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Daisy Reeves

Structural Devices and their Provocative Powers: A Formal Analysis of Women's Eighteenth-Century Literature

Abstract

In recent years, scholars have identified a missing link in the critical conversation with respect to feminist formalist analyses of early modern literature. These close, formal readings are important tools of analysis for women's literature in particular, as much of that literature emerges from a political landscape in which women's speech is necessarily curtailed. This dissertation joins that critical conversion, building upon the work undertaken in recent years to analyse literature from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, to provide a feminist formalist analysis of three eighteenth-century texts: *The Female Quixote* by Charlotte Lennox, *Evelina* by Frances Burney, and *The Mysteries of Udolpho,* by Ann Radcliffe. Contextualising each text within its specific surrounding cultural and historical landscape, this dissertation applies narrative and reader response theories to delineate a distinct reading of the selected texts that identifies subversive challenges to the gender norms associated with eighteenth-century English society. Notable topics of concern identified through this formal analysis include marriage, education, the dichotomy of public versus private space as it pertains to the domestic containment of women, and behavioural standards as they are applied both to women and to men. This dissertation concludes that where women's speech is shaped by the strictures of the world in which they live, new modes of communication emerge through which to delineate a feminine subjectivity, free from the constraints of 'the real language of men'.

Structural Devices and their Provocative Powers: A Formal Analysis of Women's Eighteenth-Century Literature

Daisy Reeves

Grey College

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts by Research

Department of English Studies

Durham University

2024

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Introduction

The eighteenth century remains a historically pivotal time, both for the emergence of the novel as a source of contention and for the ongoing societal debates surrounding the evolving roles and rights of women. Thus, this period forms a unique vantage point from which women could respond to, comply with, or rebel against the conditions of their lives through the conduit of a newly emerging literary form, making the eighteenth century a fertile ground for feminist formalist analyses of narrative forms emerging from women's writing in this period. Coupled with the concurrent debate surrounding the evolving conceptualisation of womanhood in broader society, literary society experienced its own challenges with respect to women and the novel. Although somewhat improved from the prior century, women's rights and roles remained limited by social and legal norms, which extended to the confinement of women to the domestic sphere and, in some quarters, positioned them as moral exemplars. Novels written by women during this period can offer unique insights into how these limitations may have been resisted or reinforced. One proposed solution to the challenge of conducting research on women's writing during a time when explicit speech is disadvantageous for women is to perform close reading analyses of the form and structure of literature emerging from this landscape. This dissertation focuses on three such works—*The Female Quixote*, *Evelina*, and *The Mysteries of Udolpho*—and examines how their narrative forms challenge the gendered expectations of eighteenth-century women. By applying a feminist formalist lens, this dissertation will argue that these novels do more than merely reflect the period's values; they provide a subtle but significant critique of the socio-political structures that constrained women's autonomy and expression. Through an examination of the narrative form, as well as the structural elements of these texts, this dissertation will demonstrate how these novels critique and engage with the

gendered behavioural expectations of their time.

To situate these expectations within their context, this dissertation will briefly touch on the historical features defining the prevalent attitudes of the period. Many of the behavioural norms of the eighteenth century emerged in part from the popular conceptualisation of womanhood, and had specific consequences for women in literary society. Much of the concern about novels centred on the prevalent position amongst those with moralistic belief systems that they ought to serve a didactic moral purpose. Thus, novels aligning with that ethos (*Pamela*, *Clarissa*, et al), became household names in the wake of their publication. The persistent concern here is that women reading novels has some bearing on their ability to participate in ordinary life, as well as their resulting marriageability. As David Richter notes, the prevalence of satirical works on romance extending into the nineteenth century 'must have been based on something real or the satire could not have been so common or current'.[1] One such satire, *The Female Quixote*, by Charlotte Lennox, is a subject of focus in the chapters that follow, and will further examine the modes of satire in play during this period.

The concerns surrounding the behavioural impact of novels likely emerge from a social backdrop situating them within the period of the Enlightenment, in which the prevalent ethos is the prioritisation of reason and knowledge. Feminist formalism offers a lens through which to understand how narrative form can subtly critique gender norms emerging within a context where the folly of novels stood in contrast to its revered counterpart: reason. As Dorinda Outram explains, the Enlightenment 'relies on rationality, reasoning which is free from superstition, mythology, fear and revelation, which is often based on mathematical 'truth', which calibrates ends to means, which is therefore

[1] David Richter, 'The Gothic Novel and the Lingering Appeal of Romance', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Eighteenth-Century Novel*, ed. by J. A. Downie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 472-88 (p. 483).

technological, and expects solutions to problems which are objectively correct'.[2] The positioning of emotionality as a contrast to reason accounts for the ways in which mounting opposition to concerns adjacent to sentimentality took hold. Samuel Johnson argued that 'the legitimate end of fiction is the conveyance of truth,'[3] and that 'the rejection and contempt of fiction is rational and manly'.[4] This view was shared by several other prominent writers of the eighteenth century,[5] however, things began to change in the latter half of the century, with sentimental novels reaching their height of popularity between the 1770s and 1780s.[6]

Ten years later, in 1790, Mary Wollstonecraft published her pamphlet, *A Vindication of the Rights of Men, in a Letter to the Right Honourable Edmund Burke; Occasioned by His Reflections on the Revolution in France*. The treatise, as the title suggests, dealt with the concerns of working men, advocating for republicanism and decrying the monarchy, standing in staunch opposition to Edmund Burke and his rhetoric endorsing hereditary privilege. The reception of Wollstonecraft's pamphlet is broadly representative of the crux of the issue surrounding romance novels throughout this period: what critics saw as passion in Wollstonecraft stood in the shadow of the perception of Burke's comparative reason; likely, suggests Ian Ward, a result of the 'indignation' Wollstonecraft owns in her first *Vindication*.[7] It would be another two years, in 1792, before Wollstonecraft published *A*

[2] Dorinda Outram, *The Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), p. 6.
[3] Samuel Johnson, *The lives of the Most Eminent English Poets; With Critical Observations on Their Works; by Samuel Johnson. In Four Volumes. Embellished With Elegant Engravings* (Edinburgh: printed by D. Buchanan, sold by him, & by W. Creech, P. Hill, W. Mudie, & A. Constable, 1800), p. 251.
[4] Samuel Johnson, *The Lives of the Poets: Volume I.* (Illinois: Project Gutenberg, 2003), in *Johnson's Lives of the Poets* p. 79 <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/4679> [accessed 28 April 2023].
[5] For a summary of both Samuel Richardson and Henry Fielding's positions on the novel, see Hubert McDermott, *Novel and Romance: The Odyssey to Tom Jones* (London: Macmillan Press, 1989), p. 148. For an assessment of Daniel Defoe's position, see Maximillian Novak, 'Defoe's Theory of Fiction', *Studies in Philology*, 61.4 (1964), 650-68 (p. 651). For Sarah Fielding's views, somewhat diverging from those of her brother, see Emily Friedman, 'Remarks on Richardson: Sarah Fielding and the Rational Reader', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 22.2 (2009), 309-26 (pp. 309-10).
[6] Albert J. Rivero, 'Introduction', in *The Sentimental Novel in the Eighteenth Century,* ed. by Albert J. Rivero (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 1-14, (p.1).
[7] Ian Ward, 'The Constitution', in *Mary Wollstonecraft in Context*,, ed. by Nancy Johnson and Paul Keen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. 199-206 (p. 204).

Vindication of the Rights of Woman.

Suffice it to say, then, that throughout the period of forty-two years with which this dissertation is concerned, only two of those years reflected a version of England that had seen Wollstonecraft's seminal work on women's rights. Thus, an assumption of an innate femininity, as opposed to one borne out of inculcation, bolstered arguments put forth in numerous conduct books written for an intended readership of young women. At the more severe end of the spectrum sits James Fordyce's *Sermons to Young women.* At the other end sits *A Father's Legacy to His Daughters,* by Dr John Gregory. The latter, explains Mary Catherine Moran, was 'easily the best-selling female conduct book of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries'.[8] Gregory views women as fundamentally 'designed' for the purpose of 'soften[ing] hearts and polish[ing] the manners [of men]'.[9] Gregory's conceptualisation of innate femininity, says Moran, posits the demarcation of a 'properly female nature'.[10] Whilst Gregory's purpose here was to establish an argument supporting women's naturally superior humanity as a means by which to measure the progress of man, the obvious problem arising from this rhetoric is simple: if women are naturally sensitive, emotionally weak, fragile beings, then logic dictates that they could (or even should) be 'protected' from the harsh realities of politics and public life. Whilst it seems obvious to state, given that this particular debate lingers on in modern society, Gregory's understanding of women as naturally predisposed towards femininity was not especially unique or new. Rather, the popularity of his conduct text (and those like it) evidence, to some extent, a general sense of feeling towards the nature and boundaries of womanhood in eighteenth-century England, and if not the nature, then certainly the expectations placed upon women.

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[8] Mary Moran, 'Between the Savage and the Civil: Dr John Gregory's Natural History of Femininity', in *Women, Gender and Enlightenment*, ed. by B. Taylor and S. Knott (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 8-29 (p. 8).
[9] John Gregory, *A Father's Legacy to His Daughters* (London: Printed for A. Millar, W. Law, and R. Cater; and for Wilson, Spence, and Mawman, York, 1793), pp. 18-19.
[10] Moran, p. 9.

This dissertation will take a feminist formalism approach, which develops upon traditional formalist discourses by negotiating the intersection between form and gender ideologies. Traditional formalists such as Gérard Genette and Viktor Shklovsky focus on narrative structure and defamiliarization, concepts that provide a fundamental foundation in formalism that remains useful within a feminist formalist context. Specifically, the ways in which women's eighteenth-century writing can subvert patriarchal norms through subtle formal techniques. As a critical methodology, formalism – that is, the analytical focus on a text's structure, language, and narrative techniques – has long been used to examine the ways in which literary forms produce meaning. Formalists have contributed to the understanding of how texts operate independently of (and in conjunction with) their historical, political, or biographical contexts. However, as Lara Dodds and Michelle M. Dowd note, traditional formalist approaches have, historically, overlooked both women's early modern writing and the ways in which, if any, gender roles may influence formal features.[11] Danielle Clarke and Marie-Louise Coolahan also note this phenomenon, suggesting that there has been an evasion of analyses of this nature.[12] Feminist formalism builds upon traditional modes of formal analysis by negotiating the intersection of gender ideologies and literary form. An absence of research in this area can only produce a gap in understanding the literary significance of meaning that is generated by form. Whilst traditional formalist readings might focus on rhyme, meter, and genre choice, feminist formalism extends these analyses by examining how formal techniques intersect with representations of gendered power relations, identifying the ways in which women resist or comply with the patriarchal norms of their respective societies.

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[11] Lara Dodds and Michelle M. Dowd, 'Happy Accidents: Critical Belatedness, Feminist Formalism, and Early Modern Women's Writing', *Criticism*, 62.2 (2020), 169-93 (p. 169).

[12] Danielle Clark and Marie-Louise Coolahan, 'Gender, Reception, and Form: Early Modern Women and the Making of Verse', in *The Work of Form: Poetics and Materiality in Early Modern Culture*, ed. by Ben Burton and Elizabeth Scott-Baumann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 144-61 (p. 151).

Work on closing the gap in the critical conversation has already begun, particularly within the analysis of seventeenth-century poetry, as has been undertaken by Elizabeth Scott-Baumann (2013), Sarah Ross (2015), and others. Dodds and Dowd define feminist formalism as 'a methodology that both attends to the structural, rhetorical, and other formal techniques of a given text and takes gender as a central category of analysis' delineating a proposed framework with a dual approach: 'sustained attention to the formal aspects of early modern women's texts' and the deployment of 'feminist formalism as a specific method of reading'.[13] In terms of establishing a baseline of formal analysis, they suggest that 'it can include discussion of local details, such as rhyme, meter, and diction, as well as larger, structural issues, such as genre choice, dramaturgy, and narrative strategy'.[14] With respect to differentiating between formalism and feminist formalism, they suggest that the formal analysis should consider the ways in which the meaning of a text is generated 'through the complex intersection between form and gendered ideologies' as a feminist formalist analysis, say Dodds and Dowd, 'takes the synergy between form and gender—as a cultural construct, as a component of representation, or as a material condition of literary production—as central to its sustained textual examination'.[15] Thus, the analysis undertaken in this dissertation will reflect the socio-political foundations present in the respective historical backdrops associated with the periods in which each text is published.

The analysis offered here will delineate the ways in which the three respective authors challenge gender norms, and the ways in which they engender behavioural constraints on women; it will negotiate the ways in which these women made use of the space within their novels to challenge the spatial parameters of eighteenth-century life, in which 'woman' is conceptualised as intrinsically bound to the domestic sphere, on the cusp

[13] Dodds and Dowd, p. 177.
[14] Ibid., p. 178.
[15] Ibid.

of entrance into the public world. Dodds and Dowd suggest that 'by taking women's texts seriously as works of art— as formalist analysis does—we can ensure that these texts remain central rather than subordinate to scholarly conversations about early modern literary history'.[16] However, ensuring that this formal analysis is conducted through the lens of gender allows for the full range of human experience to be accounted for. One of the central concerns in the third chapter, for example, expands on the contention that Romanticism is often defined through the masculine experience, emphasising autonomy and agency as pivotal concepts driving the poetry in production during this time. Women's experience, emerging from the confines of the domestic sphere, cannot be said to be fully articulated from within a masculine framework delineating the ideologies underpinning the Romantic movement. Thus, analysing women's formal contributions to literature through the axis of their own experience, within the political landscape of their lives, allows for the understanding of a feminine subjectivity evident within Romantic poetry.

Whilst scholarship to date has sought to redress the balance within the study of women's seventeenth-century poetry, this dissertation hopes to demonstrate that there is value in broadening the research focus to include women's eighteenth-century novels. The comparative social landscapes of the two centuries are dramatically different, and progress in women's freedoms typically increases over time, but the social mores and values of the eighteenth century still carry with them the concomitant expectation that women will behave in specific, sometimes constraining ways. Since these limitations emerge from prevalent ideas about the nature of woman, women's ability to challenge those expectations explicitly is still somewhat curtailed in this period. Moreover, beyond the limitations of women's speech, there is value in examining the nonliteral or obscured aspects of a narrative, as formal techniques can be deployed for the purpose of

[16] Ibid.

demonstration rather than merely narration.

Clark and Coolahan suggest that the evasion of formal analyses of women's poetry is thought to follow the assumption that with limited education, women of the early modern period lacked the formal tuition required to demonstrate knowledge of composition and metrical analysis (a theory that Clark and Coolahan note has not been tested 'in any serious way').[17] However, metrical analysis is not an inherent concern with respect to novels, and composition is perhaps more immediately relevant in the context of poetry than with longer prose. It is also true that whilst women often lacked a formal education, this did not necessarily indicate a complete absence of education. As Michèle Cohen explains, far from being haphazard and unstructured, women's education at home seems to have been 'highly regulated, following a strict and often self-imposed discipline', which she notes is the case with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who 'studied Latin up to eight hours a day for two years in her father's library, enjoying the fact that she was believed to be spending that time 'reading nothing but novels and romances'.[18] Further, Frances Burney's diary, written when she was just sixteen, reveals that she

> made it a kind of rule never to indulge myself in my two most favourite pursuits, reading and writing, in the morning – so, like a very good girl I give that up wholly … to needle work, by which means my reading and writing in the afternoon is a pleasure I cannot be blamed for by my mother, as it does not take up the time I ought to spend otherwise.[19]

The view that women's ability to learn without formal structure is limited is not new, and follows the assertion that, as Cohen notes, 'on their own [women] cannot generate the rationality that disciplines the male reader'.[20] Thus, self-educated, 'unsystematic' female

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[17] Clark and Coolahan, p. 151.
[18] Cohen, Michèle, '"To Think, to Compare, to Combine, Methodise": Girls' Education in Enlightenment Britain', in *Women, Gender and Enlightenment,* ed. by B. Taylor and S. Knott (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) pp. 224-42 (p. 225).
[19] Frances Burney, *The Early Diary of Frances Burney 1768-1778*, ed. by A. R. Ellis (London: Bell and Sons, 1913), p. 15.
[20] Cohen, p. 231.

readers are thought to be too sensible, too emotional, and much like Mary Wollstonecraft, too 'passionate'. Whilst society has progressed and these views no longer represent the prevalent attitudes towards women's learning, there is still some reticence to embrace formalist analyses of women's eighteenth-century writing. However, since the rationale driving the decision to overlook this such a vast body of work is based on an untested theory, there is limited evidence to substantiate this concern. More importantly, perhaps, excluding women's early modern writing from the corpus of formal analysis on the basis that those women lacked a formal education diminishes the value of their (often meticulously organised) self-directed study. Alternatively, research in this area could reveal the extent to which women's autodidactic modes of education produce divergent or distinctive aspects of form and structure that have otherwise been overlooked. Specifically, in the context of this dissertation, as a mode of resistance contesting the gendered norms and expectations of their lifetime.

In a broader sense, the slight shift in focus from poetry to novels allows for a more intensive analysis, sustained over longer pieces of literature, enabling the examination of formal techniques that may be less relevant or successful in shorter pieces of often unconnected work. There are innumerable features where this becomes relevant in the context of novel analyses, many of which will become evident throughout the coming chapters, but to offer some specific examples here, it could be especially relevant for identifying temporal distortions where significance is established through prolonged focus on specific subjects, subtly indicating their importance in the overall hierarchy. Additionally, it could be useful for identifying complex character parallels that take place at vastly divergent locations within the text, or the deployment of multiple narrating voices over the course of the novel. In a context where the body of material is longer, different

techniques become relevant and necessary for conveying specific themes and ideas. Extending the formalist analyses of men's early modern writing to include women's writing in all literary forms can only enrich our collective understanding of early modern formalism.

To perform the feminist formalist analysis required here, this dissertation will draw upon the works of Gérard Genette and Viktor Shklovsky for the purpose of outlining the specific formal techniques deployed within the selected texts, as well as exploring potential explanations for why they are engaged in specific ways. Since Genette's *Narrative Discourse* is, to some extent, an index of techniques, compared by Jonathan Culler in the text's foreword,[21] to the student of literature's equivalent of a car manual, to be used in formal analysis (namely as it relates to order, duration, frequency, mood, and voice); it will usefully provide the framework for much of the analysis here, about which, Genette explains:

> "Analysis of narrative" in this sense means the study of a totality of actions and situations taken in themselves, without regard to the medium, linguistic or other, through which knowledge of that totality comes to us […] analysis of narrative discourse as I understand it constantly implies a study of relationships: on the one hand the relationship between a discourse and the events that it recounts (narrative in its second meaning), on the other hand the relationship between the same discourse and the act that produces it, actually.[22]

Genette's analysis of narrative time (specifically, his concepts of order and duration), provide the framework by which it will be argued that women novelists in this period manipulated narrative structures to challenge the limitations placed on female autonomy. By directing narrative time, these authors allowed their protagonists to experience moments of empowerment or subjugation, often disrupting traditional expectations of women's roles. Furthermore, it will allow for an interpretation of elements of the text that

[21] Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1980), p. 7.
[22] Ibid., pp. 25-7.

indicate the probability of support (or disapproval) for a particular feeling or position, in ways that are not explicitly stated within the narrative. As Genette explains, 'as narrative, it lives by its relationship to the story that it recounts; as discourse, it lives by its relationship to the narrating that utters it'.[23] To give an example here, one of the most illuminating findings of the analysis of Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho* is, perhaps, of its poetry, which, interspersed as it is throughout the novel, reveals another reading entirely when connected. Thus, the context derived from a disconnected reading of the narrative is altered dramatically when analysed from a position of assumed interconnectedness.

Whereas Genette provides a fundamental framework for the formal analysis of a narrative's discourse(s), providing several points of analysis spanning various areas of formal focus, Shklovsky is concerned only with one specific formal technique: the ways in which strangeness and familiarity can be leveraged within a narrative to produce an intended and specific effect. In 'Art, as Device', Shklovsky negotiates the fundamental question of what, exactly, determines art, contrasting perspectives shared by Potebnya (that poetry is imagery), and Andrey Bely and Merezhkovsky (that imagery is symbolism),[24] to contend that

> […] this thing we call art exists in order to restore the sensation of life, in order to make us feel things, in order to make a stone stony. The goal of art is to create the sensation of seeing, and not merely recognizing, things; the device of art is the "enstrangement" of things and the complication of the form, which increases the duration and complexity of perception, as the process of perception is, in art, an end in itself and must be prolonged. Art is the means to live through the making of a thing; what has been made does not matter in art.[25]

Shklovsky's theory of defamiliarization provides the groundwork necessary for understanding the ways in which these novels disrupt normalised gender roles. By

[23] Ibid., p. 29.
[24] Shklovsky, 'Art, as Device', *Poetics Today*, 36.3 (2015), 151-74 (p. 159).
[25] Ibid., p. 162.

rendering familiar social expectations strange, authors like Burney and Radcliffe cause readers to reconsider the limitations placed on women, particularly as they relate to behavior, speech, and individual autonomy. Shklovsky explains that it is through the automatization brought about by the completion of 'routine actions' that the significance of experience is softened and minimised: 'Things that have been experienced several times begin to be experienced in terms of recognition: a thing is in front of us, we know this, but we do not see it'.[26] He gives the example of holding a quill for the first time, and how different it feels later, when the experience is less new.[27] Of course, if this is the manner in which meaning is accrued, then its inverse, defamiliarization, can serve as a potent tool for generating significance in the mind of the reader. Indeed, Shklovsky argues that

> Tolstoy's method of estrangement consists in not calling a thing or event by its name but describing it as if seen for the first time, as if happening for the first time. While doing so, he also avoids calling parts of this thing by their usual appellations; instead, he names corresponding parts of other things. Here is an example. In the article "Ashamed," L. Tolstoy enstranges the concept of flogging: "People who have broken the law are denuded, thrown down on the floor, and beaten on their behinds with sticks," and a couple of lines later: "lashed across their bare buttocks." There is a postscript: "And why this particular stupid, barbaric way of inflicting pain and not some other: pricking the shoulder or some other body part with needles, squeezing arms or legs in a vice, or something else of this sort."

This 'estrangement', achieved through omitting the directly identifying language of 'flogging' enables the reader to experience the action without the surrounding context established by familiarity. By imagining the associated actions, and not the label ascribed to them, Tolstoy is able to invoke shock and disgust in his reader. It is via the identification and analysis of the techniques elucidated by Genette and Shklovsky that a feminist formalist analysis will be achieved here.

In addition to outlining the specific techniques present in the selected texts, this

[26] Ibid., p. 163.
[27] Ibid., p. 161.

dissertation will consider issues such as when specific formal devices are incorporated into the narrative, and what potential impact they might have on the reader, be that in the eighteenth century or in modernity. With regard to the last point, reader response theory, as suggested by David Miall, will be drawn upon to demarcate potential responses to Burney's *Evelina,* particularly in response to Evelina's 'bad end', which has been widely regarded as an anti-feminist anti-climax to an otherwise promising examination of the prominent social values of the period. Thus, by drawing on Genette's analysis of narrative structure, Shklovsky's theory of defamiliarization, and David Miall's framework of reader response theory, this dissertation will demonstrate how the formal techniques used by Lennox, Burney, and Radcliffe reflect a feminist critique of the gendered constraints in eighteenth-century English society.

This dissertation will now explore how the formal structures of these three novels serve as vehicles for feminist critique. Each of the selected texts features a variety of formal techniques with attending objectives. In *The Female Quixote*, Charlotte Lennox employs satire and temporal manipulation to both mock and destabilize the gendered expectations of her heroine, Arabella. Through extended monologues and exaggerated narrative strategies, Lennox challenges the romantic ideals that trap women in limited roles. Temporality in particular is a strong theme here, as Lennox manipulates the passage of time in narrative to allow for the reader to anticipate Arabella's decisions, using the knowledge they have accrued as a consequence of reading the text to assimilate the values present in the French romance, ultimately producing a sympathetic response towards the ostensibly irrational protagonist. Following a similar thread, duration is manipulated for the purpose of delineating a hierarchy of importance. Arabella is afforded huge monologues to foreground her in the text in a very literal way, by populating the majority of words in the novel. To contrast this, her marriage to Glanville - supposedly the restorative climax of the novel - is a

mere footnote at the end of the text. Whilst not uncommon for the period, it does centralise and extend Arabella's relative agency and autonomy as a dominant concern in the narrative; this triggers an onslaught of 'moments' emphasising the relentlessness of patriarchal power.

Lennox utilises the concept of community within her intertitles, the majority of which occupy a critical presence throughout the novel, but invite the reader to show sympathy towards Arabella's 'foibles'. Another way Lennox achieves this is by engaging hyperbole to demonstrate the lack of realism in Arabella's character construction, which at times brings into question who the object of the satire actually is: the reader, or anyone misguided enough to believe that Arabella represents a realistic example of the perils of reading romances? To this end, it will be argued that Lennox includes sentimentalism as a device to negotiate political perspectives, in the sense that it mediates the satire directed at believers of an Arabella-esque response to romances with Arabella's ultimate marriage to Glanville. In this way, this dissertation will find that Lennox uses reader response as an attendant device, shaping the perception to the criticism of female quixotes by representing them in such a way as to suspend belief in their existence at all.

Having examined the ways in which Lennox employs satire and narrative time to critique gender norms in *The Female Quixote*, the next section will explore Burney's use of the epistolary form in *Evelina* to challenge societal expectations of women. While Lennox's manipulation of time manipulates the prioritization of themes to direct her reader, Burney's *Evelina* focuses on spatial negotiation, particularly the tension between public and private spheres. Burney utilizes the epistolary form to explore the liminal space between the public and private spheres. Evelina's letters reflect her gradual negotiation of societal norms, with the form itself symbolizing the tension between domestic containment and public exposure. Doubles are deployed to generate defamiliarisation by means of contrasting exhibited behaviours across the sexes: what is allowed in male characters

becomes the boundary at which female characters must not push. Whilst this is perhaps a figurative concern, a more tangible negotiation of space is identified as a dominant issue in *Evelina*, and it will be argued here that much of that negotiation takes place in the epistolary form. Letters, caught in the liminal space between the public and the private realms of communication, parallel Evelina's (and by extension, Burney's) position in society: relegated to the domestic sphere, and anxious to emerge into the public world. As Burney positions herself at the metaphorical boundary delineating the male and the female, the space reserved for each becomes slightly more malleable, and the line dividing the parties becomes blurred.

Burney's construction of Evelina's character as artless and naïve, it is argued here, has a more tactical purpose: by engaging Evelina's innocence, a quality that carries with it the concomitant assumption of inexperience and, to some extent, ignorance, Burney is able to say things she would not otherwise be able to commit to without fear of reproach. Thus, Evelina's construction allows her to challenge social values as they relate to women without being held personally responsible for them. It is for this reason that Burney's *Evelina* is a novel that exploits liminality to renegotiate borders. As Burney mounts her critiques of femininity and the limitations that accompany them, she mounts them from the very confines made possible by the underpinning ideologies, almost like the Trojan horse of early feminism. In this way, she is able to draw comparisons between the treatment of her doubles, for example, Captain Mirvan and Mrs Selwyn, noting the discrepancies between how the latter is received in juxtaposition to the former, without ever raising suspicion that she might be sympathetic to Mrs Selwyn's contrasting reception amongst her peers. Of the three texts selected for this dissertation, Burney's perhaps exemplifies best the purpose of the intervention made here. To mount a formal critique of eighteenth-century gender roles is to do it in such a way as to make one's reader uncomfortable enough that they begin to

question everything they have come to understand about women's role and place, but to do it well, it must be done in such a way as to not alert the reader to its purpose. Through these formal techniques, Burney not only highlights Evelina's liminal position in society but also critiques the rigid social expectations imposed on women, making *Evelina* a subtle, unintentionally feminist, intervention into eighteenth-century gender norms.

Having established how epistolarity is central to Burney's negotiation of space, the next section will explore how Radcliffe's use of Gothic conventions in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* challenges the confinement of women through her representation of the female sublime. Radcliffe's use of poetic interludes and the structure of the Gothic castle highlight the heroine's resistance to confinement and her journey towards autonomy. Like Burney, Radcliffe uses doubles to draw specific parallels. In this case, it will be argued that one particular double - that of the mother and daughter - is included for the purpose of emphasising a female sublime (in contrast to that of the masculine framework of Romanticism more broadly, following Radcliffe) in which the natural landscape and their attendant associations with the divine are prioritised. Radcliffe emphasises the role of the mother in the female sublime as conveyed through her pen. Her use of the gothic castle, a motif commonly understood as a representation of women's confinement to the private sphere, it will be suggested, is deconstructed, as Emily finds her way to freedom not through engagement with the divine, but via the recovery of the mother. This differs somewhat from Burney's approach, as Radcliffe seemingly offers a solution to the problem raised in both novels, though hers is a solution that emphasises sorority and the strength of female bonds. This emphasis on the importance of female bonds is continued with Radcliffe's sense of community, fostered via the inclusion of poetry, the topics of which often centre on the female experience, which prioritises women and women's concerns within the narrative. Radcliffe's emphasis on sororal community is evident through the

subtle inclusions of intertextuality, extending the community of influence and exchange beyond the boundaries of the text, a parallel to the ways in which sound penetrates spaces otherwise barred within the novel. This theme is developed and extended through her use of sound patterning to delineate alternative modes of communication and experience from the position of ‘othered’, ‘alienated’ woman. Common threads in this regard range from the inclusion of music and song to the incorporation of the bat as an emblem of divergent modes of communication. Here, Radcliffe zeroes in on the difficulty women have in articulating their circumstances from within the society that limits them, highlighting the need for alternative modes of expression and communication that convey the challenges women navigate, both from the perspective of not revealing the extent of discontent in those fear social repercussions, and of isolating the lack of seriousness associated with women’s opinions.

To briefly summarise the collective findings, all three texts manipulate language, to some degree, and each example has its own purpose. These communicative functions, it will be argued, are sometimes used to reiterate a defamiliarising function; for instance, both Lennox and Radcliffe use language to incorporate a deautomatising feature within the words as they are read from a particular perspective. In the case of Lennox, Arabella’s speech is anachronistic, mirroring that of the heroines in her romances. The effect of this, it will be noted, is such that it ensures she stands out in the main body of the text as unusual, ensuring that she garners the majority of the reader’s focus as they try to parse out what she is saying in a dialect that is unfamiliar to them. In the case of Radcliffe, this emerges through her use of song, music, and sound more generally, to emphasise the penetrative capacity of communication outside of language, inviting the reader to examine more closely the messages contained within the form.

In conclusion, this dissertation argues that the narrative structures and formal

techniques used by Lennox, Burney, and Radcliffe serve as subtle yet powerful critiques of the gendered norms in eighteenth-century England. By manipulating time, space, and narrative voice, these authors not only tell stories of women but also challenge the very structures that limited them. This dissertation will assert that there are some correlations between the three texts, in the sense that there are commonalities between the ways in which formal techniques are engaged to achieve similar outcomes. It will find that, for example, all three texts display evidence of defamiliarising (or deautomatising) techniques to emphasise the inherent unfairness of expectations placed on women with respect to their behaviour within society, particularly as they relate to standards that allow for behaviour in men that is considered inappropriate in women. There is a strong formal foundation across all three texts identifying a commonality of subversion through form, facilitating a reading of each novel that supports the thesis of this dissertation: that women writing in the eighteenth century may not obviously challenge their situation in society, but there are indicators within their novels to suggest that they were developing new modes of communication to delineate their experience, and more significantly, their disapproval of the values shaping their lives. Whilst the social landscape changes dramatically during the eighteenth century,[28] and the publishing industry undergoes radical change that sees the emergence of a wide variety of women publishing towards the end of it, the commonality between each of the texts rests in how quiet they are in outwardly criticising the status quo. Thus, the analysis contained within this dissertation supports the use of the framework outlined by Dodds and Dowd, extending towards the end of the eighteenth century, and potentially up to the emergence of early feminist organisation in the nineteenth century.

The wider implications of this research indicate that there is value in formal analyses

[28] Nancy E. Johnson, ‘Political and Legal Thought, in *The Cambridge Companion to Eighteenth-Century Thought*, ed. by Frans De Bruyn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), pp. 98-130.

of early modern women's writing, in spite of their self-directed study. Indeed, the analysis here reveals that women's writing from this period is equally as technical, subtle, and impactful as comparable work of their formally educated male counterparts. It has also been suggested here (and the chapters that follow are hoped to justify this claim) that feminist formalist analyses of women's literature produced within this period reveals a range of experience that has been overlooked by much of the existing scholarship. By examining the attendant techniques of a novel that do not strictly pertain to the narrative, the multitudes of women's communication can be revealed. The untested hypothesis that a formal education would limit the significance of early modern women's writing is at odds with the wealth of knowledge and insight that can be gleaned from studying these works from a feminist formalist perspective. Once a body of feminist formalist research has been conducted in this period, there is perhaps scope in the future for assessing the extent to which, if any, there are similarities between the ways in which women manipulate form, and whether it differs in any meaningful way from early modern novels produced by men. However, the current wider impact is such that analyses of this kind demonstrate women's competence during a time when this has been in question, and the intervention sought to be made by this dissertation is to add to what is hoped will grow to be a wide-reaching, rich area of research that allows us to better understand the motivations, techniques, impact, and implications of early modern women's writing. The analysis here will demonstrate a clear, consistent application of formal techniques in the three selected novels, which evidences a cogent understanding of the crucial role played by formal elements in the construction of a narrative, as well as technical sophistication in the development of those elements. Whilst some of those elements include retrospective readings of a particular technique, others are clearly and intentionally embedded into the structure of the text, often with subtle adroitness.

Chapter I: The Female Quixote
Introduction

The Female Quixote; or, The Adventures of Arabella, published in 1752 by Charlotte Lennox, is an ostensibly satirical text imitating the style of its earlier, also gendered sibling: *Don Quixote*, by Miguel de Cervantes. In the novel, Lennox tells the story of a young woman who experiences continual conflict with the social codes of eighteenth-century England. Raised in isolation by her father following the death of her mother, Arabella finds solace in the books that once belonged to her mother, the genre of which is primarily heroic romance. Shielded from the diverging values of broader society during this time, Arabella assimilates behavioural codes and concepts of morality from the texts she devotes her time to reading. When it is time for her to marry, she rejects the social framework outlining her role within the pre-marital dynamic, bemoaning what she perceives as a loss of agency in courtship, comparing and lamenting her predicament in contrast to that of the heroines she comes to know and idolise through romances.

Following the guidance of a 'dogmatic clergyman',[1] taking the form of a 'cure' (which is referenced numerous times with regard to correcting Arabella's mindset) she relents, succumbing to the values she has dedicated years of her life to rejecting in an anticlimactic submission which ultimately sees Arabella marry her cousin, Glanville. This chapter will provide a textual analysis, with some focus on the broader societal issues surrounding the publication of the novel, identifying the narratological mechanisms that contribute to evidencing the ways in which a text can enter dialogue with conventional standards for women.

The text appears to satirise romances during a time when the purpose, or more

[1] Wendy Motooka, 'Coming to a Bad End: Sentimentalism, Hermeneutics, and *The Female Quixote*', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 8.2 (1996), 251-70 (p. 252).

specifically, the function of the novel is still mainly in debate, most notably by prominent writers of the period, including Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, and Samuel Johnson. In the preface to his 1740 novel, *Pamela,* Samuel Richardson asserts that it will not only 'divert and entertain' but also 'instruct and improve the minds of the YOUTH of both sexes'.[2] In the preface to *Clarissa*, he writes that 'story or amusement should be considered as little more than the vehicle to the more necessary instruction'.[3] However, whilst Richardson and Fielding were proponents of a didactic model of fiction, their novels often diverged in content from their theoretical perspectives.[4] Additionally, by the time Lennox released *The Female Quixote*, romances had fallen out of favour, and even when they were read, they were not presumed to convey realistic narratives.[5] In 1785, Clara Reeve distinguishes romance (that which discusses 'fabulous persons and things … in lofty and elevated language') from the novel, which offers 'a picture of real life and manners, and of the times in which it is written'.[6] The question of why Lennox chose to release the novel when she did is debatable, but it is perhaps the case that *The Female Quixote* offered Lennox the opportunity for redemption within the literary marketplace following an ambivalent reception of her earlier works sympathising with the coquettish and quixotic female characters of her own making. Both *The Art of Coquetry* and *The Life of Harriot Stuart* were characterised as 'morally problematic', in *Harriot Stuart'*s case because its eponymous character, Harriot 'frequently violates eighteenth-century

[2] Samuel Richardson, 'Preface By the Editor', in *Pamela: Or, Virtue Rewarded*, ed. by Albert J. Rivero, *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Samuel Richardson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 3–8 (p. 3).

[3] Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa* (Illinois: Project Gutenberg, 2003) <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/9296/9296-h/9296-h.htm#link2H_PREF> Accessed 12 January 2024.

[4] Sharon Smith Palo, 'The Good Effects of a Whimsical Study: Romance and Women's Learning in Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote*', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 18.2 (2005), 203-28 (p. 211).

[5] Laurie Langbauer, 'Romance Revised: Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote*', *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*, 18.1 (2005), 29-49 (p. 30).

[6] Clara Reeve, *The Progress of Romance and the History of Charoba, Queen of Aegypt* (New York: Facsimile Text Society, 1930), p. 111.

conventions of proper female behaviour'.[7] Thus, Lennox's satirising of a genre she was clearly very familiar with, given the level of detail included in *The Female Quixote*, was likely a strategic decision resulting from the reception of her earlier work, and may not necessarily reflect an agreement with the dominant perspectives on romance as they apply to women, and in particular, women's reading.

Although much of the existing feminist scholarship seeks to argue that Lennox offers a proto-feminist analysis in the depiction of Arabella, a woman clearly troubled by the societal expectations of her sex, others have noted that Arabella's 'cure' offers a disappointing but predictable ending for the protagonist of this story. Norbert Schürer brings Lennox's literary integrity into question by stating that she 'abdicated artistic authority over her own works' and was 'quick to accept suggestions' from Richardson and Fielding, themselves influential male patrons of Lennox,[8] presumably for the purpose of securing financial reward by conforming to the expectations of the literary marketplace. Wendy Motooka, however, argues that Arabella's 'bad end' is no cure at all, since - unlike the doctor - she does not abandon her quixotic belief system. Rather, she, 'begins the novel as an empiricist, and ends the novel as an empiricist'.[9] It is interesting to note that whilst Lennox spent a significant amount of time attempting to redeem herself for writing characters whose knowledge of the world emerged from works of fiction, much of what we know about Lennox derives from *The Life of Harriot Stuart.*[10] Thus, there is limited usefulness in continuing to speculate on the intentions of a woman whose life was complicated by poverty and a need to navigate such a gendered landscape in which her sex

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[7] Kate Levin, 'The Cure of Arabella's Mind: Charlotte Lennox and the Disciplining of the Female Reader', *Women's Writing*, 2.3 (2005), 271-90 (p. 273).
[8] Norbert Shürer, *Charlotte Lennox: Correspondence and Miscellaneous Documents* (Plymouth: Bucknell University Press, 2012), p. xxxvii.
[9] Motooka, p. 252.
[10] Levin, p. 274.

frequently suffered. Rather, it seems infinitely more useful to discuss the ways in which the novel conveys (or fails to convey) a proto-feminist narrative, or as will be attempted in this dissertation, an indication that the form of the novel conveys a sense of challenging gendered expectations typical of the period. In the case of *The Female Quixote*, most notably, the relevance of societal attitudes towards reading, quixotism, sentimentalism, realism, and women's agency, in shaping the narrative. Therefore, conjecture applied to any potential intentions Lennox may have held during the writing of this text will be limited to those strictly necessary and of which there is textual evidence. In any case, Lennox's intentions are not of primary significance here; the reader's potential response to the text is a far more useful metric for the generation of a more complete picture, particularly with regard to delineating the efficacy of formal devices as an alternative mode of communicating gendered subversion.

For the purpose of performing an analysis of the text that addresses formal concerns, this dissertation draws upon Gérard Genette's seminal text, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* in its theoretical approach. It will find that anachronisms permeate the text in ways that generate meaning, allowing the reader to experience unexpected emotions to content that should otherwise be received as compliant and ideologically compatible with the values established in eighteenth-century social codes relating in particular to expectations of female behaviour, particularly emphasising the strictures on women's reading, education, and awareness of their position as women. It will discuss the shifting sense of community within Lennox's intertitles, evidencing a complicated relationship between the reader, the narrator, and society at large, to explain the ways in which the contrasting identities of the textual and intertitle narrators contribute to the reader's unstable grasp of how to feel about Arabella's quixotism. Specifically, it will conclude that numerous structural, formal, and narratological strands of *The Female Quixote* contribute

to evoking in the reader a desire to see Arabella defy the odds and forge a path for herself that is contrary to the expectations of her society, and that her failure to do so causes the reader to extract her own meaning.

Locating Lennox

This chapter will discuss some of the contexts situating Lennox in the literary field, including her relationships with her peers and the ways in which, with their assistance, she was successful in manipulating the direction of her career as a novelist. When Lennox writes *The Female Quixote*, she is approximately twenty-two years of age; and yet, by this time, very early into her adult life, she is writing to save her career. Within the space of the two preceding years, Lennox had managed to mire herself in controversy following the reception of two key texts: *The Art of Coquetry* (1750) and *The Life of Harriot Stuart, Written by Herself* (1751). The former text is a lengthy poem, the subject of which centres on extolling the virtues of coquetry, a subject that did not command the respect of much of an eighteenth-century readership. The latter, a text previously referred to as 'her strong protest against a world in which [...] she knew herself to be a stranger,'[1] is thought to be significantly autobiographical in nature. The narrative follows the eponymous protagonist, Harriot Stuart, who narrates the entirety of the story in a letter to her friend, Amanda. In this letter, she describes herself as a 'coquet', a reader of heroic romance books, and a writer of poetry. Having been rescued from a burning theatre in London, she is relocated along with her family when her father, an army officer, is posted to colonial New York. In spite of attempts made by Harriot to secure a marital match of her choosing, her father insists she marries Maynard, an unpleasant man in whom Harriot has no interest. Before the wedding takes place, her preferred suitor, Captain Belmein disguises himself in Native American dress and abducts Harriot. When she escapes and returns to her family, they cancel the wedding to Maynard. After the death of Harriot's father, she realises she is in

[1] T. C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel, *Samuel Richardson: A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 18.

love with a potential suitor of previous interest, Dumont. However, since she promised her father she would not marry a Catholic, she resolves not to marry him. Dumont's family also seek to prevent the marriage and are temporarily successful in doing so, having imprisoned poor Harriot in a French convent. She is then abducted by a French count and held prisoner until she dresses in men's clothing and escapes. Finally, Harriot returns to England and marries Dumont.[2]

Perhaps the most glaring difference between Arabella and Harriot is that, in spite of Harriot's troubles, she is eventually able to marry the man of her choosing; Arabella loves Glanville but does not find her way there uninfluenced. Arabella's end is now synonymous with misfortune; her 'cure' is a disappointing anti-climax. Some have speculated that this is because Arabella is a mere device in Lennox's quest for redemption following a number of bad reviews that threatened her reputation, and by extension, her career.[3] Similar moves were made by Eliza Haywood in the year prior to the publication of *The Female Quixote*, when Haywood responded to the shifting convention towards the Richardsonian model of novel writing with the publication of the first installation of *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* (1751). Along with Lennox, Haywood had a history of publishing problematic literature, and 'erotic/political romances like *Love in Excess* (1719),' but as the literary landscape began to shift in favour of didactic novels with some emphasis on virtue, Haywood, like Lennox, responded by producing a more conventionally compliant novel.[4] Lennox's move from writing for pleasure to publishing novels was already bold. The regard for publishing as a natural progression from writing that men benefited from was simply not a perspective regularly applied to women. Since the primary concern for

[2] Charlotte Lennox, *Harriot Stuart* (London: Printed for J. Payne, and J. Bouquet, 1751).
[3] Levin, p. 275.
[4] David H. Richter, 'The Gothic Novel and the Lingering Appeal of Romance', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Eighteenth-Century Novel*, ed. by James Alan Downie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 472-88 (p. 474).

women was respectability, and publishing inherently carried with it a certain assumption of visibility and publicity where female writers were concerned, the very act of publishing was enough to cast doubt upon a woman's respectability. Thus, her private life could become public and she would be subject to significant scrutiny as a result. Lennox was no exception to this rule. Whilst her close friend of many years, Samuel Johnson, was very supportive and encouraging of her decision to move towards publishing novels, stating that publishing distinguished a woman writer,[5] he was certainly in the minority. However, there were concerns about the novel that threatened Lennox's reputation, and by extension, her ability to continue sourcing income from the literary marketplace.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu described the book as having 'marvellous figures and exhibits', in other words, says Susan Carlile, that the characters were 'extravagant', and that she was 'distracted by plots that did not correspond with her own concept of what was "realistic"'. She further argued that Lennox drew 'unconvincing depictions of ideal virtue' and that her 'efforts at verisimilitude and moralizing were crude'.[6] It was these particular criticisms, and those of a similar ilk, that in challenging Lennox's bold writing style, catalysed the concerns regarding her respectability. However, it is not clear how much of Lady Mary's critique emerges from a genuine sense of concern with the content of the text. Her loyalty to Lady Isabella (the inspiration for a self-involved, controlling character in Lennox's novel) may have influenced her perspective on Lennox's protagonist. The critiques that emerged following the publication of *The Art of Coquetry* were less ambiguous, however. The eroticised responses to Lennox's poetry saw her branded as a dangerous influence on female readers,[7] and the bluestockings showed equal concern about Lennox's respectability. In a letter to Catherine Talbot, Elizabeth Carter wrote

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[5] Susan Carlile, *Charlotte Lennox: An Independent Mind* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2018), p. 56.
[6] Carlile, p. 76.
[7] Levin, p. 272.

> do you know any thing of a Mrs. Charlotte Lennox, who is publishing by subscription? One or two of her poems were printed in the last Magazine. For the edification of some of my young friends, we read one of them on the art of coquetry, at which they were much scandalized. The poetry is uncommonly correct, but the doctrine indeed by no means to be admired. It is intolerably provoking to see people who really appear to have a genius, apply it to such idle unprofitable purposes.[8]

That Harriot is a poet who also writes controversial material did not improve the situation for Lennox. As Levin explains, '"her" poems (which do omit the infamous "Art of Coquetry") advertise Harriot's sexual availability and inflame her male readers. These readers interpret Harriot's poems literally: because she writes well of love, she must know love'. Thus, the *Magazine of Magazines* categorised *Harriot Stuart* as belonging to a selection of novels known equally for their propensity to debauching the 'virtue of its young male readers', arguing that

> many an honest country gentleman, and many a raw university boy falls a prey to them: they pick his pocket and debauch him from morning to night. - The most noted of these -are Harriot Stuart, Fanny Hill, Charlotte Summers, lady Frail, &c. &c.[9]

Lennox's reputation was at risk, and this could account for the level of support she received from Johnson, Millar, and Fielding during the time she published *The Female Quixote*. The relationship with Johnson is described as Lennox's 'closest intimate friendship and deepest personal connection'.[10] Coupled with the fact that, as we have seen, her reputation had by this time seen some damage following the publication of *The Art of Coquetry* and *Harriot Stuart*, it is unsurprising to learn that, as Brian Hanley explains, 'Johnson, Millar, and Fielding formed an informal coalition of sorts that exploited the popular press, in particular the growing cachet of the book review, in an effort to condition the public's response to *The Female Quixote*'. In fact, Johnson was so supportive of Lennox that two weeks after

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[8] M. R. Small, *Charlotte Ramsay Lennox: An Eighteenth-Century Lady of Letters* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1935), p. 248.
[9] Levin, p. 274.
[10] Carlile, p. 282.

Fielding's review of the text was published in the *Covent-Garden Journal*, Johnson published his own review in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, in which he somewhat misrepresented Fielding's comments to convey an entirely positive reading of *The Female Quixote*. Fielding had expressed that he was an admirer of the novel, 'identif[ying] five points on which Lennox's work surpasses its model, *Don Quixote*, four points on which Cervantes' romance is the better of the two, and areas of comparison where the two works are on equal footing'.[11] Johnson, however, refers to his friend's review as an 'encomium', suggesting Fielding had extended greater praise to Lennox's novel than he had in reality.[12] As her close friend, it seems likely that Johnson merely wished to support Lennox in her literary endeavours, but the extent to which he manipulated the press following publication suggests that he was also somewhat concerned by Lennox's predicament. As Hanley suggests, Johnson's representation of Fielding's words must have 'stretched to the limit his highly refined sense of scholarly manners'.[13] Another plausible reason for Johnson's extensive support throughout the time following the publication of *The Female Quixote* is Lennox's financial situation. Whilst the fact that she was married in a 'notorious marriage shop' suggests a certain amount of determination to marry Alexander Lennox, as a printer's apprentice, his fortune was described as consisting 'wholly in hopes and expectations'.[14] It soon became clear to Lennox that her husband was not capable of earning a steady income, and by 1749, her financial struggles were public knowledge, prompting the production of a play at the Little Theatre in Haymarket to raise funds on her behalf.[15]

Another relevant consideration is that Fielding in particular, a friend to both

[11] Brian Hanley, 'Henry Fielding, Samuel Johnson, Samuel Richardson, and the Reception of Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote* in the Popular Press', *ANQ*, 13.3 (2000), 27-32 (p. 29).
[12] Hanley, p. 29.
[13] Ibid., p. 30.
[14] Carlile, p. 50.
[15] Ibid., p. 51.

Johnson and Lennox, had his own ideas about what shape the novel ought to take, and Lennox's devotion to realism in *The Female Quixote* supported his own aspirations in that regard. When Lennox writes what could be referred to as her redemption text, she does so fully apprised of the direction the novel is taking, in line with the opinions of her peers. Fielding, for example, was so opposed to the genre of heroic romance that he included allegories in his own novels to deter women from reading them. In *Joseph Andrews* (2014), for instance, Fielding cautions pregnant mothers against reading unapproved texts (or engaging in quixotic 'imaginings') on the basis that they may somehow infect the minds of their unborn child through the analogy of a birthmark 'which his mother had given him by longing for that fruit'.[16] As Amelia Dale explains, 'Fielding here draws on the contemporary theory of the mother's imagination's capacity to mark her fetus, a theory that figures the unborn child as a text that potentially can be inscribed by maternal imaginings'.[17] He was not alone in believing that heroic romance had a negative impact on women who read the genre, nor was he alone in thinking that the new novel of the Enlightenment should serve as a vessel for imparting morality (though in practice, hos own novels fell short of the specific morality he frequently endorsed). Samuel Richardson, another friend of Johnson and Lennox, shared his sentiments and rigorously advocated for a novel that centred realism within its narrative. Thus, when he wrote *Pamela* (1740), he insisted that it would be 'written to NATURE, avoiding all Romantick Flights, improbable Surprizes, and irrational Machinery', with 'Rules, equally New and Practicable, inculcated throughout the Whole, for the General Conduct of Life'.[18] Fielding and Richardson are

[16] Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews* (Oxford: Oxford University Press and Wesleyan University Press, 2014), p. 225.
[17] Amelia Dale, 'Gendering the Quixote in Eighteenth-Century England', *Studies in Eighteenth- Century Culture*, 46.1 (2017), 5-19 (p. 10).
[18] Albert J. Rivero, *Samuel Richardson, Pamela in Her Exalted Condition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 3.

sometimes referred to as the fathers of the modern novel, owing to their contributions to the developed format, which is characteristic of the Enlightenment in that it reflected the period's prioritisation of rationality, reason, logic, and reality.

When Lennox wrote *The Female Quixote*, this was the context in which she did so, keenly aware that some of the support she hoped to receive from her peers was contingent upon her subscription to the ideas shared amongst them regarding the shape of the modern novel. Had she written favourably of quixotic women during this time, as we have already seen to some degree with *Harriot Stuart*, the response would not have been as conducive to remedying her financial difficulties. Whilst Laurie Langbauer (1984) argues that by the time Lennox released *The Female Quixote*, romances were no longer en vogue, Lennox's commitment to producing a novel as Fielding, Richardson, et al envisaged it extended far beyond criticism of heroic romance. Even when taken at face value as a satirical work, Lennox adheres to the structural and narratological themes established in texts by Fielding and Richardson. To all intents and purposes, she did not merely imitate Cervantes' text; instead, she reproduced a novel in exactly the style she knew would be approved by her peers and mentors. For example, a key concern in both incarnations of the modern novel is the introduction and resolution of tension that threatens essential institutions that uphold the social contract. In Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*, one source of tension is created through a narrative suggesting incest. This narrative threatens the institution of marriage, disrupting the social contract and reinforcing the reader's need to anticipate resolution, as well as reinforcing this value within their own life. Fielding achieves this by elucidating the parentage of Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones, ensuring that he not only mitigat[es] its disquieting implications, but actually transmut[es] potential pathos into high frivolity'.[19] Lennox's own protagonist embodies the tension throughout the novel, and of

[19] Martin C. Battestin, 'Henry Fielding, Sarah Fielding, and the Dreadful Sin of Incest', *A Forum on Fiction*,

course, her entire persona is a lens through which the reader is encouraged to engage with the social ramifications of failing to adhere to a ubiquitous code of conduct. She then resolves the problem through Arabella's 'cure', allowing her to marry just like Joseph and Tom. In both instances, the resolution and resulting catharsis further embed the cultural ideology in the mind of the reader, further solidifying their willingness to comply with the convention. Lennox adheres to this structure, but there are notable deviations that will be covered at length in the coming chapters. For the moment, suffice it to say that her adherence to the format of Fielding's novel(s) ensured that she would appeal to a style of narrative that was both growing in popularity and validated by the very people she would later rely on for endorsement.

Another way that Lennox mirrors Fielding is by utilising the leverage of an existing text to serve as a qualification. Fielding establishes a modern tradition of qualifying his work on the basis of its references to existing literature, creating intertextual links that allow him to 'gain leverage from an earlier work (or event, as we will see in *Tom Jones*' use of the 1745 Jacobite rebellion): *Shamela* and *Joseph Andrews* use *Pamela* as foil, *Amelia*, although in different ways, *Clarissa*'.[20] This is, of course, a similar device used by Lennox when writing *Harriot Stuart,* some eleven years later. It is also the first of a number of indications that Lennox may deploy narratological devices for the purpose of influencing the response of her readers. By associating her text with Fielding's former novel, she creates an intertextual link that is not quite potent enough to protect her from the criticism that would follow, but she almost certainly learned from this and modified her approach with *The Female Quixote.* Furthermore, Lennox adopts a similar structure of

13.1 (1979), 6-18 (p. 6).

[20] April London, *The Cambridge Introduction to the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 51.

'relation between the individual and the social'.[21] April London argues that the 'ideal conjunction of the "Good-Humour and Benevolence" exhibited by the hero and a number of father figures [in *Joseph Andrews*]' echo prominent social structures contained within *Pamela* and *Clarissa*.[22] Of course, these themes spill over into *The Female Quixote*, as Glanville's willingness to tolerate Arabella's 'folly' and persevere very much translates to a benevolence unparalleled by any other character in the novel, with perhaps the exception of the libertine, Sir George Bellmour, whose agenda is less transparent to Arabella, and deployed with dubious intentions. The narrative features well-meaning men (who later serve as father figures following the death of Arabella's own father) who seek to guide her back to their version of sense and rationality. This construction of course reaches its climax when Arabella is finally saved by a clergyman, acting in service of the omnipotent Father in the absence of her own.

Another way Lennox follows Fielding's lead is through the narrative associated with Arabella's servant, Lucy. As London explains, gothic novels, 'while repudiating aristocratic excess' find interesting ways to 'demonstrate their commitment to continuity over rupture'. She continues,

> Indiscreet and prone to gossip, servants like Annette and Ludovico in *Udolpho* or Paulo in *The Italian* serve the useful narrative purpose of conveying information that the more modest protagonist cannot, for reasons of decorum, articulate.[23]

Of course, *The Female Quixote* is not gothic, so Lucy is closer to Partridge than to Ludovico, highlighting Fielding's influence rather than the conventions associated with gothic novels. What is perhaps slightly different about Lucy, and isolates one of the ways in which this narrative diverges from gothic, is that she is frequently less comical than her mistress, Lucy has no idea where to begin, what ought to be included in a retelling of her

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[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid., p. 137.

mistress' life, or what would be appropriate to convey to a man about whom Arabella knows very little.[24] It is on this occasion that we see it is Lucy, not Arabella, who is in possession of decorum, and whilst she very much aligns with the comical representation of the underclass present in novels of the same period, she represents a further humiliation of Arabella as even though she belongs to the underclass, lacks the background of a good birth from the landed gentry, has no classical education to speak of, and ought to take guidance from her mistress, she finds herself unable to do so, guided by a woman with less of a grasp of propriety than she has. Why Lennox chose to undermine Arabella via a member of the underclass is not clear. What is clear, however, is that Lennox studied the novels of her peers very closely and reproduced with great effect those qualities necessary for her literary redemption. Indeed, she was successful in this endeavour, as *The Female Quixote* was 'her most enduring work',[25] situating her as a competent novelist in her field, and standing out as the most important novel of her career. Not only did she succeed in distancing herself from the debauchery of male respondents to her earlier works, but she also managed to carve out a reputation as one of those intellectual women who understood the benefit of abiding by the conventional wisdom of her male peers. Having built the foundations to garner the support of the well-respected novelists of her time, Lennox put her best foot forward and set about building what would ultimately amount to a financially disappointing career from the ashes of her old persona.

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[24] Charlotte Lennox, *The Female Quixote* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 121.
[25] Jodi L. Wyett, 'Quixotic Legacy: *The Female Quixote* and the Professional Woman Writer',*Authorship*, 4.1 (2015), 1-19 (p. 1).

Feminine Quixotism

The problem of women and quixotism extended well into the eighteenth century. Some concerns from Johnson and Fielding, as well as in popular conduct texts from the period, positioned Arabella and the women like her as a threat to the established behavioural standards of the period. Scott Gordon outlines a framework of orthodox quixotism, which he asserts applies to *The Female Quixote*, and explains that typically, orthodox narratives depicting quixotism explore themes involving the loss of a mother, which he remarks is often positioned as being causative in producing quixotism in female children. Further, he suggests that this identification of the mother as catalysing such behaviours is one of the only acknowledgements of 'the importance of mothers and mothering'.[1] Of course, it could also be argued here that it credits mothers with having more power than they feasibly benefit from within a system that marks them as subservient to males, and perhaps echoes, in some ways, the modern tradition of blaming mothers for the perceived failings of their children. Nevertheless, Arabella has the loss of a mother in common with both Evelina Anville of Frances Burney's *Evelina* and Emily St Aubert of Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho,* also discussed in this dissertation. Emily finds herself motherless by the end of the first chapter, and develops similar quixotic themes that converge on what Gordon identifies as 'ways of seeing'.[2] He delineates a subjective perception shared by quixotes that produces a sort of 'blindness', resulting in 'quixotes [only] see[ing] what (and only what) their internalized genre registers'.[3] For Emily, for example, this perceptual problem presents when she misconstrues the meaning of an image she sees her father weeping

[1] Scott Paul Gordon, *The Practice of Quixotism: Postmodern Theory and Eighteenth-Century Women's Writing* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 42-43.
[2] Ibid., p. 54.
[3] Ibid., p. 46.

over.[4] For Arabella, the many times she encounters situations that feel dangerous to her because of her perceptions, such as when she believes she has been 'carry'd off;'[5] or when she causes embarrassment by trying to have a gardener restored to his position following her fervently held belief that he is of high birth, asking, incredulously, 'do you imagine a Person of his Rank could be guilty of stealing Carp?'[6] Amelia Dale argues that quixotism is intrinsically enmeshed with masculinity, and by extension, with national character. She explains that 'just as the quixotic character is imprinted by the text he—or she—has consumed, theories of national character conceive the moral and/or physical specificities of countries as marking their inhabitants.[7] Put simply, the text's context can reshape its subjectivity. In spite of the fact that as Aaron Hanlon argues, English quixotes occupy a 'liminal position,'[8] existing on the margins of what Dale relays are a 'collection of peculiar people united only through their heterogeneity', quixotism is not merely tolerated but 'potentially celebrated'.[9] This is not the case where Arabella is concerned. Marta Kvande suggests that female quixotes might receive different treatment than their male counterparts in part because of the way in which reading is thought to affect physiology, and moreover, its unique impact on women. She suggests that reading conducted by men is considered as a representation of 'civilized values in part because it can be connected to classical texts and in part because men were believed more capable of the discipline required to read correctly'. She suggests that men's reading has physiological and behavioural foundations, in that it was 'linked to good posture and was disciplined enough to be safe and authoritative within a private library,' and that 'men were able to transcend the physical

[4] Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 26.
[5] Lennox, p. 305.
[6] Lennox, p. 25.
[7] Dale, p. 7.
[8] Aaron R. Hanlon, 'Toward a Counter-Poetics of Quixotism', *Studies in the Novel*, 46.2 (2014), 141-158 (p. 153).
[9] Dale, p. 7.

effects of reading because they could control the process through their disciplined habits'. Women, on the other hand, 'lacked such training and discipline; "women's [reading] tended to be located in the female body" because they were unable to transcend its physiological effects'.[10] Thus, whereas men's reading is recommended, women's reading is cautioned against.

However, for Dale, female quixotes are positioned differently because they do not represent an eclectic national character since they are associated with a 'subversion of Anglo- British identity'.[11] Kvande also acknowledges, however, that female quixotes 'serve as a figure for political instability, and the threat posed by her quixotic reading becomes more or less dangerous depending on the contemporary political climate and on the authorial audience'.[12] The quixotic representation present in Lennox's publication of *The Female Quixote* was influenced by the 1745 Jacobite Rebellion, in which 'the Stuart Pretender was seen as quixotic in his failure to perceive and accept the political reality of the Hanoverian monarchy, and in his attempt to impose his own reality on the world'. The link between the events can be traced back to the 1715 Jacobite Rebellion, 'when popular publications linked James Stuart's belief in his right to the throne to Don Quixote's belief in romances'.[13] Thus, characters such as Arabella, whose femaleness defines their quixotism within a political context with an existing discourse situating the quixote, are depicted as unreliable observers of reality, altering their validity in the mind of the reader. As Gordon explains, readers 'are never permitted to share the quixote's perceptions of the people or objects with which she comes into contact, since the narrative always reveals the

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[10] Marta Kvande, 'Reading Female Readers: *The Female Quixote* and Female Quixotism', in *Masters of the Marketplace*, ed. by Susan Carlile (Plymouth: Lehigh University Press, 2011), pp. 219-41 (p. 222).
[11] Ibid., p. 11.
[12] Ibid., p. 219.
[13] Ibid., p. 224.

"real" facts before it portrays the quixote's misapprehensions'.[14] Arabella's consumption and emulation of the 'very bad[ly] translat[ed]' French romances represents her quixotic practice as 'an imitation of what is already a poor imitation of foreign models'.[15] Her failure to comply with the expected norms of female readership renders her a madwoman who eschews her own Englishness: Arabella becomes stateless and foreign. This is echoed through her mannerisms and style of dress as well as her peculiar behaviour and rejection of social norms. It is compounded by the palpable sense that she is an unreliable witness to reality. Gordon suggests this type of narrative 'might use such interpretive moments to unsettle our confidence in the notion of what is "evident"',[16] which is a similar mechanism to the focalization of Frances Burney's *Evelina.* As is discussed in the second chapter of this dissertation, the format of the novel, singularly focalized as it is, creates a fundamental issue with distinguishing fact from perception. Since we only have Evelina's perception of characters in the novel to extrapolate from, it is difficult to develop a three-dimensional view of the narrative world. Just as the reader is caused to question the validity of observations made by Emily and Arabella, separate mechanisms call into question the reliability of Evelina's perceptions. However, as Marta Kvande observes, in spite of this general treatment of female quixotes, Arabella is depicted as unusually powerful. She continues, suggesting that whilst Arabella is 'regarded as nearly mad by many other characters in the novel, she is also fascinating and powerful; she is frequently able to control her suitors' behaviour, getting them to collude in her fantasies, because they fear alienating her.[17] In this way, the convention of isolating the quixote as the single object of ridicule is somewhat diffused here, perhaps even thwarted entirely, by the very characters who are intended to stand in opposition to Arabella's fantasy as bastions of rationality and

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[14] Gordon, p. 44.
[15] Dale, p. 11.
[16] Ibid., p. 45.
[17] Kvande, p. 219.

reason.

Quixotism is a nuanced concept and the treatment of it is dependent on a number of factors. Quixotism in *The Female Quixote* is typical, following what Gordon calls the orthodox framework for quixotism, but it is no less complex and nuanced here than anywhere else. Complicated by the dual factors of influence along sex and socio-political lines, Arabella is thrust into a political, nationalist discourse. How Arabella's quixotism is read, in terms of whether it constitutes a positive reading of female quixotism, is difficult to say. Gordon suggests that in a rush to 'heroiz[e] Arabella to recover a subversive text [...] recent readings necessarily ignore or obscure the steady ridicule that the novel directs at this quixotism'.[18] Of course, it is challenging to identify whether this ridicule emerges from Lennox's feelings on the matter or is simply a realist's depiction of a realistic response to such behaviour. The same can be said of Arabella's marriage to Glanville; whilst modern readers note their disappointment in Arabella's 'cure', it should not be assumed to result from Lennox's support. Rather, it is representative of the most realistic outcome. Arabella is a fantastical rendering of a character that, in reality, does not exist. One might suggest that her quixotism serves to parody perspectives on quixotism because it is so extreme. Were it to exist in reality, however, ridicule would be the most likely response to it. This is not to say that ridicule of quixotism is reasonable or even relevant to this novel. The ridicule taking place in *The Female Quixote* is of a version of quixotism that only exists in fantasy.

[18] Gordon, p. 53.

Structural Analysis: *The Female Quixote*

Whilst many scholars have read *The Female Quixote* and found it wanting of a feminist foundation, this chapter instead argues that such readings fail to properly attribute the novel to its socio-political context, or rather, that they fail to look beyond that context. As has been mentioned previously, there were myriad factors influencing Lennox's decision to write the novel in the way that she did, but this does not mean there are no modes of engaging with the text that reveal alternative readings. This analysis will suggest that the text itself embodies the message waiting to be understood. It will not seek to support any argument with assertions that Lennox had intended for her novel to be read in this manner. Rather, it will suggest that the novel's very structure makes it necessary to do so. As is seemingly appropriate for a novel so peppered with anachronisms, this analysis will begin at the end. Arabella's unlikely marriage to Glanville has, unsurprisingly, received significant negative attention from many scholars throughout the centuries since it was written. Wendy Motooka writes, 'what had seemed a glorious feminist spark disappointingly fizzles into an unremarkable marriage that returns woman to her proper place'.[82] Other readers who more or less share her disappointment in what is frequently referred to as Arabella's 'bad end' include Leland E. Warren (1982), Margaret Anne Doody (1987), Patricia Meyer Spacks (1990), Margaret Dalziel (1973), and Laurie Langbauer (1984).

Perhaps the least unfavourable view to emerge from this collective is Margaret Dalziel's assertion that Lennox's choice to end the novel in this way was likely a product of her financial predicament.[83] However, as mentioned previously, even this mitigating factor does not grant her much in the way of a pardon from critics who suggest, as did Norbert Schürer, that Lennox relinquished authority over her works and readily accepted suggestions from both Richardson

[82] Motooka, p. 251.
[83] Margaret Dalziel, 'Introduction', in Charlotte Lennox, *The Female Quixote*, ed. by Margaret Dalziel (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 423-25 (p. xviii).

and Fielding. What is surprisingly lacking in analyses of Arabella's 'bad end' is much in the way of acknowledgement that since, as many scholars have noted, Lennox could not salvage her writing career whilst bestowing on Arabella the ending she perhaps deserves, we must look elsewhere than Lennox's intentions for alternate readings of this anticlimactic ending. Motooka qualifies her disappointment in the novel's denouement, stating that feminist readings with a focus on retaining the 'essential femininity of quixotism and the essential masculinity of rationality' encounter problems when attempting to reconcile those aims with the novel's 'abrupt and seemingly anti-feminist conclusion'. She suggests that extending the analysis to the book as a whole, 'we must be willing to reimagine the relations between gender, quixotism, and the novel's ultimate sentimentalism.[84] Furthermore, she acknowledges that *The Female Quixote* is not an outlier in its use of 'sentiment as a mediator of political conflict'.[85] Indeed, it was the strategy of Elizabeth Montagu's sister, Sarah Scott, in her debut novel *The History of Cornelia* (1750).

Cornelia, whose construction ultimately forms a vessel for the positive portrayal of female education which Scott personally advocated, charts the ideal trajectory of an educated woman to the development of morality and virtue.[86] As Peter Sabor notes, whilst Scott ventures to qualify the attempt to 'if not instruct in the knowledge, yet animate in the practice of, virtue', she fails to indicate the inclusion of what he calls 'the most striking characteristic of her novel: its sentimentality'. He continues, outlining Cornelia's response to her distressed friend, in which '[she] urges her to accept part of her fortune: 'you shall be freed from the difficulties you at present are under, and I from the secret pain of having unemployed money by me'.[87] There is

[84] Ibid, p. 252.
[85] Ibid., p. 264.
[86] Sarah Scott, *The History of Cornelia* (London: printed for A. Millar, opposite to Katharine- Street, in the Strand, 1750).

[87] Peter Sabor, '"Moral Romance" and the Novel at Mid-Century', in *The Oxford History of the Novel in English: Volume 1: Prose Fiction in English From the Origins of Print to 1750*, ed. by Thomas Keymer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 579-94 (p. 592).

very little scholarship available on Sarah Scott, but extrapolating from the concerns of her later novel, *A Description of Millennium Hall* (1762), which endorses a utopian ideal of a women's community not all that far removed from Mary Astell's earlier vision,[88] it is unsurprising to find philanthropic gestures in her novels, even if she does not draw attention to their inherent sentimentalism. Jonathan C. Williams argues that Sarah Fielding's novel, *The Adventures of David Simple* (1744) 'deploys death as a figure for thinking about political critique and its limits', explaining that 'on their deathbeds, characters utter politically charged speeches, but cannot act upon their words, such that sentimental critique is both powerful and inoperative'.[89] In this sense, the commonality between these novels is the way in which sentimentalism is deployed strategically as a formal device, structurally situated to mediate charged political concepts and the reader's response to them. For Scott, the endorsement of female education; for Fielding, 'expression of sentiment affords characters on their deathbeds the opportunity to imagine a future political order in which losses will be restored and where the poor will be rich',[90] and for Lennox, sentimentalism mediates the satire directed at believers of an Arabella-esque response to romances with Arabella's ultimate marriage to Glanville.

Motooka suggests that the benefit of Arabella's reading is 'its ability to account for Arabella's conversion without conceding a feminist defeat'.[91] It would be reasonable, in response to such a bleak statement, to ask what the benefit of avoiding defeat might be if it is as inevitable as it seems. However, this chapter will discuss some of the factors suggesting that in actuality, the conclusion is, after all, decidedly feminist. What is more, it seems necessary to reframe this text not as merely narrowly escaping feminist defeat, but as emblematic of female struggle under the extremity of patriarchal suppression: enduring and ingenious. Further, it will be argued here

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[88] Sarah Scott, *A Description of Millennium Hall* (Illinois: printed for A. Millar, Project Gutenberg, 2008).
[89] Jonathan C. Williams, 'Deathly Sentimentalism: Sarah Fielding, Henry Mackenzie', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 30.2 (2017), 175-97 (p. 175).
[90] Ibid., p. 177.
[91] Motooka, p. 252.

that what emerges from this reading is a sense of celebrating deductive reasoning, arising from an endorsement of the education of women, resulting in a narratological support of didactic purpose. To elucidate how this reading is produced, this analysis will begin by discussing the findings of a number of studies referenced in David S. Miall's chapter in *A Companion to Literary Theory* (2018). With regards to Arabella's 'bad end', this chapter will first argue that this reading is the direct result of a reluctance to believe that anyone might finish the novel feeling satisfied that, having spent the overwhelming majority of it rejecting the notion of marriage outside of her own terms, Arabella relents at the last. A study cited by Miall, conducted by Martindale and Dailey (1995), suggests that readings of this nature are stably predictable. As Miall explains, 'current opinion among literary theorists is that literary texts are unstable and that readers will thus disagree over their meaning. The article [Martindale and Dailey] produce rejects this likelihood'.[92] The study followed eleven psychology students in their evaluation of three poems, after which they were asked to write a short essay, about which, Miall continues, noting that following the scoring of essay contents for 'Heise's (1965) norms for evaluation, activity, and potency, which are thought to measure the main dimensions of connotative meaning', readers showed consistent agreement across all poems, and they conclude that 'people agree in their interpretations of literature to about the same extent regardless of whether they express these interpretations via rating scales or essays'.[93] Thus, there are reasonable grounds upon which to assume a consistent reading within the scope of a modern readership. However, one limitation of Miall's research, with respect to this analysis, is that it does not extend to the analysis of evolving perspectives of various readerships throughout history. A modern reading of eighteenth-century literature will, of course, be vastly different than that of an eighteenth-century reader. Whilst it would be useful to understand the potential ways in which readings of Lennox

[92] David S. Miall, 'Reader-Response Theory', in *A Companion to Literary Theory*, ed. by David H. Richter (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2018), pp. 114-25 (p. 122).

[93] Ibid.

differed within their period, a stable reaction within a modern context can be relied upon for interpreting a formal reading of proto-feminism within that context. However, Karin Kukkoken offers an interesting reading of *The Female Quixote* that may provide some clues about the reader's response in the eighteenth century. According to Kukkoken, the brand of didacticism in the novel facilitates the predictive processing of Arabella's responses to the various scenarios she finds herself in, and the framework for that predictive processing is French romance mediated by probability calculus. She explains,

> *The Female Quixote* asserts the power of decorum and thinks it through to the end. Lennox's novel creates a situational logic that plays through the basic cognitive features of probability calculus and touches on their seventeenth- and eighteenth-century conceptualizations in literary criticism and philosophy. [...] The vraisemblable describes the configurations of decorum which shape readers' understanding of the fictional world. To grasp these cognitively, readers undergo a learning process about the fictional world, which Lennox highlights through Arabella's meta fictional comments drawing on the French romances and the critical discourse around them and through her own use of chapter headings and suspense in the probability design of the novel. [94]

The suggestion here is one that applies to all audiences in all time periods; as the novel progresses, the reader becomes more adept at predicting the probabilities of Arabella's next move. This means that by the end of the novel, the reader has been educated on the parameters of decorum outlined in French romances, which allows them to determine what the appropriate response to any given social problem might be, from Arabella's perspective. For example, Kukkoken explains that during the scene when Arabella believes she and her companions are about to be ravished by a group of riders during a walk along the river, readers have already amassed enough knowledge of French romances and their attendant framework of decorum to understand that Arabella is most likely planning to swim across the Thames, owing to her the fact that 'she recounted "that Action of Clelia's" (62) and praised her "sublime Courage" (277)'. Furthermore, Kukkoken suggests that 'Lennox uses the harangue to delay Arabella's leap into

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[94] Karin Kukkoken, *A Prehistory of Cognitive Poetics: Neoclassicism and the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 201.

the Thames and to signal to readers the degree to which they have come to think along the same probabilities as the Quixote'.[95] With reference to the delaying harangue she mentions as a device to grant readers the time to understand their own capacity for predicting probabilities, Joe Bray notes Watt's observation that Richardson deploys a similar device in *Clarissa*, explaining that throughout the novel, 'the pace of the narrative was slowed down by minute description to something very near that of actual experience', which culminates in a 'minute-by-minute content of consciousness which constitutes what the individual's personality really is, and dictates his relationship to others'.[96] In this case, it connects the reader to the moment in a specific way that causes them to think, alongside Arabella, in real time, reaching the same conclusions at the same speed as Arabella. With regard to Arabella's 'bad end', Kukkoken suggests that Arabella does not necessarily reject the decorum of romance entirely, but that the Divine's 'Pascalian wager' prompts her to act in accordance with the brand of decorum she wishes to see in the world. When Arabella works her way through that problem, she determines that it is more beneficial at least to behave as if the world the Divine conveys to her exists, lest she be wrong and suffer the consequences of failing to do so.[97] What is more interesting and, perhaps, more relevant to this dissertation is that if Kukkoken is correct, then audiences in the eighteenth century would most likely have been surprised by Arabella's 'cure'. Having been educated in the appropriate responses to anti-romantic ideologues, they would likely have expected Arabella to behave as she did when challenged by Glanville earlier in the novel. Whilst surprise and disappointment are distinct emotions, and experiencing one does not necessarily guarantee that the other will follow, it does allow, perhaps, for a level of suggestion that may have defamiliarised the subject of agency earlier in the novel that could allow for varied emotional responses to it. Suffice it to say that there is cause to consider that the eighteenth-century reader is, at the very least, surprised

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[95] Ibid., p. 194.

[96] Joe Bray, *The Epistolary Novel: Representations of Consciousness* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 57.

[97] Ibid., pp. 197-198.

by the outcome. Further, there is plausible research to suggest that modern readers of *The Female Quixote* might all agree, for one reason or another, that the culmination of Arabella's experiences in her marriage to Glanville might not, after all, represent a suitable ending for the novel.

The salient argument presented by Miall is that 'empirical studies have shown that literary texts are to an important degree stable entities: aside from the pyrotechnics of postmodern criticism, there are several issues arising from such stability' and that, in the main, readers tend to agree when it comes to 'their interpretations of a given text; that the formal aspects of the text provide a pervasive structure for its interpretation; and that the insights of the ordinary or "common" reader show a degree of continuity with professional readings.'[98] It is to his second assertion that this chapter will now turn, that the 'formal aspects of the text provide a pervasive structure for its interpretation'. In his chapter on duration, Genette deals with the problem of accounting for the speed of narrative within a text, about which he explains that by alternating longer scenes and shorter summaries, a narratological rhythm can be established to guide the reader in the direction of a hierarchy of event importance, distinguishing between the dramatic and the nondramatic.[99] What is interesting about Arabella's marriage to Glanville is that in spite of the repeated references to its likely occurrence, the event is relegated to the status of a summary. There are fifty-nine references to marriage in the entirety of the text where the word root 'marry' is featured. This does not account for the numerous instances where the anticipated marriage is referenced through allusion, such as when Glanville takes to courting Arabella for the purpose of securing her hand and engages in many heated debates about the nature of romantic relationships so that he might convince her that marriage is advantageous. Nor does it include metonymies such as 'give him her hand', of which there are a number. Interestingly, the relative frequency of terms relating to marriage sits at 0.0000542 for the first half of the novel.

[98] Miall, p. 123.
[99] Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse* (New York: Cornell University, 1980), p. 97.

By the middle of the text, it drops to 0.0000203, gradually declining throughout the latter half of the book, until it rests at 0.0000136.

This trend towards referential reduction cannot be identified in other novels from the eighteenth century, including *Mysteries of Udolpho, Evelina, The History of Betsy Thoughtless*, *Pamela, The Adventures of David Simple,* and *Tom Jones*. Genette explains that the significance of a concept can be conveyed through frequency; by repeating sequences, the writer constructs a cognitive familiarity with a thing, reducing its newness in the process.[100] The result of this familiarisation is that the reader then comprehends the significance of the event by recognising the volume of space (and time) dedicated to the concept. Whilst Genette outlines a number of ways in which frequency may impact a text, it is his reference to *repeating narrative* that interests me here, which Genette describes as an event 'where the recurrences of the statement do not correspond to any recurrence of events'.[101] Formally, the concept of marriage loses its significance as the novel progresses by way of its diminishing referential repetitions. As mentioned previously, Arabella's marriage to Glanville is relegated to the status of summary, tacked on to the end of the text as if it were an afterthought. In fact, so unimportant is Arabella's marriage that it occupies a paltry eighty words in a novel boasting almost one hundred and fifty thousand. This jarring juxtaposition of the emphasis versus spatial (and narratological) importance creates a perceptible discordance within the text that calls into question the way in which we are supposed to interpret the event. If, as we are expected to believe, the marriage of Arabella and Glanville is the grand culmination we are led to believe throughout the narration of the text, why then is it condensed so dramatically? We could answer this with pragmatism, as one scholar has, suggesting that it was Johnson's influence prompting Lennox to stunt the novel's growth prematurely, but this does not alter the reading of it or the perceptions we as readers develop of the presentation of events or their whereabouts in the hierarchy of the

[100] Ibid., p. 113.
[101] Genette, p. 116.

narrative.

Structurally speaking, then, Arabella's 'unity' with Glanville is the least important part of the story. Further, whilst it could be argued that this often tends to be the case, and similarly short marriages can be found in Eliza Haywood's *Love in Excess,*[102] as well as in Jane Austen more broadly, it does indicate that much of the focus through the narrative is on Arabella's struggle against her limited agency: a circumstance she is able to extend as a result of her obsession with romances. In contrast, huge passages of the text are dedicated to Arabella's monologues and dialogue with other characters relating to her extensive reading, whereby she makes repeated, extensive accounts of the heroines of Scudery's texts and their adventures. We see her turn to them for guidance on what she ought to do in any given situation, such as when in chapter eleven, having fled her father's home in fear of the gardener's intent to ravish her, she asks 'did not the wicked Arianta betray her mistress into the power of her insolent lover? Ah! Arabella, thou art not single in thy misery, since the divine Mandana was, like thyself, the dupe of a mercenary servant'.[103] However, we see Arabella engaging with the precedents established by those heroines in a way that is compensatory. She does not merely adhere to what could be considered doctrines for her, as we see in chapter nine when she is forced to invite Glanville to return following her father's intervention. She decides to leave her father's home, but

> the want of a precedent, indeed, for an action of this nature, held her a few moments in suspense; for she did not remember to have read of any heroine that voluntarily left her father's house, however persecuted she might be: but she considered, that there was not any of the ladies in romances, in the same circumstances with herself, who was without a favoured lover, for whose sake it might have been believed she had made an elopement, which would have been highly prejudicial to her glory; and, as there was no foundation for any suspicion of that kind in her case, she thought there was nothing to hinder her from withdrawing from a tyrannical exertion of parental authority, and the secret machinations of a lover, whose aim was to take away her liberty, either by obliging her to marry him, or by making her a prisoner.[104]

[102] Eliza Haywood, *Love in Excess* (London: printed for W. Chetwood, at Cato's-Head in Russell- Court, near the Theatre-Royal; and R. Franklin, at the Sun against St. Dunstan's Church in Fleet- Street; and sold by J. Roberts in Warwick-Lane, 1719), pp. 55-56.

[103] Lennox, p. 99.

[104] Ibid., p. 35.

This excerpt is an intertextual link with Richardson's *Clarissa, or The History of a Young Lady* (1747) which tells the story of its eponymous protagonist, Clarissa Harlowe, who faces pressure from her parents to marry a wealthy but unlikeable suitor, Mr Solmes. Rejecting the match and fleeing the family home, she is abducted by the libertine, Lovelace, culminating in her rape and subsequent death. The quote serves a dual purpose, says Joseph F. Bartolomeo, 'mark[ing] Clarissa's conduct as more egregious than that of a romance heroine, but also ostensibly situates Arabella in a situation as precarious as Clarissa's'. However, since Arabella's father, the marquis is much more 'accommodating' than Mr Harlowe, opting instead to use his 'persuasions' to manipulate Arabella, says Bartolomeo, 'Arabella's situation is far less dire'.[105] The reference sits among a number of similar intertextualities, in addition to what Bartolomeo identifies as similar themes within the plot, as well as borrowed or inverted characters (Arabella, for example) which may explain why he describes *The Female Quixote* as a 'rewriting of *Clarissa* in a comic mode'.[106] Nevertheless, this scene is one of a number of anachronisms within the text highlighting women's limited freedoms (in comparison to the heroines of romance) in the eighteenth century, which Arabella compares with the comparative agency of the women in the romances she reads. It is clearer still when in chapter eight, the narrator questions

> what lady in romance ever married the man that was chosen for her? In those cases the remonstrances of a parent are called persecutions; obstinate resistance, constancy and courage; and an aptitude to dislike the person proposed to them, a noble freedom of mind which disdains to love or hate by the caprice of others.[107]

There is a confusing blend of satire and reality in play here. Arabella is mocked for her dramatic reactions to ordinary situations, and yet, there is a palpable sense that a dramatisation of a bad situation does not detract from the fact that the situation remains bad. Arabella is not at

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[105] Joseph F. Bartolomeo, *Matched Pairs: Gender and Intertextual Dialogue in Eighteenth- Century Fiction* (Newark: University of Delaware Press; London: Associated University Presses, 2002), p. 95.
[106] Ibid., p. 91.
[107] Lennox, p. 27.

risk in the same way that Clarissa is, but her complaints about the absence of total agency remain valid.

Deborah Ross suggests that Arabella's positioning of her father as a controlling tyrant is a misrepresentation, arguing that Arabella's 'heroic disobedience is especially foolish' since 'He simply expresses the wish that his daughter marry the man of his choice, and hopes that her filial piety will rather incline her to accept than otherwise'.[108] Of course, Ross herself alludes to what Arabella is rejecting here. It is the reliance on her 'filial piety' that Arabella undoubtedly experiences as manipulation, whether or not she has the language to articulate it. It is why her father so frequently resorts to 'persuasions to effect what he desire[s]; and, from the natural Sweetness of her Temper, [i]s sometimes not without Hopes, that she might, at last, be prevailed upon to comply,'[109] suggesting that her refusal to comply 'is too much: I am to blame to indulge your Foibles in this Manner: Your Cousin is worthy of your Affection, and you cannot refuse it to him without incurring my Displeasure'.[110] That Arabella is manipulated into compliance rather than compelled through physical force does not make the loss of agency any less significant here. Ross further asserts that the novel's message is clear: 'the clearest path to personal happiness is obedience to just authority'. However, alternative readings are possible here. Whilst she further suggests that Lennox intended for the novel to serve as a didactic tool for the dissemination of anti-heroic romance rhetoric, it seems unlikely that the form of the novel conveys this particular lesson, regardless of Lennox's supposed intent. This is possibly why Ross somewhat re-evaluates her position when she says 'the reader cannot avoid feeling that Arabella, who is supposed to be wrong, is actually right, because this is her story'.[111] It is perhaps in part because of this, but more important is the fact that Arabella's worldview is structurally embedded into the narrative, such

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[108] Deborah Ross, 'Mirror, Mirror: The Didactic Dilemma of *The Female Quixote*', *Studies in English Literature*, 27.3 (1987), 455-75 (p. 461).
[109] Ibid., p. 43.
[110] Ibid., p. 55.
[111] Ross, p. 461.

that we as readers understand through repetition, as described by Genette, that this worldview is important and central to the progression of the narrative. Another way this indecisive ambiguity is structurally present is through the narrative voice. After all, in the quote Ross uses to form her analysis above, beginning with 'what lady in romance ever married the man that was chosen for her?'[112] Ross herself notes initially that it is the narrator who asks this question, not Arabella. Thus, it is the narrator who 'miscasts her father as the tyrant of romance,'[113] albeit with the agreement of Arabella. Ross suggests that this narrative interjection is ironic, owing to its reference to *Clarissa*, but in conjunction with a formal structure that seeks to position Arabella's situation as the dominant narrative within the text, it bolsters the supposition that women benefit from less agency than a fantastic rendering of seventeenth-century figures through the use of rhetorical devices encouraging the reader to engage with the question.

Returning to the narrative voice, Genette identifies four modes of narration: subsequent (past-tense narrative); prior (predictive narrative); simultaneous (narrative in the present); and interpolated (between the moments of the action).[114] It is the former two categories we will deal with here. The first inclination of what S. Cailey Hall calls Lennox's 'discursive communities' reveals itself in the relationship between the intertitle and textual narrators, which are suggested to function as separate characters with distinct purposes. The textual narrator provides a past-tense account of the story, situating this voice as a subsequent narrator. The intertitle narrator, however, offers a predictive narrative, situating the voice as a prior narrative. On its own, this may not seem very unusual, but coupled with particular references made within the intertitles, it lends credence to the notion that not only are the textual and intertitle narrators distinct voices, but that there may be several voices in play within the intertitles, if not in the textual narrative. One such indicator is the use of 'we' in the intertitle of book three, chapter eight: 'In which we

[112] Lennox, p. 27.
[113] Ibid., p. 461.
[114] Genette, p. 217.

hope the reader will be differently affected'.[115] Hall explains that there is significance in the plural pronouns in *The Female Quixote,* as in the footnote indicating that '"*The Heroines always speak of themselves in the Plural Number"', which Hall suggests can be seen as 'aligning itself with the standard set by female voices in Arabella's romances' as 'the intertitle voice more successfully creates a virtual community with the reader and with the heroines of the romances that shaped *The Female Quixote*'. Hall further suggests that the intertitle voice also leaves open the possibility that it could be an entirely separate assemblage of voices—a chorus of sorts— commenting on the text.[116] This could certainly account for why some intertitles appear to have a matter-of-fact approach to introducing the chapter, e.g. 'Which treats of the Olympic Games'.[117] Whereas others appear more sardonic in tone, e.g. 'In which a lover is severely punished for faults which the reader never would have discovered, if he had not been told'.[118] The more sardonic of the two types can also be found in Fielding's novels. For example, in *Tom Jones,* there are chapters 'Containing little or nothing' and 'A crust for the critics'.[119] This is unsurprising, as Bartolomeo argues that in *The Female Quixote,* Lennox adopts '"masculine" techniques and practices' in the style of Fielding, including 'an omniscient narrator, satirical attacks on both the feminised genre of romance and debased contemporary manners' as well as 'an emphasis on humor over pathos and sentiment'.[120] However, Lennox's use of 'our' within some intertitles, e.g. 'In which our heroine is engaged in a very perilous adventure,'[121] the result of which is the merging of the intertitle voices and the reader, suggests, as Hall notes, 'that Arabella is shared and quite possibly possessed by both the reader and the intertitle voice'.[122] It is difficult to ascertain what the purpose of this manoeuvre might be. On

[115] Lennox, p. 133.
[116] Cailey S. Hall, 'All the Bright Eyes of the Kingdom: Charlotte Lennox's Discursive Communities', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 41.2 (2017), 89-104 (p. 94).
[117] Ibid., p, 80.
[118] Lennox, p. 30.
[119] Henry Fielding, *Tom Jones* (Illinois: Project Gutenberg, 2004) <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/6593/pg6593-images.html> [accessed 9 December 2023].
[120] Bartolomeo, p. 91.
[121] Ibid., p. 92.
[122] Hall, p. 94.

the one hand, we know that prefixing a name with 'our' is commonly used as a term of endearment during this time due to its usage by Samuel Johnson in letters that reference Lennox. On the other, it could be that this inclusion functions as a way to encourage the reader to share in the intertitle voice's ridicule of Arabella. A third suggestion would be that the purpose is to deter the reader from outright ridicule in favour of gentle chiding, as one might mete out to a sibling. In this capacity, at least one of the narrative voices would be acting to soften the blow of Arabella's least likeable moments. There are times during which the intertitle voice carries over into the narrative text, for example, in chapter eleven of book two, when the intertitle voice introduces the chapter with 'In which the Lady is wonderfully delivered,' the opening words of the chapter read: 'But to return to Arabella, whom we left in a very melancholy Situation'.[123] This continues as the novel progresses, with the intertitle voice making its presence more obviously known, such as when it promises in chapter one of book seven to increase the length of the subsequent chapter in recompense for the shortness of the incoming text, then fails to do so in chapter two. In this case, the intertitle voice adds unreliability to the mix, which is an interesting consideration in light of what Hall explains about Lennox's penchant for creating communities with diverging opinions. She suggests that Lennox's 'eidolon, "The Trifler"', emerges as a community of voices, rather than a single narrative voice, which she says, 'debate the Trifler's right to her "title." Imagining collectives that are female-initiated but not exclusively female, Lennox proposes an alternative to the idea of a singular author, while also experimenting with established narrative techniques'.[124] It is plausible, then, that a potential collective of intertitle voices both bolster and destabilise the narrative depicting Arabella as unreasonably attached to heroic romance. Either through encouraging the reader to ridicule her alongside the collective, or by encouraging the reader to sympathise with Arabella, or by demonstrating that it is unreliable, the ambiguity surrounding exactly how many narrators there

[123] Lennox, p. 99.
[124] Hall, p. 90.

are in combination with Lennox's history of contriving discordant, collective narrators suggests that there is room here for the argument that its exclusive purpose is not strictly to direct the reader towards disapproval of Arabella's worldview. Arguably, it seems more plausible that its purpose is to emphasise the spectrum of opinion.

Part of what seems strange about this text is that Lennox is writing what has been referred to here as her redemption text in what is considered, in literary terms, to fall within the confines of realism. Indeed, Ross asserts that 'never did a novel so loudly proclaim its own realism in direct opposition to the romance, which Lennox's narrator seems unequivocally to condemn'.[125] To a certain extent, this is wholly evident; as already discussed in this chapter, Arabella's marriage to Glanville is the most realistic outcome for a woman in her situation, in the sense that it is the most probable outcome in a real-world context. The problem, however, is that whilst *The Female Quixote* might deal with the common structure of 'formal realism', which is to say that it is not 'the kind of life' the novel presents, but 'the way it presents it',[126] in a layman's sense, the bulk of the text is not especially realis*tic.* Whilst one could argue that this is the result of Lennox's intention to write a satirical text, it is reasonable to question who the focus of this satire really is. Whilst anti-romance sentiment undoubtedly permeates the text, it is hard to imagine that at least some of that satire is not reserved for anyone still clinging to the delusion that Arabella as a character represents anything close to a realistic threat in the real world. If Arabella exists to deter the average woman from following in her footsteps, surely even the most ardent of female quixotes would consider themselves safe, owing to the stupendously hyperbolic portrayal of feminine quixotism contained in this novel. To contrast the portrayal of Arabella with that of Burney's protagonist, Evelina, for example, is to demonstrate the extremes to which Arabella is subjected. Whilst Evelina would likely not be described as a quixote, her youth and

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[125] Ross, p. 456.

[126] Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1957), p. 8.

resulting inexperience mean that she is often found in situations similar to those Arabella is so afraid of. However, there is a degree of tolerance for Evelina's mistakes that is not present in *The Female Quixote*, even when Evelina makes mistakes that present her as potentially worthy of judgement. These circumstances are handled carefully within the narrative, and her treatment by the other characters of the story generally reflects that tolerance. The realism portrayed in *Evelina* conveys the simple truism that the inexperienced will err until experience arrives. If we were to transplant Arabella into Evelina's narrative, would she be regarded more or less severely by the characters of that story world? It seems feasible to imagine that a number of her foibles would, at least, be attributed to her ignorance of the social code, forgiven as they are in the case of Evelina. Both emerge from rural seclusion; both are raised without the influence of a mother. It seems unlikely that she would be mocked to the degree that she is in *The Female Quixote*. Thus, it logically follows that if Arabella's quixotism is the subject of derision here, then at least within the parameters of the realism portrayed in *Evelina*, so, too, is the reaction to it. Of course, later in the century, there is another female quixote who receives gentler representation than Arabella, and that is Emily St Aubert of *The Mysteries of Udolpho.* Equally frightened by perceptions of threats that later turn out to be figments of her imagination, she remains the heroine, and crucially, that status is not dependent upon her marriage to Valancourt.

Whilst the exaggeration of an existing trope can certainly paint a particular picture, the compelling factor is that whilst Arabella as Lennox's quixote occupies a plain of existence unexplored by any sane person before her, there remained genuine concerns about the influence of heroic romance, or fiction more broadly, on women. As some scholars have noted, in order for Lennox to have such intimate knowledge of the texts she allegedly sought to satirise in this novel (some of which extend into tomes themselves) she would have to have read the genre extensively herself. How might she have felt to be included in the fearmongering over women being adversely affected by their consumption of romantic novels? It seems likely that she considered herself an intelligent, amply capable woman. The suggestion that she, and other

women, might lose their objective rationality through the reading of a book must have been galling to hear. This adds to the sense that the satire in this novel might not be as obviously targeted as it first appears, and could account for the way Lennox depicts Glanville in relation to Arabella. Whilst Arabella receives all of the negative attention from other characters in the story, it is Glanville whose behaviour goes beyond the realms of acceptable conduct in eighteenth-century society. In chapter six of book three, Glanville is so emotionally affected by Arabella's rejection of him after she expresses concern that he was planning to assist the gardener in carrying her off that he pledges to 'convince you of my innocence, by bringing that rascal's head to you, whom you suspect I was inclined to assist in stealing you away'.[127] Further, in chapter four of book four, when Arabella is once again convinced that she is at risk of being carried away, Glanville resorts to violently defending his cousin when he, 'transported with rage at this insolence, hit [Mr Hervey] such a blow with the butt-end of his whip', the result of which is an apparent sword fight.[128] The distinction between the pair is obvious: Arabella's ideas are simply ideas, and any ideas she has about the ways in which heroic romance might determine her own conduct, she would not find cause to injure someone. However, what is most compelling about this contrast is that Glanville is supposedly merely entertaining her 'folly'. If this is the case, then why does he risk besmirching his own character, destroying his reputation, and potentially exposing himself to the legal ramifications, should he actually have followed through with his plan to bring the gardener's head to Arabella? What this says about the subtextual narrative is not clear, but it could be argued that the intimation is simple: if women are susceptible to the follies of heroic romance, then there can be no reason why men, too, would not fall victim to the perils of its concomitant quixotism.

One of the distinguishing features of Arabella's feminine quixotism is her unusual use of language. Returning to Miall's chapter discussing reader-response theory, he addresses

[127] Lennox, p. 127.
[128] Ibid., p. 157.

Aristotle's category of 'diction and style' by turning to the use of defamiliarisation. He argues that deviating from the ordinary usage of words 'raise[s] the diction above the commonplace,'[129] the result of which is linguistic defamiliarisation. Whilst Miall refers here specifically to the tragic poet, the effect is the same for Arabella, whose speech sounds antiquated, anachronistic, and alien to eighteenth-century society. He continues,

> Aristotle's account of style contrasts unfamiliar words (deliberately adopted) with normal diction, a distinction that has been regarded as a difference between foregrounded and backgrounded words. A parallel pair of terms noted by Mukařovský is automatization and deautomatization. His account continues: "By foregrounding … we mean the use of the devices of the language in such a way that this use itself attracts attention and is perceived as uncommon, as deprived of automatization, as deautomatized, such as a live poetic metaphor."[130]

Thus, in the context of *The Female Quixote*, we can understand that Arabella's speech patterns place her in the foreground, deautomatised, making her stand out from the text in ways that could not be achieved if she used ordinary speech patterns with an era-appropriate vocabulary. Miall elaborates on the psychological implications of reading deautomatised text, arguing that 'the more an act is automatized, the less it is consciously executed; the more it is foregrounded, the more completely conscious does it become' and 'in literature foregrounding thus turns attention to the linguistic means, away from the aim of communication'. Thus, in this context, 'the aim of the reader is to grasp the implications of the literary style, whether this features phonetic, grammatical, or semantic components, and with their help consider the purpose and implications of the text in question'. He identifies a second psychological feature of deautomatised language, which is that it 'emphasize[s] the emotional effect of an expression', suggesting that 'words and groups of words evoke a greater richness of images and feelings than if they were to occur in a communicative utterance'. He concludes by stating that the comments are suggestive of a 'link' between 'foregrounded terms of poetry' and literature, 'a point of departure for a theory of

[129] Miall, p. 115.
[130] Ibid., p. 117.

literary reading. The comments above allow for the augmentation of literature in feeling, for the enrichment of language in poetry, and for the involvement of the self'.[131]

Thus, by nature of the structure of the text, the reader is caused to engage with the content on a deeper level than they otherwise might, had Arabella's speech patterns complied with the conventional linguistic boundaries of the eighteenth century. It is precisely because Arabella is so absurdly anachronistic in language (and, perhaps, in her style of dress as well as her mannerisms) that the reader engages more critically with the concerns addressed within the novel. The results of the studies support to some degree what is being suggested in this chapter: that literary texts are to some extent autonomous and that structural features embedded within the text can guide a reader towards a particular interpretation, whether they are aware of those features or not.[132]

Suggesting that these points of analysis can evidence an intentional formal engagement with gendered expectations in the eighteenth century is tricky and of course, debatable, but in line with what we already know to be true of Lennox (that she had pedagogical aims for her writing, that she sought for the reader to engage critically with a text, that she later sought to instigate debate through the narrative voice of *The Lady's Museum*, and that she did not have the capacity to speak freely given that there were factors responsible for her need to comply with the values present in eighteenth-century England) we can draw some speculative conclusions here. That Lennox was willing to sacrifice her artistic integrity for the purpose of securing financial aid suggests that she was a woman who was prepared to push the boundaries of what was acceptable of women. This chapter has suggested that Arabella's marriage to Glanville is frequently read as a disappointing but inevitable fact of life for women of Lennox's period. Ironically, within a satirical text that follows a realist approach, this is the most believable aspect of the narrative. There would not have been a way for Lennox to end this text without Arabella marrying if her aim was to restore her reputation within literary society. The subtextual anti- climax that results

[131] Ibid., p. 117.
[132] Ibid., p. 120.

in a dissatisfying denouement is structurally integrated into the text through the ways in which Arabella is depicted (in her mannerisms, the way she dresses, her antiquated speech patterns, and the ways in which her vernacular foregrounds her in the text; the fact that her monologues dominate the novel, the anachrony of her socio-political standing, the observation that her character is so wildly absurd that it calls into question the behaviour of Glanville, and by extension, his own suitability as a husband) amongst other things, suggests that Lennox's design was intentionally disruptive to provoke a deeper analysis of her purpose. By virtue of our relation to Arabella and her worldview, directly informed by the ways in which Lennox deploys various narratological devices to deliver the narrative, we as readers critically engage with her ultimate marriage in ways that extend beyond the desire for a societally acceptable outcome. This is suggestive of a need to engage with the concept of marriage, and indeed, of love. As Lennox draws the novel to a close, she makes a point of emphasising the differentiation between the Bellmour/Glanville marriage and the 'union' of Arabella and Glanville. And yet, throughout the novel, we are led towards the most authentic conclusion possible: that the presence of love in Arabella's relationship does not result in a less significant domestication of the thinking woman. Hence the narrator advises us that

> we choose, reader, to express this circumstance, though the same, in different words, as well to avoid repetition as to intimate that the first-mentioned pair were indeed only married in the common acceptation of the word: that is, they were privileged to join fortunes, equipages, titles, and expense; while Mr. Glanville and Arabella were united, as well in these, as in every virtue and laudable affection of the mind.[133]

Here, Lennox could not speak more plainly. She tells us that the concept she will seek to elucidate is 'the same, in different words'. That Arabella is united with Glanville 'in every virtue and *laudable* affection of the mind'. Having married Glanville, Arabella's thoughts have undergone a transformation from that which is abhorred, subject to ridicule, and serving as a warning to women across the country to that which is laudable and virtuous. In marrying

[133] Lennox, p. 384.

Glanville, Arabella ceases to be a thinking woman, the likes of which Lennox has the predisposition to favour. It is in the fact that the ending is disappointingly predictable that meaning accrues; had Lennox written Arabella as headstrong to the end, resolute and unyielding in her worldview, the perfect storm of conditions would not allow for the reader to engage critically with the notion that perhaps it might have been better if Arabella had not married after all. Whether that viewpoint is immediately obvious to the reader is somewhat secondary to the point, which is that Lennox created an ending for the novel that leaves its modern readers dissatisfied with the outcome. Intentionally or not, this negative experience is intrinsically linked with the content, which happens to be, in this case, the summary of a marriage for which we were not adequately prepared. The inevitable result is that the reader then must begin to understand why it is that they experience the resulting emotions that follow, and thus, Lennox has achieved her goal: a readership of critically engaged thinkers. In the first instance, Lennox actively broadens the bandwidth of what it means to be a woman in eighteenth-century England. At a significant personal cost to herself, she tried hard to push the boundaries of gender norms within her first texts. Whilst she was no exception to the social rules governing society throughout the period, she found creative ways, later, through the Trifler, and potentially through *The Female Quixote*, to subtly subvert ideas about women's place in the world. She encourages readers, and in particular, women, to engage critically with the texts they read, and the texts she writes. There is undoubtedly some interest in questioning the merit of marriage, irrespective of love, which is unsurprising given her earlier work in *The Art of Coquetry.*

The analysis here has presented a picture of *The Female Quixote* that represents a novel which epitomises the concept of autonomous narratological structure. Its self-contained ecosystem functions with the assistance of clever mechanisms that guide the reader through what without which, on the surface, would read as little more complicated than a compliant encomium on the modern novel. By deciding which parts of a narrative ought to dominate to convey a specific sense of the story; by foregrounding our heroine with her strange vernacular; by juxtaposing her

(and by extension, her contemporaries) against the seventeenth-century interpretation of women of antiquity; by positioning her as less unhinged than her eventual husband, and through many more strokes of genius, Lennox manages to redeem herself as a reputable writer, salvage her reputation more broadly, solve her imminent financial concerns, and most importantly, she does so without anyone questioning the deeper meaning of the novel (perhaps because they themselves felt too uncomfortable to acknowledge their discomfort with Arabella's marriage?) Thus, the only criticism she receives is of the novel's ending, and not because Arabella marries Glanville. Even now, almost three hundred years later, it can only be surmised that any of the points of analysis contained within this work were intentionally implemented. The theories raised here have been supported with perspectives on Lennox from other sources, bolstering the validity of certain speculations about her own perspectives with what we know about her other works. Ultimately, however, so much of Lennox's own history is clouded by what we do not know. Much of her story emerges from her own fictional works, from which scholars have made deductions, as is the case in this chapter, which is, quite possibly, what she would have enjoyed more than anything. The idea of critically engaged readers deciphering her literary puzzles and enigmatic history almost three hundred years after the publication of *The Female Quixote* is, one expects, a foible she would very much endorse.

Chapter II: *Evelina*
Introduction

Evelina, or *the History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World,* published in 1778 by Frances Burney, is an epistolary novel. Narrated by its eponymous protagonist, Evelina Anville, a concern within the text is her ongoing struggle to negotiate the gendered complexities of eighteenth-century English society. Evelina, raised initially in rural isolation by a surrogate caregiver, Arthur Villars, embarks upon her entrance into the world for the purpose of learning how to navigate the transition from a sheltered English girl to a young woman with a socially compliant system of values. The novel features strong concerns relating to identity, as Evelina lacks a father of her own until the end of the narrative, her mother is dead, and her relationship with her remaining family members is strained. Her surname, 'Anville' (an anagrammatic rearrangement of her first name) is the only identity she can claim until her father acknowledges her as his child. Ungrounded and, in some sense, unclaimed, Evelina is thrust into situations for which she is underprepared and, at times, over guided by an abundance of mentors with often conflicting notions of what it means to be a young woman, and how one should behave within the confines of what is now widely recognised as a patriarchal society. Evelina's many social faux pas are the result of her sheltered upbringing and unfamiliarity with public life. It is often the case that she is ill-prepared for the confusing events she faces by inconsistent approaches to proper etiquette and its underpinning social values.

This chapter will examine the relationship between the novel's form and its interrogation of the social code as it pertains to women. Specifically, it will focus on the epistolary format and the ways in which the format, delivered through the conduit of a letter, enables the reader to engage with a critical evaluation of social relationships through the axis of defamiliarisation. Furthermore, it will suggest that the use of doubling

throughout the novel allows for the appearance of a consistent dichotomy that problematises the complicated, convoluted, and often contradictory nature of the scenarios Evelina navigates throughout the narrative. It will negotiate the ways in which themes of identity further complicate Evelina's relationship with the world at large, as a young woman who is dependent on (and expectedly deprived of) the acknowledgement of her father to find stability in her life as a woman. This chapter will also discuss the inherent liminality present within the novel's format, and the ways in which Burney engages the dichotomy of private and public space to challenge the expected behaviours, values, and social norms of eighteenth-century English women.

In many ways, from her sense of style in dress to her use of language and broad naivety, *Evelina*'s narrative resembles *The Female Quixote*. Like Evelina, Arabella is ignorant of the ways of the world. Unlike Arabella, however, whose irrational catastrophising about her perception of danger results in an unserious perception of her character, Evelina finds herself in legitimately dangerous situations where unpleasant men pose a credible and immediate threat. One of the most interesting things about the text is how alike Arabella and Evelina are in thought processes and in behaviour, but their respective receptions are entirely different. Whilst Arabella's behaviour is the result of her belief in the decorum associated with romances, it emerges, at its root, from the same naivety that Evelina embodies. Arabella's reception, in which she is mocked and misunderstood by a community of narrators who dub her, as a quixote, fundamentally irrational and lacking in material grounding, is much different than Evelina's, who faces some of the very real harms feared by Arabella, and is instead afforded a kinder narrative: Evelina is constructed as naive, inexperienced, ignorant of proper etiquette, owing to her rural seclusion. Her lack of knowledge and understanding paves the way for an unfolding narrative in which innocence steers the course. Arabella's comparative understanding reads

as a neurotic obsession with a fictional, frequently dogmatic, worldview. There is no acknowledgement that the fundamental fear Arabella experiences is, like Evelina's, a valid concern. Because her fear emerges from her reading of romances, she is mocked and derided for her formulation of an understanding of the world that arises from books. In both cases, the women are found to be somewhat at fault. However, whereas Evelina's lack of understanding of the risks around her causes her to find herself in precarious situations that threaten her safety, Arabella's understanding marks her as eccentric. The backgrounds from which both women emerge are different, but they bear some similarities. Arabella, whose mother dies during her early childhood, benefits from the presence of her father until he dies when she reaches early adulthood, burdened with the emotional weight of expectation that she marries her cousin, Glanville, in line with her father's wishes. Evelina, it transpires, is the product of an illegitimate relationship between her mother and father, the libertine, Sir John Belmont. When her mother dies, Evelina is left in the care of Villars, a clergyman with a sense of duty to her mother. Both women, then, understand what it is to know loss and to understand a lack of belonging in a world that situates women in accordance with their proximity and relationship to men. More important, perhaps, is that both women experience some questioning of their legitimacy and seriousness as a consequence of realities broadly beyond their control: Arabella, through her learned understanding of the world around her, and Evelina, through her ambiguous parentage. Neither woman benefits from being wholly legitimate, or is valued separately from the questioning of her circumstances. Both women have no option than to cede to the social reality of definition in accordance with patrilineal ties. For Evelina, legitimacy arrives when her biological father claims her as his own, and again through her marriage to Lord Orville. For Arabella, legitimacy is borrowed when she marries her cousin as her father instructed, in the sense that her problematic knowledge of the world is tempered by her proximity to a

male, or rather, a legitimate person. Evelina's ensuing battle with identity is evidenced by the introduction of her grandmother. Bold, othered, and anathema to the respectable people of Evelina's circle, Madam Duval is the cautionary tale that exists to emphasise the necessity for masculine guidance and leadership in Evelina's life.

Evelina's unstable identity is explored thoroughly through the narration of thoughts she would never utter outside of the context of communication with her most trusted confidants. The epistolary format serves to facilitate her with the platform to expound slightly more freely upon the things she cannot say in other contexts. Whilst she navigates the reality of her life, constricted by the expectations placed upon her as a woman, the novel's format allows for engagement with the mores and values she finds arbitrary or unfair. Whereas an ordinary, third person, past tense narrative might rely on the interpretations of an omnipotent narrator, or may expose the reader to thoughts that will never be shared aloud, Evelina's letters introduce us to quasi-private correspondences that platform her concerns in a tangible way. She is not merely thinking these things, but sharing them with a trusted party in a safe environment: a world we are invited into that might otherwise have languished in thought.

Locating Burney

Frances ‘Fanny’ Burney’s endurance as a writer of historical significance for over two hundred years reflects her life and experiences beginning in early childhood. The child of a musician and teacher, and the only one not to receive a formal education, she spent much of her childhood voraciously consuming a wide array of literature available in the home, [1] from the conservative, *Sermons to Young Women* by James Fordyce (1766), to the risqué, *The Lady’s Dressing Room*.[2] Outside of her wide-ranging interests in the various genres books had to offer, she also wrote often in the form of a journal addressed to ‘Nobody’, as well as in letters to Samuel Crisp and to her sister, Susan.[3] These journals will inform the analysis of the text, as topics addressed within them are suggestive of having influenced the ways in which she negotiates the concerns of the novel, from its roots in the sense of learning to read and write, to the broader perceptions of women and education. For example, there is a strong case to suggest that at least some of Burney’s drive to succeed in spite of the lack of an educational foundation to underpin her endeavours likely emerged from the difficult relationship she shared with her father, who underestimated his daughter from an early age when she showed difficulty in learning to read and write; skills she would develop only when she had reached the age of ten.[4] Describing Burney, her father said she was ‘wholly unnoticed in the nursery for any talents, or quickness of study’.[5] Thus, not only did Burney achieve this assimilated learning through the writing of letters, but she did so after a protracted period of illiteracy, whereupon she taught herself to read and write following her father’s loss of interest in her educational advancement. It is thought that

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[1] Harman, p. 27.

[2] Jonathan Swift, ‘The Lady’s Dressing Room’, *Poetry Foundation* (1732) <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/50579/the-ladys-dressing-room> [accessed 12 November 2023].

[3] Ibid, pp. 60, 74.

[4] Ibid., p. 40.

[5] Ibid., p. 39.

Burney's difficulties were most likely caused by Dyslexia, but to her parents, she was 'backward' and to family friends 'the little dunce'.[6] Having been overlooked, considered intellectually stunted by her family, then, Burney was left to her own devices, and with the time she had available to her, she educated herself extensively. Burney's interest in pursuing authenticity through writing is evident in her journals, where she articulates plainly her feelings on the everyday situations arising in her life. It is when she feels her writing is most private that she speaks most freely, which is evident in the first year of entries in her diary. Whilst not fastidiously kept during this time, these entries reveal a lot about how Burney thinks and feels when not under the scrutiny of a public audience. When describing the family's cook at her wedding, she depicts her as 'a maiden of about fifty, short, thick, clumsy, vulgar; her complection the finest saffron, & her Features suited to it'.[7] Similarly scathing, she expounds upon a performance of Tamberline by students of the Soho Academy, explaining that

> the young Gentleman who perform'd Selima, stopt short, & forgot himself – it was in a Love scene – between her – – him I mean & Axalla – who was very tender – She – he – soon recover'd tho – Andrew whisper'd us, that when it was over – *'He'd lick her!* – St[r]atocles amused himself with no other action at all, but beating, with one Hand, his Breast, & with the other, held his Hat.[8]

Burney is not merely bold in her criticisms, but funny. These satirical sketches of her experiences in life are not something she pursues in her published novels, and its presence dwindles throughout her journals. However, Burney does demonstrate the development of her abilities when navigating challenging scenarios in *Evelina*, which exemplify a mastery of unspoken norms and values, the boundaries of which she continually pushes against in a manner that manages not to cause offence. Moreover, it is often endearing and gives rise to

[6] Ibid., pp.34-35, 40-41.
[7] Frances Burney, *Evelina*, ed. by Vivien Jones & Edward A. Bloom (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 66.
[8] Ibid., p. 43.

positive associations with Evelina, whose errors are frequently navigated with such poise that it is difficult to imagine she has broken any rules at all. The journals, however, indicate a degree of frustration in the mediating period between learning of the rules that govern one's sex and mastering them. For a bright young woman who was responsible for her own education, having received little to no assistance from her guardians in doing so, it must have been enormously challenging to learn that her own aptitude would not safeguard her against society that sought to make her small. The stifling environment that required her to curtail her speech produced interesting literary artefacts to reflect upon, but it certainly paints the trajectory of her mastery of those constraints in a disconcerting light. As Harman explains,

> Fanny Burney's freedom with language reflects her self-image as an 'outsider' in literature and her defiance of conventional limitations in a manner that could be seen as rebellious, even revolutionary; but, as with her natural and powerful feminism, her sense of propriety, personal prejudices and deep conservatism all militated against her acknowledging this. The more she did acknowledge it, the more inhibited her writing became.[9]

Burney did not think of herself as a revolutionary. Rather, it seems she felt that the discrimination of her sex contradicted conservative values. Staunch as she was in ostensibly paradoxical points on the political spectrum, it would have been a source of immense frustration to her that she ought to consider her sex lesser for reasons that lacked logic. Indeed, Burney comments on Homer's estimations of the female sex in her journals, stating that 'It really grieves me to think that there certainly must be reason for the insignificant opinion the greatest men have of Women – At least I fear there must. – But I don't in fact believe it – thank God!'[10] In spite of her seemingly conservative political perspectives, she held firm to the belief that women were not defined in accordance with the low opinions men held about them.

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[9] Harman, p. 76.
[10] Ibid., p. 27.

Evelina was well received by both the reading public and the literary critics of Burney's time, earning positive feedback from many of her contemporaries, including Hester Thrale and Dr Johnson; although Thrale did initially suggest that she found the novel 'flimzy'.[11] However, its initial publication was undoubtedly a risk. Offered anonymously even to its publisher, Thomas Lowndes, *Evelina*'s success won Burney the respect of the most esteemed intellectuals in the country, situating her in circles befitting her newly recognised talent as a novelist.[12] One compelling indicator of the extent to which *Evelina*'s readers were captivated rests in Lowndes' decision to print the 1779 edition of the text with the inclusion of illustrations. This edition, published following the commission of frontispiece plates valued at seventy-three pounds, was a costly endeavour to pursue that would have been a risk notwithstanding the success *Evelina* had already boasted. It evidenced Lowndes' faith that the novel would continue to yield profits, and he was correct. Not only was *Evelina* a profitable venture for her debut publisher, but with the many publishers catering to many levels of social strata in England and beyond for 240 years.[13] Another testament not only to the initial good reception of the text, but of what would ultimately culminate in ensuring its enduring relevance both within and without literary society, is the inclusion of *Evelina* in the British Novelists series published in 1810. A total of thirty-seven publishing houses contributed to the series, which boasted the backing of Anna Letitia Barbauld, whose contribution to the 'canon-making enterprise' arrived in the form of the preface and 'extensive analytical commentary [...] on the work of each novelist'.[14] Barbauld's reputation as an established person of esteem in literary society, owing to her success as a poet, children's writer, essayist, critic, editor, and prominent creator of

[11] Thaddeus, p. 31.
[12] Harman, p. 110.
[13] Svetlana Kochkina, *Evelina: A Life-Story of a Book, Told by Its Paratext* (unpublished [Ph. D], McGill University, 2020), p. 197.
[14] Anne Toner, 'Anna Barbauld on Fictional Form in The British Novelists (1810)', *Eighteenth- century fiction*, 24.2 (2011), pp. 171-93 (p. 172).

Romantic literature, ensured that *Evelina* would be situated in the literary canon from the moment it was included in the series. Its mere inclusion served as an endorsement from one of the country's most respected intellectuals, not just for her evident skill, but for her known principled morality.[15] However, it is important to acknowledge the role played by a changing literary landscape in shaping *Evelina*'s enduring success. In the years following its publication, rigorous effort was underway to improve accessibility to literary works at the lower end of the economic spectrum. Whilst *Evelina* had been a resounding success within the ranks of her own social stratum, it was the newly established interest in publishing books at a lower price point that allowed for the novel to find its way into the hands of the lower classes.[16] That *Evelina* was included in a compilation of literary recommendations featuring Barbauld's seal of approval (at a time when the advancingly literate public was in the market for literary guidance) gave the novel an advantage that would propel it towards a period of success surpassing 240 years.

Perhaps Burney's greatest achievement with the publication of *Evelina*, however, rests in its power to shift perspectives with regards to the propriety of the novel, and with novel reading more generally. In spite of the widening market for novels towards the end of the eighteenth century, its reputation remained problematic in a broad sense within some spheres, with some continuing to consider the genre inappropriate within polite society, particularly for women, who 'were frequently hoping to produce anything but the novels, which were not the most profitable form of publication'.[17] Moralists such as James Fordyce continued to admonish the writing (and reading) of novels, branding them immoral vessels, and encouraging women not to indulge in them by asking

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[15] Kochkina, p. 135.

[16] Chris Louttit, '"A Favour on the Million": The Household Edition, the Cheap Reprint, and the Posthumous Illustration and Reception of Charles Dickens', *Book History*, 17.1 (2014), 321-64 (p. 332).

[17] Betty Schellenberg, 'Putting Women in Their Place: Locating Women Novelists in the 1750s', in *Masters of the Marketplace: British Women Novelists of the 1750s*, ed. by Susan Carlile (Bethlehem: Lehigh University Press, 2011), pp. 242-58 (p. 243).

> what shall we say of certain books, which we are assured (for we have not read them) are in their nature so shameful, in their tendency so pestiferous, and contain such rank treason against the royalty of virtue, such horrible violation of all decorum, that she who can bear to peruse them must in her soul be a prostitute, let her reputation in life be what it will.[18]

Fordyce, who published a number of texts advocating for his own brand of morality: *Sermons to Young Women* (1766), *The character and conduct of the female sex, and the advantages to be derived by young men from the society of virtuous women. A discourse, in three* (1776), and *Addresses to Young Men* (1777), to name but a few, was a Scottish Presbyterian minister and poet with a strong preaching presence in London, associating himself with Samuel Johnson, whom he thought highly of.[19] Not only was Fordyce considered influential and popular in his role as a writer of conduct books, but his *Sermons to Young Women*, in particular, was well known to Burney.[20] A variety of contributing factors led to a loss of popularity in Fordyce's brand of piety in the decade prior to his death in 1792, but his position and proximity to literary scholars such as Dr Johnson provides some context for how influential his ideas about novels remained to be during Burney's lifetime, and in particular, prior to the publication of *Evelina*. After, however, the landscape began to change and attitudes towards the novel along with it. By the early nineteenth century, Fordyce's sermons were considered priggish and antiquated.[21] Whilst it is true that the general advancement of society contributed to this change in attitudes, Burney is thought to have 'legitimised the novel as an aesthetically and morally acceptable form'.[22] Since *Evelina* follows the conventional standards of didacticism, with a focus on lessons in virtue and morality, this perception is likely a result of the themes raised within

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[18] James Fordyce, *Sermons to Young Women* (London: A. Millar & T. Cadell, 1766), p. 148.

[19] Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, *Fordyce, James (c. 1720-1796)* (2004) <https://www.oxforddnb.com/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-9879?rskey=Ks0GqR&result=1> [accessed 4 September 2023].

[20] Harman, p. 59.

[21] Kochkina, p. 104.

[22] Jacqueline Pearson, *Women's Reading in Britain, 1750-1835* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 127.

the novel that allow the narrative to somewhat bridge the gap between moralistic guidance for young women and novels as a genre. The format of the novel, in particular, allows for immediate reflective commentary on events that take place throughout the narrative, and Evelina typically responds in an era-appropriate manner. When she fails to do so, it is forgivable because it evidences her lack of worldliness, reinforcing her innocence in the mind of the reader. Whatever *Evelina* can be read to mean (in any of the eras since its publication) it can hardly be interpreted as an immoral text, and Evelina as a character cannot be perceived as an immoral influence. The novel's ability to straddle two roles and do it well is what marks Burney out as such an influential writer. With *Evelina*, she shows a receptiveness towards the concerns and values of her time whilst pushing at the boundaries in very nuanced ways. Thus, *Evelina* exists almost as a bridge between worlds, with a careful, conscientious appreciation for the world that is left behind.

Burney sets out with an awareness of her precarious position from the beginning. Desiring the respect and appreciation of her literary peers (and simultaneously understanding the general feeling towards novels during this time, particularly from the quarters she so evidently wants to impress) she includes an acknowledgement and justification of her decision to publish a novel:

> Perhaps were it possible to effect the total extirpation of novels, our young ladies in general, and boarding-school damsels in particular, might profit from their annihilation: but since the distemper they have spread seems incurable, since their contagion bids defiance to the medicine of advice or reprehension, and since they are found to baffle all the mental art of physic, save what is prescribed by the slow regimen of Time, and bitter diet of Experience, surely all attempts to contribute to the number of those which may be read, if not with advantage, at least without injury, ought rather to be encouraged than contemned.[23]

The crux here is that if novels cannot be avoided, convention compliant novels are preferential. How she qualifies her commitment to writing better novels that do not cause

[23] Burney, p. 10.

'injury' is, in part, through an assurance that *Evelina* is not a Romance novel:

> Let me, therefore, 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 all 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.[24]

Much like Lennox, Burney seems, at least on the surface, to wish to distance herself from the prevalently criticised genre. Whereas Lennox's critique of romances is embedded into the narrative of the text, Burney prefaces hers with a reassuring disavowal of such novels. The urge these women share to distance themselves from the genre is undoubtedly a product of the general feeling towards heroic Romance, but this is particularly relevant when we consider that many of the contemporaries shared by Lennox and Burney held strong theoretical positions against novels which failed to serve a moral or didactic purpose. Dr Johnson most notably argued that

> irregular combinations of fanciful invention may delight a-while, by that novelty of which the common satiety of life sends us all in quest; but the pleasures of sudden wonder are soon exhausted, and the mind can only repose on the stability of truth.[25]

This statement trivialises romances and leaves little ground for the novel to tread without stumbling into the questionable territory of 'fanciful invention'. Burney's prefatory apologia becomes clear when we consider her assurances in the context of to whom they are directed ('the great writers') and her acknowledgement that she does not intend to copy them or to tread

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[24] Ibid.

[25] Samuel Johnson, *Preface to Shakespeare* (Illinois: Gutenberg, 2004), in *Project Gutenberg* p. 3 <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/5429> [accessed 14 August 2023].

'the same ground which they have tracked'.[26] However, whilst Burney assures the reader she will not tread the same path as her literary peers, qualifying her novel on the basis of its natural realism, she is following the lead of Fielding. Her intention to 'draw characters from nature, though not from life, and to mark the manners of the times' is a familiar theme in the 'neo- classical' eighteenth century, where the emphasis on nature influencing the production of art is popular. However, whilst popular, this mode of writing is relatively new, and 'unlike the romance, can claim only a very recent pedigree'. Fielding outlined similar concerns in his opening chapter of *Tom Jones,* explains Viven Jones, defining 'what he called his 'history' as dealing with "no other than Human Nature", and he invoked Pope's An Essay on Criticism: "True wit is nature to advantage drest / What oft' was thought, but ne'er so well exprest."' In this sense, Burney continues Fielding's precedent, expressing concern over the requirement to 'define the degree to which art, or novels in particular, might legitimately shape or embellish 'nature'.[27]

Samuel Richardson's *Pamela,* published some thirty-eight years previous to the writing of *Evelina,* represents the benchmark against which Burney would have been compared. Its eponymous protagonist, Pamela, is transformed from a maidservant to the lady of the house, having caught the attention of her employer, Mr B. Read from a modern perspective, it is hard to imagine what moral lessons Richardson sought to impart on his target readership of young women given that Pamela is sexually assaulted multiple times before being kidnapped and held captive at the hands of her master. However, the full title of the book confirms the intention: *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded* depicts Pamela's eventual compliance, resulting in Mr B offering a legitimate proposal of marriage, which she

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[26] Burney, p. 11.

[27] Vivien Jones, 'Frances Burney', in *The Cambridge Companion to English Novelists*, ed. by A. Poole (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 80-97 (p. 85).

ultimately accepts. Whilst *Evelina* and *Pamela* have very little in common in terms of underlying motive, which naturally has a resulting impact on the narrative, there are similarities between the texts which evidence the importance *Evelina* played in blazing a trail for novels of a similar nature to emerge in its wake. Like *Evelina*, *Pamela* is an epistolary novel, but extends beyond written communication to Pamela's parents, including journal entries addressed to them during her imprisonment. It is difficult to know whether Pamela intends to share them with anyone as there is no indication in the text beyond the narrator's suggestion that

> we shall now leave the honest old pair praying for their dear Pamela, and return to the account she herself gives of all this; having written it journal-wise, to amuse and employ her time, in hopes some opportunity might offer to send it to her friends; and, as was her constant view, that she might afterwards thankfully look back upon the dangers she had escaped, when they should be happily overblown, as in time she hoped they would be; and that then she might examine, and either approve or repent of her own conduct in them.[28]

The second half of the narrative emerges from Pamela's journal, which is an important distinction. Whereas Evelina's narrative plays out entirely publicly (which is to say that there are no wholly private refuges through which we are introduced to her unequivocally authentic emotion) it is reasonable to presume that Pamela's innermost thoughts are accessible at almost every intersection during the latter half of the novel. Not knowing if she will ever be allowed to leave, and with no means of conveying the letters to her parents, it is more reasonable to assume she does not imagine they will ever be read. Pamela herself argues 'for what one writes to one's father and mother, is not for every body to see', suggesting she has no intention of showing her friends, as the narrator implies.[29] It is because of this perception of privacy that Richardson is able to position Pamela as the epitome of femininity: a chaste, virtuous woman who, never straying from

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[28] Samuel Richardson, *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded*, ed. by A. J. Rivero (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), p. 90.

[29] Ibid., p. 212.

the 'correct' path even in thought, is rewarded with a marriage to a wealthy man.

When Pamela expresses anxiety about Mr B's insistence on reading them, saying

> one word, good sir, one word before you read them, since you will read them: Pray make allowances—for all the harsh reflections that you will find in them, on your own conduct to me: And remember only, that they were not written for your sight; and were penned by a poor creature hardly used, and who was in constant apprehension of receiving from you the worst treatment that you could inflict upon her.[30]

Mr B responds

> I had as many instances of your saucy reflections upon me in your former letters, as there were lines; and yet, you see, I have never upbraided you on that score; though, perhaps, I wished you had been more sparing of your epithets, and your freedoms of that sort.[31]

Pamela's primary concern here is how she will be received for speaking badly of the man who sexually assaulted and kidnapped her. This, in conjunction with her ultimate compliance, are factors evidencing Pamela's virtue, and the basis upon which she is 'rewarded' with the offer of marriage to her abuser.

Evelina's narrative is much more transparent in the sense that it does not appear to be calculated in such a way as to reward her for virtuous behaviour. Rather, Evelina is given room to err in social contexts without experiencing any permanent consequences. Despite her many social faux pas in the presence of Lord Orville, she goes on to marry him anyway. Her calibre is not typically determined by how knowledgeable she is about proper etiquette, and when it is, such as when Mr Lovel attempts to shame her for her modest roots,[32] Evelina's narration means that the reception of this behaviour is focalized through her own perspective, fostering sympathy for Evelina, and not Mr Lovel. Concerning

[30] Ibid., p. 213.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Burney, p. 83.

knowledge of the character, we know only what Evelina is prepared to share with Arthur Villars and her friend, Miss Mirvan, but her private, innermost thoughts are never revealed, and never used as a linchpin upon which to assert or deny her virtue, even when her semi-public opinions (such as those she shares with Mr Villars about the Captain) lead us towards the assumption that her private imaginings could be less kind.

Furthermore, like Evelina (and Lennox's Arabella, and Radcliffe's Emily), Pamela is young, innocent, naive, and largely ignorant of the real world, having such limited experience of it, which makes Henry Fielding's *An Apology for the Life of Mrs. Shamela Andrews* (1741), published a year after *Pamela* under the pseudonym *Mr. Conny Keyber*, all the bolder in its contrasting depiction of the young maidservant. The narrative mirrors the main thematic points contained in *Pamela*, with the exception that the protagonist, pointedly dubbed Shamela, is a markedly less pleasant personality, embodying the sort of person one might imagine being the target demographic for the moral lessons endorsed in Richardson's novels. The daughter of a London prostitute, Shamela is cunning and deceptive, with scant regard for her reputation as a woman, and sets out with the intention of duping her master, Squire Booby, into proposing. It is later revealed that she was having an affair with the Rev. Arthur Williams. The novella highlights and satirises the moral objectives of Richardson's didactic *Pamela,* likely resulting from his own position on the novel. As Jane Spencer explains

> [Fielding's] opinion at that time of the novel as a form can be gauged from his caricature of the popular novelist Eliza Haywood as 'Mrs Novel' in *The Author's Farce*: one of a medley of representatives of silly, modern, commercial entertainments, she lives in the style of her own erotic fictions, and has an affair with the equally ridiculous Signior Opera.[33]

Fielding is credited with having built upon Richardson's weaknesses in ways that allowed

[33] Jane Spencer, 'Henry Fielding', in *The Cambridge Companion to English Novelists*, ed. by A Poole (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 48-62 (p. 48).

for the development of the form, not merely satirising his work, which extended beyond *Shamela* into other semi-satirical works, including *Joseph Andrews*.[34] Intended originally as an extension of Fielding's prior work, Joseph started out life as Pamela's brother. However, the work developed into something different, about which he said it was a 'kind of writing which I do not remember to have seen hitherto attempted in our language', and what Fielding called a 'comic-epic poem in prouse'.[35] Thus, when Burney writes her apologetic prefatory statements, she does so knowing that her efforts will be judged against a complicated backdrop of analysis that is at once critical of and simultaneously developing upon the purpose, format, and trajectory of the novel as a literary form. She need not have worried; Dr Johnson praised Burney as a 'successor to the already highly respected male novelists of the mid-century' and her fiction was regarded as blending 'the dignity and pathos of Richardson' with 'the acuteness and ingenuity of Fielding'. *Evelina* in particular was an 'instant success', and her decision to write in the epistolary form so favoured by her peers resulted in the predominant view that it 'would have disgraced neither the head nor the heart of Richardson' and was, as anticipated, widely assumed to have been written by a man.[36]

Diverging from the thematic focus on women's virtue (or lack thereof), Frances Sheridan's *Memoirs of Sidney Biddulph* (1761) shares narratological similarities with *Evelina*. Whilst Burney focuses on the micro-level impact of navigating complex systems of class, gender, and their intricate intersections with youth, Sheridan's focus is somewhat larger, dealing with the macro-level impact of gender on the women forced to abide by the patriarchal dictates of their era. Sidney is reluctant to marry, but does so anyway and, whilst

[34] Ibid., p. 49.
[35] Henry Fielding, quoted in R. D. Lund, 'Augustan Burlesque and the Genesis of "*Joseph Andrews*", *Studies in Philology*, 103.1 (2006), 88-119 (p.88). Available at:
<https://shorturl.at/kux67>
[36] Jones, p. 80.

conducting herself in accordance with the values set out for her, she nevertheless experiences financial distress, demonstrating throughout that even situated as she is, dependent on the financial support and social currency of the men in her family, she cannot rely on the support of her brother, who favours his new wife's desire to abandon her. The novel is written in epistolary form and is delivered through Miss Biddulph's supposed memoirs. In the style of Richardson, and in particular, his later novel, *Clarissa,* Sheridan engages the same presumption of privacy to construct a narratological argument that, arguably, stood somewhat in opposition to Richardson's notions of virtue and their importance within society. Whereas Pamela is rewarded for her adherence to the rules of her society, Sidney is continually punished. This analysis is perhaps somewhat diminished by the culmination of the novel, in which Sidney is eventually rewarded by a wealthy uncle who appears with an inheritance to bestow upon his niece and nephew– if they pass a test of morality. Posing as a homeless man, he approaches them separately to ask for help. His nephew, desiring only to please his wife, turns his uncle out without offering assistance. Sidney, however, provides him with as much as she can spare. Having proved her virtue, the uncle rewards her with property, financial aid, and the promise of inheritance. Thus, Richardson's code of morality is, to some extent, perceptible within the narrative. However, its presence does not diminish or disprove Sheridan's main thesis here: a woman's inability to exist in her own right, as, without the guardianship of a male, she risks financial ruin. It was not Sidney's virtue that proved to be salvation for herself and her children, but luck. The decision to produce a novel entirely out of memoirs is perhaps the factor that cements this argument. Since memoirs are presumed to be factual recollections, her virtue cannot easily be called into question as there is a presumption of truthfulness. Thus, her misfortunes cannot be attributed to the just desserts of an unvirtuous woman, but must be attributed to the cold brutality of a society that approximates a

woman's value in accordance with her proximity to a male. Just as Richardson deployed the presumption of privacy to evidence the notion that Pamela's transition from maid to marriageable woman arose from her inner goodness, Sheridan demonstrates the simple truism that conformity alone ensures a woman nothing. From the inverse vantage point, Burney tackles this indirectly, as any possible perception of a lack of virtue on Evelina's part (emerging from her lack of familiarity with customs and expectations of her as a young woman) does not culminate in a loss of options for her. As an unknown woman with dubious parentage, who does not understand the rules that apply to her, emerging from a life of seclusion with only her guardian's influence, Evelina is anything but the picture of virtue with the credentials required to secure her future. Regardless, it has little impact on Lord Orville's desire to marry her. Whilst all of the novels discussed in this subchapter lay some degree of claim upon the intention to embody realism, Burney and Sheridan deliver it slightly more realistically, clearly communicating the irrelevance of a woman's behaviour - within reason, of course - on her trajectory in life.

The Epistolary Novel

The epistolary novel can be traced back to the seventeenth century, beginning with 'Roger L'Estrange's first translation of *Les Lettres portugaises*'. Typically regarded as a tradition limited to the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the discourse surrounding the genre often centres heavily on concepts of psychological immediacy commonly attributed to the format.[1] Perhaps the most prominent author of epistolary novels, to the extent that he is often credited with defining the genre, is Samuel Richardson. Bray collates a selection of commentaries on Richardson's work, beginning with Monika Fludernick's note that 'the work of Richardson, especially *Clarissa* (1747– 48), earns pride of place' and that

> this novel provides some of the first examples of first-person free indirect thought, since in Clarissa's letters 'the perplexities of the experiencing self are elaborated in unprecedented detail' (171) [...] Thomas C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel, for example, claim that '*Pamela* was, at any rate, one of the first works in western prose fiction to convey a story as it happened rather than merely relate it – perhaps the very first to do so consistently'.[2]

However, there is some debate surrounding the immediacy conveyed in Richardson's free indirect thought, and the extent to which it is effective as a medium of complete authenticity that naturally results from that immediacy. As Dorrit Cohn explains, when Richardson claims 'that his epistolary form achieves "instantaneous descriptions and reflections", "immediate impression of every circumstance", or "writing to the minute", these words can hardly be taken literally. Logically, there is always an interval between each episode and its recording'.[3] Commenting on this 'interval', Gérard Genette suggests that 'the eighteenth-century novel, from *Pamela* to *Obermann*, exploited that situation propitious to the most subtle and "irritating" counterpoints: the situation of the tiniest

[1] Bray, p. 1.
[2] Ibid., p. 54.
[3] Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978). P. 209.

temporal interval'.[4] However, as we have already seen in the case of *The Female Quixote*, those exploitations of temporal intervals can be crucial in guiding a reader towards (or away from) a particular perspective. Whilst some debate remains over the extent of immediacy present in Richardson's epistolary novels, it is clear that the format offers a particular kind of connection with the reader that is more difficult to achieve in other forms. This is perhaps best evidenced by the opinion of some scholars that they find in Burney what they suggest is lacking in Richardson. Eva Figes argues that the letters in Evelina 'have an immediacy and credibility lacking in Richardson' and are cleverly used to move the narrative forward, and one feels they might actually have been sent, which is never the case in Richardson, where the letter is always a literary device addressed to the reader rather than a recipient.[5]

Epistolarity is central to Frances Burney's life and progression as a writer, and during the course of her lifetime, she produced what amounts to four volumes of material, and what Lorna Clark described as an 'abundance and variety; more compelling, perhaps, in its entirety than her fictional output, it merits equally serious consideration for what it reveals about her evolution as a writer'.[6] Clark explains that Burney uses her letters as a conduit through which to develop her skill as a writer, honing her writing style and the themes evident in her writing. She begins with a private diary, to which she writes to a 'projection of a kind of second self': 'to Nobody, then, will I write my Journal! Since To Nobody can I be wholly unreserved—to Nobody can I reveal every thought, every wish of my Heart'. However, Clark continues,

> for Burney, affectionate participation was crucial, and the form soon deviates; five years later, away from home on a long visit, she sent a journal account to her favorite sister, Susan ("the first of many . . . spanning nearly three decades," as her

[4] Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse Revisited* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 218.
[5] Eva Figes, *Sex & Subterfuge: Women Writers to 1850* (New York: Persea Books, 1982), p. 33.
[6] Lorna Clark, 'Epistolarity in Frances Burney', *The Age of Johnson,* 20 (2010), 193-xi (p.193).

> editor remarks; EJL, 1:274), which was later passed on to a family friend, Samuel "Daddy" Crisp. Soon she was sending him long journalized accounts of his own, which he in turn shared with family and friends. As Joyce Hemlow notes, the practice of sharing her journals with a circle of intimates changed their nature: "They were no longer addressed exclusively to Nobody, but tended to take the form of actual letters, long journal-letters, written to Mr. Crisp and Susan.[7]

The bulletins sent to her sister, Susan, during Burney's stay in the Queen's household address an audience of at least one, which 'puts them into the public realm, since any letter would be assumed to be read by the recipient, and might of course be read by others'.[8] The concept of private and public communication is a subject covered extensively in this chapter, but it is complex in this century; Janet Todd questions whether this distinction 'can be made at all'.[9] This question emerges from the analysis of an era in which 'the modes of public expression were not so much contraries as alternatives'.[10] Whilst they are seemingly distinct forms of communication, 'the private realm was to check the public in terms of how far conventional, arbitrary codes of expression could control the whole of a person's sense of reality [...] the public realm was a corrective to the private realm as well; natural man was an animal'[11] Jürgen Habermas offers some critical insight into the boundaries of and distinctions between private and public spheres in the eighteenth century, explaining that the primary distinction is behavioural, and 'the bourgeois public sphere may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people come together as a public'.[12] He continues, remarking that

> the public's understanding of the public use of reason was guided specifically by such private experiences as grew out of the audience-oriented (publikumsbezogen) subjectivity of the conjugal family's intimate domain (lntimsphiire). Historically,

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[7] Ibid., p. 194.
[8] Philip B. Daghlian, 'Dr. Johnson in His Letters: The Public Guise of Private Matter', *The Familiar Letter*, 67.1 (1968), 108-29 (p. 109).
[9] Janet Todd, 'Fatal Fluency: Behn's Fiction and the Restoration Letter', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 12.2-3 (2000), 417-34 (p. 423).
[10] Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), p. 98.
[11] Ibid., p. 91.
[12] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: an Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), p. 25.

> the latter was the source of privateness in the modern sense of a saturated and free interiority. The ancient meaning of the "private"-an inevitability imposed by the necessities of life-was banned, or so it appears, from the inner region of the private sphere, from the home, together with the exertions and relations of dependence involved in social labor.[13]

The 'subjectivity' he references, which he describes as 'the innermost core of the private', arrives in the form of the letter, which Habermas describes as 'containers for the "outpourings of the heart' more than 'cold reports'.[14] He continues, suggesting 'it is no accident that the eighteenth century became the century of the letter: through letter writing the individual unfolded himself in his subjectivity'.[15] And still, whilst these letters might constitute privacy as we understand it today, Habermas advises that they remained somewhat 'audience-oriented', explaining that some correspondences (such as Goethe's) 'were intended from the outset for publication'.[16] Thus, defining the boundaries of public and private spheres and the various forms of epistolarity present in the eighteenth century is complex and nuanced. This chapter attempts to reflect that nuance, whilst also adhering to the philosophy of Burney who, in her journals, wrote 'to Nobody' so that she might 'be wholly unreserved' and 'reveal every thought, every wish of my Heart,' which is to say that the concept of privacy is negotiated here as existing on a spectrum, and the intricacies of that dynamic are navigated with caution. After all, whilst Burney sought to write 'to nobody', in reality, she would end up writing for anyone who wished to read her journal. Even reasonable assumptions of privacy can ultimately culminate in very temporary guarantees in the longer term.

Early on in Burney's letter-writing career, she began selecting material based on its suitability for building a narrative: 'she sets out deliberately to amuse, enliven, and cheer

[13] Ibid., p. 28.
[14] Ibid., p. 49.
[15] Ibid., p. 48.
[16] Ibid., p. 49.

[Samuel Crisp] [...] engaging him directly in her account, she incorporates into it his imagined responses and her own playful retorts'.[17] This changed following Crisp's death, says Clark, who explains that after which, 'Burney's audience is primarily female', and

> the tone changes. The letters written to Susan and Mrs. Locke, dating from a later, more somber period, are quite different, offering instead a "window to my Breast," which is more in keeping with the 12 "subjective and psychological overtones" with which epistolary narrative was traditionally associated. "The concept of the ideal letter as a natural and unstudied outpouring of the heart was a current one." The genre was praised 13 for its ability to convey "the immediacy and authenticity of the subjective inner state of the writer" and "to capture a sense of emotional immediacy."[18]

It is during this time when Burney's skills as a writer of epistolary fiction start to develop into something less humorous, more serious (not always in subject, but intent), and began to more closely resemble the novels she would later publish. Clark remarks that in Burney's novel, 'so in Burney's letters: one senses this same "drama of her unarticulated desire" structuring the narrative that, no less than three times, yearns to take the form of a courtship journal but is resisted by reality'.[19] This potentially accounts for the high degree of emotionality captured in the novel, and the sense that this emotionality is conveyed with the immediacy other scholars have noticed is lacking in Richardson's novels. This is achieved through 'Evelina's syntax and punctuation' which 'helps to recreate the rush of thoughts "occurring to me nearly at the same time", as the dashes separate her initial, disjointed reactions' in this example, 'to Orville's arrival'.[20] Bray further remarks that 'Evelina is capable of recollecting moments of strong emotion', for example, when 'she remembers vividly Lord Orville's concern when he met her in dubious company in Marylebone-gardens: " – yes, my dear Sir, he looked greatly concerned; and that, the remembrance of that, is the only consolation I feel, for an evening the most painful of my

[17] Clark, pp. 195-196.
[18] Ibid., p. 196.
[19] Ibid., p. 199.

life"'; Bray suggests that 'Evelina often recalls particular 'instants' of crisis'.[21] Burney's epistolarity likely conveys the immediate emotion so well (and arguably, more effectively than Richardson) because unlike Richardson, whose *Pamela* emerged from the reading of model letters,[22] Burney's was an evolution and development of an existing practice, not simply in the art of letter-writing, but in the specific specialism of narrative development within that context. Her active attempts to improve the ways in which she delivered a narrative within her letters, both to Samuel 'Daddy' Crisp and to Susan and Mrs. Locke, produced a more authentic rendering of what Richardson set out to achieve.

Structural Analysis: *Evelina*

The dualistic sense of virtue and morality as predictors of success (and, of course, the inverse) prevalent in novels of the period is perhaps a topic of some concern for Burney. One method through which this presents is via the inclusion of doubles, about which Dale Townshend explains, 'manifestations of doubles and doubling in literature may be traced back as far as the origins of Western civilization itself. The dualism variously articulated by Plato and Aristotle was easily assimilated by the rise of JudeoChristian theology' which she suggests is 'a pervasive system of thought which both reworked and reified classical philosophical endeavors through its accompanying metaphysical distinctions between body and soul, good and evil'.[1] Whilst issues pertaining to doubling, foiling, duality, and doppelgangers are typically the psychoanalyst's wheelhouse, their inclusion in this dissertation is based on their formal purpose. In particular, the ways in which the reader is influenced to regard the roles played by morality and virtue when commonalities are found between characters who comply with gender norms and characters who do not. To begin, this subchapter will deal with the ways in which doubles are deployed to highlight the contrasting expectations and outcomes of women and men who behave similarly but are regarded very differently by their peers. Martha J. Koehler identifies pairs of doubles in *Evelina*, although she reaches different conclusions than are arrived at in this dissertation, including Mr Smith and Sir Clement Willoughby, 'Evelina and the putative "Miss Belmont"', and Orville himself, she suggests, is paired with 'Orville' as portrayed deceptively by Sir Clement. Koehler's contention is that Burney primarily uses imaginary doubles, 'which signals the construction of self-images through others', and is not too far

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[1] Dale Townshend, 'Doubles', in *The Encyclopaedia of the Gothic*, ed. by W. Hughes, D. Punter, and A. Smith (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2016), pp. 185-95 (p. 189).

removed from the contention made here, which is that Burney uses doubles to signal the construction of the gendered self through sexed pairs.[2] This is perhaps most evident in the case of Madame Duval; the crass, impolite, argumentative and domineering grandmother to Evelina is universally disliked for her traits, whereas Captain Mirvan, who serves as her double in this narrative, is enabled in his behaviour by Sir Clement Willoughby, who assists the captain in pulling all manner of tricks on Madame Duval, including having her believe she has been robbed by highwaymen,[3] and ruining her clothing and hair.[4] These doubles are present throughout the narrative; Sir Clement Willoughby, the self-aggrandising practical joker is matched by Miss Selwyn, whose sardonic wittiness renders her unlikeable to most of the characters. The difference between them, however, is that Miss Selwyn, unlike Sir Clement, acts offensively less often than she acts defensively. This is the case when, in volume III: letter I, Evelina and Miss Selwyn are ‘incommoded by three gentlemen’ by whom Evelina is ‘disgusted’; however, ‘Mrs. Selwyn’s severity rather surprised [Evelina]: but you [Villars], who have so often observed it, will not wonder she took so fair an opportunity of indulging her humour’.[5] Despite Evelina’s acknowledgement that the gentlemen were rude and behaved improperly, Miss Selwyn’s retorts stand out as the more severe of the exchanges. This is likely influenced by the existing narrative surrounding her, about which Evelina explains,

> she is extremely clever: her understanding, indeed, may be called masculine: but, unfortunately, her manners deserve the same epithet; for, in studying to acquire the knowledge of the other sex, she has lost all the softness of her own [...] she is not a favourite with Mr. Villars, who has often been disgusted at her unmerciful propensity to satire...[6]

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[2] Martha J. Koehler, ‘Faultless Monsters' and Monstrous Egos: The Disruption of Model Selves in Frances Burney's *Evelina’*, *The Eighteenth Century*, 43.1 (2002), 19-41 (p. 33).
[3] Burney, p. 168.
[4] Ibid., p. 151.
[5] Ibid., p. 274.
[6] Ibid., p. 269.

Here, Burney shows an understanding of the fact that Miss Selwyn receives less tolerance towards her traits because they are regarded as masculine qualities. Evelina goes so far as to explain that she has

> never been personally hurt at her want of gentleness; a virtue which, nevertheless, seems so essential a part of the female character, that I find myself more awkward, and less at ease, with a woman who wants it, than I do with a man.[7]

This excerpt tacitly identifies the unfairness in the fact that the same behaviour produces two very different reactions, reflecting the sex of the perpetrator. Sir Clement is, of course, equally disliked for his wide range of distasteful qualities, but his participation in the behaviours causing annoyance is always offensive. He acts unprovoked, rarely in defence of himself or someone else, and when he does appear to show concern for Evelina, that concern emerges from self-interest, such as when she and her cousins are walking down alleyways and encounter a group of rowdy men who mistreat the women. Sir Clement steps in to offer assistance to Evelina, but his motivation in doing so is to isolate her from the group for his own interests.[8]

Sex, of course, is not the only axis across which these contradictory expectations are addressed via doubles or dualistic pairings. On a larger scale, the Mirvans stand in opposition to the Branghtons, whose primary point of contrast is that of class. The concern here is slightly more difficult to isolate as the Branghtons present as every bit as dislikeable as their reception warrants, but a nuanced examination reveals the truism that both the Mirvans and the Branghtons have a mutual goal: a desire for Evelina to receive justice for the wrongs she has endured at the hands of her biological father, John Belmont. This is best illustrated when Lady Howard - Mrs Mirvan's mother - carefully articulates to Arthur Villars that she agrees with Madame Duval about her plan to initiate legal action

[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid., p. 198.

against John Belmont following his failure to claim Evelina as his daughter. She justifies the proposed action, asking

> and why, my dear Sir, should not this be? [...] Your lovely charge, now first entering into life, has merit which ought not to be buried in obscurity. She seems born for an ornament to the world. Nature has been bountiful to her of whatever she had to bestow; and the peculiar attention you have given to her education, has formed her mind to a degree of excellence, that in one so young I have scarce ever seen equalled. Fortune alone has hitherto been sparing of her gifts; and she, too, now opens the way which leads to all that is left to wish for her.[9]

Since there are no letters from the perspective of Madame Duval, we only hear her public speech, or rather, a retelling of her public speech. Thus, it is difficult to determine how she authentically feels, and we are left to deduce her intentions from that which she says in the company of others. This is true also of the Branghtons, who are said to only be interested in Belmont's claiming of Evelina because they feel entitled to a share of Evelina's inheritance. It is clear that many of the values by which Madame Duval conducts her life cause friction with the English characters of the story because of cultural differences emerging from her French background, and yet, she is nevertheless perceived to be rude because of her otherness. This disparity is carried further when we contrast the depiction of the Branghtons with that of the Mirvans. The situation and circumstances of the Branghtons are elucidated harshly, with hallmark descriptors typically associated with the lower classes. The description of their meal, which was

> ill-served, ill-cooked, and ill-managed. The maid who waited had so often to go down stairs for something that was forgotten, that the Branghtons were perpetually obliged to rise from table themselves, to get plates, knives, and forks, bread or beer. Had they been without pretensions, all this would have seemed of no consequence; but they aimed at appearing to advantage, and even fancied they succeeded. However, the most disagreeable part of our fare was that the whole family continually disputed whose turn it was to rise, and whose to be allowed to sit still.[10]

Here we see that the Branghtons have a need to prove themselves worthy of Evelina's

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[9] Ibid., pp. 124-125.
[10] Ibid., p. 176.

company, but she fails to recognise it. It is interesting that she does not notice the parallels between the Branghtons' failure to pass for members of high society and her own blunders in the presence of Lord Orville, and shows little sympathy for their attempts to impress her. Whilst Evelina makes an attempt here to demonstrate compassion for their circumstance, suggesting it would have 'seemed of no consequence' that the family does not benefit from the standard of service to which she has become accustomed, the repeated references to the 'two pairs of stairs' Evelina climbed to visit the Branghtons in their home demarcates the degree to which she feels she has fallen in social standing simply by way of belonging to them.[11] Again, we see that the benefit of only portraying characters through public speech is such that it allows for the assertion of specific motivations evidencing a particular brand of morality. Since we are not privy to the inner thoughts and feelings of any of the Branghton family, we are reliant on the third-party retelling of what was said and by whom. This allows for the propagation of a narrative upon which a perceived lack of virtue provides the justification and answer for and to the ways in which the Branghtons are treated by the remaining characters in the story. This technique, 'focalization', will be discussed later in this chapter.

Conversely, whilst similar language is used to describe the Captain, such as when 'he laughs and talks so terribly loud in public, that he frequently makes us ashamed of belonging to him,'[12] or when he repeatedly speaks badly of the women in his company:

> what signifies asking them girls? Do you think they know their own minds yet? Ask 'em after any thing that's called diversion, and you're sure they'll say it's vastly fine-they are a set of parrots, and speak by rote, for they all say the same thing: but ask 'em how they like making puddings and pies, and I'll warrant you'll pose 'em.[13]

The Captain's rudeness has no bearing on his position within the rank of society he belongs

[11] Ibid., pp. 175-176.
[12] Ibid., p. 79.
[13] Ibid., p. 110.

to. He is allowed to behave impolitely without consequence, and his circle becomes no smaller despite the lack of attempts to control himself in public. His poor manners, whilst commented on extensively throughout Evelina's letters to Arthur Villars, are attributed to his rough life at sea as a naval officer. Furthermore, there is a willingness to overlook his bristly nature and agree to disagree with him in such a way as to maintain a cordial relationship in ways that are not necessarily extended to Madame Duval, such as when Arthur Villars writes to Evelina, explaining that 'however I may differ from Captain Mirvan in other respects, yet my opinion of the town, its manners, inhabitants, and diversions, is much upon a level with his own?'[14]

Perhaps the most interesting example of duality here is the dichotomy created by the selective deployment of public versus semi-private discourse. In formal terms, Gérard Genette identifies the perspective from which a narrative is told as 'focalization', the function of which is to limit (or not) the reader's access to information, be it through the manipulation of diegetics or via the control of whose thoughts, feelings, and perspectives are shared with the reader, and indeed, whether they are shared at all.[15] As Luc Herman and Bart Vervaeck put it, focalization 'refers to the relation between that which is focalized—the characters, actions, and objects offered to the reader—and the focalizer, the agent who perceives and who therefore determines what is presented to the reader'.[16] Whilst focalization and narration are typically dealt with on separate terms, the lines become blurred when the narrator is acting as a focalizer, as is the case with Evelina, who internally focalizes throughout the narrative. Genette's conceptualisation of focalization, say Herman and Vervaeck, is limited, lacking clarification with reference to subject and

[14] Ibid., p. 117.
[15] Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1980), p. 168.
[16] Bart Vervaeck and Luc Herman, *Handbook of Narrative Analysis* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2019), p. 77.

object: a weakness noted and developed by Mieke Bal. One of the most helpful clarifications she arrived at, within the context of this chapter's focus, is the attention she gives to unreliable perception, such as in the case where a character is viewed only through the lens of a 'single focalizer', Herman and Vervaeck suggest gives rise to concerns that the perception may be unreliable.[17] In *Evelina,* almost all of the characters are perceived by a single focalizer: Evelina herself. Except for the small number of letters exchanged between Arthur Villars and Lady Howard, and Evelina and Miss Mirvan, Evelina's perception is the dominant perspective offered. Genette deals with external and internal focalization, but what is happening in *Evelina* is ever more complex. Whereas Genette's schema accounts for scenarios in which there is some degree of omniscience - that is to say the knowing of a character's thoughts and feelings - then the absence of that omniscience presented in Evelina's exclusively public discourse complicates matters further. For example, in *The Female Quixote*, the narrator addresses the countess' concern that she had 'gone too far' in indulging Arabella's fascination with romance, and the narrator assures the reader that 'Arabella felt a tenderness for her that had already the force of a long contracted friendship, and an esteem little less than veneration'.[18] The omniscience of the narrator confirms Arabella's feelings, but no such confirmation can exist within the format selected for *Evelina*. To assume she speaks freely in her letters to Arthur Villars is to operate from the assumption that we are all of us honest when communicating our thoughts and emotions. If, as Herman and Vervaeck argue, 'focalization manipulates the reader', then the absence of an internal thought process on behalf of Evelina requires that the reader trusts her public relaying of it.[19] The result is that the reader cannot know for sure that Evelina's words on paper align with her genuine

[17] Ibid.
[18] Charlotte Lennox, *The Female Quixote*, ed. by Margaret Dalziel (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 329.
[19] Ibid., p. 77.

thoughts and feelings. This is, as explained by Herman and Vervaeck above, most perceptible when a single focalizer is the repeated point of reference for perceiving another character, causing the reader to feel unsure of the reliability of that narrative, but the same is true of Evelina's speech, bound to exist only in the public sphere.

We have already seen the ways in which doubles and duality can function as structural devices for the purpose of controlling a narrative. Complete in its portrayal of its protagonist's inner thoughts and feelings, *The Memoirs of Sidney Biddulph* presents a fairly unchallengeable picture of a moral, virtuous woman for whom there is no structurally embedded reward to be given in exchange for her conformity. Similarly, Richardson deploys the same strategy to evidence the justification for the reward Pamela receives for having behaved in an appropriate way. Whilst both of these outcomes could have been attempted, and likely achieved, through the use of primarily public discourse, what makes their narratives all the more believable is that those characters write to nobody; thus, there is no reason to imagine they would lie. Words and their uses are of significant concern for Burney. As Amy Pawl explains, 'while Evelina writes letters, she would not presume to write a book—and Burney has'. The result, says Pawl, 'is that Burney has a certain anxiety about written words as well. Once they become public, they are more like spoken words in that they may be misunderstood or misused'.[20] Evelina's narrative has a near-closeness to private discourse, as she communicates in the main with Arthur Villars, confessing thoughts and feelings to him that she might not otherwise speak in company, such as her many complaints about Captain Mirvan and Madame Duval. The closeness and familiarity offer more authenticity than, say, her letters to Miss Mirvan, where she is perhaps differently transparent, if not less. The mode of writing, relationship to the protagonist, and

[20] Amy J. Pawl, '"And What Other Name May I Claim?": Names and Their Owners in Frances Burney's *Evelina*", *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 3.4 (1991), 283-300 (p. 298).

transparency available to the reader culminate in the shaping of a reading, and each component can be manipulated to produce a specific outcome. Evelina's varying identities as a daughter and as a friend reveal parts of a whole, but she remains obscured by the presence of an audience, no matter how small. For this reason, Evelina in writing forms the only half of a double we are privy to. Burney's anxiety surrounding the transition from private to public writing is palpable within the novel, and the ways in which the shift in audience can be used to manipulate the reader's understanding of a character's motivations is used with great effect to portray Evelina in the light she is depicted.

The formal consequence of introducing doubles and dualistic pairings in this novel is that it facilitates the analysis of contrasting expectations deriving from sex. The accessory function here is that of defamiliarisation; whereas, as we will see in the coming chapter, Radcliffe's use of devices such as subjective, detailed descriptions of a landscape or sound patterning through song can be understood to problematise an accepted norm, Burney achieves the same outcome through the use of a unilateral reception to a bilateral behaviour straddling both sexes (or indeed, social classes, as is also often the case). Russian literary critic, Viktor Shklovsky, primarily associated with Russian formalism, explains that experience is intrinsically associated with recognition: that failure to recognise a thing is a failure to know it. By 'deautomatising' a thing (also referred to as 'defamiliarisation', it can be reshaped into an unknown entity, such as, says Schklovsky, Tolstoy's approach to estrangement, which 'consists in not calling a thing or event by its name but describing it as if seen for the first time, as if happening for the first time'.[21] In positioning similar characters with contrasting power differentials as mirrors of each other, Burney effectively causes the reader to engage with the behaviour in question through the distorting lens of

[21] Shklovsky, 'Art, as Device', *Poetics Today*, 36.3 (2015), 151-74 (p. 163).

unfamiliarity. Mrs Selwyn defamiliarises the behaviour of Sir Clement Willoughby, prompting Evelina to acknowledge that her position on Mrs Selwyn's character emerges from her own expectations of the female sex. Madame Duval defamiliarises the behaviour of the Captain, whose belligerence is enabled by Sir Clement and tolerated with increased regularity than that of his female mirror. Burney successfully elucidates what has been obfuscated by familiarity; in doing so, the root behaviours are examined anew, as if being witnessed for the very first time. This time, devoid of the mollifying accoutrements of expectation, propriety, morality, and virtue.

It is important to note, however, that the predominantly singular point of focalization serves as an equal accessory to the defamiliarisation in play here. The impact of the defamiliarising doubles would likely not be quite as successful were it not for the unreliability of Evelina's narrative voice. In conjunction with this, Evelina's character is structured as fundamentally unreliable, embodying naivety, innocence (which can just as easily be interpreted as ignorance) and a lack of experience. Her foundations as an unreliable character feed into the reader's estimations of her ability to provide an objective account of the tertiary characters in the story, which culminates in the cultivation of fertile ground for the destabilisation of trust, priming them for the defamiliarisation that follows.

Building on the defamiliarising elements of the novel are its paratextual components. One such concern is its anonymous publication. It should be noted that this was not especially unusual for the period, as 'over 80 percent of all new novel titles published between 1750 and 1790 were published anonymously'.[22] However, there are reasons to suspect that Burney's decision to remain anonymous may have been more complicated. As previously mentioned, readers of *Evelina* presumed the author to be male.

[22] James Raven, 'The Anonymous Novel in Britain and Ireland, 1750-1830', in *The Faces of Anonymity*, ed. by Robert J. Griffin (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 144-66 (p. 143).

Whilst this may seem to be a natural assumption from the vantage point of a world in which most authors are male, and the literary landscape remains to be a male-dominated field, there are indicators to suggest that Burney intended to be read that way. As Janice Thaddeus explains,

> Burney in her preface evoked the male novel-writing tradition, mentioning Johnson, Rousseau, Fielding, and Smollett at least partly to convince reviewers that the anonymous author was male. Though mentioning them, she also denied their influence, saying that they were 'barren', that they had left nothing for an imitator to cull (p. 9). Burney deliberately avoided mentioning any of the women writers whom, as we can see in her journals, she read and admired. Disingenuously, then, the transvestite author claimed no originality even as she asserted originality.[23]

But Burney's issues with identity began long before the writing of *Evelina*. Her family name, 'Burney' is a shortening of its Irish antecedent, 'MacBurney', likely changed to put distance between the family and their Irish roots following concerns that it might represent them harshly, in view of her grandfather's 'revived stage career'. This change of name was of great significance to the family, and a point of pride for Burney's father, Charles, who considered it an opportunity for a new life. Burney felt so strongly in agreement with her father that she destroyed most of his early memoirs for the sake of protecting the life Charles had envisioned for them under the name of Burney.[24] Understanding the extent to which she went to protect their family name, it is not difficult to imagine the strength of emphasis placed upon its importance by her father. Its impact on Burney is evident, whose rumination on the concepts of identity and naming is palpable throughout her novels. To this, *Evelina* is no exception. Evelina Anville is Burney's nameless protagonist. Claimed by no one, and wholly reliant on the validation of patriarchal system of value, she is cast adrift within a society that thrusts her into a liminal space: charming, attractive, and intelligent, but without the answer to the question of her parentage, ultimately less valuable

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[23] Janice F. Thaddeus, *Frances Burney: a Literary Life* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), p. 37.
[24] Harman, p. 22.

as a person and as a potential wife. Whereas Burney's untraceable past afforded the family the promise of a better life, she shows a keen awareness of the fact that it must be accompanied by a traceable proximity to a valid male custodian. Without this, Evelina's absence of legitimate parentage ensures her the inverse of the success promised to Burney and her family. In many ways, it is ownership that allows for Evelina's realisation as a whole person. As long as she is denied the title of Lady Belmont, she cannot exist, suggests Amy Pawl. Orville represents a welcomed rescuing presence, '"honour[ing] [Evelina] with his entire attention" [...] Recognized by Orville, Evelina becomes "Somebody" once again'.[25] And yet, Evelina concerns herself with the protection of her name (and concomitant reputation) long before she even knows what it is. Evelina understands that even without a name, she can destroy its value before it belongs to her.

Evelina's behaviour, from walking amongst prostitutes down alleyways (after which she is expected to explain herself to Sir Clement),[26] to her lack of understanding of the rules by which she must behave when dancing (or not dancing),[27] all have a potential bearing on her ability to claim the name to which she is entitled. Naming, then, is central to the experience of Burney and the women of her time. Protecting it, and the reputation it garners through the behaviours engaged in by its owner is pivotal to protecting one's place within a society that functions, for women in particular, on the conformity to expectations that, if ignored, have the power to destroy a life. It is unsurprising, then, that Burney should focus so intently on this issue throughout *Evelina*. Her decision to publish anonymously, with the necessary caveat that doing so was not entirely unusual for the period, seems in part to reflect her anxiety surrounding self-ownership - at least in an authorial capacity - within a society that prohibits women from doing exactly that. Her

[25] Pawl, p. 286.
[26] Burney, p. 199.
[27] Burney, p. 32.

name, given to her by her father, and which she fiercely protects as likely instructed to do so, was never really hers to own at all. How, then, can she claim it for a public airing of her writing, which already fills her with anxiety?

This theme of anxiety has another axis by which it can be examined. Throughout Burney's lifetime, she becomes accustomed to the prevalent notion that the role of women is to remain in the domain assigned to them: the private sphere. Whilst Burney will have seen the changing landscape that allowed for women to enter the public sphere, this progress was slow and complex. As Emmanuel Peraldo explains,

> the public sphere [...] was essentially male, as men were supposed to demonstrate their masculinity through rational political debate in the public sphere. So the exclusion of women from the public sphere would prevent them from taking part in the political debates and discussions. But Burney's novel brings confusion between public and private relationships and spaces, as its main character and narrator Evelina is jockeying for position, negotiating personal space within and between the private and public places she goes through, trying to get a name, a position and a place in society.[28]

Thus, Burney steps out into an arena that presents her with a range of challenges: the emergence into a sphere that is habitually denied to her, the suggestion that she must own a name that was never really hers, and the transition from a private audience of 'nobody' to one with the power to destroy her reputation, and potentially, her financial and social security. Thus, in this context, the anonymity with which *Evelina* is introduced into literary society can be understood as a paratextual representation of the challenges Burney negotiates with the concept of identity and what it means for her as a daughter, writer, and woman living in eighteenth-century England.

This new negotiation of space presents a palpable sense of liminality within the novel. Wedged between the confines of the domestic sphere and the exposure of public life, there is a tangible sense of transition evident throughout the narrative. In her seminal text, *Sexual*

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[28] Emmanuel Peraldo, '"Is This a Place For Miss Anville? – These Dark Walks! – No Party! – No Companion!" Space and Gender in Frances Burney's *Evelina*', *Cercles*, 32.1 (2014), 53-61 (p. 44).

Politics, Kate Millett explains that

> [male] privileges, are "public" (war, money, politics, and learning) whereas female "duties," meaning responsibilities, are "private," e.g., domestic -is in the realm of philanthropy. In pursuit of its kind offices, Ruskin is inclined to permit woman a narrow latitude to step beyond her sphere, never into the great world of nineteenth-century reform, but into the little world of the homes of what were then known as the "honest poor." There, while sewing garments and exchanging recipes, the respectable wife might make some minuscule restitution for the ravages her masculine class-counterpart had been busy accomplishing all day through his worldly prerogatives of politics, money, and technology.[29]

Evelina's 'entrance into the world' is as much about the young everywoman's entrance into the public sphere, as she desperately scrambles to find her place within society: a transition that is, in many ways, contingent upon the procurement of a name to locate her in history. As she lingers in the liminal space of namelessness, even the offer of marriage does not alleviate her anxieties about this lack of belonging and, even though she is Evelina Belmont for a very short time, it remains important to her to claim it for even a short while before she is married. As Joanne Cutting-Gray explains, 'the "nameless" functions symbolically for the patriarchy that constitutes the "named"' as 'namelessness as a metaphor for woman stands in the way of Evelina's social acceptance and inhibits her ability to name herself other than within the category of innocence, the "character" given to her by her culture.[30] The short space of time she is Evelina Belmont can, of course, can be read as representative of another liminal space within the narrative, demarcating the transition from claimed to owned, if not in its most harsh context, then at least in the capacity to which a husband could claim ownership over his wife. Julia Epstein remarks that 'Burney insists that the period in which a young woman becomes quintessentially identified as marriageable […] forms a crucially liminal proving ground, a period during

[29] Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), p. 104.

[30] Joanne Cutting-Gray, 'Writing Innocence: Fanny Burney's Evelina', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 9.1 (1990), 43-57 (p. 44).

which fundamental social barriers are traversed'.[31] The claim having been staked, she belongs to him, perhaps more than she belongs to herself.

Returning again to the format of the novel, perhaps the most evident example of liminality is the letters in which Evelina exists. The epistolary novel, which 'was already somewhat archaic when Richardson revived it and Burney and Smollett turned it to their own rather anomalous purposes', is a perspective worth returning to here.[32] This chapter has already touched upon the complexity of unravelling what, exactly, it means to communicate exclusively in this format, and the challenge of determining just how private ostensibly private missives can be (particularly at the extremes, when the concern is the authenticity of emotion and thought).

Letters, then, occupy a liminal space between modes of communication: not quite public, yet not quite private, their position on the spectrum of authenticity that can only be accurately determined by the author. And yet, there must certainly be some semblance of comfort and perhaps even refuge within the liminal confines of a letter. As Peraldo explains,

> the many instances in which Burney's female characters must negotiate space in ways which parallel their wider struggles to maintain the "upper hand" in their relationship to men can usefully be examined in relation to the development of eighteenth-century notions of privacy, concealment and individualism. If the gendered boundaries between the private and public spheres of activity, along with the necessity to separate male and female spaces, appear to be somewhat blurred in *Evelina*, Burney examines and criticises how the bourgeois society clings to empirical methodologies and how women and their reputations are constantly looked at, observed, and controlled by the male gaze.[33]

This is especially prevalent in *Pamela,* where the protagonist's journals occupy a more evident transitional space. Wholly private at the point of writing, it is unclear whether the

[31] Julia Epstein, 'Marginality in Frances Burney's Novels', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth-Century Novel*, ed. by John Richetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Year), pp. 198-211 (p. 198).
[32] April Alliston, *Virtue's Faults: Correspondences in Eighteenth-Century British and French Women's Fiction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 4.
[33] Peraldo, p. 54.

'letters' will ever be read. Their liminality commands an analysis of the significance represented by the chasm separating the realms of the private and the public, respectively, and how the rules are redefined throughout that transition. Evelina never ventures to presume her letters will remain wholly private, written exclusively for an audience of one, but it is evident in the content of those letters that the comfort she experiences allows for a freer recollection of events, including the use of language to describe characters and their behaviour in this sheltered vestibular space that she otherwise would not utter except to herself. Letters, then, communicate a confidence to exist within a sphere of society that does not exist in either a public or private context. Guarded in the extent of freedom contained within them, they are distinct from the confines of the ultimately private space of the mind, yet separately guarded from the judgemental eyes and ears of wider society, there is a parallel to be drawn here from the vulnerability of Burney's position as a female author. We see this from her early journals, when she harshly describes the characters from her story of life, humorously accessing a stratum of language she is unable to enjoy within the public sphere. These exercises in venting frustration provide some insight into the challenges of navigating this liminal space on the cusp of entering the public sphere, not least because the public sphere represents a legitimate danger for women in Burney's lifetime. London in particular, with its larger population and a topography that offers up alleyways and dangerous pockets, is a city of tangible risk for the unaccompanied woman. Furthermore, much of that risk exists on sexual terms, with perhaps the ultimate concern for women being that they might experience a sexual assault. Thus, young women's access to public space is intentionally limited not explicitly as a measure of control, but to ensure her safety. To consider oneself at risk on sexual terms is to emphasise the anxiety of entering into a sphere that is uniquely dangerous to a woman on the basis of her sex. Thus, the anxiety surrounding breaking through this early glass ceiling is not entirely

psychological, nor is it enforced subtly through social norms and expectations. The risk is real, for Evelina and for Burney.

There is some parallel here between Gérard Genette's identification of paratexts and the crux of concern within *Evelina*. In the preface to Genette's *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, Richard Macksey defines paratexts as 'those liminal devices and conventions, both within and outside the book, that form part of the complex mediation between book, author, publisher, and reader: titles, forewords, epigraphs, and publishers' jacket copy are part of a book's private and public history'.[34] The mutual sense of liminality and regard to the distinctions between the private and the public are corollaries that speak to the ways in which the physicality of a novel - be it through the production of a book's tangible existence or beforehand, through the ways in which the novel is structured and the narrative built - contribute to the generation of meaning. Just as the narrative is important in ascertaining ideologies and purpose within a novel, the quantities unknown to the reader - the ways in which a novel is altered, and why; the order in which a narrative plays out, the duration of time elapsing throughout each scene, the perspective from which a narrative is told, and so on and so forth - each contribute to the construction of meaning, irrespective of the reader's conscious awareness of those structural mechanisms.

As mentioned previously, Evelina's character as a naive, young, inexperienced woman contributes to the narrative, but it also serves as a structural device. Throughout the novel, the reader is reminded of the extent to which women are observed, or rather, the ways in which they are influenced to behave in a particular way by the presence of the male gaze. For example, when Evelina explains that 'the gentlemen thought it most prudent not to

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[34] Richard Macksey, 'Preface', in Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, ed. by Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), (p. i-vi).

seem watching for her; though they both contrived to divert themselves with peeping at her as she passed,'[35] and when she describes Lord Orville as 'so nice an observer'.[36] For Peraldo, this is where Burney critiques 'bourgeois ideology for continuing to associate female reputation with an observable social performance', and in the process, 'suggesting that women can control their reputations, by going for example to an "obscure place" not to be seen, as in the episode at Drury-Lane Theatre [...] when, in fact, that performance is already mediated by social intelligence'.[37] However, what is perhaps more pressing within the context of this chapter is the necessity for understanding that Burney is portraying through *Evelina* the standards to which she is held. This is perhaps why, as Lillian Lu notes, 'numerous critics have drawn connections between the narrator Evelina and the author Burney that help to illuminate how Burney uses her protagonist as a satirical tool'.[38] The sense that she is aware of being observed is evident through the use of repeated language denoting surveillance frequently referenced throughout the novel: 'see, senses, unobserved, watching for, peeping, observer'.[39] It is precisely because of these conventions that Burney published *Evelina* anonymously. In some ways, however, she uses the very same constricting boundaries to her advantage in a way that allows for an interrogation of them without exposing herself to the consequences of doing so. Whether this was Burney's intention is impossible to say, but the construction of Evelina's naivety, coupled with her quasi-private discourse, enables Burney to circumnavigate the need to curtail her critiques. Any mistakes Evelina makes, whether it is examining the desire to have control over whom she dances with (or whether she dances at all); the sense she feels that she should be the sole agent of determining whom she will marry when her Branghton

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[35] Burney, p. 153.
[36] Ibid., p. 34.
[37] Peraldo, p. 57.
[38] Lillian Lu, 'Assuming Innocence: The Ingénue's Satire in Frances Burney's *Evelina*', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 33.1 (2020), 55-76 (p. 59).
[39] Ibid.

cousin proposes, or the freedom with which she confesses her bemusement that Mrs Mirvan would marry the captain, Evelina transgresses, speaking more freely than she ought, in a way that is forgivable because she is constructed from the beginning as a character with a lack of understanding. As Cutting-Gray remarks, ‘artlessness and beauty without wealth and name is not only Evelina's global condition; it is also the charm of her appeal, the only marketable asset she has, and the greatest danger to maintaining her character’.[40] Evelina’s artlessness enables Burney to obscure her knowledge and understanding of these values by presenting these questions and opinions through the vantage point of a more tolerable perspective: artless Evelina. Had Mrs Mirvan expressed these feelings, the reader might be less sympathetic towards them because of the expectation that she is old enough to know better. As Peraldo suggests, Evelina’s epistolary voice is ‘just as powerful and opinionated as Captain Mirvan or any other male character’.[41] Evelina’s naivety paves the way for the subsequent structural devices - chiefly, perhaps, defamiliarisation and doubles deployed from a liminal vantage point - are afforded ground to penetrate. In many ways, Burney occupies the liminal space between private and public life from a strategic position. It is whilst she is obscured - by anonymity, by constructed naivety, and by structural device - that she is able to negotiate the challenges of transitioning from one sphere to the next. Further, it enables her to do it in such a way as to be undetected and unaccountable for those thoughts and feelings she wrestles with from her earliest journals.

This negotiation of space is central to the novel’s formal culmination of meaning, and possibly one reason so many readers of Burney interpret her works through a feminist lens. As Carole Pateman explains, ‘the dichotomy between the private and the public is central to

[40] Cutting-Gray, p. 44.
[41] Peraldo, p. 59.

almost two centuries of feminist struggle; it is, ultimately, what the feminist movement is about'. Pateman continues, suggesting that the common root of liberalism and feminism rests in 'the emergence of individualism as a general theory of social life; neither liberalism nor feminism is conceivable without some conception of individuals as free and equal beings, emancipated from the ascribed, hierarchical bonds of traditional society'.[42] Examining this statement within the context of Burney's early attachment to the name her father manufactured on behalf of the family and evidently encouraged her to protect provides some crucial context to understanding the anxieties Burney must have been navigating as she rested on the cusp of entering public life. To publish *Evelina* and enter the world is to stake one's claim in individualism, asserting oneself as a free and equal being. And yet, Burney's fervently held belief in the equality of her sex is somewhat confused both by her desire to belong in the most conventional sense: that she is traceable along her father's line, and, as Harman explains, whilst modern academics undoubtedly read Burney's obvious analysis and criticism of the ways in which women are treated as a feminist critique, Burney 'would have been shocked and distressed to have been associated with anything so subversive'.[43] Burney's confused approach to estimating a woman's equality is intrinsically linked with the politics of space. As Shirley Ardener suggests,

> space reflects social organisation, but of course, once space has been bounded and shaped it is no longer merely a neutral background: it exerts its own influence. [...] The environment imposes certain restraints on our mobility, and, in turn, our perceptions of space are shaped by our own capacity to move about, whether by foot or by mechanical or other transport. So: behaviour and space are mutually dependent.[44]

Having become accustomed to the space in which she inhabited, Burney's conflicted anxieties about stepping out of it are understandable. Resultantly, that conflict surrounding

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[42] Carole Pateman, *The Disorder of Women* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), p. 118.
[43] Harman, p. 60.
[44] Shirley Ardener, *Women and Space: Ground Rules and Social Maps* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020), p. 3.

the negotiation of space is palpable throughout the novel, to the extent that the confines of Evelina's letters truly convey a sense of refuge and freedom that perhaps would not be possible in novels focalized through alternative modes. Appreciated by readers for over two hundred years, *Evelina* is every bit the debut novel it was anticipated to be, commanding the respect of Burney's literary peers and striking out into a new landscape with shifting borders straddling many contexts. This chapter has argued that Burney's first novel can be read - by its paratexts and its structure - as an ideological statement on the treatment of women in eighteenth-century England. We have seen that Burney's anxieties likely preclude the possibility that she ever set out to write a feminist novel, and this chapter will not conclude with the suggestion that she did. Rather, the consideration to be made here is that Burney sought to challenge a range of prejudices she recognised as being exclusively applied to her sex, and this analysis has shown the ways in which she was successful in that endeavour. Sheltered by her ability to hide in plain sight, she constructs in Evelina the perfect Trojan horse, through which she adroitly isolates and deconstructs the inherent unfairness of hegemonies straddling lines of sex and class.

Burney's own difficulties with identity exemplify the broader problems arising from the necessity and power of naming with regards to both legitimacy and respectability for women, and the ways in which she locates this problem as it is explored through Evelina's character delineate the challenges faced by women who sought, as did Burney, an individualist conceptualisation of self: agency, free from the constraints of traditional hierarchies and patriarchal ownership. The inherent emphasis placed upon the distinction between the private and the public, conveyed through the use of an epistolary form, allows for the exploration of difficult subjects. The use of doubles and defamiliarisation makes accessible that which is otherwise relegated to the halls of radicalism. For Burney, there was nothing radical at all in the suggestion that women be considered equal to men.

Perhaps her reluctance to identify with subversive political movements is the uppermost important marker of her belief that women deserved better.

That idea was not radical to Burney; it was simply common sense.

Chapter III – *The Mysteries of Udolpho*
Introduction

The Mysteries of Udolpho (1794), Ann Radcliffe's penultimate novel in her lifetime, is a gothic romance that would carve out a genre subsequently imitated throughout the century following its publication. The novel follows the protagonist, Emily St. Aubert, whose character as a 'highly strung' young woman lends credence to the arguments of those who identified Radcliffe as a progressive at best, and a radical at worst. The novel's rich descriptive content marks Radcliffe as an obvious admirer of the sublime, with long passages outlining the picturesque scenery charting her travels across the natural landscape. This chapter will discuss the ways in which Radcliffe constructs a subjective feminine specificity in contrast to the masculine framework of Romanticism. It will discuss the production of subjective female expression that is achieved through the deployment of formal devices, notably defamiliarisation and a dialogic narratological structure, that create a conversation through which women's interiority can be explored in a manner that is both unexpected and illuminates a feminine perspective. It will also discuss the ways in which Radcliffe engages sound patterning to disrupt the reader's familiarity with everyday auditory experiences. It will further develop upon the ways in which temporality has been identified as a destabilising entity within the text, in addition to the disruption of narrative form with the inclusion of poetry. It will also identify the use of doubling, drawing comparisons between *Udolpho* and Evelina, to suggest that the sublimity evident in Radcliffe's novels is shaped by the mother-daughter dynamic, producing a reading that aligns with the concept of a female, or feminine, sublime. Finally, it will conclude that there is a formal reading of *Udolpho* that allows us to understand, to some degree, the ways in which Radcliffe responded to and negotiated the constraints of her industry.

Radcliffe's use of plot twists is extensive throughout the text, in conjunction with the inclusion of ostensibly supernatural entities that, for one reason or another, transpire to

have scientific or rational explanations as the plot progresses. Emily, unlike other representations of her sex, (e.g. Charlotte Lennox's Arabella and Frances Burney's Evelina) is frequently challenged with an internal dilemma: the objectivity of her rational mind battles for authority over her sensibility, resulting from a fear of the unknown. Evelina's objectivity is not challenged in quite the same way as Emily's, as her depiction emerges from naivety and not quixotism (which, to some extent, is interpreted as a shade of madness). Arabella, however, is different still, as she does not experience this inner conflict, believing fervently in her romantic notions of honour and virtue until the very end of the novel, where it still is not clear if she abandons her 'foible' in theory, even if she seems to have amended her ideas.

The novel experienced significant success throughout Radcliffe's lifetime and for many years following her death. In exchange for the copyright, she received a considerable payment of £500, although it was commonly believed that she had received £1000, a mistake originating from an obituary published in *New Monthly Magazine*. This sum caused a significant stir within the literary sphere, standing out as the largest amount ever paid to a female novelist; by comparison, Burney's *Cecilia,* published in 1782, earned Burney £250 for the copyright, purchased by the bookseller Thomas Payne.[1] Perhaps the most salient concern regarding Radcliffe's earnings rests in the cultural impact of this knowledge as it spread through the literary sphere. The mere notion that larger sums were potentially available to novelists, but in particular, female novelists, began to change the perception of novels, and the potential opportunities that arose from writing them. To this end, Radcliffe's success inspired Frances Burney, who published 'semi-gothic' *Cecilia,* shortly after *Udolpho.*[2] Gary Kelly outlines the position of women writers towards the end of the

[1] Claire Harman, *Fanny Burney: a Biography* (London: Harper Collins, 2000), p. 192.

[2] Rictor Norton, *Mistress of Udolpho* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1999), pp. 94-96.

eighteenth century as emerging from the prior context of the 'professional middle-class cultural revolution' culminating in a particular image women as a reflection of class, but that 'women remained subordinate in the revolutionary class because 'woman' could be a cure for both the 'virtues' and 'vices' of their class'. Print culture enabled women to participate in the production of writing on the basis that it allowed them to contribute to the cultural revolution. However, this position presented a quandary: by publishing, women thrusted themselves into the public sphere, when there remained, as in previous decades, some assumption that the figure of woman is inherently domestic. Furthermore, concerns surrounding women's intellectual capacity for the work was, to some extent, still in question.

Women's writing was functional in supporting their domesticity, generally taking an epistolary form, and not with a view to seeking publication. By the late eighteenth century, this perception had begun to change in the midst of a culture of sensibility, in which women's writing, emerging as it was thought to, from the domestic sphere, was considered to be the authentic contrast to the 'artfully rhetorical, learned, and stylized discourses dominated by men;' yet publishing remained a contrast to femininity, and many women continued to publish anonymously. They often published within topics considered more appropriate for a female writer, and many women who were paid for their work would not divulge that this was the case.[3] However, whilst these factors certainly had an impact on women's publishing during this time, Paula Backscheider remarks that 'by the 1780s it was a commonplace that England took pride in the large number of "female authors […] possessed of such indisputable merit" and believed that "women's learning might be a

[3] Gary Kelly, *Women, Writing, and Revolution 1790–1827* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 10-11.

source of national pride.''[4] She further indicates that women poets enjoyed a pleasant reception to their works in the eighteenth century, which she describes as a 'remarkably consistent, hospitable atmosphere' that facilitated a 'rapid' and 'widespread' acceptance of female poets.[5] That women poets benefit from this position is congruent with Kelly's assertion that the female figure is associated with remedying virtue and vice, since poetry was widely regarded as a vessel for 'enunciat[ing] national and personal morality'.[6] As figures of supposed authentic virtue, it seems sensible to suggest that women's poetry would be especially welcome within this context.

There are important nuances to bear in mind here, however. Whilst women could (and did) publish with increased frequency, just as Richardson and Fielding's theory often differed in reality from their practice, so, too, are there differences in the theoretical conceptualisation of poetry. Ellen Arnold explains that linguistically, at least, the Romantic understanding of poetry is one of a domain emerging from the masculine. This perception springs from the religious notion that language itself was 'originated by men and for men'. Women are alienated from 'patriarchal language' in both the 'biblical and Miltonic accounts of the Creation', in which creation is associated with the Word of God, and of course, since language is an inherently masculine quality, so, too, is the Word. Thus, Eve is 'excluded from the community of language shared by God and Adam, and deprived of an equal share in inventing human language' and subsequently has an understandable distrust of the system that excludes and limits her.[7] Whilst this context did not have a necessarily prohibitive impact on the publication of women's writing, it likely shaped the perception of its quality in contrast to its male-penned alternative. This, in conjunction with women's

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[4] Paula Backscheider, *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets and Their Poetry: Inventing Agency, Inventing Genre* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2008), p. 5.
[5] Ibid., pp. 4-5.
[6] Ibid., p. 7.
[7] Ellen Arnold, 'Deconstructing the Patriarchal Palace: Ann Radcliffe's Poetry in '*The Mysteries of Udolpho*', *Women and Language*, 19.2 (1996), 21-9 (p. 21).

success in the eighteenth century, likely account for what Betty Schellenberg refers to as 'The Great Forgetting', in which, advancing into the nineteenth century, the works of women completed in the century before are 'relegated to the footnotes and margins of the central narrative, soon to be erased from it altogether'.[8] The motivation driving the figurative deletions was a redefining of the parameters of literature. Clifford Siskin remarks that this narrowing of the definition of literature also served as an 'act of gendering […] they took writing out of the "hands" of women'.[9] This context is important for understanding the way in which Radcliffe was perceived for a significant period of her life, which correlates with her fading into obscurity, shrouded in mystery amidst the promulgation of rumours about her propriety, mental health, and overarchingly, her reputation. This chapter will cover more extensively the circumstances leading up to Radcliffe's withdrawal from the literary sphere and subsequent seclusion, but suffice it to say for the moment that the rumours relating to the precise cause (and date) of her death would persist for many years after her actual death, in spite of a resounding lack of substance for any of the claims made, most of which made reference to a supposed madness in Radcliffe that has never been substantiated.[10]

Irrespective of the spurious claims made about Radcliffe, her influence on the development of the genre of gothic fiction cannot be passed over without mention. Sir Walter Scott, whom Marilyn Butler argues originated the notion that Radcliffe's novels consisted of little more than terrible imaginings, goes on to say that 'all the while the full sweep of the *Waverley* series, with its fictional motif of pursuit and imprisonment, of the hero's neurotic depression, inner division, frustration, fear, and helplessness, is nothing if it

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[8] Betty A. Schellenberg, *The Professionalization of Women Writers in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 164.
[9] Clifford Siskin, *The Work of Writing: Literature and Social Change in Britain, 1700–1830* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), p. 195.
[10] Norton, p. 207.

is not Radcliffean'.[11] This theme is not an unfamiliar one; in spite of considerable efforts expended to trivialise or otherwise disparage Radcliffe and her writing, her influence is unmistakably identifiable in many of the novels of her contemporaries, including the notoriously misogynist Romantic, Coleridge, whose poem 'Mad Monk', notes Frederick Beaty, boasts *Udolpho* as a source without acknowledgement,[12] and similar findings can be traced in the work of Wordsworth.[13] Furthermore, Radcliffe's influence is palpable in the works of Dickens and Thackeray.[14] That is all without delving into the accusations of plagiarism, of which there are a number, perhaps most notably involving Percy Bysshe Shelley, Keats,[15] and Lord Bryon.[16] Were we to chart the trajectory of literature influenced by the Romantic poets, and by extension, Radcliffe herself, this chapter would overrun by a significant margin. And yet, as Norton notes, Radcliffe has been 'ejected from her rightful position among the Romance poets, but that she no longer figures largely in the history of the English novel is less forgivable', particularly in light of the pivotal role she played in developing what is known today as the gothic novel.[17] Some attempt has been made to redress the balance; notable examples include Pietropoli (2007), Townshend (2014), and Looser (2015), but it is not clear if these endeavours have been as successful as to ensure that when reference is made to the Romantic poets, Radcliffe is a name that would be conjured in the collective consciousness in quite the same way as the men who exploited her work to further their own careers.

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[11] Marilyn Butler, 'The Woman at the Window: Ann Radcliffe in the Novels of Mary Wollstonecraft and Jane Austen', Women and Literature, 1 (1980), 128-48 (p. 128).
[12] Frederick L. Beaty, 'Mrs. Radcliffe's Fading Gleam', *Philological Quarterly*, 42.1 (1963), 126-29 (p. 126).
[13] Ibid.
[14] Norton, p. 254.
[15] Walter E. Peck, 'Keats, Shelley, and Mrs. Radcliffe', *Modern Language Notes*, 39.4 (1924), 251-52 (pp. 251-52).
[16] A. Duyce, 'Plagiarisms of Lord Byron, *The Atheneum; or, Spirit of the English Magazines*, 3.5 (1818), 196 (p. 196).
[17] Norton, p. 253.

Radcliffe-Adjacent

Anne K Mellor comments on the distinction between masculine Romanticism and feminine Romanticism (the retrospective labels relating to literature published during this time): the former, established by 'William Blake, William Wordsworth, Samuel Coleridge, Lord Byron, Percy Shelly, and John Keats' et al, delineates a specificity built upon notions of an 'autonomous self, that legal "person" whom John Locke defined as having "a property in his own person."'[1] In contrast, the specificity of feminine Romanticism, established by 'Mary Wollstonecraft, Ann Radcliffe, Charlotte Smith, Dorothy Wordsworth, Jane Austen, Maria Edgeworth, Susan Ferrier, Felicia Hemans, Leticia Landon, Mary Shelley' et al, emerges from what Mellor says might be called 'family politics', advocating for the rights of common men and women. Mary Wollstonecraft's contribution to this particular concern was to interject the call for a 'REVOLUTION in female manners', advocating for equality over the distinction of spheres.[2] Whilst Percy Shelley emerges from a younger generation than Radcliffe, his 'Defence of Poetry' (1821) speaks to the cultural milieu defining poetry within a broader framework of masculine Romanticism. His comment that 'poetry is connate with the origin of man'[3] correlates with Arnold's observations about the gendered conceptualisation of language, and offers some insight into the ways in which Radcliffe's poetry would be situated within the scheme of language that identifies a masculine origin. In the well-known and frequently cited preface to his *Lyrical Ballads*, the second edition of which was published in 1800, William Wordsworth defines 'good' poetry as 'the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings' but a poet, he suggests, is 'a man speaking to

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[1] Anne K. Mellor, 'Gender Boundaries', in *The Oxford Handbook of British Romanticism*, ed. by David Duff (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 204-16 (p. 207).

[2] Ibid., p. 209.

[3] Percy B. Shelley, 'A Defence of Poetry', in *Classic Writings on Poetry*, ed. by William Harmon (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 2005), pp. 349-74 (p. 356).

men' through the 'real language of men'.[4] Bernard Jones remarks that by 'language of men', Wordsworth is writing for the middle and lower classes of country life.[5] However, it is important to bear in mind here that Wordsworth himself endorses a Miltonic representation of language, noting that the 'invaluable works of our elder writers, I had almost said the works of Shakespeare and Milton, are driven into neglect by frantic novels, sickly and stupid German Tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse'.[6] As mentioned above, Arnold references the way in which Eve is excluded from the Word of God, and resultantly, the language shared between God and Adam - a notion echoed in Miltonic accounts of creation.

Thus, Wordsworth here endorses a 'language of man' that is inherently exclusive of women. Whilst he writes *Lyrical Ballads* after the publication of *Udolpho*, and thus did not influence the shape of its narrative or themes at the time of writing, his contributions to the characterisation of Romantic literature shape the post-Romantic readings of Radcliffe's work. Therefore, his understanding of poetry as a masculinised form is crucial context for understanding the broader position Radcliffe is read from in the years following publication.

Margaret Homans explains that, distinct from constitutional factors, this framework of masculine language evident during the Romantic period, 'in which the masculine self dominates and internalizes otherness, that other is frequently identified as feminine, whether she is nature, the representation of a human woman, or some phantom of desire'; charting its origins in biblical and, subsequently, Miltonic texts, Homans isolates the difficulty women have with establishing a feminine specificity that emerges from the

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[4] William Wordsworth, *Lyrical Ballads, With Other Poems* (Illinois: Project Gutenberg, 2005), p. 17 <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/8905> [accessed 17 May 2023].
[5] Bernard Jones, '1798–1898: Wordsworth, Hardy, and 'The Real Language of Men', *English Studies*, 80.6 (1999), 509-17 (p. 510).
[6] Ibid., p. 22.

othering and objectification of the feminine.[7] It is perhaps the occupation of this position of othered entity that represents the largest obstacle to women writing during this time, and certainly in the context of writing poetry, which is thought to be the most enlightened mode of linguistic expression. It could be argued, then, that the women who did so during this time were reimagining a feminine specificity, in which the collective 'she' is positioned not in accordance with the male gaze, but with her own subjectivity.

Perhaps the most important thing to note about Radcliffe is how little information about her is actually available. The most comprehensive biography to date, *Mistress of Udolpho,* by Rictor Norton, is itself a product of the lack of information to be found about Radcliffe. Thus, much of the content is based on speculation, identifying what may have happened, what could have been likely, and what seems probable based on the correlation of specific events and the Radcliffe- adjacent ephemera that has been located. Unfortunately, a significant amount of this conjecture emerges in the form of interpretation of Radcliffe's narrators as having a bearing on Radcliffe's positions, opinions, and emotions. For obvious reasons, this places us in murky territory; whilst some speculations are more plausible than others, the salient précis is clear: we know more about what people thought Radcliffe might think or say or feel than we do about Radcliffe's legitimate interiority. Consequently, an earlier attempt to produce a biography on Radcliffe defeated Christina Rossetti, who failed to locate sufficient material with which to draw any firm conclusions.[8] It is for this reason that this chapter will likely represent an overreliance on Norton's text, owing to a lack of material about which much of any substance can be gleaned.

One claim made in Norton's biography is that Radcliffe was likely a Unitarian, and that the consequence of this unverifiable information is that we can thus identify evidence of

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[7] Margaret Homans, *Women Writers and Poetic Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 12.
[8] Norton, p. vii.

her political and religious positions within her novels. Whilst it is confirmed that she had Unitarian family members (specifically, an aunt and uncle) and that there is evidence suggesting she holidayed with those family members during her childhood, the extrapolation to assert its influence on Radcliffe's own politics is somewhat spurious. Much of this argument is rooted in statements suggesting that Radcliffe's relationship with those family members would mean that a 'belief in egalitarian principles and political freedom would have rubbed off on [her]' or that it is 'almost certain' she would have read pamphlets and published letters produced by her uncle, Dr Jebb.[9] The tacit suggestion here is that she would have absorbed by osmosis his ideas and assimilated them as a consequence. Further, there is at times a palpable sense of bolstering a lack of definitive evidence with suggestions of correlations within her novels, such as when it is argued that 'Valancourt in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* could be a portrait of a liberal Dissenter', a statement followed by attempts to locate Radcliffe's religious position.[10] This is not solely Norton's presumption, and it is understandable that these conclusions might be reached when a number of her contemporaries interpreted her novels in similar ways, but it is prudent to bear in mind that much of the information presented takes the form of theory. Whilst Radcliffe was read by a wide-ranging audience that spanned the classes from lower-middle-class to the aristocracy, Norton makes the claim (although, again, he does not provide evidence) that a significant amount of that readership was comprised of 'highly strung young ladies'.[11]

Perhaps worthy of note is that he describes her male readership as 'sensitive and artistic'.[12] In spite of the fact that, as Norton notes, Radcliffe 'avoided overt political statement by setting most of her works outside of England', her readers continued to form their own opinions about the measure of her political position, as if her narrators function

[9] Ibid., p. 16.
[10] Ibid., p. 18.
[11] Ibid., p. 7.
[12] Ibid., p. 8.

as little more than a conduit through which Radcliffe can be understood. Nevertheless, it is of course possible that Norton is correct about Radcliffe's political perspectives, but it is perhaps sensible not to presume that corroborating evidence within Radcliffe's novels necessarily communicate a personal endorsement.

Another example of narratives being imposed on Radcliffe centres on the subject of her mental health. Whether the intention was to smear Radcliffe's character to make way for male writers; a lack of understanding of how women could produce narratives of the nature Radcliffe produced, or a mixture of the two, the notion that something was not quite right with Radcliffe began in 1809, when letters between Elizabeth Isabella Spence and the Dowager Countess of Winterton were published. Within the postscripts of these letters, Miss Spence discusses Radcliffe's mental state, suggesting that

> the reader will, no doubt, regret with me that a lady whose original genius and wonderful imagination have insured her immortal fame, should have been obliged to retire into a remote part of Derbyshire under the most direful influence of deep-rooted and incurable melancholy.[13]

It is doubtful that Miss Spence's intention extended beyond repeating information relayed to her by hoteliers, but nevertheless, the rumour mill began to turn, after which there were likely participants who embellished what they had heard to tarnish Radcliffe's reputation. Norton suggests that the origin of this story is likely local to Derbyshire, and possibly an attempt to drum up tourism by nearby hoteliers.[14] In all probability, Miss Spence was merely passing along what she had heard, most likely because she believed it to be true. The same cannot be said for the people responsible for the beliefs shared by Revd Charles Wheelwright who, in 1810, published a collection of poems in which one featured the

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[13] E. I. Spence, *Summer Excursions Through Parts of Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, Warwickshire, Staffordshire, Herefordshire, Derbyshire, and South Wales* (London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, Paternoster-Row, 1809), p. 164.

[14] Norton, p. 206.

claim that Radcliffe had died insane.

> Nor to the restless child of pain
> Thy potent influence is confined,
> Thy phantoms seize the ardent brain,
> And sweep the tract of mind.
> As the pale spectres cross her way,
> Lo! RADCLIFFE shudders with dismay,
> And vainly struggling to be free,
> Flies to the grasp of Death, from Madness and from thee.[15]

Aside from the fact that Radcliffe was not even dead by this point (and would not be until 1823), what this demonstrates is the persistence of this rumour and the ways in which it evolved over time. The original story centred around the notion that Radcliffe had visited Haddon Hall and based the castle Udolpho on it; that the horrors of her imagination had, over time, diminished her mind. Sir Walter Scott embellished the story somewhat, claiming to have heard that Radcliffe 'return[ed] to [Haddon Hall] to spend the night there, searching in its hidden passages and deliberately cultivating the atmosphere for her mysterious *Udolpho*'.[16] The rumours would not be publicly challenged until after Radcliffe's death. Quite why they were allowed to persist without correction is subject to debate, but it could be that Radcliffe felt that dignifying them with a response would give them credibility. Thomas Talfourd tells us that 'some of these rumours reached her; but she could not endure the thought of writing in the newspapers that she was not insane'.[17] In any case, the rumours were allowed to persist, and persist they did, until the editor of the *Annual Biography* published a correction, stating that

> Mrs Radcliffe was in Derbyshire on two occasions, and on both but for a few days; the one in 1798, when, after the death of her father, she

[15] C. A. Wheelwright, *Poems, Original and Traditional; Including Versions of The Medea and Octavio of Seneca* (London: Printed by A. J. Valpy, Took's Court, Chancery Lane, 1810), p. 274-75.
[16] Norton, p. 210.
[17] Thomas Talfourd, ''Memoir of the Life and Writings of Mrs Radcliffe'', Prefixed to Ann Radcliffe, *Gaston de Blondeville, or The Court of Henry III… St Alban's Abbey… Posthumous Works… Memoir,* ed. by Thomas Talfourd (London: Henry Colburn, 1826), (p. 95).

> accompanied her mother thither; the other in the latter end of 1799, or the beginning of 1800, when she went to visit her mother, who was very ill, and who died shortly afterwards. Haddon house she never saw; nor had she ever heard of it at the time of her earlier publications. With respect to the second part of the statement, it does really seem to be unpardonable, when we consider that the writer might have easily ascertained, had it been only by a reference to her publisher, that it was utterly destitute of truth, and that Mrs Radcliffe was frequently to be seen in the vicinity of the metropolis, in which she lived.[18]

It is clear that the rumours surrounding Radcliffe, about her mental health as well as her respectability (more of which will be discussed later in this chapter), served as a convenient source of gossip for those who would rather women did not write at all. Whilst they were not successful in undoing her reputation for literary excellence, there is reason to suspect they were successful in pushing her towards the margins of society and away from her vocation.

Radcliffe's sequestration was complicated, as 'the extraordinary degree to which Mrs Radcliffe had secluded herself from society was supplemented by the obsessively overprotective actions of her husband'. However, The *New Monthly Magazine* obituary referred to Radcliffe's 'disgust with the world, "a depression of spirits" for many years and seclusion from society "followed by ill health."'[19] It does not appear to be unclear that Radcliffe struggled with mental health difficulties. What is unclear, however, is exactly when they began. Since her seclusion at Windsor, between 1812 and 1815, was undertaken without the presence of her husband, Norton suggests that 'Radcliffe became the proverbial madwoman in the attic– that she was packed off to a quiet spot in Windsor to recover from a mental breakdown'.[20] However, Radcliffe's husband, William, had repeatedly stated that his wife was seriously affected by the various rumours about her in current circulation. It seems likely that what had once been a manageable situation

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[18] 'Mrs Radcliffe', *Annual Biography and Obituary*, 3: IV (1824), pp. 89-105, p.97.
[19] Norton, p. 220.
[20] Norton, p. 225.

became untenable after the many attempts at character assassination had been actioned against her, perhaps the worst of which directly targeted her respectability. T. J. Curties acknowledged Radcliffe as his inspiration for some of his novels, stating that they

> owe all their story to the imagery of, perhaps, a too heated imagination. Its mysteries – its terrific illusions – its very errors must be attributed to a love of Romance, caught from an enthusiastic admiration of *Udolpho's* unrivalled Foundress. – He follows her through all the venerable gloom of horrors, not as a kindred spirit, but contented, as shadow, in attending her footsteps.[21]

And yet, his critique of her status as a female writer working to develop the genre that would later be recognised as gothic romance could scarcely have been more scathing, attacking what he perceived to be a lack of proper behaviour in women writers. He continues,

> ought the female Novelist, in order to display a *complete* knowledge of human nature, to degrade that delicate timidity, that shrinking innocence which is the loveliest boast of womanhood in drawing characters which would ruin her reputation to be acquainted with? -- Ought she to describe scenes which bashful modesty would blush to conceive an idea, much less avow a knowledge of? -- Oh no! Let the chaste pen of female delicacy disdain such unworthy subjects; -- leave to the other sex a description of grovelling incidents, debased characters, and low pursuits: -- there is still a range Wide and vast enough for fanciful imagination; but when female invention will employ itself in images of the grosser sort, it is a fatal prediction of relaxed morals, and a species of -- at least -- LITERARY PROSTITUTION.[22]

In many ways, it became effective for critics to attack Radcliffe through the suggestion of guilt by association. Having herself birthed gothic romance, she became responsible for it, and the gendered inflection of this responsibility resulted in identifying Radcliffe as the maternal custodian of the genre. Thus, when iterations of similar themes were published, relying heavily on the genius of *Udolpho*, Radcliffe's work was blamed for inspiring the improprieties within them. The result was another critic's questioning whether the morally

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[21] T. J. Curties, *Ancient Records, or, the Abbey of Saint Oswythe. A Romance* (London: Printed at The Minerva Press for William Lane, Leadenhall Street, 1801), p. vi.
[22] Ibid., pp. vii-viii.

dubious content of the imitations that followed could ever have been possible without Radcliffe's conception of the genre.[23] This was certainly the case with Mathew Gregory Lewis' *The Monk*, which received the high praise of one critic, noting that it was 'totally unfit for general circulation'.[24] Just as Lennox had to concern herself with the worry that she might be considered a bad influence on the minds of young women, so too, did Radcliffe, in spite of the fact that this influence could be conducted through a third party and still be thought of as her responsibility. It did not matter that Radcliffe had not personally written the content deemed unworthy of public viewing; that she facilitated a space from which it was allowed to grow; that she carved the tools by which such narratives could be created, was enough to see her scapegoated for the missteps of anyone said to be a student of the Radcliffe school.

And so, over time, Radcliffe is transformed, in the collective consciousness, into the madwoman, the whore, and perhaps worst of all, the progressively- minded. Whether they were successful in shaming Radcliffe out of the literary sphere, or if she simply chose a slower pace of life for the benefit of her health is subject to debate, but it is a testament to how threatening a presence she was as a writer of gothic romance that such an unnecessary attack should be mounted against her at all. However, simply by receiving the payment she did for *Udolpho*, she opened up the possibility that women could, or perhaps even should, be more highly compensated for their work. Listed among the viragos of her time, she is remembered for her contributions to female advancement in literature. Robert Miles remarked that Radcliffe was 'far and away the best-selling English novelist of the 1790s; the most read, the most imitated, and the most translated'.[25] In spite of the attempts to

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[23] 'The Castle Spectre: a Drama in Five Acts', *The Analytical Review, or History of literature, Domestic and Foreign, on an Enlarged Plan*, XXIII: XV (1798), pp. 179-91, p.183.
[24] 'The Monk: a Romance', *The Monthly Review*, XXVII: 20 (1797), pp. 451-52, p.451.
[25] Robert Miles, 'Popular Romanticism and the Problem of Belief: *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794)', in *Ann Radcliffe, Romanticism and the Gothic*, ed. by Dale Townshend and Angela Wright (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 117-34 (p. 8).

blame her for the work of others by mere association with the genre she created, and if not created, then 'brought into prominence,'[26] she failed to adhere to the precedent of apologising in novels written by women. Where many women felt obliged to provide a prefatory apologia in their novels, Radcliffe was 'content to conclude each novel with a perfunctory moral tag'.[27] Whatever this did or did not mean for her perspectives on the writing of her female contemporaries (although this concept is explored in more detail later in this chapter), it did not reflect a common practice undertaken by women. As Radcliffe navigated a vocational sphere that was populated by a sometimes-hostile peer group, ultimately withdrawing for reasons we will likely never fully understand, one salient point remains: most of the information we have about who she was materialises from sources other than herself.

Radcliffe's politics, religious persuasions, and moral belief systems have all but been decided on her behalf, both by her contemporaries lingering on the last vestiges of a rumour, and by modern academics, eager to fill in the blanks of a woman who was, inarguably, pivotal in making progressive strides towards the comparatively privileged positions the women of modernity enjoy. It is understandable that we should want to know more about the woman who blazed a trail for those who followed her, but in a bid to understand who Radcliffe was, there is a tendency to construct a version of reality for her that might never have existed. Indeed, a footnote published within an essay in *The Edinburgh Review* in May of 1823 stated that

> the fair authoress kept herself almost as much incognito as the Author of Waverley; nothing was known of her but her name in the title page. She never appeared in public, nor mingled in private society, but kept herself apart, like the sweet bird that sings its solitary notes, shrowded [*sic*] and unseen.[28]

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[26] Hannah Doherty Hudson, 'Sentiment and the Gothic: Failures of Emotion in the Novels of Mrs Radcliffe and the Minerva Press', in *The Sentimental Novel in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Albert J. Rivero (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 155-72 (p. 156).

[27] Norton, p. 11.

[28] 'The St James's Chronicle – The Morning Chronicle – The Times – The New Times – The Courier, &c. –

Radcliffe wanted her private life and inner world to be kept separate from her public persona. In fact, she tried to avoid having a public persona at all. It is for this reason that this chapter will discuss only the potential readings of a novel as a complete artefact and independent argument, separate from what Radcliffe might have thought or felt about any of the subjects raised.

Radcliffe's sympathetic writing of characters such as Madame Cheron invites us to consider women's subjective interiority more closely, whether that is conducive to imagining them as pioneers of feminism or not. Radcliffe's novels can be read as a dialogue between the novel, its characters, and the readers of its contemporary context, as well as modern-day readers. Within that spectrum, there is room enough for a vast array of interpretations, all of which can be allowed to emerge from the novel as it is composed, with all of its narratological complexities. It is impossible to confirm what Radcliffe meant to do with her texts, but media-specific interpretations can be made to demonstrate the encapsulation of experience that is suggestive of specific ideologies, separate from speculation about Radcliffe's identity. This chapter will seek to elucidate the ways in which Radcliffe's novels allow for the exploration of feminine interiority, without seeking to impose an unsubstantiated, Radcliffean interiority.

Cobbett's Weekly Journal – The Examiner – The Observer – The Gentleman's Magazine – The New Monthly Magazine – The London, &c. &c.' *The Edinburgh review*, (1823). 38, IV, pp.349-78, p. 360. Edinburgh: Printed by the heirs of David Willison, for Archibald Constable and Company, Edinburgh: and London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown.

Gothic Sentimentalism

Whilst this chapter has sought to locate Radcliffe as an early pioneer of gothic romance, there are important influences from her predecessors that are worthy of mention here. Charting the trajectory of the novel towards Radcliffe's specific innovative creation is crucial to understanding Radcliffe's vision. As Hannah Doherty Hudson explains, whilst gothic novels might seem somewhat separate from the sentimental, 'the novels of Ann Radcliffe, however, do find their way into scholarly discussions of sentimentality with some regularity'. It is also important for developing an understanding of which particular devices contribute to the generation of meaning within *Udolpho*, and whether or not those devices are unique to Radcliffe. Specific commonalities between the six novels Hudson examines on the basis that they are categorised as gothic include 'scenes of terror, with hints – or more – of the supernatural' and, of the novels analysed, all 'feature old and mysterious buildings somewhere in the plot; all deal with scenes of abduction or imprisonment; all use disguise or uncertain identity as a plotline', otherwise, plot themes are various.[1] Additionally, she helpfully collates a number of identifying qualities outlined by Diane Long Hoeveler over the course of several publications. Hoeveler's 'formula' for gothic fiction, as identified by Hudson, is 'part sentimental virtue in distress, part novel of manners, part melodramatic confrontation between good and evil'.[2] Hudson, on the other hand, argues that the gothic novel is characterised by its inherent distrust of sentimentalism. Whilst both genres feature emotional intensity in protagonists (from both men and women alike), lachrymosity, Hudson suggests, is a gothic problem: indicating benevolence in sentimental novels, it typically points to self-interest in a gothic context.[3]

[1] Hudson, p. 157.
[2] Ibid., p. 155.
[3] Ibid., pp. 159-160.

Hudson interprets this as a fundamental distrust of sentimentalism, and by extension, sensibility. This view is not shared by Ellen Arnold, who argues that whilst '[*Udolpho*] holds up masculine rationality as the ultimate value, for instance, the poems insist on the value of feminine sensibility'.[4] Whereas Hudson argues that phrases catalysing tearful reactions 'emphasize the futility of these expressions of emotion: they're no good to anyone else, and often don't even accomplish the desired results – relief, aid, respite – for the sufferer,'[5] Arnold emphasises that 'the great value of a woman of sensibility for Radcliffe lies in her ability to interpret intuitively, to know instinctively' and that 'such sensibility exists in stark contrast to the more traditionally masculine value of rationality, which requires logical explanations, positive proof, and definitive form'.[6] However, it is important to note that Hudson and Arnold have different aims; whereas Hudson seeks to delineate the similarities and differences between sentimentalism and gothic fiction, Arnold seeks to mount a defence of sensibility within the novel. Furthermore, whilst Hudson does not make an inherent value judgement on sensibility, she does suggest implicitly that Radcliffe conforms to Hoeveler's template of gothic fiction, which appears to be in conversation, to some degree, with the narrative form of sentimentalism. Another perspective to consider is that both Hudson and Arnold raise valid considerations that do not have to work in opposition to one another. If, as Hudson suggests, sensibility appears in the form of self-interest in *Udolpho,* its presence does not necessitate the presumption of selfishness. The connotations associated with selfishness are an excess of self-interest, but could anyone accuse Emily St. Aubert of this? Who else, besides Valancourt, whose presence is notably lacking for much of the novel, would elevate her interests? What Hudson's analysis lacks in this instance is the recognition of gendered realities, even

[4] Arnold, p. 23.
[5] Hudson, p. 162.
[6] Arnold, p. 23.

amongst the less desirable villains of gothic fiction. Madame Cheron's self-interest may at first appear closer to Hudson's assessment, but even in this case, a closer examination is advised. An unmarried woman of presumably advancing age whose physical appearance is mocked by Signor Cavigni could be described as selfish when she contrives for herself a marriage with Montoni through deception. However, when her behaviour is contextualised within its sociological backdrop, a landscape that ascribes value to women on the basis of their relational proximity to men, it seems more fitting to describe her as self-conscious than selfish. Whilst her behaviour could indicate an excess of self-interest, the context in which her behaviour is exhibited matters. Without a husband or children of her own, her value within her society inevitably diminishes. Even in a comparatively modern context, women often have difficulty deriving value from places beyond their proximity to men. Is it an excess of self- interest to attempt to circumvent those outcomes, or are we predisposed to the belief that a woman who only thinks of herself is in violation of the social code, regardless of the mitigating circumstances necessitating such a reaction?

The socio-political topography is at times in direct communication with the narrative deployed in *Udolpho*, and not just in relation to gender. Kelly Hurley suggests that 'the Gothic is rightly [...] understood as a cyclical genre that re-emerges in times of cultural stress in order to negotiate anxieties for its readership by working through them in displaced (sometimes supernatural) form'.[7] Toni Wein locates those cultural anxieties in a bid to explain why gothic fiction did not take flight following the publication of what is arguably considered the first novel to appear within the genre, Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764). Wein's suggestion is that the requirement to absorb the 'returning military population, over 200 000 in number' following the Seven Years' War, in

[7] Kelly Hurley, 'British Gothic Fiction, 1885-1930', in *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, ed. by Jerrold E. Hogle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 189-208 (p. 194).

combination with the fact that Great Britain's victories resulted in the conquering of 'peoples foreign in race and religion [...] dearly-held myths about the nature of the British people as Protestant, commercial, and liberty-loving' were necessarily challenged.[8] Wein references Deniz Kandiyoti's description of nationalism when identifying gothic novels as an exercise in nationalist discourse: 'it presents itself as both a modern project that melts and transforms traditional attachments in favor of new identities and as a reaffirmation of authentic cultural values culled from the depths of a presumed communal past'. The salient point of Wein's argument is that 'the gothic novel is a harmonizing fiction', at once dealing with the 'actions, sentiments, conversations, of the heroes and heroines of ancient days' and 'the rules of probability', bridging the gap between the fantastical of the ancient romance and the pragmatism of the modern novel. This 'bricolage', says Wein, 'encapsulates an aestheticized version of nationalist discourse's paradox'.[9] It is this context that provides the analysis through which an understanding can be developed of the conflicting readings of gothic fiction provided by Hudson and Arnold. There is at once the sense of Radcliffe elevating sensibility as a desirable trait, whilst simultaneously emphasising that this occurs in a very guarded way, or as Hudson would describe it, an aspect of emotion that is 'turn[ed] inward'. The phrasing itself here is organically Radcliffean, as if we should be surprised that the woman who spent so much of her life either sequestered in solitude or seeking to shield herself from the view of the public should convey a level of human experience that epitomises the value of interiority. Helene Meyers asserts that 'Radcliffe created the prototype for the Gothic heroine, the Gothic villain, and the Gothic setting,'[10] advancing the earlier efforts of Walpole to delineate an

[8] Toni Wein, *British Identities, Heroic Nationalisms, and the Gothic Novel, 1764–1824* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 2.
[9] Ibid., p. 4.
[10] Helene Meyers, *Femicidal Fears: Narratives of the Female Gothic Experience* (New York: State University of New York, 2001), p. 26.

amalgamation of the fantastic and the sensible. Radcliffe navigated this, says John Colin Dunlop, by providing a rational explanation for the ostensibly supernatural phenomena within her novels.[11] Whilst this has been interpreted by some as evidence of Radcliffe's opposition to sensibility, in that she created a narrative in which Emily's father worries that her 'highly developed sensibilities will be injurious to her happiness,'[12] and after each incident of heightened emotion proves irrational, his fears are proven valid. Whilst Emily does experience valid fears resulting from her imprisonment by Montoni, she also experiences irrational fear emerging from her quixotic perception. However, she sees over time that the rational explanations for the events that cause her to be frightened render her sensibilities less significant than her incisive, analytic mind. For those who read the novel in this way, the indication is clear: Radcliffe's narrative favours evidence and rationality. This is certainly Hudson's view, who argues that 'not only "gothic times" but the gothic genre itself [...] prove inimical to the idea of a laudable and useful sentimentality,'[13] This position will be challenged later in this chapter, but for the moment, suffice it to say that there are indicators within the text that demonstrate that 'this very system [of patriarchal rationality] is subverted by the poetry within it, which imagines an alternative in its place, an alternative that deconstructs the dichotomies on which monolithic patriarchy is built'.[14]

Whilst the narrative contained within *Udolpho* stages an apparent conflict between rationality and sensibility, the novel also invites us to question not simply an expression of masculinity, but the concept entirely. Radcliffe's construction of fallible yet chivalric heroes, says Wein, 'encompasses contemporary debates about the desirable attributes of masculinity,' some of which include the strength of zeal for issues pertaining to 'politeness

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[11] John Colin Dunlop, *The History of Fiction: Being a Critical Account of the Most Celebrated Prose Works of Fiction, From the Earliest Greek Romances to the Novels of the Present Age* (Edinburgh: James Ballantyne & Co. for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1816), n.p.
[12] Hudson, p. 158.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Arnold, p. 24.

and sentimentality; the permissible degree and type of violence and/or aggression employed in maintenance of honour; the recourse to forms of civility; [...] and the relative merits of active as opposed to passive virtue'.[15] What is common amongst the analyses of Radcliffe's work is this notion of conversations existing within the text. It is almost as if, as the narrative unfolds, we are witnessing a dialogue that engages with, subverts, and directly challenges the ideas, values, and morals present within society during the time the novel is published. Another way this is achieved, says Joe Bray, is through the use of portraits, engaged to subvert their primary function of verifying identity. He uses Kamilla Elliott's framework of portraiture purpose, which explains that 'pictures identify persons; persons identify pictures; and persons' picture identifications of others identify them' and 'gothic fiction is the mothership of literary picture identification – no other literary period or genre is so pervasively, didactically, and obsessively concerned with it'[16] to suggest that Radcliffe's approach inverts this dynamic for the purpose of 'highlighting the inevitable subjectivity involved in assessing character'.[17] Bray argues that Radcliffe's subversive use of portraits causes 'the nature of reality to be brought into question' by mediating Emily's relationship with her own identity.[18] He discusses Emily's failure to recognise the portrait of an unidentified woman located amongst her father's things, explaining that 'likeness' is not a stable quality here, and that 'visual representation[s]' 'mediate and complicate' the relationship between 'subject and image', obscuring Emily's reality and making it more difficult for her to parse out the significance of a thing.[19] Issues relating to identity confusion, whilst not traditionally associated with sensibility, may represent for *Udolpho*

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[15] Wein, p. 96.
[16] Kamilla Elliot, *Portraiture and British Gothic Fiction: The Rise of Picture Identification, 1764–1835* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), p. 6.
[17] Joe Bray, 'Ann Radcliffe, Precursors and Portraits', in *Ann Radcliffe, Romanticism and the Gothic*, ed. by Dale Townshend and Angela Wright (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 33-48 (p. 35).
[18] Ibid., p. 43.
[19] Ibid., pp. 44-45.

what Arnold identifies as the feminine strength of sensibility. Whilst, as she argues, the masculine alternative of rationalised, evidential 'knowing' is elevated as the superior collection of traits, a woman of sensibility has the scope for exploration that provides the platform upon which crises of identity can be negotiated. Perhaps, what the novel elevates here is not simply ways of knowing, but ways of unknowing, and the insight that can be gleaned from the pursuit of antitheses to evidentiality. It is perhaps the palpable sense of grappling with this contention, in which the reader is invited to compare and evaluate the merits of sensibility in contrast to rationality, that positions Radcliffe within the scope of the feminine (in addition to her sex). It is one thing to write when female; it is quite another to write in a way that can be interpreted as evidence of elevating positive feminine behaviours, in a way that positions them above their masculine counterparts. One controversial feature of Radcliffe's genre of gothic fiction is her use of poetry that affixes her, with a somewhat reluctance from the wider sphere, to Romanticism. As Miles explains,

> Radcliffe's clunking explanations of the sublunary causes behind extra-mundane appearances especially relegate her to a pre-, and very much non-, Romantic status [...] and yet, as Nathaniel Grogan's decidedly 'Romantic' pictorial rendering of a scene from *Udolpho* indicates, her exclusion from Romanticism feels counterintuitive. She was a central figure in the revolutionary tumult of new literary forms that took the 1790s by storm.[20]

Radcliffe's feminine sensibility, or rather, the sensibility of her novels, marked her as ineligible for membership to what had increasingly become synonymous with a literature subsequently understood as 'Romantic' and dominated for many generations of critics by male writers. What distinguishes Radcliffe's gothic fiction from that of her predecessors is difficult to categorically determine; her work appears at times to be an amalgamation of several genres: the influence of sentimentalism is palpable, as are the echoes of romance

[20] Miles, pp. 118-19.

and, whilst many would disagree, the association with Romanticism remains. These influences (or rather, at times, infusions) blend seamlessly with the new genre as Radcliffe created it, to produce what is now instantly recognisable as not just gothic fiction, but gothic fiction of the Radcliffe school, such is her influence in shaping the template for this class of novel.

Structural Analysis: *The Mysteries of Udolpho*

The main thematic arguments in this section will centre on the ways in which Radcliffe's use of formal devices contribute to the generation of a feminine specificity within a Romantic context, in contrast to the ideological framework of masculine Romanticism. It will be argued here that these devices, culminating in a subjectivity, can be interpreted as challenging the behavioural standards of women in the eighteenth century. The first thematic concern that will be discussed here is Radcliffe's inclusion of poetry. Arnold argues that the function of Radcliffe's poem 'To the Bat', contained within *Udolpho*, is that of 'a sort of code with which women signal to each other their oppression and their efforts to escape it'. She explains that the bat serves as a 'fitting symbol' for suggesting new or different modes of communication and ways of knowing. Whilst, as she notes, Radcliffe would not have been familiar with the mechanisms accessed by bats for navigation and communication, she would have had some sense that the bat experiences the world in very different ways than a human. Thus, the bat can be interpreted as a metaphorical representation of women's 'othered', 'alien' position, relative to the male.[1] Poetry often emerges at points in the narrative where Emily is negotiating the intricacies of experiencing heightened emotions when she knows she must attempt to quash them, revealing something more moderate in its place. This is true of the scene immediately preceding the presentation of 'To the Bat'. She is alone in the chateau, 'visiting the deserted rooms' when she hears a noise that startles her. The narrator explains that

> the subject she had been considering, and the present tone of her spirits, which made her imagination respond to every impression of her senses, gave her a sudden terror of something supernatural.[2]

[1] Arnold, p. 24.
[2] Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, ed. by Bonamy Dobrée and Terry Castle (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 95.

She then attempts to rationalise her response: ‘she sat for a moment motionless, and then, her dissipated reason returning, ‘what should I fear?’ said she, ‘if the spirits of those we love ever return to us, it is in kindness’.[3] She then has an emotional reaction to her heightened state:

> The silence, which again reigned, made her ashamed of her late fears, and she believed, that her imagination had deluded her, or that she had heard one of those unaccountable noises, which sometimes occur in old houses.[4]

Then, having abandoned the library and the task at hand, she is reminded of poetry recited to her by her father, and ‘To the Bat’ is introduced.[5] This is not the only time the poem features in the novel, however. Its thematic repetition alone should indicate its importance to the narrative, but the moments in which it is introduced reveal a pattern that is worth examining further. ‘To the Bat’ is reintroduced in volume four, chapter XII, offering new verses within the poem when Lady Blanche is overlooking

> the vale, which far, far below had opened its dreadful chasm, the eye could no longer fathom. A melancholy gleam still lingered on the summits of the highest Alps, overlooking the deep repose of evening, and seeming to make the stillness of the hour more awful.[6]

Blanche becomes afraid when her ‘enthusiasm sunk into apprehension, when, as the shadows deepened, she looked upon the doubtful precipice, that bordered the road, as well as on the various fantastic forms of danger, that glimmered through the obscurity beyond it’.[7] She then asks her father if he thinks the road is dangerous given the time: he replies, ‘it is scarcely safe to proceed now,’ but ‘the guides, assuring him that there was no danger, went on’.[8] Blanche is ‘revived by this assurance’ and returns to her ‘pensive pleasure’ of observing the ‘twilight gradually spreading its tints over the woods and mountains’.[9]

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[3] Ibid., p. 96.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid., p. 597.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid., p. 598.
[9] Ibid.

Noticing bats, she recalls the poem given to her by Emily, and 'To the Bat' is recited once more. The emerging pattern is a narrative arc of its own. In both cases, the passage of events is as follows: Fear, rationalisation, trivialisation, catharsis, and poetry. Both women experience fear resulting from external stimuli; both women rationalise their fears, albeit via a third party in Blanche's case. The trivialisation comes from an internal place within Emily, who chastises herself for being afraid at all, but for Blanche, it comes from the guides, who override even the count's fears. Both women experience catharsis when their fears are found to be irrational, although Emily reaches this conclusion alone, and the response to both scenarios is to recite 'To the Bat'. The lines of this poem seem at times to be somewhat discordant with the narrative contained within the prose. In particular, the verses introduced when Blanche recites it reveal more than the initial version we are given. If we connect the final line of the first half to the first line of the second, the result is eerily revealing: 'dimming her lonely visions of despair | From haunt of man, from day's obtrusive glare'.[10] It is through poetry that the women of *Udolpho* are able to communicate with each other whilst shielding themselves from the 'obtrusive glare' of man. It is through poetry that they are able to express their emotions in relative privacy, without the masculine intrusions of patriarchal expectations. Thus, the pattern is altered by the connection of lines to: Fear, rationalisation, trivialisation, catharsis, and authenticity. Specifically, feminine authenticity: an expression of imagination resulting from a feminine perspective, separate from the default of the male Romantic's imagination. Separate, perhaps, from the 'real language of men'.

The poem shares topical concerns with Charlotte Smith's 'To a Nightingale', conveying solitude and melancholy to delineate the experience of sublimity in flight. Whereas the

[10] Ibid., pp. 96 & 598.

bat's 'lone footsteps print the mountain-dew',[11] the nightingale is a 'poor melancholy bird – that all night long | tells't the moon thy tale of tender woe'.[12] Similarly, both poems depict an exploration of natural, sublime scenery; the bat has its 'shadowy glen's romantic bow'r',[13] and the nightingale its 'woodlands wild to rove'.[14] Of course, there is a more direct suggestion of intertextuality, perhaps suggesting some degree of influence on Radcliffe by Smith, in the first chapter of the novel, when 'on the stillness of the night, came the song of the nightingale breathing sweetness, awakening melancholy'.[15] Smith's is not the only influence on the themes developed in the novel. As Clara Frances McIntyre notes, there is significant evidence to suggest that Radcliffe relies heavily on Hester Thrale Piozzi's description of Venice and the Brenta, from *Travels in Italy*, within *Udolpho.*[16] Perhaps, in this sense, Radcliffe uses subtle intertextuality as a mode of communication with the women of her society. This theme of sororal communication occurs throughout the novel in other examples of poetry offered by Radcliffe, and Arnold suggests that 'in effect, the peasants' chant, in conjuring the sea-nymph with whom Emily identifies, works to rejuvenate Emily's poetic power, which has been stagnant during her imprisonment in Udolpho'.[17] This correlates with Horrock's observations that poetry ceases during Emily's imprisonment, and echoes the contention made in this chapter, that feminine specificity emerges from the ways in which women experience life, in opposition to the freedom and agency of the masculine. It is only through connection with that shared specificity (in the sense that women experience shared interpellation) that Emily's poetic power is

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[11] Radcliffe, p. 598.
[12] Charlotte Smith, 'To a Nightingale', in *Elegiac Sonnets, by Charlotte Smith*, ed. by Charlotte Smith (London: printed by A. Strahan, for T. Cadell; and sold by T. Cadell jun. and W. Davies successors to Mr. Cadell in the Strand, 1795), p.3 (p. 3), ll. 1-2.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid., p. 10.
[15] Radcliffe, p. 5.
[16] Clara Frances McIntyre, *Ann Radcliffe in Relation to Her Time* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1920), p. 58-9.
[17] Arnold, p. 24.

rejuvenated. The prose directly preceding 'To a Sea-Nymph' shows the characteristics of the pattern identified previously. Fear: 'it brought gloomy images to her mind', rationalisation: 'but the view of the Adriatic soon gave her others more airy, among which was that of the sea-nymph, whose delights she had before amused herself with picturing', trivialisation: 'anxious to escape from serious reflections, she now endeavoured to throw her fanciful ideas into a train', and authenticity in the poetry that follows. The following lines could be interpreted as a commentary on the selective appreciation of woman's voice.

> My potent voice they love so
> well, And, on the clouds, paint
> visions gay,
> While strains more sweet at distance
> swell. And thus the lonely hours I
> cheat, Soothing the ship-wreck'd
> sailor's heart, Till from the waves
> the storms retreat, And o'er the east
> the day-beams dart.
> Neptune for this oft binds
> me fast To rocks below,
> with coral chain, Till all the
> tempest's over-past,
> And drowning seamen cry in vain.[18]

Radcliffe conceals the authentic emotions of her female characters in the margins of her novels, within the poetry she elects to include. Just as the 'potent voice' of the sea-nymph is 'love[d] so well' for its use in saving sailors, it is punished in equal measure by Neptune, who 'binds [her] fast | to rocks below, with coral chain'.[19] The sea-nymph and Radcliffe alike have their voices contained; whilst there is an appreciation for their voices in specific contexts, the overarching theme is one of containment and censorship. Of course, the political conflict here is not quite as potent or obvious as it is within the works of Radcliffe's contemporary poetic force, Anna Barbauld, who published a collection of

[18] Radcliffe, p. 181.
[19] Ibid.

poetry two years prior to the publication of *Udolpho*, in which she engages the sublime to indicate her support for the Corsican Republic: ‘and glows the flame of LIBERTY so strong | in this lone speck of earth! This spot obscure | shaggy with woods, and crusted o’er with rock | by slaves surrounded, and by slaves oppress’d!’[20] However, Barbauld’s poem, ‘The Rights of Women’, in which she describes women as ‘too long degraded, scorned, opprest’, though thought to have been written in 1794, was not published until 1825.

Often read as anti-feminist, standing in opposition to Mary Wollstonecraft, Elizabeth Raisenen argues that Barbauld’s feminism simply differs in the sense that it rejects ‘difference feminism whose goal is to dominate men’.[21] Whatever the reason, the perception of mocking, in conjunction with the fact that the poem was published posthumously, suggests that the landscape of discourse centring on women was contentious and varied, even amongst women, as has been outlined in the chapter of this dissertation. Barbauld’s decision to delay publishing may reflect her having reservations about its potential reception during a time when she is still establishing herself as a writer within a landscape in which feminism is still very much in its infancy, with little to no formal organisation in place. However, Barbauld’s later boldness can provide some insight into the socio-political backdrop here, and may account for Radcliffe’s use of poetry to convey themes of a female struggle against constraint. It is perhaps for this reason (and of course, the broader issues impacting women in Radcliffe’s time) that there is a palpable sense of yearning for the safety of seclusion within her poetry that is not entirely surprising, as the speaker tells of how ‘in coral bow’rs I love to lie | and hear the surges roll above’[22] yet with her ‘sister-nymphs I sport | till the broad sun looks o’er the floods | then, swift we seek our

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[20] Anna Barbauld, *Poems* (London: Printed for Joseph Johnson, St Paul’s Churchyard, 1792), p. 2.
[21] Elizabeth Raisenen, ‘Mary Wollstonecraft, Anna Barbauld, and Equality Feminism’, in *Called to Civil Existence: Mary Wollstonecraft’s A Vindication of The Rights of Woman*, ed. by Enit Karafili Steiner (Place of Boston: Brill, 2014), pp. 25-48 (p. 27).
[22] Radcliffe, p. 179.

crystal court | deep in the wave, 'mid Neptune's woods'.[23] These lines produce a picture of safety amongst a community of women, obscured by 'the waters view'.[24] If, as has been argued earlier in this chapter, the masculine framework of Romantic poetry is built upon what Wordsworth identifies as the 'real language of men', and this language emerges from a biblical and, subsequently, Miltonic understanding of the nature of language itself, then Radcliffe's inclusion of poetry inadvertently challenges the dominant framework built upon masculine notions of agency in contrast to the feminine position as other, intrinsically associated with the spheres of 'family politics' and domesticity. Readings of *Udolpho* that follow Wordsworth's delineation of poetry as a masculine form are influenced by this unintentional challenge to a framework that seeks to exclude women. And if, as Percy Bysshe Shelley suggests, 'poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world',[25] and this arbitrarily emerges from the masculine perspective, then Radcliffe's feminine specificity, materialising from the position of objectified 'other', is a destabilising presence in the novel. Radcliffe is, of course, not the only female poet of her time, nor was she the only female poet writing within a context that defaulted to the male conceptualisation of what constitutes valuable literature. However, her contributions to the canonical works produced by women of this period can be read, retrospectively, as a challenge to the hegemony of the 'real language of men'. The act of writing female specificity from the position of otherness is, in itself, subversive. However, it will be argued here that Radcliffe manipulates the form of the novel with the inclusion of poetry specifically to emphasise the female perspective. Thus, there is a conscious effort here to disrupt and destabilise the hegemony of masculine experience, specifically via the inclusion of a feminine specificity. It is with caution that 'a' or 'the' female specificity is indicated here, as this chapter will not seek to argue that, as

[23] Radcliffe, p. 180.
[24] Radcliffe, p. 179.
[25] Shelley, p. 374.

Hélène Cixous indicated in *The Laugh of the Medusa* (1975), there is a perceptible female mode of expression in the form of writing; rather, it is hoped that it can convey the singularity of navigating patriarchal strictures as part of a wider approach to evidencing female subjectivity through the examination of women's interiority.

Radcliffe's poetry was criticised for its failure to adhere to the masculine ideals of Romanticism. Mary Favret explains that Coleridge's 'chivalric response' to the poetry in *Udolpho* shows a desire to 'protect the fragile "beauty" from the "adventures" of fiction and circulation. Poetry requires the critic's attention and intervention so that it can be presented to the public, its virtue intact, its value undiminished'.[26] Coleridge's feminised view of poetry suggests it was as unwelcome within the pages of a novel as Radcliffe was within the sphere of Romantic poetry. Coleridge is not alone, as comparatively modern critics have extended similar concerns relating to poetry nested within novels. Jay Clayton argues, says Favret, that he finds '"poetic moments" disrupting the "classical" English novel: in those cases, "the dangerous allure of lyric" threatens to "damage the narrative form" and thereby the "ethical" concern of fiction'.[27] *Udolpho* is a novel that is contested on the bases that it is written by a woman within a genre that is defined by its male contingent; it contains poetry (which requires the 'real language of men'), and its aforementioned inclusion of poetry within the narrative form is damaging to the conceptualisation of what it is a novel is supposed to achieve. Other critics have noted that the inclusion of poetry within *Udolpho* is a 'ladylike' practice; Gary Kelly explains that the inclusion of verse in eighteenth-century novels written by women is a common. He tacitly suggests that a novel's seriousness is somewhat linked to its masculinity, and that Radcliffe's inclusion of poetry by Milton, Shakespeare, Thomson, et al is an attempt at

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[26] Mary Favret, 'Telling Tales about Genre: Poetry in the Romantic Novel', *Studies in the Novel*, 28.3 (1994), 281-300 (p. 282).
[27] Ibid.

legitimising her literariness, borrowing validity from good writers (good male writers) to hide from what he calls ‘despised prose.’[28] This explanation is somewhat reminiscent of the ‘prefatory apologia’ Radcliffe expressly avoided, according to Norton; however, instead of apologies for her writing, the suggestion is that she borrows ‘literariness’ from canonical writers. Whilst Kelly’s argument edges very close to diminishing Radcliffe’s work with the presumption of the necessity for ‘literiz[ation]’, he is touching on a concept that borders on what Radcliffe seems to be doing with the poetry in *Udolpho*. It is perhaps the case that Kelly’s position emerges from his interpretation of Radcliffe’s view on sentimentality, which he says is ‘warned against’ in *Udolpho*, representing the danger posed by and to the ‘self’.[29] This view is somewhat understandable from a critic whose position is that poetry within the novel is but an intrusion on the narrative form. However, Ingrid Horrocks suggests that Radcliffe’s poetry may be the ‘hero of the text’ as ‘both quoted and interpolated poetry provide vital companionship and support – a kind of musical "accompaniment" – to isolated individuals and single voices within the gothic narrative’.[30] Horrocks notes that quotations cease during the time of Emily’s imprisonment,[31] which, if read within the context of what has been suggested in this chapter (that Radcliffe’s poetry can be interpreted as a representation of feminine specificity) can be understood as a commentary on the broader implications of women’s situation in the eighteenth century, but specifically, as a commentary on the restriction of defining poetry through the lens of masculine understanding. ‘Imprisoned’ by the boundaries of gender, for women, there is no reading, writing, or elevation of understanding to emerge from poetic interjection. As Horrocks puts it, ‘to remember, to

[28] Gary Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period* (London: Longman Group, 1989), p. 54.
[29] Ibid., p. 54.
[30] Ingrid Horrocks, ‘Her Ideas Arranged Themselves": Re-Membering Poetry in Radcliffe’, *Studies in Romanticism*, 47.4 (2008), 507-27 (p. 508-9).
[31] Ibid., p. 508.

read, and to write literature must, in some sense, be to move free of confinement'.[32] The concept of the gothic as an allegory for the confinement of women to the private sphere in the eighteenth century has an established basis in scholarship; Eugenia DeLamotte, Paul Morrison, Maggie Kilmour, and Kate Ferguson Ellis each delineate a parallel between systems of patriarchal power and the gothic space. Indeed, there is a sense, as established in the chapter preceding this, that women writers in the eighteenth century are cultivating a discourse on the dichotomy of space, within and without gothic fiction. Whereas Burney's discourse has a more physical basis in reality, negotiating the concept of privacy through the form of the novel, Radcliffe adopts the motif of the castle as a representation of women's relegation to the domestic sphere. However, Ellen Malenas Ledoux suggests that the maligned castles of the gothic can be read in conjunction with their frequent production of 'defiant damsels', which she indicates is apparent in Charlotte Smith's *Emmeline.* Unlike Udolpho, Mowbray Castle is, in some ways, a comforting presence for the distressed protagonist, as she navigates its 'idiosyncratic nature to escape attempted rape in multiple instances'; unlike Emily, Emmeline is 'not terrified of moving down dark hallways, and she perceives these spaces as under her control'.[33] This context is important for understanding that, as Malenas Ledoux correctly indicates, 'no unified female authorial voice existed regarding the domestic politics of Gothic space'.[34] Part of the difficulty in locating a trend towards feminine specificity is its frequently attendant presumption of unity that inadvertently denies subjectivity. Malenas Ledoux does not argue that Smith's representation of the gothic space is any more or less representative of women's ideologies than Radcliffe, and indeed, this chapter will not suggest that Radcliffe's representation of

[32] Ibid., p. 509.
[33] Ellen Malenas Ledoux, 'Defiant Damsels: Gothic Space and Female Agency in *Emmeline, The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *Secresy*', *Women's writing: the Elizabethan to Victorian period*, 18.3 (2011), 331-47 (p. 334).
[34] Ibid., p. 333.

similar themes is the only interpretation of them. Rather, that Radcliffe's voice is a representation of her experience as a woman, and that there is an evidence base for suggesting that formal devices used within *Udolpho* support existing readings of its portrayal of a brand of terror that is rooted in patriarchal power. One of the ways Radcliffe achieves this is through the inclusion of poetry. This opens a dialogue in which poetry is the mediator between the text and the reader, offering another view on sensibility that shifts the perspective of her choice to include poetry from unwelcome, feminine intrusion to active discourse.

Returning for a moment to look more closely at 'To the Bat', whilst providing an appropriate metaphorical representation of the ways in which women navigate the world (as well as the modes of communication developed within the novel) it is also a fitting motif for something more poignant. The bat benefits from a degree of freedom that women of Radcliffe's era cannot comprehend, even with Radcliffe's own attempts to mimic it in her own life. Under cover of darkness, it passes by largely unnoticed, allowed to pursue its business without interference or objection. Its dark body and propensity for flight allow it to negotiate the world, obscured by the night sky and bound by nothing but the innate drives to eat and sleep. Whilst Radcliffe would not have known the specifics of echolocation, the modern readership certainly does. Taken as a complete artefact, the formal interpretation is then shifted in response to this knowledge, meaning that, in a modern context at least, the novel's emphasis on sound becomes increasingly relevant. Angela Archambault explains that in gothic novels,

> sound wafts over walls, passes through latched doors and knows no real barrier. Specifically, Gothic novelists Radcliffe, Lewis and Maturin experiment with the potential of sound as a menacing device by orchestrating cacophony, gloomy chants and disembodied voices. Unable to be governed, it is, therefore in its very essence, an additional, albeit elusive, element that fuels the genre.[35]

[35] Angela Archambault, 'The Function of Sound in the Gothic Novels of Ann Radcliffe, Matthew Lewis and

Much like the bats of Radcliffe's poetry, sound can penetrate barriers that are otherwise insurmountable for the women of the novel. It intrudes into a world that is broadly inaccessible to women, in much the same way as Radcliffe's poetry intrudes on the narrative form. By imposing its own perspectives on the discourse surrounding women's voices, the patriarchal bounds are dismantled and stretched to accommodate a range of experience that contradicts the default male perspective. It is this sense of boundary-breaking that punctuates the novel; formal devices become the conduit through which readers and characters alike can intrude into spaces they would not otherwise be able to penetrate. This is achieved through the use of poetry, sound, music, and as will be discussed later in this chapter, temporal distortion. Whilst poetry is included throughout the novel to mitigate the expectation of emotional moderation, it is music that releases Emily from the patriarchal contract governing her sensibility. In chapter VI

Emily is warned by peasants that the sound of the lute she hears precedes death, and her superstitious nature emerges once more: 'Emily, though she smiled at the mention of this ridiculous superstition, could not, in the present tone of her spirits, wholly resist its contagion'.[36] The use of the word 'tone' to describe Emily's mood, as opposed to any other, is 'as if her being resonates with the same sound vibration as the lute and is penetrated by its power.[37] Radcliffe's influence of penetrating the novel's narrative form with poetry and music becomes the dialogue with which Emily is encouraged to indulge in the full range of her emotional experience. Just as the women of Radcliffe's novels communicate surreptitiously through the use of poetry, Radcliffe herself appears to be in coded dialogue with the characters, as it is through the use of alternative communication

Charles Maturin', *Études Épistémè*, 29.1 (2016), 1-16 (p.1).
[36] Radcliffe, p. 68.
[37] Archambault, p. 3.

forms deployed by Radcliffe that Emily is able to experience this moment of emotional abundance.

In addition to the overt focus on sound within *Udolpho*, as well as the many instances where music can be heard, is the fact that much of the poetry recited by Emily is done so in the form of singing. Viewed in conjunction with Archambault's comments about the quality of sound, this can be considered as a somewhat literal example of the ways in which Emily's voice, stifled at various points throughout the novel, is able to penetrate the dialogic space from which she has been excluded. What really demarcates Radcliffe's use of sound as an alternative mode of communication, or even, perhaps, a language of its own, is the emphasis she places not just on the creation of sound, but on the reception of it. As Noelle Chao explains, Radcliffe's

> descriptions of sound and music, visible in the form of printed words, press the limits of textual audibility by evincing what Carol Jacobs has referred to in *The Dissimulating Harmony* as 'a plentitude of language [...] [they] possess a kind of sonic plentitude that persistently gestures to an audible reality beyond the text.' These descriptions constitute her Gothic soundscape; and within this soundscape, by accentuating the divide between the perceptions of eye and ear, the musical mysteries of Radcliffe's Gothic provide opportunities for her to make the dynamic tensions between sound and sight visible on the pages of the novel.[38]

As the novel communicates a rich, auditory experience through text, it introduces the reader to ways of experiencing sensory stimulation that exist outside of the familiar. The novel engages defamiliarisation as a formal technique, which is exactly the purpose of the poetry contained within it: to challenge the perception of a male default within Romantic poetry is to offer the reader new ways of knowing; this concept is mirrored throughout the text with the inclusion of sound as an immersive experience offering insight into this sensory

[38] Noelle Chao, 'Musical Listening in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*', in *Words and Notes in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Phyllis Weliver and Katharine Ellis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 85-102 (p. 92). The reference mentioned in the excerpt is Carol Jacobs, 'The Dissimulating Harmony: The Image of Interpretation in Nietzsche, Rilke, Artaud, and Benjamin' (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins university Press, 1978), 108–9.

phenomenon that is typically reserved for the realm of auditory experience. The result of this device, which it will be argued is identifiable as a narratological device, is that the range of experience relating to voice is defamiliarised through the reintroduction of familiar things within a context of unfamiliarity. As indicated in previous chapters, defamiliarisation (or 'deautomatization', as Viktor Shklovsky calls it), is a process by which 'things that have been experienced several times begin to be experienced in terms of recognition: a thing is in front of us, we know this, but we do not see it'. By estranging the object and subject, the author finds a new 'way to reach our conscience [...] chang[ing] its form without changing its essence'.[39] Lennox achieves this in a number of ways, but most relevant here is the ways in which she modifies Arabella's speech patterns to reflect those of the heroines in her favoured romances. The effect is to have the reader re-evaluate her arguments, spoken in a language that is extraordinary, reframing her rhetoric in the newness of another tongue to change, as Shklovsky remarks, the 'form', but not the 'essence'. Where Radcliffe achieves this most obviously is within her detailed, vivid descriptions of the landscape. Defamiliarisation is almost an inevitability of being exposed to perceptions of the world that differ from our own. Valancourt's description of his travels is an interesting textual example of this phenomenon:

> He then described its fall among the precipices of the mountains, where its waters, augmented by the streams that descend from the snowy summits around, rush into the Vallée d'Aran, between whose romantic heights it foams along, pursuing its way to the north west till it emerges upon the plains of Languedoc. Then, washing the walls of Tholouse, and turning again to the north west, it assumes a milder character, as it fertilizes the pastures of Gascony and Guienne, in its progress to the Bay of Biscay.[40]

We do not know if Emily has visited this scene herself, but Valancourt's notice of the

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[39] Viktor Shklovsky, 'Art, as Device', *Poetics Today*, 36.3 (2015), 151-74 (p. 163).
[40] Radcliffe, p. 105.

water's directionality, or the ways in which he perceives it to 'assume a milder character' may constitute descriptive expressions that differ from her own, altering the image produced in her mind's eye of the scenery described. Thus, even the characteristics of a familiar scene featuring a river become defamiliarised through the process of engaging with alternative perception. The same is true of Radcliffe's soundscaping. This experience is defamiliarised for the reader, familiar with the literal auditory emissions of a sound through the construction of a language denoting the communication of sound. The experience is afforded a new lens through which to experience this phenomenon: nonverbal sound as communication. This defamiliarisation of ordinary experiences within *Udolpho* emphasises the feminine specificity deployed within the text. Ordinary phenomena become reimagined through distinct modes of expression that destabilise the reader's familiarity: essence intact, form disrupted.

Burney deploys doubles in *Evelina* to produce a defamiliarising effect. By drawing attention to the accepted behaviours of the male characters of the novel through a contrast provided by equally 'badly' behaved women, she is able to evoke in the reader a sense of unfamiliarity with the behaviours under scrutiny, and the disparate responses to them. Perhaps the most obvious example of character doubling in *Udolpho* is between Emily and the Marchioness. The physical likeness between the pair is noted by Dorothée (the servant at Château-le-Blanc) and Sister Agnes (later identified as Signora Laurentini), and Emily wonders if the Marchioness could be her mother. Ellen Moers suggests that the figure of the 'mother' may be a 'double, a twin perhaps, to the woman herself'.[41] Donna Heiland notes the emphasis placed on the mother-daughter relationship in Radcliffe's novels, suggesting that its purpose is to devise 'an aesthetic that insists on rather than obscures

[41] Ellen Moers, *Literary Women: The Great Writers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 16.

difference, as a way of allowing the daughter, whose story is always at the center of the novel, to separate from her mother and take her place in that larger society'.[42] Heiland develops on Alison Milbank's themes, suggesting that Radcliffe's depiction of the sublime is one that necessitates the consolidation of the mother- daughter relationship, through the 'recovery of the mother' to facilitate the emergence of autonomous identity and an emergence into the public sphere.[43] This perspective follows Patricia Yaeger's construction of a 'female sublime', which she describes as 'a vocabulary of ecstasy and empowerment, a new way of reading feminine experience'[44] It is worth noting that there are, however, some challenges here with subscribing to Yaeger's framework of a 'female sublime', specifically with the notion of 'a vocabulary of ecstasy and empowerment', since this definition suggests, in the style of Hélène Cixous' *The Laugh of the Medusa,* that there is a stable and identifiable mode of literary femininity. To assert this is, in some ways, to strip woman of her subjectivity, constructing a feminine monolith which is built upon a system of ideas for which there is little evidence. If women write in identifiably female ways, they have yet to be identified. This problem likely accounts for Barbara Claire Freeman's assertion that the female sublime is 'a domain of experience that resists categorization, in which the subject enters into relation with an otherness – social, aesthetic, political, ethical, erotic – that is excessive and unrepresentable' and resultingly, not a discursive strategy, technique, or literary style the female writer invents, but rather a crisis in relation to language and representation that a certain subject undergoes'.[45] This is closer to the construction of feminine specificity referenced in this chapter: that which is undefinable yet emerges from

[42] Donna Heiland, *Gothic and Gender: an Introduction* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), p. 58.
[43] Alison Milbank, 'Introduction', in Ann Radcliffe, *A Sicilian Romance*, ed. by Alison Milbank (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. ixii-xxix (pp. xxi-xxvi).
[44] Patricia Yaeger, 'Toward a Female Sublime', in *Gender and Theory: Dialogues on Feminist Criticism*, ed. by Linda Kauffman (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), pp. 191-212 (p. 192).
[45] Barbara Claire Freeman, *The Feminine Sublime: Gender and Excess in Women's Fiction* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1995), p. 2.

the subjectively female experience of patriarchal suppression.

As much of this discourse centres on feminist psychoanalytic concepts of the mother-daughter dynamic, the focus here will be limited to that which concerns Radcliffe's use of the female (or perhaps, feminine) sublime, and the ways in which it pertains to her deployment of a double within this context. Heiland argues that Radcliffean plots demonstrate a 'resistance to the patriarchal plots of the Burkean sublime' delineating the ways in which the 'lives available to women are really no better than living deaths'; in contrast to representations of the sublime common to Walpole and other male authors of the gothic, Radcliffe's deployment of the sublime deals with something far less fantastic: 'the seemingly routine erasures of women from the public sphere that mark the experiences of so many women in Radcliffe's novels'.[46] Radcliffe depictions of the sublime represent nature as a source of terror to parallel the ways in which masculine specificity condemns women.

Radcliffe's poem, 'Storied Sonnet' depicts the natural world as a source not of divine wonder, but of abject danger:

> The weary traveller, who all night long
> Has climb'd among the Alps' tremendous
> steeps, Skirting the pathless precipice,
> where throng Wild forms of danger; as he
> onward creeps
> If, chance, his anxious eye at distance
> sees The mountain-shepherd's solitary
> home, Peeping from forth the moon-
> illumin'd trees, What sudden transports
> to his bosom come!
> But, if between some hideous chasm yawn,
> Where the cleft pine a doubtful bridge
> displays, In dreadful silence, on the brink,
> forlorn
> He stands, and views in the faint
> rays Far, far below, the torrent's

[46] Heiland, p. 58.

> rising surge, And listens to the wild
> impetuous roar;
> Still eyes the depth, still shudders on the
> verge, Fears to return, nor dares to venture
> o'er.
> Desperate, at length the tottering plank he tries,
> His weak steps slide, he shrieks, he sinks—he dies![47]

The sonnet somewhat foreshadows Emily's own fears here, as, whilst the 'weary traveller' must fear the dangers posed by the natural landscape, it is Banditti (men) that Emily must fear as she negotiates the terrain. From a masculine perspective, the natural sublime represents freedom and self-government; from the vantage point of the feminine sublime, Emily's freedom is continually under threat. For Heiland, Radcliffe's use of the sublime serves the function of depicting experiences that 'at best [offer] a temporary escape from, and at worst actively perpetuates, the oppressive politics of a patriarchal society' in which the sublime experience 'isolates, overwhelms, and eventually effaces those individuals who succumb to it'.[48] However, Emily is not ultimately 'effaced' by her experiences of the sublime, returning to the public sphere, says Heiland, 'not as a result of human interaction with nature, the supernatural, or even the divine'[49] but through the recovery of the mother, when Emily learns that the Marchioness is, in fact, her aunt, and not her mother. Thus, this double, in conjunction with what could be interpreted as a depiction of the feminine sublime, can be read as an attempt to destabilise the hegemonic notions of a masculine sublime, in conjunction with the masculine framework of Romanticism.

Furthermore, it could be argued that, viewed through the lens of this subjectively feminine sublime, the comparative circumstances of Arabella and Evelina take on new meaning. Raised primarily by men, without this crucial maternal bond, they cannot, in accordance with the theoretical framework of agency outlined here, emerge from the confines of the

[47] Radcliffe, p. 165.
[48] Heiland, p. 60.
[49] Ibid., p. 61.

private sphere, as there is no reconciliation with the mother to be found. Arabella's closest female ally is the Countess, whose immediate impact on Arabella is short-lived, following her swift departure from the narrative. Evelina, whose primary female guardian is the domineering Madame Duval, whose relationship with her own daughter was less than ideal. A picture begins to emerge, depicting a thematic concern delineating a lack of female community that binds women to the domestic sphere.

Another way *Udolpho* distorts the reader's perception is through the manipulation of temporality. As Michael Paulson explains, the novel is punctuated by 'moments'; whilst this verbiage is not unusual for the period, Radcliffe's excessive use warrants further examination, as she 'places particular stress on it through frequent repetition in tight clusters, especially in dialogue'.[50] Whilst Paulson's argument centres on the idea that Radcliffe 'stages a conflict between two distinctive forms of temporality—the sentimental temporality of the "moment," and the aesthetic temporality of the "day" and the "scene' for the purpose of demonstrating a 'threatening emblem of fragmentation and disintegration, on the level of both personal identity and of social cohesion', this chapter will discuss the ways in which Radcliffe's distortion of time represents a defamiliarising of concepts within the novel as a complete artefact. In this instance, it is to sensibility that Radcliffe once again turns her hand. Paulson argues that Radcliffe 'emphasizes moments of heightened feeling' to the extent that the novel becomes a stream of successive moments, to the extreme that 'the form loses its ability to organize narrative and instead becomes a figure of mere succession—one thing after another'.[51] *Udolpho* is so full of feeling; so full of questioning dialogue that penetrates and permeates the boundary between the reader and the novel that the reader cannot escape the inevitability of emotional response. The waves

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[50] Michael Paulson, 'Out of Time: Temporal Conflict in Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*', *European Romantic Review*, 30.5 (2019), 595-614 (p. 597).
[51] Paulson, p. 605.

of emotion that Paulson describes - 'one thing after another'- replicate the overarching themes identifiable within the text, highlighting the abundance of suppressed emotion from female characters who grapple with the expectations placed on them by a masculinist society that favours rationality and emotional reserve. This is perhaps best evidenced when Emily reveals that she has learned the truth about Valancourt:

> for a moment, she continued unable to speak; then a profound sigh seemed to give some relief to her spirits, and she said,
>
> "Valancourt! I was, till this moment, ignorant of all the circumstances you have mentioned; the emotion I now suffer may assure you of the truth of this, and, that, though I had ceased to esteem, I had not taught myself entirely to forget you."
>
> "This moment," said Valancourt, in a low voice, and leaning for support against the window—"this moment brings with it a conviction that overpowers me!—I am dear to you then—still dear to you, my Emily!"[52]

Four moments feature in this short extract, emphasising the heightened emotion of the scene with a blow-by-blow account of the dialogue as it unfolds, situating the reader within a passage of time that more accurately represents the reality of the 'moment', and not a condensed retelling of it. This technique is used with success by Lennox when Arabella's 'delaying harangue' following the incident by the Thames causes the reader to engage their own ideas of romance to anticipate Arabella's next move. Here, is it used to convey a sense of overwhelm to the reader, emphasising the oppressive patriarchal presence reflected in the portrayal of the sublime, as indicated by Heiland. Resultantly, sensibility permeates the text, concealed by the narrative and contained within the form itself, either within the dialogue created by the inclusion of poetry, or through the use of moments that culminate in a temporal distortion producing an abundance of emotion.

Udolpho, when taken as a complete artefact, can be read as a formal exercise in defamiliarisation that evidences and endorses feminine power and creativity, as well as

[52] Radcliffe, p. 668.

evidencing the hidden qualities of feminine interiority. The inclusion of poetry facilitates dialogue with the novel itself, as well as with its readers. The use of sound as an extended metaphor for the female voice breaks down preconceptions surrounding what it is to hear, to value, and to understand the emissions around us, causing us to question, in this case, the value of the female voice that is otherwise stymied. The emphasis placed on sensibility, both through the dialogue staged by the poetics of the temporal distortions of the novel, experienced as a collection of moments, encourages the reader to examine more closely their own emotions, and the value inherent within them. The result is that Radcliffe's interiority as someone who perceives the world in much different ways than the male writers of her time provides the reader with an alternative perspective; the opportunity to look upon the topics raised with a lack of familiarity, enabling an experience that is unburdened by pre-existing prejudices. Whilst many of the devices deployed within *Udolpho* are not unique to Radcliffe, or even to the genre, it is the combination of these devices, themes, and the distinctly Radcliffean voice that produces a specific reading of the text, and what is more, that these readings change over time as chronological distance and alterations to language produce yet more defamiliarising effects upon the reader. Thus, its meaning shifts and changes over time, and will continue to do so as the novel ages alongside advancing time. Its existence continually defamiliarises the reader to concepts about which prejudgements are questioned and revisited in response to the thematic concerns of the narrative form.

Regardless of Radcliffe's ostensible political positions, or the ideas she may or may not have held about the position of women in the world, the novel itself is a complete medium through which clear arguments can be identified and expanded upon. If the decision to include poetry within the novel was, in fact, a 'ladylike' practice, then it is a practice through which the feminine is afforded a voice. If Radcliffe's participation in the

production of novels was contextually inappropriate within the spectrum of knowledge about women, then it revealed a number of truisms about women that allowed for the conceptualisation of femininity to change over time. Not least because, as appears to be the case, Radcliffe wove into her novels the power of suggestion that allowed for women's situation to be examined more closely. For woman, with all of her subjective intricacies, to be looked upon as a singular entity, separate from the associations of her sex. The lynchpin of *Udolpho* is the manner in which it elevates the voices of women as individuals with a singular perspective, which, whilst some would consider this an excess of self-interest, others would call it enterprisingly-minded.

Conclusion

This dissertation set out to establish whether a feminist formalist analysis of three eighteenth-century texts, selected at divergent chronological intervals, could identify a communicative challenge of patriarchal values present during the period. It sought to respond to the difficulty of working with women's literature from the early modern period, in the sense that, as identified in the introduction to this work, women's speech is necessarily curtailed by the strictures of the society in which those women live. One of the initial concerns when beginning this dissertation was that a close reading of *The Mysteries of Udolpho,* a text published so late in the century, advancing towards the closure of the early modern period, would reveal very little of any substance that could be interpreted as a useful addition to the formal analysis of texts necessitating this type of close reading. Whilst the political and social landscape changes dramatically between the publishing of *The Female Quixote* and *Udolpho,* there is still a palpable hesitance present in the novel that marginalises women's perspectives to those liminal spaces, typically within the poetry included there. This dissertation has identified a body of evidence to suggest that women's subjective experience - and resulting challenges to the circumstances bringing about that experience - can be identified within the form of the novels they write, at least within the eighteenth-century, building on existing work produced by scholars researching in earlier centuries. In the main, there is a prevalent use of defamiliarisation, temporal distortion, and non- linguistic communication (or a divergence from common parlance) to convey specific themes.

For example, in *The Female Quixote,* this manifests in the communication of subversion through Arabella's character construction: anachronistic, unfamiliar, and centralised within the narrative and form, she communicates rebellion, and her readers are encouraged to sympathise with that rebellion. In *Evelina,* her construction as innocence personified allows her to function as a vessel through which Burney is allowed to speak more freely, somewhat shielded through

by the naivety of her protagonist, who is expected to behave as young women often do, erring and learning as experience washes over them. In *Udolpho,* these divergences are found in the lines of poetry, the use of sound to parallel experience, and the construction of a female sublime in contradiction to the masculine framework of divinity in the natural world. There is also a palpable sense of engagement with the apposite concerns regarding the division of space in the eighteenth century. Lennox arguably challenges this by dividing the physical space of her novels in such a way as to prioritise Arabella's worldview. Burney achieves this through the use of an epistolary form, which prompts a number of questions relating to the distinction between the concepts of private and public space, revealing the reality that there is no ultimate sense of privacy for women in the eighteenth century that exists outside of their own heads. Occupying a liminal space between the private and public spheres, women on the cusp of entrance to the public world do not, as suggested, benefit from much in the way of privacy at all. Anxious to emerge, there is a rich body of analysis contained within *Evelina* that delineates the experience of advancing into the public world. Radcliffe intrudes on the narrative to interject song: poetry demarcating the female experience demands space within the story, representing the emergence of women into public life, and its concomitant necessity for examining the conditions of those lives as they exist along the men who elevate agency and freedom as core values in poetry and in life.

The Female Quixote, it was argued, was found to challenge the concept of quixotism as a rational representation of women readers of romance through the deployment of hyperbolic satire to construct a caricature so fantastic that Arabella parallels the fantasy of French romance. The way in which Lennox uses the physical space within the novel is such that it guides the reader to interpret whose narrative matters the most. The result, as is argued in this dissertation, is that Arabella's emphasis on autonomy and personal choice is emphasised and elevated above that of both the satire directed at her and the ostensibly balance-restoring anti-climax that is her marriage to Glanville. The marriage engages sentimentalism to mediate the satire directed at

believers of an Arabella-esque response to romances: a device used both by Sarah Scott and Sarah Fielding to mediate political themes within their novels. Further, it has been argued that by educating the reader in the art of the French romance, through repeated negotiations of situations in which Arabella instructs the reader on the appropriate response of the heroine, the reader develops the ability to predict and negotiate new scenarios in the way that Arabella would, producing a residual sympathy for the protagonist and her romantic ideas. This residual sympathy makes it more difficult for the reader to accept her ultimate marriage to Glanville, as by the time the marriage arrives, we are all of us predicting that Arabella will stand firm and refer to her subjective system of virtue. When she fails to do so, it is difficult not to be disappointed. Thus, there is a strong sense within the novel that it challenges the assumption that women will, should, or must marry. The latter part of this argument straddles a dual purpose, however; in educating the reader via romance, contained within a novel whose purpose is ostensibly to steer women away from romances, it educates them rather well in the moral codes of the French romance.

Furthermore, it has been suggested here that Lennox manipulates the passage of time to facilitate the reader in applying their learning, as they practise anticipating Arabella's response to each scenario as it is presented. Thus, there is some sense here that Lennox challenges the commonly held belief that women's education should be brief, relevant to the domestic sphere, and devoid of the corrupting influence of romance, which she is very familiar with, having relayed the specifics within the novel herself. Lennox deploys a variety of formal devices for the purposes of both humanising and satirising the concept Arabella is intended to represent: an irrational woman who has been ruined by the reading of romances. Through defamiliarisation, deployed via the language in which she speaks, she is brought to the forefront of the narrative, simultaneously othered and elevated in importance in contrast to the other characters in the story. The decision to represent Glanville as susceptible to the morality of romances in a bid to secure the affections of Arabella articulates this concept well. Not only does this portray him as

someone who is flighty and irresolute with regard to his own convictions, but it has the double purpose of making Arabella appear less of a threat to the prevailing sense of morality than Glanville, who seems open to the concept of committing murder in the name of love. This further suggests that there is some cynicism on Lennox's part that romances really constitute the threat they are portrayed to pose. Thus, there is a cohesive sense contained within the form of the novel that Lennox challenges common conventions surrounding marriage, education of women, and the relative lack of agency women benefit from during this time.

Burney engages doubling to enter a dialogue with the concept of morality as it pertains to men and women, respectively. Her construction of equally dislikeable characters that mirror each other from the contrasting vantage points of sex isolates the inherent hypocrisy in the portrayals of dislikeable qualities in men versus dislikeable qualities in women. Here, she challenges the notion that bad behaviour in men is intolerable behaviour in women, and the primary mechanism deployed to achieve this is defamiliarisation, which highlights the impropriety of male behaviour within the story. Whereas those behaviours may otherwise be ignored, or, as is the case with Captain Mirvan, attributed to the circumstance of their lives, the women who stand in opposition to them (yet embodying those same behaviours) encourage the reader to re-examine their prejudices allowing for that behaviour in men whilst condemning it in women.

Liminality, however, is the nexus of Burney's challenge to patriarchal power within *Evelina.* Through this liminal position, as the grand orchestrator of discourse, shielded by her constructed mouthpiece, and as the orator of a female experience conveyed from the space between private life, she isolates the anxieties of that transitional space. Her use of focalization, in which Evelina's perspective is the dominant lens through which we as readers experience the story world, we are encouraged to prioritise what is, essentially, an unreliable narration of that story world. This further validates Evelina's construction as naive, as the reader is somewhat disconnected from her account of the events that transpire, since there is scant opportunity to corroborate her version of events. The broader communication here, however, centres on the

notion of authenticity that is ostensibly present in epistolary novels, thought to convey immediacy that is conducive to that broader aim of truthfulness. However, whilst Evelina communicates more openly with Villars than she does in a public setting, she is never truly authentic in relaying her genuine thoughts. Thus, Burney's negotiation of private versus public discourse serves as a commentary for communicating the anxieties surrounding women's entrance into the public world: necessary for women's advancement, but nonetheless frightening, as the public world represents real threats to the safety of women. Issues relating to identity are also prominent in *Evelina,* as Burney negotiates the notion of self as it relates to women.

Evelina's lack of verifiable lineage thrusts her into the liminal space of the unclaimed woman. Without the validating 'ownership' of a willing male, she is less valuable, less credible, and less important. Thus, the narrative explores the ways in which women's identity hinges on her proximity to an attendant male, which begins with the paratextual lack of ownership instigated by Burney when she published *Evelina* anonymously. Therefore, there is a formal basis upon which to assert that Burney uses *Evelina* as a vessel through which to enter a dialogue with prominent matters of concern for women in the eighteenth century: negotiating the transition from the private to the public spheres, and its concomitant fear surrounding safety. The notion of woman as necessarily attached to the male, and the gender norms that restrict women whilst freeing the man.

Radcliffe, advancing towards the end of the eighteenth century, delineates a far more specific picture of the female experience, and the challenges to patriarchal power that are necessary to alleviate its associated struggles. If such a thing as 'a' feminine specificity can exist in writing, then Radcliffe comes close to demarcating it. The novel deploys a complex variety of interwoven formal devices that work simultaneously to present a particular theme. The most prominent double contained in the novel, that of Emily and the Marchioness, forms part of the whole in which a female (or feminine) sublime is constructed to emphasise the role of female

bonds (specifically, that of the mother and daughter) to facilitate the emergence of woman into the public sphere. The construction of a feminine sublime assists with the broader goal of challenging the hegemony that situates literature that would subsequently reflect a masculine Romanticism as supreme, isolating the disparate concerns of women that emerge from constraint in contrast to the freedom and autonomy enjoyed by men. The poetry Radcliffe 'intersperses' throughout the novel is representative of women's marginalisation in society, and yet, it serves as a persistent metaphor for the endurance of the female voice. This is particularly relevant to the concerns of this dissertation, as it perfectly emphasises the motivation for its production: even during times of stricture, where women are constrained by patriarchal power, there are traces of rebellion to be found if one looks in the right places. Radcliffe pays homage to her female contemporaries, deploying subtle intertextualities in the novel that reflect her appreciation for women's writing, and extending a sense of community amongst characters within the novel to the broader female community without.

The novels selected for this dissertation share commonalities in that they challenge the supremacy of patriarchal power as it relates to the female experience. It is this experience that is so carefully outlined in the texts. Each concern addressed is in relation to that which affects the quality of life afforded to the women of the eighteenth century. When the behaviour of men is challenged, it is only done so within the limited scope of its impact on the women around them. Radcliffe's concern about masculine representations of poetry is related insofar as she sets out to establish her own poetry, emerging from the comparative position of constraint. Burney's depiction of Sir Clement's bad behaviour exists only to ask why women are not granted the same courtesy. Lennox's portrayal of Glanville's susceptibility to romance exists to controvert the assumption that romances are intrinsically damaging to women. Through formal devices, each of these women finds an avenue through which she can challenge the 'real language of men', by asserting the importance of the language of women.

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