evelina*, she pays homage to him with a poem, in which she refers to him as "Author of my being". (2) The Burney family was climbing the social ladder dexterously, making their way to the circles way above their own rank, it was their discretion which helped them make it possible. However, Burney was inhibited and had social insecurity while seeking public approval and support within the female intellectual circle, yet she acquired quite well the vitality of a woman's deportment as people readily associated it with her subject matter. Additionally, her father was attentive to the emergence of her identity as an authoress and

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<sup>47</sup> Clark, 171.

<sup>48</sup> Clark, 172-3.

encouraged her demureness with the following words: “Your coyness tends to enhance your Fame greatly in Public Opinion”.<sup>49</sup>

However, Thrale was envious that Burney would not put her before her immediate family; she never ceased to announce their priority in her life, especially her sister Susanna, with whom she was in continuous contact through letter exchanging.<sup>50</sup> Notwithstanding, the two friends both benefited handsomely from their intimacy. Thrale finally had a female friend, with whom she could freely communicate, and Burney, in addition to having a dear company, had a whole new world open to her, where she could observe the high manners of people of upper social classes, as well as acquainting herself with accomplished authors.<sup>51</sup> Even though she was awkward at times, she was her own woman; she knew when to reject and isolate herself in dedication to the creation of her new works. When the time came, she took leave of Thrale when her greedy aspiration to reserve her exclusively for herself became out of control; since the strings that bonded Burney and her sister Susanna together were impossible to untie, it was impossible for her to meet Thrale’s demand. She was however quite sympathetic when Burney was set to write her second novel while she was mourning the loss of her husband. It was this event that accentuated the authenticity of their friendship.<sup>52</sup>

Equally prominent is the fact that a similar pathway was destined for Burney as happens to the protagonist of her first novel. She could not be completely associated with the protagonist, but a complete dissolution between them was out of question. Both the author and Evelina are women who are set to challenge the patriarchal rules that render them mere inferiors to their male counterparts and subservient to them, too. Burney made her way to the summit of the literary scene and proved to the world, writing is not a male-specific occupation and a woman can earn her living out of writing and pose a threat to a patrilineal ideology. The authoress was known to adhere with much filial affection to her father, and was replete of fear to ever disappoint him. Intriguingly, the same concern recurs in Evelina, as the readers observe time and again her sheer

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<sup>49</sup> Sabor, 27.

<sup>50</sup> Clark, 174.

<sup>51</sup> Clark, 174-5.

<sup>52</sup> Clark, 176-7.

anxiety lest she upsets or goes astray from the invaluable teachings of Mr. Villars. Burney's literary skills were appreciated dearly and celebrated as equal to the forefathers of novel as a genre. Her disguise as a male author in a masculinized world of literature, as well as her adapting the voice of a son of the pioneers helped her work gain a wide range of admirers. Even though Burney rooted for women's involvement with writing and was proud to prove she could earn her living with this profession, she refrained from celebrating her female antecedents in the preface to *Evelina*.<sup>53</sup> Seeking approval and taking instantly note of the compliments she received on the success on her works, in her journals, where she also noted women writers whom she had read and admired, she deliberately avoided mentioning them in the preface to *Evelina* (12); disingenuously, then, the transvestite author claimed no originality even as she asserted originality (Thaddeus, 2000)<sup>54</sup>.

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<sup>53</sup> Sabor, 24.

<sup>54</sup> Thaddeus, 37

### **Submission and types of delicacy.**

It is now possible to discuss other aspects that underpin Burney's work. Silence and submission were prerequisite to female presence in society. Women were expected to be pure, pristine, innocent and submissive. The chasms in the letter-journals of the heroine expose her attempts to have and assert an identity to her liking, which however is denied as she commences the story as a young lady who was disowned, unacknowledged by her biological father. Her lacking a male guardian provides the basis for the manner in which she is perpetually addressed within the flow of the novel until the end when she gains acknowledgment by her father and has a husband. She does not detest, but at times falls short of properly receiving the predatory approaches of men which do not only intimidate her but stupefy her as they are altogether novel to her; for she was new to this whole new world, having spent a non-threatening and affectionate childhood with the benevolent parson, Mr. Villars. "Namelessness" is a crude reality in defining women at the time in which this epistolary novel is set; it was when the female population was denser in comparison with that of males' and men were the buyers of the marriage market. Since there was much demand for a single man, it was necessary that women had dowry to reward the man who has blessed them.<sup>55</sup> (Newton, 1976) It is patriarchy itself that is responsible for this malevolent construction, therefore the absence of a "name" is detrimental to a woman's status and her worth within the hypothetical market where she is solely a piece in display. Evelina's stepping into the marvels of the city of London assigns her two new duties; displaying herself in her best state and waiting to be chosen.<sup>56</sup> It is patriarchy itself that constitutes the "name", Evelina's namelessness stands in the way of her seeking social acceptance and it denies her an identity, a name she would earn other than her assumed innocence, which is a mere cultural entity, nothing but the attribution of those that assert the audacity to define her even before she was born. Innocence has been specially and culturally tailored on women to disarm them with more ease by their male counterparts, that's how Sir Clement laments her distrust in him when he allegedly promises to take her to her house in the chariot or when he insidiously drags her into darkness when he has previously been the salvation she prayed for, entrapped in the claws of random vicious men in the dark alleys. Reading well the signals that reveal the advancement of treachery towards her

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<sup>55</sup> Newton, 48.

<sup>56</sup> Newton, 49.

renders her alerted at all times, as a consequence, she is no longer uncalculating or spontaneous.<sup>57</sup> (Cutting-Gray, 1990)

Although Evelina is originally the legitimate heiress of a great fortune, the daughter of a wealthy baronet, the initial stages serve to demonstrate as well as highlight the “namelessness” of the protagonist; alluding to a seemingly innocuous interruption, the nurse of the dying unhappy mother of Evelina had imposed while in her deathbed, which unfolds with the striving of a very meticulous and unconventional character called Mrs. Selwyn, whom should be dealt with as this work proceeds. Back to chase, the protagonist is under the constant scrutiny of men; inherently meek she is unable to evade the insistent and officious accosts of them every time she is separated from the people that protect her. She is victim to physical and verbal harassment every time her shield drops; in other words, the people around her that repel intruders, or insiders who seek opportunities to ambush her, catch her unawares to impose on her their demands. The command that triggers the beginning of all events is the preliminary request of Lady Howard that Evelina should catch a realistic glimpse of the world, *equally shared by pain and pleasure, hope and disappointment* (21) instead of solely dreaming of it which may not always reflect the bitter authenticity of the exterior world, which realizes itself shortly.

The scene depicting the first ever encounter of Evelina with this bitter truth occurs the very moment she dips her toe in the gigantic ocean, the exterior world, during the ballroom dance hosted by Mrs. Stanley where the protagonist is accompanied by the Mirvans. Even though her education is unfit for this new society, she proves she is not devoid of the features that render a woman an individual who is adept in analyzing her surrounding, evaluating the extent to which the prevailing environment appeals to her senses and accordingly making a sound decision. That she chooses not to dance with anyone at all, abhorring the outcome of her observation; that men assume they are at liberty to pick from all women present that night is not a foul decision however, the manner in which she implement her decision does not reflect the prevalent codes in that given social gathering that she consequently seems impertinent and draws the eternal hostility of the foppish Mr. Lovel.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Cutting-Gray, 47-8.

<sup>58</sup> Cutting-Gray, 46.

Mr. Villars, the humble guardian of Evelina tirelessly celebrates the artlessness and beauty of his foster child yet, well-aware of the dangers such qualities may attract, he is at once chagrined at the impending predicament his dear child is destined to face and restless due to the abominable men that surround her anytime she is on her own. He is always at her disposal to offer gracious advice, always willing to protect her innocence. He even warns her against Lord Orville with whom he is well-aware Evelina is deeply attached, *"You must quit him! - his sight is baneful to your repose, his society is death to your future tranquility! Believe me, my beloved child, my heart aches for your suffering, while it dictates its necessity."* (370) Comprehensibly, he senses the wickedness of Willoughby and assists Evelina in her acknowledgement of the evil intentions of his and take a solid stance against him: *"...it is sometimes dangerous to make requests to men who are too desirous of receiving them'."* (189) Mr. Villars is aware that Sir Clement will use all that is in his power to have her, and he invites Evelina to be prudent around him and never to lower her shield lest he has repugnant attempts that will not terminate at her will unless there are witnesses around. *"... the slightest carelessness on your part will be taken advantage of by a man of his disposition."* (200) Mr. Villars proves he is a good judge of personality and that his judgment was not unduly when Sir Clement is depicted eager to take advantage of the new circumstances he observes as to the people that surround Evelina, and he hopes they would contribute to his conquering her as Evelina notes *the alteration in my companions authorizes an alteration in his manners* (247). Sabor argues that Mr. Villars obsessively demands that Evelina stays within his citadel that dismisses danger, he is at unease at all times she is away from him and he is constantly worried that her purity and innocence are under irretrievable threat. He declares three times his ultimate desire to die in her arms. His anguish stems from the loss of his friend Mr. Evelyn and his distressed daughter Carolyn Evelyn. Having no children of his own, or a wife by his side, he desperately seeks to preserve Evelina's contentment and her reputation as a young woman.<sup>59</sup> It is also claimed in the article that if Belmont has contributed to the confusion by keeping his putative daughter out of the way, Villars unwittingly made the deception possible. It was because the nurse saw him so keen to hide Evelina from the world that Dame Green considered it safe to offer her own child to Sir John instead.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Sabor, 26.

<sup>60</sup> Sabor, 25-6.



Next, Cutting-Gray argues in depth that the heroine achieves agency the moment she holds the pen and starts the composition, she does not only recount the events she has experienced, but she also evaluates and understands thoroughly the multiple relationships she has with all the other characters.<sup>61</sup> She owns every detail the novel consists of, she has to narrate the story therefore she needs to comprehend each and every occurring, the motives behind the actions of all figures; the vulgarity of the Branghtons, the satirical and the humorous language of Mrs. Selwyn, the almost unreal delicacy of Lord Orville, the male impertinence of Willoughby and constraints upon women. She is extremely vexed with fear when she faces the threat that Sir Clement Willoughby “*would hear Miss Branghton call me cousin.*” (110) The liberty she has achieved is denied to her once again with the disruption of indecorous patriarchal hand, when her letter to Lord Orville was purloined by Willoughby, who is stupefied with Evelina’s apparent attachment to Orville and thrives to degrade him in the eyes of Evelina by forging a letter that initially flatters her but then disappoints her dearly upon the realization that it was actually an utterly daring and impertinent letter that demean her, with the implication that he was willing to send a servant to fetch her letter; the idea that the two would surreptitiously circulate letters disheartens her and even though she does not get rid of the letter, she chooses not to respond and with the recommendation of Mr. Villars, she promises to do her best to avoid him at all cost. However, when the two finally have the chance to converse without the malevolent outsiders, she gathers the audacity to express her discomfort with the letter, which she reckons this man, who even has complied to protect her like a brother, be her guardian cannot have risked damaging her pride like that. He accordingly reveals his ignorance of the letter, she proposes to fetch it but she is hindered by Sir Clement Willoughby who catches her from her gown and tears the letter; he coercively dares to justify his ill-doings like he has always done, this time well-aware that his actions are all in vain.

Another incident that highlights the namelessness of Evelina is occasioned with her feeling bitterly at not having been considered an individual who would potentially place a bet on the sickly competition that Lord Merton and Mr. Coverley arrange, she is well-aware of her implied absence within this social sphere with her meekness in comparison with her female guardian, Mrs. Selwyn who is deemed to be satiric and insolent at times yet is articulate and protective anyway; and the lack of wealth of the heroine, which was then a coarse determinant that rendered

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<sup>61</sup> Cutting-Gray, 51-2.

a person worthy of reverence, whereas another a sheer redundancy in any gathering. Even though it was Lord Orville who previously tried to change the minds of the two equitably shallow men about the amount they recklessly aspired to gamble, on a mere attempt to demonstrate no matter how high that amount seemed, it would not pose any menace to their financial stability, he does not quite succeed in achieving the exact desired outcome. When the foul game finally commences, there is much thrill on the part of the two gentlemen, it is their money at stake, after all. They are so overwhelmed with the will to success, they have become almost enraged. When one of the old ladies is about to collapse, Evelina attempts to reach out yet her action out of pure apprehension for the well-being of the woman is hindered by Lord Merton claiming it would be detrimental to the fair flow of the game, as a result the lady falls with great force, indeed and eventually the game inevitably comes to a halt for good. Evelina's stance is made evident as she is the person who is responsible for writing the letters, she expresses her unease, yet the readers retain the opportunity to behold the disapprobation of Mrs. Selwyn and Lord Orville. Mrs. Selwyn does not intervene but simply declares her reluctance to bet when she is invited to partake of the bet. On the other hand, where Lord Orville interrupts is more considerate towards the good of the whole of the society. Thus, it is worth mentioning that the non-compliant attitude of the two men who presumptuously situate themselves above all law is highlighted by Janice Farrar Thaddeus, who included the prominence of the Queen Anne statue which was erected in 1711 availed to ban the betting on sports activities for more than £10.<sup>62</sup> To this end apparently, Lord Orville attempts to discourage the two men to agree to decrease the amount they would play for, yet he only manages to convince them to lower it to £100 from £1000. Additionally, in the same article she discusses that, from the viewpoint of Evelina, the readers are able to visualize the spectrum of displeasure with this act, Evelina's being the most intense, probably because she is the only person whose opinion the readers experience the most vividly; Lord Orville's and Mrs. Selwyn's are worth noting, too. Evelina, confirming to being the successful observant she is, once again sees here, to what extent a corrupted person can abuse and usurp the power he holds.

Another aspect to heed that concerns the scene of the two old ladies is that there is no description that make them come to life, the sole piece of information spared to the readers regarding them is

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<sup>62</sup> Thaddeus, 47.

that they are over the age of 80; other than that, the audience is completely oblivious to their mien, the type of attire they have on them, the tone of their voices, even though this specific reader has the opinion that they would indubitably sound perturbed; evidently no one is interested in their names as no one addresses to them with their actual names but with those of the gentlemen they represent in the wager game. Moreover, this is not the only instance that distinguishes itself in the discussion of the lack of identity. In addition to making explicit the exceptionally good manners of Lord Orville in struggling to ease Evelina's distress, during the scenes with the prostitutes Evelina met at Marylebone possess no individuality that would validate them as people worthy of acknowledgment in the eyes of the readers; on the contrary, the solitary contribution they make for the unfolding of the novel is that they pose danger to the dignity of Evelina and it is Lord Orville who breaks her free from her the figurative chains that tie the three together. Evelina is amazed by the intervention of Lord Orville in this instance and cries, "*How delicate his whole behavior! Willing to advise, yet afraid to wound me!*", (294) which will accordingly direct the scope of attention of this article to a new issue to cover in the next paragraph.

The article entitled "*Evelina; or, Female Difficulties*" comprehensively deliberates on the issue of delicacy, which consistently appears in the novel, making it a central concept, therefore is worth bestowing special attention to, and her article provides the basis for the discourse of this paragraph. (Staves, 1976) Previously, the occasion that the whores at Marybone cause has been briefly dealt with. What Orville does is interpret an ambivalent situation, while accurately applying his prior knowledge of Evelina and making a fair judgment, shrinking from hazarding a guess that would mortify a meek creature for life. His discretion is exemplary for true delicacy. However rare it is, the readers come to acknowledge and associate the term with him more and more, from the viewpoint of the heroine who is haplessly subject to physical threat whenever she is separated from her guardians. Yet another incident occurs that invigorates the distinction between Willoughby and Orville; when Evelina after the opera needs a means to reach her house in safety, Willoughby impudently offers her a seat in his coach, whereas the latter gallantly proposes to lend her his coach and servant, implying that he would not escort her, to this Evelina expresses her admiration and exclaims: "*How grateful did I feel for a proposal so considerate, and made with so much delicacy!*" (113) Sir Clement Willoughby, in the succeeding pages

manages to corner her in his coach and does not refrain from taking the opportunity to declare his obviously unrequited love, which puts Evelina in terror for she is confused about his intentions towards her, Staves claims she does not believe he intends to murder her yet, holding someone tightly in between your hands reducing their movements only suggests an impending trouble; nevertheless the innocent, inexperienced Evelina has not yet acquired the vocabulary to express her fear of rape or sexual harassment, she only begs him to release her, her interlocutor is on the contrary, is ripe with earthly experience and is cognizant of Evelina's inability to neither protect herself nor blame him of inappropriate behavior.<sup>63</sup> He acts as if he is puzzled as to why she is uncomfortable, whereas she takes refuge in silence and when she gets vocal, she is at a loss for words even when she realizes the coach driver has gone astray from the path that leads to her house:

*"For Heaven's sake, what is the matter?"*

*"I—I don't know," cried I (quite out of breath), "but I am sure the man goes wrong; and if you will not speak to him, I am determined I will get out myself."*

*"You amaze me" answered he (still holding me), "I cannot imagine what you apprehend. Surely you can have no doubts of my honor?"*. (116)

Willoughby never stops his insidious exertion of physical power upon Evelina, his declarations of love do not end soon as they encounter once again when he and the Captain execute their plot against Madame Duval, he seizes the opportunity to make an unwelcome approach to her, *he hastily came into the chariot, and seated himself next to me. I would fain have disengaged myself from him, but he would not let me* (177); he even admits to having established a fraudulent companionship with the Captain in order to achieve proximity to her.

Through the end of the novel, the chivalry of Lord Orville resurfaces. Evelina writes: *"I learned by Mr. Macartney, that this noblest of men had insisted the so-long supposed Miss Belmont should be considered, indeed, as my sister, and as the co-heiress of my father; though not in law, in justice, he says..."* (472) Lord Orville's delicacy is once again under scrutiny as he has found a way to cater for all parties involved in the story whose innocence proves them worthy of this

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<sup>63</sup> Staves, 371-2.

prize, granting Evelina one more time the opportunity to appreciate his benevolence. As a result of another thorough observation, she reveals her disbelief at the decency of Mrs. Beaumont, she explains how she believes “*she piques herself upon being too high-born to be capable of an unworthy action, and thinks it incumbent upon her to support the dignity of her ancestry.*” (340) Understandably, she is doubtful whether Mrs. Beaumont is authentically virtuous or if it is merely the case that she disdains evil acts because she thinks a woman of her value should do so.

As implied above, this paragraph is devoted to the exploration of what Staves calls “false delicacy”.<sup>64</sup> “*My first thought was to fly to Mr. Branghton; but I feared, that an instant of time lost might forever be rued*” (223) Sometimes it well behoves that women take action according to their senses, that they do what they deem appropriate; she overcomes what she is customarily expected to do and becomes a free agent as she directly involves herself into this exceptionally noteworthy situation where she comes bravely to this impoverished man’s aid. The readers see she would be guilty of false delicacy were she to shrink from entering Mr. Macartney’s room as he is about to shoot himself. Staves continues to argue that delicacy becomes more problematic when people think of it as implying weakness and modesty or when they ask whether the same delicacy is being recommended for both sexes. Like many other eighteenth-century novels, *Evelina* sometimes seems to deny significant differences between its masculine ideal and its feminine ideal. Indeed, as discussed in the abovementioned article, Fanny Burney sympathized with the eighteenth century idea to feminize the masculine ideal, which she articulates through Evelina, who accordingly inserts her opinion that she finds *so feminine his delicacy* (318), when writing to Maria about Lord Orville.<sup>65</sup> After she has recounted the story to her mentor, Mr. Villars, he expresses his admiration with Evelina’s timely intrepidity in saving Mr. Macartney from suicide:

*"Though gentleness and modesty are the peculiar attributes of your sex, yet fortitude and firmness, when occasion demands them, are virtues as noble and as becoming in women as in men: the right line of conduct is the same for both sexes, though the manner in*

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<sup>64</sup> Staves, 372.

<sup>65</sup> Staves, 372-4.

*which it is pursued may somewhat vary, and be accommodated to the strength or weakness of the different travelers"* (266).

Countless times does Evelina come to appreciate the gallantry of Lord Orville, yet with every man that has his eyes on Evelina quite like a vulture, convinces her even more that Lord Orville is superior to all men his age. Typically, men in the novel, even when they make relatively short appearances, contend with other men around them; the way they are cladded, the way they do not take no for an answer, that they consider women mere assets, that they are prone to physically and/or verbally harass women out of crude enjoyment, exhibit their greedy desire to assert their manhood, they seek the admiration around them and they are accustomed with the ways to achieve it. Lord Merton asserts a model, in that, he has an immense disregard for the female kind unless they are young, physically charming and submissive; yet, possessing external beauty brings with it many drawbacks. Although he is surrounded by women, he acts as if it is his birthright to utter churlish statements at the expense of the pride of the opposite sex, and since the callousness of men is only rampant, the next quotation is exemplary and serve to extrapolate the prevailing coarseness towards women. He highlights how superfluous elderly ladies in his opinion are, with the following words: "*I don't know what the devil a woman lives for after thirty: she is only in other folks' way.*" (330) He consistently ignores the presence of Evelina, "*Lord Merton was determined not to know me before Lady Louisa*" (346) but when he is too drunk to contain himself, he makes unsolicited and unwanted advances to Evelina, to which Lady Orville haughtily professes her gratification, "*I declare I am monstrous glad to get rid of him*" (375). Evelina is appalled by what she has experienced and despises their attitude and laments being the prey once again.

The obnoxious Mr. Smith, whom the protagonist meets during the time she has spent with the Branghton family, is a silversmith who lodges in the same building as her. He asserts presumptuously that, she would only be lucky to earn him as her wedded husband, he proceeds to convince her of his fear of commitment, that his promiscuous friends would be disappointed to see him settle down and leave the life he currently enjoys behind, "*marriage is all in all with the ladies; but with us gentlemen, it's quite another thing!*" (274). He recognizes the fact that he makes the purchase in a buyer's market, and it pleases him to call attention to the fact that the

laws of supply and demand make him the treasure and that it is only natural and desirable to women that he impose his will on them.<sup>66</sup> He is, in fact, "*thunderstruck with amazement*" when Evelina refuses the assembly ticket, which he has tried to force upon her, accordingly he feels he is entitled and empowered enough to question the reason for her rejecting him, Evelina is indignant as she writes "*I cannot endure that he should think me at his disposal*" (274).

When Evelina's much-awaited reconciliation with her actual father happens, he initially believes it to be a fraud and he dismissively rejects to see her, yet when he is eventually persuaded, he collapses upon the sight of Evelina, taken by a sobbing fit, for Evelina's extraordinary resemblance with her mother, Caroline is more than an adequate proof. He is more interested in his inner trauma than caring for his long-lost daughter. Evelina does not withdraw, kneels by his side and asks for his blessing, which he grants accordingly. However, he falls short of offering the affectionate embrace to this delicate orphan, however he fulfills his duty to award her with his legacy and finally, a name. It is worth noting that Lord Orville reveals his love for a nameless orphan, when Evelina literally had nothing. He is the one to see and appreciate her worth and respects her, too. He never ventures to act when he senses her discomfort, he is always genuinely delicate to any situation where Evelina is a participant, more frequently when she is the center of attention.

A woman does not always have the blessing to weep out of glee, crying is one of the most genuine ways to reveal one's emotions, as a matter of fact it goes for both genders, the readers witness relatively more often the expression of grief through tears, this scene however is laudable in that it indicates utmost felicity: "*To be loved by Lord Orville, - to be the honored choice of his noble heart, - my happiness seemed too infinite to be borne, and I wept, even bitterly I wept, from the excess of joy which overpowered me.*" (422) Also significant is the fit Sir John Belmont throws. He suffers from an authentic and vivacious torment as he discovers that Evelina is not an impostor but quite evidently the daughter whom he had left forlorn. Inadvertently put him under much stress, Evelina is yet ignorant as to what to implement so she could end this man's misery but she simply waits until the poor man could contain himself: "...*looking at me with great*

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<sup>66</sup> Newton, 50.

*earnestness, 'Poor unhappy Caroline!' cried he; and, to my inexpressible concern, he burst into tears. Need I tell you, my dear Sir, how mine flowed at the sight? (466).*

It is also efficient to evoke Evelina's sincere tenderness towards Mr. Villars; he is the first person with whom she shares her joy after the realization that Lord Orville is not the person whom the two were treacherously beguiled to believe he was, in a secondary attempt to win his consent for the imminent union with Lord Orville. Because the reconciliation of the two is indeed too hasty, she is discontented with the mere idea of offending him. She seeks the approval of Mr. Villars so candidly that, she is almost restless to visit him with her husband. In the end she writes the following words: *"ALL is over, my dearest Sir; and the fate of your Evelina is decided! This morning, with fearful joy and trembling gratitude, she united herself for ever with the object of her dearest, her eternal affection. I have time for no more; the chaise now waits which is to conduct me to dear Berry Hill, and to the arms of the best of men."* (498) she echoes the last remark from time to time, she never ceases to pay homage to the Reverend (62, 310, 314, 323).

Another eminent character is Madame Duval. She only enters the scene when Evelina is to come of age. Her inability to cater for a minor is recounted to the readers. She attempted to affect a union between one of her nephews and her only daughter, Miss Evelyn, to which the latter did not give consent and instead made a private marriage to Sir John Belmont without witnesses, only to be betrayed by this abominable man who was supposed to be a dear friend, which literally led to her downfall as the readers come to acknowledge that Miss Evelyn died in childbirth. She deconstructs the social codes referring to the nurturing and loving portrayal of women; even though she was fortunate enough to seduce an affluent gentleman, as the readers note, her coarse nature reveals itself from the fissures that she fails to cover at the times of utter vulnerability. She constantly reacts fiercely to the mockery of Captain with whom she is in a never-ending altercation. *The rage of poor Madame Duval was unspeakable; she dashed the candle out of his hand, stamping upon the floor, and, at last, spat in his face. (77)* Their battle has its roots in the pronounced nationalist identity of her. This is the scene where the two violate the simplest, most preliminary rules of delicacy and physically harm one another. As abominable as the Madam is, the ill-treatment of the Captain towards her makes her deserving of Evelina's referring to her as the "poor Madame Duval". This is not the only occasion where Evelina is moved as a result of the distress of the French lady. *"...she burst into tears, and said, 'let me not lose my poor*



*daughter a second time!*" (62) She is not necessarily an affectionate person, yet she implies her displeasure with her past as she collapses and recalls her unhappy daughter, which Evelina cannot help but notice because she does not possess much prior knowledge to harness, she is willing to put faith in people and sympathize unquestionably with anyone who demands it. However, her displeasure with the Madame prolongs as the latter refers to Mr. Villars, to Evelina's utter surprise and indignation, as "*the meddling old parson*", (81-205) to which she swallows her pride and stays mute. Madame Duval is aware that the only person she can exert power over is the meek Evelina because she believes she legally owns her; she behaves increasingly more vulgar as the novel proceeds, especially in her treatment to Evelina *...and as for you Miss, 'again advancing to me, 'I order you to follow me this moment, or else I'll make you repent it all your life.'* (100) Evelina tries to recover from the uncouth address that is directed to her. Similarly, in the scene where the Captain and Willoughby play a bloody plot against the Madame, even though Evelina is the one to cut her rope and save her from the ditch, she experiences an unexpected abruptness from her, *"...the moment she was up, she hit me a violent slap on the face! I retreated from her with precipitation and dread."* (181) Madame Duval is only concerned about a potential robbery and not rape<sup>67</sup>, a commentary in which she complains about her cloak looking *like a dish-clout*; (190) ensues, reminding wittily of her former occupation as a barmaid. Evidently now, Madame Duval turns to hostility when her wishes are not granted, the reason she is heated in the following excerpt is because her dear friend that she takes everywhere has declared interest in Evelina, which she instantly rejects, yet the Madame is infuriated since she wants Monsieur DuBois all for herself, she is so blind with fury that she repeats the same irretrievable mistake that cost her a daughter and threatens Evelina into an arranged marriage: *"...protested she would neither take me to Paris, nor any more interest herself in my affairs, unless I would instantly agree to marry young Branghton."* (307).

Captain Mirvan is possibly the most inhumane character in the novel and unlike the rest of the diabolical characters, he does not receive punishment. He even manages to trigger feeling of sympathy for Madame Duval and Mr. Lovel from the readers. He humiliates that once-archnemesis of Evelina so savagely that the readers cannot help but sympathize with the poor man. The Captain, with his extreme haughtiness, puts the readers at unease oftentimes, especially

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<sup>67</sup> Thaddeus, 46.

with this very extreme instance, in which he intimidates the foppish Mr. Lovel with a monkey which he claims could be his brother. Delivering a violent blow to the animal, Mr. Lovel is helpless to shun the wrath of the poor creature, which *darting forwards, sprung instantly upon him; and, clinging round his neck, fastened his teeth to one of his ears. I was really sorry for the poor man; who, though an egregious fop, had committed no offence that merited such chastisement.* ” (493) It is Lord Orville who breaks the brawl and demonstrate his utmost care to answer to the needs of the others who are incapable of defending themselves, as will be discussed in depth in upcoming pages of this dissertation work.

### **Brave ladies. The price of feminized education. The flaws of aristocracy.**

Mrs. Selwyn's contribution to the unraveling of the plot is worth a special attention, considering how effective she proves to be from the first moment she makes an appearance in the novel and the occasional comments she fearlessly makes concerning the male figures that the readers have long expected to see humiliated. Moreover, the fact that it is another woman, who clears the path a young lady is to cross is noteworthy. The posthumous assistance of Evelina's mother to accomplish this end possesses by far the greatest importance, but for the sake of the overall argument this paper supports, it is almost mandatory to refer to the doings of this intriguing lady, which wreak havoc with the societal expectations and still provide the most definitive help to the protagonist. Mrs. Selwyn performs another duty before she puts a much awaited end to the sufferings and yearnings of Evelina that involve Sir John Belmont's finally yielding to the truth behind his actual familial ties. That is to say, Mrs. Selwyn is not an ordinary lady for the given period of time, her abruptness in speech, independence in speaking her mind and her inimitable problem-solving skills imply at least the modicum of masculineness that clearly shows is a must for everyone, regardless of their gender. Because she stands as the sole representative of female agency in critical thinking throughout the book, this dissertation work has given special attention to the exploration of the subject, echoing Timothy Dykstal's article, *"Evelina" and the Culture Industry*. (Dykstal, 1995)

Mrs. Selwyn takes up the role of the guardian of Evelina upon the latter's arrival in Bristol Hotwell. Even though Evelina does not always depict her in a way that flatters her person, she plays a key role in the completion of Evelina's entrance into the world. In Bristol Hotwell, the locus of the conflict between the decadent aristocrat Lord Merton and Mrs Selwyn, where the man in question puts Evelina at unease with his flirtatious remarks and as a result, Mrs Selwyn becomes chagrined and reproaches him. Evelina does not always root for Mrs Selwyn, whom she had previously apprehended as having a "*masculine ... understanding*" (326) and shortly afterwards, her "*severity ... surprised*" (329) her. Regardless, this scene pleases her as Mrs Selwyn's assails put an, at least, transitory end to Merton's pursuit of Evelina. It is now essential that he catches her without company, unattended. There is another question that seeks elaboration. That is, even though Mrs Selwyn is a "*lady of large fortune*" (317), she is not the social equal of a Lord. Also, in this case the situation calls for the intervention of another party,

for Evelina's reacting against Lord Merton is likely to produce a similar treatment she repeatedly receives from the cunning Sir Clement Willoughby and because she has had a number of undesirable social experiences so far, too often because of her not having yet acquired the necessary manners she could readily apply to, she haplessly sinks into silence. When Lord Merton wishes to know the reason for Evelina's not attending the assembly, Mrs Selwyn playfully interrupts his never-ending interrogation by telling him that Evelina prefers to read that very night, "*in a manner that your Lordship will think very extraordinarily*" (330). The implication here is that, as discussed in depth by Dykstal, it is not only Evelina who reads, but Mrs Selwyn, too and it is possibly from her reading that she has learned she should protect her younger and less experienced charge.<sup>68</sup>

This three-way exchange is worthy of a thorough elaboration because it demonstrates Mrs Selwyn's enacting the critical function of the "public sphere", which according to Jürgen Habermas emerged in the early capitalist Europe between the government and the private realm. It is where the bourgeoisie gathered and exchanged their opinions on a variety of topics, which led them to develop an understanding of themselves and eventually gain the power, as well as the audacity to question and challenge the aristocratic rule. Habermas believes the challenges began as a result of discussions and exchanges about culture: "the bourgeois avant-garde of the educated middle class learned the art of critical-rational debate through its contact with the 'elegant' world."<sup>69</sup> With the power of creating their own understanding and interpretation of art pieces, the middle class ultimately earned the skill of critical thinking and the members started to use this way of thinking on other arbitrary powers, too. It is no secret that power is an entitlement and it is not the product of honest and hard work, therefore the people that hold power cannot help but eventually display the arbitrariness of the power they possess either by foul talking or inappropriate behavior. In the scene whose description is given above, the person that challenges

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<sup>68</sup> Dykstal, 559.

<sup>69</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1989), 29.

the aristocratic authority is Mrs. Selwyn and she exercises her critical thinking skill on Lord Merton, who is the possessor of the "arbitrary power".<sup>70</sup>

The reason for her protecting the youngster left in her charge is not necessarily because of her having read many books, but possibly because she has developed her own understanding of her readings and she is effectively asserting her own interpretation of what she has read by criticizing the prosaic Lord Merton. There is one thing that needs to be highlighted, and it is the fact that Burney's depiction of this public sphere only involves Mrs. Selwyn as the enactor of the quality of being critical. The other members of the middle class are never articulate about the culture, wherein they strive to have a place, on the contrary, they usually seek to effect personal accomplishments through the wits they have acquired thanks to that specific culture, even Evelina is remarkably silent, but it is revealed to the readers that her choice has some very deep roots that will be extensively evaluated at a later stage of this work.

The public sphere provided for the members of middle class does not spur them to exercise their power of critical thinking. Even Evelina stays extraordinarily mute about the degenerate culture surrounding her, drawing a sharp parallel to the prevalent belief that bourgeoisie's having sufficient exposure to the aristocratic environment and the language they commonly use would enable them to spot the breaches of the authority and effectively criticize them.

Burney does a majestic job in offering the most vivid representation of the 18th century English culture. Upon her arrival in London, Evelina finds herself in the haven of cultural activities: she dresses up and goes to dances, enjoys plays, listens to music; she also saunters in public places such as Vauxhall, the Pantheon and Ranelagh; last but not least, she tries and appreciates art objects, the exhibits and the architectural design of buildings, too. In a way, she develops her own taste by having exposure to a variety of forms of art. Her presence becomes objectified, too as she is almost always under close and irritable scrutiny of the others. The treatment she receives is that of an art object, which is meant to be looked at.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Dykstal, 560.

<sup>71</sup> Dykstal, 561.

Since art is treated as a commodity, and that anyone who has the necessary financial means can have access to it, there is now a wider diversity of opinions to exchange in the public places. Art is now more available to people than ever in the history.<sup>72</sup> Thus, it is essential to list the hallmark benefits art may bless its admirers with, for the sake of developing a better understanding of the attitude of the authoress towards the different types of art by making a number of references to the different members of the fictional society within the novel.

Mr. Villars' precarious desire to keep Evelina pure and as artless as a young lady, in the face of all the despicable things the outside world possesses and does not refrain from using if need be, has been referred to countless times until this point. Yet, since his finally surrendering to the idea of sending his youngster to London marks the beginning of a very long journey of a young lady's entrance into the world, it is worth taking the time and replaying that scene. It was Lady Howard, who manages to break the resistance of the parson, who is hopelessly beguiled by his own abstractionist attitude to the education of an adolescent, which does not reflect the sometimes treacherous realities of the world. The inadequacy of Mr. Villars' sincere yet abstract education is made evident especially during the initial stages of Evelina's visit to London, when she is observedly too inhibited to quickly produce a witty answer or successfully evade the socially inappropriate acts, such as not laughing at anyone ever, no matter how ridiculous that person is and how natural it would feel to laugh.

So it is safe to say that, merely giving an unbearably long list of advices to a mind that is in quest for experience may eventually backfire or simply prove insufficient. Lady Howard's pedagogically approaching the situation and using logic to convince her friend, the parson proves successful and Evelina starts counting the days until her days in London finally commence. Mrs. Howard's desire to show Evelina "something of the world" is about to come true. She writes to Mr. Villars: "*When young people are too rigidly sequestered from it, their lively and romantic*

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<sup>72</sup> M. H. Abrams, "Art-as-Such: The Sociology of Modern Aesthetics," in *Doing Things With Texts: Essays in Criticism and Critical Theory*, ed. Michael Fischer (New York: Norton, 1989), 148, 151.

*imagination paint it to them as a paradise of which they have been beguiled; but when they are shown it properly, and in due time, they see it such as it really is, equally shared by pain and pleasure, hope and disappointment".* (21) Evelina's being "artless" (23) to the ways of the world, as the parson declares her to be, renders her even more curious to absorb them. Unfortunately however, as Mrs. Howard claims would happen, Evelina's imagination "*paints*" even more "*lively and romantic*" images than the threats Villars is scared would harm Evelina. However inclined towards cancelling the trip, he finally acquiesces to the proposal and agrees that "*the time draws on for experience and observation to take the place of instruction*". (22) Like any person her age, Evelina, too has to interpret world in her own terms and construct her personality in a way that would enable her to speak her own mind about things if the situation calls for it, instead of fading into the background and becoming the passive participator of literally any given social situation. For instance, her prudent and very timely intervention that literally brings Macartney back to life, would possibly never have happened, if she momentarily deemed it more applicable to stick to her meek and diffident self and mind her own business.

As Abrams explains, the cultural sphere afforded to Evelina sought a new explanation concerning the benefits it offers, since art objects were made devoid of the political, religious and social contexts that had defined them before. The fact that art is treated as a commodity, rendered the judicious consumption of art objects a prerequisite to the proper acquisition of polite taste. Also important is the idea that art can fix one's moral deficiencies and it is no novelty, indeed. In fact it dates as long back in history as Horace, who believed "Poets aim either to benefit, or to amuse".<sup>73</sup>

Dykstal alludes to several schools of thought in his essay and argues that, in the third earl of Shaftesbury's opinion, virtue has "the same fixed standard" as "symmetry and proportion" in auditory and visual arts, or literary studies, and learning to appreciate the liberal arts could improve one's moral aptitude.<sup>74</sup> Moreover, he refers to Lord Kames, who is of a similar opinion,

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<sup>73</sup> Horace, *Satires, Epistles, and Ars Poetica*, trans. H. Rusthton Fairclough, rev. ed, The Loeb Classical Library 194 [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929], 479.

<sup>74</sup> Anthony, Earl of Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, ed. John M. Robertson, 2 vols. (1711; Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), 1:227.

he equates taste and virtue, "no occupation attaches a man more to his duty, than that of cultivating a taste in the fine arts: a just relish of what is beautiful, proper, elegant, and ornamental, in writing or painting, in architecture or gardening, is a fine preparation for the same just relish of these qualities in character and behavior." In addition, Jonathan Richardson's adding a divine texture into the argument is remarkable; he fanatically supports the opinion that the cultivation of taste will not "merely give us Pleasure, but ... Enlighten the Understanding, and put the Soul in Motion. From hence ... we are not only Thus Instructed in what we are to Believe, and Practice; but our Devotion is inflamed."<sup>75</sup>

Previously held opinion supported the universality of the moral benefits of art and how they could be interpreted in terms of the politics, religion and the social meanings and evaluated with the ready-made terminology that an average art admirer of the time would already be familiar with. Eighteenth-century theorists and most importantly, Shaftesbury's experience differed from their predecessors. Art was now associated with its consumers in that, both were great in number, mobile and more and more secular.<sup>76</sup>

Enlightenment is the second desirable outcome of Habermas' definition of public sphere, wherein the members of middle class exchange ideas and eventually, acquire the ability to think independently and utter words that represent the very ideas they have internalized, and not the blind repetition of the commonly held beliefs of the aristocrats. Kames holds the opinion that the mastery of the art of criticism allows individuals to practice their innate privilege of "thinking for themselves", in opposition to the "Rude ages" that "exhibit the triumph of authority over reason" and in which persons slavishly and "implicitly followed a leader," the present age contains persons who "disdain to be ranked in any sect, whatever be the science"<sup>77</sup>.

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<sup>75</sup> Jonathan Richardson, *Discourse II. An Argument in behalf of the Science of a Connoisseur; Wherein is shewn the Dignity, Certainty, Pleasure, and Advantage of it*, in *Two Discourses* (1719; Menston: Scolar Press, 1972), 16.

<sup>76</sup> Dykstal, 562.

<sup>77</sup> Henry Home of Kames, *Elements of Criticism*, ed. James R. Boyd (1761; New York: A. S. Barnes and Co., 1855), 28-29.



However, there surfaces a conflict between the enlightening power of art and the previously mentioned notion of Kames', that art educates and gives people a sense of attachment to their duties. In thinking for oneself, reason replaces authority, but the dilemma is that, the accomplishment of one's duty does not always depend on thorough thinking; following a leader can be the answer at times.<sup>78</sup> Kames seems to try and appeal both the authority and the people that pose challenges to it. Joshua Reynolds breaks the said educative and enlightening functions of art into developmental stages that are easier to comprehend and apply. He echoes Shaftesbury's words that the "contemplation of universal rectitude and harmony which began by Taste, may, as it is exalted and refined, conclude in Virtue." He demands "that an implicit obedience to the *Rules of Art*, as established by the practice of the great MASTERS, be exacted from the *young Students*": they should "imitat[e]" rather than "criticiz[e]." According to Reynolds, this first stage under the care of a master should be followed by a process of a disciplined studying of the students on their own. The next two stages aim to "emancipate the Student from subjection to any authority, but what he shall himself judge to be supported by reason. ... He is from this time to regard himself as holding the same rank with those masters whom he before obeyed as teachers; and as exercising a sort of sovereignty over those rules which have hitherto restrained him." Art educates people so that they fit into their places in their respective society, whereas it enlightens them to question how suitable their place actually is.<sup>79</sup> It is highly likely that both Kames and Reynolds believe that thinking for oneself and doing one's duty are in a harmony, since authority and tradition have for a considerably long time spurred persons to achieve a certain standard of not only "duty" but also "virtue". On the other hand, their perception of the ways art enlightens implies a number of slips from the customs and the power's facing a number of threats. It is only after the acquisition of the power to think about things that people can start to question them. Therefore, education precedes enlightenment.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Dykstal, 563.

<sup>79</sup> Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses on Art*, ed. Robert R. Wark (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1959), 17, 26-27.

<sup>80</sup> Dykstal, 564.

Male and female disparity surfaces in this context, too. Men are self-righteously entitled for both powers of art, whilst women are denied the enlightening power; their education aims to teach them how to be more feminine, how to execute femaleness to perfection. Questioning a fixed notion is considered a male pursuit. John Burton, in *Lectures on Female Education and Manners* (1793) rejects the utterly sexist idea "that the natural talents of Men are superior to those of Women," but still clings to the prevalent opinion by declaring that "It is not necessary, neither is it expedient for the purposes of civil Society, that Girls should be educated in the same manner as Boys." He cites, "The productions of several literary Ladies ... as sufficient proofs of the extent of the female mind," Burton still wishes women to pursue studies solely on polite literature, "for when Ladies enter into political contentions, or devote their lives to study, they throw off the female character."<sup>81</sup> There are even more dreadful examples from both male and female theorists, who advised women to study fine arts, theater, and polite literature, with only selected novels.

Dykstal again argues if Burney herself supports the confinement of female education to relatively "mild" occupations and that women should consciously work for the sake of the mere betterment of their femininity, since it is only occasional for her very own creation, the protagonist to become articulate about any occurrence in her environment, the exceptional cases of which are already closely dealt with. But then again, it is Burney who is responsible for the satiric and usually hurtful banters of Mrs. Selwyn whose adversity seems to be directed at men, more precisely, the authority. It is arguably the case that, the extraordinarily often and habitual lapses in Mrs. Selwyn's femininity stems from her proper cultivation of her intelligence, not opting for playing the delicate, inarticulate eighteenth-century model lady. She deftly manages to question the erroneous practices around her, as well as the male impertinence. Evelina, on the other hand, does not really benefit from the enlightening power of art.<sup>82</sup>

It is with absolute certainty that the abominable practice of intentionally confining women's studies to the theater, fine arts or polite literature does not suffice to deprive the female subjects

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<sup>81</sup> J. Burton, *Lectures on Female Education and Manners* (New York: Source Book Press, 1970), 163-164.

<sup>82</sup> Dykstal, 565.

of critical thinking. As Habermas suggests, whatever was read or seen in the public sphere had less importance and validity in comparison with what was said about that view or the literary piece at hand. Women's emancipation struggle was against the "aristocracy" of men, whereas men sought liberation from aristocracy itself, and accordingly, they built their arguments through their interaction with culture. Hannah More presents her ideas in a way that effectively tackles the issue. Acknowledging the relevant enlightened age's aim to spot the absurdities of a given point of view, she rejected the idea that women were distracted too much by having exposure to or developing an interest toward making intellectual accomplishment. She asserted, "Whatever removes prejudices, whatever stimulates industry, whatever rectifies the judgment, whatever corrects self-conceit, whatever purifies the taste, and raises the understanding, will be likely to contribute to moral excellence", and that the fine arts, polite literature and elegant society are among the lawful, liberal, and suitable recreations of a higher life.<sup>83</sup> There is no doubting that she opposed the idea of certain studies not fitting a woman's education and hence, their being futile. In light of the argument given above, Dykstal calls the eighteenth-century public space that gave rise to the possibilities for female enlightenment "ambiguous".<sup>84</sup>

The parson's being too keen on raising a child that is pure and innocent on the face of the earth which is rife with evil, hinders a young lady's truly projecting herself as an individual.<sup>85</sup> Wishing heartily to please the man that did so well in her upbringing, she puts too much effort into being artless and the self she needs to own with pride, starts to lose its transparency and thus, she has to strive to stay in the zone of innocence that is reserved for women back in the day, at the expense of her exceptionally-handsome contribution to her own suppression. She manages to break the viciously-conventionalized cycle by commencing to produce written accounts of her daily experiences, which she had half-heartedly relinquished in order to hide her own being in innocence.

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<sup>83</sup> Hannah More, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* (1799), in *The Works of Hannah More*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1872), 1:387.

<sup>84</sup> Dykstal, 565.

<sup>85</sup> Cutting-Gray, 44.

The opening of the novel offers a very brief cultural definition for Evelina's innocence: "*This artless young creature, with too much beauty to escape notice, has too much sensibility to be indifferent to it; but she has too little wealth to be ought with propriety by men of fashionable world*" (23). She draws much attention thanks to her physical appearance, but it puts her at risk, too. Having no name or wealth, but being innocent and beautiful, she is constantly alerted against the threat of maintaining her character from the vices that surround her.

In the novel, innocence as a notion is treated as a culture and all parties involved deem it mandatory that it continues, therefore Evelina is under close scrutiny at all times.<sup>86</sup> The foster father of Evelina wishes most enthusiastically of all people that Evelina forever preserves her very feminized value in question. He frets that she would become corrupted as a result of her social experiences, that she would change, that she would return from London not "*all innocence*". (25) Her enthusiasm about the life outside knows no boundaries at that point in time and thus, the man she leaves behind is well-aware that his attempts to change her mind would lead to a complete chaos and his imposing this patriarchal struggle of keeping the silent minor devoid of practical knowledge has to come to a halt. Regardless, he warns her time and time again. He says, "*The world is the general harbour of fraud and of folly, of duplicity and of impertinence where the artlessness of your nature, and the simplicity of your education, alike unfit you for its thorny paths*". (142)

The commonly valued female education denies its subjects the very formidable acknowledgment of the intrigues of the outside world, yet Evelina's written accounts display that she is not that unfit for the society<sup>87</sup>. Even though she goes mute at times and she is unaware of some of the very vital social codes that concern women, the readers come to realize that she does possess practical wisdom. Recounting her first social foray at the ball to Villars, she is apparently appalled by assumed male superiority over the allegedly lower sex, she determines not to engage in dancing with anyone at all so she could evade "*humouring*" (33) male condescension. Therefore, being a case in point for my reading that she deplores the lack of social manners that

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<sup>86</sup> Cutting-Gray, 46.

<sup>87</sup> Cutting-Gray, 46.

occurs around her, yet her hands seem to be tied tight when the situation calls for action. Cutting-Gray argues that, her immediate reaction is justified by her instincts but she is socially incorrect and thus, cannot help but sink into being the target of constant unwelcome advancements and they usually catch her unawares.<sup>88</sup>

She may appear meek and out-of-place, yet she is apt in making valid and reliable judgments provided that she is given the necessary space and time. She accurately discloses the male impropriety at the dance, she knows right then and there that Mr. Lovel is a hypocrite, she is intimidated by the impertinent demands of Sir Clement Willoughby and his overall treatment of her, and she condemns the unruly manners of the Branghtons. One battle she has to fight throughout the novel derives from her not being a well-tailored marriage property, that is to say, her lacking a paternal name renders her more diffident and inhibited than ever at certain times and she seeks refuge in silence, when the threat is not in the vicinity, she takes up the pen and breaks from silence, unlike the times when the only language she can speak is silence, which she admits as: "*But I was silent, for I knew not what I ought to say*" (193).

Because she is lost in reverie when confronted with a sexual-social danger, failing to interpret the confusing signs she releases, her interlocutors self-righteously direct their callous demands to her. Also due to the fact of her straining to adopt the language and appropriate behavior expected from the idealized woman, she ignominiously fails to truly embrace innocence and as a result, usually seems a little bit too confused about what it takes to be innocent. Her beliefs impede her spontaneity and her speech becomes reek of pauses and uncertainty.<sup>89</sup>

One of the two wisest men she makes acquaintance with is Willoughby. The fact and quality of him being quite observant and his wicked genius harness the reservedness and occasional confusion of Evelina. His rakish ingallantry rejects the idea of letting her go back home unescorted, his understanding of social codes well-extends that of Evelina's and he does not hesitate to practice his power when the opportunity arises.

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<sup>88</sup> Cutting-Gray, 46.

<sup>89</sup> Cutting-Gray, 47.

Trying clumsily to wear the accoutrements of the exemplary model of feminism proves to be just as detrimental to her person as being nameless.<sup>90</sup> Her obscene passivity gives rise to the common opinion that she is not to be taken seriously and that she embarrassingly lacks in thought. Thus, Evelina's gathering memories by way of directly experimenting a variety of settings and people goes to waste because of her inability to construct a better version of herself that would more actively participate in the world. She abhors that she is incapable of readily reacting to the situation at hand and she blames it on her having no "*presence of mind*" time and time again in her letters (37(2), 225, 289, 358). Whilst she is maybe too discreet about what to say next, she overlooks the fact that actions matter more, especially when pistols are about to be shot.

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<sup>90</sup> Catherine Parke distinguished between the "I" who cannot simultaneously note itself and write and the "Name" signifying the "functional counterpart of the third-person" and "appearance in a world of appearances," in "Vision and Revision: A Model for Reading the Eighteenth-Century Novel of Education," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 16, No. 2 (1982-1983), 165.

### **Writing as a tool for self-expression: a feminized weapon.**

She is a completely different person in her comfort zone that involves nothing but a piece of paper and a pen. John Richetti argues that the narrator Evelina demonstrates her admirable grasp at language while describing the events and the remarkable aspects of her social circle. Whereas, the social entity, the "impressionable and fanciful sentimental heroine" whose unaccountable participation the narration is evolved around, feels insipid.<sup>91</sup>

Evelina is ever-alerted about anything that involves how Lord Orville views her. Accordingly, the first time she actually claims her name is when she confronts the Branghtons who have attempted to use Evelina's name to obtain familial benefits that fully undermines and passivates Evelina and renders her an object in their trade.<sup>92</sup> Frightful of irretrievably losing Orville's reverence, she decides to assert herself, utterly despising the loss of her right to introduce herself to the rest of the society, presenting herself the way she wishes to be acknowledged. "*Half frantic, driven wild,*" (303) threatened by an irreparable injury, she ignores all codes that define a woman and composes a letter to Orville. She also declares to the Branghtons her desire not to be involved in a similar affair again, "*I must take the liberty to request, that my name may never made use of without my knowledge*" (306). However, that family has not possibly developed the same understanding towards social ties and the delicacy of a single woman's position in that horribly judgmental society.

She terminates her letter to Orville saying that she was usurped as the "*instrument however innocently, of so much trouble*" (304). She realizes that embracing the same passive femininity that she literally forces herself to adopt, ill-serves her and she fears she has given Orville "*reason to suppose I presumed to boast of his acquaintance!*" (300).

The relevant episode is telling in the discourse of namelessness, in that, it also demonstrates the plotting that Willoughby puts into play by stealing Evelina's letter, making sure it never reaches

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<sup>91</sup> John J. Richetti, "Voice and Gender in Eighteenth-Century Fiction: Haywood to Burney," *Studies in the Novel*, 19 (Fall 1987), 269.

<sup>92</sup> Cutting-Gray, 48-9.

its intended receiver. He functions as the interrupting name of the father that aims to deprive the woman of hers by purloining her letter. He draws a new path for the letter to follow, does not actually silence it, the letter functions still. Cutting-Gray refers to the roots of the word and argues the letter "becomes purloined in another sense (as in the French *pur-loigner*, to put aside or put amiss, to suffer), a letter in sufferance, trapped in a discourse it does not initiate, a letter effectively silenced."<sup>93</sup> The letter has been written in an intentionally indecorous and impertinent way, so that it could distort the opinion of Evelina about who Orville truly is. Whereas Evelina's letter gives Willoughby valuable insight about her intentions about the intended reader of the letter. As discussed before, Willoughby is one of the two wisest men Evelina acquaints herself with, and accordingly the letter Willoughby forges, manages insidiously to change Evelina's good opinion of Orville. The letter amuses Evelina at first, but at its perusal, she starts to find it inappropriate and considers it an insult to her person, her femininity. Especially the part where he offers to send his personal servant to fetch her reply.

In addition, Willoughby attempts to dishonor the personality of Orville. He speaks for him, he silences his biggest rivalry. When confronted, he tries to distract Evelina by referring to the intensity of his benevolent feelings for her, his justification does not make him any better of a man, since it involves nothing but dishonesty. Willoughby both disrupts the authority of Orville, and hide the "*capacity*" of Evelina: "*I concealed your letter to prevent a discovery of your capacity; and I wrote you an answer, which I hoped would prevent your wishing for any other*" (476). It has a "*clandestine air*" (316) for it aims to prevent her from writing a reponse to him or even seeing him again with the same affectionate enthusiasm.

Evelina is devastated the following days and her letters show it. She desperately struggles to leave her disappointment behind and her most devoted supporter in these dark days is the parson again. However, his teachings about character prove to be futile upon the first encounter of Evelina's with Orville in Bristol. She senses that this person does not deserve to receive the same treatment as the man who had sent her that inappropriate letter. Right then and there she manages to recognize the flawed deduction she has precedently made, yet she still needs to have more time

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<sup>93</sup> Cutting-Gray, 49.



and space at her disposal in order to accurately reflect on the situation at hand. This point in time is also telling in that, it marks the point where writing proves to be of utmost use for her once again, it broadens her horizons and offers her new insight into the whole affair. Actually writing about the indecorous letter, she is more capable of more correctly interpreting it, especially now that she has had collected observational data to guide her judgment.

Evelina comes to acknowledge the fact that she knows more about Orville through a wider context of acquaintanceship than a single letter could bear.<sup>94</sup> Therefore she is convinced that the letter is a misrepresentation of Orville, in that, it does not truly represent the man she has personally come in contact with. His past admirable demeanor and Villars' further indications seem to favor the innocence of Orville.

Willoughby's indecent act of changing the course of the letter, which mainly reflects his desire to corrupt and delude the exceptionally heroic and chivalric image of Orville, also provides an example of patriarchy that denies women the right to speak for themselves, owning the name and signs that define them. In *The Rape of Clarissa*, Terry Eagleton makes a remarkable association between the act of writing and woman: The problem of writing is in this sense the problem of the woman: how is she to be at once decorous and spontaneous, translucently candid yet subdued to social pressure? Writing, like women, marks a frontier between public and private, at once agonized outpouring and prudent stratagem.”<sup>95</sup>

Through the double participation, which exchanging letters deems a requisite, both "agonized outpouring and prudent stratagem" and from the journal she keeps, Evelina sees more clearly than ever the possible drawbacks of her misinterpretation. Even more importantly, she faces the discomforting reality that keeping her silence even when the moment calls for the opposite, does not stop her from giving the undesirable impression through the silent signs, her comportment

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<sup>94</sup> Cutting-Gray, 51.

<sup>95</sup> Terry Eagleton, *The Rape of Clarissa* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), pp. 17, 46.

and overall mood.<sup>96</sup> They add up to creating at least a modicum of interpretable messages for Orville: "*I tremble lest he should mistake my indignation for confusion! -lest he should misconstrue my reserve into embarrassment!*". And after a short while, "*I could not endure he should make his own interpretation of my silence*" (332).

Writing enchances Evelina's perception of the world, the events that evolve around her that demand her intervention. Through writing, Evelina discovers, even at the point of rejection that she is capable of thought and of course, speech: "*I will talk, -write, -think of him no more!*" (318). Furthermore, she spots the connections and parallels between different fragments of varied events and elaborate on past events, justify her behavior at the first ball, for example. Unfortunately, she could never speak directly to the people whom she believes she left a wrong impression by way of corresponding. She can freely comment on the aspects that intrigue, disturb or amuse her, which she would otherwise have to keep silent about.

Even though it took her a considerable amount of time and nerve-wrecking experience to come to terms with the fact that being a mute bystander does not contribute to her innocence but further disarms her in her struggle in the society, she eventually acknowledges the power of speaking for herself. It takes a little more than a modicum of spurring from even Villars, who advises her to act if need be, "*you must not only to judge but to act for yourself; if any schemes are started, any engagements made, which your understanding represents to you as improer, exert yourself resolutely in avoiding them; and do not, by a too passive facility, risk the censure of the world, or your own future regret.*" (203).

Writing opens her the door of a fuller and overarching world, which consists of what has been carefully concealed from her. Discovery of this alien realm may be exhausting for a young and naive mind as hers, as she expresses: "*I will not write any longer; for the more I think... the less indifferent... I find myself*" (29). However, the pain is worth suffering as it bears countless new opportunities. As the novel unravels, the readers come to witness the innermost insecurities and fears the protagonist has once held and also how she conquers them one by one, which is usually

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<sup>96</sup> Cutting-Gray, 51.

facilitated by her own writing, in addition to the sincere yet unabstractionist advices of her dear guardian, or the irreconcilably devilish secondary figures and their actions that teach Evelina how not to act. It is worth noting once again that Evelina wittily comments on the vulgarity, banality and impertinence that erupt around her, she demonstrates her skill through her imaginative pen. It enables her to acquire a greater vocabulary of experience, which provides her with a more comprehensive perspective on a given situation. However subconsciously, she constructs her character through writing, achieves a more solid and convincing state of innocence, manages to move away from a gullible bystander to an ever-alerted person, who can consciously detect and evade the attendant threats of innocence. As long as she remains silent when she must not, she complies with the active participant and thus, becomes less effective in determining her own destiny.<sup>97</sup>

The episodic formation of the epistolary novel refuses to offer the conventional denouncement. It does not aim to educate its readers. It does not kindle in its target audience the desire to theoretically explain and analyze the pathos, feelings, as well as the horrid elements. Especially considering the fact that the protagonist slowly abolishes the act of writing upon her unity with her prince charming. Moreover, her collection of correspondences do not include imperatives, she refrains from making assertive statements or declarations of truth. Yet letter-writing enables her to elaborate on her feelings she would otherwise keep all to herself and let them slowly fade because the cultural approbation deems them unutterable.<sup>98</sup>

Writing is not the means for her to keep a written record of her intense and loving feelings for Orville but rather the instrument to silently reflect on her affection and even realize its genuine magnanimity. The readers and probably the people she exchanges letters with are aware of her love for Orville, but it takes her maybe slightly more than a modicum of time to admit it herself. Villars writes, "*Long... have I perceived the ascendancy which Lord Orville has gained upon your mind*" (369). Later inscribing a letter to Villars, she experiences an emotional eruption and starts directly referring to Orville, instead: "*Oh! Lord Orville! -it shall be the sole study of my*

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<sup>97</sup> Cutting-Gray, 52.

<sup>98</sup> Cutting-Gray, 52.

*happy life, to express better by words, the sense I have of your exalted benevolence and greatness of mind!"* (474).

The confidentiality her letters provide her with encourages her to reveal her most sincere desires and worries. The same way the authoress opted for anonymity, Evelina's writing private letters also contributes to the indirect criticism of the culture within which she struggles to survive, have a name. Decorum is not Evelina's or any woman's forte when the candid expression of intimate and feminized feelings are sought after, thus writing can be a tool in achieving this end without becoming impertinent. Evelina only describes the events or how they appear to her, whereas patriarchy, the "*magistrates of the press, and Censors for the public*" (10) make assertions as to how a certain thing should be, as Burney complains.

Evelina's use of power clashes not only with that of men but also that of the other formidable women who make appearances throughout the novel.<sup>99</sup> Madame Duval only has access to this society because of her holding a certain patrilineal name and her wealth. Oddly, there is no single soul who roots for this intriguingly indecorous woman, people who happen to acquaint themselves with her, chooses to tolerate her, and not everyone is that gentle in treating her. Lady Howard has people hear her voice because of her patrilineal name, wealth and societal position. She has remarkably better manners in comparison with Madame Duval, yet their strength has similar roots. Mrs. Selwyn is much more articulate than a model lady should be, she fearlessly disses authorial figures, regardless of this, she is also indulged for identity and social position. All these women rely on and submit to patriarchy to retain the power they enjoy.

The narrative consists of letters, therefore, what the author does is merely edit them, demonstrating a storyline without recourse to an authority. In fact, both the heroine and the authoress renounce the authority; the latter in the preface, while the protagonist fights a fierce battle against it throughout the novel. Evelina arguably presents a new understanding of identity and authority. Burney makes her protagonist send and receive letters, she corresponds with the parson and Maria, whilst the authoress addresses her output to the whole world, diligently

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<sup>99</sup> Cutting-Gray, 53.

working towards educating her target readers by pointing to the female predicament, idealized comportment expected from both men and women, the rawness of the society as a whole. Both women let everyone speak for themselves and they listen to them very attentively, too. Evelina has to make sense of everything she reads and witnesses for the sake of accuracy, so that her correspondent understands her, even though sometimes they are unable to do so, it is their poor interpretation skills, and not Evelina's inadequacy in retelling the events she has witnessed or expressing herself. She has to thoroughly comprehend the satirical remarks of Mrs. Selwyn or truly reflect the embarrassing Branghton's and their vulgarness even when she abhors it. In addition, she discusses male treachery and imprudence, as well as the plight of women.<sup>100</sup>

Evelina's letters are unauthorized and she is assured their contents will be kept confidential between her and her interlocutor, otherwise she would face the threat of sounding utterly crude or even impertinent, which she condemns most of all the devils that she crosses ways with. The scene where she mutely hands the letter to Orville is telling: "*I gave over the attempt of reading... and, having no voice to answer the inquiries of Lord Orville, I put the letter into his hand, and left it to speak both for me and itself.*" (496) It is intriguing that Evelina's individualism slowly fades into the background as she increasingly surrenders herself to her soon-to-be-wedded husband. She becomes less interested in writing and making sense of the occurrences around her as can be noted by the readers, which is evident through the closing of the novel; she does not even feel strong enough to talk to Lord Orville about the contents of the letter and instead, she hands it to him so he can read it himself. This raises the question of how patriarchy affects a woman's liberation process, which changes the scope of this work.

It is essential to refer to the role of patriarchy in shaping the future of a youngster as well as the power of matriarchy to name. Evelina strives to seek the approval and admittance of her natural father from the very beginning, but the story mainly deals with her separation from her surrogate father and the novel's termination coincides with the end of Evelina's being publicly available as she agrees to marry Lord Orville. Therefore, it is safe to state that the heroine's future is determined by the men in her life, but there is more to discuss than what lies on the façade.

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<sup>100</sup> Cutting-Gray, 53-4.

The primary article that supports the argument here is "*Oh Dear Resemblance of Thy Murdered Mother*": *Female Authorship in Evelina*. (Greenfield, 1991) The protagonist gains her biological father's recognition after fighting a very lengthy battle that involves the contribution of a number of characters, the most striking of whom is the heroine's long-gone mother.

The readers enjoy the triumphant moment where Sir John Belmont exclaims: "*Oh my child, my child! ... Oh dear resemblance of thy murdered mother! ... Oh ... thou representative of my departed wife, speak to me in her name*" (471) after finally reading his old wife's last letter. The repetitive use of the word "child" here functions as the much-sought proof that Evelina's search for her paternal author has finally come to an end. The maternal power of the deceased mother here is worthy of special elaboration. It is her letter that solves the puzzle and allows the pieces to fall into their places, as well as the two women's uncanny physical resemblance that convinces the father that he had been blind to the absolute truth all along.

Evelina's publicly conversing with strangers are deprecating for the readers to follow as she is constantly the target of justified irreverence, "*really, for a person who is nobody, to give herself such airs*" (42), and her value is diminished during almost all encounters she partakes of, "*like a cypher, whom to nobody belonging, by nobody was noticed*" (407), apparently stemming from her implied nobodiness. Sir Clement Willoughby, the most insistent sexual predator of Evelina's wishes her to appreciate his feelings for him, yet he refuses to marry her because nobody "*would recommend to me a connection ... with a girl of obscure birth, whose only dowry is her beauty*" (415).

The readers appreciate this form of writing because it allows them to witness a young woman's development as an author. She is not defined by a father, it is true that she is denied a big fortune but also true is the fact that, she is not anyone's property, she is free to discover the world without anyone's pre-defining it for her. If she was part of a paternal lineage, she would be spoken for, since she has no name, she is obliged to make her voice heard, but it is also a chance for her to have the right to do so. Mr Villars describes her as the "*child of a wealthy baronet ... whose name she is forbidden to claim; entitled as she is to lawfully inherit his fortune and estate, is there any*

*probability that he will properly own her?"* (23). The book mainly deals with her surviving social situations, in which she is usually the inferior participant because of her having no name. The way she describes the daily occurrences in her life contributes to her literary control over the book's construction, and the fact that this novel is in epistolary form reinforces the link between the two abovementioned phenomena.<sup>101</sup>

Since Evelina is not owned by her father, the odds are against his stopping her from building her own narrative, considering the fact that Burney tended to assign her father as the suppressor or the destroyer of her writing. Sir John Belmont follows the same pattern, indeed. The opening of the novel is dedicated to the description of the bloody deed he committed. He killed his wife by not accepting her as his legitimate wife. This resulted in Caroline's suffering from immense shock and sorrow after the discovery that Belmont "*burnt the certificate of their marriage*" (19). Not only did he cause the early death of Caroline Evelyn, but also he distorted his deceased wife's history by creating the false truth that she bore someone else's baby, in other words, she had been involved in a licentious relationship.

The fire that smothered the ashes of Caroline Evelyn had been lit before. The draft of the book dedicated to her by Burney was set aflame in the bonfire, which was ignited to the honor of her father. Depressing yet it is, the truth needs to be acknowledged that patriarchy is responsible for the destruction of both the story of *Caroline Evelyn* and the history of the innocent mother of Evelina.

The bishop represents the ultimate good in the novel but a closer scrutiny would reveal that it has not always been the case.<sup>102</sup> He spares no detail when Evelina wishes to know the accurate account of all past events that are specifically of interest to her, yet his secrecy that involves his withholding the truth from the public serves his purpose of keeping Evelina safe from the treacherous hands lurking outside their house at Berry Hill; however, Evelina is truly damaged by Villars' discretion. "*I am*" he says "*very desirous of guarding her from curiosity and*

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<sup>101</sup> Greenfield, 306.

<sup>102</sup> Greenfield, 307.

*impertinence, by concealing her name, family, and story*" (24). It is worth taking into account that Caroline's posthumous wish, of which Villars had to give due heed was that Belmont has to reform if he wishes to unite with Evelina. The readers come to learn as the narrative unfolds that this really happened and Belmont actually did all in his power to raise the child he thought he owned. Only problem was, he fell prey to the plot the nurse planned and it was no other than Mr. Villars who made this possible, however reluctant he was. Villars is another man who buries the history of a woman, Evelina's. She explains, the "*name by which I was known, the secrecy observed in regard to my family, and the retirement in which I lived, all conspired to render this scheme ... by no means impracticable*" (448).

It is worth noting that there is one similarity that connects Willoughby and Lord Orville, that is, the lack of Evelina's verbal control during her encounters with these men. Her first meeting with the former, she "*was seized with such a panic, that I could hardly speak a word*" (35). Their initial conversations follow a similar pattern, in addition, the same feeble communicative partnership Evelina offers, repeats when they arrange their marriage. However, the speechlessness Evelina experiences in Willoughby's presence is different. His unwelcome sexual advancements towards her only shocks her, and his attempts to seduce her results in her becoming "*so much embarrassed, that I could not tell what to answer*" (115). She screams to evade him, yet it is not that easy to escape from his grip, he literally begs her to forgive him, "*for he ... would not let me rest till I gave him my word*" (118). Therefore the words she utters then do not really belong to her, her enthusiasm to write and describe these events enable her to speak her mind. Even though she can barely say a word when she is with these men, she achieves linguistic mastery by using her own words to depict her encounters with them, she regains her power as an individual by doing so. Furthermore, she retains her position as the person who introduces all characters as well as the description of their comportment from her specific point of view.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Greenfield, 309.



## **Namelessness and Matrilineage.**

Evelina and her mother share the same unfortunate destiny. Both are treated as nobody and the mother has literally no body and both desperately need to be legitimated.<sup>104</sup> Caroline has to regain her honor even after her death and Evelina has to have a name so she could marry, even though the chivalric Orville has proposed to her before she earns a name, Evelina is still subject to the abominable requests of men who are familiar with her namelessness.

Even the two women's exteriors are extraordinarily similar, Evelina is still doubtful as to how her exchange with Belmont would go, this is where Villars assures her by saying, "*without any other certificate of your birth, that which you carry in your countenance, as it could not be effected by artifice, so it cannot admit of doubt*" (404). Villars is obviously still resentful to his devilish double, as the words he utters echo the offense Belmont committed when he burnt the marriage certificate.

However no longer present, Caroline arguably recreates the burnt marriage certificate by transferring her countenance to her daughter as proof that the kinship is genuine. Since Evelina looks just like her mother, Belmont senses at their first encounter that he might have raised the wrong child. Later on, Evelina gives an account of their first encounter and she hearkens back to the words of Villars as she writes, "*the certainty I carried in my countenance, of my real birth, made him ... suspect the imposition*" (448).

However, Belmont does not easily acquiesce, the first time they see each other does not suffice to convince him, it takes more than the material presence of Evelina to bring the man to his knees, as the first words of admittance he utters are "*I see, I see thou art her child! she lives- she breathes- she is present to my view!*" (446). He is apparently only convinced that Evelina is Caroline's daughter, but he does not offer the two women the legitimacy they seek, even though he was utterly struck by the resemblance he has witnessed. After the first encounter and before the second, the impact of Mrs Selwyn is telling, as she uncovers the plot of the nurse and tells Belmont that he has been misled. The ensuing second meeting marks the much-awaited

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<sup>104</sup> Greenfield, 310.

recognition as Evelina supports her claim with a new piece of evidence, the letter that her mother wrote to Belmont on her deathbed, which as the readers are informed, coincides around the time of the birth of Evelina as Caroline died during the delivery. So, she has created two things right before passing: Evelina and the letter that proves the kinship.<sup>105</sup>

The irrefutably evidential letter reads, "*Thou know'st I am thy wife!- clear then, to the world the reputation thou hast sullied, and receive as thy lawful successor the chld who will present thee this my dying request*" (406). Not long after, to her greatest relief, Evelina expresses her triumph:

*"Let me indulge myself in observing, and rejoicing to observe, that the total neglect I thought I met with, was not the effect of insensibility or unkindness, but of imposition and error; and that, at the very time we concluded I was unnaturally rejected, my deluded father meant to shew me most favour and protection."* (450)

The salvation Evelina seeks all along comes from not the men that surround her but the death mother. Belmont first digests the letter as he ejaculates to Evelina that, "*Ten thousand daggers could not have wounded me like this letter!*" (470) then in the successive page he turns to Evelina and says, "*Evelina! thy countenance is a dagger to my heart!*" . Having acknowledged and realized the last wish of Caroline, Belmont finally brings himself to admitting that he has been on the wrong, "*Oh my child, my child. Oh dear resemblance of thy murdered mother! Oh then, thou representative of my departed wife, speak to me in her name.*" (471)

The notion that the narration covertly points at, that Evelina's salvation will come from a man is refuted by the actual occurrences. Eventually her mother is celebrated as the author of her daughter's life, had it been for the either of fathers, Evelina would have stayed suppressed forever. The novel also grants Evelina the power to author her parent; much like how her mother names and authors her, Evelina establishes her mother's name, too. She reproduces her burnt history and disseminates the truth as to what her actual story is. Therefore, the novel purposefully

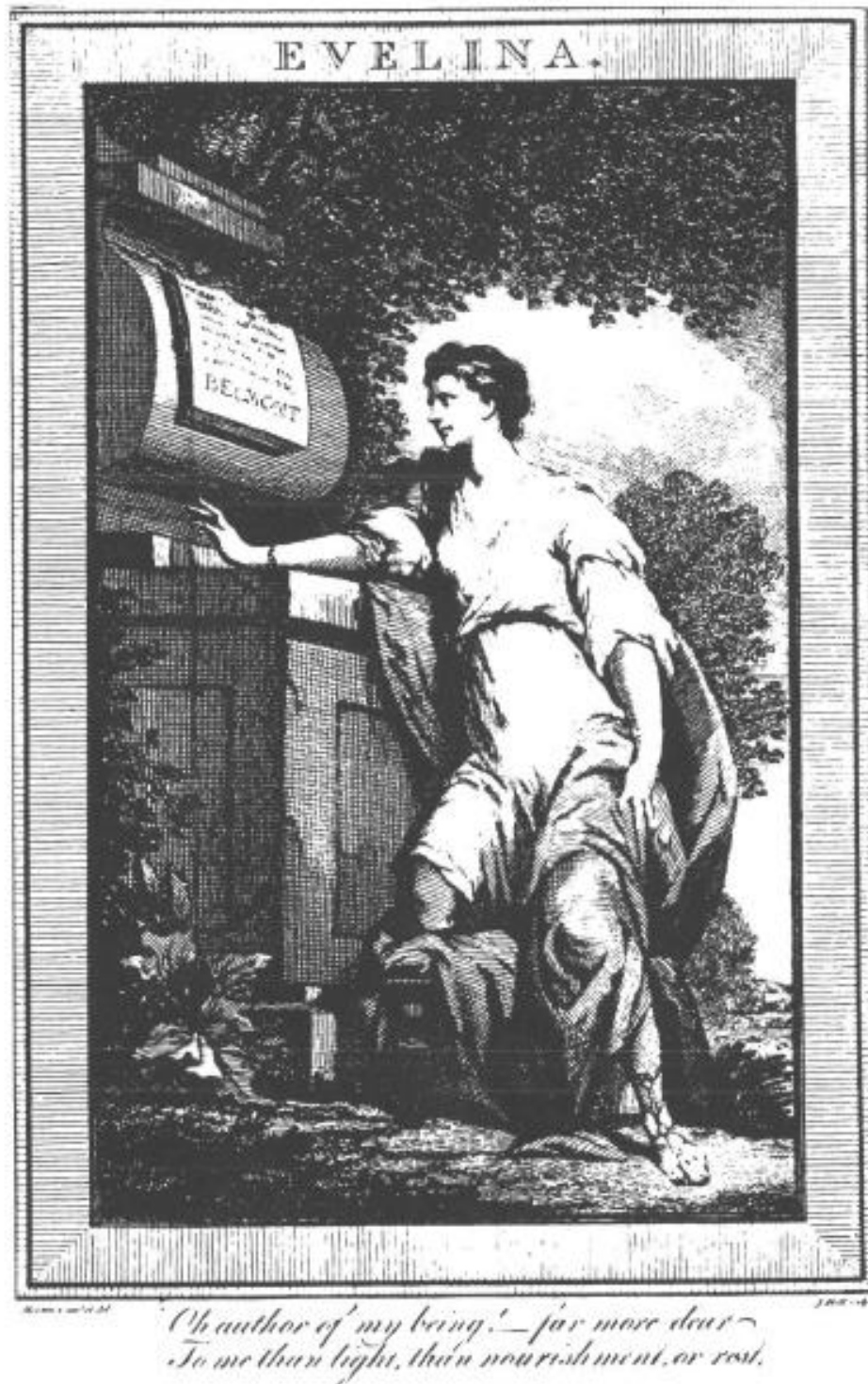
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<sup>105</sup> Greenfield, 311.

demonstrates that women retain the power to give names and offer the legitimate narration.<sup>106</sup> Greenfield argues that, reread in light of the previous argument, the ode dedicated to Burney's father in the beginning of the novel becomes even less flattering as the narration ultimately confirms the mother and not the father has the authority. She wittily makes use of the frontispiece to the first volume of the fourth edition of *Evelina*, on which stands a woman staring at a tombstone, on which reads the word "Belmont" in isolation, beneath which there are the lines of the poem: "Oh author of my being". As the legitimate wife of Sir John Belmont is the only dead Belmont in the story, the tombstone must belong to her. The image highlights Evelina's mother being the actual author of her being as well as contributing to the unleshing of the underlying message the poem bears. In the poem, the father's name is not given and in the illustration, he is definitively replaced by the mother, whose name is Belmont and who is the designated author.

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<sup>106</sup> Greenfield, 313.



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<sup>107</sup> Frontispiece from *Evelina*, vol. 1 (London: W. Lowndes, 1794). Engraved by J. Hall after J.H. Mortimer. Reproduced by permission of McMaster University Library.

Also noteworthy is the fact that gaining the recognition of her biological father strips of her the privilege to act on her own, speak for herself,<sup>108</sup> she complains to Orville before going to see Belmont that this "*journey will deprive me of all right to act for myself*" (423). Additionally, having at first had to reject the proposal of Orville, believing that there should be a father to give her away (370), with Belmont's acknowledgment of her as his legitimate daughter, Orville could now address her with her "*real name*" and soon "*by yet another name, and by the most endearing of all titles*". Thus, Evelina becomes a property that men in her life can rightfully exchange and rename. The declaration of Orville: "*You are now all my own*" (496) supports this notion.

As soon as she fully surrenders herself to Orville, she notably starts losing her literary skills. Comprehensibly enough, having been named by patriarchy, she merrily sinks into being a mute subject. When their marriage is underway, she literally has trouble reading and writing. When Orville proposes, she cannot say a word and suddenly faints. It is only later that she says, "*I cannot write the scene that followed, though every word is engraven on my heart*" (421). Greenfield discusses that Evelina's body becomes a slate, on which a text is inscribed, but unlike her mother's writing her body that reveals their kinship, which serves to promote woman's word, this time she has no control over the language that permeates on her body. Moreover, she receives the letter of Villars giving them his blessing, she bursts into tears and is, hence unable to read it. Orville asks him about the contents of the letter and also she does is hand the letter to him to read. After this remarkable scene, she produces one last very short letter, silenced by the appropriation of patriarchy, the heroine has no voice of her own now and therefore her narration has to end, too.

Evelina rises to power and stands tall one last moment, though. She signs her letter with her first name only, making "*Evelina*" the last word in the text. Considering the fact that she is married at this point and could well have used her married name, the novel does not emphasize the changed state of Evelina, but it further celebrates her anonymity, suggesting that a woman is most herself when she manages to isolate herself from the men around her. Furthermore, as discussed before,

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<sup>108</sup> Greenfield, 315.

since the name "Evelina" derives from her mother's name, her signing the letter in this specific way, reinforces the potency of matrilineage.

When Evelina's attention shifts too much from her familial affairs, the authoress pulls a dexterious trick of replacing letters, which results in the shining armor of the impossibly decorous Lord Orville slightly contaminated. However, it serves to have Evelina become more involved with the issues that the novel sets to untangle.<sup>109</sup>

Yet she still gives priority to her relationship with Lord Orville as she dismisses the letter that her mother wrote to her father right before her decease. In other words, her tying the knot to Lord Orville and her desire to seek the approval of Mr. Villars outweigh her request for her biological father's accepting her.<sup>110</sup>

It was believed that feminized worlds that are the creations of Burney are the embodiment of pseudo problems that women claimed they had to tackle. Their problems were adhered with less validity and credibility in comparison with those of their male counterparts. Relevantly, William Hazlitt uttered the following words to assert his stance in this discourse: "The difficulties in which she involves her heroines are indeed '*Female Difficulties*;'-- they are difficulties created out of nothing." His inability to sympathize with the genuine obstacles Burney's women had to deal with has its roots in the common belief that women had as much agency as a man back in the day and that they had it in their power to speak when misjudgment was placed upon them, their predicament simply arouse because they seek the approval and acceptance of those around them and that there should be someone of higher social order that would treat them as their protegee and fight their battles for them in order to earn them a place in their new environment. In other words, they are only subject to mistreatment because they are too coquettish to defend themselves.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Sabor, 28.

<sup>110</sup> Sabor, 28.

<sup>111</sup> Margaret A. Doody summarizes and rebuts Burney's hostile reviewers in Frances Burney, pp. 332-5.

Her precarious hold of the class she married into weakens progressively as on multiple occasions, she finds herself losing her coquettish decorum, one example of which is when "*with frightful violence, she actually beat the ground with her hands*". (181) As she struggles to stand on her feet once again, from the muddy ditch she has been pushed into at unawares, she does not fear of becoming a victim of rape, her fear solely consists of losing her valuables. However, the scene perfectly resembles that of a typical rape. Even though Evelina is subject to constant violence, the conundrum of Madame Duval is never handled with seriousness, on the contrary it is treated as a material for comedy both for the readers and the other characters.<sup>112</sup> Neither Evelina nor this specific reader sympathizes with this abominable woman, her tragedy is presented as farce. The incident in which Captain Mirvan played a key role, fails to elicit sympathy, cruel though he is, and that this mere action of his derives from pure hatred, does not result in absolute disapproval of this man from the audience.

As the protagonist does the aftermath once again with the parson in a closing scene of the novel, all the agonies and the mistreatment she has had to suffer from up until very recently, are the results of communicative failures that involve ill-meaning third parties. The following paragraphs deal with the relevant instances of miscommunication, deception and suppression of information by providing a set of pertinent terminology to make a better sense of the phenomenon.

The amiable and truly benevolent parson had actually committed a catastrophic mistake that contributed to the very flawed initial stages of the life of Evelina, his readily admitting the corruptedness of Evelina's biological father, resulted in him having enjoyed a personal benefit from the whole affair, which strikes him as an utter crisis that threatens one of his trademark qualities: his morality. Yet, his act is justified by a prior act of deception of the nursing lady and accordingly the parson, who actually leads a life of solitude with a very small number of trusted companies by his side, was already familiar with how "*dissipated*" and "*unprincipled*" Sir John Belmont is, (157) since he was an omnipresence during the bedridden last days of the mother of Evelina and how crass and unloving the treatment she had received from her wedded husband, who caused her death by rejecting their lawful marriage. Additionally, since the all-too-neat

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<sup>112</sup> Thaddeus, 47.

replacement of the nurse actually worked to perfection and Belmont took charge of the daughter he thought was his own and thus, never went after Evelina to claim her. Thus, the parson's acting as the guardian of Evelina and never encouraging her to demand her rightful inheritance from her biological father was actually the right thing to do under those circumstances. According to my reading of the novel, the parson is still an exemplary man. He literally makes himself become ill with the thought that he had denied Evelina a better childhood. Fortunately, Evelina acknowledges his exceptional goodness and never holds grudge against him, nor does she ever accuse him of malevolence or ill-will. The two have a bond that go beyond familial ties.



### **Paragons and parasites: interrupting the natural flow of communication.**

Koehler in her seminal work on the model selves in *Evelina* makes a comparison between Richardson's *Clarissa* and *Evelina*. She upholds the idea that since Burney wrote her novel in the wake of Richardson's stories that include virtue-driven heroines who are destined to survive an environment rife with troubles directed at their person, whose letters, too are stolen and forged by despicable third parties, she must have reflected in her work the influence of her predecessor. The two, however, are not in a complete agreement. According to the Richardsonian ideological tradition, there is a moral paragon, a female example to follow, who stands as the ultimate representative of truth and who should, no doubt be imitated. Burney, on the other hand, rejects the idea of a moral paragon and directs the attention to errors and how they affect the production of moral subjects. Her unique approach signifies her departure away from *Clarissa*.

Evelina's being unnaturally rejected by her biological father sets the tone and defines her character as a young individual. Yet, she never lacks the affectionate homely environment that every child righteously seeks thanks to the parson. However, her father's assumed 'insensibility' shapes this young individual in a way that proves she has become the opposite of her absent ascendant. The pronounced theme that the whole narrative revolves around is morality and how it is practiced by not only the protagonist but also the secondary characters, who happen to demonstrate acts that comprise of feeling and empathy or completely deny their interlocutor the said virtues. It is worth noting that Lord Orville, of all the characters that even make a single appearance throughout the novel is by far the most feeling man (after the parson) and this results in him asking her hand in marriage in the denouncement with no obstacles or disruptions that would otherwise further separate the two. The parson's adoption of Evelina functions as the supplantation of the insensibility of Belmont with Villar's affectively rearing of his charge. The parson's loving and protective raising of Evelina constructs the kind of male model she will eventually start to seek in life. "*It seems... as if this deserted child, though legally heiress to two large fortunes, must owe all her rational expectations to adoption and friendship*". (23) According to Mrs. Selwyn, it is the personal worth, rather than the perks of birth that grants people their genuine position in life; and that the said ties of adoption and companionship derive from not "*chance*" but how worthy a subject proves to be in life. (340) Both the parson and Evelina highly and heartily regard these forms of intimate relationship and at a later stage, Orville joins them by

asking Evelina to marry him. These values provide the basis for what Michael McKeon calls “progressive ideology”.<sup>113</sup> It is a critique of aristocratic ideology that defends the idea that honor is defined by virtuous act rather than birth. Koehler claims that the familial drama that precedes the birth of the protagonist assists the construction of the model bourgeois subject.<sup>114</sup> (Koehler, 2002)

Evelina’s stepping forth and her figurative entry into this symbolic order that is characterized by the above values and the erroneous practices and mistakes that give way to them will be closely dealt with now. As Lacan discussed, the symbolic order is not a mere product of language, but from a more extensive point of view, it is the “symbolic relationships”, as well as the positions that “familial constellation” generates<sup>115</sup>. The heroine’s relevant position in this constellation was predetermined by a misunderstanding that precedes her material being. The birth of the protagonist’s moral positioning, in what Slavoj Žižek calls “the logic of the error” creates problems that continue to be threatening even after the revelation of the true motives of Belmont’s. Žižek describes the Lacanian “imaginary self” as a fictitious wholeness that “exists only on the basis of the misrecognition of its own conditions; it is the effect of this misrecognition.”<sup>116</sup> Therefore, Burney’s “logic of the error” implies the bourgeois subject’s disorderly origins.

The specific context in which the value system of the protagonist emerges, distorts and destabilizes the said value system, and as a result, the paradigm and example, which are central notions of the seventeenth and eighteenth-century tradition, also become the subjects of risk. The book questions whether values that are generated by mistakes or a given person’s full or partial oblivion to the relevant circumstances, can have imitable elements that are open to generalizations for tackling future threats.

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<sup>113</sup> Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel: 100-1740* (Baltimore, 1987), 154-5.

<sup>114</sup> Koehler, 20.

<sup>115</sup> Anthony Wilden, “Lacan and the Discourse of the Other,” *Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis* (Baltimore, 1968), 270.

<sup>116</sup> *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London and New York, 1989), 8.

Richardson's *Clarissa*, Koehler argues, is particularly instructive in understanding Burney's refusal to establish the notion of paragon, the model self in her novel.<sup>117</sup> Even though *Clarissa* has to battle with many errors and misconstructions, her moral scheme is still represented as smooth and solid. Her value system seems to have been established by an idealized past. Rita Goldberg notes that the heroine's life offers "a picture of practical and moral excellence that... for the majority of the upper middle class, has already become archaic. ... [Her life] has become abstractly exemplary."<sup>118</sup> In light of these arguments, it can be argued that the major difference between the two heroines is, that of Burney's deems the forces of error as universal and ineradicable, whereas *Clarissa* is never overwhelmed by the confusions around her and acts as the embodiment of all virtues of a female paragon, performing an idealizing and abstracting function.

There are two main sources of miscommunication and error in the novel that deem it necessary to do such interrogation. Both of them hinder and impede the emergence of the coherent self, and they also drag the readers—whom the novel sets to educate and whose formation of the self it wishes to support—into the discussion by inviting them to reflect on the question of how they can effectively interpret their readings and modify their own set of behaviour by making sense of the virtuosness of the fictional characters. As Koehler suggests, Burney disses the idea of a moral paragon, whose acts should be and can be copied by those around them, who desperately need mentoring.<sup>119</sup> From the way she progressively engages her protagonist in a variety of classed and gendered mediums and exchanges, she hints at the virtuous paragons being the product of unreasonable and distorted wishes of those people who must imagine such "*monsters*", as she refers to them in her Preface. Koehler goes on to make another suggestion; she claims the novel comprises of a number of forces that are generated by ego; they are known to particularize characters and separate them from one another, and by implication, from the readers, too by intentionally presenting the self as "inwardly driven". This group dismantles the didactic, educative relationship between the reader and the characters. In addition, relevant for this

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<sup>117</sup> Koehler, 21.

<sup>118</sup> J. Paul Hunter, *Before Novels: The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction* (New York, 1990), 281-5.

<sup>119</sup> Koehler, 21

argument is the fact that what Claudia L. Johnson says about *Camilla* is also true of *Evelina*: “Burney’s defamiliarizing excess ... discloses the unbearable oddness of the exemplary.”<sup>120</sup>

Although Burney in her literary career, was a consistent follower of the Johnsonian view, that the readers benefit dearly from witnessing the moral struggles of the characters in internalizing lessons without actually having to experience those undesirable trials themselves<sup>121</sup>, the authoress’ first novel, Koehler argues, “pressures and ironicizes that ideal’s foundation in comparison, in an uncomplicated substitution of reader for character”.<sup>122</sup> Burney’s first novel pushes “the representation of the subjectivity” to the foreground<sup>123</sup>, as opposed to the then-prevalent idea of reading procedure enabling the discovery of morality types and the exemplary, imitable figures, regardless of the unique circumstances that define and surround them. On the other hand, the “Burney school” of fiction, Lynch argues, prepared the ground for Romantic reading formations “basic to a novelistic consumer culture’s modeling of complex selfhood.” *Evelina* offers an alternative to the earlier reading modes by way of elaborating on and questioning the very core of the issue, that is to say, what model is.

For the sake of the overall discussion this dissertation sets to put forth, it is worth introducing what Michel Serres would call a “parasite”<sup>124</sup>. It is the third party in a two-way communicative line, who preternaturally struggles to disrupt the flow between the binary poles that ideally involve a receiver and a sender, it is considered to be the common enemy of the other two and they continuously strive to exclude it. Maria Assad notes that the parasite does not submit to its exclusion from the exchange and does all in its power to remain in the picture, and thus, the

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<sup>120</sup> *Equivocal Beings: Politics, Gender, and Sentimentality in the 1790s: Wollstonecraft, Radcliffe, Burney, Austen* (Chicago, 1995), 152.

<sup>121</sup> *Rambler* No. 4, March 31, 1750, *Samuel Johnson: Rasselas, Poems, and Selected Prose*, Butrand H. Bronson, ed. [New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Toronto, and London, 1954], 63

<sup>122</sup> Koehler, 21-22.

<sup>123</sup> *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture, and the Business of Inner Meaning* (Chicago and London, 1998), 27.

<sup>124</sup> *The Parasite* (Baltimore, 1982) and *Hermes: Literature, Science, Philosophy*, Josue Harari and David F. Bell, eds. (Baltimore, 1982).

attempts at fully eliminating the parasite is never fully realized, the parasite only multiplies and comes back even as a greater menace or that it has already achieved a level of desired disruption in the communication and now it is too late to thoroughly fix the issue. That is to say, disorder is a natural component of communication.<sup>125</sup>

Clarissa's moral elevation that Lovelace both makes possible and comes to acknowledge, brings about her repositioning in a sharp opposition with all the other women. That is to say, the Puritan moral qualities, traditionally associated with women back in the day were promiscuousness, envy and corruptedness. Therefore, her dissociation from the gender she is supposed to represent with her rise as the female exemplar, seems to be the foundation of her perfection in terms of morality. Koehler argues, the creation of paragons is the outcome of the desire to drive away parasites, which is itself a parasitic action.<sup>126</sup> Furthermore, the connection between paragons and parasites is also present in *Evelina*, in a manner that renders the authoress' objection to the gendered idealism of *Clarissa* explicit. Her rejection of paragons functioning as moral devices in her Preface, is recapitulated in the narration that involves her elaboration of the parasitic desires that yield paragons, through Evelina's idealization of Lord Orville, in comparison with the other men that she encounters in her journey. Richardson's remodifying libertine desire is concurrent in Burney's work, too. What Richardson attempts to suppress, for the sake of preserving his heroine's moral superiority, Burney explicitly deals with. She reveals the underlying powers behind the construction of model selves to be mediation and exclusion. She designates and spurs her protagonist to work her way through building the ideal man that is the embodiment of feeling and sensibility.

Willoughby has his way with words; he plans and executes plots, once with Captain Mirvan, he finds ways to take Evelina by surprise and leave her speechless so she cannot object to him, he creates opportunities to talk to her privately, convinces people to let him inside their house, manipulates exchanges, steals and forges letters. Willoughby, like his precedent Lovelace, displays signs of exaggerated pride and controlled violence that dominate his relationship with

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<sup>125</sup> Reading with Michel Serres: An Encounter with Time (Albany, 1999), 2,19.

<sup>126</sup> Koehler, 24.

people around him, most importantly, with Evelina. His aristocratic superiority grants him the right to commit such horrible parasitic deeds, therefore readers find him predictable. There is however, another parasite that strikes the audience more powerfully. Dame Green, the washwoman substitutes her infant daughter for Evelina, as the rightful heiress to Belmont's fortune. The fraudulent act of the woman is revealed towards the end of the narration, after the man's acknowledgement of the uncanny resemblance of Evelina with her mother. The audience comes to learn that the nursing lady had had her opportunity seventeen years ago, from an exchange between the parson and Caroline, who was then carrying Evelina, thus Dame Green's having had access to a specific piece of information had been realized through her becoming a part to an otherwise binary flow of communication. These ternary modes of exchange that include the nursing lady and the imprudent libertine, suggest that the moral systems of the novel are characterized by parasitism. Dame Green's "theft of information", in Serres's terms, triggers the redirecting of the paternal affection of Sir John Belmont's. Her formative role is only momentary; she had eavesdropped on one single conversation, yet it proves magnanimous in effect. Whereas, Willoughby's parasitic interruption goes beyond the stealing and forgery of letters, which are the most authentic and concrete signs of his role.

Notwithstanding the fact that she regards him as the ultimate bearer of pure moral values, the influence of Willoughby's suggestive and insidious remarks and most importantly, the incident with the letters, eventually shake that trust to its core as she reveals the erroneous and hasty manner, with which she positioned Orville as a moral center and that misconstructions actually pose greater trouble than they seem to be, for Evelina is devastated for a remarkably long time, until she meets Orville in person again. Yet, that time marks her confessing her love for him, as she writes to Villars, she actually imagines herself in Orville's presence.

What makes Orville the object of desire for Evelina is, he is not like the other bachelors that the heroine encounters throughout the novel. She even disregards some of the suggestions of Villars, but she has a very special liking for this chivalric man. What the others deem their birthright as potent and wealthy men, Orville apparently rejects and instead, embraces an altruistic attitude that includes all, to the point that his overt actions that would otherwise imply partiality for Evelina, fall short of convincing the young lady as she mistakenly assumes the reason for his

initiating a confabulation with her, is not a conduct that reveals his very genuine and affectionate intentions for her, but "a generous resentment at seeing me neglected" (355). He is equally polite to Tom Branghton and Mrs. Mirvan; his courtesy "*knows no intermission, and makes no distinction*" (137). He provides Evelina with the ideal form of manners, he caters for the feelings of those who are neglected in conversation, in a way that he soothes the inner battles they fight. His approach to and interest in Evelina are nothing like those of his rivals'; he consciously modifies his speech in Evelina's company and he is attentive to not offending her or hurting her female pride. The precarious task of declaring his preference for her, as well as acknowledging and privileging her subjectivity, without ever objectifying her, is the outcome of his meticulously practicing the appropriate forms of gallantry. For instance, he adds an interested and sensible dimension to his response to Evelina's leaving London:

*"And does Miss Anville feel no concern at the idea of the many mourners her absence will occasion?"*

*"O, my Lord,— I'm sure you don't think—" I stopt there, for, indeed, I hardly knew what I was going to say. My foolish embarrassment, I suppose, was the cause of what followed;— for he came to me, and took my hand, saying, "I do think, that whoever has once seen Miss Anville, must receive an impression never to be forgotten." (84).*

His speech flatters Evelina. Moreover, he does not try to use his higher social standing, in order to strengthen his stance against her, making it impossible for her to reject him. By doing so, he draws a sharp line that separates him from Willoughby, whose speech is constantly modified, depending on the social status of his interlocutor and what he wishes to obtain from that person, and the reason for his being so timid and alerted derives solely from the fact of his being perpetually after achieving personal gains. Orville, on the other hand, eliminates the objectifying element that defines the libertine speech, and Evelina sincerely appreciates this novelty. In fact, in one of her letters to Villars, she makes that sharp contrast evident by juxtaposing the misogyny of the Captain, the libertinism of both Lord Merton's and Willoughby's, and Orville's moderation of gallantry. As Koehler discusses in her work, in a debate that regards the desirability of art objects (the Pantheon) or "*heavenly living objects*" of nature (Evelina and Maria Mirvan), Orville refuses to opt for either of the options, suggesting instead, "*I cannot think that either suffer by*

*being seen together*". (126)<sup>127</sup> Sir Clement, however, intervenes and reveals his disapproval of Orville's subverting the libertine codes, also subtly making a point to Evelina that, he is much more passionate about her than his rival:

*"I grant, my Lord," said Sir Clement, "that the cool eye of unimpassioned philosophy may view both with equal attention, and equal safety; but, where the heart is not so well guarded, it is apt to interfere, and render, even to the eye, all objects but one insipid and uninteresting."* (126).

His implicitly disrespecting Miss Mirvan and the whole remark's objectification of women, are further intensified by the impudent discourse of the lecherous Lord Merton. Evelina produces a response that disses libertine speech, for the sake of defending the good: "... *this other Lord, though lavish of compliments and fine speeches, seems to me an entire stranger to real good-breeding; whoever strikes his fancy, engrosses his whole fancy*". (137-8) Whereas, for Lord Merton and Sir Clement Willoughby, demonstrating a woman how much she is desired, unlike all the other options available to them, is readily generated by their unpolished and primitive masculine inclinations, which evinces what Evelina abhors, libertinism; Lord Orville "*makes no distinction*" among women and thus, he represents the sole representative of anti-libertinism. (137) Although Burney does not really reverse gender roles, her treatment of Orville suggests that it is actually an aspect of what she wishes to achieve, in a manner that echoes the maleness adhered to Richardson's *Clarissa*. As a matter of fact, Evelina is not the only person who acknowledges his truly "*feminine ... delicacy*" (318), it is also the other characters that notice it, too. For instance, Mrs. Beaumont admires his manners, promoting him to Evelina, uttering: "*un jeune homme comme il y en a peu*", (341) which translates to "a young man whom few resemble". Koehler explains the reference to Marmontel's "*La Femme comme il y en a peu*", suggesting both the function of Orville's as male paragon, on the grounds that he is one of his kind and the authoress' knowingly designating a man with qualities, traditionally associated with women.<sup>128</sup> Burney, however, is in contradiction with her words in her Preface, in which she

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<sup>127</sup> Koehler, 26

<sup>128</sup> Koehler, 26.



despises and thus, rejects the creation of a didactic paragon. Yet, she deftly reverses her words, and even though she follows a similar path as Richardson, she upholds the idea that didactic elements are constructed from contradictions:

*Let me... prepare for disappointment those who, in the perusal of these sheets, entertain the gentle expectation of being transported to the fantastic regions of Romance, where Fiction is coloured by the gay tints of luxurious Imagination, where Reason is an outcast, and where the sublimity of the Marvellous rejects all aid from sober Probability. The heroine of these memoirs, young, artless, and inexperienced, is "No faultless Monster, that the World ne'er saw," but the offspring of Nature, and of Nature in her simplest attire.*

She hints at the paragon or "*the faultless Monster*", being unreal, the mere product of the "*Imagination*", an object to meet the ultimate request in life to have an example to copy from. She manipulates her readers into acknowledging that it is the desire that creates the paragon, which is the case for Evelina. (Preface)

Orville's almost feminine gentility and his hallmark gallantry imply that he is actually the invention of Evelina, as he first appears in the novel when the protagonist is subject to the vulgar encroachments of Sir Clement's. Later in her letter to Miss Mirvan, she describes the gentleman as "*an object of ideal perfection, formed by my own imagination*". (213)

Her inexperience results in Evelina's finding herself in a great number of situations in which shame and panic prevail. This is not unique to the heroine; the readers witness plenty of instances in which the others, including even Villars and Orville experience the aforementioned feelings. However, it is worth elaborating on the occurrences that even lead Evelina to wish herself death, so she could avoid the risk of embarrassing herself in Orville's presence. Because Orville is the feminized male paragon, the ideal self she has actually created herself; she is remarkably conscious about her comportment, utterly scared of leaving the wrong impression on him. She expresses her innermost fear in her letter: "*I am inexpressibly concerned at the thought of Orville's harbouring an opinion that I am bold or impertinent, and I could almost kill myself for having given him the shadow of a reason for that idea*". (85)

The verbal attacks of Willoughby that only feebly and temporarily injure the pride of Orville's are abundant, he even makes use of philosophical terminology, suggesting that the latter's "*cool eye of unimpassioned philosophy*" reflects a "*well guarded*" heart. (126) Evelina usually opts for silence, in the face of the ill-designed comments of Willoughby's. However, regardless of her attachment to Orville, her opinion of him becomes slightly contaminated, as the readers discover that Sir Clement's degrading and demeaning actions aimed at distorting how Evelina views Orville prove to some extent successful. In addition to his most immense scheming and plotting that involve his taking possession of Evelina's letter, originally meant for Orville and his composing a letter that is characterized by impertinence that comes as a shock to Evelina upon its perusal, as she does not attribute this much openness to Orville, there are also subtler indications that Sir Clement Willoughby points at, as the novel unfolds, which are, when coupled with the inherent diffidence of Evelina, only add up to the heroine's undermining the intensity of Orville's feelings for her. Through the closure, when Willoughby gathers the news that Evelina would marry Orville, he once again denigrates him by uttering, "*... the art of Orville has prevailed; - cold, inanimate, phlegmatic as he is...*", (427) which insidiously leads Evelina to evade telling Orville about her impending meeting with Sir John Belmont, which results in his expostulation with her: "*Good Heaven!... do you indeed take me for a Stoic?*". (436) These words reflect the success of Willoughby's manipulation of how Evelina perceives Orville and they also matter, in that, they reveal the condemnation of Evelina's view of Orville by the latter, he is almost offended that Evelina still does not appreciate his intense and genuine love and care for her. This scene reveals how corrupted Evelina's interpretation of Orville as moral paragon is, made even worse by the mediations and misapprehensions that involved. With the help of this scene, Burney strengthens her idea that model selves cannot and should not be didactic constructs. The book designs Evelina as the creator of paragons, she is not to become a paragon herself. Yet, her judgments are not produced based on truth, but from a blind desire to grant another an assumed wholeness, from *méconnaissance*, as Lacan would have it.

*Here let me rest, --and snatch myself, while yet I am able, from the fascination of EGOTISM,--a monster who has more votaries than ever did homage to the most popular deity of antiquity; and whose singular quality is, that while he excites a blind and involuntar adoration in almost every individual, his influence is universally disallowed,*

*his power universally contemned, and his worship, even by his followers, never mentioned but with abhorrence.* (Dedication to Critics)

Burney in her dedicatory letter to critics, associates the ego with the paragon, which she also defines as a "*faultless Monster*" in her Preface. The authoress deals mainly with the divisive effect of egotism on persons. Egotism leads people to blindly adore themselves. Burney's discourse evinces the gap between the language that promotes the good of all people and the personal inclinations that put the subject before others. Koehler suggests that the metaphors of worship and the sacred echo the egotism's falsities with religious hypocrisy. Burney treats this phenomenon, more as a way of perception and interpretation and not as an abstract quality or state. Before she initiates the narration, the novelist attempts to convince the critics to place her on the same level with the hypocritical characters that she created. She offers a picture of the self defined by its ambiguous interaction with language, therefore, the vocabulary use associated with the repression of the morality is telling: –"disallowed", "contemned", "abhorrence", all of which strip the self off of its inherent desires and inclinations.

At the time of *Evelina*'s publication, the term "egotism" was relatively new. Margaret Anne Doody notes that "Johnson's Dictionary defines 'egotism' as a tendency to talk about oneself," but that, "Burney's use of the word does much to establish the modern meaning ... of faithful self-love with accompanying disregard for others."<sup>129</sup>

Burney's previously mentioned representation of the dynamic of the ego reflects a number of forces that can be associated with the "ego" (*moi*) of Lacan,<sup>130</sup> which is a delusional and alienated image of the self, which not only comes to being before the rise of the moral subject, but also hinders the latter's thorough and healthy construction.

This "Imaginary" self, which is formed in the "mirror stage" when the infant child is infatuated with its own assumed wholeness, this phase is characterized by the desire to attribute completion

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<sup>129</sup> *Frances Burney: The Life in the Works*, (Cambridge, 1988), 48.

<sup>130</sup> See Lacan on the mirror stage, *Écrits*, Alan Sheridan, trans. (New York, 1977), 1-7.

onto others.<sup>12</sup> This tendency reflects the self's arduous request for model selves to follow. The search in question is frustrating and exhausting in that, when met with disappointment and becomes worse, since it has its origins in narcissism and self-directed aggression. The fragile and incomplete ego "attaches itself ... as an intentional pressure bent on finding the conclusion to its own partially written story".<sup>131</sup>

As discussed before, just like for Serres, who believes miscommunication to be an inevitable occurrence in all exchanges, for Lacanian approach, perfect communication belongs to the Imaginary register. The Imaginary relation is dualistic; it is the "doubling" of the ego and the ideal other that the ego has created itself.<sup>132</sup> The binary logic in Serres's description of the struggle to exclude the parasite is also one of the defining features of Lacan's Imaginary, as Frederic Jameson notes: "The process of binary definition is ... profoundly characteristic of the Imaginary".<sup>133</sup> Both theories deem triangulation as an internal component of communication. Lacan's "third term" is the Other, the unconscious, whose duty to structure is constantly prevented by the speaking subject. Anthony Wilden suggests that "we might supplement the suggested translation of *l'Autre* as 'the unconscious' or 'Otherness' by the expression 'Thirdness'".<sup>134</sup> Like Serres's healthy flow of communication, the Imaginary register can be characterized by its conscious suppression of "Thirdness" for the sake of a stability that ironically it can never achieve.

This dissertation work has already dealt with the heroine's projection of a fictive wholeness onto Lord Orville, and "the logic of the error" in Burney, which misplaces the subject as an Imaginary

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<sup>131</sup> Ellie Ragland-Sullivan, *Jacques Lacan and the Philosophy of Psychoanalysis* (Urbana and Chicago, 1987), 59, 62.

<sup>132</sup> Gary J. Handwerk, *Irony and Ethics in Narrative From Schlegel to Lacan* [New Haven and London, 1985], 219

<sup>133</sup> Fredric Jameson, "Imaginary and Symbolic in Lacan: Marxism, Psychoanalytic Criticism, and the Problem of the Subject," *Literature and Psychoanalysis: The Question of Reading, Otherwise*, Shoshana Felman, ed. (Baltimore, 1982), 350.

<sup>134</sup> Jameson, 269.

self, as a result of misconstruction. The Imaginary register pesters the subject into identifying with idealized figures and images, and this spurs the self to produce and embrace the paragons of virtue. In the remainder of this work, the negative emotions prevalent in *Evelina* are primarily taken into consideration; how they serve to reveal the presence of the ego and its detrimental influence on the narration's moral apparatus, as well as the role these emotions play in Burney's didactic approach. The presence of the ego compromises the educative quality of *Evelina* in two ways, in addition to its general effect as a dynamic that poses an obstacle to the smooth flow of mutual exchange of moral values between the characters and the audience: a narrative structure that resists the emergence of a solid moral pattern; and the unique type of morality and gender-specific prerogatives of Villars. The ideal female comportment that Villars describes and at the same time, celebrates from the beginning of the novel, seems to support the basis for what John Zomchick calls a "normative bourgeois subject" formed by self-regulation.<sup>135</sup> His far-fetched dream becomes impossible to realize, because of the omnipresent forces of self-division and propensity of the self towards the over-enjoyment of negative emotions. His correspondences with *Evelina* may be, as Gina Campell notes, "an internal model for patriarchal readers' reception," but the supposed stability of the reading model demonstrates inner conflicts that the dynamics of the ego expose.<sup>136</sup>

Burneyan ego, as has already been argued before, displays a function of hypocrisy. *Evelina* condemns such gaps. She writes, "... *nothing can be more strangely absurd, than to hear politeness recommended in language so repugnant to it as that of Madame Duval*" (78). Generally, she is even sincerely caring towards her grandmother, but in this subtle acknowledgment of the sheer absurdity, which brings to mind her repressed mockery of some of Willoughbys ridiculous remarks. By doing so, she differs from the authoritative and peremptory writings and manner of Lady Howard and the parson, both of whom severely criticize *Evelina*'s long-lost grandmother's declaration of her remorse on her part of the whole affair that rendered

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<sup>135</sup> "Satire and the Bourgeois Subject in Frances Burney's *Evelina*," 353.

<sup>136</sup> Campell, "Bringing Belmont to Justice: Burney's Quest for Paternal Recognition in *Evelina*," 325.

Evelina a nameless child. What they believe is that, the old woman avoids taking responsibility and instead, tends to blame others in Evelina's becoming an orphan, which Villars says in an accusative tone, is her "*determined blindness*" (65). Lady Howard does not share the contents of Madame Duval's letter, but simply chooses to acquaint the parson with its chief concern, since she believes the letter is "*not worthy your notice*" (15). This behavior highlights her dismissal of Madame Duval's remorse:

*I have just had a letter from Madame Duval; she is totally at a loss in what manner to behave; she seems desirous to repair the wrongs she has done, yet wishes the world to believe her blameless. She would fain cast upon another the odium of those misfortunes for which she alone is answerable.* (15)

Ironically, however, both mighty figures of authority seem to be scared of Madame Duval's remorse, which they mockingly refuse to acknowledge; Lady Howard fears even to include it in her own polite letter: "*Can there, my good Sir, be any thing more painful to a friendly mind, than a necessity of communicating disagreeable intelligence?*" (15) Villars' response further intensifies the tension of the previous letter: "*Your Ladyship did but too well foresee the perplexity and uneasiness of which Madame Duval's letter has been productive. However, I ought rather to be thankful that I have so many years remained unmolested, than repine at my present embarrassment; since it proves, at least, that this wretched woman is awakened to remorse*". (17) Negative emotions, such as guilt, fear, shame and anxiety are abundant in this exchange. Madame Duval's unconvincing remorse that is conveyed by that "*disagreeable intelligence*" elicits "*perplexity*" and "*embarrassment*"; and the grudging "*thanks*" (16) Villars writes in the end, makes his discomfort apparent.

Another recurring theme in the narration is the concern with individuals' self-image in a given social context. Her inexperience results in Evelina's finding herself in a great number of situations in which shame and panic prevail. This is not unique to the heroine as implied above; the readers witness plenty of instances in which the others, including even Villars and Orville experience the aforementioned feelings. However, it is worth elaborating on the occurrences that even lead Evelina to wish herself death so she could avoid the risk of embarrassing herself in

Orville's presence. Because Orville is the feminized male paragon, the ideal self she has actually created; she is remarkably conscious about her comportment, utterly scared of leaving the wrong impression on him. She expresses her innermost fear in her letter: "*I am inexpressibly concerned at the thought of Orville's harbouring an opinion that I am bold or impertinent, and I could almost kill myself for having given him the shadow of a reason for that idea*". (85) Her shame escalates at times and she finds herself contemplating on self-destruction, and there is another telling instance that involves Branghtons undermining Orville, it is the moment she writes to him that ill-fated letter, she expresses her shame in another letter to Villars, "*I was half frantic, I really raved; the good opinion of Lord Orville seemed now irretievably lost. ... and I could not but conclude that, for the rest of my life, he would regard me as an object of utter contempt. The very idea was a dagger to my heart!*" (303). At times like this, she reveals an Imaginary dependence and fixation both on Orville, and on Villars, whom she calls the "*sole prop by which the poor Evelina is supported*"; (386) her apparent dependence signals her belief in achieving completion solely depending upon the perfection of another, and thus, she is even capable of self-annihilation lest she is deprived of the idealized quality of that other.

Referring back to the agonies and even existential shame of the others, there are less dramatic and severe manifestations and indications of embarrassment throughout the novel. Evelina blushes frequently, as she describes the pertinent occasions; but, so does Villars in the scene where he initially denies Evelina her journey to London, revealing the "*imputation of selfishness*". (22) In addition, when Willoughby follows Evelina to Clifton, where they are both guests, Evelina "*could not help observing, that at sight of each other both he (Orville) and Sir Clement changed colour*" (395), each man's sense of rivalry generates blushing upon seeing one another. In fact the words "change" and "colour" appear together many times in the novel. Furthermore, another description she provides of how Mr. Smith retreats into his shell of embarrassment before Sir Clement, bears outward signs of an Imaginary layer of jealousy and doubling:

*I almost could have laughed, when I looked at Mr. Smith, who no sooner saw me addressed by Sir Clement, than, retreating aloof from the company, he seemed to lose at once all his happy self-sufficiency and conceit; looking now at the baronet, now at himself, surveying, with sorrowful eyes, his dress, struck with his air, his gestures, his*

*easy gaiety; he gazed at him with envious admiration, and seemed himself, with conscious inferiority, to shrink into nothing. (247)*

Her depiction of Smith's perception of Sir Clement as an ideal ego is supported by many other instances of doubling as the novel unfolds. The most uncanny instance of doubles involves the heroine and the putative, yet oblivious "Miss Belmont", who has replaced the actual daughter of Sir John Belmont; also, Lord Orville and the epistolary persona adopted by Willoughby. Another, more amusing example is available, too; the "*full dressed, and extravagantly a-la-mode*" (491) monkey that the crass Captain forces to the presence of the foppish Lovel, cruelly uttering, "*I met a person just now so like you, I could have sworn he had been your twin-brother.*" (490) and when asked what he means by this, he defends his horrible action, "*Mean? ... why only to shew you in your proper colours*". (491) This offensive and disruptive scene that occurs shortly before the closing of the novel damages the stable ending that signifies Burney's emphasizing the fact that, even though Evelina is soon to achieve marital bliss and fulfillment and she has finally gained the recognition of her biological father; the Imaginary doubles, which are responsible for the construction of self-images through others deserve the central attention and that they will continue to linger. As a matter of fact, Imaginary forces surround the narrative; the force of Madame Duval's blind "remorse" initiates the longlasting circuit of correspondences, and thus, the narration, which interrupts the previous peace of the parson and the heroine. It also extricate from Villars a defensive case, where he wishes to reestablish his authority over Evelina by sounding convincing enough that his role in that influential past transaction was of benevolent nature.

Remorse is an ambivalent feeling that juxtaposes two contradictory forces: a suggestive moral restraint and the indulgence of negative emotions, to the point that it may even involve self-destruction, mirroring the effect of the ego. Also, since it is the emotional substratum in the book, it is worthy of a more extensive engagement, as part of the analysis. Koehler, in her article suggests that the term is defined as the combination of a sense of moral reproach with self-preoccupation, and goes on to argue that beyond its semantic connotations, it becomes a moral



domain, for it demands the approval of a character in the novel.<sup>137</sup> Villars is the judge of the verity of the remorse people feel. That is to say, he decides whether the guilt the other characters feel match his perception of how great he considers the crimes they have committed. He is triumphant as he evinces at Madame Duval's feeling of remorse at the beginning of the novel. When Evelina is in London, he acts less of the remorse police that he is, yet he is still occupied with delivering preaches about the relationship between mistakes and their negative outcomes on the psychology of an individual and how they ease the immorality of those mistakes.

*“I am sure I need not say, how much more I was pleased with the mistakes of your inexperience at the private ball, than with the attempted adoption of more fashionable manners at the ridotto. But your confusion and mortifications were such as to entirely silence all reproofs on my part.”* (65)

Villars literally encourages his charge to own her guilt, for it is where he bases his didacticism upon, he is Richardsonian in his approach to female behavior, in that, he dictates Evelina to modify and better her comportment in social settings, especially around men, like Clarissa. As Barbara Zonitch suggests, the values of “emotional self-regulation” are signs of the “new domestic ideology.”<sup>138</sup> He is the embodiment of a feminized subjectivity model, into the self-regulating boundaries of which he tries to drag Evelina.

There are a number of times, during which the abovementioned kind of bourgeois authority is interrogated in the narrative, the assumed domain Villars occupies is a prominent example. The definition of remorse Villars provides and also practices considers it to be the proper measure of an individual's self-governance, which conflicts with remorse being an extravagant physical and emotional display, which bears signs of the self-destructive potential of the ego. The scene that demonstrates the grasp at authority is between the two fathers, both of whom strives to have the final say in the heroine's fate. Zizek's suggestion that Lacanian subjects are “constitutive with

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<sup>137</sup> Koehler, 34.

<sup>138</sup> Familiar Violence: Gender and Social Upheaval in the Novels of Frances Burney [Newark, 1997], 27).

a certain guilt”, which derives from their personally experimenting with the symbolic order, which was “blocked, failed, marked with a central impossibility”. Retrieving the discussion with the symbolic order, which is concerned with the emergence of values from erroneous acts, it is safe to declare that the two fathers’ conflict provides the space to analyze the subjective guilt that Zizek outlines.

Villars explains how Caroline Evelyn had assigned him as the arbiter of the foul actions of Sir John Belmont in her deathbed, and that he has to practice his duty at all times. The original duty that has its origins in seventeen years before, revives when Lady Howard writes to Sir John Belmont and invites him to resolve the problem of Evelina. Here, it is worth remembering the earlier appointment of authority so that it can ameliorate the long-forgotten but fierce competition between the natural father and the arbitor, Sir John clearly resents Villars:

*“The venerable man who has had the care of her education, deserves your warmest acknowledgements, for the unremitting pains he has taken, and attention he has shewn, in the discharge of his trust. Indeed she has been particularly fortunate in meeting with such a friend and guardian: a more worthy man, or one whose character seems nearer to perfection, does not exist.” (163)*

Belmont acts oblivious to the whole business and does so very innocently, but having witnessed the awful predicament that specific family had to suffer from, Villars takes on the role of the saint and blindly dismisses seeking the acknowledgement of Sir John's of his daughter. Even though he is pursues the good and continues to represent the solid morality that Evelina herself thrives to achieve, his presumption proves wrong, thus to his utter disappointment, it is revealed that he has had denied the protagonist an entire childhood spent with her actual father. However, Evelina never holds grudge and continues to recognize his superiority towards Belmont.

The ternary relationship, which comprises of an inferior father, an assigned father and a deceased mother, the last of whom had granted superiority to the parson by sanctioning him to mediate the relationship between the biological yet devilish father and Evelina, is broken into pieces the moment Belmont glimpses at Evelina. He has rejected the truth until that moment, the

countenance of the protagonist is like a copy of her deceased mother. Evelina narrates the scene for Villars in her letter, combined with graphic vocabulary that reveals the hyperbolic show of remorse of the man:

*"In a voice scarce articulate he exclaimed, 'My God' does Caroline Evelyn still live?"...*

*"Lift up thy head, - if my sight has not blasted thee, -lift up thy head, thou image of my long-lost Caroline!"*

*"Leave me, Mrs. Selwyn," cried her, with quickness, "and take care of the poor child... tell her I would at this moment plunge a dagger into my heart to serve her, - but she has set my brain on fire, and I can see her no more!" (445)*

This exchange draws the attention to the magnanimity of “ego” in the novel, by positioning a variety of elements that support the presence of an Imaginary order—the visual image, the double, and implications of self-negation. In Lacan, visual perception precedes language, here the image comes before language. Belmont's agony is kindled with his glaring at Evelina for the first time ever and becoming struck by her uncanny “resemblance” to her mother. Lady Howard's previous suggestion to him that “*She is the lovely resemblance of her lovely mother*” (163) fell flat on him. Furthermore, the impact this encounter has on Sir John Belmont provides a spectacular reading since his acts of implied self-destruction and the instantaneousness the narration achieves grant the novel an impeccable vividness. The scene in question carries the whole psychic weight of the novel and the preceeding events manage to set the tone of this climactic meeting.

The suicidal tendency Sir John demonstrates when he becomes violent, recalls the actual suicide attempt of Macartney and how remorseful he then was, whereby readers witness the failure of Villars' morality as a totalizing system. Belmont is unable to contain himself and he is completely out of his once-prevalent disinterestedness to the whole business, his *anagnorisis*, as Koehler explains, subverts the previously-mentioned qualities that serve as the basis for Villars's vision of “appropriate” remorse.<sup>139</sup> Villars gives no answer to Evelina's depiction of the moment,

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<sup>139</sup> Koehler, 36.

which confirms the breach in his interpretive authority because, as stated above, he would normally decide whether the remorse is shown properly or not. Not only in this particular scene, but also, starting from the general effect of Belmont, and especially the misunderstanding that had demoted him to the status of a malevolent and care-free paternal figure, the authoress offers a representation of a primitive Imaginary self blocking the emergence of the self-regulating moral subject.

### **How kindness and civility are practiced, and the inevitable limits to them.**

At this point of this dissertation work, this specific reader deems it extra instrumental to thoroughly investigate the rare gallantry of Lord Orville and what inspired the authoress to create the character in hand, who challenges all disparities between men and women and social classes that were prevalent at the time and stands as the sole representative and embodiment of countless admirable qualities, which even a man of a superior rank would find challenging to retain. Even the greatest of men experiences slips at kindness, such examples have been previously provided regarding the parson. Whilst, Lord Orville is remarkably better at catering for the needs of those around him, the subtlety with which he performs such admirable deeds is also noteworthy. However, it is still safe to declare his kindness and perfection have limits to them, about which a number of essays will be consulted and there will be references to the pertinent passages of the novel.

Burney writes in her journal her opinion about the newly published volume of letters that the fourth Earl of Chesterfield, Philip Dormer Stanhope had written in about thirty years, which contain slightly peremptory advices about a set of interrelated comportment a young man is required to internalize in his process of becoming a reverent sociable being. Burney appreciates the letters for their having been written truly neatly and appreciates how excellent some of the hints the father provides are, but is concerned with the general tendency of the letters towards dismissal of Gentlemanlike vices; advising deceit, and exhorting to Inconstancy.<sup>140</sup>

Even though *Letters to His Son* mainly gathered the appreciation of public, to the extent that conduct manuals such as *The Polite Preceptor* took some excerpts from it, according to Hamilton's work, Burney is among the readers who believed the overall morality of the work is suffering, the chief criticism refers to the father's intimation that his son would marry a French upper-class woman, in an attempt to achieve completion in his social ascent.

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<sup>140</sup> Frances Burney, *The Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney*, ed. Lars E. Troide et al., 4 vols, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988-2003); 2:33.

Burney's extensive interest in Chesterfield's work highlights her engagement with what constitutes male virtue. In fact, in a journal entry, she describes her disapproval of an old suitor of her sister's, Alexander Seton's opinion. According to her recap, he has declared how inauthentic he finds the perfection of Samuel Richardson's Sir Charles Grandson. A consistent admirer of Richardson, the authoress was apparently very offended as she writes, "It quite hurts me to hear anybody declate a really thoroughly good man never Lived. It is so much to the disgrace of mankind."<sup>141</sup>

Her abrupt and fierce reaction against Seton's opinion, which could easily pass for a flawed thought, reflects her meticulous work on her very own creation, the male paragon of desirable comportment, Lord Orville. Her endless quest for approval is no novelty at this point of the work, another memorable instance of her diffidence occurred when she could barely suppress her amusement with her cousin Richard's approval of Lord Orville for his "extraordinary" politeness, which was followed by his confession that he was actually perusing Orville's character "every Day of his life," with the sole intention of making him "his model, as far as his situation would allow."<sup>142</sup>

Kristina Straub offers a feminist reading of Burney's early works, relevant for the discussion here, her commentary about Lord Orville's intriguing passivity during the old women's race holds a special place for the whole of this work. Therefore, the relative part of the novel will be extensively dealt with. In order to provide a historical basis for the sake of the validity of the discussion, it is worth noting that the production of the novel coincides with the rise of politeness in the early eighteenth century. Burney not only promotes the system of polite behavior of the time of her debut book's publication, but she also reveals that system to be partially disrupted with regard to how masculinity is built from scratch. In addition, Burney underscores the notion that good breeding and its positive outcomes are highly desirable for the sanctity of all people, yet she additionally suggests how inadequate one-sided contributions in a given two-way

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<sup>141</sup> (*The Early Journals*, 1:47).

<sup>142</sup> (*The Early Journals*, 3:7, 10, 9).

interaction in an environment where impertinence and cunning acts permeate prove to be, also implying that polite behavior can only achieve a transitory rapprochement.<sup>143</sup>

To provide further information for the relevant historical conditions, it should be noted that there was a desperate request for a stable environment, finding a common ground and keeping novelties to minimum in an age of exceptionally numerous advancements regarding politics, religion, science and economy. As John Brewer explains, "The aim of politeness was to reach an accommodation with the complexities of modern life and replace political zeal and religious bigotry with mutual tolerance and understanding. The means of achieving this was a manner of conversing and dealing with people which, by teaching one to regulate one's passions and to cultivate good taste, would enable a person to realize what was in the public interest and for the general good. It involved both learning a technique of self-discipline and adopting the values of a refined, moderate sociability."<sup>144</sup> People were concerned with the outmoded male pride and wanted it refined, particularly with regard to how the members of aristocracy embraced it and used it to their advantage.<sup>145</sup> However, the change did not only affect the said members but middle classes, who were struggling to achieve upward mobility, also partook of the same transition. It was deemed a must for people to imitate the lifestyle, taste for art objects, behavioral patterns and the morality of the gentry if they wanted to become their equal.<sup>146</sup>

The story officially commences as Evelina steps foot in London, which is considered to be the lotus of action. The city also matters in that, it is reek with a great variety of people and admirable art performances to appreciate and thus, it enables people to demonstrate their own

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<sup>143</sup> Kristina Straub, *Divided Fictions: Fanny Burney and Feminine Strategy* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1987), 50-52.

<sup>144</sup> John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1997), 102.

<sup>145</sup> Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain, 1660-1800* (Harlow: Longman, 2001), 79. References are to this edition

<sup>146</sup> Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination in England 1500-1800* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 325. References are to this edition.

interpretation of appropriate polite behavior and come in contact with people of higher social classes. The novel encompasses a lot of excursions to balls and *ridottos*, the theatre and the opera, as well as public gardens such as Ranelagh and Vauxhall. These scenes both offer a vivid picture of the life London offers, and the interaction of people, some of whom seem out of place, and even juxtaposed when their refinement is questioned. Burney executes a meticulous job by letting the everchanging configurations of individuals coexist, whereby she manages to suggest how public places meet the need for a platform that enables people to observe and also display themselves as if they were an art object.

There are three main elements that consistently appear in the definitions of a courteous male in the eighteenth century: propriety or decorum; the display of elegant, agreeable manners; and generosity, or accommodation to one's companions.<sup>147</sup> Conduct books commonly suggest that it takes discipline and the ability to reflect to attain these qualities. Natural passions need to be put under control, their free expression is detrimental to the overall harmony. Individuals are expected to be fully alerted at all times to perceive the feelings of the others around them and when need be, they are required to act selfless in the interest of another person. Moreover, the early-century beliefs about politeness pinpoint the idea that how people behave in public should derive from their internalized morality, there should be a clear connection between the two.

Chesterfield did not mean to publish his collection of advices to his son but rather wished to keep them as private correspondences. Therefore, his promotion of benevolent manners does not come from an attempt to encourage his son to show a genuine interest for the needs of the people around him, but merely out of his fatherly desire to see him make career-related accomplishment. Also controversial is his inculcating certain sexual practices in his son, regardless it could be argued that, it is the assumed aristocratic privilege and its countless years of execution that fostered him to make those corrupted suggestions and it is not entirely his fault to begin with.

Concerned with the construction of masculinity in the eighteenth century, Anthony Fletcher examines and interpretes the issue as the following: "The ideology of civility and sensibility ...

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<sup>147</sup> Carter, 21.



concealed the private world of the double standard and of men's insistent enjoynment, almost as their birthright in managing patriarchy, of their sexuality. When we turn from courtesy literature to diaries and correspondence, court records and other genres such as the novel, this whole world comes alive."<sup>148</sup>

He goes on to argue that the double standard permitted men to "seek consolation and relief from the pressures and responsibilities that their patriarchal role cast upon them" by pursuing sexual pleasure: "hedonism and debauchery beckoned men who are minded to seek refuge from the demaning kind of self control and life of virtue set out in the courtesy literature."<sup>149</sup>

The exposure of the said double standard in the private letters of Chesterfield's seemed to have triggered a reaction against the discrepancy in the readers of the middle classes, for they made their disapproval very apparent as discussed above. Their resentment with the entitlement of the upper-classes became further intensified with the rise of the culture of sensibility, which by implication has a common ground with politeness, regardless there is a distinction between them. As the Scottish physician George Cheyne defines it, there are certain people who possess a greater physiological sensitivity and it enables them to experience a higher degree of sympathy for other people. The ability to empathize with others was believed to bring people together and create a desirable bond between them, which in turn produced a desirable set of social behaviors. Thus, the quality of being sensible was associated with subjects of refined feeling with grater moral virtue.<sup>150</sup>

There is obviously a link between the sentimental practice of Adam Smith's, which is mainly characterized by the attempt to correctly interpret the feelings of another, and the polite practice of accommodating oneself to the feelings of those in one's vicinity. However, the early

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<sup>148</sup> Fletcher, 339.

<sup>149</sup> Fletcher, 340.

<sup>150</sup> Barker-Benfield; Janet Todd, *Sensibility: An Introduction* (London: Methuen, 1986); and ohn Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

assumption that concern for others could be acquired by self-discipline was outmoded by the time Chesterfield's *Letters* was published in the 1770s, for the prevalent assumption was that sympathy was innate, the product of refined sensibility. This belief is highly dependent on the subject's being natural. The ideals of sensibility, in a way that wreaks havoc with those of politeness, involved "authenticity rather than show" and "spontaneous feeling rather than artifice."<sup>151</sup>

Thus, it was possibly challenging for a late-century reader to appropriately make the deduction that Chesterfield was doubtlessly under the influence of the earlier assumption, and correspondingly, his spurring his son to consciously working towards pleasing the others around him might seem self-serving. Furthermore, wishing his child to eventually succeed in his diplomatic career, he encourages him to master "the graces", or the art of pleasing, to the point that he might need to consult to its ultimate form, flattery, if the situation calls for it. Ultimately, his wish for his son to cultivate a pleasing image, even if it does not necessarily reflect his inner feelings and thoughts, could be perceived as a movement away from the qualities of openness and sponatenousness that define the culture of sensibility.

Chesterfied's mother's early death led him to spend more than an anticipated amount of time with his maternal grandfather. He was also engaged with writing a book that contains advices for his daughter. This is not to say that Chesterfield was gifted with the extensive knowledge on child rearing but rather, it was a family more to pass the wisdom of the elders to the younger generations. The contents of the advices that the two parents provides are not similar, yet their arduous spurring of their respective offspring towards success is the same.

Both fathers apply to their relavant experience to inform their child of the practices they should evade, as well as provide examples that they could readily consult when need be. Both authors reflect the realities of life from their own point of view, in a cautious and affectionate way that echoes the sometimes too lengthy preaching of a father, with the minor distinction that what they

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<sup>151</sup> John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1997), 114-15.

were offering functions more as a tool that the youngster could go to when he actually wishes, making the advices much more valuable and less peremptory.

Also important is the fact that, the early letters of Chesterfield are remarkably innocuous in nature, particularly with regard to his close interest in his son's education and his advices on virtuous behavior, as well as his emphasis on the importance of sense of duty. The book only becomes suspicious as the child nears the age of sexual activity, it marks the beginning of the father's erroneously promoting the disruptive double standards, particularly when viewed in light of the sentimentalist standards pertaining to the time of the book's becoming public. Additionally, the linguistic command apparent in the letters, which is deemed appealing and rather comprehensible for a young boy is also noteworthy, in that it reflects the father's grasp of some pedagogical norms.

Burney's appreciating Chesterfield's work for containing "some excellent hints for Education" may be the outcome of Chesterfield's admiration of John Locke's seminal work, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, published in 1693. Locke was supporting the ideal that good breeding that the individual displays was based on inner virtue. It is not by mere instinct that he wrote a book on appropriate education, he developed his philosophy after having read 40 conduct books.<sup>152</sup> The statements he makes as to how young men should behave in public, reflect the ideals of male comportment of the era, in that it is quite logical and not challenging to make sense of.

Fletcher in the next page of his work argues that, a new element was added to all conduct literature after 1660, and he says it was the construction of gender: "The stress in this literature on inculcating behaviour according to a person's place in certain predetermined social and gender categories-- gentlemen, ladies, servants, apprentices-- was entirely new." Locke's work was perennial and it appealed to people from all classes and both genders, however, he was considerably more concerned with what constitutes a gentlemen, in terms of his character. As Carter comments, "With its emphasis on breeding as a virtue engendering benevolence,

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<sup>152</sup> Fletcher, 334.

consideration and thoughtfulness, polished through a relaxed and pleasing deportment, Locke's *Thoughts* had much to contribute to this new culture and, more specifically, to men's understanding of themselves as 'polite' gentlemen."<sup>153</sup>

Locke discusses the methods which can help youngsters make reasonable decisions, and commit mindful actions. Even though he favors reason over emotional instincts, he recognizes that good breeding shows with the correct interpretation of a given social situation. He believes it to be "lie not in the putting off the Hat, nor making of Complements; but in a due and free composure of Language, Looks, Motion, Posture, Place, etc suited to Persons and Occasions, andd can be learn'd only by Habit and Use."<sup>154</sup>

It is quite common and natural for individuals to experience sudden changes at their immediate environment, which by implication underlines drawing on experience that is formed as a result of observation. Locke emphasizes the worth of good breeding and that it could be studied along with "Knowledge of the World, Vertue, Industry, and a love of Reputation"<sup>155</sup> because "Breeding is that, which sets a Gloss upon all other good qualities, and renders them useful to [the gentleman], in procuring him the Esteem andd Good Will of all that he comes near. Without good Breeding his other Accomplishments make him pass but for Proud, Conceited, Vain, or Foolish".<sup>156</sup>

Chesterfield's letters echoe the Lockean teachings about good breeding using a simplified language in an attempt to address his young boy better. In addition to the already Lockean basis of his argument, he adds another dimension that mainly involves his encouragement of his youngster to heed attention to the feelings of those around him, believing that interaction with others is ameliorated by taking one's interlocutors' feelings into careful consideration. For

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<sup>153</sup> Carter, 54.

<sup>154</sup> John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, ed. John W. Yolton and Jean S. Yolton (1693; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 151.

<sup>155</sup> Locke, 156.

<sup>156</sup> Locke, 150.

instance, Chesterfield urges his ten-year-old son to be aware of others' feelings as he warns him, "The first principle of ... good breeding is never to say anything that you think can be disagreeable to anybody in company; but, on the contrary, you should endeavour to say what will be agreeable to them; and that in an easy and natural manner, without seeming to study for compliments."<sup>157</sup>

He defines civility as "a disposition to accommodate and oblige other",<sup>158</sup> and, like Locke, accentuates the necessity of civility in the completion of greater qualities: "As learning, honour, and virtue, are absolutely necessary to gain you the esteem and admiration of mankind; politeness and good-breeding are equally necessary to make you welcome and agreeable in conversation and common life".<sup>159</sup> He continues with lamenting the inability of people to accurately realize and appreciate the great talents in the same page, yet he writes, they are "judges of the lesser talents such as civility, affability, and an obliging, agreeable address and amanner; because they fell the good effects of them, as making society easy and pleasing". The idea here supports the harmonious connection between inner virtue and outward comportment. A gentleman's good public image shows his success in having properly synthesized his inner virtue with his agreeable manners.

To sum up, even though Chesterfield exclusively meant to educate his son, he also inspired a successive generation of readers, including Burney, herself. The early-eighteenth-century ideal of male politeness, of which he offers an elaborate image, helped the authoress build the base for her sentimental model of the man of feeling, and eventually, Lord Orville. Even her creation faces lapses when confronted with the pressures of the other men around him.

*"... there must have been some mistake in the birth of that young man; he was, undoubtedly, designed for the last age; for, if you observed, he is really polite."* (339) Mrs. Selwyn's utterance

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<sup>157</sup> Philip Dormer Stanhope, *The Letters of the Earl of Chesterfield to His Son*, ed. Strachey, 1:129. References are to this edition.

<sup>158</sup> Stanhope, 177

<sup>159</sup> Stanhope, 87

illuminates the authoress' tendency towards expressing her appreciation of the traditions and practices of a bygone era, since the barb of the character reads "*the last age*". In fact, Lord Orville embraces all the qualities highly valued by Locke and Chesterfield. The protagonist praises his pleasing manners countless times, once she writes, "*his manners are so elegant, so gentle, so unassuming, that they at once engage esteem, and diffuse complacence*". (85) She offers a further description of him in the same page: "*he is most assiduously attentive to please and to serve all who are in his company, and, though his success is invariable, he never manifests the smallest degree of consciousness.*"

As Locke notes, "If in Conversation a Man's Mind be taken up with a solicitous watchfulness about any part of his Behaviour; instead of being mended by it, it will be constrain'd, uneasie and ungraceful".<sup>160</sup> Completely agreeing with him, Chesterfield states that it does not suffice being civil, people should be at "ease" while they perform acts of civility. He also maintains that, rather than being paralysed by the fear of being laughed at, a truly well-bred man is equally comfortable speaking with kings as with children.<sup>161</sup> Hamilton argues that Evelina suffers from *mauvaise honte* early in her journey on the contrary, Lord Orville provides the example of the exact opposite of her.<sup>162</sup> Chesterfield describes the particular discomfort as "the distinguishing character of an English booby" who is "frightened out of his wits when people of fashion speak to him; and, when he is to answer them, blushes, stammers, and can hardly get out what he would say".<sup>163</sup> Lord Orville is the perfect match for the description that Chesterfield makes, he manages to stay silent towards the vulgarity of Madame Duval, or the hoarseness of the Captain, and he also responds good-humouredly to the satiric Mrs Selwyn, he also makes it apparent that he can make sense of the sometimes-confusing remarks she makes.

Evelina's feeling of gratitude towards Lord Orville, which the readers occasionally witness, is kindled very early in the novel at Mrs Stanley's ball. As a mere social nobody she benefits

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<sup>160</sup> Locke, 151.

<sup>161</sup> Chesterfield, 88.

<sup>162</sup> Hamilton, 425.

<sup>163</sup> Stanhope, 88.

handsomely from the condescension of a lord, for whom she expected she would be then. No matter how bashful she feels at the moment, she desperately needs the protection of a well-bred man. After her yearnings have been answered to her pleasant surprise, she remarks of Orville, "*had I been the person of the most consequence in the room, I could not have met with more attention and respect*". (37) The condescension of an aristocrat during an exchange can alleviate any awkwardness occasioned by the clash of different social classes in any public situation.

In fact, while condescension may appear as an egalitarian practice, it actually holds the power of maintaining the gap between different social ranks. In other words, the condescension shown by a superior will probably lead the inferior party to feel a sense of obligation towards the other.

Evelina's behavior confirms her understanding of this silent rule, as she becomes exceptionally disturbed when the Branghtons use her name to arrange themselves a ride home from Kensington Gardens in Lord Orville's carriage. On the contrary, Tom Branghton, under the spell of her father's belief that there is no point in knowing a lord "*if you're never the better for him*", (298) finds a way to stand in Lord Orville's presence the following day, by using Evelina's name again and very crudely, demands assistance from Orville regarding his own business. Later on when he reports Orville's response, he says "*he's no more proud than I am, and he was civil as if I'd been a lord myself*", (302) which supports the idea that Orville is a good-mannered man, indeed, whereas his previous conversational partner is utterly ignorant and he lacks the good breeding Lord Orville has apparently mastered to perfection.

In spite of the duality that polite displays of condescension give rise to, Orville's sincere wish to engage in conversations with his social inferiors draws a sharp line that distinguishes him from his snobbish sister, Lady Louisa, his mischievous *fiancé* Lord Merton, and the foppish Lovel, last of whom compliments Mrs Beaumont "*with the most obsequious respect*" but takes "*no sort of notice of any other person*" in the room, and he does so all consciously. (341) The characters named above serve to illustrate that good breeding is not a gift that is granted to the members of aristocracy at birth, or being in the company of an exemplary person does not automatically yield such desirable actions. Rather, as both Locke and Chesterfield pronounce in their respective works, the cultivation of civility is only realized as a result of consistent and accurate practice.

When Evelina encounters Lord Merton for the first time, she makes an impressively fast and accurate judgment and concludes him to be "*some low-bred, and uneducated man*", from the careless manner, with which he ignores the sanctity of the party, solely in a crass attempt to capture Evelina's uninterrupted attention and talk to her privately. He does not stop staring at her, which as a result, makes her feel uncomfortable, and he proceeds to running a highly improper investigation of who she is, in a way that everyone in the vicinity could hear him, "*in an audible whisper, which is a mode of speech very distressing and disagreeable to bystanders*" (125), Evelina describes.

She eventually discovers the true identity of him and expresses her surprise at his unpolishedness despite his aristocratic background and wryly remarks, "*Even Sir Clement Willoughby appeared modest in comparison with this person*". (125) The irony here lies in her previous judgment of Sir Clement Willoughby, with whom all her early encounters serve to help her internalize the fact that extravagantly complimenting a woman, to the extent that she feels herself at distress, shows the lack of discretion on part of the male. In other words, polite language is a must, but it does not suffice on its own. Evelina has had enough occasions to conclude her observation that, another indication of good breeding is the ability to display appropriate behavior that a specific social context requires from its subjects, in a way that shows deference to the needs of the others in one's immediate surrounding.

Sir Clement wittily exerts power over Evelina in order to eventually render her unable to resist his charm and duly surrender, his self-centeredness becomes immediately apparent in the ridotto episode and as the novel unfolds, he only becomes more disruptive. As discussed before, his understanding of social codes is much more advanced than that of Evelina's, aware of this, he constantly seeks the breaches in the rules of polite conduct in order to use them to his advantage. For instance, Mrs. Mirvan admonishes that, it is "*highly improper for young women to dance with strangers, at any public assembly*", (46) and the propensity of a stranger to intrude on a group of people is considered presumptuous, if that individual is unknown to any of the members. Willoughby, on the other hand, "*with the greatest ease imaginable*" initiates a conversation "*in that free style which only belongs to old and intimate acquaintance*". (47) Shortly afterwards, Evelina remarks, he has "*the assurance to rise ... and walk close by my side, as if of my party!*".



(48) Sir Clement pesters the guardian of Evelina, Mrs Mirvan in a similar way with his insistent attitude towards staying in the company of the two ladies, weary of the impropriety and torturing persistence and boldness of Willoughby, she acquiesces to dance with him, reluctantly granting the man a hard-earned victory.

Sir Clement enjoys seeing Evelina embarrassed, he constantly practices his assumed superiority over her by constantly making her feel overwhelmed, exhausted and speechless. His insidiously forcing her to make an explanation for a lie he blames her for having told, she collapses and throws a crying fit, at the sight of which, he cunningly exclaims, "*What have I done!*" (55) reflecting his treacherous plotting to evade any responsibility for a young woman's agony and let her suffer. Accordingly, she refers to him as "*my tormentor*" (54) and "*my evil genius*" (55) out of indignation as she describes the scene. Back to the topic, the lower she feels in his presence, the less challenging a target to conquer she becomes for him. His refusal to take responsibility for the immature and truly awful deeds he has committed aligns him with the extraordinarily rude and unfeeling Captain Mirvan, with whom he designs an outrageously malign plot to startle Madame Duval, his ready submission to partake of the plan of the malicious Captain Mirvan reveals his intention to have his blessing and ultimately have easier access to the household. The provided pretext referring to Mirvan, his profession as a sea captain, however partially, justifies his ignorance of the principles of civility. Whereas, Sir Clement has no foundation for his hoarseness, aside from his everlasting thirst for creating opportunities to exert his masculine power, which proves impossible to quench for good.

Evelina stresses that real politeness is a learned behavior. When she blurts "*If I have offended you, you have but to leave me-- and O how I wish you would!*" to him, he replies, criticizing her manners, "*My dear creature, why where could you be educated?*". (51-52) He underscores the expectations of society from women, that she is supposed to suppress her feelings and hapless, resort to silence. She learns from experience that her free expression of her feelings gives way to "a retaliatory reflex on the part of society"<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Waldo S. Glock, "Appearance and Reality: The Education of Evelina," *Essays in Literature* 2, no. 1 (1975): 35.

Her rejecting Lovel's dance proposal by laughing in his face at Mrs. Stanley's ball enrages him and he resents her for an excruciatingly long time for it and literally harnesses every opportunity to take her down at their impending encounters. Although laughter may seem like an appropriate response to someone clad with the same ridiculous clothes and the ostentatious gestures and manners that couple his overall foppish look, both sexes must repress their laughter in a social situation that involves the pride of another. As Hester Chapone explains: "It is so shocking an outrage against society to talk of, or laugh at any person in his own presence, that one would think it could only be committed by the vulgar. ... No person living is insensible to the injury of contempt, nor is there any talent so invidious, or so certain to create ill-will, as that of ridicule."<sup>165</sup>

Chesterfield discourages his son from laughter, although as a loving father, he heartily wishes him to smile out of pure merriness as long as he lives.<sup>166</sup> Burney clearly agrees with him, making sure Evelina suffers from the deserved maltreatment of Lovel, the by-product of which, in turn, reveals the lack of civility of the man, more than apparent from the way he literally tortures the protagonist for an immature and momentary mistake that never repeats and which is the obvious result of lack of relevant instruction.

Witnessing the uncomfortable exchange, Lord Orville instantly recovers from his shock at the heroine's laughter and defends her against Lovel. Unlike Evelina, he manages to suppress his feelings, in more than one occasion indeed, having had more experience in situations that strictly demand civility. For example, he yields to the claim of Sir Clement and lets him escort Evelina home after opera and all the while, he conceals his anxiety about the affair by resisting his envious urges. Furthermore, like his female counterpart, Mrs. Mirvan, he is always concerned about the negative feelings of others, and he repeatedly changes the topic of conversation in order to terminate the prevailing tension that puts certain participants at unease. At the ridotto, he takes Evelina to a seat and quite gentlemanly assures her that she did not offend him by having used his name. At a later instance, following the protagonist's distressful experience at Marylebone, he

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<sup>165</sup> Hester Chapone, *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind* (1773), vol. 2 of *Female Education in the Age of Enlightenment*, ed. Janet Todd (London: William Pickering, 1996), 182-3.

<sup>166</sup> Stanhope, 212.

postpones talking about a subject that he knows would further abash her and instead, lets her retrieve her usual humor back by taking a brief pause before initiating the impending conversation. Truly considerate, he acts very quickly to convince her that he does not suspect any wrong-doings on her part of the business. By doing so, from the very beginning, as supported by numerous examples, he functions as the exact opposite and eventually, the antidote of Sir Clement Willoughby, who manipulates and wrecks the feelings of the young woman for the sake of keeping his suffocating grab at her going.

His exemplary manners bring to mind his association with aristocracy. Intensified by the novel's refrainment from making any reference to the prior education or breeding of Orville's. In fact, no background information concerning his parents or teachers is provided, leaving unintentionally the impression that his politeness and the quality of his being civil come from within. Moreover, the extraordinarily abominable vulgarity of the Branghtons seems like a case in point in claiming that it is exclusively the members of the upper-class order, who could achieve genuine politeness. However, it could also be argued that the Branghtons do not really aspire it, they have no interest in enhancing themselves, on the contrary, they occasionally seek to accomplish their personal business by using Evelina's name in Orville's presence. Also remarkable are the habitual hoarseness of Lady Louisa and Lord Merton, who serve to suggest that association of upper-class upraising with inner goodness falls flat with regard to desirable exterior behaviour. Therefore, the words of admiration of Mrs. Beaumont, "*un jeune homme comme il y en a peu*" (341), solely condemns the lack of men who would actually strive to achieve the mastery of the self-discipline alike, which would pave the way for their showing genuine respect for others. However, the protagonist is exemplary in that, Burney was arguably promoting a form of meritocratic pattern which allows for a young lady's marrying a man whose social rank outstrips that of her father's by several degrees. She deservedly earns the reverence of an earl, Lord Orville because, as a teachable young woman, she displays signs of politeness that stems from her being innately virtuous.

Evelina admires the politeness of Orville, but she is usually not followed by the other participants. In order to imply his being no friend to gaming because of his interest in Lord Merton's affairs, he proposes that the wager between Lord Merton and Jack Coverley should have

charitable ends, instead of supporting the men to mindlessly flaunt the wealth they own. Coverley responds rather mockingly to his offer, condemning his gravity: "*Egad, my Lord, your Lordship has a most remarkable odd way of taking things*". (350) His company stays indifferent to his considerate and truly reasonable point he makes, and he finds himself expressing to Evelina that the person who deserves censure is not "the one who adapts the conversation to the company" but "the one who chooses to be above it".<sup>167</sup> Chesterfield's warning to his son underlines the act of civility, Lord Orville is forced to perform: "Take the tone of the company that you are in, and do not pretend to give it; be serious, gay, or even trifling, as you find the present humour of the company; this is an attention due from every individual to the majority"<sup>168</sup>. Thus, Orville's words of virtue fall short of convincing Coverley and Merton, as a matter of fact, they only postpone their ultimate decision and opt for betting anyway. Orville is the embodiment of exemplary civility and conversational altruism, but such qualities require a knowing audience's appreciation. On the contrary, this episode emphasizes the inevitable outcome of promoting good manners to people who may not acknowledge it; if not requested, it is no longer polite to suggest civility.

The qualities Lord Orville embraces, such as propriety, compassion and sensitivity appear in eighteenth-century conduct literature for men, thus their sole association with women is rather outmoded. In fact, caring about how the others would feel, thriving to keep the harmony of the group alive in a way that includes all parties are considered the concern of both sexes. Interestingly, both the high-spirited Coverley and the heroine herself, attribute him femaleness. While, the former makes fun of Orville's masculinity, because he drives the phaeton too cautiously saying: "*why, my Lord Orville is as careful,--egad, as careful as an old woman!*". (345) The protagonist, on the other hand, utters words of admiration upon observation, suggesting that he has a feminine delicacy. L. Lynette Eckersley argues that Lord Orville's feminization was done deliberately, in an attempt to sharply contrast him with Captain Mirvan,

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<sup>167</sup> Stanhope, 293.

<sup>168</sup> Stanhope, 181.

who is "loud, impatient, gruff, rough, and often impertinent" in "an exaggerated representation of masculine traits."<sup>169</sup>

The strenuous struggle to reform deranged men and their disruptive manners and the by-product of this attempt, the promotion of the cultures of both politeness and sensibility produced intriguing fears about effeminacy throughout the pertaining century. The fear about men possessing female qualities was prevalent. The whole conception of effeminacy was slightly distorted. Stephen H. Gregg makes the distinction that whereas effeminacy is associated with softness, weakness, loss of self-control, and enslavement to one's passions, manliness consists of "solid qualities" such as tenacity, courage, and resolution along with restraint and self-control.<sup>170</sup>

Furthermore, Hamilton refers to theorists of politeness as far back as Locke, who believed that "male traits such as hardiness, confidence and poise could be demonstrated through dancing and that masculine rationality and self-mastery could be displayed in conversational circles that included women", revealing that the desire to reconstruct male manners had the inherent anxiety about the reformation of masculinity "along feminized lines".<sup>171</sup>

Lord Orville experiences a lapse of civility only in the presence of a suspected rivalry. His lack of control stresses the latent tension between masculinity and civility in the book and implies a hairline fracture in the ideology of politeness. When Orville realizes that Evelina is with Macartney in the garden at Clifton with no attendants, he is instantly taken by jealousy and has trouble sticking to his civil, agreeable manners. When the protagonist encounters him, she reports that he does not offer her his hand as he usually does, he goes mute, and his smile does not feel

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<sup>169</sup> L. Lynette Eckersley, "The Role of *Evelina*'s 'Worthiest Object' in Frances Burney's Resistance to Eighteenth-Century Gender Ideology," *Eighteenth-Century Novel* 2 (2002): 200.

<sup>170</sup> Stephen H. Gregg. "'A Truly Christian Hero': Religion, Effeminacy, and Nation in the Writings of the Societies for Reformation of Manners," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 25, no. 1 (2001): 18.

<sup>171</sup> Hamilton, P. (2007). Monkey Business: Lord Orville and the Limits of Politeness in Frances Burney's *Evelina*. *Eighteenth Century Fiction*, 19(4), 432. doi: 10.1353/ecf.2007.0022

sincere. Also, when Evelina tries to clear the air by attempting to make an explanation, he listens but responds rather tersely. Later, when she reveals her wish to talk privately with Macartney about his personal affairs, Orville replies in a way that makes his annoyance apparent: "*is it possible, Madam, you could suppose the affairs of an utter stranger can excite my curiosity?*". (366) The gravity and coldness, with which Orville replies to her genuinely selfless and considerate intention that concerns the well-being of another man abashes her, as she expresses it when giving an overview of their encounter. The readers are already accustomed with how Orville would normally handle the situation, yet he is caught unawares and obviously struggles to act like his usual self.

As Hamilton discusses, explained with Lockean terms, the dearth of Orville's governing his passionate instincts implies his tendency towards feminine irrationality, signalled by his abrupt and insensible responses, he is for the time being, aligned with the excessively hoarse and justifiably masculinized Captain Mirvan, whose constant verbal jabs that unfeelingly assail his interlocutor or the occasional physical attacks he performs, are adhered to his being a sea man and thus, natural.<sup>172</sup> Additionally, his failure to repress his feeling of competition identifies him with the gamblers, Merton and Coverley, the portrayal of whom is deliberately made derisory implied by their extreme liking for gambling.

Another element that signals politeness is the individual's command of body language, tone of voice and facial expression, particularly in company, according to Chesterfield. Burney was definitely following the line that he drew, for she created a number of scenes that revolve around the interpretation of the abovementioned signs that the heroine duly makes note of. For instance, Orville becomes startled by Evelina's having changed her mind about staying in and going to the assembly in Bristol and dance with Sir Clement, instead. He no longer addresses her and averts his eyes whenever those of Evelina's are fixed on them. After the night comes to an end, Evelin reports, "*Lord Orville's reception of us was grave and cold: far from distinguishing me, as usual, by particular civilities, Lady Louisa herself could not have seen me enter the room with more*

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<sup>172</sup> Hamilton, 432

*frigid unconcern, not have more scrupulously avoided honouring me with any notice*" (401).

Leveling Lord Orville with his sister matters, in that, she is only in good spirits and behaves good-mannered when she is in the same room with the people that she wishes to please, Orville, on the other hand, is habitually attentive and he practices condescension all the time. The gap between the siblings is accentuated on the brother's referring Evelina as "sister". In turn, Lady Louisa acts very arrogantly, she draws her hand to her side, becomes morose, impatiently bites on her lips and abruptly replies to his brother's question and offers to leave his brother with his "new sister" and leaves the room, leaving Lord Orville "*thunderstruck*" (376). Evelina feels her attitude towards her person is "*cold, distant and haughty*" (378). Her interpretation of Lady Louisa's bodily expression concludes that she is very self-conceited and definitely impolite. Next day, she continues to resent the likeness between them as she describes the moment Orville pays his compliments: "*almost as coldly as Lady Louisa paid hers*" (407).

It is worth noting that there are a number of imperfect women in the narration, they serve to prove that anyone could be rude, not just men. However, when class-related differences enter the equation, the immaturity of Lady Louisa gains more momentum. That is to say, in contrast to Madame Duval's acquired social status and wealth, and the vulgarity of the Branghton sisters that is quite graphically revealed to the readers during their fight over Mr. Smith and Mr. Brown, Lady Louisa is a noble-born. Therefore, she plays a revolutionary part in deconstructing the long-established belief that rudeness is a flaw unique to men, and the members of low social order.

In light of this, adopting his sister's habit of neglecting people and making them feel unwelcome, and her landmark displays of mannerisms, Orville once again inclines towards femininity. The fissures in his civility expose how his jealousy disrupts his certain, otherwise exemplary male manners, and he becomes unable to control his passions with reasoning. As his sexual interest forces itself to the foreground, his politeness decreases; and consequently, his identity as a true gentleman takes a formidable blow and starts to lose its credibility. Intervening at the wager between Merton and Coverley, and the free expression of his jealousy, respectively require and render him a manly man. However, attending to the obligatory prerogatives of manliness and still being civil at every social context, with everyone he encounters becomes a slippery slope for him and he occasionally experiences slips.

His civility never takes a major hit until the foot race episode, where he mostly stays admittedly passive, whereas the heroine, who is usually ineffectual and neglected even in mere conversation, ventures to intervene when one of the old women finally and inevitably collapses. She cannot realize her immediate wish to offer aid because Lord Merton prevents her from doing so, claiming that it is "*foul play*", (374) at the expense of exposing Evelina as someone who is either ignorant of the rules of the games, or someone who does not show reverence to the game that gives enjoyment to the majority of the party. However, unlike the earlier satiric scene in which Evelina bursts into laughter to the sight of the foppish Lovel, her naivete in this case implies her moral superiority over the other members of the group, no matter how socially inappropriate her behavior is. However futile it is, her compassionate and selfless urge distinguishes her from the other constituents and places upon them a tacit judgment regarding the breach in their humanity and lack of deference to the immediate needs of the inferiors.

Lord Merton's exact social stance is never revealed, but the title "Lord" implies his proximity with Lord Orville, in terms of rank. He is "a confirmed libertine", who has "already dissipated more than half his fortune" because of gambling and promiscuity, as a result, his male companions "*consisted chiefly of gamblers and jockeys, and among women he was rarely admitted*". (331) He will soon marry Lady Louisa and he will, by implication, run through her fortune, as well. As may be expected, Orville has initially opposed the match, but to no avail. Therefore, rather maturely he has chosen to become "*tolerably quiet*" (332) during the foot race, knowing that he cannot reason with Merton and also that, even if he tries, his attempts may upset his sister. By so doing, Burney manages to provide a sound background story to alleviate Orville's otherwise irretrievable failure to demonstrate resolution and courage, which are among the complementary components of true masculinity. Since he holds both economic and political power, implied by his aristocratic rank, the authoress makes an additional and very smart contribution by referring to his body language, which is described as the same way he conveys his jealousy: he looks "*very grave during the whole transaction*", and afterwards he is "*thoughtful*" and walks "*by himself*" that the protagonist assumes she is left alone with her meditations (373-374). He is observably annoyed and he probably resents the conditions that have led him to acquiesce to this utter banality.



More significantly, the whole given environment encompasses of people from various social classes, therefore their needs and demands are in a very sharp conflict, and their reconciliation seems almost impossible according to my reading. Orville has to be preternaturally neat here; he prioritizes his sister's esteem for his person, which renders him impotent in the matter of his social obligation towards the old female contestants. Regardless, he risks losing the esteem of Evelina, the only person in the group who feels compassion for the women. In this light, Burney arguably created a situation devoid of the possibility to satisfy all parties involved, he is unable to show complaisance and condescension to everyone, figuratively speaking, his hands are tied. This scene, as Hamilton argues, suggests that while politeness may be the means of displaying inner virtue, it lacks the motive power to elicit virtuous behaviour from others.<sup>173</sup> As claimed above, civility cannot be produced by using coercion. Correspondingly, Coverley and Merton remain as unfeeling as they usually are, further accentuated by the exhibition of Coverley's ungentlemanly sense of competition which gives him a fit of "*unmanly rage*" and he "*seemed scarce able to refrain even from striking*" his contestant (373-4). With this ungovernable act, he identifies himself with the unruly Madame Duval, who is yet to learn how to control her passions by reason. By doing so, the narration offers the readers another incidence where a gendered behavioral pattern becomes dissolved into equivocality. However, it is not crystal clear whether Coverley becomes feminized by his rage, or whether that rage is the result of unreformed manliness. Notwithstanding this blurriness, he acts acutely brutal and he only retrieves his manners back when the entire party protests his request to prolong the race. As suggested in the book by the rape threats of Sir Clement Willoughby that occur more than once, an analogy can be made between the feeble resistance provided by innocent virtue in defiance of the cunning and scheming evil, and the use of politeness as a weapon against brutality. Conclusively, civility on its own, cannot guarantee benevolence or justice any more than ignorance can protect a woman against threats to her chastity.

As briefly touched upon earlier, the final scene of the novel becomes even more significant at this point. Nonetheless his thin veil of politeness he struggles to cover himself with, Lovel's obsession with his accoutrements and the fact that he has never forgiven Evelina for laughing at

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<sup>173</sup> Hamilton, 438.

him are adequate enough to emphasize his essential narcissism. The verbal brawl between Lovel and the Captain, that the latter's introducing a monkey as Lovel's brother as chastisement instigates, serves to highlight the true civility of Orville, who simultaneously ends the prank and the discomfort of the others in the room by firmly warning the Captain to send the monkey away at first, still without sounding impolite, but when his words fall on deaf ears and the monkey bites Lovel's ear, Orville grabs the animal by the collar and, "*with a sudden swing, flung him out of the room, and shut the door*", as Evelina recounts it. (493) Also before that, he tries to change the topic when Captain Mirvan insults and threatens to beat Lovel, yet he fails to stave off the impending uproar. Demonstrating such decisive action, unlike how he behaved in the foot race episode, proves he feels free to be rude to a monkey, since he cannot possibly eject the Captain from the room without initiating another lengthy argument that may involve violence, he chooses to expel the material cause of the inquietude for he does not have to cater for the feelings of the monkey. The expulsion of the monkey, as Hamilton notes, becomes a symbolic rejection of the brutality with which Captain Mirvan, as well as Lord Merton and Jack Coverley –because of their treatment of the contestant women— torture and exploit others. Only under these circumstances can Evelina call Orville's violent action "*humane, generous, and benevolent*" (493), adjectives that fuse the ideal politeness prescribed for true gentlemen with the aristocratic prerogative.<sup>174</sup> In fact, Orville's deed underscores his decisiveness, a typical male trait; whilst his catering for the immediate needs of his group is a sign of his effectual internalization of gentlemanly virtue.

Peace is achieved, albeit temporarily, for the Captain ignores the upbraid of Mrs. Beaumont and continues ruthlessly to tease Lovel. Seeing no improvement, Lord Orville intervenes again, repeating the same method: "*seeing no prospect that the altercation would cease, [he] proposed to the Captain to talk*". (494) He may attempt to distract Mirvan in order to resolve the issue, because like Merton and Coverley, he is too shallow a pupil to educate, he may never master the graces and he has no intention to. As a matter of fact, Orville's exemplarity can only reform those who are already willing to enhance themselves, Evelina's consistently approving of Orville's actions, her intense feeling of embarrassment when she is exposed as socially inappropriate and even her resorting to silent too often are signs that she is an educable young lady.

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<sup>174</sup> Hamilton, 440.

### **Her last novel, its relevant elements and the authoress' life then.**

Because the novel is exceptionally long, people were suspicious at first, even Burney's husband had his doubts in the beginning, yet he soon admitted the quality of the latest work of his wife's matched the previous novels she had published. He commented that *the Wanderer* <sup>175</sup> was an elaborate work of both seriousness and amusement, it not only instructed its readers but also gave them pleasure and he argued this, Fanny managed better than anyone else. They were only hoping the public would soon come to appreciate this fact.

The Burney family was utterly irate by the publication of Hazlitt's review of the book, in which he claimed the authoress notoriously exaggerates the predicament the female characters suffer from, the troubles they face are typical of women, that is to say, they are created out of nothing. James Burney, who was personally acquainted with the critic, took the comment very personally and wrote to Hazlitt saying that his publication of such a gloomy paper displays nothing but disregard to him and that he should have shared his opinion with him before the printing. <sup>176</sup>

Burney was almost indifferent to all of the blows she took as she knew from the beginning that it would take her readers some time to truly appreciate the worth of *the Wanderer*, maybe after her death claiming that, she never expected it to receive an immediate favor from the world, but maybe in a few years time, the work would gain the same partiality shown to its elder sisters. The problem, in her opinion, derives from the false expectations that the book constructed in the minds of her readers: some had imagined that the book would be about the French Revolution; others expected to read the story of the author's own life. <sup>177</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> Frances Burney, *The Wanderer; or, Female Difficulties*, eds. Margaret Anne Doody, Robert L. Mack and Peter Sabor, with an introduction by Margaret Anne Doody Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991. The page number will be written next to the quotations from this book from this point onwards.

<sup>176</sup> Thaddeus, 174.

<sup>177</sup> Thaddeus, 174.

When Paris was to fall to the hands of Napoleon, she fled. She prudently dealt with all her bills and entrusted the keys to their apartments to a reliable person. She was devastated by the thought that she would never find her husband, who was now in the King's army, or their son again.

When in Brussels, she was struck by another abominable possibility. That is, she would possibly lose all her literary productions that she had to leave behind in Paris: “all my MSS! - My beloved Father's! my family papers! - my Letters of all my life! my Susan's Journals! - !!! –“. This exceptionally struggling period marks her becoming herself a wanderer, a traveling incognito, who had to start all over again, having no possession of her own, since she was the wife of a soldier, what she had was nothing beyond “a small change of linen” and some clothing.

She did reunite with her husband, after all. He was still serving the King, yet his health was deteriorating. Never having had full recovery from his chest injury in Calais, he was also kicked by a wild horse that he had purchased shortly after Waterloo, optimistic that he would manage to train it, the iron hoof of which left him an ugly wound on his right leg. Unfortunately, his surgery did not go well and thus, he was no longer able to walk freely.

In the meantime, Mrs. d'Arblay was having a hardtime showing endurance to the sight she observed from her window in Brussels, however worthy of lifetime remembrance, her depiction displays her utter shock and disapproval of the repercussions of war: “to witness sights of wretchedness. Maimed, wounded, bleeding, mutilated, tortured victims of this exterminating contest, passed by every minute: - the fainting, the sick, the dying & the Dead, on Brancards, in Cars, in Waggon's succeeded one another without intermission”.<sup>178</sup>

Regardless, she yielded her last work, however flawed it was deemed to be back in the day. Even though the preface to the book attempts to explain what the readers should encounter in the book, Burney spared the introductory part to honoring her dying father. However, the mode she adopted in her latest work was deemed to be the least appealing. It is argued that skipping the poem she dedicated to her father in *Evelina* was not an issue. The challenge arose in deciphering the high

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<sup>178</sup> Thaddeus, 176-7.

language that ignores the audience in *the Wanderer*, especially when coupled with the author's inherent self-abasement, her dedication reads:

“the earliest pride of my heart was to inscribe to my much-loved Father the first public effort of my pen; though the timid offering, unobtrusive and anonymous, was long unrepresented; and, even at last, reached its destination through a zeal as secret as it was kind, by means which he would never reveal; and with which, till within these last few months, I have myself been unacquainted.” (3)

The complaints predominantly pointed at her being too personal and that she is unable to cater for her audience.<sup>179</sup> She did not necessarily invite her readers to become acquainted with the novel that is about to commence and as it unfolds, she finds herself providing footnotes to illuminate some of her references. In the paragraph given above, she implies the exchange between her sister and her father, in which the former reveals the authorship of *Evelina* to the latter, yet this revelation comes with close scrutiny because she does not actually mention the fact.

At the end of the lengthy preface, Burney asks for permission from her audience to conclude her letter with a prayer for her father's benediction and preservation, and she grants it, too.

The readers may be overwhelmed with what they have just read and with the turn of the page, the book leaves them dark at sea, with strangers conversing, no background information that would give the readers some hints that would help with the betterment of the elaboration of the scene or the characters. The protagonist has no one that calls her by her name, the audience is left alone way too fast.

At the time of *the Wanderer*'s publication, Burney felt, she was drawn once again into the territory of the mysterious. As repeated time and time again, inherently diffident, she refused to apply the formula that tested quite well in the publication of *Camilla*, her preceding work. Her father was fighting a grim battle of survival and her husband, d'Arblay was away from her, in France so that she had no one to turn to in pursuit of advice but her two brothers: Charles and

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<sup>179</sup> Thaddeus, 178.

James. The two did their best to keep her at a safe distance away from abrupt decisions that would otherwise hinder her progress and dishearten her.<sup>180</sup>

Burney was still yearning for her husband who was on the field of battle, the two committedly exchanged letters yet many of them were miscarried. They did their best to keep track of the undelivered letters. The two desperately hoped to be in each other's presence once again but fate did not really favor them. Life was following its usual course as they received both good news as well as bad news. Burney was struggling to secure a place for their son, Alex in Cambridge where he would study with a Tancred scholarship. However, there was one particular unfortunate news that struck the couple a formidable blow. Upon the revelation that a dear friend of d'Arblay's, the Comte de Narbonne was killed at war, they remembered how hard military men held onto life on their fingertips and that the reaper is rather hard to evade even though the man died helping the wounded and not actually firing guns. This incident coincided around the time Burney was to release *the Wanderer* and thus serves as an example that accentuates the exceptionally challenging life conditions that characterized Burney's life then.<sup>181</sup>

Even though the title implies the person who occupies the center of the novel, as with the authoress' preceeding works, other characters are at work and they constantly shape or contribute to the construction of the chief idea the novel tries to convey. As previously discussed in *Evelina*, this novel is also about female difficulties, the silent rules within a given society that peremptorily invite its female subjects to exercise delicacy in their own terms, the treacherous advancements of men, especially the protagonist's ordeal in receiving the payment of her honest and much-demanding works, which is a recurring injustice in the novel, as well as the intriguing ways sex and class clash and the unity of open communication and frank speech.<sup>182</sup>

Because she is scared her husband would chase her, the wanderer keeps her identity a secret, the opening scene of the book is dedicated to how Juliet flees to England to seek refuge by finding

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<sup>180</sup> Thaddeus, 148.

<sup>181</sup> Thaddeus, 154.

<sup>182</sup> Thaddeus, 158.

her relatives that would keep her safe, however intimate and genuine the bond between her and especially lady Aurora and her brother proves, she is nevertheless hindered by their odious uncle. In her new social environment, Juliet has no social character she could assure, unable to tell anyone anything that reveals her identity.<sup>183</sup>

It is ultimately revealed to the readers that Juliet's father is called Granville, implying a possible descendancy with the previous focus of this paper, Evelina Anville. Thaddeus argues that the extra two letters in the beginning indicate that Juliet is "grand"; that is to say, she is superior to her predecessor. She is more accomplished than her in every sense, she is definitely older, too. In fact, her skills divert her from the majority of her contemporaries, although she has constant trouble receiving the fair payment for her honest and meticulous works.<sup>184</sup> Both protagonists complain to the men that are ideally feminized by Burney, that they are utterly disconcerted by the attitude of the unfeeling people around them. In a way that actually attacks the latest work of the novel for its unoriginality, Croker writes; "The Wanderer has the identical features of Evelina – but of Evelina grown old; the vivacity, the bloom, the elegance, 'the purple light of love' are vanished; the eyes are there, but they are dim; the cheek, but it is furrowed; the lips, but they are withered."<sup>185</sup>

Evelina cries to Orville that besides himself all others treat her with impertinence of contempt. On the other hand, characterized by the feeling of pure admiration and appreciation that echoes her predecessor, Juliet sings Harleigh's praises with the following words: "He knows me to be indigent ... yet does not conclude me open to corruption! He sees me friendless and unprotected, - yet offers me no indignity". Like Lord Orville, Harleigh ignores the conditions that render Juliet an inferior, but chooses to treat her in the same manner which he would adopt while conversing with a social equal.

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<sup>183</sup> Thaddeus, 167.

<sup>184</sup> Thaddeus, 161.

<sup>185</sup> *Quarterly Review* 11 (April 1814) 125-6, by John Wilson Croker.

The depiction of the opening scene is rather depressive; darkness dominates, there is silence –so much so that, the frail calls of the protagonist are immediately heeded and she is invited on board, which marks her salvation and the initiation of a long chain of events.

“During the dire reign of the terrific Robespierre, and in the dead of night, braving the cold, the darkness and the damps of December, some English passengers, in a small vessel, were preparing to glide silently from the coast of France, when a voice of keen distress resounded from the shore, imploring, in the French language, pity and admission.” (11)

Mystery looms over the supposedly introductory paragraph as Burney mischievously mute the "Incognita", who shall hide her identity a secret even from the readers, even when the boat separates slowly from the French Coast, her opting for raising suspense and expectations could be frustrating as the readership demands more access to more thorough appreciation of the protagonist.<sup>186</sup> Yet, Burney persists as the real name of heroine is only discovered almost after the half of the book finishes.

The authoress deftly depicts the many ways women are hindered in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. As briefly stated above, it is not only the conundrum and the incredibly startling maltreatment Juliet suffers from throughout the novel but also the other female characters that either render the world slightly more suffocating for the rest of the women or who are themselves the sufferers.<sup>187</sup>

Admiral Powel calls the ferocious trio that comprises of Mrs Howel, Mrs Maple and Mrs Ireton "the three Furies", and at the end of the novel he asks them to leave his house (872). When the 14-year-old sister of Elinor prepares to marry, she remarks, "It is a rule, you know, to deny nothing to a bride elect; probably, poor wretch, because every one knows what a fair way she is to be soon denied every thing!". (53) Having had little endurance left for the Aunt Maple

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<sup>186</sup> Thaddeus, 162.

<sup>187</sup> Thaddeus, 161.



nuisance, Selina's chief motivation behind as she expresses is wishing to "have a house of her own, in which her Aunt Maple would have no sort of authority" (60).

On the other hand, Elinor is the embodiment of a disrupted feminist. Her peremptory request for women to become active agents in their destiny is revolutionary for the eighteenth century, yet the ways she seeks to realize her desperate wish of winning the heart of her knight in shining armor is very demeaning towards Juliet, as she thoughtlessly orders her to communicate her wishes to Harleigh, who has obviously demonstrated a tendency towards developing a liking for this mysterious wanderer. The fact that she is courageous enough to declare her interest in a man is noteworthy, whereas her blind refusal to read the signs correctly does not yield the exact result she puts her heart in.<sup>188</sup> She is yet to acknowledge a basic human right granted to all beings, however hard it is to exercise it, everyone holds the right to say "no". "Why", she asks, "for so many centuries, has man, alone, been supposed to possess, not only force and power for action and defense, but even all the rights of taste; all the fine sensibilities which impel out happiest sympathies, in the choice of our life's partners? ... must even her heart be circumscribed by boundaries as narrow as her sphere of action in life?" (177). In the early pages of the book, Elinor brands Harleigh as quixotic, yet Harleigh demonstrates no chivalry to that excess; as a matter of fact, Sir Giles Arbey is the most quixotic man in the book, in its truest sense. That is, he lends money to the hapless Juliet when she is not in the position to reject it. He is also generous with giving advice as he warns Juliet about how careful she should be with paying her debt to trades people before anyone else.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Thaddeus, 168.

<sup>189</sup> Thaddeus, 167.

**In conclusion,** the dissertation work has striven to demonstrate certain aspects of the debut novel of Frances (Fanny) Burney, which are typically the gender-specific issues women had to combat, the thorny path that leads to the construction of identity, the prosaic life conditions that render individuals unable to thoroughly fulfil their life goals, or demonstrate their exemplary and internalized virtuousness, and the limits of kindness as well as the acts of chivalry even when the person in question is a member of aristocracy. Accordingly, a panoply of articles, essays and a considerable number of quotes from the book have been employed. In addition, the readers of the novel are encouraged to come to the realization that the people of genteel upbringing are not necessarily tailor-made for the promotion of the good of society and correspondingly, there have been many examples directly excerpted from the novel to support this suggestion, also promoting the idea that it requires an open-mind to embrace and make sense of the teachings of the sage and virtuous, and truly apply those elements when a given situation demands action. Additionally, the growth of a feeble, uneducated lady and the predicaments such people may have to combat have been addressed; the omnipresence of the patriarchal fist that is brandished over women has been alluded to multiple times. The elements of innocence and namelessness have been elaborated giving priority to the protagonist, but the complementary characters, as well as Burney herself have been analyzed, too. The literary life of the authoress has been initially discussed, and in order for the paper to preserve its inner coherence, further interpretation has been added in a concise manner for the sake of the contextualization of the events that put the story in motion. The final part of the dissertation has dealt with the authoress' struggle to yield her last novel, in an attempt to reveal how her dominant living conditions *never* readily granted her the peace of mind that makes the act of writing a mere leisure, from her first work to her very last. Furthermore, her desire to please her father persisted, whose impactful [omni]presence in her life has been analyzed in depth, too. It is also worth noting that, even though on one hand, he enabled her to gain access to a very formidable literary circle that genuinely broadened her horizons, and also opened doors to her; on the other, spurred by his blind fatherly ambitions, he failed to acknowledge the limits of her dear daughter, and however unintentionally, he made her health deteriorate day by day during her time at the court and she eventually became sick and took her leave. Consequently, she had to take breaks from her literary career. The central issue that the novel sets to resolve mainly involves a family drama and its societal by-products, and the authoress' life was reek of events that were the ultimate result of her disrupted relationship with

her parents. In her first work, just like her protagonist, the authoress desperately seeks acceptance and appreciation; additionally, writing her last work, having to escape from a threatening environment, taken aback by the fear of losing all that she had left behind for good, she herself became the wanderer. Therefore, this specific reader suggests that, readers actually steal a glimpse to the life of the authoress as they experience the fictional realms that Burney created.

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