REFORMING THE HEROINE: FEMALE CHARACTERS
IN LATE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH WOMEN’S NOVELS

BAKALÁŘSKÁ PRÁCE

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Souhlasím se zapůjčením bakalářské práce ke studijním účelům.
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Abstrakt


Druhá kapitola této práce se soustředí na román *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* a zkoumá podobnost a rozdíly mezi Betsy a Amorandou. Jejím tématem je i to, jak Haywood kritizuje rozdílnost přístupu k ženské a mužské cti a pokryteckost rozlišování mezi veřejným zdáním a soukromou ctností. Vedle toho komentuje vliv hrdinčina prvního manželství na její vývoj, jakožto prostředku umožňujícího ji přijmutí společenských pravidel a ocenění hrdiny.

Třetí kapitola se soustředí na román *Evelina, Or, the History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World*. Vedle srovnání hrdinky s hlavními rysy reformované hrdinky zkoumá zranitelnost Evelinina společenského postavení jakožto neuznaného dítěte a také důležitost uznání otcem a budoucím manželem. Další část kapitoly se věnuje rádkyním a prostředkům omezujících jejich důvěryhodnost.
Čtvrtá kapitola představuje Elizabeth z Pýchy a předsudku jako součást tradice reformovaných hrdinek. Zkoumá vliv její rodiny a finanční situace na její manželské vyhlídky, komentuje spojení mezi jejími omyly a nespolehlivostí názorů jejího otce a popisuje vzájemný vliv Elizabeth a Darcyho.

Závěrečná kapitola shrnuje hlavní rysy všech hrdinek a komentuje změny v rámci tradice. Společné rysy představují hrdinčino uvědomění si chybnosti svého úsudku, podřízení se autoritě a ochraně manžela a omezená přítomnost rádkyň. Hlavními změnami je rostoucí omylnost hrdiny, ustanovení jeho autority na základě přenosu spolehlivosti od otce směrem k manželovi a více možností otevřených hrdince při výběru budoucího manžela.

Klíčová slova:

Mary Davys, Eliza Haywood, Fanny Burney, Jane Austen, reformovaná hrdinka, milenec-mentor, anglická literatura v osmnáctém století.

Abstract

This thesis explores the reformed heroine tradition in the English literature of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. It focuses on four novels: *The Reform'd Coquet* by Mary Davys from 1724, *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* by Eliza Haywood from 1751, *Evelina, Or, the History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World* by Fanny Burney from 1778 and *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen from 1813. In the centre of the thesis stands the fallible heroine who is capable of development. The first chapter concerns the social changes of the eighteenth century which introduced the idea of companionate marriage, and it explores the establishing novel of the reformed heroine tradition, *The Reform'd Coquet*. It stipulates the main characteristics of the reformed heroine character: inexperience, vanity, absence of a reliable
authority and overrating her own judgment. Additionally, it describes the relationship of the reformed coquette and the lover-mentor and notices the absence of female guardianship.

The second chapter focuses on *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* and explores similarities and differences between Betsy and Amoranda. It also describes Haywood's critics on the discrepancy in approach to male and female virtue and the hypocrisy of distinguishing between the public appearance and private chastity. Besides, it comments on the effect of the heroine's first marriages on her development as the instrument of her accepting social rules and appreciating of the hero.

The third chapter comments on *Evelina, Or, the History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World*. In addition to the comparison the heroine with the main characteristics of the reformed heroine, it explores the vulnerability of Evelina's social position as an unacknowledged child and the importance of being recognized both by her father and her future husband. Another part of this chapter describes the role of female guardians and the means of limitation of their reliability.

The fourth chapter introduces Elizabeth from *Pride and Prejudice* as a part of reformed heroine tradition. It explores the impact of her family and her financial situation on her marital expectations, notices the connection between her fallibility and unreliability of her father's opinions and describes Elizabeth and Darcy's mutual impact.

The conclusion summarizes the main characteristic of all heroines and comments on the changes within the tradition. The main similarities present heroine's recognizing fallibility of her judgement, submitting to husband's authority and protection, and limited presence of female guardians. The main changes are hero's increasing fallibility, establishing of his authority as a transfer of reliability from the father to the husband, and more options granted to the heroine during choosing her future husband.
Key words:

Mary Davys, Eliza Haywood, Fanny Burney, Jane Austen, reformed heroine, lover-mentor, the English literature in the eighteenth century.
1. Introduction

This thesis focuses on English women writers in the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, since it would not be possible to deal with all the “good women writers”\(^1\), the thesis concentrates on the reformed heroines in *The Reform'd Coquet* by Mary Davys published in 1724, *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* by Eliza Haywood, published in 1751, and *Evelina, Or, the History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World* by Fanny Burney, published in 1778. They are succeeded with the novel *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen, which was published in 1813 and is a part of the heritage of the reformed heroine tradition.

1.1 Social situation

Any discussion about novels which reflects contemporary society should involve basic knowledge of the society's valid laws and habits. Although the social classes in England in the eighteenth century were not strictly bordered, the dominant part of the society tended to adopt usual social roles: the oldest son inherited the family property, the younger sons were supposed to acquire a proper occupation, usually in the navy, church or politics. Roles of women were firmly tied to their families, they were supposed to get married and devote their lives to their husbands and children, since no paid occupation was considered appropriate for a gentlewoman, except that of a lady companion, the position both socially vulnerable and economically unprofitable\(^2\). The bond of marriage still gave all the legal power into the husband's hands. However, the situation was changing:

The many legal, political and educational changes that took place in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were largely consequences of changes in ideas about the nature of marital relations. (…) decision-making power had to be transferred to the future spouses themselves,


\(^2\) “Another result of this situation was that in upper-class circles in the late eighteenth century, manoeuvres to marry off a daughter turned into a desperate man-hunt. (…) It was not until the very end of the eighteenth century that another occupation opened for well-educated spinsters from decent homes, when 'accomplished girls, portionless and homeless' could become governesses in wealthy households to young children under seven.” Lawrence Stone, *The family, sex and marriage*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1977) 244.
and more and more of them in the eighteenth century began to put the prospects of emotional satisfaction before the ambition for increased income or status. This in turn had its effect in equalizing relationships between husband and wife.3

These changes led to greater freedom in the choice of the future spouse and prolonged the courtship period, since the future couple was supposed to get to know each other before marriage. It also created space for a mutual impact which they could have on each other. Vivian Jones notices the change in the conduct books of the latter eighteenth century, such as those of Wetenhall Wilkes published in 1766 and John Gregory published in 1774:

Their ultimate object is still social stability based on the subjection of women within marriage, but the language of affective individualism masks actual power relations by offering women the promise of romantic attachment and personal choice.4

1.2 Literary field

Other important changes took place in the field of literature: the birth of the novel as a popular literary form, and the expanding participation of women writers on the publishing market. The first development was described by many literary critics, one of the most comprehensive works being The Rise of the Novel by Ian Watt. However, Watt focuses almost entirely on the male writers Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson and Henry Fielding. Although he claims Jane Austen to be an heir of the female writing tradition, he deals with her regarding to her connection to Fielding's and Richardson's works and styles. Additionally, he hardly mentions another woman writer. This situation changed during the 1980's and 1990's due to the wave of feminist critics such as Dale Spender and her Mothers of the Novel: 100 good writers before Jane Austen, Jane Spencer's The rise of the women novelist or Vivian Jones' Women and literature in Britain, which were followed by many others; for example the works of Ros Ballaster5, Paula R.

3 Stone 217.
Backscheider or Shea Stuart. These critics focused on women writers, re-discovered the women writers tradition and introduced several literary concepts, as, for example, that of the reformed coquette and her lover-mentor. Jane Spencer describes the tradition of reformed heroines in following words: “Novels with reformed heroines were about learning to repudiate faults seen as especially feminine, and accepting male authority instead of challenging it.” These novels introduce characters of the fallible heroine and the lover-mentor, whose authority the heroine learns to appreciate.

The cornerstone of all novels discussed in this thesis is the relationship between the heroine and her lover-mentor, in which she has to accept his superiority and submit herself to the authority of her future husband. It is usually a long-term process which includes refusing the lover's opinion, realizing the lover's true character and value, and also social education of the heroine.

1.3 Reformed coquette as a literary character

*The Reform'd Coquet* written by Mary Davys and published in 1724 may be considered as the novel establishing the tradition of reforming heroines and their lover-mentors. This tradition, produced mostly by women writers, differs in several features from the work of both Fielding and Richardson, as it introduces an imperfect heroine that is not only in need of but also capable of reform. The heroine is being reformed by her lover, who adopts the role of her mentor. According to Spencer: “[. . .] heroine must find an honest man, submit to his authority and gain his protection. [. . .] Davys makes the guardian the lover and supports his programme of courtship-by-reform.”

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9 Spencer 146.
At the beginning of the reformed coquette tradition, there stands a presumption that a woman is able to be reformed and that she is worth educating. The heroine neither challenges nor defies male authority\(^\text{10}\) but the simple process of reformation changes her from a rather passive acceptor of male characters' acting, into a thinking and evolving human being. Spencer states that:

However much the basic fable of the reformed heroine encouraged a message of conformity to existing patriarchal society, the working-out of her story required a concentration on female moral progress; an investigation of the woman's mind; and the conclusion that women are capable of moral growth. \(^\text{11}\)

The heroine of *The Reform'd Coquet* Amoranda presents an archetypal reformed heroine, whose basic attributes were later used for other fallible heroines. She is an inexperienced young girl, only fifteen years old at the time of the main plot and a “sole Heiress to three thousand Pounds a Year.”\(^\text{12}\) She is witty, self-confident, and at the same time parentless and without any present reliable guardian. She has “all the Beauties of her sex, but then she had the Seeds of their Pride and Vanity too.”\(^\text{13}\) Although she is erring, she never becomes a fallen heroine; her moral integrity is never questioned. Her misjudging people and situations originates in her inexperience and vanity, not in her improper or unsteady moral values. This characteristic is commented on by Jane Spencer in *The rise of the woman novelist: from Aphra Behn to Jane Austen* where she compares reformed coquettes to Fielding's hero: “A female Tom Jones, however, could not be allowed his sexual adventures if she was to be the heroine of any but a totally immoral novel.”\(^\text{14}\)

\(^\text{10}\) We can still find a happy marriage at the end of each novel, it is still more than a hundred years to Ibsen's Nora or Shaw's Eliza.

\(^\text{11}\) Spencer 143.


\(^\text{13}\) Davys 13.

\(^\text{14}\) Spencer 140.
1.4 Self-confident heroine

Probably the most problematic Amoranda's weakness is her stubborn determination to act according to her own judgement. At the beginning of the story, legal authority is missing and Amoranda does not accept another person's opinions. When her lady's maid warns her against lord Lofty, she laughs at her, when she receives Altemira's letter on the same subject she only ridicules her motives and reliability, and the letter from a stranger pitying her for her vanity and carelessness evokes in her a fit of anger, as she: “always thought a Woman of Youth, Beauty, and such a Fortune as mine is, might raise Envy in many, but Pity in none.”

Amoranda's disrespect of the opinions of other people is connected to her being the only child of her parents, who spoiled her during her childhood. When they die, Amoranda is a self-confident young girl used to flattery, who does not respect more experienced people. This protest is usually accepted as a part of being a teenager, as a process of growing adult due to specifying one's own opinions. However, there is a certain difference in Amoranda's growing up, as the main transformation which she has to undergo is not her acceptance of the authority of experience and age but of the authority of a man as the holder of the experience.

1.5 Female guardian

Next to the heroine, there are several other female characters but only one of them is in a position of seniority to Amoranda: her relative Maria. Jane Spencer claims that:

We might expect that a novel tradition based on the woman writer's role as moral guide to her sex would present stories of a heroine's reform through the advice of a more experienced woman; and in fact, wise women often appear as mentors in didactic novels. (…) A female teacher is not always central, however. Often she plays a subordinate part while a male teacher – the heroine's lover and her mentor – takes the dominant role.

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15 Davys 29.
16 Their relationship is not specified in the novel, Maria is described by Amoranda only as “a grave Lady, the only Relation I have on my Mother's side.” p.95.
17 Spencer 146.
Maria's position and role fit this statement. It could be expected that she would undertake the role of the heroine's tutor and adviser instead of Amoranda's late mother but her role is limited to an observer and she does not intervene in Amoranda's relationship with either Formator or Alanthus.

1.6 Father-figure

The principal authority in *The Reform'd Coquet* is presented by Formator, Amoranda's tutor and protector recommended to her by her guardian. Amoranda accepts his guidance immediately after his arrival: “I now promise to be governed in a great measure by you; and since my Uncle has sent you to supply his place, I will use you with deference, and bring myself to comply with your Desires as far as possible.”

Formatter does not lose time, he starts the task he willingly decided to undertake and Amoranda becomes his eager student:

> His constant Care was to divert her from all the Follies of Life, and as she had a Soul capable of Improvement, and a flexible good temper to be dealt with, he made no doubt but one day he shou'd see her the most accomplish'd of her Sex: in order to which, he provided a choice Collection of Books to her, diverted her with a thousand pleasant stories, possibly of his own making, and every moment was lost to Formator, that was not spent with Amoranda.

Nevertheless, his guidance is not as fully accepted as desired. When Amoranda refuses to follow Formator's advice and she decides to go on a river trip against his will, she is punished with a nearly fatal disaster, which almost costs her her life and virtue. This adventure serves two different purposes; one is the final educative improving, as it teaches Amoranda to respect male authority over her own fallible judgement, the other is introducing Alanthus as her rescuer and future spouse.

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18 Davys 33.
19 Davys 44.
1.7 Accepting authority of the lover-mentor

Amoranda's most important lesson to be learned in this dangerous situation is the fact that neither her wit nor her money can protect her from danger, as a snare can be set and servants can be bribed; she must learn not to trust herself, because her wit is not a proper guide to safe and moral behaviour. The moment Amoranda is able to recognize this necessity and accept male authority over her own judgement and feelings, she is prepared to become a wife and can be rewarded by a proper husband. Jane Spencer comments on this result: “Masculine guidance and protection are the answer to the heroine's problems, and she is given a substitute father to guard her from other men, from the evil of the world, and from her own female nature.”

When Alanthus appears and saves her from the dangerous situation, Amoranda falls in love with him and reveals her feelings honestly to Formator: “I find you think I am in Love, and for ought I know, so I am.” Consequently, she is subjected to the last test – Formator informs her that her uncle has already chosen a husband for her: “Your Uncle, before I left him, had provided a husband for you, a Man of Worth, of Wealth, of Quality [. . .] will you scruple to oblige him?” Despite her feelings for Alanthus, she accepts her uncle's will, in the same time proclaiming her love to Alanthus: “No Formator, said she, I will die to oblige my dearest Uncle, but I cannot cease to love Alanthus.” Her submission to the legal male authority together with firmly stating her true feelings to Alanthus are sufficient proofs of her transformation and the test is dismissed by identifying Alanthus with the man chosen for her by her uncle.

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20 Spencer 147.
21 Davys 91.
22 Davys 104.
23 Davys 105.
1.8 The lover identified with the mentor

The fact that a single person acts both as the old mentor Formator and the young lover Alanthus, allows Mary Davys to create the lover-mentor character who unites the future husband with the father-figure. Amoranda evolves a strong confidence in Formator before she even meets Alanthus and she learns to respect his judgement in the intensity and scale which would not be so easily accepted from a lover during the period of courtship. She recognizes the superiority and importance of a reliable guardian without submitting herself to a male authority in general since she also learned to distrust strangers. Consequently, the transition of authority from Formator to Alanthus is not automatic and Alanthus has to prove his reliability first.

The accidental identifying of Formator with Alanthus brings Amoranda's last refusal:

While you were Formator, I had all the value and esteem for you, which was due to a good Adviser, and a careful Guardian: when I took you for Lord Alanthus, I look'd upon you as a Man of highest Merit, as well as Quality; [...] But now that you are no longer Formator, I have done with you as a Guardian; and till I am better satisfied you are Lord Alanthus, I have done with you as a Lover too.²⁴

Amoranda does not seem to refuse him due to being deceived and her pride being offended but rather from being cautious. She refuses to respect Alanthus' authority based purely on the respect she had to Formator. Alanthus has to justify his disguise:

I came to you, disguised like an old Man, for two reasons; First, I thought the sage Advice you stood in need of, wou'd sound more natural, and be better received from an old mouth, than a young one; next, I thought you wou'd be more open and free, in declaring your real Sentiments of every thing to me, as I was, than as I am.²⁵

He also provides the explanatory letter from Amoranda's uncle which confirms his story. Amoranda avoids to create her own judgement of the situation as she learned not to trust her own opinion. Since her uncle represents the only authority over her, she willingly submits herself to his wish to accept Alanthus as her future husband.

²⁴ Davys 112.
²⁵ Davys 114.
2. The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless

2.1 Betsy Thoughtless as a reformed heroine

*The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* by Eliza Haywood was published in 1751, and it presents a different kind of heroine than for example Richardson's Clarissa or Fielding's Sophia Western. Betsy is active, self-confident, vain and rather disrespectful to opinions of other people. Although her first marriage is not very happy, her story does not end by her death but in the second marriage with a loving husband. Betsy Thoughtless shares many characteristics with Amoranda from *The Reform'd Coquet* which assigns her to the reformed heroine tradition. Her parents die when she is young, she is inexperienced but self-assured, fond of flattery but virtuous and not willing to marry. Her story develops from a brief description of her childhood through her introducing to the London society, her coquettish encouraging several suitors, her first unhappy marriage to Mr. Munden, during which she learns to recognize the importance of virtue for both women and men, to the happy ending in marriage to Mr. Trueworth.

2.2 Becoming a coquette

After her mother's death Betsy spends several years at a boarding school where she meets Miss Forward, who is already acquainted with love affairs and makes Betsy her confidant. Betsy becomes fond of courtship; since she is a witness to her friend's affair she: “long[s] to be in her teens, that she might have the same fine things said of her.”26 When Betsy arrives in London to live in Mr. Goodman's household, she is “just entering into her fourteenth year”27. Mr. Goodman's wife Lady Mellasin keeps many visitors and Betsy is allowed to flirt with them. Her

27 Haywood 1,20.
fondness of courtship leads her to encouraging all suitors equally, since she values compliments more than the lovers.

### 2.3 Inefficient guardians

None of her friends or guardians warn Betsy against becoming a coquette. The substitute authorities embodied by Betsy's guardians and their wives prove to be ineffective. Jane Spencer comments on the situation in these words:

> Like most heroines in this tradition, Betsy is deprived of proper parental control. Early in the novel she is orphaned, and though she has two good guardians, appropriately named Sir Ralph Trusty and Mr Goodman, she comes under the influence of Mr Goodman's wife Lady Mellasin and her daughter Flora, who are far from sharing her virtue.\(^{28}\)

For the crucial part of the novel, Sir Trusty and his wife are simply not present in London, which strongly limits their influence on Betsy. Mr Goodman and his wife Lady Mellasin become improper guardians for a young girl. Mr. Goodman's marriage serves as a warning example of the marriage in which the wife has more power than the husband. As soon as they got married, she “gained such an absolute ascendancy over him, that whatever she declared as her will, with him had the force of a law.”\(^{29}\) When Mr. Goodman discovers that his wife deceived him being a thief and adulteress, he undergoes a process of legal separation with her. Although he manages to dispose of her, he is broken and soon dies. His lack of authority is presented not only in his inability to govern his marriage, but also in his meekness towards Betsy. When she is not satisfied with Lady Mellasin's choice of fabrics for her dresses, she easily convinces Mr. Goodman to give her income designed for her “pocket expenses […] and cloth” at her “own disposal”\(^{30}\) which allows her even greater freedom.

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\(^{28}\) Spencer 147.

\(^{29}\) Haywood I, 16.

\(^{30}\) Haywood III, 67.
2.4 Female guardians

In the persons of her guardians' wives, Betsy receives two senior female advisers; Lady Mellasin and Lady Trusty. However, none of them proves to be a proper tutor: Lady Mellasin's guidance is questioned at the beginning by Lady Trusty, “she had heard many things relating to the conduct of lady Mellasin, which made her think her a very unfit person to have the care of youth, especially those of her own sex.”\footnote{Haywood I, 19.} Later in the novel, Lady Mellasin is totally discredited and she is sent to the colonies together with her daughter Flora.

Although Lady Trusty's moral credit is flawless and she is described as: “a woman of a great prudence, piety and virtue”\footnote{Haywood I, 19.}, her advice does not help Betsy in her marriage with Mr. Munden. Lady Trusty stresses the difference between male and female virtue: she states that even “a man of the strictest honour and good sense may sometimes slip”\footnote{Haywood IV, 38.} but she warns Betsy that: “those too great gaieties of life you have hitherto indulged, which, however innocent, could not escape censure while in a single state, will now have a much worse aspect in a married one.”\footnote{Haywood IV, 38.}

Spencer comments on this advise as follows:

At Betsy's wedding Lady Trusty gives the bride advice that could have come out of any contemporary female conduct-book. Be neither too fond nor too cold, she advises, remain in your own sphere, give him his rights, and always yield to him in disputes (IV, 37) Standard advice, but Betsy's experience shows that it cannot be followed with any dignity.”\footnote{Spencer 151.}

Betsy soon finds out that her husband does not love her. He becomes avaricious and he has a sexual affair in his and Betsy's household. Betsy has to learn how to find her own self-confident way of conduct in regard to social rules and she manages to leave him with her family approval.
2.5 Virtue

Liberties allowed to men

As the only one of all authors discussed in this thesis, Haywood deals in her novel with the question of double moral standards. The topic appears several times: Betsy's eldest brother has a mistress, Trueworth visits a prostitute and he even has a sexual affair with Flora Mellasin. Beside the male characters' behaviour, the topic is also the object of several discussions: next to Lady Trusty's advice, it is mainly Betsy's discussion with her brother Francis about the nature of female virtue.

When Betsy's oldest brother arrives in London and establishes his own household there, Betsy expects that she will live with him, but he refuses it. The reason is simple: he brought a French mistress who now lives in his house “appear[ing] as his wife in all respects except the name”.\textsuperscript{36} If Betsy had lived in his house, she would have had, as his sister, “a right to, and doubtless would have claimed all those privileges another was already in possession of. --- And how would it have agreed with the character of a virtuous young lady, to have lived in the same house with a woman kept by her brother as his mistress?”\textsuperscript{37} Haywood presents this reason as perfectly understandable and does not provide any direct Mr. Thoughtless' judgement virtue or morality. However, Mr. Thoughtless is punished for his affair by his mistress' proving to be disloyal and cheating. Haywood seems to share the belief that once a woman looses her chastity, her character is corrupted forever.

Similarly, when Flora Mellasin seduces Trueworth, the affair is presented as fatal for her; however, it is not affecting his moral credit as it “is no more than any man, of his age and constitution, would have done”.\textsuperscript{38} Haywood allows Trueworth to marry virtuous Harriot while Flora has to leave England. This contrast is partially smoothed by Trueworth's decision to end the

\textsuperscript{36} Haywood II, 193.
\textsuperscript{37} Haywood II, 193.
\textsuperscript{38} Haywood III, 77.
affair with Flora before his wedding, claiming in his letter to Flora: “I am going to be married, and it would be the highest injustice in me to expect that fidelity, which alone can make me happy in a wife, if my own conduct did not set her an example.”39 Although Haywood's presentation of Flora as an immoral woman who intrigues against Betsy does not evoke many friendly feelings to her, the discrepancy between consequences for the same sin for Flora and those for Trueworth is considerably striking for a modern reader.

Restrictions set for women

The character of female virtue is discussed in Betsy's conversation with her brother Francis. He claims that “a woman brings less dishonour upon a family, by twenty private sins, than by one public indiscretion” and she replies that she hopes that she “shall always take care to avoid both the one and the other, for my own sake.”40 Todd says that “the novel focuses not only on woman but on the reputation or the sign of womanhood acting in society”41. Haywood's attention is turned to the negative definition of female virtue: “the forfeiture of what is called virtue in a woman is more a folly than a baseness”42. She refuses definition of female virtue based solely on the public reputation and implies the necessity of combining the public appearance with the chastity of private actions.

On the other hand, Haywood confirms the importance of female reputation when Trueworth receives an anonymous letter informing him that Betsy has an illegitimate child. When the child's nurse confirmed that Betsy pays the expenses for child's provision, he believes that she is the child's mother.43 This misunderstanding is the final reason for Trueworth's ceasing to court Betsy since a “marriage with miss Betsy was, therefore, now quite out of the question with him”.44 In this manner, her well-meant act of charity turns against her due to her previous careless

39 Haywood III, 136.
40 Haywood III, 110.
42 Haywood III, 110.
43 However, the reality is different – the child is an orphan which Betsy supports together with her friend miss Mabel.
44 Haywood II, 207.
behaviour. Trueworth changes his opinion later when the real state of things is explained by a reliable witness but at that moment he is already engaged to another girl.

### 2.6 Delaying of the marriage

When Betsy comes to London, she is pleased by the attention and feelings which she evokes in men of “family, fortune, and character”\(^{45}\). Spencer comments on the situation that: “Delighting in the admiration of the various young men who visit the house, Betsy encourages all advances equally, and becomes a coquette.”\(^{46}\) She stays both emotionally and physically unattached and she refuses to get married as she considers herself to be too young to become a married woman. According to Todd, Betsy “knows that it is more fun to be ‘courted, complimented, admired, and addressed by a number than be confined to one”\(^{47}\) She also realizes that a married woman has more duties and less entertainment than a single girl, since she is her husband's property instead of being her suitor's ruler. She approaches the courtship period as the time of her power over a man and the wedding day as the end of it. In Betsy's two marriages, Haywood introduces a different attitude which stresses the importance of relationship between spouses. While the marriage without affection with Munden seemingly confirms Betsy's belief that wedding transfers the power from the woman to the man, the companionate marriage with Trueworth implies that the power can be shared in the relationship based on mutual love and respect.

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\(^{45}\) Haywood I, 190.

\(^{46}\) Spencer 148.

\(^{47}\) Todd 150.
2.7 Lover-mentor

The characters of suitors in *The History of Betsy Thoughtless* differ from those in *The Reform'd Coquet*; while Amoranda could hardly accept any of hers, regardless whether fortune hunters Callid and Froth, libertine Lord Lofty or unscrupulous Biranthus, most of Betsy's suitors are respectable men who want to marry her for her beauty and virtues. When Trueworth meets Betsy in Oxford, he almost immediately falls in love with her and decides to marry her. As soon as he discovers that Betsy became an object of a sexual attack and her brother Francis underwent a duel on her behalf, Trueworth confesses to Francis that “she, and only she, can make me blest; and I returned to Oxford full of the hopes of an opportunity to lay my heart, my person, and my fortune at her feet”48. Similarly to *The Reform'd Coquet*, the first declaration of the lover is made to a heroine's male family member not to herself. However, there is no disguise to be found here, and Francis does not hesitate to inform Betsy about her “new conquest”49. He praises his friend Trueworth as a man who has “a much larger estate than your fortune could expect:; he is a man of “ancient family [. . .] but, above all, he has sense, honour, and good nature”50.

When Trueworth presents himself to Betsy as her suitor, she already has another sincere suitor recommended to her by her guardian Mr. Goodman. She is not confused by the necessity to choose between them, instead she decides to enjoy the courtship game; “when they both came to address her, she should play the one against the other and give herself a constant round of diversion.”51 Trueworth's first proposal is refused, since Betsy does not want to marry him: “at least 'till she had exercised all the power her beauty gave her over them [her other suitors].”52 Betsy's trifling with her suitors eventually leads to a duel between Trueworth and her Mr. Staple,
which fortunately is not fatal for any of them and serves as a proof of Trueworth's courage and generosity.

2.8 Lover-mentor's authority

Trueworth is not very successful either as Betsy's lover or her mentor. When Betsy visits her schoolmate friend Miss Forward, who is a supported mistress, or in other words, a prostitute, Trueworth advises her to terminate this acquaintance. However, Betsy is not aware about the way her friend earns her living; therefore she refuses Trueworth's advice. Deborah Nestor notices that Trueworth “attempts to persuade her to drop her friend (p.201). But his warnings are vague, and Betsy is not worldly enough to perceive his meaning.” During her visit at Miss Forward, Betsy behaves carelessly, she is considered as a prostitute and almost raped. She immediately ends her relationship with Miss Forward and is decided “that for the future she should be very careful what company she kept, of both sexes” Unfortunately, her decision does not last for a long time and Betsy has to experience further dangerous adventures before she stops being thoughtless.

2.9 Marriage

After another Betsy's adventure, during which she is once again nearly raped, Betsy's brothers decide to intervene in their sister's life. Nestor states that to “relieve themselves of responsibility for Betsy's welfare, her family and guardians decide that she must marry” and they persuade her to accept the proposal of her only current suitor Mr Munden. Betsy's first marriage allows Haywood to present the unhappy situation of a woman married to a husband who

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54 Haywood II,123.

55 Nestor 583.
neither loves her nor respects her but also provides opportunity for Betsy's development. Spencer stipulates that Betsy's "marriage to the mean, petty and domineering Mr Munden is an ordeal during which she finally learns how to keep the self-respect she has claimed as her standard. She has to teach herself, for Haywood does not share the faith in masculine authority evident in The Reform'd Coquet."\textsuperscript{56} This marriage forces Betsy to fully realize how dangerous is flattery, when she gets (once again) almost raped by her husband's benefactor. Now, she has to rely on herself as her husband does not present any moral authority and the social standards presented by Lady Trusty are far from being helpful. However, Betsy learns and she finally stops acting thoughtlessly. Comparing her husband to Trueworth, Betsy discovers how important are generosity and virtue for a husband, and she realizes that she loves Trueworth. She also learns to respect her friends' opinion and she leaves Munden only after their approval. As Stuart reminds us, Betsy "is not completely tested in her resolve; Munden dies before she would have to face a real trial of modesty and endure legal action"\textsuperscript{57}. Trueworth's wife dies even before Munden and their "accidental meeting reveals the depth of their mutual feeling"\textsuperscript{58}. After a requisite year of mourning, Betsy gets married to Trueworth.

\textbf{2.10 Conclusion}

Betsy who gets married to Trueworth is a different character to Betsy who arrived in London at the beginning of the novel. Similarly to Amoranda, she understands that it is necessary for a woman to be protected by a reliable husband, not to be flattered by her suitors. While the flattery endangers the female reputation and can eventually lead to the fatal loss of virtue, the guidance of a reliable and experienced husband provides her protection. She learned to accept the importance of public appearance as a part of female virtue: she left Munden after their friends'
approval and married Trueworth only after a year of mourning. She does not try to postpone the courtship period anymore since she is aware that performing the power as the courted lover cannot bring her any satisfaction in the marriage; therefore she agrees to get marry to Trueworth as soon as it is socially acceptable.
3. Evelina, Or, the History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World

3.1 Evelina as a reformed heroine

*Evelina, Or, the History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World* was the first novel written by Fanny Burney and it was published in 1778. Its heroine, Miss Evelina Anville, shares several characteristics with other reformed coquettes: she is parentless and her story is about discovering the world and recognizing her place under the authority of a proper guardian-husband. However, she differs from Amoranda and Betsy in two important points: while both her predecessors do not have any reliable guardian, Evelina is guided by Reverend Mr. Villars; and in contrast to both Amoranda and Betsy, who tend to overrate their own judgement, Evelina willingly follows her guardian's advice. Consequently, whereas an important part of Amoranda's and Betsy's development is to learn to respect the judgement of other people, Evelina rather learns to respect her own.

3.2 Leaving the guardian

At the beginning of the novel, Evelina is a young inexperienced girl, who was brought up in the seclusion of a country parish by Reverend Villars, who took care of her after her mother's death in Evelina's infancy. He educates Evelina and tries to protect her against all dangers of the world. However, his guardianship never was very reliable in the question of marriage: being Evelina's grandfather's tutor, he did not prevent him from marrying “then a waiting-girl at a tavern”, later Madame Duval; he did not protect Evelina's mother from her marriage to Lord Belmont, which later ended in his leaving her and her premature death; additionally, his power over Evelina is severely weakened from the moment she leaves the parish.

59 Burney 1,7.
His influence is mostly performed via letters; therefore, his well-meant advice usually reaches Evelina too late. Evelina, who is used to respecting his guidance as the highest authority, has to learn to form her own opinion, simply because he is not present, and much of the advice of this country parson is not applicable to the London society with its sophisticated social rules. Evelina seeks for a substitute authority but Burney repeatedly introduces her into situations where no guidance is either available or reliable and Evelina has to rely on her own judgement. At the end of the story, Evelina submits herself willingly to Lord Orville's guidance despite Mr. Villars' recommendation. Her accepting Orville's marriage proposal represents the transfer of authority from the father-figure to the future husband.

### 3.3 Evelina as a coquette

Similarly to Betsy, Evelina arrives in London at the beginning of the novel and she encounters the London society and its social rules the first time in her life. She is already well-educated and submits herself to her guardian's authority but is not familiar with the social limits generally applied to a woman. While Amoranda is in need of education itself, Evelina, so as Betsy, rather needs to understand and adopt social standards. In contrast to both Amoranda and Betsy, Evelina does not wish to perform her power over men in courtship and delay the marriage, she simply does not realize that society does not allow a young woman to choose her partner even in such a trifle matter as dancing. Spencer says that:

> However different Evelina's desires from those of thoughtless heroines who try to resist their guardians' control, she does make many of their mistakes. Her behaviour at the first balls and assemblies she goes to is not that of coquette teasing her admirers, but it is nevertheless fundamentally related to the coquette's action, because it expresses feelings of rebellion against the woman's prescribed position in courtship.\(^60\)

Evelina's main social mistake at her first ball is her refusal to dance with the coxcomb Lovel and later accepting Lord Orville's offer. This mistake is caused by two reasons. Firstly, she

\(^{60}\) Spencer, 154.
is disgusted by the male approach to women at the public ball, as “they passed and repassed, looked as if they thought we were quite at their disposal, and only waiting for the honour of their commands”. 61 Secondly, she is unaware of breaking social rules by her behaviour, since she had “only danced at school”62 and she “had not once considered the impropriety of refusing one partner, and afterwards accepting another”. 63 She knows how to dance but she does not know rules applied on the choice of the dancer. Spencer presents the following comments on the impropriety of Evelina' attempt to choose her partner: “It is the men's part to choose (if they wish) while women must wait to be chosen. Evelina's fears of having the wrong dancing partner thrust upon her reflect the eighteenth-century woman's fear of being made to accept an unwanted partner for life.”64 According to Spencer, “Evelina has to learn to keep the rules of assemblies and of society”65, she has to find out how to retreat from the visible performing of power. Although her judgement of both men is correct, she does not understand that social rules do not let her choose between them. She has to learn that the society provides her only one choice: to dance with any man who chooses her; or not to dance at all and then refuse everybody. Answering the question, how to make herself approachable to the right man and avoid unintended attention of the others', is one of Evelina's main tasks.

3.4 Female guardians

There appear three different characters in the novel who serve as Evelina's female guardians: Mrs. Mirvan, Madame Duval and Mrs. Selwyn. Each of them represents a different example of female behaviour which should be avoided by the heroine. Mrs. Mirvan is presented as a perfect gentlewoman, always kind and mild, but her marriage with churlish Captain Mirvan

61 Burney I, 35.
62 Burney I, 44.
63 Burney I, 44.
64 Spencer 155.
65 Spencer 155.
does not belong among the happiest ones. Despite all her tact and good temper, she is neither able
to soften her husband manners nor persuade him to change his mind once he made any decision.
As Shea Stuart notices “Even a good wife could have a bad marriage.” Mrs. Mirvan is a mother-
like character who introduces Evelina into London society but she is unable to protect Evelina
from dangerous situations: she does not help her at social assemblies, nor can she protect her
from Madame Duval's influence. Her example represents how powerless a woman is when she is
not supported by a reliable husband.

Madame Duval is probably the most ridiculed character of the whole story, she is an
archetype of the older woman who accepts neither her age nor the female subordination. She is
punished for her seizing extensive power by a violent attack of Captain Mirvan and Sir Clement,
who pretend to be masked robbers. Later on, when she discovers the true identity of her attackers,
Burney stresses her powerlessness by not providing any legal satisfaction to her. Her role in
Evelina's life is endangering: she acts without regarding social rules and she brings Evelina into
many obscure situations which can potentially worsen her social status.

Evelina's last female guardian is Mrs. Selwyn who represents an independent
gentlewoman preferring her wit over female gentility. Evelina describes her in a letter to Mr.
Villars in these words: “She is extremely clever: her understanding, indeed, may be called
masculine: but, unfortunately, her manners deserve the same epithet; for, in studying to acquire
the knowledge of the other sex, she has lost all the softness of her own”. Harrison Steeves
stipulates that “Strong-minded women were only grudgingly appreciated in Evelina's day; so it is
not surprising that she prefers the soft virtues to the rational.” Although Burney presents both
Madame Duval and Mrs. Selwyn as characters whose example is not to be emulated she uses

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66 Stuart 565.
67 Burney II, 263.
them as accelerators of the final climax; thanks to their actions Evelina is recognized by Lord Belmont as his daughter and heiress.

### 3.5 Unstable identity

Evelina's main task, as defined at the beginning of the story, is to be recognized by her father Lord Belmont, who left her mother before Evelina's birth. Belmont's refusing to acknowledge Evelina as his legitimate daughter places her into position of a bastard child which limits both her social position and marital prospects. Since her family is not publicly known, Evelina is treated by strangers according to the society and the situation in which she currently finds herself. One of her suitors feeling offended by her even claims that she is “a person who is nobody”\(^{69}\) because he “cannot learn who she is”\(^{70}\). The insecurity of Evelina's social position allows Burney to introduce her into various social environments and accordingly to be treated in different ways. Appearing at a ball accompanied by Mrs. Mirvan, Evelina is treated by all as a gentlewoman; on the other hand when Sir Willoughby meets her alone in the opera, he treats her nearly as a prostitute and tries to rape her. Although Burney presents Willoughby as a rake and libertine, his approach to Evelina documents the vulnerability of woman's position which strongly depends on her family and male protectors. Burney's criticism of the society which allows such a treatment is obvious but she does not seem to attack the domineering male role. Spencer states that: “Burney shows that the rules of society encourage men to treat women badly, but by introducing Orville she manages to attack only the bad behaviour. Not the rules themselves.”\(^{71}\)

\(^{69}\) Burney I, 49.
\(^{70}\) Burney I, 49.
\(^{71}\) Spencer 155.
3.6 Lover-mentor

Similarly to *The Reform'd Coquet*, Burney also presents a lover-mentor character in *Evelina* but she creates the connection between the lover and mentor differently from Davys. According to Spencer:

> In *The Reform'd Coquet*, the husband is established as the woman's true guide by making the old mentor and the young lover the same person. In *Evelina* the same effect is achieved more naturalistically, by means of repeated comparisons between Lord Orville and Mr Villars.  

These comparisons appear in Evelina's letters to Mr. Villars, where she repeatedly compares Orville's character and behaviour to her only reliable guardian, Mr. Villars himself. While Davys unites the mentor and the lover into the single character Formator/Alanthus and Haywood presents Trueworth as the only reliable authority, Burney introduces the natural transfer of authority based on similarity of father-figure and future husband.

The first time, when Orville and Evelina meet at a ball, his opinion of her is neither flattering nor true; he considers her to be “a poor weak girl” because she is too frightened to reply any of his questions during the dance. Nevertheless, he soon recognizes her character and value and he treats her as a gentlewoman even when he meets her accompanied by two prostitutes. Susan Staves notices that “After she [Evelina] has been seen with the two whores at Marylebone Gardens, Orville seeks to caution her without suggesting that he suspect her virtue and without actually saying that the women were whores.”

Evelina has already realized who those women were, and she appreciates that Orville's warning is not more explicit: “How delicate his whole behaviour! willing to advise, yet afraid to wound me!” Orville's careful approach serves as a confirmation that he appreciate Evelina's

72 Spencer 154.
73 Burney I, 46.
75 Staves 372.
delicacy. According to Spencer: “The point is that Orville can see through false appearance, and this is crucially important to the novel. Evelina like Betsy Thoughtless, criticizes the world's readiness to judge the heroine by appearance.” The situation is similar to the moment when Trueworth advises Betsy to terminate her relationship with Miss Forward. Although both Trueworth and Orville avoid the word prostitute, Evelina, in contrast to Betsy, understands the situation.

### 3.7 Challenging authorities

In the main part of the novel, Burney presents Evelina as a girl who willingly submits to reliable guardians. Spencer even claims that: “Never was heroine more single-hearted in devotion to her hero. Far from acting the coquette, she only wants to be the dutiful daughter of Sir John Belmont, the worthy pupil of the Reverend Mr Villars, and eventually the well-directed wife of Lord Orville.” Despite Spencer's conformist reading, the book yields the different interpretation: Evelina who has to challenge both Mr. Villars' and Orville's authority.

Observing Evelina's growing attachment to Orville which culminates in her submitting herself to his guardianship and protection, Mr. Villars is far from approving it: “Long, and with the deepest regret, have I perceived the ascendancy which Lord Orville has gained upon your mind. […] You must quit him!” Next to possible jealousy of his unique position in Evelina's life, his reason for such an abrupt order is simple: Villars refuses the very idea that Orville could “be sensible of [Evelina's] worth.” In other words, since he does not regard Orville as Evelina's potential husband, he can see him only as a possible seducer. Similarly to his impotence in case of Evelina's grandfather's and mother's marriage, Villars' judgement of marital matters once again...

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76 Spencer 155.  
77 Spencer 154.  
78 Burney III, 73.  
79 Burney II, 76.
proves to be fallible. Evelina judges Orville differently and she challenges her guardian's authority: regardless of Villars' recommendation she does not end her acquaintance with Orville and later on she even accepts his marriage proposal. However, her submitting to Orville's authority is not absolute; she successfully challenges his opinion when she meets her half-brother Mr. Macartney despite Orville's apparent disapproval. According to Spencer:

Orville may be a lover-mentor like Trueworth and Formator, but in this novel the heroine is not only one who has something to learn. From the beginning he is ready to trust her innocence and make allowances for her inexperience, but he has to learn to trust her judgement too.\(^{80}\)

When he respects Evelina's opinion which differs from his own, he establishes himself as a desirable husband as it is most probable that he will generously share his power with his wife. Thus Burney presents a different kind of lover-mentor character than Davys and Haywood. His opinion is fallible and he learns to respect the heroine's opinion. This mutual impact was further explored by Austen in the relationship of Elizabeth and Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice.*

### 3.8 Recognition

In the character of Lord Orville, Burney presents a truly sentimental lover. Being a member of nobility, he decides to marry Evelina despite her obscure origin in which regard he contrasts with the rather pragmatic Alanthus and Trueworth. Spencer characterizes Orville's role as follows:

Although circumstances, the faults of others, and her own ignorance continually place her in situations where the true Evelina may not be recognized, it is Lord Orville's distinction to perceive unknown Evelina Anville as a true heroine before she is revealed to the world as Evelina Belmont.\(^ {81}\)

Far from being coquettish, Evelina delays her answer to Orville's proposal. Firstly, she wishes him to be aware of her situation; secondly, as the meeting with her father finally

\(^{80}\) Spencer 156.  
\(^{81}\) Spencer 154.
approaches, she wants to set her identity as a daughter before becoming a wife. Mrs. Selwyn serves as an intermediary in both these issues: she explains Evelina's family background to Orville and she presents her to her father. Evelina's delicacy is spared the explanation and she happily informs Mr. Villars that Mrs. Selwyn “had told [Orville] my whole story, and yet he was willing, nay eager, that our union should take place of any further application to my family.” Evelina still hesitates to confirm her agreement, since “it would be highly improper I should dispose of myself for ever, so very near the time which must finally decide by whose authority I ought to be guided.” When Evelina meets her father, her resemblance to her mother forces him to acknowledge her. Finally, the marital problem is solved in the most conservative manner: Belmont uses his paternal authority and together with Orville set their wedding day the following week. So, as Spencer states, “at the end of her trials Evelina gains Orville as a guardian-husband, in addition of being reconciled to her father and retaining love and care of Mr Villars, the man who has been as a father to her.”

82 Burney III, 193.
83 Burney III, 194.
84 Spencer 154.
4. Pride and Prejudice

4.1 Elizabeth as a part of reformed heroine tradition

*Pride and Prejudice*, written by Jane Austen and published in 1813, became one of canonical novels of English literature. Although it is usually another Austen's heroine, Emma, who is linked to the reformed heroine tradition, Elizabeth also shares several significant characteristics with Amoranda, Betsy and Evelina. She misses a reliable guardian, overrates her own opinion and makes many severe mistakes in her judgement of other people and social situations. Together with Davys, Haywood and Burney, Austen shares the belief that regardless to her fallibility, a young woman is able to improve and develop.

Mary Poovey states that: “Jane Austen did concern herself [. . .] with the process of a young girl's maturation.”\(^{85}\) and Jane Spencer describes Austen's approach in following words: “Central to her work is the belief in women's capacity for intellectual and moral growth that underlies most novels of the reformed coquette tradition.”\(^{86}\) Austen does not challenge the female need of male guidance and protection, but as Spencer claims, her “heroine is a woman who can rise above trifling and frivolity and deserves to be treated as a rational creature.”\(^{87}\) However, this progress is often painful and the heroine has to redefine what is rational. Elizabeth considers herself to be very rational but her opinions are often based on irrational prejudices. One of her mistakes is her misjudgement of Darcy, her suitor and later husband. In contrast to other lover-mentors discussed in this thesis, Darcy is not unmistakable and he has to learn to value the heroine. Nevertheless, he presents a different point of view and thanks to him Elizabeth reconsiders her opinions and prejudices. Later on, despite Darcy's mistakes in judging Elizabeth and her family, Elizabeth learns to estimate his character and becomes his wife.

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\(^{85}\) Poovey 172.
\(^{86}\) Spencer 169.
\(^{87}\) Spencer 168.
4.2 Elizabeth as a coquette

In contrast to Amoranda and Betsy, Elizabeth can hardly be characterised as a coquette. She does not try to postpone the marriage considering herself to be too young, she does not encourage any suitor whose marriage proposal she does not mean to accept, and she does not try to perform the power of a courted woman over her lover. Her approach to the marriage is rather pragmatic since she understands the importance of financial securing. On the other hand, she also stresses the sentimental belief of companion marriage and the need of mutual love and respect between spouses. Her way to the marriage is not simple and she encounters several man who are in a potential or an actual role of her suitors.

Two men who seem to be charmed by Elizabeth but never proposes marriage to her are Mr. Wickham and Colonel Fitzwilliam. Elizabeth is aware of their affection but she reasonably realizes their insufficient financial situation. In other words, both Wickham and Fitzwilliam are not “in possession of a good fortune”\(^88\); therefore each of them is decided to marry an heiress, which prevents them to court Elizabeth. She is not very upset by that and conforms herself by a rather vain notion that “she would have been his [Wickham's] only choice, had fortune permitted it.”\(^89\)

Elizabeth also receives two actual proposals: Mr. Collins and Mr. Darcy propose to marry her without any previous encouraging from her side and barely any courtship from theirs. Mr. Collins simply decides to marry one of his cousins and since Jane, the oldest sister, is supposed to be already engaged to Mr. Bingley, he proposes to Elizabeth. When she refuses him, he can barely accept it and he does not hesitate to remind her that “in spite of your manifold attractions, it is by no means certain that another offer of marriage may ever be made you. Your portion is unhappily so small that it will in all likelihood undo the effects of your loveliness and

\(^88\) Austen 2.  
\(^89\) Austen 40.
amiable qualifications.”

Despite the economic reasons and her mother's persuasion, Elizabeth, supported by her father, stays firmly decided. When Mr. Collins proposes to her best friend Charlotte Lucas several days later and she accepts, Elizabeth can hardly understand Charlotte's reasons. Austen does not seem to share Elizabeth's disgust and explains that Charlotte:

> Without thinking highly either of men or of matrimony, marriage had always been her object; it was the only honourable provision for well-educated young women of small fortune, and however uncertain of giving happiness, must be their pleasantest preservative from want.

This comment presents one of Austen's indirect critics of female role in society. In contrast to Haywood, the object of the critics changes from the approach to female virtue to the limited means of living which society accepts as suitable for an educated woman.

The other proposal comes from Mr. Darcy and it is even more unexpected by Elizabeth since she stays perfectly blind to his falling in love with her. Spencer states about Darcy's proposal that “His evident expectation that she will accept his first proposal links him to Mr Collins, whose earlier proposal to Elizabeth showed his belief that a woman must be eager to grasp any eligible offer of marriage.”

Nevertheless, Elizabeth is convinced about Darcy's “arrogance”, “conceit” and “selfish disdain of the feelings of others”; therefore she harshly refuses him claiming that: “I had not known you a month before I felt that you were the last man in the world whom I could ever be prevailed on to marry.” Her negative feelings to him are strengthened by her conviction that he foiled her sister Jane's marriage with Bingley and destroyed his childhood companion's expectations. Considering Darcy's first proposal in the view of the lover-mentor tradition, he is predestined to fail since he approaches Elizabeth as a mentor pointing out the foolishness and inferiority of her family, rather than a submissive lover trembling about her decision.

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90 Austen 252.
91 Austen 287.
92 Spencer 172.
93 Austen 134.
94 Austen 134.
4.3 Mother

As was already mentioned, Elizabeth is not an orphan without family. Both her parents are alive and present, she has even four sisters and other relatives. Nevertheless, neither of her parents presents a reliable authority. While the other heroines are endangered by having no or limited family, Elizabeth is similarly endangered by her family's impact. Her social position and marital expectations are weakened by her mother's and younger sisters' behaviour and her father's neglect, similarly to Evelina's not being acknowledged by her father. Elizabeth's mother is ridiculed from the beginning for being an imprudent woman without stable opinions, whose only two interests are gossips and her daughters' getting married. However, her obsession of getting husbands for her daughters is understandable if we realize that according to Stone the rate of never married woman was around twenty-five per cent in the eighteenth century.\(^95\) Since none of Mrs. Bennet's daughters is to inherit sufficient provision after their father's death, marriage is the only way how to secure their living. Mrs. Bennet is tempted to get them married to anybody without considering the future husband's character. Her negative impact proves in several situations: she insists on Elizabeth's acceptance of Mr. Collin's proposal, she encourages Lydia's journey to Brighton and she despises Darcy when Elizabeth is ready to marry him. Fortunately, her influence is usually limited by her husband's authority and by her own instability of opinions: she is unable to override Elizabeth's decision after Mr. Bennet's approval and she changes her opinion on Darcy the moment she is informed about his proposal to Elizabeth.

4.4 Other female authorities

Next to Mrs. Bennet, there appear two other female characters who are in the position of authority to Elizabeth: Lady de Bourgh and Mrs. Gardiner. Lady de Bourgh mirrors in several
characteristics Madame Duval from *Evelina*. She is an economically independent widow who tries to perform her power on other people. Lady de Bourgh's authority is inevitably accepted by those who are financially dependent on her, like Mr. Collins and his wife Charlotte, but she is unable to influence anybody else, since her authority is based rather on her socio-economic position than on her moral superiority. When she forces Elizabeth to promise to never marry Darcy, Elizabeth refuses the submission which would be based only on the higher social rank of the older woman. Similarly to Madame Duval, Lady de Bourgh serves as the final accelerator; when she tries to persuade Darcy, she unintentionally discloses that Elizabeth's feelings to Darcy have changed, which leads him to his second marital proposal to Elizabeth.

The only female character who would be able to fulfil the role of the female mentor is Mrs. Gardiner: “an amiable, intelligent, elegant woman”.\(^96\) When she appears in the story, she advises Elizabeth against any connection to Wickham from financial reasons. However, her influence is later diminished and she serves rather as a technical instrument of the story than a wise adviser; she takes Elizabeth to Pemberly and she informs her about London events after Lydia's elopement. Although she can see growing feelings between Elizabeth and Darcy in Derbyshire, she does not talk about him with Elizabeth and Austen does not provide any satisfactory explanation of this silence. Mrs. Gardiner's reliability is later questioned when she misinterprets Darcy's action regarding Lydia and Wickham's wedding as a proof of Darcy's claimed attachment to Elizabeth and she thinks that they are engaged. She reminds the wise advisers Lady Trusty or Mrs. Mirvan, whose influence is also limited.

### 4.5 Transition of the male authority

Elizabeth is well aware of her mother's unreliability, on the other hand, she respects her father's authority and she almost adores his satirizing view of world which she even adopts.\(^96\)
While Elizabeth learns to respect Darcy's authority, she simultaneously reconsiders her father's attitude. During her mediation about Darcy's description of her family, she recognizes that her father's opinions and attitude are not flawless. He mostly neglected his daughters' education, exercising only minimal authority over them. Although Elizabeth asks him to forbid Lydia's journey to Brighton, his desire for peace and quiet together with his misjudgement of possible consequences lead to his approval and consequently to the disaster which is almost fatal for the whole family – Lydia's elopement with Wickham. Mr. Bennet tries to find her but he soon resigns leaving all activity to his brother-in-law. Lydia is found and Wickham is forced to marry her, but Elizabeth soon discovers that Darcy was the one who arranged the marriage. This recognition serves as a confirmation of Darcy's competence and presents the final transfer of guardian's authority from Mr. Bennet to Darcy. The process is similar to the transfer of authority and reliability from Mr. Villars to Lord Orville in Evelina. However, while Burney's repeating comparisons figuratively identify mentor Villars with lover Orville, Austen uses different method: the father's reliability is discredited and he is substituted by the lover who proves to be reliable and, in contrast to the father, is also able to protect the heroine.

4.6 Darcy as a lover-mentor

Darcy slightly differs from other lover-mentors discussed in this thesis. While Formator is an unmistakeable tutor whose judgement is superior to Amoranda's; while Orville's knowledge of social rules is the reason why Evelina seeks his advise; Darcy simply has access to more information than Elizabeth, and he is more experienced thanks to the possibilities provided by his higher income. Greenfield notices that: “From its opening chapters, Pride and Prejudice coordinates women's lack of property with their lack of knowledge, as if one absence informs the other.”97 This is confirmed by characters of Mr. Bingley's sisters who are more “accomplished”

97 Greenfield 342.
thanks to the better education which they received in schools and the experience they gained by living in London than Elizabeth and her sister educated by their mother in the country.

Elizabeth's limited experience together with her overrating of her judgement lead her to misinterpretation of several people and situations. When Darcy offends her vanity claiming that she is: “not handsome enough to tempt me”\textsuperscript{98}, she understandably considers him to be a proud and snobbish man; therefore she easily accepts Wickham's story about Darcy's mistreating him. Darcy's letter, written after his first proposal to her, forces her to reconsider her opinions of Darcy, Wickham, and her family. She does not regret her refusal but she starts to understand that her opinions were false. When she later meets Darcy at Pemberly, his changed behaviour to her and to her relatives allows her to recognize his value and develop romantic feelings for him. However, Darcy is not physically present in time of her meditations; he has no other direct impact on Elizabeth until she discovers that he found Lydia and arranged her marriage with Wickham. Greenfield comments on Elizabeth's meditations about Darcy when they are separate in following words: “She [Elizabeth] must think about his absence to desire him. For a woman like Elizabeth to love is to fixate on a missing man; to love is the consummation of missing that man.”\textsuperscript{99}

Although Darcy's role in Elizabeth's change is crucial, her improvement is performed by her own meditations and reconsidering her opinions.

4.7 Conclusion

Elizabeth differs from Amoranda and Betsy, since she neither try to postpone the marriage nor prolong the courtship period. She is ready to marry but she is unwilling to accept a man just because he chooses her. Elizabeth simply performs exactly that power which Evelina had to learn to avoid or conceal – the right of choice her partner, and, in contrast to Evelina,

\textsuperscript{98} Austen 22.
\textsuperscript{99} Greenfield 346.
Elizabeth is not punished for it. On contrary, she gets married to a rich and reliable husband and her refusal even relieves Darcy of much of his social snobbery. When he proposes marriage the second time, not only Elizabeth's feelings to him are changed but also Darcy himself since he understands the importance of general politeness. However, before this happy ending, Elizabeth has to learn to transfer her trust from her father to Darcy, together with recognizing falseness of her own judgement. Poovey stipulates that:

In essence, in awarding Elizabeth this handsome husband with ten thousand pounds a year, Austen is gratifying the reader's fantasy that such outspoken liveliness will be successful in material terms, but she earns the right to do so precisely because Elizabeth's first fantasy of personal power is not rewarded.  

However, Darcy and Elizabeth's relationship is not so one-sided as is usual in case of other heroines discussed in this thesis. Poovey comments on their relationship that "Darcy and Elizabeth, then, learn complementary lessons: he recognizes that individual feelings outweigh conventional social distinctions; she realizes the nature of society's power." Thus, after each of them learned to respect social norms and each others' value, Elizabeth and Darcy can get married.

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100 Poovey 201.
101 Poovey 201.
5. Conclusion

This thesis discussed four novels written by English women writer in the eighteenth century and at the beginning of the nineteenth century, namely *The Reform'd Coquet* by Mary Davys, *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* by Eliza Haywood, *Evelina, Or, the History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World* by Fanny Burney and *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen. It concentrated on the heroines of the novels and their reformation, stressing the role of the lover in the process. During the eighteenth century, there spread the idea of a companionate marriage which offered a possibility of a mutual impact of future spouses during the courtship period. This impact was explored by the women writers within the reformed heroine tradition. In the centre of this tradition, there stands a new kind of heroine who is virtuous but her judgement is fallible. The most important characteristics of her fallibility are her ability to improve, usually with the help of her lover, and the fact that her mistakes are never fatal.

5.1 Amoranda

*The Reform'd Coquet* can be considered as the establishing novel of the tradition which presented an imperfect heroine capable of change. Her most problematic feature is her overrating her own judgment and ignoring other people's advice. This characteristics proved to be the crucial feature of each reformed heroine discussed in this thesis. Although she makes several mistakes in her judgement, none of them becomes fatal and she remains virtuous. Amoranda is not willing to marry, she prefers the state of a single woman who is courted and flattered by her suitors. She has to realize the necessity of male protection and guardianship. Being an orphan, she misses a reliable authority. During the novel, she learns to distrust her judgment and accepts the authority of her mentor Formator. When Formator is identified as her suitor Alanthus, Amoranda does not accept him automatically; he has to prove his reliability before she agrees to marry him.
Although there appears a senior female character, she does not present a guardian for the heroine, since the authority to which the heroine has to submit herself is not based on experience or age but on the gender.

5.2 Betsy

The main task of the heroine of *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* is the recognition of the proper partner and the value of virtuous husband. At the beginning, she is an inexperienced girl recognizing London society. She is fond of courtship and she is encouraged to flirt by the environment in her guardian's family, instead of being warned against negative consequences. Although she has several guardians, none of them presents reliable authority: her male guardians are not present or too week, their wives are discredited or their advice proves to be ineffective. Haywood explores the topic of the chastity and criticises the different approach to male and female virtue. Men are allowed to behave rather freely before the marriage, but illegitimate affair is always fatal for a woman and prevents any possibility of honourable life. She also stresses the contrast between the public appearance and the private virtue; the heroine defies the true chastity and is left by her lover for a false accusation of being a mother of an illegitimate child. Another Betsy's mistake is her delaying the marriage. She prefers flattery of many suitors to the love of a husband and she ends up in an unhappy marriage with a man who neither loves her nor respects her. Her first marriage provides the space for meditations: Betsy recognizes the importance of husband's character and mutual respect and love of spouses, she begins to respect social rules and public opinion and also value the protection of a loving reliable husband. Finally, without prolonging another courtship period, her reformation is crowned by the happy marriage with her lover-mentor, whose value she learned to appreciate.
5.3 Evelina

Evelina differs from Betsy and Amoranda in two aspects: she has a trustworthy guardian and she willingly submits to his guardianship. However, her guardian's authority proves to be ineffective and later even false and she has to rely on her own judgement. One of the main obstacles she has to overcome is her inexperience. She enters London society without being aware of its rules; therefore she makes several mistakes. Although she does not try to perform power in the courtship period and postpone the marriage, she is not aware of impropriety of the female choice of the partner. She has to learn how to avoid the unwanted attention of her suitors and simultaneously to be noticed and valued by the man she appreciates herself, in other words, how to choose a husband without the public appearance of a coquette. Similarly to Betsy, Evelina has several female guardians whose authority and influence are diminished. They are presented as examples of the improper behaviour, the importance of choice of a good husband, and they serve as accelerators of the final recognizing. In contrast to Amoranda and Betsy, Evelina is not a complete orphan. Nevertheless, her father refuses to acknowledge her as his legitimate daughter. It destabilizes Evelina's social position and she is often treated according to the society and the situation in which she is encountered by her suitors. The importance of the lover-mentor is in recognizing her identity even in rather absurd situations. Burney connects Orville with Evelina's guardian by his repeated resembling the father-figure without identifying with him. Although Evelina respects both Villars and Orville, she has to challenge their opinion and Orville learns to respect her judgment. At the end, she is recognized by her father and her social position is firmly set as Belmont's daughter, Villars' ward and Orville's wife.
5.4 Elizabeth

Elizabeth can be seen as a part of reformed heroine tradition from several reasons: she tends to overrate her own judgement, which proves to be fallible, and she misses a reliable guardian. She has to realize the fallibility of her father's opinions and transfer her trust to her lover. As the only heroine discussed in this thesis, Elizabeth is affected by the lack of money which limits her social position and marital expectations. Far from being a coquette postponing marriage, she refuses two proposals since she value the future husband's character over financial security. Similarly to other novels, the impact of the female guardianship is limited: her mother tries to secure her daughters and marry them but her lack of consideration prevents any real effect; other senior women do not present a moral authority or are distant and misjudging. The only authority is presented by Elizabeth's father Mr. Bennet and later by her lover Mr. Darcy. Elizabeth has to reconsider her father's authority, recognize its insufficiency and accept the lover's guidance and his protection. However, in contrast to the other lover-mentors, Darcy is not unmistakable and he has to develop better social understanding before Elizabeth accepts him as a husband. His role as a mentor is limited: he provides the impulse to heroine's meditations but not present during her change.

5.5 Conclusion

Although the particular heroines differ from each other, they share several characteristics: they are rather inexperienced, they overrate their judgement and they misses reliable guidance. Each of them has to recognize the importance of social rules and adopt the social values. Amoranda learns that only husband can provide her efficient protection, Betsy realizes importance of husband's character and virtue, Evelina discovers that the best protection is a husband who provides a solid social status and Elizabeth accepts superiority of her future
husbands' judgement. At the end, they all accept the authority embodied by their husbands. The important feature of the novels with reformed heroines is the limitation of female guardians' authority. They are presented as unreliable since ineffective, discredited or ridiculed. This limitation of female reliability is one of the means defining the character of the authority which the heroines have to accept as strictly male. The reformed heroine has to recognize the fallibility of her own judgement and submit herself to the protection of her husband. However, there can be observed several changes within the tradition: although the hero is always superior, he is more and more fallible; the social critics turns from the question of female virtue to the limited possibilities for educated women; and the heroine is allowed to choice her husband.
Bibliography


