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**English Society at the Turn of the 18th Century from the
Viewpoint of Contemporary Women Writers**

Diplomová práce

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I. Introduction

This paper is an attempt to present a description of English society, during the second half of the 18th and the beginning of 19th century, according to the views of F. Burney, C. Lennox, J. Austen and F. Trollope. Their works give information about the contemporary society, the authors' relation to the society, and their contradiction in the social rules. The authors also describe people's characters, their relationships, and other points giving an account of the society of the time. Those novels are *Evelina* by Frances Burney, *The Female Quixote* by Charlotte Lennox, several novels written by Jane Austen, and *The Widow Barnaby* by Francis Trollope. Due to the inaccessibility to *The Widow Barnaby* this novel is not analysed in the paper.

Historical background

Those authors were writing during the time when England was ruled by the House of Hannover, George II (1727-60) and George III (1760-1820). The constitutional monarchy was established after the Glorious Revolution, and so the real power was within the parliament, the kings were dependent on parliamentary decisions. It was the time when Britain was gradually getting hold of its colonies. After winning the Seven-Years' War with France (1756-63), England added India and Canada to its empire and so gained the world power. Yet, in 1773 the Americans started to protest against the British government and this led to the war. America won, became independent and so England lost its first colony. In Europe started the French Revolution in 1789. It ended by the defeat of Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815.

In literature, we can divide this time into two periods. The first period is called Classicism, the Age of Reason. It takes place during the eighteenth century, which is also called the Century of Enlightenment. All branches of science are developed, and this results in great technical progress. The second period is Romanticism, which starts at the turn of the eighteenth century. It is the reaction of literature to the rationalism that emphasises reason. Writers turned again to senses and sentiments and emphasised passion and emotion. However, not all writers were immediately affected by the change in literature.

Evelina, *The Female Quixote*, *The Widow Barnaby*, and the works of Jane Austen were still written under the influence of Classicism and despite all the happenings in the world, those novels do not mention contemporary political events.

Introduction to the writers

Charlotte Lennox, née Ramsay

She was born in or before 1730 and spent her youth in New York. Before 1747 she came to England, where she married Alexander Lennox. However, he gave her neither financial nor emotional support and so she had to make her own living by writing. Her first novel, *The Life of Harriot Stuart*, was published in 1750 and in 1752 *The Female Quixote*, her best-known and most celebrated work appeared: "it attracted the attention and approval of both Henry Fielding and Samuel Richardson; Samuel Johnson applauded it and Jane Austen was to read it more than once." (Doody, 1989, 1). *Henrietta* (1758), *The History of Harriot and Sophia* (1760-1), and *Euphemia* (1790) are Lennox's other novels which explore the lives of contemporary women. *Shakespeare Illustrated* (1753-4) is a work where Lennox, as one of the first writers, traces Shakespeare's sources and so she starts the Shakespeare criticism. She also wrote two plays: *The Sister* and *Old City Manners*: "her first play . . . appeared for only one night at Covent Garden, but . . . [the second] had a good run at Drury Lane in 1775-6." (Doody, 1989, 1). She was not such a successful playwright as a novelist. That was mainly because of the existing restrictions on theatres by the Licensing Act. This time was the most unproductive in the history of English drama. Only two theatres were licensed to produce spoken drama on stage, they were Drury Lane and Covent Garden: "Theatrical writings were few and far between during what proved to be one of the most barren periods in the history of English drama." (Allen, Smith, 1996, 110). Lennox had two children, yet her daughter predeceased her, and most probably she got separated from her husband. At the end of her life she was ill and poor, she died on 4 January 1804.

Fanny Burney

Frances (Fanny) Burney was born in 1752. She wrote since she was ten years old. *Evelina* was her first novel, published in 1778, which gained her a high success. Yet, she hid herself from the success in order to protect her privacy from public criticism: “she shrank from the success that threatened her privacy and stigmatized herself as ‘the very cowardly Writer’” (*Bloom*, 1982, 1). Her other novel was *Cecilia* (1782), which displays Burney’s mature skills as a novelist. In 1786 she was unhappily placed into a position at court as Second Keeper of the Robes to Queen Charlotte, the wife of George III. When she left her court service in 1791, she got married to Alexandre d’Arblay and in 1794 her son was born. Her third novel *Camilla* (1796) was another success for Burney. While she was living in France (1802-1812) she wrote another novel, *The Wanderer* (1814), which was about the French Revolution. *Memoirs of Doctor Burney* (1832) was her last work containing autobiographical material. In 1842 she published her diary, also called *Diary*, which she wrote since her youth. It contains notes of what happened around her, in the literal world or at court. This book is an important document containing information about contemporary society. She died in 1840.

Jane Austen

Jane Austen was born in 1775 and died in 1817. From an early age her father encouraged her in her love of reading and she was familiar with many of the contemporary writers, including Fanny Burney. Her first novel, written in 1795, was called *Elinor and Marianne*, but it was later rewritten and published in 1811 as *Sense and Sensibility*. In 1796 she started to write her next novel *First Impressions*, which was also rewritten and published in 1813 as *Pride and Prejudice*. Her other novels were *Mansfield Park*, *Emma*, and *Northanger Abbey*, the latter was a satire on Mrs Radcliffe’s *Mysteries of Udolpho*. Her last novel was *Persuasion*, her own love affairs were reflected in those of Anne Elliot. Austen was surrounded by her affectionate family and was absorbed in her writing as well as domestic chores: “Jane Austen led a life often noted for its lack of events.” (*Cave*, 1994, 1). Once she accepted a proposal of marriage but

changed her mind the next morning. Her self-contained life seems to be reflected in her novels which are “peopled by impoverished clerical families, eligible country squires, foolish snobs and husband-hunting women, seem to portray the world in miniature.” (Cave, 1994, 1). Her novels of family life were untouched by the troubled years including the French Revolution and the ugliness of the world. Jane Austen died in 1817.

Francis Trollope

She was born in Hampshire in 1780. She married a wealthy lawyer and they had six children. However, his business collapsed and they were forced to move to Ohio, where they tried to regain their wealth. When she arrived there, at the turn of the eighteenth century, America was already an independent country after winning the War of Independence with Britain in 1783. It was during this period that she started to write. She was a careful observer and so in her novels she focussed on the descriptions of human faults. Her first novel was *Domestic Life of the Americans*, in it she pictures the character of American people. Also in her next novel *The Adventures of Jonathan Jefferson Whitlawshe* she criticises the Americans for the miseries caused on the black people in the Southern States. *The Vicar of Wrexhill* deals with the subject of the church corruption and is thought to be her best work. In her books she describes Americans as “coarse, selfish, intemperate, insincere, indelicate, and generally ridiculous.” (spartacus schoolnet). This is why she has not been such a favourite author among the Americans: “She is best known by Americans for her unflattering portrait of the young nation” (spartacus schoolnet). However, she also attempted to satirise the English, in *Hargrave*, *Jessie Phillips*, and also *The Lauringtons*, in the latter she deals with the “superior people” of society. She became involved in child labour campaigns and after she had visited several factories she expressed her experiences in a novel called *Michael Armstrong, the Factory Boy*. In total she wrote forty books and among her most successful novels belong *The Widow Barnaby* and *The Widow Married*. Her son Anthony Trollope was also a famous novelist, whose

books dealt with English politics, society, and the civil service. He is still widely-read today. Frances Trollope died in 1863.

Introduction to the novels and the style in which they were written

Evelina

This novel, written by Frances Burney, first appeared in 1778. It is a picture of human existence, where Burney tries to explore the human character. She illustrates good and bad characters, manners, and opinions of those days, and by doing this she moralises the society: "in tune with eighteenth-century moralism, she saw the novel as a perceptive vehicle." (*Bloom*, 1982, 26). The main plot of this novel is the change of self-understanding of a seventeen-year-old country girl, Evelina, who has to enter the society in different levels. Being brought up without her own family, by her mother's best friend in a small village, in a circle of a small number of people, she has to enter the world and to learn to distinguish between the good and the bad.

Even though Burney worked from a humanistic base, we can feel her optimism from the comic spirit of this novel: "*Evelina* is, in fact, a serio-comic novel which partakes of two narrative movements, one intellectual or thematic and the other situational or structural, but both operating at the same time." (*Bloom*, 1982, 15). In the thematic movement, Burney focuses on the adventures of Evelina, which are sometimes laughable and sometimes dangerous. But all her experience is necessary for the development of Evelina's self-knowledge. In the structural movement the novel is "neatly - too neatly - defined as by a system of balance and counterbalance, point and counterpoint." (*Bloom*, 1982, 25). An amusing episode is always followed by another that is having serious implications, or it is followed by an edifying statement. By this scheme Burney places in a balance what is injurious and wholesome.

The setting of this novel is other aspect, together with the plot and meaning, which is controlled. It blends with actions and characters but never dominates them. The locations are rather suggested than provided with precise details: "Critics like Paul Elmer More and Austin Dobson were perhaps right in complaining about her visual deficiency." (*Bloom*, 1982, 25). As a result, her

characters are always in the foreground compare to the appropriate but muted setting, which is forced to be created by reader's imagination and is stimulated by the action and dialogues: "As a novelist Fanny appreciated setting, but she thought it less important than her shifting clusters of people and their interaction." (*Bloom*, 1982, 25). We can see her careful selection of characters, situations, and places. For example Berry Hill, situated in countryside is an idle location for the elderly and wise Mr. Villars, Evelina's protector. Howard Grove, although situated in countryside, is a place of lively and youthful spirit, mainly represented by the friendship between Evelina and Maria. Lady Howard and her daughter Mrs. Mirvan create peaceful atmosphere, which is later interrupted by brutal behaviour of her husband Captain Mirvan. His behaviour shows contrast between order of the country and the disordered London experiences. London and its urban life is not described as completely bad, there is also Orville, the truthful lover and protector of Evelina. Other setting, which Burney uses in this novel, is the provincial one: Bristol Hotwells and Clifton. This is the place where town and country blend together into an elegant location.

As the carefully chosen setting results in schematised balance of *Evelina*, also the structure of the whole book results in the same effect. The novel divides into three volumes, which are comparable in length. Part one is preparatory; Evelina visits London for the first time and discovers its high and low social groupings. The latter is represented by Evelina's grandmother Mme Duval, who has high plans with her, and her relations the Brantons. Evelina recognises contrast between London society and the calm life at Howard Grove. In part two, Evelina is exposed to the vulgar behaviour of Mme Duval and her London relatives in contrast to the manners of Lord Orville. Part three centres in Bristol Hotwells and Clifton, where Evelina is at her lowest point in her search for identity. However, things change and she and Orville recognise their love and Evelina also discovers her father and a brother.

The search for father is a complication in the novel and is less significant than the search for practical wisdom of self-knowledge and a proper marriage. Climax builds upon climax through series of misunderstandings and difficulties: "In its serio-comic theme, then, *Evelina* at least partially fulfils Lionel

Trilling's concept of the novel as 'a perpetual quest for reality, the field of its research being always the social world, the material of its analysis being always manners'." (*Bloom*, 1982, 27). The way, which Burney chooses for the search of reality, is to set against each other the comic and the serious movement. The theme pervades through the whole novel; the structural elements, which impose the theme, come out quite repeatedly from the serious to the comic: "the structural elements . . . would appear to be a pendulant line swinging with more or less regularity from a fixed point between the serious and the comic." (*Bloom*, 1982, 27).

The theme in *Evelina* is understood quite early in the novel and it is straightforward, but the situations swing between the grave and the amusing. For example Mme Duval and the Branghtons are ridiculous figures and they provoke involuntary laughter. Yet, since we view their actions through Evelina's disapproving eyes we have also some sympathies with our heroine: "That the comic will be succeeded by the serious is a constant expectation, and as a result the moral purpose pre-empts a large portion of the reader's attention." (*Bloom*, 1982, 28). Characters' behaviour, whether it is good or bad, provokes us to a response within ourselves. We become more aware of the variety within character which humans possess, also we are better able to distinguish between the good and the bad. Burney, by describing different kinds of personalities, gives the book a didactic intention, which she softens by comic scenes and dialogues: "Such goodness as we see in Villars, Orville, Macartney, Evelina herself, often taxes even the latitude implicit in moral realism." (*Bloom*, 1982, 29).

The target in the story, set by Burney, was to make her heroine see, understand, and learn how to behave with different kind of people. This is why she had to come up with many descriptions of type-figures in her novel. Her comic characters could remind us those of Fielding: "In the creation of her comic characters she observed a precedent set by Fielding. That is, she too – without his consciously satiric thrust – recognised affection as the 'source of the true Ridiculous'." (*Bloom*, 1982, 29). The novel is written in an epistolary technique just as the books of earlier novelists as Fielding, Richardson, or

Smollet. Jane Austen followed Burney not only in time, she was also influenced by her. Even Austen used her novels to give an account of human characters, especially human follies:

With her superior comic vision, acute psychological understanding, and sheer craftsmanship Jane has overshadowed her predecessor. But it is pleasant to realize that Fanny, though somewhat obscured by Jane's lustre, continues to glow softly in the light of her memorable achievement.
(*Bloom*, 1982, 31).

Works of Jane Austen

Austen's style of writing was much influenced by her early readings, especially of Samuel Richardson and Henry Fielding: "Austen owed much to both Richardson and Fielding with regard to her concept of the novel." (*Allen, Smith*, 1996, 112). Henry Fielding influenced Jane Austen in such a way that her first novel *Elinor and Marianne*, later rewritten and called *Sense and Sensibility*, was formed in epistolary technique and with the third person narrator. This style of writing was typical for Fielding, as *Allen and Smith* (1996, 112) say: "Her choice of a third person narrator showed the influence of Fielding.". However, in the second rewritten version of this novel, Austen changed her style and did not use the form of letters to tell the narrative. She did not even let the narrator comment so often on the story; instead she used dialogues to describe the characters and to narrate the story. Her dialogues were so well created and combined with situational irony, that Austen did not have to use verbal explanations to express her judgement. Nevertheless, still can be seen similarities between the styles used by Austen and Henry Fielding. For instance, a comparison can be made between the narrating style of Austen and of Fielding in *Tom Jones*: "And now I may dismiss my heroine to the sleepless couch, which is the true heroine's portion; to a pillow strewn with thorns and wet with tears. And lucky may, she think herself, if she get another good night's rest in the course of the next three months." (*Tomalin*, 1998, 166). The style of Jane Austen where the narrator expresses the general truth is also worthy of comment: "A woman especially, if she has the misfortune of knowing anything, should conceal it as well as she can." (*Tomalin*, 1998, 166).

Jane Austen was a novelist of manners and in her books she worked on a limited circle of society, namely the rural middle class and the upper class: "Three or four families in a country village is the very thing to work on" (*Allen, Smith*, 1996, 111). She described their relationship, attitudes, and negative sides of their characters, while still maintaining a sense of detachment and irony: "in her restrained satire of social excesses of the period, was perhaps nearer to the classical minded moralizing spirit of the eighteenth century than to the new age of romantic rebellion and potential sentimentalism." (*Allen, Smith*, 1996, 111). The socio-political atmosphere and events at the beginning of the eighteenth century, in addition to the French revolution, were not mentioned in her novels. Her novels concentrated on the calm society life, at first sight such unimportant events as balls and parties, and proposals of marriage, yet she managed to set into this uninteresting background an interesting plot, as *Allen and Smith* (1996, 112) say: "Her plots are nonetheless well structured, and reveal that love of perfection and close, exacting discipline which she believed was one of the prerogatives of any potential writer". She described her characters rather objectively and with psychological depth. Her close analysis of character expressed a warm sense of humour and strong realism. Realism in her novels was shown in such faults of character as vanity, pride, and selfishness. Austen manifests this realism in different characters. Even from the first reading of the texts it is possible to deduce that Emma is the epitome of vanity, Mr. Darcy is the self-confessed proud gentleman, and that Mr. Collins is the embodiment of selfishness.

Jane Austen wrote only six important novels and several other narratives, but within them she demonstrated different styles of writing. *Sense and Sensibility* is a kind of a debate, *Pride and Prejudice* a love story, and *Northanger Abbey* a satire, a novel about novels and novel reading. Austen, even as a young writer, experimented with different styles of writing. According to Tomalin (1998, 155): "She was too inventive and too interested in the techniques of fiction to settle in any one mode, and she tackled the problems of three such diverse forms with astonishing skill". However, her first works took so long to complete that she was rewriting them and putting them on the shelf

before they were ready for publishing. Even then the publisher rejected them and it took even more years before the novels finally got to the readers. Austen had a difficulty in establishing reputation for her books at the turn of the eighteenth century. After her death in 1817, her popularity increased only slowly. Yet, there were also some positive critiques of her works. Richard Whateley, later the Archbishop of Dublin, wrote of her novels in the *Quarterly Review* in 1821 that they are “Christian basis of her morality” (Tomalin, 1998, 276). Macaulay praised in the *Edinburgh Review* her “supreme skill in drawing characters who appear both commonplace and unique, which he found akin to Shakespeare’s” (Tomalin, 1998, 276).

The Female Quixote

The Female Quixote was Charlotte Lennox’s most successful book, it was well received by the public after its first appearance. In few months it was published in its second edition and soon translated to German, Spanish, and French. This novel is famous for its commanding and powerful heroine, Arabella and for its prove of superiority of woman’s novel over romance. Arabella is a young heroine living in an isolation of a beautiful castle. As she loses her mother very early and has no other example to follow she turns to seventeenth-century romances. However, she takes them too seriously and expects people to behave like chivalric heroes and heroines from those books. Lennox describes in her novel “the disparity between societal expectations of women’s lives, and the lives they actually led” (spartacus schoolnet). At the end of the book Lennox expresses the strength of the social influence. Arabella is cured from her delusions of ordering men around and is taught that if she wants to life in this world she must follow men’s rules, since this is men’s world. This novel is highly evaluated from its female perspective, because it contains moments of social criticism in the eighteenth century.

It deals with purpose and definition of literature and its effect on women’s education. All these issues were thought of by other women writers of the post-Renaissance era. One of the greatest female writers who is said to be the patron saint of feminism, is Mary Wollstonecraft. She dealt with the issues of

female sensibility and education. Lennox was an important female writer from the view of feminism within the literature, “Lennox participated in transgenerational intellectual debates of great importance, and was a significant member of the tradition of British women writers.” (spartacus schoolnet).

S. Johnson and S. Richardson had an influence on the style in which was written *The Female Quixote*. They advised her and gave her encouragement: “Mrs. Lennox was fortunate in receiving both literary and practical assistance from Samuel Johnson and Samuel Richardson. Johnson had already played an active part in furthering her career.” (*Isles*, 1989, 419)

The Widow Barnaby

This novel was first published in 1838 and became popular very soon after its appearance. Martha, the heroine is both comic and vulgar, who awakens a feeling of embarrassment within the readers. She is a typical representative of a female relative who appears in most families. Yet the real main heroine of this novel is Barnaby’s niece, Agnes, who creates her future within this book.

Trollope describes the middle-class society of Clifton, Bristol, Cheltenham, and London. She discusses the life of both professional people and the aristocracy and the importance of a good marriage: “A world where marriage-alliances underline the social world of ‘taking the waters’, attending balls, visiting, promenading, and subscription libraries.” (spartacus schoolnet). This world is very much similar to that described by Jane Austen in her novels. Also Austen’s young ladies were attracted by men in uniforms, as for instance Lydia in *Pride and Prejudice*. Trollope and Austen were contemporaries and both concentrated on society of their time.

The Widow Barnaby begins by an introduction to the family history, which is situated in Devon at the turn of the eighteenth century. Trollope pictures the interaction of Martha within the society, when she is still a young lady in 1813: “We . . . recognise that the author is writing of the England she knew as a younger woman. Fanny Trollope was aged sixty when the book was published in 1839.” (spartacus schoolnet). This novel was followed by other two

novels, which continue in the widow's adventures. In 1840 appeared *The Widow Married* and in 1843 *The Barnabys in America*.

The first appearance of novel

The middle of the 18th century was an important time in literature, it was the time when the English novel was born. The appearance of the first English novel was a slow process starting by authors concentrating on the study of characters. Later, writers focused on writing stories of adventure. *Pamela*, a novel written in the form of letters, by Samuel Richardson came out in 1740. This work is different from mere stories of adventure, which had frequently appeared before. A novel examines human heart and shows effects of human character. This literary form was already commonly used by the writers creating during the era of Classicism. However, the popularity of the English novel is connected with appearance of Realism and Naturalism. While the Romantics wrote mostly lyrical poetry, epics or lyrical dramas in verse, novel became a popular literary form later in the eighteenth century.

Novelists wrote more about contemporary problems, their works reflected sharp social criticism and they wanted to give a broad description of English society. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, there started to appear so-called Gothic novels. They had exotic themes, especially from the Middle Ages and were full of horror and mystery. Their authors longed to escape from contemporary life and problems to a world based entirely of fantasy. However, novel as a literary form was starting to be popular shortly after its first appearance and soon became a dominant genre. During the Victorian Age (1837 – 1901), novel was the most popular and influential literary form. In the eighteenth century, the book market was already established, writers were not supported by their rich patrons anymore and they had to make their living by writing. The first novels were published in series to test their popularity, only then they were published as books.

The history of modern novel, according to Bishop Huet, is said to be dated to 1670, when the important romances were written by a woman writer Madeleine de Scudéry:

“The history of the novel as established by Huet offers much encouragement to women writers of prose fiction, and it is noticeable that a number of English women writers of prose fiction emerged and flourished in the decades after 1670. The influence of writers like Scudéry and others can be felt in non-fictional works”
(Doody, 1989, 16)

Romances underwent a decided change, which took place in England with remarkable speed from the early 1750s. Prose fiction written in the first half of the eighteenth century was circumscribed into Formal Realism: “The repudiation of the romance can be felt in novelistic works themselves in the 1740s, especially the late 1740s, and by the mid-1750s a whole gender of prose fiction is officially dead.” (Doody, 1989, 17). In the English-speaking world, novel has been dissociated from the romance since the mid-eighteenth century. However, this distinction remains an English characteristic because other nations make no difference between novel and romance, as Doody (1989, 18) says: “The French, Germans, and Italians make no equivalent effort to find another word, and le roman, Der Roman, etc., may cover many types of fiction”. According to this division within the literary gender all the works written by Burney, Lennox, Austen or Trollope are classified as novels.

II. Female Popular Reading during the 18th Century

Romances written during the first half of the seventeenth century were very popular in England, especially in the first half of the eighteenth century. Even though their plot consists in a love story full of heroic actions their background is usually supported by true historical events. They were excessively read by women and men, prove of which had left for us Alexander Pope in his work *The Rape of the Lock*, where the young Baron creates his altar of love “Of twelve vast French Romances, neatly gilt’. (Twelve of the romances could create a substantial altar of nearly a hundred volumes.)” (Doody, 1989, 15). Also Horace Walpole’s favourite reading during his study at Eton in the 1730s was the French romances. He was teased by his friend Henry Seymour Conway about his reading: “I remember you buried in romances and novels; I

really believe you could have said all the Grand Cyrus's, the Cleopatra's, and the Amadis's in the world by heart" (Doody, 1989, 15). Walpole's choice of literature was very similar to Lennox's Arabella and to her quixotic understanding of her reading. In Walpole's correspondence to George Montagu, on 6 May 1736, he describes the landscape of Eton College:

Were not the playing fields at Eton food for all manner of flights? No old maid's gown . . . ever underwent so many transformations, as those poor plains have in my idea. At first I was contented with tending a visionary flock, and sighing some pastoral name to the echo of the cascade under the bridge: how happy should I have been to have had a kingdom, only for the pleasure of being driven from it, and living disguised in an humble vale. As I got farther into Virgil and Clelia, I found myself transported from Arcadia, to the garden of Italy, and saw Windsor Castle in no other view than the *capitoli immobile saxum*.
(Doody, 1989, 16)

Horace Walpole, Charlotte Lennox, and other writers were brought up under the old habits of reading and had to receive a great shock in the change of fiction. The idea of prose fiction underwent a decided change and romance was repudiated in the 1740s. Even though Lennox read romances she did not write them herself as they got out of fashion by the time she started to write. *The Female Quixote* appeared in 1752 and Lennox was already forced to change the theme of writing, compare to that under which she was brought up. The question of romances was still within her and she used it at the beginning of her writing career. Formal realism took its place, yet despite other countries English literature dissociated romances and novels written since the mid-eighteenth century. As Doody (1989, 18) says: "the extreme wariness of 'romance' has remained an English characteristics, as linguistic use reflects; the French, Germans, and Italians make no equivalent effort to find another word, and *le roman*, *Der Roman*, etc., may cover many types of fiction".

The popularity of romances

There were writers in England and abroad who scorned mainly the ladies who were carried away by the absurdity of their reading. The French

wrote parodies of French romances, for example the *La Fausse Clélie* (1670). It was written by Adrien Thomas Perdou de Subligny and was translated into English in 1678 with the title *Mock-Clelia, or Madam Quixote*. Charlotte Lennox probably knew this book very well and wanted to ridicule her heroine, who was affected by romance reading, too: "This episode [from *Mock-Clelia, or Madam Quixote*] seems to be reflected in Lennox's scene in which Arabella defends the chastity of Cleopatra." (Doody, 1989, 23). Lennox's Arabella defends the chastity of Cleopatra as well as Subligny's Juliette d'Arviange, who identifies herself with the Clélie of Scudéry's romance:

But she [Cleopatra] was never ravished, I am certain; for she was too willing.

How! Sir, said Arabella: Was Cleopatra ever willing to run away with her Ravisher?

Cleopatra was a Whore, was she not, Madam? Said he.

Hold thy Peace, unworthy Man, said Arabella; and profane not the memory of that fair and glorious Queen, by such injurious Language: That Queen, I say, whose Courage was equal to her Beauty; and her Virtue surpassed by neither. Good Heavens! What a black Defamer have I chosen for my Protector!

(*The Female Quixote*, 1989, 105)

It seems that novels which describe heroines affected by romance reading are written in order to ridicule this kind of literary gender. There are novels, written in different countries, which seem to fulfil this role. The title of Lennox's *The Female Quixote* is an allusion to Miguel de Cervantes' novel *Don Quixote*. Cervantes' hero believes entirely in the chivalric romances, that he has read. In his life he acts out the role of the adventurous knight, who he encountered in his books. It is possible to look at this book as at an attempt to ridicule French romances and at an advice to get rid of them. However, Cervantes in this novel in fact studies the character of romance reading, as Doody (1989, 14) says: "This first modern study of the nature and effects of novel-reading is profound and paradoxical". To think that Cervantes wanted to prove his readers the ridicule of romance reading would mean not to pay attention to his other extensive pastoral romance *La Galatea* and to the fact that Cervantes created a new romance in his last novel *Persiles y Sigismunda*. In this novel Persiles is derived ultimately from Greek romance tradition, as for example the Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*, which was written in AD 250. In *The*

Female Quixote, Arabella is enamoured from this kind of romances, as were for example *Artamène, ou le grand Cyrus* and *Clélie*, the fictive works of Madeleine de Scudéry. Doody (1989, 14) says that *The Female Quixote* like *Don Quixote* “has often been treated as a very simple work, exhibiting only author’s ‘desire to ridicule the French heroic romances, and to point out their potentially harmful effects on the minds of inexperienced readers’”. Thus Lennox’s aim was not just to ridicule romances and their readers, but to study the value of romance and its effect on the reader.

Authors writing novels, concerning romance reading must have been themselves well read in those romances, which their characters found so addictive. Walpole read those romances while studying at Eton and Charlotte Lennox perhaps also read and reread them in her youth. In her novel she retells the stories of many romances, for example the adventures of Oroondates, the hero of Guathier de Costes de La Calprenède’s *Cassandra: the fam’d Romance*:

Yet this faithless Man ... gave so glorious a Proof of his Repentance and Sorrow, that the fair Queen restored him to her Favour, and held him in much dearer Affection than ever: For, after he was convinced of her Innocence, he was resolved to punish himself with a Rigour equal to the Fault he had been guilty of; and, retiring to the Woods, abandoned for ever the Society of Men; dwelling in a Cave, and living upon bitter Herbs, passing the Days and Nights in continual Tears and Sorrow for his Crime: And here he proposed to end his Life, had not the fair Thalestris found him out in this Solitude; and, struck with the Sincerity of his Repentance, pardoned him: and, as I have said before, restored him to her Favour.

(*The Female Quixote*, 1989, 126)

As Lennox had a good knowledge of those heroic romances, she could also understand the danger that they could have on an inexperienced reader. She chose this theme in her earlier novels: “Mockery of romance conventions is found in ‘Shallum to Hilpah’, one of the best of her *Poems*. More important, the dangers of romance-reading play a prominent part in her first novel, *The Life of Harriot Stuart*.” (Isles, 1989, 420). In *The Female Quixote*, Lennox chose her already-familiar subject and examined it even more deeply and comprehensively. She pointed out the difference between romance and

good fiction, expressed the positive value which brings the reading of good fiction and the harmful effects of romance reading. Her opinion on novels is well expressed in the chapter before the last where the Doctor a clergyman, who cures Arabella after falling into a river, tries to explain her the mistake of her believing entirely in those romances:

To the Names of many of these illustrious Sufferers [Olympia, Bellamira, Parisatis, . . .] I am an absolute Stranger, replied the Doctor.

The rest I faintly some Mention of in those contemptible Volumes, with which Children are sometimes injudiciously suffer'd to amuse their Imaginations; but which I little expected to hear quoted by your Ladyship in a serious Discourse.

. . . if I may not likewise complain of such contemptuous Ridicule as you are pleas'd to exercise upon my Opinions by opposing them with the Authority of Scribblers, not only of Fictions, but of senseless Fictions; which at once vitiate the Mind and prevent the understanding; and which if they are at any Time read with safety, owe their Innocence only to their Absurdity.
(*The Female Quixote*, 1989, 374)

Arabella has many problems with her altered behaviour thanks to the romance reading, but fortunately the Doctor succeeds and she comes to understanding of her folly. The end of the novel shows the reader that this kind of literature can be read only for entertainment without seriously considering its contents.

This sort of concluding explanation, which was aimed to Arabella and the readers, was as *Isles* (1989, 422) says probably influenced by Johnson: "She obviously had him in mind when she created Arabella's eventual saviour, 'the pious and learned Doctor –', and was heavily influenced by his ideas and phraseology in the penultimate chapter". *Isles* (1989, 422) also suggests that it is debated whether this chapter was written wholly or partly by Johnson himself: "there is absolutely no contemporary suggestion of his having written it; . . . structurally, the dialogue and argument are far below Johnson's standard . . . it would be best to regard this chapter . . . as Mrs. Lennox's until definite evidence to the contrary is found".

Lennox pointed out the lack of sensibility within the characters of romances. She showed that there was little that readers could learn from following heroines' examples. The writer describes the folly of Arabella who took

an example of her favourite heroine Clelia and wanted to live and behave in the same way:

‘This now, my fair Companions, said she, with a solemn Accent, that the Destinies have furnish’d you with an Opportunity of displaying in a Manner truly Heroick, the Sublimity of your Virtue, and the Grandeur of your Courage to the World.

The Action we have it in our Power to perform will immortalize our Fame, and raise us to a Pitch of Glory equal to that of the renown’d Clelia herself.

Like her, we may expect Statues erected to our Honour: Like her, be propos’d as Patterns to Heroines in ensuing Ages: And like her, perhaps, meet with Sceptres and Crowns for our Reward.

. . . If your Honour be dear to you, if an immortal Glory be worth your seeking, follow the example I shall set you, and equal with me the Roman Clelia.

Saying this, she plung’d into the Thames, intending to swim over it, as Clelia did the Tyber.

(*The Female Quixote*, 1989, 362)

To take an example of a literal hero and to learn something new about the way of thinking and behaving could be very enriching, however only in a sensible book. Lennox expressed the ridicule of following the examples of romance heroines without using own judgement. She also shows that the only purpose of those books is to read them for entertainment without any serious consideration of their contents.

However, although the plot cannot be taken too seriously romances reflect contemporary life much better than history books, as the first translator of *Le grand Cyrus* says: “the Intrigues and Miscarriages of War and Peace are better, many times, laid open and Satyriz’d in a Romance, than in a downright History, which being oblig’d to name the Persons, is often forc’d . . . to be too partial and sparing” (*Doody*, 1989, 22). Thus romances are not worthless completely; they contain true historical descriptions. Lennox’s Arabella reads in romances about important and well-known historical places and events. Lennox gives her a chance to compete with the knowledgeable gentleman Mr. Selvin: “He affected to be thought deep-read in History, and never failed to take all Opportunities of displaying his Knowledge of Antiquity, which was indeed but very superficial” (*The Female Quixote*, 1989, 264). All Arabella’s knowledge is gained from romance reading, however, she is able to give Mr. Selvin such view

of historical details that even he is taken aback. As they speak about the medicinal waters in Bath, Arabella surprises him by mentioning a historically important place with deep knowledge of details: "I am of an Opinion, added she, that Bath . . . is less frequented by infirm Persons, than the Springs of Thermopylae were by the Beauties of Greece, to whom those Waters have the reputation of giving new Lustre." (*The Female Quixote*, 1989, 265). It seems that Lennox let Arabella shock others with her knowledge gained from romances to show that their historical background contains information worth remembering, despite its insensible plot. In this way she pointed out that the style in which romances were written could misguide even an intelligent girl. They present the historical events and places so truly that it is difficult for inexperienced young girls to realise that the rest of the story is only a fiction. Lennox expressed an approval of Arabella's knowledge by admitting Mr. Selvin's ignorance upon this matter: "Mr. Selvin, who, with all his Reading, had never met with any Account of these celebrated Grecian Springs, was extremely disconcerted at not being able to continue a Conversation" (*The Female Quixote*, 1989, 265).

Elements of feminism are noticeable when Lennox allows a girl to exceed a man in knowledge. Not only that Arabella succeeds over a man, but also he cannot find the courage to admit his absence of information before a woman. To save his image of a knowledgeable gentleman he insists on being right. Lennox perhaps describes the state in society where the knowledge was expected only from a man. Certainly the other way round was considered as embarrassing:

The Shame he conceived at seeing himself posed by a Girl, in a Matter which so immediately belonged to him, made him resolve to draw himself out of this Dilemma at any Rate; and, though he was far from being convinced, that there were no such Springs at Thermopylae as Arabella mentioned; yet he resolutely maintained, that she must be mistaken in their Situation; for, to his certain Knowledge, there were no medicinal Waters at the Foot of that Mountain.
(*The Female Quixote*, 1989, 265)

Those facts about Thermopylae, which Arabella read in a romance, were correct; these springs really exist: "Thermopylai ("Warm Gates") takes its name

from the hot sulphurous springs around which a small spa has grown up.” (*Baedeker’s Greece*, 2000, 471). Not only that Lennox evaluated romance for its accurateness in history description, she also pictured the situation when a woman triumphs over a man. This is one of the moments within the book where it is possible to see elements of feminism.

The writer of that romance was in fact Arabella’s favourite French romance writer Scudéry, writing in the 17th century. In the novel she calls him historian because she believes him to write only about the truthful historical events. Had Mr. Selvin known this writer himself he could use this occasion to ridicule Arabella for her romance reading. Arabella admitted writer’s name and even his works, thinking that she speaks about a great historian. Scudéry was rather famous and it seems strange that a person so interested in reading had not heard about him. Yet it is possible that Lennox took the opportunity of expressing aversion of the English against the French, which during this time existed. She let Mr. Selvin be ignorant of this name and also let him say that he does not know him because of him being French. It seems that he does not read anything French because it is of a lower standard not worth him. And so when Arabella mentions the writer’s name Mr. Selvin expresses his ignorance of such author:

The great Scudéry was a Frenchman; and both his *Clelia* and *Artamenes* were written in French.

A Frenchman was he? said Mr. Selvin, with a lofty Air: Oh! Then, ‘tis not surprising, that I have not read him: I read no Authors, but the Antients, Madam, added he, with a Look of Self-applause; I cannot relish the Moderns at all: I have no Taste for their Way of Writing.

(*The Female Quixote*, 1989, 267)

Lennox supports women in expressing their knowledge in history as well as in their command of languages, since Arabella reads all the French romances in French. Yet while she is praising women for their knowledge and romances for containing truthful historical information, she does not forget to ridicule women for allowing the romances to affect them and romances for having such insensible plot. So while Arabella exceeds so well in knowledge over Mr. Selvin she also shows her weakness for believing the romance stories.

However, as Mr. Selvin does not read romances he cannot recognise the right moment when Arabella speaks truthful information and when misleading:

I protest, Madam, said Mr. Selvin, casting down his Eyes in great Confusion at her superior Knowledge in History, these Particulars have all escaped my Notice; and this is the first time I ever understood, that Pisistratus was violently in Love; and that it was not Ambition, which made him aspire to Sovereignty.
(*The Female Quixote*, 1989, 266)

Although Arabella gained a good knowledge of history through romances they affected her way of life and reasoning. In this novel Lennox describes the way of thinking of those girls turned by romances. Even though the world they live in is sensible and safe they create for themselves a feeling of unhappiness and being in danger. As their common sense is altered by their reading it is not possible for them to see the reality of the modern world. Also Arabella imagines that she is in a great danger of being kidnapped by her ravisher:

Well, cried she, taking one of the Letters, this is exactly like what happen'd to the beautiful Princes of Cappadocia; who, like me, in one and the same Day, receiv'd Advice that two of her Lovers intended to carry her off.

. . . . If what he says is true, replied Arabella, who had been in extreme Confusion, while a Letter so different from what she expected was reading; I have indeed unjustly condemned him. Nevertheless, I am still inclin'd to believe this is all Artifice; and that he is really guilty of entertaining a Passion for me.
(*The Female Quixote*, 1989, 293-295)

Other Lennox's aspect of Arabella, beside her altered common sense, is her strong-mindedness. It is not easy to teach her contemporary social behaviour, which thanks to her reading she is unaware of. On the contrary, she always tries to teach people around her the way she expects them to behave. Arabella, according to her heroines, uses signs instead of commands yet this kind of communication is not easily understood to those who are not acquainted with it: "she made a Sign to him to retire; . . . But, finding he did not obey her, for really he was quite unacquainted with these Sorts of dumb Commands, she hastily retired to her Closet" (*The Female Quixote*, 1989, 36). Despite Arabella's strange even improper behaviour Lennox did not let her act completely rudely. It was her sweet behaviour that balanced the oddity of her manners: "Her bidding

him so peremptorily to leave the House, would have equally persuaded him of her Ignorance and Ill-breeding, had not the Elegance of her Manners, in every other respect, proved the contrary" (*The Female Quixote*, 1989, 37). Thus Arabella is pictured as a girl without common sense yet very sweet and kind. In this way Lennox gains readers' interest in her story and reaches their satisfaction by a happy ending.

Romances grew out of fashion and people were interested more in real life stories than in fiction. They started to look upon this kind of literature as childish, not worth reading. This fact is well expressed by Arabella when she tries to gain Glanville for the admiration of those books that she loves so much. She does not succeed in drawing him into her world. Lennox expresses through Glanville the opinion of romances within the contemporary society. Even though they were so popular still in 1730s, in the time of publishing of this novel Lennox already describes the change in literature when people disregarded romances as boring and valueless. So this is why Glanville feels so discussed when Arabella asks him to read her favourite passages:

Therefore pray read the whole Transaction. Stay! Here it begins, continued she; turning over a good many pages, and marking where he should begin to read.

Glanville, having no great Stomach to the Task, endeavoured to evade it, by interchanging his Cousin to relate the Passages she desired he should be acquainted with: But she declining it, he was obliged to obey; and began to read where she directed him: And, to leave him at Liberty to read with greater Attention, she left him, and went to a Window at another End of the Chamber.

Mr. Glanville, who was not willing to displease her, examined the Task she had set him, resolving, if it was not a very hard one, to comply; but, counting the Pages, he was quite terrified at the Number, and could nor prevail upon himself to read them.

(*The Female Quixote*, 1989, 50)

After 1740s and 1750s romances gained the reputation of worthless reading. Glanville expresses this opinion about romances, which belonged to the contemporary society. He does not want to read them because he already knows their senseless contents, as Doody (1989, 26) says: "Glanville merely rejects the books, on the vague grounds of fashion and hearsay". Also Samuel Richardson in *The History of Sir Charles Grandison* (1753-4) deals with the subject of demise of romance. One of his characters, Mrs. Shirley gives her

opinion of the senseless value of romances: “The reading in fashion when I was young, was Romances’, adding, ‘You, my children, have in that respect, fallen into happier days.’ “ (Doody, 1989, 26). In her youth she was so taken in by romances that she nearly could not appreciate the qualities of her lover: “what was a good sort of man to an Oroonates?” “ (Doody, 1989, 26). From this quotation it is evident that the question of romances was very popular at the time when they got out of fashion. They were exchanged for more realistic prose, which was getting still more popular.

All in all it seems that Lennox is more for romances than against them. Her novel expresses good points of romances as well as the danger of getting misguided. She also makes clear the distinction between romances and novels that were written after the 1740s. In Lennox’s last novel *Euphemia*, the heroine’s mother scorns her for reading romances. However, Lennox in the name of the heroine defends this kind of reading:

I perceived the book was lettered on the back, it was Sidney’s Arcadia; I smiled. ‘That is a romance, is it not, Madam?’ said Mrs. Bellenden; ‘Clara is very fond of those sort of books, too fond I think.’ Clara blush’d, and seemed apprehensive of more rebukes on this subject. ‘It is a romance, Madam,’ said I, ‘but it is a very ingenious work, and contains excellent lessons of morality’ ” (Doody, 1989, 32)

The popularity of the Gothic novel

Other novel where the heroine strongly believes in fiction is Jane Austen’s *Northanger Abbey*. A writer who perhaps influenced Austen most on the point of writing about the folly of valuing literature over life is Charlotte Lennox, whose *The Female Quixote* appeared in 1752: “Austen clearly seems to have had Arabella in mind when she wrote up the first of the two great disillusionment scenes in *Northanger Abbey*.” (Castle, 1990, 14). On the contrary from Arabella, who is turned by romances, Catherine the main heroine is misguided by Gothic novel. *Northanger Abbey*, Austen’s satire on a Gothic novel, introduces its heroine Catherine Morland as Austen’s weakest heroine. She is not a heroine by any of the usual rules of fiction. She is neither clever nor beautiful, she is not accomplished in anything and has no admirers, surprisingly for this genre of literature she is just an ordinary girl. Catherine is not strong in

her opinions; she cannot speak up for herself and grasps only the most rudimentary literature. As *Castle* (1990, 7) makes up from Austen's description about her character:

she exhibits "neither a bad heart nor a bad temper", but she has "no taste for a garden"; her French is "not remarkable"; her skill at drawings "not superior"; and she has "no chance" of throwing a party into raptures by a "prelude on the pianoforte". Books she has learned to like, but only when they are "all story and no fiction".

However, it would be terribly unfair and inaccurate to ignore the depth and the genuine passion of this superficially insignificant heroine. Perhaps the real Catherine is quite different from the perceived weak character, which many readers discover. In truth Catherine is full of freshness, honesty, and an openness to love which at that time when financial reasons, not love, decided a marriage is remarkably poignant and refreshing. She is full of passion and fantasies found in the gothic novels and fiction but these fantasies never seem to come true. To add insult to injury, she discovers that they can even destroy her chances of love: "The visions of romance were over. Catherine was completely awakened. Henry's address, short as it had been, had more thoroughly opened her eyes to the extravagance of her late fancies" (*Northanger Abbey*, 1990, 159). She falls in love with the first man who dances with her. With him she is unsure whether to laugh or to be serious about the things that he talks about. Catherine's sweet character makes her very agreeable, in spite of her foolishness over believing her novels to be real. Indeed, one could suggest that it is her very foolishness and innocence, which makes her quite so warm and personable. Just as Don Quixote the eponymous hero is loved all around the world for his near madness induced by chivalric tales, Catherine is to be loved for her well-meaning, though often foolish, ways.

Austen assaults the contemporary Gothic fiction, her novel *The Northanger Abbey* is a burlesque on Mrs. Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, which appeared in 1794. When Austen started to write her novel, this book was probably the most widely read in Europe: "Radcliffe's novel went through numerous editions and spawned a host of imitations at home and abroad. To debunk such a work - however insouciantly - was to debunk one of the

cherished icons of late-eighteen-century popular taste.” (*Castle*, 1990, 11). Austen makes fun of the excesses of the Gothic novel such as mysterious old buildings, the terrors of the night, lights suddenly extinguishing or suspicious deaths. In her novel she sets up a superficial resemblance to contrast her fiction and Radcliffe’s. The latter creates romantic situations in her book; Austen makes the same situations but comically unromantic. She sets them in the midland counties of England, rather than the fantastical world of impenetrable castles, gloomy convents, and banditti in France and Italy: “By this method of ironic dislocation, Austen both acknowledged her powerful precursor and signalled her separation from her: to parody Radcliffe was also to escape her.” (*Castle*, 1990, 11). Yet Austen’s novel is more than just an anti-Radcliffean parody, it also describes how it could interfere with readers’ lives.

Austen shows how easy it is for an eighteen-year-old girl to believe the literature to describe real life experiences and to behave like if she is half-asleep. The heroine of *Northanger Abbey* Catherine Morland is a foolish young girl because she believes in what she has read rather than what she can see:

“I never look at it,” said Catherine, as they walked along the side of the river, “without thinking of the south of France.”

“You have been abroad then?” said Henry, a little surprised.

“Oh! No, I only mean what I have read about. It always puts me in mind of the country that Emily and her father travelled through, in the *Mysteries of Udolpho*.”

(*Northanger Abbey*, 1990, 82)

Catherine cannot see the real landscape that is in front of her without comparing it to the one which she has read about in her book. She lets her book come between her and real life. The source of Austen’s irony in this case is the fact that “Radcliffe herself had never been to the south of France and composed her own often fanciful descriptions of its terrain only after consulting guidebooks.” (*Castle*, 1990, 13).

Catherine’s problem is that she believes too much in her books and she trusts people perhaps too much. This results in situations where people whom she thought were her friends deceive her. Austen puts Catherine’s problem into a larger context and blames the society, as *Castle* (1990, 19) says: “Catherine has been made stupid – by a society, which fails to honour the

intelligence of its female members". Austen believed that the reason why her heroine was not able to think is that she had never been taught to think by society. Her lack of education made her ignorant. Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) explains that society kept women in a state of intellectual childishness. Novels, poetry, and conduct-books, which were patronized by men, were aimed to keep women in a state of mental and emotional dependence: "As a result, most women were either foolish or vicious" (Castle, 1990, 14). Women were brought up only to please men and because of this they failed to develop their own judgement and understanding, as Wollstonecraft wrote:

Told from their infancy, and taught by the example of their mothers, that a little knowledge of human weakness, justly termed cunning, softness of temper, outward obedience, and a scrupulous attention to a puerile kind of propriety, will obtain for them the protection of a man.
(Castle, 1990, 18)

Wollstonecraft called for a revolution in female manners, which would return them to their rational thinking equal to men. She wanted to reform women and them to reform the world. Also Austen repeatedly connects Catherine's failure to think with the society which did not teach her to do so. Young ladies lacked education, which they received only from their mothers and in this way the female folly was repeated from generation to generation. There were not many women who could educate their daughters in logical reasoning. Wollstonecraft wrote so, in her *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*:

To do everything in an orderly manner is a most important precept, which women, who, generally speaking, receive only a disorderly kind of education, seldom attend to with that degree of exactness that men, who from their infancy are broken into method, observe. This negligent kind of guesswork – for what other epithet can be used to point out the random exertions of a sort of instinctive common sense never brought to the test of reason? – prevents their generalizing matters of fact; so they do today what they did yesterday, merely because they did it yesterday.
(Castle, 1990, 20)

Austen used Catherine to explicate the behaviour of girls educated according to the needs of society. No one has ever shown Catherine, who was educated only by her mother, that she might be anything other than a foolish creature.

She does not get any advice even from other older women. Perhaps this is why she turns to her books of fiction for advice about the world.

Catherine's enlightenment comes about with the help of Henry Tilney. He does not tell her what to think but rather that she can think. For example when Catherine asks him why his brother flirts with her friend who is engaged, Henry refuses to answer and forces her to think about it on her own:

"But what can your brother mean? If he knows her engagement, what can he mean by his behaviour?"

"You are a very close questioner."

"Am I? – I only ask what I want to be told."

"But do you only ask what I can be expected to tell?"

"Yes, I think so; for you must know your brother's heart."

"My brother's heart, as you term it, on the present occasion, I assure you I can only guess at."

"Well?"

"Well! – Nay, if it is to be guess-work, let us all guess for ourselves. To be guided by second-hand conjecture is pitiful. The premises are before you."

(*Northanger Abbey*, 1990, 119)

Austen understands that by leaving women on their own and treating them as intellectual equals they can succeed in the liberation of their mind. This is how Henry treats Catherine and she does succeed. When she faces her biggest challenge, namely how to judge Henry's father, she is on her own but through claiming her own powers of mind she reaches the inner freedom on her own for the first time. The marriage of Henry and Catherine is delightful yet symbolical: "Catherine, by choosing Henry, retains her newly discovered intellectual freedom. By loving the one person who refuses to condescend to her, she demonstrates - joyfully – that condescension is no longer necessary." (*Castle*, 1990, 24).

However, understanding men does not mean the only way of escape from women's folly. Austen believes in the power of fiction, which could transfer opinions from one woman to another. A novelist who can express her own power of mind is an example for her female readers. Even though *Northanger Abbey* was one of Austen's early novels she realized that the novel itself could be an instrument of enlightenment. She wanted her readers to form their own opinions, to pay attention, work things out for themselves, recognize when she

is joking and when not: “by inviting us to exert our own ‘powers of mind’ as we read, Austen affirms her faith in us – that we might indeed become, male and female alike, that ideal reader for whom she writes” (Castle, 1990, 25). Austen refuses to make the world around her ideal. One of Austen’s critics, Julia Kavanaugh, in her *English Women of Letters* in 1862 said, “She refused to build herself, or to help to build for others, any romantic ideal of love, virtue, or sorrow.” (Castle, 1990, 25).

The popularity of magazines

The popularity of literature diversified from romances, gothic novels, and novels. Yet the reading that is popular all the time, since the seventeenth century until today, is the magazine:

“The growth of popular literary forms at this time [late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries], and their characteristic attention to women’s concerns, especially in the novel and the popular periodical, played a key role in this process [reformulating sexual relations and the family].”
(Nováková, 2000, 45)

Authors of magazines and novels used their works to show women how they could change their life; they played an important process of feminisation. For example Jane Austen, who in *Northanger Abbey* taught Catherine to think for herself, or Charlotte Burney who allowed Evelina to choose a partner that she wanted. The same role played the magazines directed for women: “the popular periodical became a primary locus of the feminization of discourse” (Nováková, 2000, 46).

The first periodical that was written by women and addressed solely to females was *The Female Spectator*. It was based on the tradition of *The Tattler* and *The Spectator*. Its first woman editor was Eliza Haywood and her aim was to improve the morals and the manners of that age. As Nováková (2000, 47) says, E. Haywood as an editor “seeks to resolve a number of contradictions for the women in this period”. This is why she split herself into four imaginative contributors who all contribute for *The Female Spectator*. She chose those roles very carefully to cover all the necessary subjects that she wanted to discuss. For three of them the main distinction is the marital status:

There is an unnamed widow; Mira, wife to a worthy gentleman; and the virgin daughter of a wealthy merchant, Euphrosine. Significantly, only the anonymous editor herself is defined without reference to a man, in the only profession available to the respectable middle-class woman, that of the writer.

(Nováková, 2000, 47)

This periodical was mainly directed for those women who lost their way and followed folly. It was there for them in order to help them to find their way. The usual content was a long essay with stories or letters, which were supposed to educate. Their didactic outcome was always reviewed in the commentary at the end. This was the style in which the magazine tried to enlighten the female sex:

Moral attitudes are thus graphically demonstrated by examples in the Horatian dulce et utile pattern. Topics are limited: no politics or intrigue, not even the 1745 rebellion . . . but concentration on proper behaviour, honesty, taste, nature, excess of dress, and education. The primary subject, however, is love and marriage.

(Nováková, 2000, 48)

In this way it is obvious that Eliza Haywood goes against the rules of the contemporary society. She presents women as intelligent and reasonable beings. However, she does not try to free women from their domestic roles, on the contrary she wants them to understand these roles as necessary ones. As Haywood says herself:

. . . would it not be better if she performs those duties more through principle than custom, and will she be less punctual in her observance of them, after she becomes a wife, for being perfectly convinced, before she is so, of the reasonableness of them, and why they are expected from her?

(Nováková, 2000, 48)

The Female Spectator followed the popular tradition and wanted to prove its reality by presenting its material in the form of letters. By this it wanted to create the impression of readers' direct participation in the periodical. So the magazine dealt with concrete problems usually connected with marriage. Its function was to provide space for intimate and private discussion to which Nováková (2000, 48) says: "The magazine functions as 'surrogate family, providing an intimate and private space for the discussion of issues to which even, or perhaps especially, a mother cannot be made privy". Throughout the time, the magazine

changed from the epistolary periodical to a woman magazine, which keeps personal relationship with its readers.

From the mid-eighteenth century onward the magazine concentrated on the subject of achieving marital happiness. *The Female Spectator* became only a magazine for women and was separated from the public spheres. So the newspaper dealing with the public issues is defined as masculine yet the magazine dealing with private issues is thought of as feminine. Haywood expressed herself on this matter:

Several of the topics he reproaches me for not having touched upon, come not within the province of a *Female Spectator*, - such as armies marching, - battles fought, - towns destroyed, - rivers crossed and the like: - I should think that it ill became me to take up my own, or reader's time, with such accounts as are every day to be found in the public papers.
(Nováková, 2000, 50)

Even though women magazines, as *The Female Spectator*, presented only female and private issues their role was not wholly insignificant. It greatly helped women to gain a better status within the society.

Women magazines and magazines in general were extremely popular, which proves even Jane Austen in *Northanger Abbey*. However, surprisingly she expresses her dislike of this kind of literature gender. The point that she makes is how unfair it is that a novel being so professional is decried yet magazines, as she says "collectors of lines", eulogized. She speaks about the situation in society where novels are underestimated and degraded, not only by readers but also by authors themselves: "custom so common with novel writers, of degrading by their contemptuous censure the very performances, . . . bestowing the harshest epithets on such works, and scarcely ever permitting them to be read by their own heroine." (*Northanger Abbey*, 1990, 21). On the contrary from those authors Austen allowed her heroine to find a protection in other heroine. That is why Catherine is so enwrapped in Emily, the heroine of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. The reason why Austen lets Catherine find protection in a novel heroine is that Catherine does not find it in the real society. In this way Jane Austen criticizes the society which does not provide education for girls and lets them grow up without any advice on their actions: "if the

heroine of one novel be not patronized by the heroine of another, from whom can she expect protection and regard?" (*Northanger Abbey*, 1990, 21). Austen tries to make the distinction between novels and, as she says other literary corporation. She wants to explain the superiority of the style of novels and the injustice for not being appreciated: "Although our productions have afforded more extensive and unaffected pleasure than those of any other literary corporation in the world, no species of composition has been so much decried." (*Northanger Abbey*, 1990, 21).

It was due to ignorance and fashion that a novel had so many enemies and the magazines were so admired. As Austen says: "the abilities of the nine-hundredth abridger of the History of England, or of the man who collects and publishes in a volume some dozen lines of Milton, Pope, and Prior, with a paper from the Spectator, and a chapter from Sterne, are eulogized by a thousand pens." (*Northanger Abbey*, 1990, 22). There was no real reason why novels were thought to be so invaluable since their content was worth of good quality. However, magazines were popular and people were not ashamed of their reading. In fact, as Jane Austen comments, they were proud of it despite their valueless contents:

Now, had the same young lady been engaged with a volume of the Spectator, instead of such a work, how proudly would she have produced the book, and told its name; though the chances must be against her being occupied by any part of that voluminous publication, of which either the matter or manner would not disgust a young person of taste: the substance of its papers so often consisting in the statement of improbable circumstances, unnatural characters, and topics of conversation, which no longer concern any one living; and their language, too, frequently so coarse as to give no very favourable idea of the age that could endure it.

(*Northanger Abbey*, 1990, 22).

Jane Austen is a great novel supporter and sees the great power within these books. She uses them, in the contrast from romances, as a force of enlightenment and also great entertainment. She expresses the difference within these books. She shows those that have no real message and can only turn young ladies heads as happened to Catherine with reading *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. She is an enthusiast about the form of a good novel: "the greatest

powers of the mind are displayed, in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humour are conveyed to the world in the best chosen language.” (*Northanger Abbey*, 1990, 22). Despite Austen’s criticism of women magazines, they played a great role in the course of women enlightenment. Thus even *The Female Spectator* is an important element that was of assistance along the way of feminization.

III. Women’s Enlightenment

Female writers, especially during the second half of the eighteenth century and at the turn of the eighteenth century, used their works as the means of women’s enlightenment. They recognized the need of women becoming equal to men. The only way to start this movement was to write about it in their stories. Thus novels and magazines became the centres of discussions of female matters, which needed improvement on the way of feminization. However, as those writers were women as well, they had to overcome even more obstacles when they tried to get their works published. Yet, this difficulty in publishing expresses the contemporary position of woman within society. It demonstrates the restrictions, which were placed on women, and also the behaviour that male society demanded of them.

Female writers and their role within the society

A parallel can be recognised between Burney, the way she was brought up, and her heroine Evelina. Both of them were brought up very prudishly and as adults they behaved excessively modest, Burney in her real life and Evelina within the book. Burney was a shy woman obsessed by concealment in order to avoid disgrace, as *Bloom* (1982, 13) says: ”Had she been more self-confident and less the child of a culture that still looked askance at fiction, she would have grasped that her novel was as blameless as her life.” Evelina, as well as Burney, behaves with discretion in the society and tries to avoid public criticism, as is shown on a situation where Evelina desperately wants to stay concealed:

“Fearing to be known, I whispered Miss Branghton not to speak my name. Had I considered but a moment, I should have been sensible of the inutility of such a caution, since not one of the party call me by any other appellation than that of Cousin, or of Miss; but I am perpetually involved in some distress or dilemma from my own heedlessness.”
(*Evelina*, 1982, 243)

Evelina’s goodness and discreteness makes it very difficult for her to resist stronger characters than herself. Unfortunately, her closest relative Madame Duval, who also has the right to decide her future, is a difficult character to manage. Evelina has difficulties in dealing with her grandmother but also with her relatives the Branghton’s:

‘Goodness, then,’ cried young Branghton, ‘if I was Miss, if I would not make free with his Lordship’s coach to take me to town.’
‘Why ay,’ said the father, ‘there would be some sense in that; that would be making some use of a Lord’s acquaintance, for it would save us coach-hire.’
‘Lord, Miss,’ cried Polly, ‘I wish you would, for I should like of all things to ride in a coronet coach!’
‘I promise you,’ said Madame Duval, ‘I’m glad you’ve thought of it, for I don’t see no objection; - so let’s have the coachman called.’
‘Not for the world,’ cried I, very much alarmed, ‘indeed it is utterly impossible.’
‘Why so?’ demanded Mr. Branghton; ‘pray where’s the good of your knowing a Lord, if you’re never the better for him?’
‘Ma foi, child,’ said Madame Duval, ‘you don’t know more of the world than if you was a baby. Pray, Sir, (to one of the footmen), tell that coachman to draw up, for I wants to speak to him.’
(*Evelina*, 1982, 244)

It is difficult for Evelina to put up a word for herself. She is shy and wants to be discrete in every situation; it is hard for her to get others to accept her decision. Evelina’s behaviour points out the difficulty of being discrete. On one side, the society requires women to be brought up in modesty and to let men act. On the other side, under this condition ladies have no other choice than to submit to the decisions of others. Burney expressed her own feelings of self denial in *Evelina*. She had to leave her brother to deal with the publishers and even in order to stay concealed she wanted to publish her book anonymously: “Their first choice, the reputable bookseller Dodsley, refused to consider the anonymous work. (*Bloom*, 1982, 9).

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries women writers had problems with publishing their works under their names. Their books were accepted by the publishers with difficulty. Also when the books were just out people were prejudiced to by them, if signed by a woman. Another difficulty was to resist possible criticism, which was Burney's constant fear, because she was made by her publisher sign her work. She expressed her fears as follows, "I am frighten out of my wits from the terror of being attacked as an author, and therefore shirk, instead of seeking, all occasions of being drawn into notice." (Bloom, 1982, 7). Her novel became successful very soon after being published and it seems that Burney had nothing to fear just to enjoy her success. There were people who tried to support her and encourage her but also those who made it difficult for her to stay unnoticed in the public eye:

'the more the book is drawn into notice, the more exposed it becomes to criticism and remark'. Like Crisp and Johnson, Mrs. Thrale tried to fortify her, to make her less afraid of notoriety. After a pamphlet, *Warley: a Satire* (by the Reverend George Huddesford), named 'dear little Burney' the author of *Evelina*, Fanny was extravagantly upset; . . . she was 'shocked, mortified, grieved, and confounded' to learn about the pamphlet, which apparently she had not seen. 'I had always dreaded as a real evil my name's getting into print – but to be lugged into a pamphlet! . . . So now the murder's out!' "

(Bloom, 1982, 13)

She was not alone who was restricted by the society. Jane Austen had to publish all her books anonymously in order to follow the 18th century conventions when "no career other than marriage was open to women at her time. Women writers, no matter how good they were, found it quite difficult to sell their books under their own names even in the first half of the 20th century. That is why many of them used male pen names." (Brendlová, Nový, 1998, 21). For instance, Mary Ann Evans (1819-1880) also had to find a way to get her books published, sold, and to keep her privacy. That is why her whole creation is known under the name of George Eliot. The Brontë sisters are also a very good example: Emily became Ellis Bell, Charlotte used the pseudonym of Currer Bell and Anne Brontë was Acton Bell. Perhaps it is possible to say that women writers were discriminated in a certain way from the public life and if they wanted to participate in it they had to find their own way of doing it. Actually

this is the main story of *Evelina*. At the beginning shy, inexperienced, not-knowing how to behave in the society. Yet Burney prepared for her such characters that she has to meet and situations that she has to undergo that she realises how the society works, how to stay modest and yet to be socially accepted. In fact, this entire novel is about finding the way to be good but to be aware of the wrong and to know how to deal with it.

Charlotte Lennox was not an exception; she also found it difficult to present her works to the publishers especially under her own name. Some people thought her work to be unoriginal even banal: "Lennox was anxiously securing access to the press, and beginning her career as a writer – some might say a hack writer." (Doody, 1989, 8). Although she did not sign her first book *Poems on Several Occasions* by her name she only wrote there "By a Young Lady", which on its own was quite courageous in declaring her sex. Yet her other works she signed only as The Author. Lennox was different from Burney in the sense that she was not shy about public relations and she made herself known to her fellow writers. As Doody (1989, 8) says: "[she] secured . . . through Johnson, an introduction to Samuel Richardson, . . . fresh from the triumphant appearance of his *Clarissa*". Richardson was her adviser and an agent in the preparation of *The Female Quixote* for the press. It is very probable that she was acquainted also with Henry Fielding: "Fielding's *Covent-Garden Journal* gave a surprisingly favourable notice of *The Female Quixote*." (Doody, 1989, 8). With the help of those gentlemen she found it easier to enter the literary society. Doody (1989, 7) explains that Lennox's fight to survive as a woman writer, having no other income, led to an extreme poverty:

She appealed to the Royal Literary Fund, which . . . supplied her with twenty pounds because of urgent distress, and in 1803 established an allowance out of the Fund of one guinea a week for life. She was not long to enjoy this humble pension; she died in 1804, poverty-stricken."

It is noticeable from her characters that she was conscious of being close to poverty through her life. The heroines of Lennox's middle period are all hard up: "Henrietta and Sophia are shown earning their living. (In the later *Euphemia* the heroine is at last provided for, but only in the confines of a dismally unhappy

marriage.)” (Doody, 1989, 14). Thus, even though Lennox wrote several books, which became famous very shortly after their publishing, it was very difficult in the eighteenth century to make a living only out of writing.

Austen also had problems to establish herself as a writer at the turn of the 18th century. It was not possible for her to deal with the publisher on her own, she had to use an agent and because her father was an intelligent man, interested in literature, he took up this charge. Her first novel ready for publishing was *First Impressions*. Her father thought very well of it so he wrote to the publisher whether he would consider it. What is more Mr Austen well knew himself that he cannot present the book as the work of a woman writer and as Tomalin (1998, 122) mentions: “He did not name an author but simply indicated that he had ‘in my possession a Manuscript Novel, comprised in three Vols. About the length of Miss Burney’s *Evelina*’, . . . His letter was answered with unusual rapidity for a publisher: ‘Declined by Return of Post’ is written across the top”. This refusal meant that *First Impressions* was rewritten into *Pride and Prejudice*. It is possible that *First Impressions* was already a very good novel and did not really need rewriting, perhaps this declination could have underestimate Jane Austen at the beginning of her creation: “from what we know of her juvenile writing, and to have pleased her father so much – you may also believe that, with publication and success in 1798, Austen might have written another equally good novel before 1800.” (Tomalin, 1998, 122).

The submissive role of women

Austen understood eighteenth century conventions, which recommended women to be submissive. This social force made it difficult for women to live up to their own ideas. Yet, she knew that women should make their decisions in their lives in order to be happy with their position in the society: “Whatever the conduct books might say to recommend retiring and submissive behaviour on the part of young ladies, the economic facts of life might dictate that a young lady should put herself forward and make an effort, entering the adventurous bustle of the world. (Doody, 1998, 8). When Austen wanted to publish and sell her books, she herself experienced how limited

possibilities women had in the society. Those conflicts with contemporary conventions she tried to point out in her works and in them it is possible to recognise the starting feminism. In *Lady Susan* Austen seems to express through her heroine her rebellion against being passive and the will to free her mind. She describes the social order in which women are forced to compete with men in order to survive:

That tormenting creature Reginald is here. My letter, which was intended to keep him longer in the country, has hastened him to Town. Much as I wish him away however, I cannot help being pleased with such proof of attachment. He is devoted to me, heart and soul. He will carry this note himself, which is to serve as an Introduction to you, with whom he longs to be acquainted. Allow him to spend the Evening with you, that I may be in no danger of his returning here.

(*Lady Susan*, 1990, 261)

Although the heroine Lady Susan is a villain and behaves cruelly she is also a survivor, a woman who refuses to become a victim. *Castle* (1990, 28) suggests that: "Austen half-identifies with her heroine's incorrigible will to power, her gaiety, her erotic rebelliousness, her triumphant contempt for all 'romantic nonsense' that keeps other women subservient." Austen cannot bring herself to disagree with the submissive female authority of her character and she adores this more complex kind of domination: "Austen seems to express through her heroine something of her own 'rebellious heart and indelicate feelings' – her own irreverence, pride, and radical freedom of spirit." (*Castle*, 1990, 28).

Austen did not agree with the role of women in the society as a subservient being and she referred to it in her books, yet in the real life she behaved according to all customs and traditions. *Sense and Sensibility* is a good example to show Austen's concern about discretion, polite lies, and carefully preserved privacy on one hand, and transparency, truth telling, and freely expressed emotion on the other. She presents the conflict in behaviour through two sisters: Elinor and Marianne. One of them represents the traditional hypocrisy and the other open and truthful behaviour. In 1790 this question of behaviour was publicly debated, "as part of a wider political discussion, with radical writers like William Godwin and Robert Bage favouring the complete openness practised by Marianne, conservatives insisting that the preservation

of the social fabric requires an element of secrecy and hypocrisy.” (*Tomalin*, 1998, 155). Austen, at the beginning of the novel is in favour of behaviour, which is in accordance with the contemporary social rules. From the very start of the novel she shows how important and right it is to behave according to the social necessity of discretion, if not lying. Elinor refuses to share her problems and sorrows even with her own much loved sister:

Elinor, the eldest daughter whose advice was so effectual, possessed a strength of understanding, and coolness of judgement, which qualified her, though only nineteen, to be the counsellor of her mother, and enabled her frequently to counteract, to the advantage of them all, that eagerness of mind in Mrs. Dashwood which must generally have led to imprudence. She had an excellent heart; her disposition was affectionate, and her feelings were strong: but she knew how to govern them: it was a knowledge which her mother had yet to learn, and which one of her sisters had resolved never to be taught.
(*Sense and Sensibility*, 1994, 4)

Elinor even says that it is a duty to “tell lies when politeness requires it”. She is determined to behave according to the social rules even though she disagrees with them. At first it seems that Jane Austen agrees with this behaviour but later in the novel we can see her opinion changing. She starts to take the side of Marianne.

At first Marianne’s inability to lie is shown as silly. The way that she dramatizes her emotions only makes things more difficult for others. Marianne is following her heart and that takes her into unconventional and risky behaviour. She sends letters to her lover Willoughby and behaves as if they were engaged even though they are far from it, in any eighteenth century notion:

“And now,” silently conjectured Elinor, “She will write to Combe by this day’s post.”
But if she did, the letter was written and sent away with a privacy that eluded all her watchfulness to ascertain the fact. Whatever the truth of it may be, and far as Elinor was from feeling through contentment about it, yet while she saw Marianne spirits, she could not be very uncomfortable herself. And Marianne was in spirits, happy in the mildness of the weather, and still happier in her expectation of frost.”
(*Sense and Sensibility*, 1994, 161)

Marianne’s honestly expressed feelings are not silly at all. Most probably they belong also to Jane Austen. However, she would never speak as openly as

Marianne in public herself. Austen understood how dangerous it was to express emotions in society in terms of the effect it could have on reputation and feelings. *Tomalin* (1998, 156) suggests that “survival in society means you cannot afford to live with Marianne’s openness, at least not if you are an unprotected woman. Marianne’s behaviour is wrong in the light of this social fact: Jane Austen learnt quickly enough herself”. It is almost certain that Jane Austen thought and acted at least in social life very differently. She believed in sincere self-expression and honesty yet at the same time it would have been extremely difficult for her to actively endorse her thoughts in social reality. As she showed in this novel sincere behaviour is preferable over conservative (or to put it bluntly dishonest) behaviour. From Austen’s critique of the contemporary society, it is obvious that she did not agree with the conventions of being tactfully dishonest in social life, as well as with the subservient role that 18th century society required from a woman.

Jane Austen described the social roles of men and women in 18th century England. The passages where Anne Elliot gives her reasons for this matter are perhaps also shared by the author. Austen clearly understood the conventions of her time and knew that there was nothing one could do about them apart from living with them. However, she lets Anne Elliot speak her mind and convey to her readers Austen’s opinion and disagreement. She blames the social role of women, which forces them to be strong, and which results in keeping their lives in isolation. She points out that men have the advantage to have jobs or professions to keep them occupied but blames this fact for the loss of feeling:

Captain “It [to forget a lover] would not be the nature of any woman who truly loved.”

Harville smiled, as much as to say, “do you claim that for your sex?”

“Yes. We certainly do not forget you so soon as you forget us. It is perhaps, our fate rather than our merit. We cannot help ourselves. We live at home, quiet, confined, and our feelings prey upon us. You are forced on exertion. You have always a profession, pursuits, business of some sort or other, to take you back into the world immediately, and continual occupation and change soon weaken impressions.

(*Persuasion*, 1994, 233)

Jane Austen was strongly defending her sex, which is noticeable from all her books. She hoped to see better conditions for women and to see them equal to men. She did not want to submit to the widespread opinion of women and explained her way of looking at women's situation in the following dialogue between Captain Harville and Ann Elliot:

But let me observe that all histories are against you – all stories, prose and verse. . . . I do not think I ever opened a book in my life which had not something to say upon woman's inconstancy. Songs and proverbs all talk of woman's fickleness. But, perhaps, you will say, these were all written by men."

"Perhaps I shall. Yes, yes, if you please, no reference to examples in books. Men have had every advantage of us in telling their own story. Education has been theirs in so much higher a degree; the pen has been in their hands. I will not allow books to prove anything.

(*Persuasion*, 1994, 235)

The life for women was full of obstacles. Yet those women writers as Burney, Lennox, Austen, whose work can be viewed as having feminist elements, expressed their opinions of the society so well to others that things could have started to change.

Novel, in the hands of women writers

Charlotte Lennox was born in or before 1730 and so she was brought up during a time when romances were still a popular reading for women and even for men. As Doody (1989, 16) says: "In the later seventeenth century the French romances had seemed to offer a literary world common to men and women". It was frequent for a man to read the classics but also romances. However, women usually did not have access to study the classics yet they were allowed to enjoy novels: "Walpole could read both Virgil and *Clélie*; the classical works were jealously guarded as a male preserve The prose romance was virtually the only extensive gender which women had successfully practised." (Doody, 1989, 16). Even though it was difficult for women writers to publish their books during the development of the modern novel women authors had some support within the public. The first major critical discussion of the history of the modern novel, Bishop Huet's *Traité de l'origine des romans*, appeared in 1670 as a lengthy preface to *Zayde*, a novel (or romance) by a

woman author. Huet praises the women writers and offers much encouragement, not only to French but also to English women writers. *Doody* (1989, 17) says that: "it is noticeable that a number of English women writers of prose fiction emerged and flourished in the decades after 1670". However, when Lennox started to create herself around 1750, the era of romance had gone. As a result the women writers lost something that was their tradition and what they were good at. In the new phase of Augustanism that old tradition was disappearing. Lennox had to deal with her attraction to romance; she had to give it up yet unwillingly. She found a result in a story that is about a girl who is a slave to imagination, which was forced upon her after her mother had died soon after giving birth.

The books of romances were the only inheritance that Arabella had from her mother. Lennox mentions the question of female inheritance as it stood during the eighteenth century when the female inheritance was presented by women writers in their novels as dangerous or double-edged. Lennox describes a woman as an unfit inheritor: "The woman is never the proper inheritor, the truly desirable inheritor, of a paternal legacy. And paternal inheritance . . . is in an oblique and unfavourable relation to the daughter." (*Doody*, 1989, 21). Arabella's father was a man of fortune as well as property so the inheritance was of an immense value. Yet the will, that he had left after him, conditioned Arabella's inheritance by marrying her cousin, whom she despised. If she decided not to marry him he would gain a third of the estate. Here Lennox describes not only the difficulty of legal inheritance for women but also that it could have been used as a force into marriage. In *The Female Quixote* Sir Charles, the brother of Arabella's father, expresses with impertinent shortness the cruel condition of the will:

Mr. Glanville sighed, and cast his Eyes on the Ground, as he returned her Compliment [Arabella's wishes of joy on bequeathing a part of the estate], with a very low Bow; and Sir Charles, observing his Confusion, told Arabella, that he thought it was a very bad Omen for his Son, to wish him Joy of an Estate, which he could not come to the Possession of, but by a very great Misfortune.

(*The Female Quixote*, 1989, 66)

Arabella frees herself from the dangers of her position within the paternal inheritance thanks to her reading of romances, where women are of great importance. In this way she escapes the cruel truth that she is only a pawn in the inheritance, as *Doody* (1989, 21) says: "As a daughter, her lot is not to be one who is served (like Mandane or Clélie) but to serve". The tradition of arranged marriages is so common that even gentle Mr. Glanville wishes for a moment that Arabella's father had forced her stronger into the marriage through the will:

As he loved her with great Tenderness, this Thought [that she would find someone more agreeable] made him extremely uneasy; and he would sometimes wish the Marquis had laid a stronger Injunction upon her in his Will to marry him; and regretted the little Power his Father had over her: But he was too generous, to dwell long upon these Thoughts, and contended himself with resolving to do all that was honourable to obtain her, without seeking for any Assistance from unjustifiable Methods.
(*The Female Quixote*, 1989, 65)

These thoughts describe how common it was to force a daughter into a marriage as a condition to inherit the home where she was born. Lennox calls these methods "unjustifiable" and so expresses her disagreement with the power that a parental inheritance had.

Social rules restricting women's behaviour

Another point of contemporary society, which Lennox wanted to discuss in her book, was the fact that a young woman could not ask to be left alone. As *Doody* (1989, 25) comments: "according to conventional rules of conduct the young woman, even if newly bereaved, has no right to ask to be left to herself". Since Arabella is wrapped up in romances, where women have the power to control the movements and behaviour of others, she asserts her right to a room for herself. However, her behaviour creates displeasure with her uncle:

What, said he, to Mr. Glanville, does she so little understand the Respect that is due to me as her Uncle, that she, so peremptorily, desired me to leave her Room? My Brother was to blame to take so little Care of her Education; she is quite a Rustic!
(*The Female Quixote*, 1989, 25)

Arabella behaves in contrast with contemporary social rules. She not only asks her uncle to leave her to herself but also speaks when according to social rules she should not: "She speaks, emphatically and at length, when according to conduct books and contemporary rules a young unmarried woman should remain totally silent." (Doody, 1989, 25). Through assuming the powers of romances Arabella expresses herself freely regardless of social rules, which so much limit the behaviour of a woman. By this behaviour she makes men pay attention to her wishes and as a result they do not automatically place her under their control. Actually, occasionally she speaks and treats men as patronizingly as is common for men. Thus Lennox points out the limitation within woman's behaviour in comparison with men's. Sir Charles at one point comments Arabella's ability to express herself:

Mr. Glanville, when Arabella had finish'd this speech, cast a triumphing Glance at his Sister, who had affected great Inattention all the while she had been speaking. Sir Charles in his Way, express'd much Admiration of her Wit, telling her, if she had been a Man, she would have made a great Figure in Parliament, and that her Speeches might have come perhaps to be printed in time. (*The Female Quixote*, 1989, 311)

Even though Arabella cannot enter Parliament and to think of it is very improbable, yet she allows herself the freedom to speak when she requires. Lennox here presents the limitation connected with woman's freedom, which is illustrated on their restriction on speech and the impossibility of appearing in public places such as Parliament. However odd was Arabella's behaviour, she managed to across the contemporary social rules and have her own way: "the meta-fictional joke remind us not only the limitations placed on women in Arabella's world, but of the limits Arabella has already overleaped." (Doody, 1989, 25).

Miss Glanville appears in this book as a contrast to Arabella. She behaves according to the traditions and so she fits in the society. Arabella behaves in her own way, which she copies from the romance heroines and this is why she is viewed as ridiculous and is not fully accepted by the society. By presenting these two completely different characters Lennox expresses her doubts about the correctness of the society. Miss Glanville behaves according

to the rules that society requires of a woman yet she appears in the novel as a bad character. Even though she loves Sir George she is willing to embarrass him in order to put her own back:

This Thought throwing her into an Extremity of Rage, all her tenderest Emotions were lost in the Desire of Revenge. She imagin'd to herself so much Pleasure from exposing his Treachery, and putting it out of his Power to deny it, that she resolv'd, whatever it cost her, to have that Satisfaction.
(*The Female Quixote*, 1989, 364)

On the contrary, Arabella behaves according to her own rules of correct behaviour, which is not accepted by the society, yet her personality is entirely good:

Arabella's extreme Tenderness upon this Occasion [her father's illness], her anxious Solitude, her pious Cares, and never-ceasing Attendance at the Bedside of her sick Father, were so many new Charms, that engaged the Affection of Glanville more strongly.
(*The Female Quixote*, 1989, 58)

Not only that Arabella behaves according to her own rules she also dresses according to her own fashion, which is identical to that of her romance heroines as well as her behaviour. Since she has been all her life hidden away from the society and wrapped in her romances she does not understand the conventions of the society, she knows only those conventions mentioned in her books of fiction and she behaves according to them. Arabella designs her own fashion of dress and is not afraid to stand out from the crowd and to be different, not only in dress but also in behaviour: "She appears always *en costume*, highlighting the fact that she acts a self, invents her self, has consciously chosen a part. Others must adjust their more commonplace expectations to her striking and unusual appearance." (*Doody*, 1989, 126). For the ball in Bath she did not follow the contemporary style yet she ordered her dress to be made in a fashion of her heroine Princess Julia. However, instead of looking ridiculous as her enemies expected she looked to her best advantage:

Scarce had the first tumultuous Whisper escap'd the Lips of each Individual, when they found themselves aw'd to Respect by that irresistible Charm in the Person of Arabella, which commanded Reverence and Love from all who beheld her.

Her noble Air, the native Dignity in her Looks, the inexpressible Grace which accompany'd all her Motions, and the consummate Loveliness of her Form, drew the Admiration of the whole Assembly.
(*The Female Quixote*, 1989, 272)

The life during the eighteenth century was full of obstacles, especially for women. Yet those women writers as Burney, Lennox, and Austen, whose work can be viewed as having feminist elements, expressed their opinions of the society so well to others that things could have started to change for better.

IV. The Question of Marriage

And when, I tell you, pursued she with a Smile, that I was born and christen'd, had a useful and proper Education, receiv'd the Addresses of my Lord – through the Recommendation of my Parents, and marry'd him with their Consents and my own Inclination, and that since we have liv'd in great Harmony together, I have told you all the material Passages of my Life . . .
(*The Female Quixote*, 1989, 327)

In this passage the virtuous Countess is trying to persuade Arabella, the heroine of *The Female Quixote*, that good women have neither history nor adventures. However, Charlotte Lennox herself had both history and adventures. Before she was twenty she moved with her family from Gibraltar to New York and then as an adult came to England on her own. All this travelling was an adventure on its own in the eighteenth century. As she found herself unprovided for and “practically in the position of the woman who has to live by her wits” (*Doody*, 1989, 7), she published her book *Poems on Several Occasions* and had married Alexander Lennox. He never made any money and she was unable to secure her family financially only by her writing. All this led to extreme poverty. The first few years of her marriage were so poor that she was convinced that “marriage alone was hardly a preservative against want.” (*Doody*, 1989, 7). She understood that whatever the conduct books recommend to young ladies, women have to enter the world in order to secure the economic facts in their lives.

Lennox's Arabella in *The Female Quixote* insists on believing entirely in French heroic romances and behaves according to her favourite heroines. By

her behaviour Lennox wanted to show how romances could overpower our mind if we believe in them. As *Duncan Isles* (1989, 419) says, this work exhibited author's "desire to ridicule the French heroic romances, and to point out their potentially harmful effects on the minds of inexperienced readers". Lennox expresses the absurdity of Arabella, who lives according to the romances, and does not care about her finances. She even congratulates her cousin on inheriting a third of her father's castle, where she lives: "Her Father's Will being red to her, she seemed extremely pleased with the Articles in favour of Mr. Glanville, wishing him Joy of the estate that was bequeathed to him, with a most enchanting Sweetness." (*The Female Quixote*, 1989, 66). Arabella appears the entire book as a ridiculous creature except the very end where she learns her mistake. Bearing that in mind, her carelessness of material security is due to the fact that her only interest lies in romances. It is also necessary to consider that she is a very rich person not knowing the meaning of poverty and so is unable to appreciate her position in life. Although her obsession with romances is ridiculous and has no financial worries about her future, she expresses the necessity of love when considering marriage. By describing an extreme of considering only love for marriage, Lennox criticises the society, which in the contrary according to traditions considers only finances.

Lennox's heroine does not think of marriage as the means of securing her future. Since Arabella lives according to romances the only necessity in her life is love. Through her Lennox demonstrates the need of considering love on one side and the unhealthy extreme of only believing in love on the other. Arabella is placed in the story next to Miss Glanville who is more realistic and considers both, money and love. Miss Glanville also has more realistic requirements of a husband. However, Arabella prefers to wait, it does not matter how long for the man that fulfils all requests of a romantic hero:

Doubtless, returned Arabella, I am the first Woman of my Quality, that ever was told so by any Man, till after an infinite Number of Services, and secret Sufferings: And truly, I am of the illustrious Mandana's Mind; for she said, That she should think it an unpardonable Presumption, for the greatest King on Earth to tell her he loved her, tho' after Ten Years of the most faithful Services, and concealed Torments.

Ten years! Cried out Miss Glanville, in Amazement; Did she little consider what Alterations ten Years would make in her Face, and how much older she would be at the End of Ten Years, than she was before?

Truly, said Arabella, it is not usual to consider little Matters so nicely; one never has the Idea of an Heroine older than Eighteen, tho' her History begins at that Age; and the Events, which compose it, contain the Space of Twenty more.

(*The Female Quixote*, 1989, 111)

For Arabella it is important to get married without considering lover's material situation in life but according to the rules of romances. Yet as Lennox's financial situation was quite different from that of Arabella's, Lennox herself probably wanted to recommend to young ladies to take the material matter of their lover into their account. As *Doody* (1989, 7) says: "The early years of her married life were sufficiently exiguous to convince Charlotte Lennox that marriage also was hardly a preservative against want".

Not only that Arabella does not care about the material situation of her lover but she also does not mind to wait until her late twenties or thirties in order to find him. Yet these ideas about getting married later in life are, however, against the contemporary social traditions, to which objects Eliza Haywood:

[she] voices a contemporary objection to the zeal of male relatives in marrying off young girls: 'One has no sooner left off one's bib and apron, than people cry, - "Miss will soon be married." - And this man, and that man, is presently picked out for a husband. - Mighty ridiculous! - they want to deprive us of all the pleasures of life, just when one begins to have a relish for them.

(*Doody*, 1989, 27)

Charlotte Lennox wanted to illustrate to young ladies that the most important thing in choosing a partner is not how long it takes to find him but how happy they could be together. Lennox herself got married after a very short time and as *Doody* (1989, 7) says about Lennox's husband, "Charlotte seems to have found him highly disagreeable to live with". Bearing that in mind, it seems that she hoped young girls to be more considerate in choosing their husbands and to think about both, their future security and also about being in love.

Fanny Burney married at the age of thirty-nine, after an acquaintance lasting less than a year. Also she had a notion of an ideal marriage. In her novel *Evelina* the perfect marriage is taking place. However, it is only when Evelina

finds the value of prudence that she finds a husband, materially secured with a good position and also whom she loves: "That Evelina has reached this enviable state is symbolized in her marriage, which guarantees feelings as well as status and security." (*Bloom*, 1982, 19). Burney pointed out to young ladies that it is important first to understand themselves and the world around them. Only then they can be able to find a husband who is able to secure them and whom they love.

Also Trollope described problems connected with marriage at the turn of the eighteenth century. Through Agnes one of the main heroines of *The Widow Barnaby* she explains the way of thinking and acting when choosing the right partner. Trollope's description of Agnes's search for husband keeps readers attention until the end. Trollope and Austen were contemporaries and the ends of their books were very similar. All Austen's books end by a happy ending for the main heroines and the same end is expected for Agnes in *The Widow Barnaby*. It seems that the main heroines express authors' wish of happy marriage for the contemporary young ladies. The reality is usually showed on the other characters, whose end is not always to their liking. Like Austen, she also concentrates on the middle-class professional people but also aristocracy. She does not focus on the working life of those people, she focuses on "A world where marriage alliances underline the social world of taking waters, attending balls, visiting, promenading, and subscription libraries." (spartacus schoolnet).

Jane Austen thought highly of marriages. In her books she described different marriages, each of them in different circumstances. Unlike her heroine protagonists the other characters do not always have such a happy marriage, fulfilling both criteria of love and financial stability. Jane Austen shows that in most cases love is not an essential part of marriage and that the resulting unity is usually a loveless marriage: "For many young ladies from poorer families, the chance of marrying a wealthy gentleman might be the only path to a comfortable future." (Brendlová, Nový, 1998, 21).

In *Pride and Prejudice* Austen introduced Elizabeth's cousin Mr. Collins and her best friend Charlotte. Charlotte is ten years older than Elizabeth,

who is around thirty, intelligent with a good sense of humour and also as is notable later very practical. Mr. Collins is portrayed as a quite ridiculous character and inspires laughter in everybody. However, Elizabeth feels revulsion towards him. This is because Mr. Collins chose Elizabeth as his future wife after he had found out that her sister Jane would soon be engaged. Under those conditions she declined his offer of marriage. Yet Mr. Collins does not waste time and makes the same offer to her friend Charlotte who accepts it. At this point everybody is very surprised. Up to that time Elizabeth and Charlotte have the same character, the same outlook on life, and the same principles in life. Suddenly, Charlotte accepts a husband who is so repulsive to Elizabeth. Elizabeth is shocked and cannot understand why Charlotte does not follow their principles in life:

My dear Jane, Mr. Collins is a conceited, pompous, narrow-minded, silly man; you know he is, as well as I do: and you must feel, as well as I do, that the woman who marries him cannot have a proper way of thinking. You shall not defend her, though it is Charlotte Lucas. You shall not, for the sake of one individual, change the meaning of principle and integrity, nor endeavour to persuade yourself or me, that selfishness is prudence, and insensibility of danger security for happiness.
(*Pride and Prejudice*, 1986, 138)

However, Charlotte explains to Elizabeth that at the age of thirty she made a reasonable decision to buy herself a social position as a married woman, by which she will escape the humiliation of being dependent on her parents:

I am not romantic, you know, I never was. I ask only a comfortable home; and considering Mr. Collins's character, connections, and his situation in life, I am convinced that my chance of happiness with him is as fair as most people can boast on entering the marriage state."
(*Pride and Prejudice*, 1986, 129)

Through the presentation of these two ways of thinking there are two opinions that the author wants to give. As Elizabeth is so open-minded and modern in thinking, she represents the way in which marriage should be considered. It is Jane Austen's wish at the beginning of the nineteenth century that a marriage should be about love. In contrast, Charlotte Lucas represents an intelligent and sensible young lady but with a clear difference that she does not fight against

the way in which things work. In essence, she accepts the social conventions for better and worse and arranges her life around them.

In *Pride and Prejudice* Jane Austen describes the contemporary conventions in society of considering marriage. Furthermore, Elizabeth Bennet expresses the sensible manner of a woman following her aim in life and other characters as Mr. Collins, Mrs. Bennet, Lydia illustrate the variations in character and its impact on their lives. However, Jane Austen was also only a human and erred during her life too. Anne Elliot the heroine of *Persuasion* may be seen as the alter ego or mouthpiece of Jane Austen herself. Depth and tenderness of *Persuasion* has led many readers to assume that in it Jane Austen was telling a love story of her own. Rudyard Kipling, in his vulgar, loving poem Jane's *Marriage*, went even further:

In a private Limbo
Where none had thought to look,
Sat a Hampshire gentleman
Reading of a book.
It was called *Persuasion*,
And it told the plain
Story of the love between
Him and Jane
(Laski, 1975, 110)

Jane Austen shows in *Persuasion* the position in life of women who lost their chance of marriage. According to Austen's own experience of staying single all the life she could identify with the heroine Anne Elliot, who marries only after a long and tedious experience. Through her she speaks about the isolation which a woman can experience when she stays single and has no confidantes. She expresses the deep sensation in which she is able to create, yet has no one to offer it to. In this novel Austen describes how English society accepts unmarried women and the opinions of other people. She illustrates single life as full of suffering. However, she has to live on her own yet hopes for some change in the future. Anne feels isolated in the rich London society and even though she has a good position in it and is financially well secured all this is for nothing if she feels so lonely with only her lost love to accompany her. Austen presents a picture of English society where financial matters were the top priority, yet the happiness was not conditioned by it.

Social conventions and notably money are prominent notions in other Austen's classics. Fanny Price, the heroine of *Mansfield Park*, becomes shy, quiet, and vulnerable after leaving her poor family to be brought up by her rich relations. Thanks to her spiteful aunt she never feels at ease but rather out of place; she cannot take her situation for granted: "that is a very foolish trick, Fanny, to be idling away all the evening upon a sofa. Why cannot you come and sit here, and employ yourself as we do?" (*Mansfield Park*, 1994, 72). Even though her other aunt and uncle at Mansfield Park behave respectfully to her, the cousins do their best to ignore her. The only exception is her cousin Edmund who shows her some affection: "What! Cried Edmund; has she been walking as well as cutting roses; walking across the hot park to your house, and doing it twice, ma'am? No wonder her head aches." (*Mansfield Park*, 1994, 74). It is not surprising that after such a traumatic childhood Fanny as an adult is permanently in low spirits:

Fanny is cautious and censorious. Jokes make her and her cousin Edmund uneasy. She takes joy in the stars, in music and poetry and flowers, and in her brother William; but she is not a joyous person, perhaps because her childhood experiences have dried up something in the spirit.
(*Tomalin*, 1998, 232)

The difference between Fanny and her cousins is even greater when they are choosing their life-long partners. Their characters are tested when a couple from London arrives. This couple manages to dazzle everybody except Fanny. She is strong enough not to be thrown into a marriage without any affection. It is her strongly held opinion that it is wicked to marry without love:

"I should have thought," said Fanny, after a pause of recollection and exertion, "that every woman must have felt the possibility of a man's not being approved, not being loved by someone of her sex, at least, let him be ever so generally agreeable. Let him have all perfections in the world, I think it ought not to be set down as certain that a man must be acceptable to every woman he may happen to like himself."
(*Mansfield Park*, 1994, 357)

From Austen's comment told by Fanny it is noticeable that it was a common way in which women were supposed to behave; to accept every man who happened to like them. The same notion is expressed by another Austen's

heroine Emma: "Oh! To be sure," cried Emma, "it is always incomprehensible to a man that a woman should ever refuse an offer of marriage. A man always imagines a woman to be ready for anybody who asks her." (*Emma*, 1994, 47). Austen expressed through Fanny and Emma some of her own thoughts about contemporary society. Not only that it should be for the woman to decide her husband whom she loves but also whether she stays all her life single. Austen never married and Emma has the same inclinations towards marriage. Although she is romantic and wants her friend to be in love, she herself seems immune to male sex in general. She never dreams about a romance for herself and she does not even feel the need to attract her male friends: "My being charming, Harriet, is not quite enough to induce me to marry; I must find other people charming – one other person at least. And I am not only, not going to be married, at present, but have very little intention of ever marrying at all." (*Emma*, 1994, 66).

The question of marriage was quite complex during the eighteenth century. As women were not allowed to work themselves and came from families with financial problems, or rich families which wanted to preserve their income, their only way to a happy future was to marry a man of fortune. However, this kind of marriage did not usually secure love. Thus there was not much choice for women to decide about their future and as Austen and Lennox experienced themselves it was not even easy to stay single or separated. The question of marriage is a topic that was popular then and is still today.

V. The Hostility between the English and the French

Evelina was published fifteen years after the end of the Seven-Years' War between Britain and France after which Britain definitely gained the worldwide power. This war lasted from 1756 to 1763 and ended by a peace agreement in Paris. Britain fought against France for the supremacy in North America and India. After victory the British gained main colonial sovereignty in the world and had reason to feel superior especially over the French. This conflict affected the feeling between these two nations. However, the first dispute between them started during the reign of William III: "The hostility

between the English and the French began in the reign of King William III. The political and economic tension between the two nations continued through the Napoleon Wars.” (*Bloom*, 1982, 410). In *Evelina* it is possible to feel this tension between the British and the French.

Captain Mirvan is the father of Evelina’s best friend. He spent many years abroad, Burney does not say exactly where but most probably in one of the British colonies. On his arrival Evelina is shocked by his ill-suited behaviour. However, thanks to his openness he is the person who expresses his feelings toward the French. It is quite possible that his feelings correspond to those shared by the British. Another important character is Mrs. Duval. She is English by origin yet she married a Frenchman and lived in France for many years. She speaks of herself as of French and of Britain as of a foreign country that she does not like very much: “she began, with great bitterness, to inveigh against the barbarous brutality of that fellow the Captain, and the horrible ill-breeding of the English in general, declaring she should make her escape with all expedition from so beastly a nation.” (*Evelina*, 1982, 67). It seems that she expressed in this way the French side of the argument. She constantly uses French expressions in her speech. Probably this was the way that Burney decided to present the opinion of the French nation. Of course, being born in England she spoke well English and by imputing French expressions she reminded the readers throughout the story about the country which she now belongs to. Burney perhaps wanted to present the characters realistically, that is why for example Mrs. Duval’s companion Monsieur Du Bois being French does not have any conversation within the book. When he utters some comment it is always written in French. It is obvious that when Captain Mirvan meets Mrs. Duval he lets her know of his opinion about the French:

‘And pray,’ said the Captain, ‘why did you go to a public place without an Englishman?’

‘Ma foi, Sir,’ answered she, ‘because non of my acquaintance is in town.’

‘Why then,’ said he, ‘I’ll tell you what; your best way is to go out of it yourself.’

‘Pardie, Monsieur,’ returned she, ‘and so I shall; for, I promise you, I think the English a parcel of brutes; and I’ll go back to France as fast as I can, for I would not live among non of you.’

'Who wants you?' cried the Captain; 'do you suppose, Madam French, we have not enough of other nations to pick our pockets already? I'll warrant you, there's no need of you for to put in your oar.'

'Pick your pockets, Sir! I wish nobody wanted to pick your pockets no more than I do; and I'll promise you, you'd be safe enough. But there is no nation under the sun can beat the English for ill-politeness: for my part, I hate the very sight of them, and so I shall only just visit a person of quality or two, of my particular acquaintance, and then I shall go back again to France.'

'Ay, do,' cried he, 'and then go to the devil together, for that's the fittest voyage for the French and the quality.'

'We'll take care, however,' cried the stranger, with great vehemence, 'not to admit non of your vulgar, unmannered English among us.'

(*Evelina*, 1982, 50,51)

It seems that Europe, especially France, Switzerland, and Italy, was the kind of refuge for people who were not accepted by the British society for their social offences. It was mainly at the turn of the century and further on that writers and artists found their exile in one of those countries. It was for example P. B. Shelley, who left his Irish wife and started to live with Mary Godwin, the daughter of W. Godwin and M. Wollstonecraft. As this was inadmissible act they decided to leave Britain for Switzerland. They got married after Shelley's first wife had committed suicide. Later they lived in Italy. It was also Lord Byron who left England permanently after he had divorced his wife and also after his relationship with his step-sister, with whom he had a daughter, became public. He had another illegitimate child with Shelley's relative. Also Mrs. Duval in *Evelina* had wicked intentions in France. She and her husband wanted to marry her daughter to Sir Belmont to gain financial security for themselves. However, when he discovered that she was penniless he annulled the marriage certificate. The girl escaped to England where she gave birth to a baby-daughter Evelina and then died. It was Mr. Villars who was the guardian of this child. Mrs. Duval was not interested in her until Evelina's 16th birthday when she decided to take her to France: "Madame Duval . . . told them, that she had it in her head to make something of me, and that they should soon call me by another name than that of Anville." (*Evelina*, 1982,121).

From Burney's writing it is obvious that the life, habits, and manners were quite different in both countries. After the death of Mrs. Duval's husband she did not wait for one year for her mourning to be over. Even though it was one of the main rules of the contemporary society, which for example followed Arabella when mourning the death of her father: "But Arabella, who was determined to pass the Year Mourning, in the Retirement she had always lived in, absolutely refused, strong as her Curiosity was, to see London." (*The Female Quixote*, 1990, 65). However Mrs. Duval went to Britain only three months after her husband had died and not wearing a mourning dress: "he had been dead but three months, which had been employed in arranging certain affairs, that were no sooner settled, than she set off for England. She was already out of mourning, for she said nobody here could tell how long she had been a widow." (*Evelina*, 1982,53). Through Mrs. Duval's feeling of being secure in England it is possible to feel the necessity of following the rules for mourning at the end of the eighteenth century. Not only did she conceal her mourning she also arrived to England in the company of a single young gentleman. This is other example of contemporary social rules: a single man should not follow a single woman. Burney expressed her dislike of breaking this rule by arousing a great surprise on the sight of this couple and lets the Captain offend them both:

She was attended by a French gentleman, whom she introduced by the name of Monsieur Du Bois: Mrs. Mirvan received them both with her usual politeness; but the Captain looked very much displeased, and, after a short silence, very sternly said to Madame Duval, 'Pray who asked you to bring that there spark with you?' 'O,' cried she, 'I never go no-where without him.'

Another short silence ensued, which was terminated by the Captain's turning roughly to the foreigner, and saying, 'Do you know, Monsieur, that you're the first Frenchman I ever let come into my house?'

Monsieur Du Bois made a profound bow. He speaks no English and understands it so imperfectly, that he might, possibly, imagine he had received a compliment.

(*Evelina*, 1982, 56)

At the end of the book Mrs. Duval shows her real intentions which she had had with Monsieur Du Bois from the beginning. When Du Bois falls in love with Evelina Mrs. Duval becomes very jealous and reveals her plans with him.

Surely, to think of a marriage or of having a lover only three months after husband's death is immoral even in France, yet perhaps in contrast with England it is pardonable: "she began, in French, an attack which her extreme wrath and wonderful volubility almost rendered unintelligible; yet I understood but too much, since her reproaches convinced me she had herself proposed being the object of his affection." (*Evelina*, 1982, 252).

Also thanks to Mrs. Duval's vulgar behaviour it is possible to learn something about the differences between the British and the French. She describes for example the French female fashion of not wearing hats in public places. This was quite different from the fashion in England: "It's quite a shocking thing to see ladies come to so genteel a place as Ranelagh with hats on; it has a monstrous vulgar look: I can't think what they wear them for. There's no such thing to be seen in Paris." (*Evelina*, 1982, 59). However, Evelina expresses the opinion of the British on this matter. She feels very foolish without a hat and is also afraid of attracting attention to herself for not wearing one: "I requested Mrs. Duval to borrow a hat or bonnet for me of the people of the house. But she never wears either herself, and thinks them very English and barbarous" (*Evelina*, 1982, 88).

Other Mrs. Duval's remarks belong to the themes of conversation. She explains that in France they leave out the topics of religion and politics. This situation probably had deeper roots than just being mere fashion. It was the time of the reign of Louis XV. (1715-1774) in France. He decided to rule without the main minister but he did not have enough of self-confidence to regulate his ministers when reforming the society. At the end of the Seven-Years' War France lost most of its colonies to Britain. His style of life and the war was so expensive that the country became much poorer. Even though Louis XIV was his grandfather, unfortunately he did not take after him and so the question especially of foreign politics was a failure. Perhaps this was the reason why people did not speak of politics in public; it was an embarrassing and annoying theme for them: "'Ay, now,' cried Madame Duval, 'that's another of the unpolitenesses of you English, to go to talking of such things as that: now in

Paris, nobody never says nothing about religion, no more than about politics.’ “
(*Evelina*, 1982,59).

The Captain and Mrs. Duval have a lot in common, they are both quite vulgar and criticize one another’s nation. However, the Captain seems a bit more intelligent than Mrs. Duval does. It is especially when they visit the Cox’s Museum, which displayed the costly toys made by the jeweller James Cox. Mrs. Duval admires all the things with expressions that she has never seen anything like it in whole her life. On the contrary, Evelina gives probably a reasonable account of the museum when she says that “This Museum is very astonishing, and very superb; yet, it afforded me but little pleasure, for it is a mere show, though a wonderful one.” (*Evelina*, 1982, 76). Even the Captain surprisingly proves his sensibility and attacks Mrs. Duval for her improper taste:

‘Pardie,’ cried Madame Duval, ‘I hope you two is difficult enough! I’m sure if you don’t like this, you like nothing; for it’s the grandest, prettiest, finest sight that ever I see, in England.’

‘What,’ (cried the Captain, with a sneer) ‘I suppose this may be in your French taste? It’s like enough, for it’s all kickshaw work. But, pr’ythee, friend,’ (turning to the person who explained the devices) ‘will you tell me the use of all this? For I’m not enough of a conjurer to find it out.’

‘Use, indeed!’ (repeated Madame Duval disdainfully) ‘Lord, if every thing’s to be useful! – ‘

‘Why, Sir, as to that, Sir,’ said our conductor, ‘the ingenuity of the mechanism, - the beauty of the workmanship, - the – undoubtedly, Sir, any person of taste may easily discern the utility of such extraordinary performances.’

‘Why then, Sir,’ answered the Captain, ‘your person of taste must be either a coxcomb, or a Frenchman; though, for the matter of that, ’tis the same thing.’

(*Evelina*, 1982,76)

It will probably stay an open question on which side Burney was. It is obvious that as she presented this rivalry by such vulgar and ridiculous characters that she was against this kind of open verbal nationalistic fighting. Anyway, it is possible that she put the British to a slightly better position especially when the vulgar Captain proved his common sense in his taste of art, yet Mrs. Duval did not. The rivalry of nations between Britain and France strengthened during the French Revolution and the following Napoleon War. Burney got more experience about this conflict as she married a French aristocratic liberal,

Alexander d'Arblay, in 1791. They moved to France and lived there from 1802 to 1812. Her knowledge of the French Revolution she expressed in the novel *The Wanderer*, which was published in 1814. The tension between the British and the French continued throughout the history and unfortunately is felt even today. This is where *Evelina* conveys meaning even until the present time.

VI. Conclusion

From the outset of this essay it is suggested that the novels, written during and at the turn of the eighteenth century, played an important role within the society. By satirizing adventures of girls who took reading too seriously and behaved according to their heroines, the writers showed how necessary it was for women to start thinking for themselves and to make their own decisions. These novels stimulated women's minds in thinking of their position in society and of the changes that they would like to make. However, it was not only novels that helped women to solve their problems, other important source was the periodical, *The Female Spectator*.

It was also this period in history when women writers struggled with publishers and so felt the necessity to change the contemporary rules much more strongly than ordinary women did. Their books gradually started to express the necessity of getting equal to men. These authors and their works played an important role in the process of feminization.

Next point that was debated within these books was the question of marriage. The writers described different marriages, thus there are examples of marriages for love, even though both people are poor, or loveless marriages merely for money. A marriage for love supported by finances is shown as the best option. However, the authors do not blame those that marry barely for money, on the contrary in this way they explain the cruelty of society. In most cases this is the only way for women to secure themselves a better future. The authors find the fault again within the society.

The end of this essay presents an outlook to the feeling of the British and the French towards each other and gives some more information about the British society at the end of the eighteenth century.

In conclusion, this work gives a picture of the English society at the turn of the 18th century and how it was criticized by the contemporary women writers, thanks to whom the problems started to be solved.

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