HISTORY OF THE NOVEL IN STORIES OF FEMININITY: *MOLL FLANDERS, EVELINA* AND FORDYCE'S *SERMONS*

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ABSTRACT

HISTORY OF THE NOVEL IN STORIES OF FEMININITY:
MOLL FLANDERS, EVELINA AND FORDYCE'S *SERMONS*

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In this study the rise of the English novel is investigated from the perspective of Nancy Armstrong's *Desire and Domestic Fiction* which put forward that the novel genre emerged out of the conduct books of seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Within this scope two of the first English novels *Moll Flanders* (1742) by Daniel Defoe and *Evelina* (1778) by Frances Burney will be studied side-by-side by comparing their plots with one of the most popular conduct books of the era: Fordyce's *Sermons.* The study aims to draw parallelisms and reveal the clashes among these three texts to shed light upon how novels came into to existence and why some of them, like *Moll Flanders*, were blacklisted and forced into an underground existence while others, *Evelina,* were praised and taken as examples by later writers.

Keywords: Rise of the English novel, *Evelina*, *Moll Flanders*, novel of manners, conduct books

ÖZ

KADINLIK ÖYKÜLERİNDE İNGİLİZ ROMANININ TARİHİ:
MOLL FLANDERS, EVELINA VE FORDYCE'IN *VAAZLAR*'I

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Bu çalışmada İngiliz edebiyatında roman türünün doğuşu, Nancy Armstrong'un *Desire and Domestic Fiction* isimli kitabında öne sürdüğü roman türünün on yedinci ve on sekizinci yüzyıllarda geniş kitlelerce okunan, kadınlar için yazılmış görgü kitaplarından türediği ve bu rehberlerin bir süre sonra Adab-ı Muaşeret Romanları'na dönüştüğü önerisi açısından incelenecektir. Bu bağlamda İngiliz romanının ilk örneklerinden olan Daniel Defoe'nun *Moll Flanders* (1742) ve Frances Burney'nin *Evelina* (1778) adlı romanlarının yanı sıra on sekizinci yüzyılda çok yaygın bir şekilde okunan ve popülerleşen James Fordyce'ın *Sermons to Young Women* (1766) adlı görgü kitabı karşılaştırmalı olarak incelenecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İngiliz romanının doğuşu, *Evelina*, *Moll Flanders,* görgü kitapları, Adab-ı Muaşeret Romanları

To all the brilliant women in my life;
but two in particular,
my mother, Berrin; and my sister, İrem.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"One is not born but rather becomes a woman" says Simone de Beauvoir in her *Second Sex;* but, how exactly does she do that? How have women learned and adopted the patterns of behavior that are attributed to the female sex? How do they know what it means to be "feminine"? Even though there have been – and still are – many sources of information with regards to "the code of female conduct", few of them have been as popular and influential as the book of conduct. The female ideal was communicated through these guides to proper femininity in seventeenth and eighteenth century in England. So popular had these non-fiction writings become that their premises quickly transformed into common sense, and they were later translated into the long tradition of novel of manners which carried out the same function in the form of fiction.

Nancy Armstrong, one of the leading scholars working on the theory of the novel, in her *Desire and Domestic Fiction* (1987), finds the origins of the novel genre in these books of conduct. Novels of eighteenth and nineteenth century were embodiments of the sexual contract that was imposed on women as a version of the social contract that governed the politics and society of eighteenth century England. Armstrong observes that eighteenth century English novels, which were praised and acknowledged as decent works of literature, conveyed the same female ideal that is found in the teachings of the books of conduct. Frances Burney's *Evelina* (1778) is considered a perfect example of novel of manners with its heroine adorned with the very virtues and merits promoted by conduct books, whereas Defoe's *Moll Flanders* (1722) portrays an image of woman who constitutes the exact opposite of what came to be known as the ideal female at the time with her mischiefs and misguidance.

The contrast between the lives of the two young women is ostensible; but what effect has this contrast brought about? Armstrong informs us that while both the

novelist and the novel itself were praised by critics – Samuel Johnson being one – in *Evelina's* case and Burney was admired and taken as an example by writers that succeeded her, *Moll Flanders,* and her literary sister *Roxana,* were disregarded and "[had] to wait until [the twentieth] century before they could be classified as novels" (49). This presents us with a curious case because *Moll Flanders,* in actuality, holds virtually all the characteristics of the classical definition of the novel genre, that is, it is an account of real or plausible personal experiences of life-like characters. This widely known definition finds its roots in another groundbreaking work in the history of the novel: Ian Watt's *The Rise of the Novel* (1957). He introduces formal realism, which will be explained later in the study, as the distinguishing feature that separates the genre from other forms of writing.

In this study, I will argue the reason why Defoe's famous female misfit could not enter the anthologies until the twentieth century despite the true-to-life manner in which the novel is written is that Moll's life style as a woman and perspective on what makes a woman "gentle" does not resemble the one depicted in Burney's *Evelina.* Thus, this study will be a comparative one throughout which the differences between the depictions and representations of female characters – both protagonists and minor characters – will be analyzed within the framework of the ideal femininity favored and promoted in conduct books in order to situate them in the context of the emergence and categorization of the novel genre.

If the novel had emerged out of documents that aimed to teach women how to become marriageable, then it is safe to assume that because Moll does not have the same perspective on what makes a woman "gentle," she was excluded as a novelistic heroine from her contemporaries. Therefore, *Moll Flanders'*s case of exclusion points to the fact that the sexual contract that was imposed on women was translated into literature in a way that it determined the borders of a genre. Thus, while Moll's perception of gentlewomen challenges the female ideal of the era, Evelina's view embraces it and this distinction is most apparent in their

particular views, approaches and attitudes towards the characters surrounding them in their stories. Within this scope, what I will argue is that, the two heroines' views on who is a gentlewoman and who is not indeed correspond to the perception at the time of what is a novel and what is not.

In our time, the literature on how ideal women should look, behave and talk reveals itself most prominently in the pages of women's magazines such as *Vogue* and *Cosmopolitan.* These magazines bring forward and advertise an image of woman who is *modern*, charming and independent. However, the fact that these magazines draw such a portrait does not necessarily mean that they also support and promote equality between sexes, empowerment of women or subversion of gender roles and stereotypes. The reason for this is that such publications fulfil the same function as the conduct books. Much like these manuals to ideal femininity, women's magazines today also include tips on how much a woman should weigh and how she might lose her extra weight, what types of clothes she should be wearing, how to treat men in social situations and in the bedroom in order to become attractive and desirable. If one were to tell the avid editors of such publications that the kind of discourse they are employing today actually belongs to an era three hundred years ago, they would most probably object. Nevertheless, the book of conduct – being nonfiction and didactic – carried out the same task. The commonly Anglo Saxon woman with a slender figure and flawless skin with the most fashionable attire that smiles happily on the covers these magazines has been teaching our generation how an ideal woman must think, behave and look for decades. Much the same, the female figure that became almost alive in the pages of women's manuals of the seventeenth and eighteenth century England communicated a similar female ideal without recognizing the actual living conditions of women of the era.

According to Nancy Armstrong, the effect of the premises and teachings of conduct books has been perpetuated in different forms since their emergence. In her groundbreaking *Desire and Domestic Fiction,* she argues that the most prominent and significant of these is the form of writing which we today call the

novel. Additionally, she also finds the origins of women's magazines in these guides to proper femininity. In order to provide a comprehensive account of the history of the theory of novel, I will engage in a contrastive study of the works of prominent scholars of the novel. Such a study will reveal Armstrong's distinct and fresh perspective and method which will provide the methodological framework of my study as well. By employing the underlying proposition of her work – novels carried out the function of conduct books in the form of fiction – I will study two eighteenth century novels side by side, Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* (1722) and Frances Burney's *Evelina* (1778). As a background to this study, Ian Watt's work on the theory of the novel will also be studied since his work is still widely accepted as *the* history of the rise of the novel. I will also look into the characteristics of the reading public of the eighteenth century; particularly, the views on women's reading. Since the focus of this study is to reveal the parallels between the conduct books and the novel genre, I will include an analysis of James Fordyce's *Sermons to Young Women* (1766) – a rather popular and influential conduct book of the era. Fordyce's *Sermons* will also act as a guide in my analysis of the two novels. Using Fordyce's arguments on what makes a woman gentle will reveal how close the two titular heroines are to his descriptions.

Reading *Moll Flanders* and *Evelina* alongside each other within this framework will result in a better understanding of the extent of the conduct books' impact. The answer to the question "who is an ideal female" is shaped by the dominant culture and understanding within societies. This was the case in the time of Moll and Evelina, and still is the case in our time. Therefore, the classical view of the novel as being an account of plausible personal experiences loses its effect and there emerges the need to look into these early writings under a different light and perspective. Such a critical reading reveals that gender roles and stereotypes have had a significant impact on literary traditions, theory, and categories as well.

CHAPTER 2

THE NOVEL: THE THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1.A Comparative Study of the Works of Watt and Armstrong

The origins of the English novel have been a subject of debate since the questions as to how and why this form of writing emerged and what distinguished it from other forms of writing could not be answered easily. Nevertheless, there have been many scholars and critics who dug deep into the novel form to reveal its distinctive features and at the same time attempted to position it in a historical context that would explain this new genre's coming into existence. Ian Watt's *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (1957) (hence *RN*) has been acknowledged by almost all critics as one of the first and most influential works in explaining the origins of the novel despite its being challenged by other scholars of English Literature who pointed to the problems and questions Watt's work brought along. Nancy Armstrong is one of those scholars and her *Desire and Domestic Fiction* (1987) (hence *DDF*) so significantly changed the ways in which this genre has been viewed and introduced an almost revolutionary theory for the rise of the novel. Since the aim of this study is to shed light upon the connection between the perceived female ideal during the eighteenth century and how certain works by writers came to be recognized as novels while others did not, in this chapter, I will engage in a comparative study of these two influential studies on the origins of the novel genre.

Michael McKeon in his *The Origins of the English Novel 1600-1740* (1987) (hence *OEN*) acknowledges Watt's *RN* as "[t]he most successful attempt to explain the origins of the English novel . . . for many years" (1) while also recognizing that it needed to be "extended" in order to address the problems and questions that remained unresolved. He argues that, even though Watt's

arguments are strong and attractive as they seem to provide answers to questions that had long been posed and remained either not or partially answered, it needs further investigation to illuminate the work's vulnerable points.

The basis for Ian Watt's argument is that what distinguishes novel from other forms of writing is formal realism and he explains formal realism as:

> [A] set of narrative procedures which are so commonly found together in the novel . . . a full and authentic report of human experience, and is therefore under an obligation to satisfy its reader with such details of the story as the individuality of the actors concerned, the particulars of the times and places of their actions, details which are presented through a more largely referential use of language than is common in other literary forms. (32)

This definition, whether we are aware of its source or not, has in fact become the widely accepted definition of the novel – an account of real or plausible events that ordinary people experience, which nevertheless bears elements of surprise, dramatic revelations, and unexpected twists in its plot. He suggests that the true-to-life manner in which the novels are written "allows a more immediate imitation of individual experience set in its temporal and spatial environment than do other literary forms" (32) and as a result novels are much less demanding than other literary conventions in that the readers could engage with and comprehend the contents of these pieces of writing without much difficulty. And this, according to him, "most closely satisfies [readers'] wishes for a close correspondence between life and art" (33) which added to the novel's popularity. Watt attributes the importance and popularity of Defoe (and Richardson as well) to their employment of formal realism in their writings which enabled them to convey a sense of "suddenness and completeness" (34) that had not been encountered in a literary work prior to the novel.

Aside from formal realism being referred to as the novel genre's distinctive feature, Watt focuses on the rise of the middle class as the major contextual aspect that can be associated with the rise of the novel. He asserts that changes in the reading public had major effects on the quantity and the quality of the kind

of literature that was circulating around England. He points to certain factors that had led to these changes and these factors were – to summarize – the distribution of literacy (majority of the population was illiterate), high cost of books and low incomes, lack of leisure time and absence of privacy. Having the opportunity to be able to read and afford books, and also having the time and the privacy to do so were in the hands of the middle-classes. Watt at this point designates another group of persons who did not belong only to the middle-class, but still were among the reading public – women. The reason for this is that, as was supposed by Watt, women of all classes had more leisure time compared to men:

> The distribution of leisure in the period supports and amplifies the picture already given of the composition of the reading public; and it also supplies the best evidence available to explain the increasing part in it played by women readers. (44)

Upper class women, since they could not participate in the sort of activities that their husbands were engaged in; middle class women, since they were only responsible for household chores and taking care of the children; and lower class women – especially waiting maids of rich households – since they had enough time, privacy and lighting, could read omnivorously. Watt quotes from foreign visitors to England, who reported statements like the following: "tradesmen's wives were rather lazy, and few do any needlework" (qtd in 44), to arrive at such conclusions and by exemplifying the situation with Richardson's heroine Pamela, he deduces that this is the reason why most of the novels of eighteenth and nineteenth century English literature hosted famous graceful heroines as their focus. So, changes in the reading public evoked changes in the literary tastes, and hence came into being – the novel.

Michael McKeon in *OEN* in relation to Watt's work's two founding features (formal realism, rise of the middle class), raises two sets of questions: "questions of truth" and "questions of virtue." "Questions of truth" that McKeon poses are related to generic categories, and here what he means by generic categories refers to the distinction between romance and novel. For Watt, as explained above, the distinction is the novel's formal realism which McKeon disagrees with by stating

that if Fielding is included in the list of writers of first novels in English literature, "we must dissipate and weaken the explanatory framework by requiring it to accommodate 'romance' elements and the anti-individualist tendencies they imply" (3). He asserts that romantic elements still exist ("persistence of romance") in these first novels and particularly in Fielding's works. The reason why McKeon names questions related to generic categories "questions of truth" is that they seek answers for how people "conceive the relationship between 'fact' and 'fiction,' between 'history' and 'literature' ('myth,' 'romance,' 'poetry')" (28) which are considered to be the elements that make novels closer to reality than other forms of writing. "Questions of virtue" brings before us the problems that are revealed through Watt's evaluation of the link between the rise of the middle class and the rise of the novel. He states the questions that had been asked by the critics as follows,

> Where is the evidence . . . for the dominance of the middle class in the early eighteenth century? How was it distinguished . . . from the traditional social categories of the aristocracy and gentry as the nobility of early modern England was itself transformed by cultural attitudes and material activities that bear a clear relation to the new "individualism"? What . . . are we to make . . . of the familiar type of middle class upstart whose middle class identity is defined by nothing so much as a self-negating impulse, a will to be assimilated into the aristocracy? (3)

McKeon lays bare that the middle class did not came into being as a separate entity, especially from aristocracy. He gives an example in his essay "Generic Transformation and Social Change: Rethinking the Rise of the Novel,"

> George King's celebrated table of the 1690s ostensibly aims to give a continuous financial, and therefore quantitative, progression from the top to the bottom of the English society. But he is obliged to work with both honorific and occupational categories, and around his table the two sorts of category become intermixed in a way that undermines the purpose of the project. (390)

He gives a similar example, this time the study of Joseph Massie in 1760, which had the same problem as in George King's work where hereditary titles – such

as that of a "lord" intermingled with titles related to occupations – such as that of the members of the clergy. Consequently, because the social classes at the time were in a state of discrepancy and intermixing, Watt's argument that the origins of the novel coincides with the dominance of the middle class in the eighteenth century has thus become a slippery slope.

The reason why McKeon's work is included, even if in brief, in this section is that it calls into question in a systematic and orderly way the very grounds of one of the most influential works on the origins of the novel. However, considering this study's aim, the more relevant and significant contribution to the field is that of Nancy Armstrong as she bases her arguments on a ground and employs a method that has completely changed the views and perceptions with regards to the novel's coming into existence and women's role in it. Armstrong begins her argument by laying bare that she knows "of no history of the English novel that can explain why women began to write respectable fiction near the end of the eighteenth century" (7). She criticizes Watt's work, since even though he attempted to provide a full account of the rise of the novel, he did not include in his study a discussion as to "why the majority of eighteenth-century novels were written by women" (7). This exclusion by Watt hints at the conclusion that there were many female readers but not that many female authors at the time. According to Armstrong:

> [S]uch attempts to explain the history of the novel fail because – to a man – history is represented as the history of male institutions. Where women writers are concerned, this leaves all the truly interesting questions unasked. (7)

She argues that Watt's way of interpreting the history of the novel "presupposes a social world divided according to the principle of gender," (8) and avoids considering how such an order emerged in the first place and what role women played in its formation. Armstrong, therefore, traces the appearance and development of "a specific female ideal" back to the emergence of the conduct books.

> … the last two decades of the seventeenth century saw an explosion of writing that proposed to educate the daughters of numerous aspiring social groups. The new curriculum promised to make these women desirable to men of a superior rank and in fact more desirable than women who had only their own rank and fortune to recommend them. (19-20)

Such books were unique at the time since they "aimed at producing a woman whose value resided chiefly in her femaleness rather than in traditional signs of status," (20) and they brought forward the exclusively female qualities which put a clear-cut distinction between female and male patterns of behavior. Such discourses of sexuality helped shape the novel, and domestic fiction appeared out of these non-fiction and didactic works that aimed at molding women's behavior in a way that would ensure the protection and maintenance of the institution of traditional family. She considers domestic fiction "as the agent and product of a cultural change that attached gender to certain kinds of writing" (28). This leads to the conclusion that while certain kinds of literary forms have been open to women, others belonged predominantly to men. Thus, writing and language were also divided as female and male and the basis of human identity also became gendered. Therefore, what domestic fiction includes is female writing that is "writing that was considered appropriate for or could be written by women" (28) namely, the novels of manners. Considering the fact that its emergence was perpetuated by the production and proliferation of conduct books, "domestic fiction [also] helped to produce a subject who understood herself in the psychological terms that had shaped fiction" (23).

Samuel Johnson, the eighteenth century literary giant, critic and moralist, in one of his essays in the Catholic periodical *The Rambler*, describes novels' readership as "the young, the ignorant, and the idle" (20). Similarly, one quote from *The Monthly Review* of April 1775 reads,

> Every love-stricken swain and every melting nymph is qualified to write a love-story which shall pass for a pretty novel; at least with the help of a friend, to spell it and put it together. (362)

Such quotations, the likes of which can easily be found, lay before us the cold fact that it was not only novels' readership that was subject to criticism and reprobation; novel writers were viewed to be as trivial as their readers. Therefore, it is safe, historically speaking, to say that the genre was not appreciated and did not signify any literary value at the time of its first appearance as a new form. Armstrong also emphasizes that "there is good reason to believe that novels did not become *literary* works until the twentieth century" (my italics, 38), but there were novels that were accepted as decent and polite.

> Favored among kinds of fiction were the novels which best performed the operations of division and self-containment that turned political information into the discourse of sexuality. These novels made the novel respectable, and it is significant that they so often were entitled with female names such as Pamela, Evelina, or Jane Eyre. (21)

With Richardson's *Pamela,* then, the public started to consider novels as a respectable genre of writing since in its plot and characters he successfully recreated the tenets of the book of conduct in the form of fiction. In other words, Richardson, in a way, can be said to have *rehabilitated* the novel genre and used a formula that would please all – especially those that deemed this form of writing a *bad influence* on the younger generation. However, what the writers and promoters of Richardsonian mode of writing considered safe proves to be utterly dangerous in Armstrong's point of view since the books of manners "appeared to have no political bias . . . they presented readers with ideology in its most powerful form" (60). To that effect, Armstrong openly challenges the previously written histories of the British novel by asserting that these works of fiction and non-fiction that aimed to teach women socially agreeable manners had existed before the way of life they depicted.

According to Armstrong, one cannot separate the new female ideal and the rise of the novel and the new middle class. The conduct books did not designate those belonging to the aristocracy as their target audience. Conversely, they portrayed a modest household where the husband works outside the home to provide for

the family whilst the wife stays at home with the children and works to make the home a pleasant place to raise a family.

> By the late eighteenth century, however, certain novels such as those by Burney and other lady novelists were certainly considered polite. This was the moment in history when people began to understand social relations in terms of the modern class society, and when political affiliations were understood, not as a function of loyalties to those above and below one in a chain of economic dependency, but in relation to those who derived their economic livelihood from similar sources in labor, land, service, or capital. Not only was this the time when sexual behavior emerged as a common standard for identifying and evaluating individuals from all reaches of the social world, it was also the period during which the entire tradition of the novel was being established. In 1809-10, Walter Scott put together the first collection of what he called *The Novels of Daniel Defoe,* which excluded *Roxana* and *Moll Flanders.* (38)

Therefore, the changing demographics of the society evoked the need to define and regulate the sexual relationships in a way that is relevant under the particular circumstances of the era. Domestic fiction assumed the function of the book of conduct; however, this should not be interpreted as when novels of manners became popular, the book of conduct had long been extinct. In fact, they co-existed for a long time to the point that in some conduct books and educational treatises we see certain books are recommended and others being excluded. In the case of Defoe's fiction, for example, *Robinson Crusoe* was in the reading lists for girl. Armstrong finds the reason for its inclusion in the assumption that Crusoe's economic ventures would sure be unimaginable for women and they would never attempt to imitate his financial ambitions and assertiveness.

> It was no doubt because Crusoe was more female, according to the nineteenth century understanding of gender, than either Roxana or Moll that educators found his story more suitable reading for girls than for boys of an impressionable age. (16)

And what about Defoe's *notorious* anti-heroines? Armstrong argues that those would certainly be *poisonous* for boys and girls of a young age since their adventures are rather different from Crusoe's in that they prove to be more

plausible and, surely, far less morally appropriate with the "undesirable qualities of their nature, and the ill-judgment behind their decisions" (97). After all, who, in their right minds, would allow their children to read at night, in the privacy of their room, the stories most of which are told by women who tear down the institution of marriage and disregard concepts of honor, virtue and chastity? So, instead of such horrid images of moral corruption, conduct books agreed upon one certain type of fiction which would be appropriate and safe for a young women to read, and "[t]his was a non-aristocratic kind of writing that was both polite and particularly suitable for a female readership," (97) it was also entertaining since it successfully dramatized the principles of the book of conduct.

Watt's strikingly influential work helped shape our understanding of this form of writing for a considerably long amount of time and it still continues to be taught as the one of the secondary readings in novel courses offered in many universities around the globe. However, if it were to be singled out as the one-and-only source to be read about the emergence of the novel genre, it would fall utterly short in assisting us to comprehend fully the complex cultural context out of which the genre was born and evolved. Armstrong's (and also McKeon's) work manifests its significance in this respect the most because *DDF* serves as a guide for us, students of literature, to see clearly the long ignored role of women – both as readers and writers – in the creation of books of novel. When analyzing English novels of manners of the eighteenth century, which were written for (and mostly by) women, it should be kept in mind that the depictions of women in these texts sought to replicate a specific female ideal – an ideal woman on whose shoulders a literary tradition rose and took the desired shape.

In order to better understand the social processes that helped accelerated popularity of novels, it would be useful to have a closer look at the readership of these books. The next chapter, therefore, will include an investigation of the reading public of the eighteenth century with a particular focus on women readers since the answer to the question "who read novels" and "why did they

choose to read these books" would bring to light the cultural and historical mechanisms that contributed to novels' rise.

2.2.Reading Public of the Eighteenth Century

So, is there any validity in Johnson's clear-cut description? Was novel's readership truly comprised of "the young, the ignorant, and the idle?" Who read novels? Who could afford them? What aided them in accessing books? How often did they read? How was their "reading" viewed by others? These questions have busied literary critics' minds for a long time; and many have attempted to provide answers to these long debated questions. In this part of my study, in a similar and yet much humbler attempt, I will include the works of J. Paul Hunter and Jacqueline Pearson on the eighteenth century British readership.

J. Paul Hunter in his essay "The Novel and Social/Cultural History" adopts the school of New Historicism to re-evaluate the social and historical context in which the novel emerged. He puts forward that old histiography with "its emphasis on political, military, and economic history and its tendency to see history itself as a primarily a question of public events and public policy" did not pay attention to "private activities and unempowered people" and ignored "feelings and opinions not obviously relevant to dominant political and economic directions" (14). Unlike old histiography, then, New Historicism takes into account all kinds of documents to be able to describe the social, economic and political events and issues. It is thus "more conscious of the domestic, the material, the everyday, and the interconnected, and more ready to study ordinary people who seem powerless and neglected – more anxious that a concept of culture include different varieties of historical methodology and different sites of investigation" (17). By taking such a methodology as the base of his essay, Hunter attempts to shed light upon the demographics of the reading public of the eighteenth century England.

Early novels attracted new readership since, unlike traditional literature, they did not require the kind of education that is available only to upper classes of society. Hunter remarks that it is "inaccurate (and anachronistic)" to assume that novel readers came only from the merchant class or the new bourgeoisie which came into being with the Industrial Revolution later in the century. Conversely, readership of novels included those who belonged to the lower classes of society, and they were "not only clerks, tradespeople, and those who had taught themselves to read for pragmatic purposes, but considerable numbers of domestic servants, both men and women" (19). Hunter presents us with a table of demographics of literacy in the eighteenth century England:

- Literacy rose sharply during the seventeenth century, with more than twice as many literate Britons in the eighteenth century as at the beginning of the seventeenth.
- By 1750 at least 60 percent of the adult men in England (and perhaps more) could read and write.
- Female literacy by 1750 had risen even more dramatically (and from a much smaller base); at least 40 percent of adult women (and possibly as many as half) could read. During the eighteenth century literacy increased among women faster than among men.
- Literacy was increasingly common, for both men and women, in the middling and lower orders of the population, although substantial numbers of people, especially in rural areas, remained illiterate.
- Literacy was higher in some regions of Britain than others: highest in Scotland, the Southeast of England, and (especially) London. (20)

However, even if we get a grasp of the extent of the group of individuals from such accounts, we still do not have an accurate account as to who read novels. Hunter suggests that Johnson's being able to designate the readers of novels ever so unwaveringly is a definite sign that he himself was among them. According to Hunter too, many readers of novels were indeed young because that was the group in society which novels addressed with their protagonists who were "young people on the verge of making important life decisions about love or career or both" (20). However, Hunter rejects Johnson's definition of novel readers as ignorant by pointing out that "such readers were not *traditionally*

educated" (20). Johnson's approximation that novel readers were "idle" is also rendered problematic by Hunter:

> [A]lthough novel readers might well steal an hour here and there from their workdays, those workdays were long . . . and without relief . . . The time to read had to be stolen from somewhere when life was lived under such difficult and precarious conditions, and young readers must often have read deep into the night, their only private time. Leisure was for the leisure classes, and sleep and work were the only two places from which time for reading, for many readers, could come. (20-1)

This picture that is presented before us by Hunter also falsifies Watt's description where he claims that household servants in the eighteenth century had the time and facilities to read extensively.

Moralists found that novel reading was inconvenient and dangerous especially for young people of lower classes since they might emulate the actions of the protagonists which – in most cases – suggested that a prosperous life may be available to them provided, of course, they follow the instructions that are conveyed through these texts. Hunter points out that:

> A lot of the worry . . . about the effects of novel reading centered on young women … whose heads might be turned and their passions inflamed. Novel reading seems to have been very popular among young women; the most persuasive evidence we have of their desire for novels is not statistical but derives from the ubiquity of warnings in conduct books, sermons and moral treatises. Besides, the plots of novels suggest that authors envisioned many women readers among their audience, perhaps even *primarily* women readers" (22).

Jacqueline Pearson in her *Women's Reading in Britain 1750-1835: A Dangerous Recreation* (2005), dwells upon this last part in Hunter's essay, which puts forward that while literary circles were in general displeased with the fact that novels did not comply with the classic literary conventions, with both its simplistic language and characters, moralists were in an outrage about these books' contents which did not comply with social conventions of the time. The worry, though, was mostly focused on women's reading and its very much

apprehensively anticipated outcomes. As Pearson puts it "women's reading became a site on which one may see a variety of cultural and sexual anxieties displayed" (1). Modernity, enlightenment, and "the city life" necessitated and encouraged literacy, and thus it became widespread and "politicized as never before" (1), since people's being able to read brought about questions as to *what* and *whom* they were reading and how this private act might ultimately affect the public and whether this effect would be favorable or not.

The discussion on reading and readers soon became gendered and the formula was that "reading was necessary for the *Reputation of Men* but only for the *Amusement of Women"* (my italics, 3). The points of discussion were also directed towards different aspects of reading according to gender. Pearson suggests that men's reading was thought to facilitate intellectual development; the discussion on women's reading, on the other hand, was centered on their body with "girls being urged to limit their 'reading' because it was an enemy to 'health and beauty' likely to 'hurt [the] eyes' or 'spoil [their] shape'" (3). Some critics even claimed that voracious reading could cause "fainting" and "dangerous changes in pulse rate" (3). While reading helped men acquire a level of sophistication and power, the possibility that the same might hold true for women was alarming:

> Reading empowered the male: 'He that loves reading . . . has but to desire' and he will acquire knowledge and power. But female desire was more problematic, and the literature of the period is full of women and girls who long to read but are forbidden to do so or are restricted in their reading. (3)

The commentators' (as Pearson calls the critics, moralists, essayists, columnists etc. of the time) views on women's reading were, in fact, many in number and, sometimes, contradicting in their nature. On the one hand, reading was seen the most poisonous act a woman could engage in, but on the other, it was thought to be women's "most rational employment" (1). Pearson quotes from a caricaturist of the time who pleaded to be saved from "a wife who when stockings and shirts want repair, sits reading a novel all day in her chair"; however, the same

commentator also claimed he would not want "a wife who in reading could ne'er find delight" (2). Another example Pearson gives is an anecdote by The Duchess of Devonshire who allowed herself to read *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* and Rousseau's *Confessions*, both of which were notorious among English readers for their lack of morality. The reason why the Duchess was able to indulge in reading such texts was twofold according to Pearson. She read them "not only because they were fashionable and so essential to effective social life, but also because her husband had read them and marked them for her," and hence, "her reading of an apparently transgressive text is actually dutifully complaint to domestic ideology" (3).

Therefore, this, in Pearson's words, "polyvalence" of the idea of a reading woman prevalent in the eighteenth century causes a sense of perplexity on the researcher's part because of the difficulty in pinpointing a public consensus that reached a verdict on whether women should be reading or not. This ambiguity can be said to stem from the very nature of the act of reading; while it keeps one "inside" the home; the room; within the borders of a closed domestic space, it also opens the doors to the world outside – it allows people to transgress the predetermined borders of their lives without "physically" going beyond them - which was perceived to be particularly disconcerting since this "duality threatened subversion of an ideology of separate spheres" (2): journeys and adventures one might never set out on; relationships that are far from being socially appropriate or acceptable; characters who do not get married, refuse to remain in the home looking after their families, who find themselves in unimaginably difficult situations and are able to overcome them; all are welcomed in readers' homes through their imagination. Nevertheless, despite the contradicting ideas on whether women should be reading or not, what we know now, and the public knew then for sure is that women did read; so the question then became how to regulate that reading, how to amend it in a way that would make sure the texts that were being read would not "lead women astray." At this point, literature that aimed specifically at women, such as conduct books,

women's magazines and novels, gained an unmatched significance as they "implicitly renegotiated the distinction between public and private, creating a world, and a format, which was 'domestic yet public', their reading constituting 'an event somewhere between the private and the social'" (2).

Pearson comments that despite the fact that the views on women's reading differed in detail, one thing was certain; their reading was important for society, members of their families and themselves; and it had to be controlled, or "policed", because of the fact that it was one of the fundamental elements in the "creation of femininity" (42) since it had the power of shaping and altering emotions. Some believed reading had the power of "humanizing the heart", and others thought it would "develop the heart prematurely and lower the tone of the mind" (42). Therefore, the discourse employed in the discussion on the effects of reading further created binaries "heart and mind;" "good and bad books;" appropriate and inappropriate reading practices; and, eventually, it would have the potential to create good and bad behaved individuals – good and bad women. This line of thinking manifests itself educational treatises and conduct books which addressed women with their warnings against "bad" literature, black lists, or recommendations on good texts and suggested bibliographies. Pearson observes that women writers had been more industrious in producing detailed lists of appropriate books; Mary Wollstonecraft, for instance, provided a complete anthology of acceptable readings for women in her *The Female Reader*. In books of conduct too one finds advice on what/whom to read and what/whom to avoid, but these, instead of making recommendations, merely outlined the kind of literature that was considered useful. For example, in James Fordyce's sermons, which will be discussed in detail later in this paper, the sentiment is that women should not be reading at all – except for much praised prose of Richardson whose name Fordyce does not refrain from stating.

Among the routinely banned literary works Pearson includes "skeptical, politically radical or erotic works" (43) and novels; however, she focuses her attention specifically on what women should and could read, and she comments

that however innocent a genre might appear to be, one could easily find someone opposing it since it is in the nature of reading that a reader might read even the least "harmful" book "rebelliously and resistingly rather than compliantly" (43). Pearson suggests and analyses a list of genres for women that starts from "the most legitimate" kinds of texts and ends with "the most problematic", and the list is as follows: "Biblical and religious reading;" "conduct books;" "informative reading;" "history;" geography, voyages and travels;" "imaginative literature (poetry and drama);" "scientific reading;" "translations and reading in foreign languages;" "philosophy and metaphysics;" and "novels" (44-86). The titles in the list in and of themselves make it clear that the acceptable texts for women to read was dogmatic and didactic. In other words, the creative, imaginative, intellectually stimulating and foreign texts were not viewed as suitable for women. So, reading was in fact allowed – but only when it fell within the categories of "appropriate" and "educational."

Novels were thought to have a "too seducing, too trivial, [and] too dangerous" power. Anne Lister, a traveler and diarist, for example, was alarmed by novel reading because she "identified [it] with her lesbian sexuality . . . and was afraid novels encouraged romance" (82). Novels, thus, became almost demonized and were dreaded for they recounted and revealed emotions that should have remained under the surface so that society with all its rules, conventions and roles for its members was sustained in a way that would ensure its healthy continuation. Still, despite all the anti-novel propaganda, people remained loyal to this new genre; and hence, it prevailed and preserved its popularity. Some critics argued that people had the common sense to put aside a poorly written book. As excellently put by Pearson, "while anti-novel comment dominated the battle on paper, it had clearly lost the real war" (84).

The fact that women did read no matter how fiercely the act was criticized is made crystal clear throughout Pearson's study. However, there remains the need to explore the processes in which novels became acceptable and respectable in the eyes of both the public and the literary critics. The first step to such an

investigation, as this study attempts to follow and implement Armstrong's arguments in *DDF*, is to study the characteristics of the model female propounded by the conduct books. Hence, the chapter that follows will seek to introduce the fundamental qualities of this ideal female image.

CHAPTER 3

FEMALE IDEAL IN THE BOOK OF CONDUCT

When did the novel become an agreeable genre? Armstrong emphasizes that "[b]eginning with Richardson's *Pamela* . . . one can observe the process by which novels rose to a position of respectability" (98). Because the word "novel" had become virtually a pejorative term – in literary sense – with all the previous reservations about it, Richardson made an effort not to have people read it as one; he wrote the book, as quoted by Piroska Balint in her *Female Manners and Morals* (2013), in an attempt to instruct "handsome Girls, who were obliged to go out to Service…how to avoid the Snares that might be laid against their Virtue" (107). But, according to Armstrong, *Pamela* cannot be considered a conduct book either. The reason for this is that, in conduct books one does not observe a female subjectivity that sought to represent the female body. Although it is true that they include instructions on apparel and hygiene, they fail to value the body as female. Books of conduct was ever so strictly opposed to women's reading novels even though they avoided mentioning "what exactly was so threatening about fiction that women had to shun it above all other reading" (109); though in James Fordyce's sermons, we are able to catch a glimpse of the "possible side effects" of reading novels. However, even these passages fail in pinpointing the specific aspects of this literary genre that might put its whole readership's morally compliant existence in danger.

Therefore, what Richardson did so successfully was to deploy "the strategies of conduct-book literature within fiction" and contain "the strategies of the most

deleterious fiction – a tale of seduction – within the frame work of a conduct book" (Armstrong 109). By doing so, he "domesticated" his fiction by including both forms of writing in it; and thus his writing can be said to have grown into a sort of melting pot where a story of seduction, which had the prospects of becoming very popular among readers and rather abhorrent among critics, gained structure through the teachings of the conduct book. And just like that, we had the first example of domestic fiction.

It is important to point out that if one is to read the novels of eighteenth (and also nineteenth) century English literature in search for the traces of the premises of conduct books, they must have a good understanding of the female ideal they communicated. Some of these instructional texts focused solely on household duties of women; some of them prescribed long lists of meal recipes; and others focused on manners and ways to carry themselves appropriately in a wide variety of settings. They are full of warnings on details which, if one does not pay attention, might cause trouble in one way or another.

Conduct books of seventeenth and eighteenth century, in their very essence, aimed to teach young women how to become marriageable. These texts were educational also in the sense that they taught values that could exclusively be adhered to femininity and that they protested to be inherent in all women by their nature. They constructed a form of subjectivity, says Armstrong, "which they designated as female" (14) and passed on knowledge to encourage young women to embrace and preserve their virtues.

> This writing assumed that an education ideally made a woman desire to be that a prosperous man desires, which is above all else a female. She therefore had to lack the competitive desires and worldly ambitions that consequently belonged – as if by some natural principle – to the male . . . She was supposed to complement his role as an earner and producer with hers as a wise spender and tasteful consumer. (59)

They endeavored to communicate a female ideal that is amiable, agreeable, and virtuous in her nature. Balint summarizes the characteristics of an ideal woman as indoctrinated by the book of conduct:

> [The ideal woman] was responsible for the regulation of a good household: she managed servants, taught her children and comforted her husband; furthermore, she did charity works and religious activities such as helping the poor and teaching them the Bible. (51)

Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, in their renowned *Madwoman in the Attic* (1979), describe the ideal female as "angelic" and find her origins in the Bible; and more specifically in Virgin Mary who was the "great teacher of purity . . . a mother goddess who perfectly fitted the female role (20). However, they suggest, "for the more secular nineteenth century . . . the eternal type of female purity was represented not by a Madonna in heaven but by an angel in the house" (20). This was made possible via the proliferation of the conduct books during the eighteenth century which addressed young women, cautioning them against unbecoming behavior and "reminding all women that they should be angelic" (23).

On the other hand, Nancy Armstrong, throughout the chapter titled "Labor That is Not Labor" in *DDF*, uses the term "the new woman" for the female ideal that was being created with the teachings of the books of conduct. She argues that the new woman was in opposition to both the aristocratic woman and the laboring woman. Women from both these extremes focus their attention to the body, to the material. The aristocratic woman was preoccupied with her body and its adornments. She "spent her time in idle amusements" (75); much the same, the working class woman also "located value in the material body" (76) that is physical labor. Conversely, the premise of the conduct books with regard to femininity was that the true value of the domestic woman lay beneath the surface. They attributed an innate quality to femininity.

One common point that virtually all conduct books agreed upon was that any women – regardless of their class – who engage in self-display is likely to have

their value diminished. And the aristocratic woman is particularly vulnerable on this matter since with her wealth and title might attract many admirers which could prove to be tempting. Armstrong quotes from one conduct book which put forward that such women "who aspire to the fashionable world" would become "low minded satellites of fashion and greatness" (76). So, neither the aristocratic idleness nor physical labor was exalted by the book of conduct; both were the "antithesis" of domestic woman. Instead, they introduced a new category of labor: domestic duty. Barbara Darby in her essay "The Rules and the Late Eighteenth Century Conduct Books for Women" (2001), summarizes the duties of the "proper lady" which were brought on by the economic, industrial and technological changes in the society which resulted in women's confinement to the home:

> [She] oversaw the activities of the house, but did not work herself, transformed her husband's earnings into a tangible quality of life, ensured that her husband had a retreat from his work, thus ostensibly making him more productive, and reared children. (336)

Darby argues that what conduct books made sure to communicate was that there was indeed a reward for this "domestic, passive, asexual existence:" the view that women were morally superior, crucial for their roles as mothers and "guardians of domestic happiness" (336). It is important to point out, though, that conduct book writers express rather clearly that women's role in the home did not place them in an inferior position compared to that of men. Their role was indeed very essential for it endowed upon them responsibilities the most important of which was the care and education of the children which meant that, in the wider sense, women were responsible for happiness and welfare of not only the family, but also the nation. Sustaining a healthy family life governed by the rules and values of the society would assure the preservation and continuation of those values.

To be able to perform their duties and fulfil their roles to the point of perfection, women needed guidance and instruction which is where we see the primary

objective of the book of conduct: providing education needed for the improvement of women's behavior; refinement of the innate femininity. According to Armstrong this female depth is an "invention," and this invention paved the way to the development of educational programs targeting women which "strove to subordinate the body to set of mental processes that guaranteed domesticity" (76).

So, besides the emergence and spread of conduct books, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw an increase in attempts to integrate the education of females in line with the teachings of these guides. Educational treatises were being written in the hopes that they could improve the curricula since they were convinced that education "became the preferred instrument of social control" (Armstrong 17). Robert Edgeworth and his daughter Maria in their *Practical Education* acknowledged the power of education as well as literature, and therefore, hoped to incorporate certain works of literature in the curriculum.

> Convinced that the "pleasures of literature" acted upon the reader in much the same way as the child's "taste for sugar plums" (p 80), the Edgeworths along with other forward-thinking educators began to endorse the reading of fiction that made social conformity seem necessary, if not entirely desirable. (16)

When they are chosen carefully, novels could carry out the same function as conduct books in improving young people's behaviors. Armstrong suggests that the books that were encouraged to be read by young people are today considered to be "the novels which best exemplify the genre" (38) in that they "translated the social contract into a sexual exchange" (38). The decrease in the number of conduct book publication at the end of eighteenth century "was not because the female ideal they represented passed out of vogue," to the contrary, "by this time the ideal had passed into the domain of common sense where it provided the frame of reference for other kinds of writing, among them the novel" (63). As an example to the internalization of the rules that conduct books conveyed Armstrong gives the difference between the writings of Samuel Richardson and Jane Austen. Austen did not have to represent the household as detailed as

Richardson did, or make rules as clear as Burney did, since by her time, the rules that governed sexual relations put forward in the conduct books had long been accepted.

3.1.Introduction to Fordyce's Sermons

In the previous chapter, I have attempted provide a general view of the teachings of conduct books. Even though some of these guides were written for more specific purposes, such as teaching home economics and cooking, the underlying philosophy and premises governing these texts were common in all of them: educating women in ideal femininity. Since the books of conduct were very popular, they were rather abundant in number and we can still find many of them very easily either online or in university libraries. There has also been a wide variety of research on conduct books; so, one can get a rather clear picture of what these texts are about and the behavioral patterns they intended to teach without actually reading them. However, without reading them, one is not fully able to comprehend the essence and impact of these writings - as Armstrong puts it brilliantly "one is struck with a sense of their emptiness" (60) – the style in which they were written, and the parallels between these books and their successor – the novel.

With this reason in mind, I have chosen one conduct book that would help the reader have a clearer understanding of the structure and style of these guides to proper femininity. The conduct book to be read and analyzed within the scope of this study is James Fordyce's *Sermons to Young Women* (1765). The reason why this text is chosen is, first and foremost, its popularity at the time. The sermons are mentioned by many scholars: Joyce Hemlow, an acclaimed Frances Burney scholar, for example, in her study "Fanny Burney and the Courtesy Books" (1950), paints a detailed picture of the impact of the book of conduct on Burney's writing as well as on the education of young women in England. She introduces the most popular texts on female virtue, bringing forward James Fordyce's sermons:

> Sermons to Young Women [of Fordyce], comprising twelve chapters or sermons on such subjects as "Modesty of Apparel," "Female Reserve," and "Female Virtue, with Domestic and Elegant Accomplishments," appeared in two volumes in 1765. It became popular at once and ran to five editions before 1768, to eleven before 1798, and to fourteen before 1814. In 1765 Miss Talbot wrote to Miss Carter: "I have just been reading a book, lately published, which I entreat you to like, as I do, exceedingly. It is in two volumes, *Sermons to Young Women*." (734)

Fordyce's work was so popular in the eyes of the public that it was also included in the reading "lists of *improving* works for young ladies" (735). An initial reading of these sermons has also shown that one can find some of the implications of Fordyce's advice in the plots of both Burney's *Evelina* and Defoe's *Moll Flanders* – the former trying hard to conform the rules and values promoted in the sermons; and the latter trying to survive despite these societal values, and thus, subverting the rules. Therefore, keeping in mind the connections between the two novels and the sermons, a discussion of Fordyce's book of conduct will be most useful considering the aim of this study.

James Fordyce was a Scottish clergyman who actually delivered these sermons in churches in London, and later compiled them into a two volume guide book. He was reported to be a rather excellent preacher who had a distinct impact on his audiences. Therefore, like his oral deliveries in the church, his written advice in the form of the book of conduct also became rather popular and influential. Being a clergyman, Fordyce often refers to the Bible (particularly to St. Paul's insights) about the manner and nature of the female sex.

As quoted by Barbara Taylor in her essay "Feminists versus Gallants" (2004), a Scottish Enlightenment historian commented that Fordyce did not "merely reinforce a patriarchal structure which he found already existing in British society, but … helped to lay an entirely new foundation for male superiority" (128). Similarly, the first aspect that strikes one's attention about his sermons is the tone in which Fordyce addresses his audiences. When addressing his

audience, he identifies himself as a brother to them who speaks for their best interests.

> Come then, my sisters, and hearken to a brother, while he endeavours to show you one side of those things which you ought principally shun, in order to the maintaining of your Sobriety. (64)

By doing so, he successfully gets rid of the potential doubts regarding his motives. He establishes a kinship between himself and his audience, and claims to have no ill intentions; that he should not be considered as someone from the opposite sex. However, despite his effort to position himself as an equal and insistence that he only has women's *best interests* in mind, by suggesting that he is a brother to them, Fordyce ends up occupying the high ground in patriarchal hierarchy.

It is not so difficult to detect, right from the first pages, why he had become so popular and why his words and style had such an immense influence on the readers. The reason for this is that the way he addresses the readers conveys a feeling of genuine concern that is derived from compassion and friendliness. Fordyce, throughout his sermons, stresses the fact that his sole objective is to help and guide women to have happy and prosper lives. However, he also mentions that, he has spoken for not only women's welfare, but also and even more importantly for the welfare of the society as a whole.

> The author of the following Discourses was prompted to publish them, from an unfeigned regard for the Female Sex; from a fervent zeal for the best interests of society, on which he believes their dispositions and deportment will ever have a mighty influence … (preface iii)

Therefore, his remarks and advice should concern all members of the community; because, he says, the conduct and choices of women affect every individual living in the country. What we can deduce from this is that a woman's actions could never be deemed private or personal since the quality of their conduct – virtuous or not, appropriate or not, decent or not – has an indisputable relevance to the well-being and continuity of the society itself – its smallest and

most precious unit being the family. Hence, the fact that what is at stake is the possibility for a nation to exist in prosperity bestows upon Fordyce the authority to regulate and improve women's conduct. However, the minister makes it clear that he does not wish to exploit his authoritative position; conversely, because he supposes women to have such an impact over the society, to his mind, they are the ones occupying a higher position with all the good qualities of their nature. Indeed, the reverend praises and exalts the good nature of women over the whole course of his sermons:

> That works of ingenuity and elegance are particularly becoming in your sex, and that the study of them ought to enter into female education as much as possible . . . should they by any neglect of their persons render themselves less amiable than God has made them, they would so far disappoint the design of their creation. (3)

At this point, we should remember Armstrong's comment on "female depth" since Fordyce's comments on the issue prove to be a good example of it. Conduct books of the era, she suggests, adhered an innateness to femininity, and Fordyce's sermons follow the same principle: there is a potential in every woman to become the model female; what should be done in order to bring that potential to the surface is providing women with the proper education. Fordyce speaks from a deterministic point of view and puts forward that all women are created fragile, elegant, and affectionate; and therefore, he believes, essentially, they would not behave in a way that is dissimilar to their disposition. By claiming so, he attributes certain characteristics to women that, in a way, traps them since in the event that they behave outside these norms, they would have acted against religion, society, morals, and womanhood.

At first, Fordyce states that his sermons address all women regardless of their social class and age. Nevertheless, he then designates the young and the genteel as his target audience.

> The preacher is willing to hope, that women of most conditions, and at all ages, may meet with some useful counsels, . . . Should any of those *young persons in genteel life*, to whom they are

> chiefly addressed, deem the reprehensions they contain too severe, or too discriminate … (my italics, preface iv)

This is also in line with Armstrong's suggestion that "the new woman" is not and cannot be the same as the aristocratic woman who is preoccupied with her looks and spends her time with idle entertainment in the company of men. Therefore, the motive behind Fordyce's resolve to address the young and the genteel lies in the fact that these two groups are in the most urgent need of counsel for the betterment of their behavior and temperament so that they could shift their attention from their body – the material – to innate virtues of their sex.

The most interesting and, perhaps, most relevant portion of the sermons as far as this study is concerned is the part where Fordyce contemplates on novels and the effects of reading novels on young persons; he writes "[I will] caution you against that fatal poison to virtue, which is conveyed by profligate and by improper Books" (73). Throughout the passages where he discusses this topic, the underlying premise is that the novel is a poisonous literary genre with its depictions of aberrant relationships, situations that are far from reality, endings that are misleading, and its portrayal of immoral and ill-advised characters with unattainable deeds.

> We consider the general run of Novels as utterly unfit for you. Instruction they convey none, they paint scenes of pleasure and passion altogether improper for you to behold, even with the mind's eye. Their descriptions are often loose and luscious in a high degree; their representations of love between sexes are almost universally overstrained. All is dotage or despair; or else ranting swelled into burlesque. (75-6)

His insights about the novel are in parallel with that of Samuel Johnson who regarded it as a form devoid of any literary significance with a readership comprised of young and idle people. It is a form of writing that draws an implausible world and gives young people wrong impressions with regards to values, and social status. Like Ian Watt, Fordyce also finds that novels are

particularly popular among women; a genre that is designated to the young females.

> To come back to the species of writing which so *many young women are apt to* doat upon . . . such books lead to a false taste of life and happiness, that they represent vices as frailties, and frailties as virtues; they engender notions of love unspeakably perverting and inflammatory. (my italics, 79)

He does not state openly the names of the books he categorizes as novels, or writers he regards as novelists – at least not the ones he dispraises. However, he does mention one name that he admires dearly for telling stories that would benefit women – Samuel Richardson. The fact that Fordyce expresses his admiration of Richardson as a novelist, and that he appreciates and promotes his novels is rather significant in that his remarks, in a way, support Armstrong's argument. The reason for such an assumption is that Fordyce regards only the kind of written work that brings forward and promotes the values of virtue, chastity and sobriety, and books that direct young people in the way of morals and etiquette as worthy of reading and as bearing a literary significance. He considers Richardson's work to be substantial and valuable.

> Amongst the few works of this kind which I have seen, I cannot but look on those of Mr. Richardson as well entitled to the first rank; an author, of whom an in disputable judge has with equal truth and energy produced, "that he taught the passions to move at the command of reason" . . . an author, to whom your sex are under singular obligations for his uncommon attention to their best interests. (74)

Therefore, it can be concluded that because Fordyce sees Richardson as a supporter of the merits and values that are also present in his own work, he recognizes the writer as having the same authority over the improvement of young persons' conduct. Thus, the works of literature that he calls novels fall into a different category than Richardson's books because while he defines the novel as a "vulgar" literary genre, – same adjective he employs when describing unappealing women, he renders the writer's work as "beautiful productions."

> Beside the beautiful productions of that incomparable pen [Richardson's], there seem to me to be very few, in the style of Novel, that you can read with safety, and yet fewer that you can read with advantage. (75)

The following passage also deals with novels, but this time he talks about the sort of publications that young women should avoid reading not only because reading such books would be a waste of time, but also because they draw a wicked picture of the world and people.

> [Such books] on some occasions actually reward those very crimes, and almost on all leave the female readers with this persuasion at best, that it is their business to get husbands at any rate, and by whatever means . . . that repentance for the foulest injuries which can be done the sex, is generally represented as the pang, or rather the start, of a moment; and holy wedlock converted into a sponge, to wipe out at a single stroke every stain of guilt and dishonour, which it was possible for the hero of the piece to contract. (79)

What strikes one about this passage is that the plot and events he is describing here have an alarming resemblance to Moll's life. He scrutinizes certain novels in that they recount stories of women who assume finding husbands as their profession, have no sense of what is virtuous, are promiscuous in their relationships with men, and are nonetheless rewarded with repentance. To his mind, such behavior might have no excuse and could never be dismissed solely because one becomes repentant. Bearing in mind that repentance is one of the key concepts that is being explored in Defoe's *Moll Flanders,* we are convinced that Moll's story fits Fordyce's description of trivial and inferior works of literature that he calls novels.

What we gather from his tone is that, such books are not only examples of *bad* literature, but they should also be *black listed* for women in Fordyce's view. The way he approaches this subject matter is rather significant in that it poses a question of categories. On the one hand, he denigrates the novel genre, on the other, he calls Richardson – whose books are considered today as the first examples of the English novel – an outstanding writer of beautiful books; so, he

places Richardson on a different level. Consequently, this conduct book not only categories women, but also books. Remembering the underlying premise of Nancy Armstrong's work – that conduct books evolved into novels – we can detect in Fordyce's sermons, a hint of a desire to rehabilitate books that do not fit the category of courteous books by juxtaposing them with what he considers as decent and appropriate works of literature; much like his attempt to regulate young women's behavior in a way that would be fitting within the framework of social, cultural, and religious rules for conduct. Keeping in mind the parallels, similarities and correspondences between the two texts, it can be concluded that, besides Richardson's *Pamela,* Burney's *Evelina* is also an epitome of all the ideals with regards to expected patterns of female conduct.

Fordyce's sermons are divided in various sections that focus on different aspects with regard to female conduct. In the following chapters, the two eighteenth century novels that this study takes as its focus, *Moll Flanders* and *Evelina* will be explored under the light of Fordyce's views on female reserve, motherhood, female apparel, entertainment, and female friendship. Such an analysis will help us comprehend how these books have been viewed since the time of their publication. Studying these two novels from the perspective of Fordyce's principles on the female ideal will also reveal how the views on these novels correspond to the quality of the heroines' respective experiences and conduct recounted in their stories.

CHAPTER 4

DEFOE'S *MOLL FLANDERS*

Daniel Foe, the unofficial poet laureate of England, was born in London sometime between 1659 and 1661. When looking through the chronology[1] of his lifetime, one is overwhelmed by the extent of tumultuous events of his personal life as well as the social and political turmoil prevalent in England at the time. In his twenties, he became a wealthy business owner, and he travelled extensively around England and Europe. However, this prosperity did not last long for when he was in his early thirties, he went bankrupt, and in 1692, he was imprisoned for his debts. In 1695, he changed his name, and henceforth he would be known as Daniel Defoe. Throughout the following few years, he served as an agent for the king, William III, which ended with his arrest in 1703, this time for accusations of libel emerging after he published the political satire, *The Shortest Way* where he, as a religious Dissenter, criticized High Church extremists. His arrest resulted in his imprisonment in Newgate, which became the source of the observations his characters recount in his crime fiction. Between 1704 and 1713, he served as an agent for the government and he worked as a political journalist. In 1713, he was arrested and imprisoned one more time, again for his debts and political writings. *The Family Instructor*, Defoe's first conduct book, was published in 1715. He wrote several more conduct books, the most controversial of which was *Conjugal Lewdness* in which he discussed contraception (he was opposed to it), and the equality between the wife and the husband. *Moll Flanders* was published in 1722, and from that year on, until his death in 1731, he produced an "unceasing torrent of language" (2). When he died in his early 70s, he was still in large amounts of debt and was hiding from his creditors.

[1] The chronology that is being referred to here is retrieved from Richetti, J. "Chronology". *The Cambridge Companion to Daniel Defoe.* Ed. John Richetti. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. xi-xiv. Ebook.

John Richetti, in his introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Daniel Defoe* (2008), comments that "Defoe is arguably the most important writer of the first thirty years of the English eighteenth century, and the one nowadays the most widely read" (2). Novels by Defoe contain and reveal the plausible experiences of their individual characters, but more importantly, they encompass his characters' "intersection and involvement with issues within the larger socio-historical world in which they acquire their identities" (3), and *Moll Flanders* (1722), stands out as an excellent example of this particular aspect of Defoe's oeuvre.

4.1.*Moll Flanders:* The Blacklisted Heroine

Moll Flanders (1722), as its full title suggests, is the memoir of the heroine Moll, whose real name we do not know, where she recounts her "fortunes and misfortunes" which have led her to become notorious for her criminal actions, and hence, change her name. "Moll is born into crime" (74), says Hal Gladfelder in his essay "Defoe and Crime Fiction", referring to her birth at Newgate to a mother who was imprisoned there until Moll was born, and then, was deported to America. Starting life as an orphan, Moll first lives with a group of gypsies after which she is placed in the care of a good-natured old nurse from whom she learns how to work with the needle and receives basic education. When she reaches adolescence, she leaves her foster mother's home, and starts living with a wealthy family as a servant. Thereafter, Moll's life takes a bitter toll, and she gets involved with many men either as their mistress or as their wife. All her marriages end early and bitterly. At one point, she unknowingly marries her half-brother whom she leaves after finding out the true nature of their relationship. Over the course of her life, she gives birth to more than four children some of whom she leaves behind. After the death of her last husband, Moll is left penniless and truly desperate at which point she starts stealing. Throughout her life as a criminal, she is supported by her governess who teaches her the intricacies of the job and becomes her accomplice. Eventually, she gets caught and is sent to Newgate where she becomes repentant. She is exiled to America

where she and her Lancashire husband, Jemmy, start a new life. There, she reunites with her brother/husband, and after he dies, she starts recounting the story of her life to Jemmy. Together, they return to England and live the rest of their life "in sincere penitence."

The events of Moll's life are rather complicated and shocking, even for our time, with her discussion of and experience with various societal taboos such as extramarital sex, incest, adultery and crime, which had made the novel an unpleasant read and was considered to be unfit for "the drawing-room table." The literary presence of Moll was disregarded for a long time, but, as Nancy Armstrong informs us, it started being considered a novel in the twentieth century. However, since then, there have been many debates regarding the novel's literary merit, Moll's eligibility as a novelistic heroine and true motives behind her actions. Before studying the novel from the perspective of Fordyce's sermons, it would be useful to review the literature on *MF*, which is possibly the most controversial among all of Defoe's novels, to gain insights about the points of discussion surrounding the novel.

One of the earliest commentators to write about and praise the novel was Virginia Woolf. In *The Common Reader,* in the chapter "Defoe" (1919), she tells us about the time when it was decided to build a monument next to Defoe's grave:

> [T]he marble was inscribed to the memory of the author of Robinson Crusoe. No mention was made of Moll Flanders. Considering the topics which are dealt with in that book, and in Roxana, Captain Singleton, Colonel Jack and the rest, we need not be surprised, though we may be indignant, at the omission. (85)

Woolf comments that while she does not deny the excellence of *Robinson Crusoe, Moll Flanders* is "among the few English novels which we can call indisputably great" (85). For Woolf, this is because Moll stands out as an audacious character who is driven by the "worst of devils, poverty," and in order to survive, as she was not born into any kind of wealth, high social status, or any kind of emotional support that might substitute parents, "she has to depend

entirely upon her own wits and judgment" (87). Woolf interprets the swift transitions between her marriages as a manifestation of the urgency resulting from her lack of resources. And her marriages, before she becomes a "professional" thief, are her only resources; therefore, "she has no time to waste upon the refinements of personal affection; one tear is dropped, one moment of despair allowed, and then 'on with the story'" (88).

Unlike many scholars who call into question Moll's reliability as a narrator, Woolf does not doubt the authenticity of the heroine's account, because to her mind, as Moll does not refrain from lying to serve her purposes, "there is something undeniable about her truth when she speaks it" (88). Considering the themes focusing on the material inequality between the two sexes, which is characteristic of Woolf's work, that she examines the novel from a class-conscious point of view is not surprising. She draws our attention to the fact that Moll is born into to a class of persons who constituted the lowest stratum of society. The only powers at her disposal are the authority she has over her body and her judgment. Therefore, the heroine's story of struggle through the hardships of life, fuelled by her ambition and imagination, makes the readers, says Woolf, "admire Moll Flanders far more than [they] blame her" (89).

Lois A. Chaber, in her "Matriarchal Mirror: Women and Capital in *Moll Flanders*" (1982), takes on a similar position to that of Woolf and comments on the novel from a Marxist perspective, meaning she engages in an analysis of the novel bearing in mind the heroine's social status as an orphaned woman with a parental background clouded with crime. Chaber refers and responds to the heated debate over the novel and, its main character, Moll's literary legitimacy. She contests the previous commentaries by making clear that they were so preoccupied with the heroine's morality that they sought to evaluate the literary value of the book based on the supposed underdevelopment of Moll as a novel character. Chaber challenges such views that adhere a psychological comedy to the heroine by citing inconsistencies and contradictions she manifests, and she

sides with Woolf in putting forward that *MF* should actually be read as a social criticism:

> The heroine's allegedly indelicate, immoral, and illegal activities are emanations and illuminations of a burgeoning patriarchal capitalist community - or anti-community - the novel's main object of concern. (212)

Moll was born into uncertain and fluid circumstances both on the personal level, and also in terms of the social and economic state of the country at the time; an instance in history which Marx calls "period of transformation" which means that "the material forms of production in society come in conflict with the existing property relations of production" (qtd. in Chaber 212). Therefore, Moll becomes the embodiment of conflicting classes with her "bourgeois enterprise" and her search for a husband of gentility and wealth. Chaber asserts that a Marxist reading of *MF* is vital in that it allows for a shift of focus from Moll's psychology and morals to her surroundings where "she alternately flounders and flourishes" (213); however, even such an analysis falls short in recognizing Moll's gender since, according to Chaber, Marxist critics have been as inattentive as "liberal" scholars in analyzing the heroine's misfortunes with a mind-set that is conscious of gender issues, which results in their condemnation of the character. Reading the novel with such a perspective reveals that instead of attempting to defend or make excuses for Moll, one should be celebrating the fact that, unlike her contemporary sisters, she resists "reduction to the literary alternatives of marriage or death" (213). When critics ignore the inherent social and economic injustices toward woman, they end up attributing Moll's hiding money from her husbands to her "secret economy of personal prudence" (qtd. in Chaber 216), when it actually appears to be a precaution "against the legalized theft of women's property rights" (216).

Critics have been fixated on the slipperiness of the moral grounds on which Moll makes her decisions and have made efforts to investigate her "real motives" and drives behind her decisions. Such a position falls utterly simplistic since it fails to recognize the social processes by which Moll is forced to approach her

relationships with men as if they are transactions in "market dealing" (*MF 68).* And we understand that this went both ways from the fact that she resorts to marriage for financial stability much like the men who pursue her after they hear the rumors that she has in her possession a large sum of money.

Another point that critics have also disregarded was that the debate surrounding the heroine started to get *personal*. Some of them blamed her for her cunningness and wickedness, and others took pity on her and described her as a "victim" of circumstances. Her criminality has been evaluated from two extreme points of view: her moral bankruptcy and her desperation and helplessness. Nicola Lacey, on the other hand, in her *Women, Crime, and Character* (2008) argues against both points. She investigates the views on female criminality remarks that,

> Women offenders tend to be thought of as weak-minded or mad rather than bad: or, when engaged in behavior sufficiently subversive of conventional norms of femininity 'doubly deviant'. [They] also tend to be seen as victims: victims of their hormones, of their circumstances and sometimes, of men. (3)

Therefore, women as criminals have been approached with the same stereotypes of femininity: they are passive, rely on their emotions and driven by their impulses of body rather than the mind. Moll stands as a contrast to these views for she is an autonomous character "brimming with agency and enterprise" (3). She has plans and aspirations, and strategies for realizing them. She is not bereft of conscience either; she expresses her feelings of shame and guilt about the consequences of her actions, for example, when she steals a gold necklace from a child. She considers stealing her job and praises herself on how good she is at it. She asserts her strong sense of self at every occasion, and even if she acquires a considerable amount of wealth through her job she is unwilling to give it up. With all such qualities, Moll has been widely considered to a *masculine* character which pinpoints the dominant understanding of innate femininity – as well as the views on masculinity – of eighteenth century conduct books.

It must be noted at this point that we owe *Moll Flanders*'s revival in the twentieth century and the various debates that have flourished about the novel ever since,

to Ian Watt's work on the rise of the novel. He is one of the first scholars who focused a special attention to this long neglected work of literature, and because his work was pioneering and highly influential, it did not fail in accentuating the work's realistic aspects that justified its classification as a novel with its great detail both in terms of its intricateness in social and economic commentary and in terms of its character's psychological complexity. However, it should also be noted that even though Watt is to be given credit and praised for unearthing Moll, his critical analysis of the novel was not so much praised as his discovery. Watt in his essay, "The Recent Critical Fortunes of *Moll Flanders*" (1967) dwells specifically on the critical controversy circling around Defoe's infamous heroine who had been sentenced to an underground existence for nearly two centuries until it emerged "to be canonized as one of the world's great novels by the modern movement in literature" (109). Throughout the essay, he responds to the reactions and criticisms of his criticism of *MF*; therefore his responses provide us with a succinct summary of various scholars' diverse meditations on the novel.

Even though Watt accepts that *MF* is indeed a novel despite the "hackneyed assumptions" that it does not fall into this generic category with its lack of "a tidy plot, love, sensitive people, psychological development, [and] a conventional moral outlook" (110), he is rather skeptical about its being acclaimed as a great classic. He suggests that the novel lacks coherence in its theme and in the actions of its heroine. Similarly, Terrence Martin, conveys his doubts about the accuracy of the book's details of the social situation at the time, and that he does not consider *MF* as having a "sophisticated structural unity involving theme, character and tone" (qtd. in Watt 111). Another critic, Robert R. Columbus, disregarded the novel due to Defoe's "deliberate and conscious attempt to unriddle the soul of Moll Flanders" who lacked the moral competency to make judgments about her own actions, and thus, could never be truly penitent. Watt is suspicious also because of the unknown particulars of the character since we do not even know "if she is a blonde" (111), which makes the

readers feel uneasy about the moral development of the character since they cannot situate her in a framework that would reveal her true identity and feelings. Additionally, because of the parallels between Defoe's and Moll's lives, the critics could not dissociate the character from her creator's own experiences which, according to Watt, makes Moll far from being "a round and fully-developed fictional character" (112). Mark Schorer likewise discusses the impossibility of Defoe's impartiality about his heroine mostly because he "is" her. Moll stands out as a "classic revelation of the mercantile mind" whose morality Defoe failed in measuring. This association of Moll with Defoe, for Schorer, not only undermines the literary value of the book, but also diminishes the "human value" of its main character. Robert Alter offers an even grimmer interpretation of the heroine by stating her brutally plain language stems from "her businesswoman's literal-mindedness" which means that the only significant realities in life are that of the material quantity and quality. And when she is attempting to be polite and discreet especially when commenting about sex, Alter comments, she is merely copying the way the gentility speak, which is rather predictable considering that those are the ones she aspires to.

After stating and responding to the many interpretations of *MF* by a wide circle of critics, Watt declares that his "doubts about Defoe's characterization of Moll Flanders obstinately continue" (116). Like other critics who find the solution in "talking of duality, paradox, above all of irony" (119), Watt also resorts to the same solution and puts forward that the only plausible explanation for the contradictions and inconsistencies in Moll's judgment is that *MF* is a work of irony and comedy:

> Moll Flanders looks us right in the eye and smiles back … whether she is grinning at the memory of a particularly clever theft, or of some rewarding encounter with Jemmy, or even at the eternal felicity alleged to be the retirement pension of all true penitents, the reader must decide for himself. Of course there would be nothing inconsistent in resolving that it is the very idea of expecting her to break the habits of a life- time, and tell the whole truth, even to herself, which makes Moll Flanders-or is it her creator?-keep smiling. (126)

It must be noted that while one could find merits in all these arguments about Moll's lack of moral development and consistency and that it is this lack that makes the novel only a mediocre one, it is apparent that none of the critics, prior to Armstrong, evaluated the history of novel from a female – or even non-gendered – point of view. The literature on the novel genre ignored the long tradition of the book of conduct and how significantly it shaped novels in terms of both their content and structure. The conclusion they reach to make sense of *MF*, that it is a work of irony, is even more degrading since there is a suggestion in this protestation that this novel, and thus its heroine, cannot and should not actually be taken that *seriously.* Therefore, even if Watt managed to revive this great work of fiction, he and others could not accurately pinpoint the reasons why *MF* was ostracized and remained underground for a time as long as two hundred years. And this is why, by following Armstrong's footsteps, a reading of Moll's experiences under the light of Fordyce's teachings would help us better understand the social and political mechanisms that passed the verdict on *MF* and decided that it does not have what it takes to become a work of literature; a novel, and Moll cannot be regarded as a proper female since she is the opposite of what a woman should be.

4.2.Moll: "The Misfit"

In order to comprehend to what extent *Moll Flanders* fits Fordyce's description of books that were unfit for women, we should remember the characteristics of such publications that he recounts in his sermons:

> It is their business to get husbands at any rate, and by whatever means . . . that repentance for the foulest injuries which can be done the sex . . . holy wedlock converted into a sponge, to wipe out at a single stroke every stain of guilt and dishonour. (79)

If we consider the whole plot of *MF* from the point of view of this passage, it becomes crystal clear that Moll's experiences, without question, go beyond what is appropriate and what is decent in a woman to Fordyce's mind, since Moll indeed sees finding husbands as a business: "marriages were here the

consequences of politic schemes for forming interests" (*MF* 72) she says; in fact she sees it as a market and that "the market ran very unhappily on the men's side" (*MF* 73), since men had all the liberty to find a suitable wife without worrying about *becoming undone*. Therefore, Moll, driven by the urge of a decent survival, never ceases to seek opportunities to ensure her financial stability, and with the limited resources in her hands she first turns to her many husbands, and then to theft. As seen in the passage above, such a life cannot be excused and actions forgiven no matter what has driven one into them; repentance would not be the solution for the cleansing of such souls. However, as contrary to what Fordyce preaches, the reader finds that Moll does repent as a result of which she escapes hanging, and is eventually given leave to live the remaining days of her life with her husband in "sincere penitence for the wicked lives [they] have lived" (*MF* 376). Such a peaceful ending goes against the minister's vision that once a woman is undone in wickedness and impropriety, there is no possibility for her of a future happiness.

Even if the novel with its heroine's unbecoming experiences and its unexpected ending – unexpected in terms of the principles of the book of conduct – clearly goes against societal norms with regard to gender roles, which makes it rather apparent why it was deemed "unfit for the drawing-room table," there is more to it that challenges the predominant view of the ideal female of the eighteenth century – and these will be explored under the themes of "female character and reserve;" "apparel;" "friendship;" and "motherhood" put forward by Fordyce.

The merits Fordyce distinguishes in terms of female character and reserve are rather self-explanatory: "shamefacedness," "virtue," "innocence," "blushing," "propriety," "purity," "dignity," and "tranquility." These concepts do not signify much for Moll since for her, from the beginning of her life, what counts is the ability to take care of oneself. What she understands from being a gentlewoman is that she "get[s] enough [money] to keep [her] without that terrible bugbear going to service, whereas they meant to live great, rich and high, and I know not what" (*MF* 13). She acts on the same principle when she gets involved with the

older brother in the household where she goes for service. At first Moll does blush at the man's advances; but, it cannot be said to be a result of shamefacedness since she is more excited than timid in the face of his revelation of his affection for her. She admits that this confession of love from "such a gentleman" elevated her vanity and that her "head was full of pride" and did not consider her "own safety or virtue" (*MF* 24). Therefore, Moll subverts the idea of innate innocence and female depth that are to be found in all women as she is in fact acting on her basic drives which do not correspond to the premises of the book of conduct. Later, she remarks, upon receiving the handful of gold he leaves for her, that "whether he intended to marry me or not . . . seemed of no great consequence to me" (*MF* 26-7), for unlike Fordyce, she thinks what makes a woman marriageable is the money that she owns. Her conclusion is further exemplified around the time of her second marriage which happen under full control of Moll who makes her prospective husband believe that she is in fact a wealthy widow.

Fordyce is as much concerned about the femininity in men, as he is disturbed by masculine women when he writes "a masculine woman must be naturally an unamiable a creature. I confess myself shocked whenever I see the sexes confounded" (53). He describes such women as "monstrous". For Fordyce, who ascribes an "amiable virtuous timidity" to women's character, Moll might as well be said to resemble a man more than a woman since she earns her own money and calculates it, both looks after her children and leaves them behind, gets involved with many men and uses these liaisons as business strategies, moves quite frequently and is not confined to home. Never in any passage of his book does Fordyce instruct women to learn to earn money and run finances. They are responsible for is making the home a decent and peaceful place for their husbands and children. Consequently, Moll with her lifestyle and character is not only yards away from being considered a gentlewoman, but worse, she fits the category of *monstrous* women with all the masculine traits she bears.

Fordyce discusses the topic of "monstrous women" when extending his advice on female apparel as well. From the beginning, he puts particular emphasis on his view that women must not appear too fancy or "meretricious" should they desire a permanent and secure place in men's minds. What becomes ostensible throughout this chapter is that Fordyce juxtaposes women of virtue with prostitutes when discussing apparel. A woman's clothes become the determining factor in whether they are perceived and treated as esteemed subjects or as unchaste individuals. And it goes without saying that being mistaken for a prostitute – not to mention being an actual sex worker – is the very thing every women should be dreading – the worst thing that could happen. Within this scope, he points out that, how a woman dresses herself ultimately defines who they are. Even though we do not have a physical description of Moll and how she dresses herself, what comes across from her story is that she views specific items of apparel such as linen and gold as commodities rather than adornments. However, Moll is in fact preoccupied with her looks which Fordyce – and also she – names "vanity" which is the worst of all evils a woman might befall into. As a young woman, she enjoys the fact that she is being noticed for her beauty and she offers a piece of advice in this matter saying that young women should be cautious of the possible dangers that might follow "an early knowledge of their own beauty" (*MF* 25) for she also believes herself to have the charm to captivate men. However, the dangers that Moll and Fordyce refer to are rather different in their nature since while Fordyce writes about the possibility of a woman becoming shallow and corrupt on the inside, Moll discusses it in terms of its head spinning effect which might influence women's judgment. As she progresses to maturity, Moll begins to understand her beauty as a commodity as well since she repeatedly alludes to her youth and beauty before engaging in a new relationship. What is important here is that, while Fordyce – along with all other conduct book writers – urges women to rise above the physical and refine their virtuous inner female, Moll is focused on the material, on her body, which is the only advantage she has in her disposal that would assure a prosper life for her.

The last point Fordyce makes on the topic of apparel is the issue of "effeminate" men and "masculine" woman. A man might seem feminine not only in his attitude but also in his attire – which is something to be avoided, just as a woman should at all costs avoid appearing unclean, and dowdy. He suggests a universal distinction between women and men's makeup; between what is feminine and masculine. Therefore, he bases his arguments on what is naturally true for both sexes. Moll transgresses this crucial boundary as well when she disguises herself as a man during her days as a thief. Not only does she adopts the conventional behavioral patterns of a man with her mobility in the public sphere, her having a profession outside the home, and involvement in management of her money, but she also takes advantage of the male physicality. Her daring to do so surely makes her an inappropriate character, what is more, it makes her one that is monstrous.

The vocabulary Fordyce employs regarding apparel is quite straightforward: simplicity, cleanliness, plainness, chaste, grace, and taste. He brings forward these merits as opposed to dirtiness which poses a binary opposition; therefore, in the minds of the audience there occurs two categories, clean and chaste – good; dirty and vain – bad. Moll's surroundings, though, are far from being sterile. When we consider Moll's female companions, we see that she belongs to the group that Fordyce speaks of with grief and pity, because the women in her life – the nurse and her governess – do not help her to become agreeable in her conduct, but rather assist her in earning money and tend to her health. Therefore, their roles cannot be characterized as guide, mentor, or chaperon; they are her comrades, or business partners. Fordyce contemplates on female friendship in depth and renders the possibility of a genuine and sincere female friendship and companionship problematic since, as a concept, he finds it unrealistic. He encourages a friendly relationship between married and single women; but, a sincere intimacy among single women is dubitable. For him, comradery and solidarity between individuals is possible only in men's relations with one another which is proved to be not true in Moll's case. After she leaves

her first husband's home upon his death, Moll makes an acquaintance with a widow who is in better circumstances than she is. She helps her with her trouble with a man whose character she inquires after, which results in the man's resentment. Moll helps her solve the problem by offering her advice and assistance, and the widow in return assists Moll in her establishing a relationship with the tradesman. What we see here, then, is a network of women who support each other in situations which would seem unsavory in the eyes of the society.

For Moll, her female companions are rather important. In the novel, there are two women characters that Moll is influenced by, depends upon, and gives place and voice to: the nurse and her governess neither of whom fit Fordyce's definition of a gentle and amiable woman. The nature of their relationship can be seen as an example of what we consider today as female solidarity and companionship since the governess gives Moll a place to live and an opportunity to provide for herself, becomes her partner, helps her through a risky pregnancy and takes care of her child in her absence: "Her care of me in my travail, and after in my lying in, was such, that if she had been my own mother it could not have been better." (*MF* 187)

The last important theme in Fordyce's sermons to be explored in relation to *MF* is motherhood. Fordyce stresses rather frequently the significance of parents – and particularly mothers' – in women's lives. For a woman who is deprived of their parents, it is crucial to have a guardian that would protect and guide her. Mothers are responsible for the betterment of their children's behavior and protection of their virtue through guidance. As noted by Chaber, Moll has three mothers: "her biological one, her 'nurse', and her 'governess'" (219). All three maternal figures actually do offer refuge to Moll but this is not the same protection that Fordyce has in mind. He talks about an education in female decorum that would protect them against the devils of vanity and dishonesty. Moll's mothers, however, as put forward by Chaber, "shelter Moll from the patriarchal authorities constantly impinging on her life: the local magistrates who would put her out to service, the husband who would put her in an

institution, the English judiciary who threaten her with the gallows" (219) – the very patriarchal authority that Fordyce seeks to serve.

The legacy of her biological mother pursues Moll over the course of her life since she finds herself following her mother's path on more than one occasion, which, actually, results in her imprisonment in Newgate and deportment to the US. In their premature reunion in her brother/husbands home, through foreshadowing, we catch a glimpse of the possible future Moll would have: a relatively prosper life with her family abroad. With her criminal background, she is not the model mother the books of conduct promote. Her nurse, an independent and industrious woman, provides her with the primary education she needs and teaches her how to work. The fact that she encourages her to earn her life by working also renders the nurse as problematic character since the conduct books do not approve of laboring women due to their focus on the material as well. The governess is Moll's accomplice and she is the one who introduces her to the world of crime and teaches her the particulars of the job. By doing so, the governess "represents the professionalization of crime" (Chaber 220). However, what is more dangerous about Moll's governess from the point of view of Fordyce is that she provides opportunities for otherwise outcast women to survive and thrive. She takes special care of unwed mothers and gives them the education they need to continue their lives. In a way, the governess' tutelage stands out as an alternative to the teachings of conduct books because she holds the door open for other possibilities. And as a female character, she is in charge of a *business* where she profits from the work of Moll and other women, which makes her a laboring body that focuses on the bodies of supposedly debauched women. The governess subverts the dominant views on women and motherhood and she comforts Moll through difficulties and provides the kind of support she needs.

Srividhya Swaminathan in her insightful essay "Defoe's Alternative Conduct Manual" (2003), suggests that, with all the advice Moll gives throughout her story, *Moll Flanders* can actually be read as a conduct manual as well – an

alternative one with a different agenda. The characters in *MF* are portrayed in a way that would both excite and instruct the reader. In Moll's narrative, we do not see a stable and secure family life and economic circumstances. She belongs to an underworld that continually casts shadows over the society, through which Defoe is able to depict conditions of a life where the instinct to survive and people's basic needs put abiding by religious and moral rules and conventions on the background – rendering them insignificant. Therefore, Moll's own understanding of women's roles, morals, and concepts of virtue and propriety subverts the ideals propounded by the books of conduct.

CHAPTER 5

BURNEY'S *EVELINA*

Frances Burney was born in 1752 in Norfolk to a family of eight.[2] Her family was composed of musicians, writers, scholars and artists, so she was born into a rather sophisticated environment nurtured by literary and artistic debate. Burney lost her mother when she was ten years old and remained in the sole care of her father until she got married in 1783, when she was thirty-one. She began writing at a very young age; but on her fifteenth birthday, in 1767, she destroyed all her writings including the novel *The History of Caroline Evelyn* in a bonfire. Throughout her life, Burney was surrounded by her father's enthusiasm towards and involvement in literature and arts, as well as literary personas – one of whom she made a close acquaintance with, Samuel Johnson. In 1778, she published her first novel *Evelina: or A Young Women's Entrance into the World.* Burney was very much influenced by her father's opinion on her work which was the reason behind her burning of her earliest writings. Her devotion to her father, her desire

[2] The chronology of Burney's life is retrieved from Sabor, P. "Chronology". *The Cambridge Companion to Frances Burney.* Ed. Peter Sabor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. 13-17. Ebook.

to make him proud and her fear that she might in any way cause shame on his part, dominated the production of *Evelina*. This anxiety was also the reason why she published the novel anonymously. Kate Chisholm comments in her "Burney Family", that among the children of the Burney household, Frances was the only one who took advantage of and "cultivated her life chances" for being Dr Burney's daughter. Her novels became best-sellers at her time and were praised for the elegance of the style in which they were written. The intricate portrayal of her characters are said to derive from the vivid artistic and upper class environment that she enjoyed while growing up. Burney influenced many writers from later generations – Jane Austen in particular, who drew from her work while writing *Pride and Prejudice.* Jane Spencer, in "Evelina and Cecilia," comments that with Burney's prose "women's novel writing gained a higher level of critical esteem that it had never attained before" (48).

5.1.*Evelina:* The Novel of Courtesy

Evelina: A Young Woman's Entrance into the World was published under a pseudonym in 1772. As can be understood from its title, it is the story of a young woman, Evelina, who leaves her home to embark upon a journey to her new and exciting surroundings in London under the care of Lady Howard and her family. Evelina is an orphan like Moll, but she has had a much more consistent and refined environment growing up. She has learned the merits of her nature from Mr. Villars who always reminds her of her own value as an innocent and modest young woman. In her new environment, she is faced with dangers and difficulties deriving from two sources: her ambiguous family background, and her lack of knowledge as to how to carry herself without appearing displeasing in her new upper class social surroundings. Evelina has to make good use of the teachings of her guardian Reverend Mr. Villars, and the guidance of Mrs. Mirvan to overcome the difficulties that she is faced with through her insistent and "vulgar" grandmother Madame Duval and the unwanted advances of various libertines such as Mr Lovel and Mr Willoughby.

According to Vivien Jones, who remarks in her "Burney and Gender", the publication of *Evelina* could not come at a more unfortunate time, because it was the "low point in the history of novel" (158), due to the negative views surrounding it because of its contents. However, as noted by Nancy Armstrong *Evelina* was among the novels which were praised by both critics and readers and the novel established that "it eventually supplanted everything that the novel had formerly been. In this manner, a relatively new form of writing came to define the genre within a remarkably few number of years" (97). Samuel Johnson, who dreaded the novel genre, was in such enthusiasm about the novel that, Jones reports, he "persuaded Hester Thrale that 'Harry Fielding never did any thing equal to the 2d Vol of Evelina" (165).

The instructional and educational value of Burney's fiction is acknowledged by contemporary critics as well. Joyce Hemlow in her "Fanny Burney and Courtesy Books" (1950), argues that Mr. Villars' letters to Evelina constitute the book of courtesy that the heroine is following and in her attempts to abide by her guardian's teachings, we see a young woman in the process of her moral training. Taking on the role of the conduct book writers of the eighteenth century, Mr. Villars instructs the young woman in way of proper conduct by teaching her the rules. Conversely, as noted by Balint, there have also been critics who argue that Burney, with her characters who "are passionate, even melodramatic or fiercely independent," is actively involved in subverting the patriarchal structure instead of supporting it and leaning on to it. Nevertheless, the characters that are being referred to here are not the heroines of her novels. Gilbert and Gubar point to anti-heroine characters in Burney's fiction, such as Madame Duval, who serve "as dark doubles for [the novelists] and their heroines, women writers are both identifying with and revising the self-definitions patriarchal culture has imposed on them" (79). These unbecoming women characters stand for an ideology that defies the patriarchal values and by their existence they "attack" the rules of the books of conduct. Margaret Doody in *The Life in the Works* (1988) similarly suggests, when discussing *Cecilia* (1782), certain aspects of Burney's writings

actually question traditional values and beliefs: “Nobody who reads the novel can imagine this was a work ground out to please the author’s father. Dr Burney’s deepest and most comforting beliefs are constantly questioned in this novel” (148).

According to Balint, Burney does not consider her writings as novels as well; rather she wishes them to be “sketches of characters & morals, put in action, not a Romance” (qtd. in Balint 110) which, in return, points to Burney’s intention to communicate the ideology of conduct books. Hemlow further informs us that “Burney was always pleased and even touched by any recognition of her moral purpose” (758). Balint brings into our attention that Burney was actually a keen reader of conduct books herself and she cites *Sermons to Young Women* by Fordyce as one of the works that she read and was influenced by.

Therefore, it would be safe to assume that Burney was following the conduct book tradition; and by creating fictional difficulties for her heroines to overcome with the command of their education in female virtue and prudence, she allows us to observe the tenets of the book of conduct in action. Evelina, as the title of the novel suggests, enters the world and despite the fact that she inexperienced, she is guarded and supported by Mr Villars’s advice. In time, she learns how to behave appropriately in this new setting composed of fashionable aspects and many predators that rely on the weakness of the heroine’s judgment.

5.2.Evelina: ‘The Gentlewoman’

Burney’s heroine Evelina armed with her prudent and timid manners and education provided by her guardian Mr Villars enters London’s upper class society at the suggestion of Lady Howard who comments that the girl should be kept far away from her notorious grandmother Madame Duval, and that she should also be introduced to the *world* and learn how to behave in presence of such social company. Burney depicts many situations in which Evelina finds herself in terror due to her inexperience in such settings. So, from the very beginning of the novel we see the process through which a young woman would

eventually learn how to carry herself without jeopardizing her virtue in the face of embarrassing incidents and sexual threats.

Patricia M. Spacks notes in her *Novel Beginnings* (2006), that "[i]ssues of manners determine many of the plot's meanings and many of its actual events" (163). Over the course of the novel Evelina's critical gaze gets more and more refined especially when it comes to Mr. Lovel and Sir Clement Willoughby, The Captain and her grandmother Madame Duval and her entourage. One can trace back the underlying reasons for the polite characters' of disapproval of Madame Duval in her conception as a bad mother who neglected her duties as a guide and teacher and her unfitting behavior in social gatherings. It is also not so curious why this not so loveable character has a French background since, as stated by Margaret Anne Doody, "England was at war with France for most of Burney's lifetime" by which time Burney was in her sixties. So the novel took care that the character is in complete opposition with what is thought to be nice, agreeable, friendly and polite. Therefore, Evelina serves its purpose well by demonstrating these rules by juxtaposing the innocent heroine to low figures who, in the case of *Evelina*, are represented with characters such as, Captain Mirvan, Madame Duval and the Branghtons. Thus Evelina becomes the embodiment of the young women who gradually learned socially pleasing codes of behavior via various troublesome experiences, and since it shows this progress (and as it can be seen in the extended title of the novel *the History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World)* the novel itself becomes a guidebook to manners – a conduct book.

Burney, goes beyond the teachings of conduct books in that she also offers advice on the codes of the etiquette of upper-class polite society. Conduct books did not include such information because, as seen in Fordyce's sermons as well, attending public events is not suitable for women – especially for the young. Fordyce does not envision a life for women outside the "tranquility" of their home. Therefore, Burney, by drawing on from her experiences, assists her audience by exemplifying the kind of behavioral patterns to be accepted and frowned upon through Evelina's observations and social training.

Evelina's first test with regards to codes of behavior takes place in the first dancing assembly she attends. Unaware of the code that she must dance only with the man she has engaged herself to and with no man at all if she declines one, she does not accept the offer of a suitor saying that she does not wish to dance. (162)

> A confused idea now for the first time entered my head, of something I had heard of the rules of an assembly, but I was never at one before, -I have only danced at school – and so giddy and heedless I was, that I had not once considered the impropriety of refusing one partner, and afterwards accepting another. I was thunderstruck at the recollection . . . (*E* 36).

As Spacks puts it, by attending public and private assemblies, Evelina is presented with situations and problems which function as tests that she fails at first. Remembering Fordyce's adherence to female character a timidity that results in "a sweet and dignified" blushing, Evelina's frequently blushing cheeks and the constant embarrassment and terror she experiences in the face of new people and situations pinpoint one of the primary characteristics of female reserve put forward by conduct book writers. In another scene that cause the heroine trouble, she learns that as the rules of decorum dictates, a woman must not speak or dance with a man who has not been introduced by a chaperon – which means Evelina should not be making acquaintances by herself. Upon experiencing such embarrassment, she expresses her wish that if there was "a book, of the laws and customs a-la-mode, presented to all young people, upon their first introduction into public company" (84). The fact that the heroine is deploring the lack of a conduct book that could have taught her the social rules is a way of Burney's communicating to the reader the vitality of the courtesy books and hence the courtesy novels.

The most important reason why Evelina goes through such alarming levels of shame and discomfort is the presence of Lord Orville – the young woman's knightly and reserved love interest – who diminishes her confidence because Evelina assesses her deportment by considering what he might think or feel

about her. Therefore, Lord Orville, whom she greatly admires, helps her, more implicitly than Mrs. Mirvan does, to modify her conduct. And since he is the one who would make the ultimate decision as to whether Evelina is "marriageable" or not, the influence of his comments on her behavior is far greater. When Evelina realizes that Lord Orville sees her with her cousins the Miss Branghtons (whose behavior she describes as "weak, foolish and titter"), she is horrified:

> What, what can [Lord Orville] think of this adventure! How strangely, how cruelly have all appearances turned against me! Had I been blessed with any presence of mind; I should instantly have explained to him the accident which occasioned my being in such terrible company. (*E* 265)

And just as she imagines, Lord Orville does question Evelina about the people he has seen him with and with utmost haste and discomfort Evelina explains the situation. As can be seen, Lord Orville's is not only a love interest in Evelina's life. He also has a dominating role that controls and alters the girl's behavior, which is an effect that is acknowledged by Fordyce. He suggests that men tend to observe and evaluate women's stance and attitude with a critical gaze: "Men, I presume, are in general better judges than women, of the deportment of women . . . they will look at you with a cooler eye, and a closer inspection, than you apprehend; at least, when they have opportunities of seeing in private company" (54). Lord Orville monitors Evelina from a distance in most of the social gatherings they attend, and as a consequence, the girl finds herself in constant fear and anxiety that she might in any way engage in a type of behavior that would displease him, or make him think lesser of her. Despite her fancy for him, she does not feel comforted around him; contrarily, she finds herself in an inner turmoil for the fear that she might in any way offend or repulse him:

> [B]ut for Lord Orville – if then he thought me an ideot, now, I am sure, he must suppose me both bold and presuming. Make use of his name! – What impertinence! – he can never know how it happened, he can only imagine it was from excess of vanity" (*E* 53).

When Evelina begins to narrate the events of social gatherings and tells us about the people she meets in these gatherings, we clearly see the kinds of people she likes and dislikes. She judges individuals according to their manners and clothes. Evelina narrates in Letter XXI the time she attends the opera with Madame Duval's company. She is extremely uncomfortable and displeased with her company and tells Mr. Villars that she has been somewhat ashamed to be seen with them. By doing so she communicates the unacceptable type of behavior in such a setting:

> Notwithstanding my vexation at having been forced into a party so very disagreeable, and that, too, from one so much – so very much the contrary – yet, would they have suffered me to listen, I should have forgotten every thing unpleasant, and felt nothing but delight in hearing the sweet voice of Signor Millico, the first singer; but they tormented me with continual talking. (*E* 102)

Thus, in Evelina's disapproving and horrified tone, the reader captures the essence of Burney's writing: the rules to appropriate conduct can and must be learned. Can be learned – because at first the heroine herself does not have a clue as to how to behave in such gatherings, but with experience and observation (i.e. education) she gradually begins to occupy a position that enables her to criticise the conduct of others; and must be learned – since individuals acting outside the norms are detected, labelled ("vulgar," "unpleasant," "low-bred," and so on) and excluded.

Burney cleverly juxtaposes Evelina with Madame Duval and her company – the Branghtons to illustrate the rudeness of their behavior and the delicateness of hers. The Branghton girls are uneducated and lower class characters. Evelina expresses her disapproval in one of her letters to Mr. Villars by saying that she is discontent with living among "those to whom even civility is unknown, and decorum stranger" (*E* 240). When we compare her portrayal of these young woman with Fordyce's advice on how women should publicly carry themselves, we see that the Miss Branghtons' conduct is in complete opposition with what he preaches. They talk and laugh loudly and discuss topics that are inappropriate.

We also catch a glimpse of how society views them since Evelina encounters Lord Orville while she is in the company of the women and he openly questions the heroine's relation to them.

However, the true anti-gentlewoman of the novel is undoubtedly Madame Duval. Before Evelina meets her both Lady Howard and Mr. Villars depict her as a woman who failed in her responsibilities as a mother and caused troubles to her own daughter – which, for Fordyce, is the worst crime a woman could commit since a woman is first and foremost is a potential mother who is responsible for the guidance, protection and improvement of her children. Mr. Villars' description of Madame Duval bears resonances to that of Fordyce on imprudent women:

> Madame Duval is by no means a proper companion or guardian for a young woman: she is at once uneducated and unprincipled; ungentle in her temper, and unamiable in her manners. I have long known that she has persuaded herself to harbour an aversion for me – Unhappy woman! I can only regard her as an object of pity! (*E* 13)

Thus, not surprisingly, whenever Evelina is with Madame Duval, she is usually terrorized and in contempt: "Her [Madame Duval's] dress was in such disorder, that I was quite sorry to her figure exposed to the servants . . . the disgrace was unavoidable" (*E* 165). Madame Duval's unfavorable character is further revealed by the scenes where she comes face to face with Captain Mirvan – who is also rather rude. Burney shows the reader that women with unbecoming behavior ends up pairing up with men with possibly worse qualities. This is also in line with Fordyce's suggestion that if a woman behaves prudently and innocently, she will certainly find a man that has a similar conduct.

The heroine's, and other characters', discontent with Madame Duval is not hidden from the reader. But, there are more subtle aspects in her grandmother's characterization that make her even more repulsive, which is revealed by Fordyce's insights. Fordyce draws an ideal woman image who is restrained in her manners, distant and coy in her scarce conversations with men, and prefers

to stay at home rather than attend in public entertainment. However, he also admits that he would not wish to see them confined in convents, remarking that such confinement and tradition is peculiar to Catholic countries. Curiously enough, instead of "catholic," he uses the word "poppish" which used to be an old pejorative term for Catholicism.

> We do not, you may believe, wish to see you cut off from the friendly intercourse and innocent delights of society, confined to convents, as millions of your sex most unnaturally are in poppish countries, and there condemned to the idle yet fatiguing task of a devotion unreasonable in many respects, uninteresting in most, feeble for want of temptation, visionary and dry at the same time. (81-2)

Considering his former sermons, it is safe to assume that Fordyce is actually following a kind of state policy. When he is depicting an unappealing woman figure, he suggests such women try to speak French; and when he is making clear that his "countrywomen" are delicate by their nature, he contrasts the women of the isle with French women – positioning the latter in an inferior stance. Bearing in mind the fact that England and France have a long history of conflict and disagreement, his approach and tone become meaningful in context. And, thinking back on *Evelina*, we remember that the most repulsive and dreaded character of the novel, Madame Duval has a French background. She most of the time seems out of place; and described as impolite, inappropriate, and unmannerly. Hence, the novel, in and of itself, functions as an ideological state apparatus that specifies the allies and opponents of its heroine according to a much wider context of England as a country.

The last point to be made about Madame Duval's characterization is related to the issue of apparel which Fordyce puts a special emphasis on. The topic of apparel is brought up in *Evelina* in the very beginning. For their first outing, Mrs. Mirvan takes Evelina to the stores to buy her new and appropriate clothes. So, learning to dress up properly can be perceived as the one of the first steps in becoming a lady. Even if Evelina finds that woman should undergo such unnatural changes a little odd, she abides by them; and soon she become

conscious of the importance of a woman's apparel since she starts evaluating people's clothes, and disdains Madame Duval's general appearance as it is, in most occasions, is not very neat and orderly – which is another way in which Burney's novel echoes the premises of the books of conduct and thus Fordyce's.

In *Evelina,* we see the responsibilities of married women and qualities of unmarried women in action. Evelina is sent to Mrs. Mirvan's house in London for two reasons; one, so that she would not have to encounter her "vulgar" grandmother Madame Duval, and two, so that she could "see something of the world . . . when they are shewn properly, and in due time, they see it such as really is." (*E* 18) Evelina's guardian, Reverend Villars is hesitant at first thinking that because his ward is "innocent as an angel, and artless as purity itself," (*E* 21) she might be corrupted. However, he agrees with the plan because for Evelina, "the time draws on for experience and observation to take place of instruction" (*E* 19). While she is away, Mrs. Mirvan would be the heroine's guardian and teacher, introducing her, and her daughter Ms. Mirvan, to the "London scene". Evelina admires Mrs. Mirvan as she displays all the characteristics of a gentlewoman, while at the same time she protects the young woman and teaches her the rules to proper conduct. She teaches the young heroine what to wear, whom to talk to, when and how to talk and where to walk. On Evelina's first days in London, Mrs. Mirvan takes her to St. James's Park, at the sight of which the heroine is amazed since she has never seen such nicely dressed and good looking ladies before. However,

> Mrs. Mirvan says we are not to walk in the Park again next Sunday, even if we should be in town because there is better company in Kensington Gardens. (*E* 29)

Mrs. Mirvan also guides Evelina in her relationships with the opposite-sex: "indeed, Mrs. Mirvan . . . says it is not right for a young woman to be seen so frequently in public with the same gentleman" (*E* 118). Before Evelina attends her first dance party, Mrs. Mirvan takes her shopping where she goes through a process which we can today call a "makeover." They dress her up and do her

hair properly. At the assembly the young women's guardian shows them where everyone sits, and "she would sit with Maria and [Evelina] till [they] were provided with partners, and then join the card-players" (*E* 31). When Evelina is not attended by Mrs. Mirvan, she begins to feel anxious due to her inexperience and lack of knowledge; she feels more at ease around her and that is why she seeks refuge by her side whenever something troubling occurs. When she gathers that she has violated the rules of the assembly by "refusing one partner, and afterwards accepting another" (*E* 36), she immediately goes by Mrs. Mirvan's side and tells her what has happened:

> I then told Mrs. Mirvan my disasters, and she good-naturedly blamed herself for not having better instructed me, but said she had taken it for granted that I must know such common customs. (*E* 37)

Mrs. Mirvan's relationship to her husband also indicates that she is a *text-book gentlewoman*. Captain Mirvan, as his title suggests, travels to provide for his family. He is back from one of his journeys during Evelina's stay at Mirvans' house, and he appears indifferent and rude towards his family, and even worse with Evelina's grandmother and her entourage. It is Mrs. Mirvan's job to take care of the household, her husband and her husband's demeanor:

> Mrs. Mirvan, who never speaks to the Captain when he is out of humour, was glad to follow me, and with her usual sweetness, made a thousand apologies for her husband's ill-manners. (*E* 171)

We might consider Mrs Mirvan as Evelina's substitute mother that fulfils all her responsibilities as dictated by Fordyce. She cares for her and protects her; without shaming her she leads Evelina in the correct ways of behaving. We get the sense that Evelina would be a gentlewoman that is exemplified in Mrs Mirvan's character.

With regards to the kind of people young women might encounter in social gatherings, Fordyce advises them not to appear too eager, bold, or assertive; for coy women are much more appealing in the eyes of men.

> . . . I verily believe, a man living, who in his sober senses would not prefer a modest to an imprudent woman – Who can tell which is greater, the disgrace thrown upon humanity by such a character, or the honour reflected on our natures by that abhorrence, which is raised by the bare idea in every breast not totally degenerate? (p 50)

This suggestion of his is well exemplified in Evelina's experiences with Mr. Lovell and Mr. Willoughby. Both men are mesmerized by the girl's beauty and shy airs, and they – Mr. Willoughby in particular – make continuous advances towards her. Fordyce warns women against such men who would not hesitate to take the vilest liberties with them in the event that they see an opportunity – an opportunity created by a woman's *loose* behavior suggesting she might be open to conversation. Evelina, as instructed by Mr Villars – and by Fordyce – keeps a distance from even the man she desires to be with – Lord Orville. Eventually, she is "rewarded" for her reserved and restrained behavior and ends up with the man she loves. Therefore, the fact that she preserves herself will help her on the way to a presumably long-lasting marriage.

Lastly, we should mention Mr. Villars who stands out as the fictional embodiment of Fordyce in Burney's *Evelina.* The tone in which Fordyce addresses his audiences bears a profound resemblance to the style employed by Mr. Villars in his letters to Evelina. Just like Mr. Villars's protective and defensive style in which he puts himself forward as a father figure who does not doubt his daughter's innocence, sincerity, and sense of decency, Fordyce also approaches his audience in the same fashion to the point that he identifies himself as a brother to them who speaks for their best interests. He asserts, in a way similar to Mr Villars, that he does not, even for one second, distrust women's graceful, honest and fragile nature, nonetheless urges them to be cautious towards predators and tempting offers.

Even if Evelina begins her life as an orphan like Moll, she is left under the protection of a minister, Mr. Villars, who also knew and guided her mother, unlike Moll who is left in the midst of a group of travelling gypsies. Mr. Villars

describes the girl's mother as innocent and well-behaved, but ill-fated. He speaks rather highly of the mother and indicates that Evelina is the embodiment of her mother's good-spirit, virtuous character, and sweet nature. What can be observed in Fordyce's words in describing such young women is in parallel with the way Mr. Villars depicts Evelina. Both in the letters he writes to Mrs. Howard and to Evelina herself, he paints a picture of the girl that becomes the sum of all the virtues explained and promoted by Fordyce. Like Fordyce, Mr Villars also expresses that he would be most comforted if the young woman remains in the security of their home. Evelina more or less feels the same way as even though she enjoys going to plays and the opera, she most of the time prefers the security of Berry Hill as opposed to being outside. In addition to that, whenever she feels that she is under some sort of threat, she yearns for a shelter – that is home: "My only hope, is to get safe to Berry Hill; where counselled and sheltered by you [Mr. Villars], I shall have nothing more to fear" (*E* 59). Notwithstanding his initial advice and concerns, Fordyce also expresses the need that their guardians should be introducing young girls to the appropriate social circles. The full title of *Evelina – the History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World* – suggests the same sentiment. The novel as a whole is actually an account of how a young woman gradually becomes aware of the mechanisms of an upper class social life and learns how to behave in such settings.

At this point, it would be useful to remember that Louis Althusser regards literature as a cultural ideological state apparatus which, by its definition, "functions by ideology". With its adherence to religious doctrines, and class conscious societal rules, employment of a language that prioritizes the continuity of the family institution and promotion of values that would ensure the preservation of a social classes and hierarchies, Fordyce's book of sermons in and of itself function as an ideological state apparatus. Keeping in mind the parallels, similarities and correspondences between the two texts that have been explored and discussed throughout this chapter, it can be concluded that

Burney's *Evelina* is an epitome of all the ideals with regards to expected patterns of female conduct.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study has been to analyze the rise of the novel genre by reading side-by-side two of the earliest English novels, Defoe's *Moll Flanders* and Burney's *Evelina*, along with one of the most popular conduct books of the eighteenth century, Fordyce's *Sermons*. Nancy Armstrong's *Desire and Domestic Fiction* has provided as the underlying methodological framework of this study with its groundbreaking suggestion that the novel genre evolved from the book of conduct.

Since this study aims not only to draw parallels and reveal the clashes among these three above-mentioned primary texts, but also to provide a critical analysis of the theoretical works on the emergence of the novel genre, it starts with an introduction to Ian Watt's *The Rise of The Novel,* one of the most influential and most widely read and taught theoretical works on the novel genre. Ian Watt's work has had a remarkable impact on our understanding of the novel both with his description of the genre, and with the historical and social context in which he situates it. According to his description, the novels are literary works that are written in prose which recount stories of life-like characters in real-life settings which are depicted in great detail. This is what he calls formal realism and it is this aspect that renders novels different than former forms of writing. Historically speaking, the reason why novels came into existence, according to Watt, is the changing demographics in society such as the rise of the middle class and also the developments in the publishing market which enabled people to have easier access to books, especially with circulating libraries. Watt emphasizes the impact of women's reading, which, according to him, was made possible by the large amounts of spare time they had, on novels, saying that

because they were the target audience, the earliest novels were addressed towards them. Watt's pioneering theory, despite being immensely important and influential, lacked the answers to certain very significant questions. At this point, I turned to Nancy Armstrong's *Desire and Domestic Fiction* which aims provide explanations to these very questions that had previously remained unanswered the most important of which was why and how women started writing fiction in the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Armstrong work is crucially significant since it unearths a mode of writing that exploded during the late seventeenth century which proposed to educate young women in becoming marriageable: conduct books. These guides set standards on women's behavior that were so unyielding that even today we can still observe their impact of their teachings in many publications most prominent of which is women's magazines. The female ideal they promoted and their descriptions with regard to relationships between the two sexes constructed the norms that became common sense. Armstrong's proposition is that these guides to proper femininity of the seventeenth and eighteenth century England had such an impact that the female ideal they communicated found its way into the long tradition of the novel of manners, the first of which was Richardson's *Pamela* which successfully incorporated the teachings of women's manuals into his fiction.

Richardson's work was remarkably significant not only because his *Pamela* became a defining moment in literary history being the first English novel, but it was also significant in that it became a cornerstone in social history since he came up with a solution to the question how to regulate women's reading. By the late seventeenth century, it was accepted that despite various contestations of social and religious authorities, the reading public also included women readers and the act of reading was politicized since it created a field filled with landmines. On the one hand, reading kept women at home; but on the other, it opened doors to different and distant lives enabling readers to travel to foreign territories without necessitating them to leave home. Thus, there emerged to the

need to domesticate women's reading and according to Armstrong, this is where Richardson's writing came to the rescue. His writing started a tradition that would last for centuries: domestic fiction.

The comparative study of Burney's *Evelina* and Fordyce's *Sermons to Young Women* sheds light upon the fact that Burney also, and maybe even more successfully, employed the same strategy as Richardson by dramatizing in her fiction the writings of the conduct book writers. The characters surrounding the young women and her experiences in her new social circle speak to readers in the same way that Fordyce preached his audiences and the way Mr. Villars advices Evelina. Burney's writing can be said to be even more effective than the book of conduct since one can easily relate to this smart and pleasant heroine and aspire to her in a more passionate way. This is where we see the impact of the shift in literature with a new literary genre, since, as Armstrong informs us, the novel of manners took on the job of the education of young women so successfully that the need for conduct books was no more, and hence, this form of writing soon vanished. Therefore, even though in many critical works we see Burney's *Evelina* as writing of innocence, the literary conventions out of which this text was born were far from innocent since they carried within themselves the ideology that created norms that condemned women to a trapped existence.

The study of Armstrong's work and Fordyce's sermons revealed an interesting parallel. The texts that were accepted as novels were those that drew the same portrait of femininity as depicted in the book of conduct as in the examples of Richardson and Burney. Therefore, conduct books not only set standards for women's behavior, but they also set literary standards since what was accepted as a novel and what was not corresponded to who was considered to be an ideal female and who was not. We can see this in Fordyce's approval of Richardson's novels and Samuel Jackson's praise of Burney's novels. Fordyce devalues both impolite women and impolite books, and this is where we find the main reason for *Moll Flanders'*s exclusion. Moll in her decisions and behavior does not manifest any of the values that were brought forward by the book of conduct.

That is why Defoe's heroine entered the anthologies as a novel in twentieth century, whereas Moll's contemporary Evelina had no difficulty in acquiring the same status. While conduct book writers and critics then and now have fiercely contested against the likes of *Moll Flanders* for their depiction and characterization of improper women and relationships, literary critics praised Burney's *Evelina* for its politeness and literary refinement. The exclusion of Moll from her contemporaries has been the primary point of investigation of this study since it is curious that a book of such detail with both its heroine and social and economic setting it depicts would be blacklisted.

Books that were similar to Defoe's *Moll Flanders* in their plot were denigrated and protested against at the time of their publication. However, this study also found out that *Moll Flanders*'s literary legitimacy continued to be called into question even after Watt's revival of the book. Many critics drew parallels between Moll's supposed moral bankruptcy and the novel's underdevelopment in its plot and the consistencies in its heroine's actions. The critical analysis of the novel was circling around its heroine's unreliability as a narrator. The genuineness of Moll's repentance was another very widely debated issue. This study has found out that the critics' opinions actually resembled the ones at the time of the novel's publication in that they tended to assess the novel according to the heroine's morals. While it was blacklisted for its contents back then, it was also deemed worthless as a work of literature in the twentieth century.

The chapter that discusses these criticisms from two different time periods draws attention to two important points. First and foremost, the reason why *Moll Flanders* was disregarded for a time as long as two hundred years was not simply because it was an indecent book. The study of Fordyce's *Sermons* revealed that the reason why Moll experienced a literary exile was that she went against the idea of innate femininity which is one of the most important findings of this study. Armstrong suggests that the book of conduct did not merely teach polite behavior; what it remarkable did was to ascribe a depth to being female which means that there is a potential amiable femininity in all women. Therefore,

women who failed to refine and manifest this amiable potential were seen as creatures going against their very nature. Being female was associated with being innocent, fragile, polite, compliant, and chaste; and although Moll defies and transcends all these definitions and she goes through painful experiences, she is given the chance to start over through repentance. The fact that Moll is eventually able to live a peaceful and relatively prosper life poses a threatening opposition to what is written in the books of conduct; that is, unchaste women are doomed to a life that would end in misery. Therefore, this study found out that *Moll Flanders'*s being viewed as a threat was not because the novel tells a story of seduction and sin. It was rather due to the fact that even if she is everything that the ideal female should not be, she refuses ever so stubbornly to give up on herself and her aspiration and manages to survive and be ultimately be happy.

Secondly, when discussing the twentieth century criticisms of *Moll Flanders,* this study revealed that the debates around the novel actually resembled those of conduct book writers since critics tended to focus on Moll's morality, reliability and consistency as a novelistic character. Following Ian Watt's unveiling the novel, there occurred debates that called into question, once again after two hundred years, the novel's literary substance and validity. The lengthy discussions on the authenticity of Moll's repentance points to the fact that most twentieth century critics were also engrossed by just how evil Moll actually is. These parallelisms between eighteenth century conduct book writers' and twentieth century literary critics' perspectives on the novel points to the bitter fact that the ideology behind long but old tradition of women's manuals has prevailed and has become somewhat institutionalized as we can see via Moll's example that the canon is shaped by the same line of thought. Therefore, one is not really surprised when reading Watt's argument that we cannot trust Moll since we do not even know if she is *a blonde.*

The exile of Moll and a study of conduct book tradition in relation to it bear a significance from the point of view of gender and women studies since the main

function of the book of conduct was gender construction. These manuals and the literature that evolved from them present us with an interesting point in literary history when people from different backgrounds were all preoccupied with proper female behavior. This reveals a peculiar case since women's magazines, certain television programs and internet blogs and websites today deploy the same discourse and carry out the same function. Therefore, even if the English novel has evolved, shifted its focus and flourished, the ideology behind the conduct book literature continues to prevail in different forms and via various mediums. However, the most striking aspect of this tradition, as far as this study has observed, is its immense impact on English literary canon and literary criticism. Gender roles and stereotypes not only contour and shadow the lives of individuals, but such male-dominated ideology – which creates the binaries that dominate and segregate societies – has the terrifying potency of shaping literary categories, and thus, shape our tastes and worldviews as readers. Therefore, studying the rise of the English novel, the conduct book tradition and first English novels from a feminist perspective proves to be utterly significant since such a reading brings forward the need for further research on women canon construction, and the factors at work in canonical shifts.

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APPENDICES

A. TURKISH SUMMARY

İngiliz edebiyatı tarihinde roman türünün ortaya çıkışı edebiyat tarihçilerinin uzun yıllardır yanıtlamaya çalıştığı soruları beraberinde getirmiştir. Roman türünün başlangıcının ne gibi toplumsal, ekonomik ve siyasi süreçlerle bağdaştırılabileceğini birçok edebiyat kuramcısı araştırmış ve bu sorulara yanıt bulmaya gayret etmişlerdir. İngiliz romanı kendisinden önce gelen diğer yazın türlerinden farklı özelliklere sahiptir. İlk örneklerini on sekizinci yüzyılın başlarında görebildiğimiz İngiliz romanında yazarlar halkın her kesiminden bireylerin anlayabileceği yalın bir dil kullanmaya ve herkesin bağ kurabileceği günlük hayatta karşılaşabileceğimiz karakterlerin öykülerini anlatmaya başladılar. Dolayısıyla sadece toplumun yüksek sosyal kesimlerinden kişilerin erişip keyif alabildiği ve anlamlandırabildiği klasik edebiyat türlerine kıyasla çok daha geniş bir kitleye hitap etme ayrıcalığına sahip oldular.

Bu çalışmada İngiliz edebiyatında roman türünün doğuşu, Nancy Armstrong'un *Desire and Domestic Fiction* isimli kitabında öne sürdüğü roman türünün on yedinci ve on sekizinci yüzyıllarda geniş kitlelerce okunan, kadınlar için yazılmış görgü kitaplarından türediği ve bu rehberlerin bir süre sonra Adab-ı Muaşeret Romanları'na dönüştüğü önerisi açısından incelenecektir. Bu bağlamda İngiliz romanının ilk örneklerinden olan Daniel Defoe'nun *Moll Flanders* (1742) ve Frances Burney'nin *Evelina* (1778) adlı romanlarının yanı sıra on sekizinci yüzyılda çok yaygın bir şekilde okunan ve popülerleşen James Fordyce'ın *Sermons to Young Women* (1766) adlı görgü kitabı karşılaştırmalı olarak incelenecektir.

İngiliz romanının ilk örnekleri konu ve karakterleri açısından ciddi benzerlikler gösterirler. Bu romanlardaki karakterler genç kişilerdir ve hatta çoğunlukla genç kadınlardır. Hayatlarının önemli geçiş dönemlerinde verdikleri kararlardan bahseder, bu kararların sonuçlarını, edindikleri deneyimleri, bu deneyimler

sonucu vardıkları çıkarımları okuyucuya çok yalın bir dille aktarırlar. Okuyucu roman kişilerinin en gizli düşüncelerine, sır gibi sakladığı ve belki utandığı kişisel deneyimlerine tanıklık eder. Bu sebeple okuyucu ve roman kişileri arasında daha önce benzeri görülmemiş bir yakınlık ve bağ oluşur.

Roman türü ortaya çıktığı dönemde övgüyle karşılanmamıştır. Aksine, birçok edebiyat eleştirmeni ve yorumcu bu yeni türe özellikle de içeriği sebebiyle yukarıdan bakmış, şiddetle eleştirmiş ve hatta edebi bir tür olarak kabul edilemeyeceğini dahi söylemişlerdir. Romanlarda anlatılan olaylar sığ ve çoğu zaman *genel ahlaka* uymayacak türdendir ve roman kişileri ise ahlaki olgunluğa erişmemiş ve hiçbir entelektüel kaygı taşımayan toplumun en alt kesimlerinden gelen kimselerdir. Kitaplara erişimin kolaylaştığı on sekizinci yüzyılda bu tür yazınlara ulaşılması artık herkes için mümkün olduğundan toplumsal otoriteler kaygılanırlar. Roman zehirli bir türdür; kişilerin aklını çelebilecek öykülerle doludur. Özellikle de genç bireylerin bu sebepten romanlardan mümkün olduğunca uzak durması gerekmektedir. Tehlikenin farkına varan toplumun genelinden saygı gören yorumcular ve eleştirmenler romanları kötülerler. Dahası, birçok roman kara listeye alınır. Edebi değer taşımadığı gibi genç zihinleri bulanıklaştırma ve hayal dünyasına sürükleme potansiyeline sahip bu kitaplar önce uzun yıllar eleştirilir ve kimi zaman yasaklanır. Daha sonra ise, toplumun roman okumasının önüne pek de geçilemeyeceği anlaşıldığında, romanların ehlileştirilmesi ihtiyacı ortaya çıkar.

Daniel Defoe'nun *Moll Flanders* adlı romanı kara listeye alınan kitaplar arasındadır ve roman olarak İngiliz edebiyatı içinde kendine yer bulabilmesi ise ancak yirminci yüzyılda gerçekleşir. Bunun aksine Frances Burney'nin *Evelina*'sı ise yayınlandığı ilk günden itibaren övülür ve tavsiye edilir. Bu çağdaş iki kitabın gördüğü farklı tavır ve yaklaşımların sebebini başkişilerinin gece ve gündüz kadar farklı hayat öykülerinde bulabiliyoruz. Moll fahişelik ve hırsızlıkla para kazanıp hayatta kalmaya çalışan *talihsiz* bir kadınken, Evelina rahip vasisi ve aristokrat ev sahip sahiplerinin koruması altında adab-ı muaşeret kurallarına uygun davranmayı öğrenen genç bir kadındır. Moll toplumsal

cinsiyet rollerinin tamamına karşı gelirken, Evelina hepsine harfi harfine uyar. İki roman arasındaki önemli bir benzerlik ve hoşnutsuzluk noktası ise sonlarıdır. Evelina görgü kurallarına uygun davranışlarıyla hayalindeki ideal erkeğin gözüne girmeyi başarır ve evlenip mutlu olur. Moll ise bu kuralların hiçbirine uymamasına rağmen, pişman ve tövbekâr olur ve buna karşılık o da sevdiği erkeğe kavuşup huzura erdiği bir hayata sonunda ulaşabilir. Yaptıkları için cezalandırılmaz. Bu sebepten de ataerkil düzen açısından rahatsız edici bir kitaptır.

Roman kişilerinin de o dönemde roman okuyan kitlenin de çoğunlukla genç bireylerden ve hatta genç kadınlardan oluşması edebiyat tarihi kuramcısı Ian Watt açısından şaşılacak bir durum değildir. Aynı Samuel Johnson'ın 1775'te yazdığı bir makalede söylediği gibi roman okuyucuları bolca boş vakti olan, eğitimsiz, genç bireylerdir. Ian Watt *Romanın Yükselişi* (1957) adlı çalışmasında, Johnson'ın saptamasına ek olarak roman okumayı özel uğraş olarak edinmiş kadınlara işaret eder. Watt'a göre kadınların özellik de varlıklı ailelerin yanında çalışan hizmetçi kızların hem okumaya vakti vardır, hem de bu gruba mensup kişiler kitap okunabilecek fiziki koşullara sahiptirler. Watt roman türünün yükselişini birkaç faktöre bağlar. Bunlardan ilki biçimsel gerçekçiliktir.

Özellikle Daniel Defoe'nun romanlarının popülerleşmesini Watt romanın bu özelliğine bağlar. Watt'a göre biçimsel gerçekçilik romanların konu ve kişilerini günlük yaşamdan alıyor olmasıdır. Böyle bir üslupla yazılan romanlar elbette ki diğer edebi türlere kıyasla daha yaygın bir şekilde okunacaktır çünkü toplumun her sınıfından bireyler bu kitapları okuyup anlayabilecek, kendi yaşamıyla bağdaştırabilecektir. Watt'ın romanın yükselişinde etken olarak değindiği bir başka ve muhtemelen en önemli faktör ise orta sınıfın doğuşudur. Orta sınıf on sekizinci yüzyılda sanayi devriminin bir sonucu olarak ortaya çıkmış ve farklı demografik özellikleriyle aristokrasiden ayrılmıştır. Bu sınıfa mensup kişiler hem kitaplara maddi olarak ulaşmakta sıkıntı çekmemektedir, aynı zamanda da üst sosyal sınıfların rafine edebi zevklerine nazaran daha mütevazi edebi beklentilere sahiptirler. Bunlara ek olarak, kitap okuyabilmenin gerektirdiği

sessiz ve mahrem fiziki koşullara sahip olan tek sınıf da orta sınıftır. Dolayısıyla roman okuyucuları çoğunlukla bu sınıftan çıkmış ve bu yeni edebi tür bu okuyucuların zevklerine göre şekillenmiştir. Watt çalışmasında kadın okuyucuların romanın popülerleşmesi ve içeriğinin şekillenmesi açısından önemini vurgular. Ancak roman tarihi üzerine olan bu öncü çalışma her ne kadar ayrıntılı, etkili ve ikna edici de olsa kadınların on sekizinci yüzyılın ortasında neden roman yazmaya başladığı sorusunu yanıtsız bırakır. Roman türünün İngiliz edebiyatındaki bu ilk örneklerinin kendilerinden önceki ve sonraki yazın gelenekleriyle ne gibi benzerlikler gösterdiğine de değinmez Watt.

Bu noktada Nancy Armstrong'un Watt'ın *Romanın Yükselişi*'nden otuz sene sonra yayınladığı *Desire and Domestic Fiction* (1987) adlı çalışması imdadımıza yetişir. Armstrong çalışmasına o vakte kadar yazılan İngiliz edebiyatı tarihlerinin hiç birinde kadınların neden ve nasıl roman yazmaya başladığından bahsedilmediğini söyleyerek başlar. Edebiyat tarihi kadınların okur ve yazar olarak edebiyata katkılarını yıllar boyu göz ardı etmiştir çünkü Armstrong'a göre edebiyat kuramı ve tarih de eril kurumlardır. Sosyal, ekonomik ve tarihsel süreçleri ataerkil bir bakış açısıyla yorumlayıp aktarırlar. Ve böyle yaparak roman türünden önce gelen kadınlar için yazılmış görgü kitaplarının varlığı ve bu rehberlerin zaman içerisinde Adab-ı Muaşeret Romanları'na dönüştüğünden bahsetmezler. Armstrong çalışması tam olarak bu iki yazın türü arasındaki paralellikleri araştırır. Ona göre bu rehberler masum tavsiye kitaplarından fazlasıdır çünkü aslında ciddi bir politik ideolojiye hizmet ederler. Toplumsal cinsiyet rollerinin inşası, öğretilmesi ve benimsetilmesi konusunda tarihsel açıdan bakıldığında en etkili araçlardan biri olmuştur görgü kitapları. Görgü kitapları yazarları ideal kadının nasıl düşünmesi ve davranması gerektiğini öğretirken dişiliğin beraberinde belirli erdemler getiren bir kavram olduğundan bahseder. Bu rehberlerin öğretilerinin hala geçerli olduğunu günümüzde bile gözlemleyebiliyoruz. Armstrong, arkasındaki düşünce sisteminden hiçbir şey yitirmeden zamanın ruhuna uyan farklı şekillerde karşımıza çıkmaya devam eden bu kitapların doktrinlerinin en uzun süreli ve en etkili olarak vücut bulduğu

vasıtanın ise Adab-ı Muaşeret Romanları olduğunu belirtir. On yedinci ve on sekizinci yüzyılın öğüt rehberlerinin roman türüne dönüşmesi ise Richardson'ın *Pamela* (1740) adlı romanı ile olabilmiştir. *Pamela* İngiliz edebiyatının ilk romanıdır ve başarının altında yatan sır görgü kitaplarının öğretilerini bir roman kurgusu içerisinde sunabilmiş olmasıdır. Richarson kötülenen ve küçük görülen roman türünü *Pamela* ile iyileştirmiş ve hatta deyim yerindeyse ehlileştirmiştir. Dolayısıyla daha önceden romanları büyük bir hırsla eleştiren edebiyat yorumcuları sakinleşmiş Richardson'ı övgüye boğmuşlardır. Görgü kitapları yazarları da aynı şekilde Richardson'ın yazınını ayrı bir kefeye koymuş, okuyucularına başka romanlardan sakınmalarını gerektiğini öğütlerden, *Pamela* ve benzeri kitapları gönül rahatlığıyla okuyabileceklerini salık vermişlerdir.

Toplumsal otoritenin son derece kaygılı bir şekilde yaklaştığı roman okuma alışkanlığı ne kadar yerilirse yerilsin devam etmekteydi. Kaygının büyük oranda kadın okuyuculara yönelik olduğu Jacqueline Pearson'ın *Women's Women's Reading in Britain 1750-1835: A Dangerous Recreation* (2005) adlı çalışmasında incelenmiştir. Kitaplar gezici kütüphaneler sayesinde herkesin erişimine açılmış ve insanların satın almaya güçlerinin yeteceği bir duruma gelmişlerdir. Okuma alışkanlığı yaygınlaştıkça bu eylemin düzene sokulması ihtiyacı doğar. Kadınların okuması aslında çok da kötü bir fikir değildir ve aynı zamanda modernitenin gerekliliklerinden de biri olarak görülmektedir. Okuma evin sınırları içinde gerçekleştirilir; yani kadının kamusal alana katılmasına gerek bırakmamaktadır. Ancak okumanın evin dışına çıkmadan kişileri hayal dünyasına çekip önlerine bambaşka pencereler açmak gibi *kötü* bir tarafı da vardır. Bu sebeple, Pearson'a göre, asıl soru kadınların okuyup okumaması değil okunacak kitapların ne tür kitaplar olması gerektiğiyle ilgidir. Bu bağlamda sakıncalı bulunan kitap türleri arasında romanlar başı çeker. Ancak gittikçe yaygınlaşan ve severek okunan bu yazın türü ve okuyucuların arasına girmek çok da kolay değildir. Romanların içerik ve biçim bakımından görgü kitaplarına benzetilerek iyileştirilmesi de tam olarak bu sebepten gereklidir. Görgü kitapları

da romanlar da oldukça popülerdir; ikisinin kesişiminden ise ortaya Adab-ı Muaşeret Romanları çıkar.

Görgü kitapları kadın erkek ilişkileri, namus ve bekâret kavramları üzerinde uzun uzadıya dururlar. İdeal dişinin sahip olması gereken iffet, ağır başlılık, yumuşak başlılık ve alçakgönüllülük gibi erdemleri öne çıkarırlar. Değindikleri kurallara uyulmaması durumda genç kadınların yaşayacakları ıstırap ve sıkıntıları tekrar tekrar vurgularlar. Aslında ana amaçları aile kurumunun sürdürülmesine yöneliktir. Genç kadınları evlenilmeye uygun adaylar yapma arzusu taşırlar. Kadınlar bu kurallara uygun davranıp kendilerine kısmetli eşler bulacaklar, buldukları eşlerden çocuklar doğuracaklar ve çocuklarını da aynı eğitimden geçireceklerdir. Çocukların sağlık ve sıhhatini sağlamak ve onlara gerekli eğitimi vererek ailenin devamlılığını garanti altına almak onların en önemli yükümlülüğüdür. Tüm bu konulara uzunca yer verilir. Ancak görgü kitaplarının en önemli ortak noktası kadının dikkatini maddiden maneviye çekme gayretidir. Kadınlar fiziksel kaygılar yaşamamalı ve zaman ve enerjilerini vücutları üzerinde düşünerek geçirmemelidirler. Armstrong'a göre bu açıdan görgü kitabı geleneği aslında yeni bir kadın modeli yaratır. Bu kadın ne aristokrat sınıfına mensuptur ne de işçi sınıfına. Çünkü bu iki kesimden kadınlar kendilerini ya giyim kuşam ve güzellik konularıyla meşgul ederler ya da fiziksel çabayla yaşamlarını sürdürürler. Görgü kitapları bu iki uç kesimin ortasına nişan alır. Yeni kadın modeli orta sınıfa mensup bir ev kadınıdır. Çocukları ve eşi için gece gündüz asaletinden ve sakinliğinden ödün vermeden çalışır. Davranışlarında bir ağır başlılık ve masumiyet vardır. Fazla konuşmaz, konuştuğunda da asla sesini yükseltmez ve isyan etmez. Doğuştan gelen bir kadın erdemliliğinden bahseder görgü kitapları ve onların görevi bu potansiyeli ortaya çıkarmak ve eğitmektir.

Fordyce'ın vaazları zamanının en popüler görgü kitaplarından biridir. Kılık kıyafet, annelik, ağır başlılık, namus ve kadın erkek ilişkileri üzerine uzun öğütler verir. Aslında bir rahip olan Fordyce'ın bu kitabı kiliselerde verdiği vaazlarından derlenmiştir. Tüm öğütleri arasında en fazla dikkat çeken öğe

Armstrong'un bahsettiği doğuştan gelen, özde dişilik kavramına yaptığı atıflardır denebilir. Çünkü rahip kadınların masumiyet, iyi niyet ve namuslarını içgüdüsel olarak koruma çabalarını sürekli olarak över. Ona göre zaten kadınların özündeki iyiliği pekiştirmeye çalışmaktan onlara yol göstermeye çabalamaktan başka bir gayrete gerek yoktur. Bu masumiyet ve iyilik özelliklerini davranışlarıyla göstermeyen kadınlara kadın bile demez. Onları kabalıkları, özensizlikleri ve pervasızlıklarıyla öncelikle erkeğe benzetir; daha sonra erkek ve kadının benzemesinin imkânsızlığına dikkat çekerek görgü kurallarına uygun davranmayan kadınların aslında canavarca davranışlar sergilediğini söyler. Kendisine atfedilen cinsiyet rollerini kabul etmeyen kadınların doğalarına aykırı davranmış olurlar ve böylelikle aslında insaniyetten çıkmış olurlar.

Bu çalışmanın amacı göz önünde bulundurulduğunda Fordyce'ın vaazlarının en ilgi çekici kısmı pek tabii romanlarla ilgili öğütlerde bulunduğu kısmıdır. Rahip ilk olarak kitap okumanın ve romanların tehlikelerinden bahseder. Romanlar ahlaksız kişilerin ve yozlaşmış ilişkilerin resmedildiği üstelik hiçbir edebi değer taşımayan sakıncalı kitaplardır. Okumak cezbedici bir eylem olabilir, ancak kadınların tüm akıl çelen her eylem gibi bundan da uzak durması gerekir. Gerçek olmayan ve olamayacak yaşamların ve serüvenlerin tasvir edildiği, ahlak kurallarının hiçe sayıldığı ve sapkın ilişkilerin tüm çıplaklıklarıyla gözler önüne serildiği bu kitapların kadınlar arasındaki popülerliğinin pekâlâ farkındadır Fordyce. Özellikle bu romanların bazılarındaki kadın karakterlerin koca bulmayı bir iş edindiği, kibirli davranışlar sergilediği ve sosyal toplantılara ve eğlencelere katılmaktan hiç ama hiç çekinmediğinden yakınır. Bu bölümde bahsettiği romanların Moll'ün öyküsüyle benzerliğini fark etmek işten bile değildir.

Rahibin tasvip ettiği ve coşkuyla önerdiği tek bir roman yazarı vardır, Samuel Richardson. Richardson'ın yazınını paragraflarca öven Fordyce, onun yazdığı öyküleri nazik ve masum bulur. Diğer romanların aksine, Richardson'ın kitaplarına ciddi bir edebi değer biçer ve genç kadınları eğitme konusunda en az kendisi kadar önemli bir rolü ve otoritesi olduğunu söyler. Fordyce'ın

Richardson'ı neden bu kadar övdüğü aslında oldukça açıktır. Richardson görgü kitapları geleneğini sürdürmeyi amaçlar. Bu bağlamda öne çıkardığı, desteklediği ve teşvik ettiği değerler Fordyce'ın öğütleriyle elbette ki birebir örtüşecektir. Fordyce'ın bu konuyu ele alırken takındığı tavır önemlidir. Aynı kadınları iyi ve kötü; namuslu ve namussuz; temiz ve kirli gibi ikili karşıtlıklar çerçevesinde konumladığı gibi romanları da benzer bir şekilde kategorilere ayırır. Richardson'ın yazını ve onun başlattığı edebi geleneğe uygun olarak yazılmış kitaplar edebi değer ve güzelliğe sahiptir. Öte yandan bu tanımlara uymayan kitaplar aynı *namussuz* kadınlar gibi değersizdir ve toplumdan uzaklaştırıp unutulmaya mahkûmdur.

Bu çalışmanın odağı olan *Moll Flanders* ve *Evelina*'nın Fordyce'ın vaazları ışığında incelenmesi iki roman arasındaki farklılıkların açığa çıkabilmesi açısından oldukça önemlidir. Sadece olay örgüsüne bakıldığında dahi aslında bu iki romanın farkı oldukça açık olmakla beraber, bu çalışmanın amacı göz önünde bulundurulduğunda bu farklılıkların görgü kitapları bağlamında bir çözümlemesinin yapılması daha yeni bir bakış açısı kazanılması yönünden yararlı olacaktır.

Aslında yaşam öykülerinin başlangıcına göz atıldığında her iki romanın başkişileri arasında bir benzerlik göze çapar. Moll de Evelina da yaşamlarına anne-babasız başlarlar. Moll'ün annesi küçük çaplı bir hırsızlık yapması gerekçesiyle önce Newgate Hapishanesine gönderilir ve ardından idama mahkûm edilir. Aynı dönemde Moll'e hamile olan kadın bu durumu bahane ederek görevlilere hayatını bağışlamaları için yalvarıp yakarır ve idam cezasından kurtulur. Bunun yerine o dönemki kanunlara göre doğumdan sonra Amerika'ya sürülecektir. Böylece Moll yaşamına annesinin kriminal geçmişinin gölgesinde ve yapayalnız başlar. Bebekken bir grup *çingene* tarafından büyütülür, ancak bir süre sonra onların yaşam biçimlerinden hoşnutsuz olur ve yaşı küçücükken yanlarından ayrılır. Bunun üzerine çok iyi niyetli bir koruyucu annenin yanına yerleştirilir. Yaşlı kadının yanında geçirdiği yılları mutlu geçer. Moll kadına hem saygı duyuyor hem de çok büyük bir sevgi besliyordur. Ancak

bu mutluluk uzun sürmeyecek ve yaşı yeterince büyüdüğü için evden ayrılması gerekecektir. Koruyucu annesinin yanından ayrıldıktan sonra yaşlılık yıllarına dek Moll birçok kere yer değiştirmek zorunda kalır. Evelina'nın öksüz kalma öyküsü ise bambaşkadır. Genç kadının annesinin hikâyesini vasisi Bay Villars'ın mektuplarından öğreniriz. Annesi Caroline masum, iyi niyetli ve çok terbiyeli bir genç kadındır ancak bir o kadar da talihsizdir çünkü kendi annesi – yani Evelina'nın anneannesi – Madam Duval acımasız ve görgüsüz bir kadındır. Kızına asla destek olmaz ve hatta onu da torununu da reddeder. Caroline doğum sırasında hayatını kaybeder. Evelina annesiyle asla tanışamamış olsa bile Bay Villars'ın gayretleriyle onu kendisine örnek alır, yani Evelina'nın annesine dair duydukları takdire şayan özelliklerdir. Annesinin yokluğunda rahip Bay Villars tarafından büyütülen Evelina için hiçbir şey vasi babasının fikri kadar önemli değildir. Onun koruması altına güvenli ve sakin bir çocukluk geçirir ve eksiksiz bir eğitim alır. Dolayısıyla Evelina çok daha arınık ve istikrarlı bir ortamda sakin bir çocukluk geçirir. Bu bağlamda Moll ve Evelina arasında gördüğümüz ilk fark sınıf farkıdır. Moll toplumun en alt kesiminden gelmekte ve dayanacağı hiçbir kaynak olmaksızın hayatta kalmaya ve hatta sınıf basamaklarını çıkmaya kararlıdır. O dönemde Londra'da yaşayan anne-babasız ve meteliksiz genç bir kadının bu isteği gerçekleştirebilmek için iyi bir evlilik yapmak haricinde bir seçeneği yoktur. Bu sebeple Moll gençliğine ve güzelliğine de güvenerek bunu gerçekleştirebilmek için yaşamı boyu uğraşır. Bu girişimlerinin birinde bilmeksizin üvey erkek kardeşiyle evlenir. Başta hiçbir şeyden haberi olmayan mutlu karı-kocanın anneleri ortaktır. Gerçek ortaya çıkınca Moll çok ıstırap çeker ve hem kardeşi hem kocası olan bir erkekle aynı yatağı paylaşmaya daha fazla dayanamayarak evden ayrılır ve Amerika'yı terk edip İngiltere'ye geri döner. Bu noktadan sonra birkaç kere daha evlenecek, iyice parasız ve umutsuz kaldığı dönemde ise hırsızlığa başlayacaktır.

Moll'ün hayatı günümüzde bile halen tabu olarak düşünülen deneyimlerle doludur. Ensest, evlilik dışı cinsellik, çocuklarını terk etmesi ve en sonunda hırsızlığa başlaması bu tabulara örnek olarak gösterilebilir. Bu denli çalkantılı

bir yaşamı olan bir kadının deneyimlerini aktardığı bir romanın ilk yayınlandığı on sekizinci yüzyılda kara listeye alınmış olması çok da şaşırtıcı değildir. Ancak Moll'ün dışlanmasının asıl sebebi Fordyce'ın ve diğer görgü kitabı yazarlarının öğütlediği hiçbir kurala uymaması ve buna rağmen hayatta kalıp en sonunda mutlu ve huzurlu sayılabilecek bir yaşama erişebilmesidir.

Moll görgü kitabı yazarlarının hakkında sayısız uyarı yaptığı ve yerdiği kadın imgesinin vücut bulmuş haliyken, Evelina için bu durumun tam tersi geçerlidir. Genç kadın için Fordyce'ın öğütlerinin vasi babası Bay Villars ağzından aktartıldığını gözlemleriz roman boyu. Yeni giriş yaptığı sosyal ortamda, Londra'nın üst sınıf ailelerinin yaşam tarzları ve zevkleriyle tanışır ve tüm bunlara haysiyetinden ödün vermeksizin uyum sağlamaya çalışır. Evelina'nın etrafında Moll'ünkünden farklı tehlikeler vardır. Onun açısından tehlike genç kadının güzelliği karşısında hayran kalan ve onu baştan çıkarmak için elinden geleni ardına koymayan bir takım üst sınıf erkekler vardır. Evelina'nın ise gözü asil ve kibar Lord Orville'den başkasını görmez. Fakar genç kızın yeni yaşamındaki en ciddi tehdit unsuru anneannesi Madam Duval'dır. Hem Bay Villars hem de Londra'da koruması altında yaşadığı Leydi Howard ve Bayan Mirvan yaşlı kadının genç kızı aynı annesine yaptığı gibi acılara sürüklemesinden korkar. Madam Duval görgüsüz ve bayağı bir kadındır. Evelina'ya hem kötü örnek olur hem de onu utandırır. Madam Duval'ın romanın *kötü kadını* olduğuna dair birçok işaret vardır. Öncelikle kendisi iyi bir anne olamamıştır. Kızını acılara sürüklemiş, yalnız bırakmış ve gereken ilgi ve eğitimi vermemiştir. Üstelik kendisi son derece kaba bir kadın olarak tasvir edilir. Ancak Madam Duval'la ilgili en ilginç ayrıntı Fransız kökenli olmasıdır. Burney'nin bu seçimi son derece bilinçlidir ve hem devlet politikasının hem de görgü kitapları ideolojisinin bir yansımasıdır. İngiltere ve Fransa arasındaki politik gerginlik görgü kitaplarında kötü kadın imgesinin Fransız kadınlarına benzemesi üzerinden vücut bulur. Fordyce da aynı bu şekilde sakınılması gereken kadın tiplemesini çizerken Fransız kadınlarının hafif meşrepliğinden gem vurur ve bu tür davranışlarda bulunan kadınları onlara benzetir.

Dolayısıyla *Evelina*'nın aynı Richardson'ın *Pamela*'sı gibi görgü kitaplarının muhteşem bir şekilde kurgulanmış hali olduğunu gözlemleriz. Zaten Adab-ı Muaşeret Romanları diye adlandırdığımız türün ilk örnekleridir Burney'nin romanları. Öyle ki bu türün en önde gelen yazarlarından Jane Austen Burney'nin yazın stiline öykünmüş, romanlarını benzer biçimde yazmıştır.

Zaman içerisinde görgü kitaplarının ortadan kaybolmasının sebebi içeriklerinin popülerliğini yitirmesi değildir. Aksine bu rehber kitapların artık bir varisi vardır; o da roman türüdür. Adab-ı Muaşeret Romanları görgü kitaplarının öğretilerini, aynı ayrıntı ve titizlikle olmasa da, sürdürdüğünü söyler Armstrong. Bir süre sonra roman türü de değişiklikler geçirecek ve genişleyecektir. Dolayısıyla İngiliz romanının sadece bu gündeme hizmet eden dönemi sona erecektir. Ancak kadınların nasıl davranması gerektiği, kadınlığın ve dişiliğin ne olduğuyla ilgili bilgiler farklı nesillerde farklı yollardan aktarılmaya devam edecektir.

İngiliz romanı tarihinin bu ışıkta bir incelemesinin yapılması toplumsal cinsiyet inşasının önemini ve toplumların ataerkil kurumlarının etkisini gözler önüne sermekte. Edebiyatın ve edebiyat eleştirisinin de aslında birer kurum olduğunu kabul ettiğimizde Watt'ın kuramlaştırdığı roman tarihinin neden hâlihazırda Armstrong'un çalışmasından daha yaygın olarak bilindiğini daha iyi anlıyoruz. Dolayısıyla edebiyat kuramına ve tarihini de yeni bir perspektiften, sınıf farklılıkları, toplumsal cinsiyet anlayışı ve cinsel basmakalıpları göz önünde bulundurarak, inceleme ihtiyacı doğduğunu görüyoruz.

B. TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

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YAZARIN

Soyadı : KAYA
Adı : Tuğba Billur
Bölümü : İngiliz Edebiyatı

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) : HISTORY OF THE NOVEL IN STORIES OF FEMININITY: *MOLL FLANDERS, EVELINA* AND FORDYCE'S *SERMONS*

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans [X] Doktora [ ]

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