

BLENDING BIRTH AND BEHAVIOR:
MASCULINE REPRESENTATIONS OF PATRIARCHY AND CAPITALISM
IN THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY NOVEL OF MANNERS

By

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Abstract

Out of England's turbulent and transitional eighteenth century emerged a new literary genre that sought to reestablish a sense of social order by indoctrinating the average citizen with codes of politeness and morality. With its distinctly didactic tone, the novel grew increasingly popular, particularly with young girls, who could now learn virtue and propriety through the fictional heroine's numerous adventures and etiquette blunders. Indeed, this sort of novel of manners even today continues to attract an overwhelming number of critics interested in women's issues ranging from girls' education to the marriage market. Yet, throughout all of the current scholarship, there still exists an apparent oversight, which leaves the male characters within this type of literature viewed, at best, as basic narrative devices or, at worst, leaves them simply ignored. With this omission in mind, I intend to trace the various types of masculine figures typically found in the eighteenth-century novel of manners through Eliza Haywood's *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, Frances Burney's *Evelina*, and Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*. While I do not purport to fill this evident gap in scholarship, I would like to offer a glimpse into it. Overall, I hope to contribute to the current body of criticism by demonstrating that the male characters within this historically feminine genre of fiction are more than mere plot devices. By examining masculine representations of patriarchy and capitalism in these three texts, I intend to demonstrate that the novel of manners, rather than simply instructing eighteenth-century women readers on how to think and act properly, actually moves beyond such domestic concerns into the realm of national economy, politics, and power.

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Introduction

For England, the eighteenth century represents a turbulent era of transition between the agricultural seventeenth century and the industrial nineteenth century. With its sweeping social changes, from the growing bourgeoisie to the diminishing aristocracy, this period between 1700 and 1800 is best described by Patricia L. Hamilton as “an age of profound political, religious, scientific, and economic upheaval” (417). Not surprisingly, out of this sense of chaos a “desire for stability, unity, and order” quickly grew, manifesting itself most notably through elaborate codes of politeness and sensibility (Hamilton 417). In order to inculcate the changing British populace with such stability and sensibility, advice literature and conduct books began to crowd the literary market place. In fact, with the rise of the bourgeoisie, leisure time, liberal incomes, and literacy rates began to increase, which in turn led to a surge in such “polite” publications (Ingrassia 3).

Specifically during this time period, the novel emerged as a new genre, owing much of its existence to both manners and the middle class. Indeed, its earliest forms attempted to balance an authentic portrayal of reality with a strongly didactic tone. Elizabeth Bergen Brophy explains that “the eighteenth-century novel gained respectability in large part because it was thought that its focus on the true rather than the fantastic made it an instrument for imparting knowledge and encouraging moral improvement” (233). From its inception, however, the novel has been a source of not just instruction and amusement, but controversy as well. In fact, because of its precarious balance between fact and fiction, many of the novel’s first reviewers debated its benefit as an educational tool versus its potential harm as a vulgar form of entertainment.

Despite this initial apprehension surrounding the propriety of the novel, though, its popularity continued to grow, particularly with young girls. As a result of catering to this prevailing female readership, virtuous heroines, domestic dilemmas, and novels of manners appear to dominate the literature of the latter half of the eighteenth century (Richetti 264).

While critics today still occasionally discuss the original dispute between education and entertainment, recent studies have tended to focus on more cultural and historical examinations of the early novel, including such themes as the marriage market or marriage laws, for example. Additionally, there have also been many feminist re-readings of these didactic works, affording both outcries against and subversions of the patriarchal system which held such strong sway over the genre's first heroines. Yet, even with all of this scholarship surrounding the novel of manners, there exists an apparent oversight, which leaves at least half of the characters, namely the male half, for the most part underrepresented and undervalued. For although such works as Samuel Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison* or Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* do present strong male protagonists who have received much critical attention, these novels, written by and starring men, stand in a category of their own, outside of the traditionally feminine, domestic fiction.

Therefore, regarding the eighteenth-century novel of manners specifically, the predominance of the female protagonist, with all her social and familial concerns, continues to attract an overwhelming number of scholars interested either particularly in women's issues or more generally in gender studies. Consequently, at best, male characters within this type of literature are viewed as either basic narrative devices,

servicing to test, mature, and reward the heroine, or as mere masculine stereotypes meant to warn the young, female readers of men's intentions and behaviors. At worst, the majority of the male characters within the novel of manners are simply ignored.

With this oversight in mind, I intend to trace the various types of masculine figures typically found in the eighteenth-century novel of manners. While I do not purport to fill this apparent gap in scholarship, I do hope to offer a glimpse into it. Moreover, although I am aware that studies of masculinity and male subjectivity have recently become more popular, my intentions are not to explore the male psyche. Rather, I am concerned with how and why eighteenth-century women were writing men. Accordingly, I have chosen to examine three texts based on their female authorship and chronological trajectory. These three novels of manners cover the historical range representing the height of popularity for this type of literature: beginning with Eliza Haywood's *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* published in 1751, followed by Frances Burney's *Evelina* published in 1778, and ending with Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, written around 1798-1799, but published posthumously in 1818.

With each of these works, there already exists an extensive body of scholarship that must be acknowledged before beginning my own analysis. For instance, the discussions surrounding *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* frequently debate the sincerity of Haywood's didacticism considering her controversial lifestyle. Furthermore, critics also lay this novel along side of Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* when examining the theme of virtue rewarded. As for *Evelina*, Burney's text, with its socially ignorant heroine, remains touted as the epitome of the instructional novel of manners; while the hero, Lord Orville, is commonly compared to Samuel Richardson's equally idealized

hero, Sir Charles Grandison. Finally, of the three texts, perhaps the most critical disagreement surrounds Austen's *Northanger Abbey*. As Katrin Ristkok Burlin explains:

The traditional reading of *Northanger Abbey* sees it as a falling unhappily into two disparate halves: a satisfying "Bath" volume of realistic fiction, exploring social and moral values, and a disappointing "Northanger" volume of a rather flat burlesque of the Gothic, sentimental novel. (90)

Although this may be the prevailing interpretation, I actually subscribe to Rachel M. Brownstein's reading of Austen's text. She claims that by contrasting "the implausibilities of romance with the commonplaces of common life—ordinary life, the life we lead in common" *Northanger Abbey* actually shows "that the two have much in common" (Brownstein 41-42). Moreover, Brownstein argues that by "mocking conventions and clichés" Austen "suggests that they are inescapable" (41-42). In other words, through parody, Austen exposes the real dangers lurking in everyday life.

Returning to my analysis with such scholarship in mind, therefore, I hope to contribute to the current body of criticism by demonstrating that the male characters within this historically feminine genre of fiction are more than mere plot devices. Indeed, I will argue that the different masculine models presented in these three novels of manners serve first to expose a socioeconomic structure in transition, then to critique its consequences on women. More specifically, within my first chapter I will examine the old patriarchal structure through the figure of the "Failed Father," followed by a discussion of a new capitalist system through the image of the "Fashionable Fop" in chapter two, and lastly I will reveal the ideal blend of both with the prototype of the "Flawless Fiancé" in my third and final chapter.

Since throughout my study, I will be repeatedly referring to the socioeconomic structures of “patriarchy” and “capitalism,” I want to define each of these terms. When using “patriarchy” I mean to suggest both the more traditional description of “absolute legal and economic control that the male head of household had over his dependents” as well as the “wider definition” of “personal and societal ‘institutionalization of male dominance’” as presented by Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus. Regarding “capitalism,” I will be relying on R. A. Houston’s comprehensive definition. He describes this system as:

...agricultural change, urbanization, industrial development, commercial expansion, and growing financial sophistication. Capital...accumulated and productively invested...Labor became more of a commodity to be bought and sold...creating a large group of wage-dependent laborers and an emerging...middle class that embraced the productive ideal. (Houston 378)

In the end, then, through this examination of masculine representations of patriarchy and capitalism in *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, *Evelina*, and *Belinda*, I hope to demonstrate that the novel of manners, rather than simply instructing eighteenth-century women readers on how to think and act properly, actually moves beyond such domestic concerns into the realm of national politics and power.

Chapter 1: Failing Fathers and the Patriarchy

By the end of the seventeenth century, English society remained rooted in the prevailing patriarchal structure of its past. Even into the turbulent eighteenth century, this system persisted as a means to maintain social order by offering, as Barbara Zonitch suggests, “permanence, stability, and safety in an era of uncertainty and change” (16-17). Although this “sex/gender” system has historically been considered only an “aristocratic ideology” (Mackie 2), the pattern of absolute and institutionalized male power nevertheless permeated all levels of British society. Indeed, the image of the aristocratic landlord ruling over his tenants acted as a model reflecting both public and private hierarchies, with the royal head of state ruling over his subjects just as the head of the common household ruled over his family (Stuart 560). In order to maintain this male-dominated, socioeconomic structure, practices such as patrilineage and primogeniture, which passed family property “undiminished from one generation to the next” through the firstborn son, continued to flourish (Day 11).

While this social structure granted the “divine right” of authority to men (Stuart 560), it also promised to protect and to provide for the more vulnerable members of society. In a system that did not legally recognize either women or children, their fathers, husbands, and eldest brothers were expected to provide them with both status and security. According to patriarchy’s proponents, such “paternalistic care” afforded the weak and the young alike all the privileges and protection of the family identity without any of its risk or responsibility (Zonitch 14, 17). Besides offering social status and financial security, however, men were also held accountable for the spiritual state of women and children. Under the benevolent “rule of the father,” the subordinate family

members were indoctrinated with private morality, which theoretically, would in turn create public order (Zonitch 16-17). In fact, based on such views, the subjugation of women and children was defended as essential not only for their own well-being, but for the well-being of the nation as a whole (Zonitch 17).

Yet, in spite of its supposedly good intentions, the patriarchal structure remained particularly “cruel and crippling” for women (Glover 136). Without a legal or social identity, without power or property, women were left at the mercy of their male relatives. Consequently, when the patriarchal system began to falter in the face of its own corruption as well as eighteenth-century economic and political changes, women became even more vulnerable. No longer could the patriarchy provide family identity or ethical instruction as illegitimacy and immorality abounded (Hamilton 420). No longer could the patriarchy provide private wealth or public order as gambling and dueling thrived (Mulcahy 209). No longer could the patriarchy provide any sense of permanence as male heirs grew scarce (McCrea 15). Thus, caught in this transition between the old and the new social orders, women found themselves in a similarly precarious position. Not only were they still denied an individual identity, but now women also lacked the security, however problematic it may have been, previously provided in the patriarchal structure.

With such a systematic failure in mind, the figures of the father, the guardian, and the brother in Haywood’s *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, Burney’s *Evelina*, and Austen’s *Northanger Abbey* become especially telling. Throughout each of these novels, the heroines face formidable challenges as a direct result of being denied the basic provisions allegedly afforded women within a patriarchal society. In other words, these young women are left open to insult and injury because they lack what Zonitch calls “the

traditional social signs provided by the father,” which typically included “name, wealth, and male guardianship” (39). Building on her explanation, I will be examining to what extent the male relatives within Haywood’s, Burney’s, and Austen’s novels either supply or deny the heroines with patriarchal status and guardianship. Specifically, I will be using the term “status” to refer to family name and family wealth, while my definition of “guardianship” will include both instruction (social as well as moral) and protection (social as well as physical). I will argue that the variety and severity unique to each individual heroine’s circumstances can be traced back to the variety and severity of her male relatives’ respective failures. Therefore, whether absent or simply negligent, whether wicked or simply irresponsible, whether impotent or simply inadequate, the fathers, guardians, and brothers within these three eighteenth-century novels of manners serve as representatives of the declining patriarchy, a social system that these female novelists are eager to dissect and discredit.

Beginning with the pinnacle of patriarchal power, the father figure, a general pattern of absence on the part of this masculine type easily becomes evident throughout all three of the texts. In fact, while speaking of Burney specifically, Brian McCrea asserts that such eighteenth-century novelists in general tend to “offer us patriarchs who are absent, impaired, or dead” (28). For instance, Betsy’s father dies in the second chapter of the novel; Evelina’s father refuses to acknowledge her; and Catherine’s father remains settled at home while his daughter ventures into the world for the first time. Each of these father figures represents different aspects as well as different degrees of “patriarchal weakness” (McCrea 150). Some still provide their daughters with status and others guardianship, but none of them entirely offer the supposed security promised by the

patriarchal system. Within *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, specifically, Haywood initially describes Betsy's father as "a gentleman of good family and fortune" who is "a very worthy, honest, and good-natured man, but somewhat too indolent" (27, 32). She further explains that this "inactivity of mind" along with his "aversion" to business leaves him dependent on others for the "management of his affairs," which ultimately entangles him in a lawsuit (32). Although this lawsuit does not jeopardize Mr. Thoughtless's ability to provide Betsy with a "handsome fortune of her own" (Haywood 40), his overall lax approach to life does allow Betsy to be unduly instructed and influenced by some questionable characters.

Beginning when she is ten years old, Mr. Thoughtless sends Betsy away to boarding-school, and although he visits her regularly, he does not allow her to come home during holidays or breaks (Haywood 27). Thus, although Betsy's father, with his family name and fortune, affords her a secure status within the patriarchal society, he fails to provide his daughter with adequate guardianship. He entrusts her moral and social instruction to a respectable, yet elderly and often oblivious, school governess, while her social and physical protection, upon his death, falls to the charge of preoccupied legal guardians and irresponsible older brothers. As a result of her father's early negligence, however inadvertent it may have been, Betsy becomes vulnerable to the influence of such scandalous friends as Miss Forward. From Miss Forward, she quickly learns the art of proud flirtation as well as clandestine correspondence, which later lead Betsy to endanger not only her virtuous reputation, but her very life. Ultimately, then, the patriarchal system, as represented by Mr. Thoughtless, first fails to provide Betsy with sufficient instruction to make socially and morally appropriate decisions, then denies

her the protection she needs once she has inevitably made a mistake. In other words, as Shea Stuart suggests, even from “the first edition of *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*,” Haywood effectively exposes the patriarchy’s “fundamental infeasibility” (560).

In contrast to Betsy, who has status but not guardianship, Evelina, the heroine of Burney’s novel, essentially receives neither of these basic patriarchal provisions from her father. From his introduction, Sir John Belmont is presented as a “dissipated and unprincipled” gentleman who “is a stranger to all parental feelings, and has, with a savage insensibility, forborne to enquire even into the existence” of his wife and his daughter (234-235). While we learn later that Belmont’s “total neglect” arises from a deception played upon him by an ambitious nurse (Burney 519), he still ultimately refuses a relationship with Evelina, even after the original mistake is resolved. Because he is “more involved in his own guilt than in affection for his child” (Thaddeus 44), Belmont desperately declares, “I cannot stay with thee, --oh Evelina! thy countenance is a dagger to my heart!” (Burney 531). Additionally, rather than wanting to bestow on his daughter his fatherly blessing, he reverses the “law of nature” by bitterly kneeling at her feet instead (531). In the end, although Evelina does eventually receive “paternal acknowledgement,” she gains Belmont’s name and his wealth when she will no longer use it and his guidance and protection when she no longer needs it, as she is already engaged to Lord Orville (Doody 64).

As a result of Belmont’s refusal to recognize “her right to that important last name,” Evelina spends the majority of the novel “unfathered and unauthorized” and thereby without the security of status and guardianship that the patriarchal system

purported to provide women (Doody 40). Because she is a “girl of obscure birth, whose only dowry is her beauty, and who is evidently in a state of dependency” (Burney 487), Evelina falls victim to numerous social slights and even outright attacks. During her stay at Clifton, she is snubbed by “the rest of the company” who view her “in a light very inferior” (Burney 422). Moreover, because she appears utterly “alone” and “unprotected” (Burney 486), Evelina repeatedly receives aggressive attention from a variety of unprincipled men, Sir Clement Willoughby and Lord Merton to name just two, who consider her as merely mistress, not marriage, material. Indeed, as Jane Spencer clearly observes, Evelina’s “uncertain social status, with no father’s name to define her identity, leaves her constantly vulnerable to sexual insults” (29).

With such sexual, social, and physical threats abounding throughout the novel, Burney effectively demonstrates the dangerous consequences confronting women when the patriarchal structure fails to provide its promised security. For by all but abandoning his daughter, Belmont is both the cause and the continuation of Evelina’s vulnerability. He first causes her suffering by denying her a respectable social status, then he continues it by denying her any sort of protection. Therefore, as a representative of the patriarchy, Sir John Belmont embodies its decline through not simply negligence, but actual corruption as well. In fact, as his multiple illegitimate children and his propensity for duels reveals, Belmont’s obvious moral dissipation seems naturally to lead to neglect, in contrast to Betsy’s father whose negligence stems from mere indolence.

As the final father figure within these three novels of manners, Richard Morland at first appears to represent a considerably less severe critique of the patriarchal structure. Throughout *Northanger Abbey*, Austen’s heroine arguably faces far more “ordinary” and

far less threatening situations in comparison with Haywood's Betsy and Burney's Evelina (Brownstein 41). Still, despite the parodic nature of Catherine's rather commonplace predicaments (Brownstein 41), she still suffers on account of her father's failure to be both present and particularly concerned in her affairs. When Austen first introduces Mr. Morland, she describes him as a respectable clergyman who "had a considerable independence, besides two livings" (13). In addition to his decent family name and his sufficient family wealth, Austen further presents Morland as a rather mild-mannered man who does everything "with a degree of moderation and composure" and is "all compliance" in anything proposed by his wife or children (16, 18).

Thus situated with such a lenient and perhaps somewhat indifferent father, Catherine receives little care or concern in either her instruction or protection. Although her father has taught her "writing and accounts," she is proficient in neither subject as she "shirked her lessons in both whenever she could" (Austen 14). Furthermore, while she does receive some semblance of an education, she is permitted to "leave off" entirely her social instruction as neither her father nor mother "insist" on her becoming "accomplished" (14). In fact, due to the large size of the Morland family, Catherine and her older siblings are more often than not simply "left to shift for themselves" (14). Consequently, when an opportunity arises for Catherine to quit her retired, country home and venture into fashionable society for the first time, she is ill prepared on many levels. Not only does she lack the etiquette needed to navigate the polite world, but her father gives her only the bare minimum amount of money even necessary to begin her journey (Austen 18). Also, because her parents remain "wholly unsuspecting" of any danger their

daughter may face while away, she receives no guidance, no letters or advice, from them during her entire stay at Bath and *Northanger Abbey* (Austen 17).

Overall, then, Catherine's father only partially provides her with the patriarchal promises of status and guardianship. Mr. Morland's family name and wealth, though acceptable for the neighborhood of Fullerton, appear inadequate in Bath and actually jeopardize Catherine's marriage to Henry Tilney, whose father opposes the match due to her "want of consequence and fortune" (Austen 181). Similarly, Mr. Morland's lax instruction and oblivious protection, though sufficient for the country, inevitably lead to Catherine's susceptibility to the gothic novels "of the circulating library" and her vulnerability to "the abuses of the Thorpes" (Burlin 94, 97), namely Isabella and her brother, John. Ironically, while Richard Morland seems to be the most benign of the three failing father figures, his inability to provide his daughter with security speaks volumes about the growing disenchantment with the patriarchal system. Unlike Mr. Thoughtless and Sir John Belmont, Mr. Morland is not entirely negligent or completely corrupt. He is simply a respectable, though perhaps too relaxed, country gentleman with a comfortable, though not great, income who has a family that is rather too large. Therefore, through her depiction of Catherine's father, Austen reveals how even with a reasonable family name, a moderate family fortune, a simple education and the most basic protection, patriarchy still failed to offer women true security.

Moving from the father figures, *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, *Evelina*, and *Northanger Abbey* all include yet another example of patriarchal problems through the figure of the legal guardian. Within each of the novels, these masculine types share some common characteristics. All of the legal guardians remain childless themselves,

and all spend the majority of the text physically separated from their charges. Hence, like the fathers before them, the legal guardians can also be characterized by a general pattern of absence. Unlike the heroines' fathers, however, these guardians are not expected to provide their wards with social status through name or fortune. They are simply expected to provide the guardianship portion of patriarchal security through instruction and protection. Indeed, while each of the guardians does more actively involve themselves in the guidance of their respective charges, overall they still fail, due to either being distracted by their own interests or by giving their advice much too late. Whether as a result of their absence, their personal preoccupation, or their untimely advice, the legal guardians within these three novels of manners ultimately leave Betsy, Evelina, and Catherine without social as well as physical security.

Beginning with *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, Haywood introduces each of Betsy's guardians as intelligent and respectable men. She writes that both Sir Ralph Trusty, a country gentleman, and Mr. Goodman, a wealthy city merchant, are of "unquestionable integrity" and character (Haywood 33). Unfortunately for Betsy, however, neither guardian provides the adequate amount of guidance and protection needed to secure the safety and reputation of such a head-strong young lady. Mr. Goodman, who initially takes Betsy under his own roof, leaves much of her management to his "cynical," "adulteress" wife (Oakleaf 108). When he does on occasion step in to monitor Betsy's numerous suitors, he quickly becomes so frustrated with her refusal to heed his advice that he eventually vows never again "to interfere between her and any of those who pretended to court her" (Haywood 139). Consequently, when his own family

affairs turn disastrous, Goodman abandons all hopes of positively influencing Betsy and instead asks her to “choose another guardian” (Haywood 299). As Haywood explains,

Mr. Goodman found, that to bring her to a more just sense of what was really her advantage, would be a task impossible for him to accomplish, and began heartily to wish she were under the care of some person who had more leisure to argue with her...he told her...since the revolution that had lately happened in his family...[he] Therefore wished some more proper place could be found for her. (299)

Not long after this decision, in fact, Goodman leaves Betsy living entirely on her own when he dies as a result of the stress of his divorce.

In contrast to Mr. Goodman, who becomes preoccupied with his own personal problems, Sir Ralph Trusty spends nearly the entire novel away in the country, offering Betsy guidance and protection only after she has “gone too far with Mr. Munden to be able to go back with honour” (Haywood 484). Arriving in London just in time to walk her down the aisle, Trusty disregards Betsy’s obvious reluctance to wed. Rather, he relies on the opinions of Betsy’s brothers who, out of “selfish male interests” in their own “public image” (Wikborg 94-95), believe that her marriage is “absolutely necessary for securing the honour of their family” (Haywood 482). Accordingly, Trusty does his best to persuade her of the necessity of the match. Furthermore, once Betsy has officially become Mrs. Munden, Sir Ralph promptly leaves the city, thereby leaving this apprehensive, new wife at the mercy of her “negligent and abusive” husband (Oakleaf 109). In the end, Trusty must intervene once more in Betsy’s marital affairs, but once again, he intervenes too late, after the predicament has progressed beyond repair.

Ultimately, because of her legal guardians' failure to provide interested instruction and punctual protection, Betsy is allowed to live in an utterly "unguarded manner," keeping late hours and questionable companions (Haywood 386). Acting therefore as her own mistress, she repeatedly jeopardizes both her social reputation as well as her physical safety by encouraging "the addresses of every idle fop" from the harmless Mr. Saving to the dangerous Frederick Fineer (Haywood 411). As representatives of the patriarchy, then, these legal guardians demonstrate this social structure's failings. They render Betsy vulnerable to both insult and injury by first creating, through their negligence, a need for Betsy to act for herself, then promptly condemning and trying to control her when she does so. Through Mr. Goodman and Sir Ralph Trusty, Haywood illustrates how the patriarchy required women to submit to male guidance and protection, yet remained unsuccessful at requiring men in turn to provide such basic security.

Like the previous two legal guardians, Arthur Villars, in Burney's *Evelina*, appears to be a "venerable man" (241). Because he is a country clergyman, he seems especially equipped for the instruction and protection of his charge as, according to Lady Howard, a close family friend, "a more worthy man, or one whose character seems nearer to perfection, does not exist" (Burney 241). In addition to his respectable vocation, Reverend Villars has also formerly served as the "friend and guardian" to both Evelina's mother and grandfather before her (241). However, as indicated by the grandfather's "ill-judged marriage" to Madame Duval and her own mother's disastrous, "private marriage" to Sir John Belmont, Villars's previous success as a guardian remains questionable (Burney, 102-3). Moreover, even when ignoring his past failures and focusing only on his

moral qualifications, Villars's rural and isolated lifestyle leaves him unfortunately ill-suited for the genteel education of Evelina. He himself even fears that others may view him more like "a hermit, ignorant of the world, and fit only for my cell, than as a proper guardian, in an age such as this, for an accomplished young woman" (Burney 233).

Besides his ignorance of fashionable society, however, Villars's own vested interests in Evelina's future further undermine his ability to instruct and protect his ward with proper discernment and impartiality. Once again he expresses fears of others' opinions, lamenting, "I am grieved...to appear obstinate, and I blush to incur the imputation of selfishness" (Burney 107). Yet, he attempts to justify his decision to keep Evelina secluded with him in the country by offering to make her his own daughter. He reasons, "then did I flatter myself, that to follow my own inclination, and to secure her welfare, was the same thing... My plan, Therefore, was not merely to educate and to cherish her as my own, but to adopt her the heiress of my small fortune..." (Burney 235).

On the one hand, although Villars does attempt to provide Evelina with some sort of social status and financial security, on the other hand, his efforts to offer her guidance and protection actually leave her vulnerable. For however moral his education, Villars has remained content to live "in the past, hoping to keep Evelina in a static purity," rather than actually equipping "his young ward" with the practical and polite information needed to navigate in "the present moment" of London society (Spencer 28). Indeed, Evelina deeply feels this inadequacy as she is often accused of being rural, rustic, and rude, leaving her repeatedly to lament her lot as "one whose ignorance of the world makes her perpetually fear doing something wrong!" (Burney 122). Moreover, Villars's desire to keep Evelina safely with himself seriously jeopardizes not only her chances of

being restored to her father and her rightful social position, but also her chances of being happily engaged to Lord Orville. Finally, the mere fact that Villars remains physically separated from Evelina nearly the entire novel renders his role as guardian virtually ineffective. He simply cannot be there to protect, and though he still offers advice through his letters, there are often delays in Evelina actually receiving them. In fact, Margaret Anne Doody notes that whenever Evelina seeks Villars's guidance, "her absent guardian...cannot answer in time" (63).

Therefore, as a legal guardian within the patriarchy, Arthur Villars does little to promote such a structure. Rather than securing Evelina under his guardianship, Villars's instruction exposes her to social slander while his protection wavers between underwhelming her, by his absence, and overwhelming her, by his reluctance to let her return to her real father. Like Haywood, then, Burney once again demonstrates the dangerous subjugation inherent in the patriarchal system. Through her depiction of Evelina's legal guardian, she exposes a socioeconomic structure that first produced women who were not only "unused to acting for" themselves but actually denied an opportunity to do so (Burney 441), then inevitably failed to provide for these dependent women the necessary security of status and guardianship.

In contrast to the guardians of Haywood's and Burney's novels, the final guardian figure found within Austen's *Northanger Abbey* does not serve as Catherine's guardian in the legal sense. Instead, because Catherine's father still lives and still claims her, Mr. Allen acts as a sort of chaperone overseeing her stay in Bath. Similar to the other guardians, however, Allen, who embodies the image of "a sensible, intelligent man" (Austen 19), still seems to fail in the guidance and protection of his charge. Besides

leaving his ward under the supervision of his incompetent, “inactive,” and “trifling” wife (19), Allen also seems to disappear whenever Catherine falls into an uncomfortable social position. When she finds herself practically mobbed at her first dance, he has escaped “directly to the card-room” (Austen 19); and when she finds herself without a proper “party to join” for tea, she and Mrs. Allen are left with “no gentleman to assist them” as “they saw nothing of Mr. Allen” (20).

In addition to his untimely absences, Allen also offers Catherine untimely advice. Having already embarked on one open carriage adventure with her brother and the Thorpes, Allen advises Catherine against such plans only after she has already refused, on her own, a second trip. He explains, “These schemes are not at all the thing. Young men and women driving about the country in open carriages! Now and then it is very well; but going to inns and public places together! It is not right” (Austen 93). To which Catherine replies, “I am sure if I had known it to be improper, I would not have gone with Mr. Thorpe at all,” and that she had relied on him and his wife to “tell me, if you thought I was doing wrong” (93).

Ultimately, Mr. Allen is not entirely remiss in his responsibilities as Catherine’s temporary guardian, since he does take “pains to know who her partner” is and soon satisfactorily determines that Henry Tilney is “not objectionable as a common acquaintance for his young charge” (Austen 27). However, for the most part, Allen’s guidance and protection of Catherine remains inadequate and inattentive, allowing her to cultivate a friendship with the infamous Isabelle Thorpe as well as jeopardize her safety and reputation through her excursions with John Thorpe. Entrusted with Catherine’s care, Mr. Allen fails to fulfill that trust much like the men before him, though perhaps in a less

dire, more mundane sort of way. In fact, through examining these masculine types, the evidence against the patriarchy grows potentially more damning than that of the father figures. Since each of these guardians, who are all intelligent, honorable, and good men, cannot sufficiently guide and protect the women under them, then who can? Thus, we are left to question if this social system really works if even the best men cannot follow through with the security promised women.

Even more problematic than the fathers and guardians, however, are the figures of the brother as patriarchal representatives. Unlike the overall absence of the previous two masculine types, the brothers within *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, *Evelina*, and *Northanger Abbey* spend much of the novel interacting with their sisters. Still, although they are interested in their respective sisters' affairs, their involvement seems more like interference than assistance. In fact, whether because of their own irresponsible vices or their own selfish motivations, each of the brothers within these three novels of manners actually hurt their sisters rather than help them. Moreover, not only do these brothers fail to fulfill their familial duty of guidance and protection, but they all ultimately rely on their sisters to support and save them instead. Consequently, rather than simple neglect, the figure of the brother as represented by Haywood, Burney, and Austen demonstrate an absolute inversion of the patriarchal order.

In Haywood's text in particular, this patriarchal perversion proves especially damaging to her heroine. With not one, but two brothers to take care of her, Betsy should supposedly benefit from their wise counsel and attentive protection. Yet, even from their introductions, the elder Mr. Thoughtless as well as the younger Mr. Francis Thoughtless appear to embody their last names. Haywood describes these brothers as "both men of

pretty warm dispositions” who often will make situations that are “already very bad” into something “much worse” (512). Indeed, as a result of Mr. Thoughtless’s rash nature and Francis’s “fiery disposition,” each of these young men endangers “his reputation, and even his life” by eagerly participating in the socially disdained practice of dueling (Haywood 77, 575). Furthermore, besides his tendency towards violence, the elder Thoughtless also engages in several other notorious vices from the “guilty pleasure” of keeping a mistress to gambling away his money at cards and dice (Haywood 335, 578).

In addition to their immaturity, neither of Betsy’s brothers truly offers her the guardianship she so desperately needs, as a result of their own selfishness and self-absorption. Rather than housing Betsy when Mr. Goodman passes away, Mr. Thoughtless chooses to have “his mistress preside over his home, impervious to the fact that he is thereby depriving his sister of the temporary home she needs” (Wikborg 94-5). Haywood explains his justifications of this obvious dereliction of duty:

It was not that this gentleman wanted natural affection for his sister, that he refused what he was sensible she so much desire, but he was at present so circumstanced that to have complied would, under a shew of kindness, have done her real injury.—He had brought with him a young and very beautiful mistress from Paris, of whom he was fond, and jealous to that extravagant degree...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? (276-7)

Meanwhile, Francis remains equally remiss in his responsibilities towards Betsy, as he soon becomes distracted with obtaining his own military commission. Essentially, then, these brothers choose their own happiness over the well-being of their sister.

Besides denying her the guidance and protection required of them, however, both Mr. Thoughtless and Francis also appear only superficially concerned with her social reputation. Instead of genuinely worrying about either her moral character or her physical safety, Betsy's brothers care more for how her actions reflect back on them, cautioning her that they "must share in...[her] disgrace" (Haywood 443). With such concern about their family name, Betsy quickly realizes, "they are in such haste to get me out of the way of what they call temptation, that I believe they would marry me to any man, that was of good family and had an estate" (Haywood 415). Consequently, when Mr. Munden begins to court Betsy, the brothers do little more than "look into Munden's financial affairs and that is enough" (Stuart 568) before they hand over their sister to this vain and cold man. In other words, under the guise of promoting "her welfare" (Haywood 386), Mr. Thoughtless and Francis essentially sacrifice Betsy in order to maintain their own patriarchal honor.

In the end, because of her brothers' "complete indifference to her happiness" (Wikborg 94-5), Betsy is first left to live alone, unadvised, unprotected, and exposed to the schemes of villains such as Frederick Fineer. Then, after she has fallen into too many compromising situations, she is "bullied by her brothers" into an undesirable marriage as a last resort (Stuart 568). Still, even when she is established in the supposedly safe state of matrimony, her brothers continue to cause her pain and suffering, as Mr. Thoughtless's unruly mistress at last leads to Betsy's separation from her husband. Although her brothers do offer a last-minute attempt to intervene on her behalf once she is separated from Munden, overall, as representatives of the patriarchal structure, they seem to depict a social system that has all but completely collapsed. Perhaps more importantly, though,

because it is Betsy who ultimately takes in her brother's mistress and tries to salvage his reputation, Haywood presents a patriarchy that has become irrevocably inverted, with an older brother relying on his younger sister.

Although a similar breakdown occurs within Burney's *Evelina*, her heroine suffers much less severely, while the brother benefits much more significantly from such a patriarchal perversion. When Evelina first meets Mr. Macartney, she does not yet know that she has a brother, much less that it is him. However, from the beginning of their acquaintance, she possesses a special sympathy for such an evidently lonely man. Referred to by Evelina's relatives as "nothing but a poor Scotch poet," Macartney is further described as "a young man, in deep mourning" who "had always appeared very low-spirited" (292-293). Indeed, he has much to lament as he has just spent the last of his money, discovered the illegitimate nature of his birth, and learned of his mother's death.

Evelina soon discovers this depressed and financially desperate man with a pistol in his pocket and, not surprisingly, she assumes that he intends to take his own life. While we later learn that he was not contemplating suicide at that moment, Macartney does admit his intentions of armed robbery. He explains to Evelina:

In the disorder of my senses, I formed the horrible plan of turning foot-pad...I mostly solemnly assure you, my sole intention was to frighten the passengers I should assault, with these dangerous weapons, which I had not loaded, but from a resolution,—a dreadful one, I own—to save myself from an ignominious death if seized. (Burney 356)

In addition to his thoughts of thievery, though, we also learn that, like Betsy's brothers, Macartney has also rashly engaged in the violent vice of dueling, and even more shockingly has fought and nearly killed his own, albeit unknown to him, father. In fact, such instances of Macartney's near "violation of self and family," Erin Mackie argues, serve to expose "the criminal effects of patriarchal corruption" (151).

With such unfortunate circumstances leading him to make such unscrupulous decisions, Macartney, as a brother, has little to offer Evelina. Rather than simply not helping his sister, however, he actually almost hurts her. By writing an imprudent poem in her praise, Macartney exposes Evelina to the affronts and advances of practically every man in Bath. Also, when he makes private appointments to meet with Evelina and thank her, he jeopardizes not only her reputation, but her future marriage with Lord Orville. Besides causing Evelina social pain and suffering, however good his intentions may have been, Macartney also remains utterly unable to provide his sister with the patriarchal responsibilities required of him as brother. Beyond this failure on his part, though, there exists a radical inversion of their structurally prescribed roles. Instead of sharing with Evelina the status of a good family name and estate, it is Evelina who ultimately grants her brother secure social standing by treating Macartney's wife as her very own sister and making her "co-heiress" of the Belmont fortune (Burney 532). Furthermore, rather than supporting Evelina with the guardianship of his instruction and protection, it is Evelina who saves her brother's moral character as well as his very life. As Macartney himself acknowledges, it is his sister's "benevolence" that has "snatched [him] from utter destruction" (Burney 505). Later he even admits to Evelina, "the service you have done me exceeds all power of return; you have restored me to my senses" (Burney 357).

As a final example of not just the patriarchy's decline, but its veritable inversion, Austen's *Northanger Abbey* presents yet another problematic relationship between brother and sister. In contrast to the previous brother figures, James Morland appears much more mild and much more ordinary. He does not play at gambling, does not keep a mistress, and does not fight a duel. Although he manages to avoid these particular vices, James does share a selfishness and self-absorption similar to that of the Thoughtless brothers. While Austen acknowledges that James truly cares for his sister, she also reveals his inattention to Catherine. Describing their first meeting in Bath, Austen writes, "he, being of a very amiable disposition, and sincerely attached to her, gave every proof on his side of equal satisfaction, which he could have leisure to do, while the bright eyes of Miss Thorpe were incessantly challenging his notice" (41). Thus distracted by Isabella, James all but abandons Catherine to her own discretion and protection.

Indeed, though the problems Catherine must face as a result of her brother's love interest may be more comic than catastrophic, the situations in which Catherine finds herself remain sufficiently compromising. For blinded by love, James suggests Isabella, a false and capricious girl, as a respectable friend for his naïve sister, urging "she is just the kind of young woman I could wish to see you attached to...I always wanted you to know her...and the praise of such a girl as Miss Thorpe even you, Catherine...may be proud of" (Austen 46). Besides recommending such a questionable confidante, James also angrily sides against Catherine when she, due to a prior engagement, refuses to accompany him and Isabella on an open-carriage adventure. In fact, not only does James suggest such an inappropriate scheme, but when they actually embark on their journey,

he leaves Catherine in an improper position, riding alone with and at the mercy of the obnoxious John Thorpe.

In the end, because of his absorption in his own love affair, James Morland fails to provide his sister with either protection or guidance. Yet, rather than simply neglecting these patriarchal responsibilities, James actually leads Catherine into situations that seriously jeopardize her social reputation as well as her physical safety. Moreover, when Isabella eventually breaks their marriage engagement as well as his heart, James immediately turns to Catherine for comfort and support, essentially inverting the prescribed patriarchal roles of brother and sister. Overall, then, as demonstrated by Mr. Thoughtless, Francis Thoughtless, Mr. Macartney, and James Morland, the brother figures within Haywood's, Burney's, and Austen's novels of manners appear to be the most disenchanting and damaging representations of the patriarchy. Moving beyond mere neglect, these masculine types do more to endanger their sisters than to guide and protect them. Consequently, instead of providing Betsy, Evelina, and Catherine with the security promised by the patriarchal system, all of these brothers not only fail, but rather invert this structure by relying on their sisters to gain some sort of security for themselves.

Having thus examined the patriarchy through fathers, guardians, and brothers, one last masculine figure remains to be studied. Within *Northanger Abbey*, specifically, Austen presents General Tilney as a sort of transition between the patriarchal structure critiqued in this chapter and the capitalistic system soon to be scrutinized in the next section. As both a father and a temporary guardian, the General not only embodies two important patriarchal roles, but he, like those before him, fails to fulfill the responsibilities entailed in his positions. Described as "a very handsome man, of a

commanding aspect, past the bloom, but not past the vigour of life” who comes from a “a very respectable family in Gloucestershire” (Austen 72, 27), General Tilney appears especially equipped to provide his daughter, Eleanor, with the happiness of a secure social status and to offer his house guest, Catherine, a polite and proper level of protection. Yet, in both instances he remains remiss.

In contrast to the previous patriarchal types, however, the General falls short in his duties, not due to any neglect or inversion, but because of his tendencies towards “parental tyranny” as well as outright cruelty (Austen 219). Throughout her stay at the Abbey, Catherine frequently notes that “General Tilney, though so charming a man, seemed always a check upon his children’s spirits” as she often witnesses him scolding them with severe reproofs which, to her, seem “disproportionate to the offence” (Austen 135-137). Therefore “accustomed on every ordinary occasion to give the law in his family” (Austen 215), the General justifiably appears unaffectionate and overbearing. Besides his “bullying nature” (Honan 140), though, the General also fails his patriarchal duties, when after learning of her relative poverty, he abruptly and unmercifully turns Catherine out of his house. By “hurrying her away without any reference to her own convenience” General Tilney thereby leaves Catherine to make the long journey home without proper protection or financial provision (Austen 197). This circumstance, “so grossly uncivil” (197), understandably prompts Catherine’s mother to observe that “General Tilney had acted neither honourably nor feelingly—neither as a gentleman nor as a parent” (Austen 204).

At the root of the General’s tyranny and cruelty exists an inordinate amount of vanity and greed. Not only do these corrupt characteristics cause him to violate his

patriarchal obligations, but they actually drive him to act more as a lover than a father or guardian. For, believing her to be wealthy, General Tilney aggressively attempts to woo Catherine on behalf of his son. Based on this desire to impress, he leads her through a parade of “luxury and expense,” flaunting “every modern invention” and all the latest fashions that he has added to the Abbey (Austen 145, 160). Indeed, this ostentatious display leads Catherine to comment that “every thing that money and taste could do, to give comfort and elegance to apartments, had been bestowed on these” (Austen 161). With such an affinity for “costliness” (Austen 159), then, the General further aligns himself with the consumerism characteristic of the masculine figures examined in the next chapter. Thus acting as a materialistic lover, General Tilney’s initial interest in Catherine as a sort of commodity to increase his wealth strongly ties him to the capitalist system yet to be critiqued.

Overall, what every one of these masculine types commonly shares is a failure to live up to the responsibilities expected of them by the patriarchy. Through fathers, guardians, and brothers, the authors of *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, *Evelina*, and *Northanger Abbey* employ each of these male figures to depict a social system in crisis by exposing what Kay Rogers calls “the discrepancy between the pretensions of patriarchal theory and the inadequacies of actual individual patriarchs” (96). In turn, the numerous predicaments faced by the novels’ heroines serve to demonstrate the dangers awaiting the eighteenth-century women who remained trapped within this problematic patriarchal structure. Whether left without a family name, wealth, instruction, or protection, Betsy, Evelina, and Catherine all ultimately find themselves vulnerable in some way, be it socially, economically, mentally, or physically. Yet, while the patriarchy

continued to leave women without the security it supposedly supplied, it also continued to disregard their individual identities and deny them any sort of autonomy. Hence, not only were women left unequipped to think and act for themselves, but it was also deemed improper—or “unwomanly” (Rogers, 92)—for them to do so. Ultimately, then, within each of their respective novels of manners, Haywood, Burney, and Austen work to expose and to condemn a social system that first subjugates women, then abandons them; that first creates a dependency, then fails to be dependable in return. Still, even with the patriarchal status-based system slowly giving way to a more individualistic class-based system, women will not necessarily fare any better, as we will see in the following chapter.

Chapter 2: Fashionable Fops and Capitalism

As argued in the previous chapter, Britain's reigning patriarchal structure slowly began to decline during the eighteenth century. Besides battling its own, internal failings and the general disenchantment which resulted from such shortcomings, another socioeconomic phenomenon appeared at this time to further threaten the already problematic patriarchy. With the advent of this new system of capitalism, nearly all of England's existing social institutions underwent a considerable change, from its economy to its culture and even its politics (Jaffe 251). Indeed, Janice Farrar Thaddeus explains that along with capitalism came an "influx of new money" which "untied the social hierarchy," leaving the average eighteenth-century Briton in "a world that was financially heaving and insecurely moored" (33). Out of this financial turmoil, a new public order based primarily on socioeconomic class rather than inherited status gradually developed.

Still, while most scholars associate the capitalist movement with the modern middle class, in reality both the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie alike were significantly shaped by this increasingly market-driven system. In fact, during the early eighteenth century, Edward Copeland asserts that "the rush for capital...affected all classes, from artisans to aristocrats" as "any man with ready capital, even with small amounts, was in an enviable position to profit in the new economy" (78). At the same time, every level of English society saw not only "the rise of credit and financial institutions," but later in the period they also experienced the rise of "manufacturing, commercial, and other capitalist interests" (Zonitch 24). As a result of these various fiscal changes, a society founded on commerce and "rooted" in "profit" (Zonitch 25) soon all but replaced the sovereignty of the patriarch with the sovereignty of the consumer (Barker-Benfield 62).

Thus, with such an emphasis on consumerism, the new capitalist structure quickly began to defend the individual's right to purchase, while simultaneously assigning an individual's worth based on belongings. James A. Jaffe, in "Commerce, Character and Civil Society," corroborates this materialistic mentality when he first asserts that, during the eighteenth century, one's personality was determined by one's property, then later suggests that the "capitalist market" existed as a "site" for both economic "exchange" as well as "the formation of character" (54). Consequently, because personal value depended upon personal possessions, and because "capitalist thinking" equaled "material and moral prosperity" (Evans 28), a veritable epidemic of commodification naturally erupted. From this preoccupation with objects and ownership, Britons became obsessed with acquiring not just the latest commercial products, but whatever assets could potentially improve their social position, be it fashionable experiences or even advantageous relationships.

In addition to eighteenth-century consumerism and commodification, however, another capitalist corruption lurked in the rise of lending. Lacking both restraints on the human appetite as well as regulations on the use of credit, the new market soon became "highly volatile" (Zonitch 25). As Barbara Zonitch suggests, such "ready availability of money" combined with greed encouraged many individuals "to be bold and often reckless in their financial dealings" (25). Ultimately, this fiscal irresponsibility contributed to a growing "ambivalence" towards the nature of the new capitalist structure (Barker-Benfield 86). Despite its initially "celebrated" advantages as a free and open socioeconomic model (Thaddeus 33), debates over fair trade along with concerns for the

common good eventually emerged as individuals began to exploit others in pursuit of their own self-interest (Jaffe 254).

Women in particular suffered under this laissez-faire system. At first glance, capitalism appeared both to offer the fairer sex more financial independence as well as to recognize her as a sovereign individual. With the growing popularity of personal pin money (Zontich 27), for example, ladies could now participate in the market as consumers, affording them a more “active, managing role in the new economy” (Copeland 77). Still, facing both the “dangers and rewards” of consumer spending without any real “means of generating income” (77-78), the volatile nature of capitalism left women in an equally volatile position in spite of whatever small steps may have been made towards autonomy and identity. Therefore, as a reflection of the materialism and consumerism associated with the commercial market, women fell victim to the appetites of men. Moreover, as a reflection of the bold and reckless behaviors associated with credit and lending, women suffered these same sort of brazen ventures from men.

Rather than possessing personal worth or real independence, women actually remained subjected to this new social system’s inherent threats of commodification and exploitation. Instead of being viewed as individuals, more often than not, women were simply seen as objects to possess either for their beauty or their dowry. Indeed, as the patriarchal practices of patrilineage and primogeniture slowly began to fade, the “meaning of love, courtship, and marriage,” in turn, grew increasingly “inseparable from contemporary perceptions of money” (Zonitch 26). In other words, “the flow of wealth” within the capitalist system could be “controlled by regulating love and marriage” (26). Accordingly, women became more and more “blatantly commodified” (Hamilton 438) as

they were assigned a marriage-market value (Zonitch 26). Besides merely objectifying young ladies, however, the evolving system of courtship, which was increasingly modeled after the free, capitalist market, also exploited them. Unlike the men who maintained the power to pick and choose their lovers, women were left at the mercy of men's self-interest. Thus, for women who had only the power of refusal and not of initiation, this "free" circulation of love was not actually a fair trade, but rather an exchange riddled with inequities.

Overall, then, instead of entirely ridding eighteenth-century England of the abuses practiced by the previous patriarchal structure, this new capitalist system seemed to espouse and even to extend many of the very same vices. On the most basic economic level, for instance, the luxury and excess of the aristocracy had simply been replaced by the luxury and excess of the individual consumer. Likewise, the gambling away of the family estate in dice and games had merely been replaced by equally risky gambling on the market (Jaffe 253). Yet, not only had eighteenth-century capitalism generally failed "to deliver the people of England from corruption" (Jaffe 260), it specifically placed women in a precarious social position, stuck between two extremes. G. J. Barker-Benfield, in describing the debate between the notorious libertine and rake, John Wilmot second earl of Rochester, and his biographer, Bishop Gilbert Burnet, explains this dilemma:

In sum the contrast between Rochester's argument and Burnet's was between, on one hand, a sexual freedom that, while recognizing women's intellectual equality and her equal capacity for sexual pleasure, in effect also rationalized their exploitation in ways that led to syphilis, bearing illegitimate children, degradation,

and early death; and, on the other hand, a degree of patriarchal legal and moral protection against that exploitation but one that denied women equality of mind and repressed their sexuality. (42-43)

In other words, just as the protection provided by the patriarchy could not be separated from subjugation, so also the individuality and equality promised by capitalism could not be separated from degradation and exploitation.

Within Haywood's, Burney's, and Austen's eighteenth-century novels of manners in particular, we see the fundamental threats of a capitalist system through each of the respective heroines' many suitors. These amorous men serve as more than mere love interests for Betsy, Evelina, and Catherine either to accept or to reject; rather, they act as symbols of a socioeconomic structure that both commodified and exploited women. By examining the male suitors within these three texts through the lens of capitalism, various styles of admirers immediately emerge, from the fop and the merchant to the libertine and the rake. Therefore, after first defining each of these four masculine types, I will then argue more specifically that, within *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, *Evelina*, and *Northanger Abbey*, the fops and the merchants actually represent the commodification characteristic of capitalist consumerism, while the libertines and rakes represent the inevitable exploitation caused by a laissez-faire market.

In the end, though the distinction between these categories of lovers may appear a bit more muddled in comparison to the clearly delineated patriarchal roles of father, guardian, and brother, the overall consequences for women remain shockingly similar. Whether a fop, a merchant, a libertine, a rake, or any combination in between, the suitor's commodification and exploitation of women result in a more vulnerable heroine. For as

Copeland contends, “in this time of rising prices, opening markets, competition for capital, and rampant spending, heroines become both prey and victim” (79). However, unlike the vulnerability caused by the patriarchy’s failure to provide security through status and guardianship, the vulnerability created by capitalism arises from the system’s failure to recognize and respect both female individuality and independence. Ultimately, like the previous critique of the patriarchy, this current critique of capitalism will demonstrate how Haywood, Burney, and Austen each employ a new set of masculine types to expose further a social structure which left their heroines, their peers, and even themselves lacking not only security, but also an autonomous identity.

Beginning with the fops and the merchants, these two categories of admirers represent the more materialistic and more commercial sides of capitalism. In fact, the *Oxford English Dictionary* describes the eighteenth-century fop as a “conceited person” who pretends “to wit, wisdom, or accomplishments” and who is “foolishly attentive to and vain of his appearance, dress, or manners.” With such an insatiable taste for the fine and the fashionable, the “dandy” male characters within the novel of manners often value women only superficially (OED). Rather than recognizing Betsy, Evelina, and Catherine as individuals, these foppish figures prefer to flaunt the heroine’s beauty as just another adornment to their attire.

Like the fop, the merchant also fails to value the heroine for her intrinsic personal worth. Unlike the fop, however, this disregard for women as individuals results not from any modish motives, but for more practical purposes. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a merchant is a “trader,” a man “whose occupation is the purchase and sale of goods or commodities for profit.” Based on this definition, these often ambitious male

characters view their relationships with women as mere business transactions, effectively turning Haywood's, Burney's, and Austen's protagonists into nothing more than products that provide either financial or social promotion. Thus, whether a fashionable fop or a business-minded merchant, this category of capitalist suitors ultimately leaves each of the three eighteenth-century heroines objectified and commodified.

Within Haywood's novel of manners specifically, the commodification of her heroine begins in the very first volume with the introduction of Captain Hysom. This older gentleman-officer not only provides Miss Betsy with one of her first marriage propositions, but his abrupt conduct and rough language afford her much amusement as well. Haywood describes Captain Hysom as a man

...bred at sea;--his conversation, for almost his whole life, had been chiefly among those of his own occupation;--he was altogether unacquainted with the manners and behavior of the polite world, and equally a stranger to what is called genteel raillery, as he was to courtly complaisance...he was often rude, without designing to be so... (140)

Because of his rather blunt behavior, the Captain quickly comes to the point of his proposal. He announces to Betsy that since he has "acquired a very large fortune," he has "for some time...had thoughts of marrying" (Haywood 129). Yet, instead of wooing Betsy to be his wife, Captain Hysom discusses the details of their potential matrimony as if it were either a military commission or a business contract. He not only likens his love interest to a voyage reaching its "intended port," but he also speaks of settlement negotiations and deadlines (129-130).

Besides treating his relationship with Betsy as a merchant does a monetary transaction, the Captain further commodifies Betsy when he reveals his real reasons for addressing her. He explains his desires for marriage as merely a means of producing a male heir, stating “to the end I might have a son to enjoy the fruit of my labours, after I am food either for the fishes, or the worms” (Haywood 129). Consequently, Captain Hysom does not sincerely respect Betsy as an individual, but only values her for her role as a mother to his future son. In the Captain’s mind, Betsy remains simply a commodity he requires for his own, personal use as a “vessel” to transmit the wealth he has earned at sea.

In addition to Captain Hysom, Haywood presents another instance of commodification through Betsy’s relationship with her first husband, Mr. Munden. In contrast to the Captain, though, Munden appears to pursue the heroine out of social rather than financial ambitions. Described as “altogether the courtier in his behaviour” (Haywood 526), Mr. Munden favors the fop over the mercenary style of suitor. His “naturally gay” disposition, his love of “company, and all the modish diversions,” and his “pride and vanity” all contribute to his consumerist mentality (Haywood 498, 556). Even Betsy falls victim to his materialism as he simply considers her another “beautiful object” to be added to his household (Haywood 330). Beyond objectifying her as a collector’s piece, however, Mr. Munden views Betsy’s attention and affection almost as products available for purchase by the highest bidder. Throughout the novel, he repeatedly showers her “with presents, treats, fine speeches, and all the tokens of impatient love” (Haywood 319). He buys Betsy whatever she happens to like, from large jars to curious toys and even a heart-shaped ruby (Haywood 473, 296). Therefore, after having spent a

considerable amount of money to woo her, Munden frankly confesses to Betsy, “it is your love I would purchase, almost at the expence of life” (Haywood 412-3). For “predictably,” according to David Oakleaf, such a capitalist social system only ever “leads to male possessiveness” (124).

Eventually, Mr. Munden weds his object of desire. Yet, despite his apparent sincerity as a suitor, he cares little for Betsy’s worth as an individual, much less as a wife. For rather than marrying her out of love, he has married Betsy out of vanity, to save his pride since he has already invested so much time and energy in publicly courting her. Lacking both genuine affection and the most basic respect for his new wife, Munden immediately begins to mistreat Betsy once he finally “owns” her. Indeed, this sad image of Betsy fallen from her elevated position as a courted mistress to no more than an “upper servant” in her own household (Haywood 507) effectively demonstrates what Susan Paterson Glover describes as “the awkward oscillation between agent and object,” between “owner and owned,” between “possessor and possessed” that characterized the plight of eighteenth-century women (136). In addition to this injury, however, Munden soon adds insult as, like any other materialistic fop, he loses interest in his latest possession and quickly moves on to the next trendy commodity, which happens to be the mistress of Betsy’s brother.

As a final example of the commodification of Haywood’s heroine, Frederick Fineer embodies both the foppish and the mercenary admirer. Referred to as “a “fool of fashion” and “a vain, silly and affected coxcomb (Haywood 385, 345), this pompous lover exhibits an obvious taste for the finer things in life, as his name aptly suggests. Furthermore, he claims to have both birth and title and exudes extravagance in all he says

and does, from his language to his equipage. Not surprisingly then, Fineer sees Betsy as another ostentatious object to be paraded around and possessed. Still, in addition to representing the materialism and consumerism of a fop, Frederick Fineer also views his relationship with Betsy as a business opportunity. As we learn later, Fineer is actually nothing more than a thief pretending to family and fortune in order to marry Betsy and acquire her money. While Fineer ultimately fails to force her into a clandestine marriage, he does succeed in devaluing Betsy as an individual, when he threatens to violate her for his own profit. Fineer has become one of Betsy's beaux merely out of his own vanity and necessity, rather than out of admiration for her personal worth. As a fop, he has coveted her beauty to flatter his pride, and as a merchant, he has sought after her wealth to support his extravagant lifestyle.

Overall, through the various advances of Captain Hysom, Mr. Munden, and Frederick Fineer, Haywood effectively demonstrates the dangers of commodification and the struggles for autonomy that eighteenth-century women faced "in an increasingly mercantile society" (Oakleaf 108). For, throughout *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, both the foppish as well as the mercenary suitors view the heroine not as an actual, living, breathing, human being to be respected and valued, but as a means to either a fashionable or a financial end. According to Oakleaf, in fact, whether "she can position herself as private property (a wife)" or as "public property (a whore)," Betsy cannot entirely escape being circulated as mere property (108).

Like Haywood before her, Burney also addresses the effects of capitalism and consumerism on women through the numerous lovers pursuing her title character. Beginning with her first ball and her first introduction into London society, Evelina

immediately experiences the objectification of materialistic men “as she is eyed, seized, and coveted” (Rogers 87). Even after entering the dance hall, she suffers through further vanity and flattery when she unluckily makes the acquaintance of a notorious fop. Upon her initial interaction and impression of Mr. Lovel, she writes:

a young man, who had for some time looked at us with a kind of negligent impertinence, advanced, on tip-toe, towards me; he had a set smile on his face, and his dress was so foppish, that I really believe he even wished to be stared at; and yet he was very ugly. (Burney 120)

This ridiculous and conceited beau asks Evelina to dance based solely on her beauty. Having little interest in Evelina as an individual, Lovel desires her as a dance partner only because her good looks will gain the attention and the admiration of others. Since he aspires to be the envy of the ball, he uses Evelina as a physically attractive commodity in order to flatter his own pride and to advance his own social standing. Indeed, his valuing of Evelina’s beauty stands in stark contrast to his disdain for her personality. For when she rejects his offer to dance, Lovel begins a slanderous campaign against her character.

Similarly, Burney introduces another foppish admirer through Mr. Smith, the Branghton’s tenant. In comparison to Mr. Lovel, Smith holds a much lower social position, which makes his attempts at fashion appear even more absurd. In describing this “low-bred” pretender to gentility (Burney 295), Evelina writes:

it was evident that he purposed to both charm and astonish me by his appearance; he was dressed in a very showy manner, but without any taste, and the inelegant smartness of his air and deportment, his visible struggle, against education, to put on the fine gentleman, added to his frequent conscious glances at a dress to which

he was but little accustomed, very effectually destroyed his aim of figuring and rendered all his efforts useless. (Burney 344)

Still, despite his evident disadvantages, Mr. Smith also attempts to profit by Evelina's good looks. He invites her to a public dance with the intention of putting her on display as if she were simply another piece of his ostentatious ensemble. Thus, just like Lovel, Smith fails to value Evelina as an individual, treating her instead as an object of beauty that he can flaunt in order to elevate himself socially.

Besides Mr. Lovel and Mr. Smith, Evelina's cousin, Tom Branghton, offers a final example of her commodification. Rather than representing the fops, however, Tom belongs to the merchant category of suitors. With his ignorant and immature behavior, young Branghton frequently transgresses polite social boundaries in order to promote his family's business. When he learns of Evelina's acquaintance with Orville, for instance, he employs her name as a sort of currency, gaining a personal interview with the lord. He further trades on Evelina's favor with Orville during this interview. Specifically, he solicits, "if your Lordship i'n't engaged particularly, my father is a silversmith, and he'd be very proud to serve you...and she's [Evelina] my cousin too, and she'd be very much obligated to you, I'm sure" (Burney 377).

In addition to commodifying her name, however, Tom also commodifies his relationship to Evelina. Without regard for her personal worth and with little concern for her feelings, Branghton seeks to marry his cousin merely for material gain. Tom's sudden interest in Evelina as a wife results entirely from their grandmother, Madame Duval's recent declaration that "as you are both my relations, I think to leave my fortune between you, and Then, if you marry, you never need want for nothing" (Burney 369).

Ultimately, although Evelina may suffer from her foppish and mercenary admirers in a different way than Betsy did before her, she still remains unable to avoid the commodification caused by her consumerist culture and capitalist society. Therefore, through the depiction of Evelina's social embarrassments, Burney effectively exposes eighteenth-century England's general disregard for women's individual identity and autonomy.

Even by the turn of the century, this commodification still remained to be resolved as seen in the final text, *Northanger Abbey*. While this novel includes far fewer male characters than either Haywood's or Burney's works, Austen's heroine still suffers a similar, objectified fate, though Catherine's predicaments prove more comic and more common than either Betsy's or Evelina's. With fewer suitors, the existing ones actually embody multiple capitalist characteristics at once. General Tilney, in fact, provides a perfect example of this overlap. Not only does he at times represent the failing patriarchy, as discussed in the previous chapter, but he also presents traits of both the foppish and the mercenary lover. Although the General is not technically a romantic admirer of Catherine's, he does appear to be courting her on behalf of his son. Taking her on a tour of his renovated home, General Tilney flatters his vanity and flaunts his infatuation with the latest styles and modern inventions (Austen 141, 160). It is this taste for "costliness," "elegance," "luxury and expense" which most clearly reveals his materialistic and foppish tendencies (Austen 159, 145). Copeland agrees, noting that "General Tilney's improvements to the Abbey...reflect his vanity and his excessive love of money" (82). Conversely, his covetous desire to increase his own family estate through the marriages of his children reveals his role as a merchant style of suitor. Described as "open to every

greedy speculation” (Austen 218), this profit-driven side of the General becomes the real reason that Catherine falls victim to commodification. While he pretends to value her person, showering her with attention and compliments, General Tilney is actually after her alleged wealth. In the end, therefore, because he does not truly respect her as an individual, he personally insults and rejects Catherine once he learns of her relative poverty. In fact, this materialistic motivation and the General’s resulting, rude reaction, lead Rachel M. Brownstein to deem him a real “villain of ‘common life’, not romance,” who “is evil in a commonplace way—a greedy, scheming, rude social climber” (40).

Another male character within Austen’s novel that commodifies her heroine is John Thorpe. Unlike the General, Thorpe officially courts Catherine as one of her suitors; like the General, however, John also exemplifies both foppish and mercenary characteristics. Although described as a “stout young man of middling height...with a plain face and ungraceful form” (Austen 42), Thorpe exudes vanity with all his conversations inevitably beginning and ending “with himself and his own concerns” (60). Yet the most prized possession, and hence the favorite topic of discussion, of this conceited “rattle” remains his equipage. Thorpe talks and swears incessantly about his newest purchase and all its amenities. He boasts to Catherine that his gig is “curricle-hung you see; seat, trunk, sword-case, splashing-board, lamps silver moulding, all you see complete; the iron-work as good as new, or better” (Austen 43). Thorpe’s “overweening interest in the fine points of used carriages” with all the latest features and most modern technologies, decidedly place him among the ranks of the materialistic fop (Copeland 82-83). Meanwhile, his frequent accounts of business transactions and bartering, whether with carriages or even hunting dogs, align John with the merchant

style of suitor. Using the language of trade, he repeatedly brags of closing deals, cheap bids, and bargain exchanges (Austen 43, 44, 50). Ultimately, Thorpe's propensity for both profit and possessions lead him to exaggerate and to commodify his relationship with Catherine as well. Because he believes the Morland family to be rich, John not only courts Catherine to supplement his own economic status, but he also brags about her wealth in order "to suit his present ambitions" of a higher social status (Burlin 96). Therefore, much like General Tilney, John Thorpe disregards Catherine's intrinsic worth as an individual, choosing rather to objectify her as just another product used to promote himself. Overall, then, Austen offers one last look at the dangers confronting women who lived during the dawn of eighteenth-century capitalism and its resulting consumerism. Through her "depiction of...[an] innocent heroine in the hands of a manipulative greedy society" (Burlin 108), Austen demonstrates how Catherine's attempts at asserting an individual identity become thwarted in the face of those foppish and mercenary admirers seeking instead to use her to suit their own ends.

In contrast to the fops and the merchants who simply commodify the heroines, however, the next set of suitors found within the eighteenth-century novel of manners, the libertines and the rakes, actually move one step further by their outright exploitation of women. These two types of admirers represent the dangers of a laissez-faire market that has become too open and too free. While the *Oxford English Dictionary* describes a libertine as a "licentious, dissolute" man "unrestrained in constitution, habit, conduct or language" who demonstrates a "habitual disregard of moral law" especially in "his relations with the female sex," Barker-Benfield adds further insight into this masculine type. He describes the life of "libertinism" as clearly combining the "liberty to see the

world as one of earthly delights” with “the elevation of the pursuit of pleasure for its own sake” (44). Based on this belief in their freedom to experience worldly pleasures, including love, the libertines within *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, *Evelina*, and *Northanger Abbey* all unreservedly impose themselves on their respective heroines.

Although similar to the libertines in many respects, the rakes found within Haywood’s, Burney’s, and Austen’s novels represent an even more threatening capitalist market. Described by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as a “fashionable” and “stylish” man of “promiscuous habits” and a “debauched manner,” this sort of suitor takes the forward ways of the libertine and extends them into physical assault, violence, and victimization. Instead of simply disregarding women’s rights as individuals, the rakish figures actually violate these newly emerging rights. Consequently, by taking advantage of whatever weaknesses or opportunities may arise, these gallant and dangerous male characters easily exploit the heroines’ tentative attempts at independence and autonomy.

Within *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, we see such exploitation through Betsy’s interactions with Gayland and the Oxford student as well as through the fall of Betsy’s childhood friend. In all of these instances, the vanity and pride of the young ladies along with their apparently self-reliant lifestyle provide both the leverage and the means for the libertines and the rakes alike to exploit Miss Betsy and Miss Forward. Beginning with the libertine Gayland, Haywood describes him as “a gentleman” who “was a man of family,--had a large estate,--sung, danced, spoke French, and dressed well” and whose “frequent success among the women had rendered him extremely vain” (41). This conceited suitor of Betsy’s cares little for anything else besides pursuing his own pleasure at the expense of his numerous lovers. Indeed, Haywood explains that due

to his “too great...admiration for his own person” he lacks “any great share of it [admiration] for any other” (41). Rather than appreciating Betsy’s attentions and encouragements, her coquetry and solitary living arrangements actually embolden Gayland to take certain liberties with her (Haywood 43). He takes advantage of Betsy’s vulnerable circumstances in order to elicit from her all the gratifications of love without any honorable intentions of commitment. In other words, he seeks to profit without hazarding any sort of investment. Thus, through inappropriate correspondences and clandestine meetings, Gayland not only insults Betsy’s attempts at autonomy, but he essentially exploits her proud independence with his too forward and too free advances.

Beyond Gayland’s libertine ways, however, Betsy suffers even further injury from the rakish Oxford student she meets when visiting her brother. Though his presuming manners may initially appear similar to those of Gayland, this young scholar escalates his advances into physically violent aggression. His excessively gay nature combined with his irresponsibility and inconsideration, lead him not only “to form some conjectures no way to the advantage” of Betsy’s reputation, but actually to act on such insolent ideas (Haywood 70). Encouraged by her flattery as well as their isolated meeting place, the Oxford student boldly embraces Betsy and begins to kiss her, hoping eventually to take full advantage of her good favor and his good fortune. Rather than recognizing her intelligence and her competence, he simply sees an opportunity to exploit the evidently open prospect for love for his own sexual fulfillment.

Lastly, within *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, Miss Forward’s fateful relationship with Mr. Sparkish shows the full and final extent of the tragic consequences facing a woman at the hands of a rakish admirer. Much like Betsy, Miss Forward

remains entirely the mistress of herself. Away at boarding school, unsupervised and unconcerned, she easily falls victim to the advances of the gallant Sparkish. After first acquiescing to a clandestine communication, she then begins to meet with him alone and in secret. Miss Forward claims to have trusted in his honor and he exploits this trust as she would have both herself and Betsy to believe: "I never had reason to repent of the private correspondence I carried on with Mr. Sparkish, nor knew it was in the nature of man to take advantage of a maid's simplicity" (Haywood 107). For Sparkish, he has little to lose and all the sexual satisfaction to gain from this illicit love affair. Yet, Miss Forward, however willingly, gambles on a romantic market that as yet remains unequal for women. She must pay a steep price for her risk, first becoming pregnant then later, cast off by her lover, disowned by her father, and left without another alternative, she turns to prostitution for financial support. Whether through the relatively harmless advances of Gayland or the sinister intentions of Sparkish, Haywood shows just how costly living in a laissez-fair, market-minded system can be for her female characters. Instead of respecting Miss Betsy and Miss Forward, these libertines and rakes exploit the young ladies' endeavors for independence in order to defraud them of their highest value, their virtue.

While Miss Forward represents the ultimate extreme in sexual exploitation, Burney places her heroine in almost equally dangerous encounters. Unlike Betsy and her friend who are taken advantage of because of their proud independence, though, Evelina becomes victimized because of her ignorance of social etiquette and her uncertain social standing. As the first suitor to accost Evelina with his forward advances, Sir Clement Willoughby epitomizes the libertine. Repeatedly Evelina writes of "this mischievous

man” as “artful, designing,” and exhibiting a “duplicity of character,” in spite of his good name and good breeding (Burney 140, 222, 483). Because Sir Clement is so clever, he easily takes advantage of Evelina’s naïveté in order to separate her from her party and to make many free, “abrupt and unexpected” declarations of love to her, which are all “bordering upon insult” (Burney 201, 222). Moreover, once Sir Clement realizes the extent of Evelina’s precarious social position, he uses this knowledge of her obscurity as an excuse to further impose himself upon her. Realizing this inconsistency, Evelina declares, “he seems disposed to think that the alteration in my companions authorises an alteration in his manners” (Burney 323).

Therefore, rather than recognizing her worth and her rights as an individual, no matter her family or fortune, Sir Clement simply sees her as an amorous speculation, an easy opportunity to enjoy openly and unreservedly the pleasures of love without its responsibilities. Essentially, he attempts to trade on the credit of his rank and his intellect in order to profit without any intentions of making future payments. As another applicable analogy, Andrea Henderson describes this sort of “sexual desire that is self-serving, calculating, and fickle” in which “women themselves become objects of unbridled curiosity, of a promiscuous but flippant attention” as “shopping around” (77). While her article specifically focuses on masochistic desire in Burney’s *Camilla*, nevertheless her comparison of commerce and sexuality seems not only relevant, but especially revealing when considering Sir Clement Willoughby’s style of courtship. For by targeting the unknown and unguarded Evelina, Sir Clement “reflects an unwillingness to take a risk, or, in fact, to spend at all,” which typifies what Henderson terms “casual shopping” (77-78).

In contrast to Willoughby, the libertine who merely makes verbal advances, Burney introduces Lord Merton as her example of the physically aggressive rake. From his first appearance in the novel, Lord Merton admires Evelina in an offensive manner, boldly staring at and loudly whispering about her (Burney 211). So disgusted is she with his brazen behavior, that she exclaims, “even Sir Clement Willoughby appeared modest in comparison with this person” (Burney 212). Later, in the last volume of the novel, we learn that in addition to his rude social etiquette, Lord Merton is also a drunkard, gambler, and glutton (Burney 450, 421). Indeed, with Evelina he desires to satisfy his sexual appetite in spite of his engagement to Lord Orville’s sister, Louisa. Since Evelina stands in a socially inferior position to himself and since she remains without a proper protector, Lord Merton feels free to take advantage of her vulnerability, “forcibly” seizing her hand while simultaneously vowing “he would not let [her] go” (Burney 449).

Besides his exploitive treatment of Evelina, however, Lord Merton also both uses and abuses two old women in a foot race in order to determine a bet. Without either concern for their safety or reverence for their sagacity, he mercilessly pushes them towards the finish line for his own glory and financial gain. Consequently, with both Evelina as well as these elderly ladies, Lord Merton does not just disrespect them, but he endangers them as well. In an increasingly open socioeconomic system, he sees them as fair game and thereby freely violates their rights as individuals. In other words, Lord Merton’s exploitation of women combined with his affinity for gambling points to what Henderson calls, “the perceived link between financial and sexual economies” which, during the eighteenth century, “gave rise to an analogy between the uncontrolled losses and gains of gaming and rapacious and even violent sexuality” (73). Ultimately, through

both of these liberal and rakish men, Burney exposes the inequities which still existed in the eighteenth-century capitalist system. For despite its potential for individualism, the open socioeconomic market that appeared to embrace the motto “every man for himself” did not extend this same slogan to the female sex.

Finally, within the last text, *Northanger Abbey*, the low number of male characters once again indicates that the novel’s few existing suitors simultaneously must embody multiple capitalist characteristics, from commodification to exploitation. John Thorpe offers one such example. As previously discussed, Thorpe exemplifies elements of both the fop and the merchant. Yet, many of his traits also resemble the libertine and, at times, even the rake. With Austen’s heroine left to look after herself during her stay at Bath, this impetuous young man finds Catherine an easy target to exploit, especially since he further earns her trust as an intimate friend of her brother, James. Like the libertines before him, Thorpe has an appreciation for the female form. Even despite his attentions to Catherine, he constantly becomes distracted by other “passing ladies” (Austen 69), typically offering “a short decisive sentence of praise or condemnation on the face of every woman” he meets (Austen 44).

Meanwhile, like the rakes before him, John not only plays “quizzes” on his unassuming sisters (Austen 54), akin to the old-woman race, but he also consumes an immoderate amount of alcohol, similar to Lord Merton. Boasting to Catherine, he first admits to “his four pints” per day habit (Austen 58), then immediately defends the benefits of such a dependency. Thorpe reasons, “I am sure of this—that if every body was to drink their bottle a-day, there would not be half the disorders in the world there are now” (Austen 58). With such liberal and rakish qualities, then, it is not surprising that

Thorpe eventually exploits Catherine's credulity and relative autonomy. He takes many freedoms with her, from coercing her into compromising carriage adventures to deceiving her into improper ballroom etiquette. For rather than respecting Catherine's right and ability to make her own decisions as an individual, Thorpe both ignores her input as well as unreservedly lies to her, causing Catherine to commit several social blunders merely in order to fulfill his own pleasurable agenda of driving and dancing. Overall, despite his ostensibly benign, "boorish mischief-making," he ultimately transforms from "a parodic to a real villain" (Berger 531-532), as, based on his laissez-faire market-mentality, Thorpe reduces women and his relationships with them into subservient roles for the advancing of his own social and financial ventures.

In addition to John Thorpe, though, Austen presents one last romantically rakish figure in Captain Tilney, the General's eldest son. This "lively" and "very fashionable-looking, handsome young man" has both an assuming countenance and a "thoughtless" disregard for others, particularly of the female gender (Austen 133, 116, 117). While Captain Tilney does not court Catherine, he does amorously pursue Isabella Thorpe, John's sister and Catherine's closest friend. Taking advantage of her vanity, Captain Tilney easily adds Isabella to his list of sexual exploits, even in spite of her engagement to Catherine's brother. Furthermore, by flattering her as an individual capable of acting for herself, Captain Tilney unhesitatingly leads Isabella to defy her fiancé's interest, as she openly accepts "Captain Tilney's attentions as readily as they were offered... allowing him almost equal share with James in her notice and smiles" (Austen 131). In the end, knowing full well his own intentions never to marry Isabella, the Captain accepts whatever he can freely take from her, before abandoning her to a broken engagement.

More than all the previous lovers portrayed by the previous two authors, Austen, through her depiction of Captain Tilney, demonstrates the ultimate capitalist exploitation of women. He plays the market, keeps his options open, and seizes any available opportunity. Then, once he receives his reward, the Captain withdraws his interest, and moves on to the next speculation, thereby demonstrating both the selfish nature of capitalism as well as its inherent drive for accumulation that, according to Mary Evans, invariably leads to the repression and distortion of others (Evans 78, 81-82).

On the whole, this second set of masculine types found within the novel of manners serves to represent the threat of eighteenth-century capitalism. By employing images of the fop and the merchant, the libertine and the rake, Haywood, Burney, and Austen effectively explore the inequities still affecting women despite this new socioeconomic system. Although the capitalist structure promised both to elevate the individual and to enable social and financial independence, these basic privileges were not truly offered to women during this time. Instead, the commodification and exploitation of Betsy, Evelina, and Catherine at the hands of their suitors actually reveal the dangers women faced while living in such a consumerist and volatile, market-driven culture. For though this laissez-faire system afforded free exchange, it could not yet guarantee fair exchange.

Therefore, these eighteenth-century novelists, through *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, *Evelina*, and *Northanger Abbey* respectively, all expose and condemn capitalism, not for its subjugation of women as the previous patriarchy had done, but because this new structure first granted women a small taste of autonomy, then promptly refused to recognize their independence and individuality. Thus, as a result of the failure

of the patriarchal fathers combined with the commodification and exploitation of the capitalist suitors, Betsy, Evelina, and Catherine, along with their eighteenth-century female counterparts, now lacked not only security, but also identity. Eventually, as the following and final chapter will show, each of these heroines will at last find an ideal balance of these two basic rights within the personhood of their fiancés.

Chapter 3: Flawless Fiancés and the Companionate Marriage

Caught between the traditional, patriarchal structure and an emerging, capitalist market, eighteenth-century England found itself floundering among many variations of these opposing socioeconomic systems. From a status-based culture to a class-based culture, from landed money to new money, from family names and estates to consumer credit and profit, the average British citizen could easily become overwhelmed, if not outright alarmed, by such a conflict and its potential for instability. Eleanor Wikborg explains this volatile situation as a confrontation between the “patriarchal rulers” and the “revolutionary beliefs in the rights of the individual” (9). Thus, “in a society struggling with the competing ideologies of individualism and aristocratic patriarchy” (Zonitch 23), numerous social and political responses soon emerged to counteract the growing anxiety.

In fact, recent scholars have traced this nearly national reaction through the eighteenth-century rise of manners. By focusing particularly on British male behavior, these critics seem to suggest that the campaign for politeness called for either a rejection, a revision, or a substitution of one system for the other. For instance, in *Familiar Violence*, Barbara Zonitch argues that through this lately developing “set of social practices” a “new aristocracy” and a “new masculinity” emerged to modernize and feminize the traditional patriarchal structure (30, 17, 54). Similarly, in *Momentary Fame: Female Novelists in Eighteenth-Century Book Reviews*, Laura Runge observes that the phenomenon of male gallantry pervading Great Britain during this time actually reveals a more “progressive or enlightened model of patriarchy” (278). Finally, in *Rakes, Highwaymen, and Pirates*, Erin Mackie also asserts that because, by the mid to late 1700s, “the polite modern gentleman has emerged,” he embodies both a “restoration” and

“reformation of aristocracy” (1, 178). Besides these arguments for a revised socioeconomic system, however, G. J. Barker-Benfield, in *The Culture of Sensibility*, appears to view the rise of manners as a substitution or “exchange of acquired for inherited quality” (86). Meanwhile, in “Monkey Business: Lord Orville and the Limits of Politeness in Frances Burney’s *Evelina*” Patricia L. Hamilton’s assessment of politeness seems to dismiss both the patriarchal and capitalist structures in favor of a sort of “meritocracy” in which one’s outer behavior should signify one’s inner virtue (424, 430).

Whatever the critical interpretation of this rise in manners, though, the conflict between birth and behavior, between the patriarchy and capitalism, only compounded the vulnerability of eighteenth-century women. Trapped in transition, the women of this period benefited from neither the birth nor the behavior of their male contemporaries, as demonstrated in the previous two chapters scrutinizing patriarchal fathers and capitalist lovers. For whether wealth and education were acquired or inherited, such advantages could not ultimately guarantee personal quality. In other words, as Kay Rogers asserts, “Being able to make money does not carry with it...rationality and moral worth...any more than being born the heir to a noble family” (92).

Furthermore, another flaw with this systematic promotion of politeness emerged when external etiquette served to conceal corruption rather than to reveal inner virtue. Indeed, Mary Evans clearly delineates the superficiality of such “an index of social manners—which measures appearance, wit, and charm and...takes the values of the market-place...and accepts them as the only values of human existence” (31). Overall, then, the eighteenth-century reformation of manners arguably created more ambiguity for English women as even greater discernment grew necessary in order to function in an

increasingly complicated society. Consequently, women still remained at risk on the most basic levels. Because they now lacked both a protective patriarchal structure as well as an open capitalist market, they found themselves in a “paradox” of “inadequate protection” and “excessive restriction” (Evans x), thereby leaving them simultaneously without security or individual identity.

Ironically, although born out of this movement for politeness, the eighteenth-century novel of manners seems to offer more of a prescription rather than a reaction to the confusion caused by the conflicting socioeconomic structures. Unlike Zonitch’s concept of a “new aristocracy” or Lunge’s idea of an “enlightened model of patriarchy,” Haywood, Burney, and Austen do not attempt to reform the patriarchy or to revise capitalism. Nor do they call for an exchange of one structure for the other as Barker-Benfield does. Nor, in fact, do they entirely reject either one as Hamilton seems to purport. Instead, these authors appear to adopt benefits from both systems, while at the same time managing to avoid each system’s respective drawbacks. In other words, through *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, *Evelina*, and *Northanger Abbey*, all three authors offer a blend of patriarchy and capitalism. More specifically, instead of favoring birth over behavior or behavior over birth, Haywood, Burney, and Austen actually present a social economy based equally on *both* behavior and birth.

This hybrid system can be seen through the fiancés—or husbands—found within each of the three texts. While some critics, such as Gerard A. Barker, allege that the romanticized heroes typical of eighteenth-century fiction only occupy a complimentary and subordinate role to the story’s heroine (36, 71), I want to argue that these masculine figures serve a much more significant purpose. Instead of being over-simplified and over-

idealized, I believe they actually act as icons representing the new and blended social economy prescribed by Haywood, Burney, and Austen. Therefore, through Betsy's Mr. Truworth, Evelina's Lord Orville, and Catherine's Henry Tilney, a socioeconomic structure founded on both birth and behavior, both inherited and acquired quality, both inner and outer virtue, both the patriarchy and capitalism, eventually emerges. Indeed, each of these male characters functions not only as a capitalist lover, but as a patriarchal father and brother as well. Thus, by merging the traditional, protective role of the father with the modern, liberating role of the lover, Truworth, Orville, and Tilney offer their respective heroines a welcome balance of dependence and independence, without the threat of either subjugation or exploitation. In the end, then, unlike the patriarchy alone, unlike capitalism alone, and unlike the competition between patriarchy and capitalism, it is the blending of these two systems as presented in the novel of manners that at last promises to provide eighteenth-century women simultaneously with both security and identity.

Beginning with the fiancés as father figures, Truworth, Orville, and Tilney each offer what the male characters examined in the first chapter ultimately failed to provide. As previously discussed, the patriarchal structure of eighteenth-century England allegedly afforded women the status of a family name and family wealth along with the instruction and protection of guardianship. However, in light of the growing emphasis on the modern individual, the patriarchy fell out of favor due to its tendency towards subjugation, female subjugation in particular. Yet, by presenting the fiancé as both a father figure and a lover, Haywood, Burney, and Austen essentially resolve this dilemma between choosing self and choosing security. Within *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, *Evelina*, and

Northanger Abbey, these future spouses successfully supply the protection and instruction of the patriarchy without imposing on the heroines' independent identity. Like fathers, they give their heroines the benefit of a family, its title and estate, yet they still uphold Betsy's, Evelina's, and Catherine's rights as individuals. Moreover, while these male types impart advice and confer safety, they still recognize and respect the heroine's inherent intelligence and competence.

Within Haywood's *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, Truworth exemplifies the patriarchal and paternal gentleman. Because he "is descended from the ancient Britons by the father's side, and by the mother's from the honourable and well known Old-castles, in Kent" and because he has a vast family estate "unencumbered with debts, mortgages, or poor relations" (Haywood 126, 90), Truworth's eventual marriage to Betsy will secure for her a respectable social position. Besides supplying patriarchal status, though, Truworth also frequently acts as Betsy's guardian. He provides her with protection in one of her most desperate moments, rescuing her from the villainous Fineer who, through rape, attempts to exploit Betsy's apparent financial independence. Furthermore, Truworth often advises Betsy, particularly cautioning her against interactions with her childhood friend, Miss Forward. He reasons with her:

...but I beseech you, do not think of going to the play with a woman of her class...reflect, for heaven's sake, what your modesty will suffer, in seeing yourself gazed and pointed at, by those to whom she sells her favours; and reflect yet farther, what they will judge of you. (Haywood 234)

However, because of Betsy's proud and stubborn nature, she initially resists his counsel, accusing him of being a "governor" and a "spy" (Haywood 234). Yet, rather than

imposing his opinions on her, rather than subduing her will to his own, Truworth instead respectfully withdraws his demands. Significantly, because he has faith in her genuine goodness, Truworth allows Betsy the freedom to make her own decisions. Indeed, Wikborg explains that by leaving her to learn her own lessons on her own time, “Betsy finally gives up her pleasure in mastering men” out “of a sense of self-respect,” not out of paternal compulsion (92). Overall, then, Truworth, as a father-like fiancé, represents patriarchal security without its typical subjugation.

Similar to Haywood, Burney also presents her version of the paternalistic lover through the figure of Lord Orville. Like Truworth, Orville possesses a large fortune, but even more impressive than Truworth, Orville also holds a title of nobility. With his aristocratic family name and estate, therefore, Burney’s Evelina, like Haywood’s Betsy, will gain a reputable social status upon her marriage. In addition to supplying Evelina with a secure social standing within the patriarchy, though, Orville also adopts the role of a guardian, protecting and advising her. For instance, when Evelina is first socially insulted then later physically assaulted by the rakish Lord Merton, Orville quickly offers to act as her brother. Wikborg explains how this apparently patriarchal offer in reality protects Evelina’s rights as an individual. She argues, “By speaking of his respect within the trope of brotherhood, Lord Orville restores Evelina’s self-image” as well as “liberates her from...humiliations” (Wikborg 127). Moreover, when Sir Clement Willoughby continues to pursue Evelina, threatening to exploit her evident autonomy, Orville also warns away this libertine, explaining:

This young lady, though she seems alone, and, in some measure, unprotected, is not entirely without friends; she has been extremely well educated, and

accustomed to good company; she has a natural love of virtue, and a mind that might adorn any station, however exalted: is such a young lady, Sir Clement, a proper object to trifle with? (Burney 486)

Notably, within his caution, Orville uses Evelina's own intelligence and competence as reasons against Sir Clement's dishonorable intentions.

Moving from the promise of protection to the instructional element of patriarchal guardianship, Lord Orville once again represents a lover who, according to Barker, is more "paternal rather than amorous" (77). As Evelina's "mentor," although he furnishes his heroine with "a source of security" (Barker 73), Orville does not ultimately seek her submission to his own desires and demands. While Evelina often solicits his counsel concerning her interactions with Macartney, Orville strives to guide her impartially, even against his "own interest" (Burney 451). Eventually, after Evelina can no longer ask his opinions regarding her half-brother, Orville still endeavors to trust her "goodness" and judgment in spite of his own jealous "apprehensions" and "doubts" (Burney 507). In fact, Evelina herself effectively describes Lord Orville's balanced approach to guardianship, exclaiming, "[he is] willing to advise, yet afraid to wound me!" (Burney 368). Therefore, like Truworth before him, Lord Orville's role as "father, best friend, brother, and husband" (Mackie 171), further serves to reveal a type of patriarchal security free from subjugation.

As the final fiancé within these three novels of manners, Henry Tilney, despite his label as "an unconventional romantic hero" (Brownstein 38), continues this pattern of paternal yet amorous love. From his introduction in *Northanger Abbey*, Austen establishes him as "a clergyman...of a very respectable family in Gloucestershire" and

“of a very considerable fortune” (Austen 27, 216). Indeed, it is this rich and regarded social position that he, like Mr. Trueworth and Lord Orville, will share with his respective heroine when they at length wed. Along with this secure status, Tilney also affords Catherine the protection and instruction of guardianship expected within the patriarchal system. Although, in comparison with Betsy and Evelina, Catherine faces dilemmas that are more common than calamitous, she remains susceptible to the dreadful temper of Henry’s father, General Tilney. As a result, she relies on Henry to shield her from the General’s tyranny. Therefore, when Henry must leave for business, she looks back on their last meal together and laments to herself, “Happy, happy breakfast! for Henry had been there, Henry had sat by her and helped her” (Austen 199). For without Henry’s presence and protection, the General eventually expels her from the Abbey, effectively violating her rights as a houseguest and individual.

Besides providing her with protection, however, Henry also offers Catherine a variety of instruction. Similar to Orville’s relationship with Evelina, Henry not only acts “as her mentor, or guide” (Burlin 92), but he also takes the “liberty” of treating Catherine as a sister (Austen 96). He corrects her grammar, guides her reading selections, directs her artistic eye, and, when she wrongly accuses his father of murdering his mother, he even reprimands her. Again, in comparison to the previous two texts, the counsel Catherine receives from her fiancé seems much less consequential. Instead of seeking to guard her virtue as Trueworth and Orville do with their heroines, Tilney merely offers Catherine lessons on everyday life and fictional literature. Yet, however mundane his instructions may be, Henry is careful to respect Catherine’s abilities and boundaries. Rather than requiring her to submit to his agenda, Henry only teaches Catherine as long

as she, his “ardent pupil” (Burlin 91), will allow. For example, during Henry’s “lecture on the picturesque” Austen writes:

... his instructions were so clear that she [Catherine] soon began to see beauty in every thing admitted by him, and her attention was so earnest, that he became perfectly satisfied of her having a great deal of natural taste...Delighted with her progress, and fearful of wearying her with too much wisdom at once, Henry suffered the subject to decline. (99)

Similarly, when discussing novels, Henry influences Catherine’s preferences while still affirming her existing interests and imagination. Finally, when confronting Catherine on her erroneous accusations against his father, Henry not only acknowledges her intelligence, but actually asks her to apply it. He challenges:

If I understand you rightly, you had formed a surmise of such horror as I have hardly words to—Dear Miss Morland, consider the dreadful nature of the suspicions you have entertained. What have you been judging from?...Consult your own understanding, your own sense of the probable, your own observation of what is passing around you—Does your education prepare us for such atrocities? (Austen 172)

Therefore, rather than reading this passage—like critics commonly do—as a humiliating rebuke against Catherine and her fixation with gothic fiction, I believe instead that, by acting simultaneously as a father and a fiancé, Henry Tilney is able to make a distinction between Catherine’s mistake and Catherine’s merit. Consequently, because he reprimands the former and reaffirms the latter, Henry offers one last example of patriarchal security implemented without fear of subjugation.

As the inverse of this more progressive form of patriarchy, the figure of the fiancé also represents a sort of controlled version of the capitalist suitor. With their refined taste for luxury as well as their preference for the latest plays, Truworth, Orville, and Tilney all exhibit characteristics of eighteenth-century consumerism. Still, even with their affinity for material wealth, these men, rather than objectifying women as just another possession, truly value their heroines' personal worth. Moreover, by finding love outside of the traditional, hierarchically prescribed boundaries, each of the fiancés also takes advantage of the more open social system. Yet, these men do not use the laissez-fair market-mentality to take advantage of the women themselves. In fact, instead of exploiting their future wives, these future husbands actually provide Betsy, Evelina, and Catherine with personal validation. As Wikborg effectively explains:

This self-restraint on the part of a prominent man makes him a real prize of a lover, for it implies a recognition on the part of male authority of the desirability of the heroine as an autonomous person and hence of her right to a measure of self-determination. (11)

Because they represent capitalist lovers balanced by characteristics of the patriarchal father, Truworth, Orville, and Tilney are able to honor the individuality of their heroines without threatening to commodify or exploit them. In other words, they encourage female individualism while actually respecting women's rights as individuals; they support female independence without sacrificing women's safety. Thus, within their respective novels of manners, Haywood, Burney, and Austen, use the fiancé figure to provide their female protagonists simultaneously with both identity and security.

Beginning with *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, Mr. Truworth typifies the capitalist suitor and all his consumerist tendencies. From his polished wit, to his elegant conversation, his extensive European travels, and even his “coach with one gentleman in it, drawn by six prancing horses, and attended by two servants in rich liveries” (Haywood 630), Truworth certainly seems to live a life of luxury. However fashionable he may appear, though, Haywood quickly clarifies that Truworth has managed to have all these material advantages “without being the least tainted with the vices or fopperies of any of them” (90). Indeed, we see this lack of vanity through his early marriage with Harriet Loveit. Unlike Betsy’s foolish flaunting of her own beauty and accomplishments, Harriet possesses the unaffected virtues of modesty, affability, and prudence (Haywood 360). Because she has such valuable qualities, then, Truworth not surprisingly treasures Harriet’s sincerity over Betsy’s proud merchandising. Thus, in contrast to Mr. Munden, Betsy’s first husband who essentially commodifies her by marrying her for superficial reasons and social profit, Truworth chooses his first wife based solely on her personal merit. Moreover, not until Betsy has at last learned and lived up to her own, intrinsic worth does Truworth finally and genuinely value her.

Besides expressing an affinity for consumerism, though, Truworth also openly participates in the more liberal, capitalist social system. Based on his “superior” family and fortune along with “his admirable endowments” (Haywood 387, 627), Truworth undoubtedly possesses the personal credit necessary to play this laissez-faire, social market. Because of such profitable assets, he can freely trade on his position and personality for whatever form of gratification he desires. In fact, he does initially take advantage of his personal credit when he begins a love affair with Flora Mellasin.

However, once he meets Harriet, Truworth quickly realizes and repents of how he has exploited Flora's inferior social position, her solitude, and her attempts at self-assertion. Therefore, although not entirely perfect, Truworth does offer first Harriet and later Betsy both identity and security. In the end, by acting as a tempered version of the capitalist lover, Truworth can value as well as validate Betsy's individuality without commodifying or exploiting her desire for autonomy.

Beyond Mr. Truworth, Lord Orville, in Burney's *Evelina*, also epitomizes this sort of self-restrained, capitalist suitor. Orville's "elegance," his "sweetness of manners," his "feminine" delicacy (Burney 358-6, 392), as well as his fondness for balls and for plays in fact exceed Truworth's consumerist characteristics, even rivaling such true fops as Mr. Lovel and Mr. Smith. Yet, unlike Lovel and Smith who seek to profit socially from Evelina's acquaintance, Orville does not commodify her as a dance partner. Instead, Orville thoughtfully engages Evelina in conversation with a genuine interest in understanding and pleasing her (Burney 123-7). Furthermore, in spite of her socially ignorant and inappropriate behavior, Orville not only respects Evelina's rights as an individual, but he actually defends them against Lovel's merciless harassment (Burney 184). Still more impressively, though, Orville even allows Evelina to commodify him when, at another ball, she uses his name to reject Sir Clement (Burney 140-1).

In addition to his refined, consumerist lifestyle, however, Lord Orville further exemplifies characteristics of the capitalist suitor through his potential to play the laissez-faire social market. Similar to Truworth, Orville possesses a substantial amount of personal credit, from his title to his finances to his good breeding. With so many social advantages by which he can profit, Orville is free to exploit Evelina's social inferiority

and abuse her attempts at autonomy, and yet he does not do so. Instead, as Hamilton observes, Orville demonstrates a respectful “condescension, or willingness to treat people of lower status as equals” (425). For instance, on two separate occasions, when Evelina tries to assert her independence from her vulgar family members, she unintentionally places herself in compromising situations. However, rather than taking advantage of her unfortunate circumstances as Sir Clement does, Orville first offers her protection then validates her by affirming her innocence (Burney 368). Evelina explains the disparity between these two suitors:

...in justice to Lord Orville, and in justice to the high opinion I have always entertained of his honour and delicacy,--let me observe the difference of his behaviour, when nearly in the same situation to that of Sir Clement Willoughby. He had at least equal cause to depreciate me in his opinion, and to mortify and sink me in my own: but far different was his conduct...whatever might be his doubts and suspicions, far from suffering them to influence his behaviour, he spoke, he looked, with the same politeness and attention with which he had always honoured me when countenanced by Mrs. Mirvan. (Burney 365)

Once again, like Haywood, Burney uses the figure of the fiancé to present a more controlled form of capitalism which offered women individual identity as well as security.

Within the final text, Henry Tilney affords one last look at this more careful type of capitalist lover. Similar to the fiancés before him, Tilney’s “pleasing countenance,” his good address, his captivation with plays, and his “pleasure in a good novel” (Austen 23, 83, 95) all lend themselves to establishing his consumerist taste. In fact, Henry has an impressive understanding of fashion, in general, and women’s dress, in particular, as he

frequently helps his sister choose fabrics. When asked if he understands muslin, for example, Henry responds, “Particularly well; I always buy my own cravats, and am allowed to be an excellent judge; and my sister has often trusted me in the choice of a gown” (Austen 25). While he may share with his father this preference for finery and comfort, and while he may even share a certain penchant for materialism with another suitor, namely John Thorpe, Henry does not commodify Catherine as an investment in his future estate like the former two gentlemen attempt to do. Rather, he sincerely values Catherine’s individuality, her imagination, her enthusiasm, and her pleasant company.

Of course, as previously seen with Truworth and Orville, though, Henry Tilney does not simply display the consumerism of capitalism, but he too has the ability to profit in this growing, laissez-faire social market. Because of his respectable family and “income of independence” (Austen 216), Henry has plenty of opportunities to use his personal credit to take advantage of Catherine’s social inferiority and naive self-guidance, much like his brother actually does with Isabella Thorpe. However, unlike his brother’s affair with Isabella, unlike his father’s inhospitality towards Catherine, and unlike John Thorpe’s carriage kidnapping of Catherine, Henry does not exploit his heroine. Instead, he uses his influence and position to value Catherine’s worthy nature and to validate her simple autonomy. Ultimately, through Henry Tilney, Austen offers a final model of the fiancé who effectively combines capitalist characteristics with protective patriarchal traits in order to provide the novel’s heroine with identity and security.

Out of this examination of the fiancé figure, a related study of the resulting weddings within these three novels of manners seems naturally to emerge. In fact, just as the future husbands themselves represent a blend of birth and behavior, their

companionate marriages with the heroines further demonstrate this blend of patriarchy and capitalism. Indeed, the frequency of such marriages noticeably grew in England during the eighteenth century. While this trend may have originated from the capitalist society and its more open marriage market, the companionate marriage, however, did not entirely abandon the basic premise of protection promised in the patriarchy. Instead, this sense of security, rather than relying on female subjugation, was now established through affection and compatibility, or as Wikborg describes, through the husband's "capacities for empathy" with his wife as well as "the reliability of his love" for her (137). Throughout *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, *Evelina*, and *Northanger Abbey*, we see this new balance of security and individual identity through the various marriage contracts themselves as well as the characters' opinions of the contracts.

In Haywood's novel specifically, Mr. Truworth's liberal marriage settlement serves to ensure Betsy's financial and familial security based solely on his admiration for her. Haywood writes that the "instructions from Mr. Truworth for drawing up the writings" even convinces Betsy's guardian, Sir Ralph Trusty, of Truworth's "greatness of his generosity, and the sincerity of his love to the lady he was about to make his wife" (633). Moreover, Betsy herself also advocates for the mutual affection found in a companionate marriage when she declares to Lady Trusty, "it is not the place of nativity, nor the birth, nor the estate...that if ever I become a wife again, love, and infinity of love, shall be the chief inducement" (Haywood 630). Likewise, in *Evelina*, Burney presents a similar marriage settlement secured through reciprocal admiration. Even more so than Truworth, though, Lord Orville honors his heroine as a compatible companion by proposing "to Evelina while she is destitute of a lady's two most important material

assets—family and fortune” (Wikborg 55). For, as Barker notes, Orville’s disregard for “all social and pecuniary considerations” in marrying Evelina ultimately “demonstrates the strong idealism of his love” (3).

Finally, in *Northanger Abbey*, it is Henry Tilney’s affection for Catherine that at last leads him to disregard his father’s displeasure and secure their joint happiness in a marriage contract. Furthermore, much like Haywood’s Betsy, Austen’s Catherine also explicitly declares her disgust with financially and not amorously driven weddings. She passionately admits, “I hate the idea of one great fortune looking out for another. And to marry for money I think the wickedest thing in existence” (Austen 111). Accordingly, this sentiment that Catherine espouses, this belief in “a sympathy of sensibility realized in unions that have as their aim, not the unification of estates that furthers a corporate interest, but of one private individual to her complementary counterpart,” actually epitomizes what Mackie calls the “modern romance” (7). Overall then, this companionate marriage between the fiancés and the heroines is able to provide security without suppression by encouraging men and women alike to wed out of reciprocal affection along with “mutual consent and free will” (Stuart 562).

Besides these contracts which replaced subjugation with love and compatibility, the blending of patriarchy and capitalism also emerges within the companionate marriage through the husbands’ and wives’ recognition of each others’ unique worth. In fact, this recognition balances the security of the marriage contract with affirmation of individual identity, especially for the eighteenth-century heroines who now saw a “dramatic rise in the status for a woman’s personal qualities” (Wikborg 51). Within *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, Haywood demonstrates this mutual appreciation of merits by not only

allowing Betsy to realize Truworth's numerous virtues, but, more importantly, by having Truworth acknowledge and affirm Betsy's virtues. After first rejecting Truworth, Betsy finally acknowledges:

the merits of Mr. Truworth...the amiableness of his person, --his fine understanding,--his generosity, --his bravery, --his wit, and the delicacy and elegance of his conversation, seemed to her impossible to be equaled;... and could not help be very sensibly affected, that she had rashly thrown away her pretensions to the heart of so valuable a man. (Haywood 387)

Conversely, despite Betsy's initial immaturity, Truworth at last admires her "virtue and her prudence" (Haywood 619).

In *Evelina*, this mutual acknowledgment of merits works much the same way. From the beginning of Burney's novel of manners, Evelina praises Orville's nobility, his honor, his humility, his "open, manly, and charming" countenance, along with his apparent "ideal perfection"(Burney 413, 288-9). By the end of the text, however, he in turn upholds her artlessness, her "natural love of virtue," as well as her exalted and pure mind (Burney 486, 507). Therefore, out of "his respectful recognition" of her merits, Orville essentially affirms "her unique value as a person" (Wikborg 5). Ending with *Northanger Abbey*, we see this same reciprocity of individual worth. While Catherine acknowledges Henry's noble character, his manly "clearness of...head," and his general "good sense" (Austen 100, 216), Henry also appreciates in Catherine "the excellencies of her character," her superior "good-nature," and her delightful society (Austen 212, 118). In fact, though some scholars have questioned the authenticity of "Henry Tilney's attraction to Catherine" (Burlin 91), Katrin Ristkok Burlin argues instead that their

relationship “is believable for many reasons....But what makes the relationship most persuasive is that Catherine is unaffectedly good, and Henry... admires goodness more than cleverness” (91). Overall, in examining Burney’s text specifically, Wikborg offers a more general summation of this matrimonial blend between the patriarchal lover and the capitalist suitor. She explains that such a “tribute” to the heroine’s “personal qualities is deeply gratifying” not only because it comes “from a man of impressive rank,” but because it comes from a man who combines “the exalted father figure’s proof of his love with the noble lover’s admiration” (Wikborg 55). With this emphasis on mutual respect and individual affirmation, then, the companionate marriage once again balances security with individual identity.

Finally, with eighteenth-century women’s security now established through love and compatibility, and with their identity now upheld through recognition of their individual merit, the companionate marriage’s blend of patriarchy and capitalism offers one last, but incredibly important, benefit: a measure of equality. Indeed, as Shea Stuart notes, “with the rise of the companionate marriage, women and men were to work together for the good of the household” (562). Through such sharing of responsibilities within the family, the power also eventually came to be shared. Beginning with *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, Haywood presents this balance of power through Truworth’s discourse on “the divine ordinance of marriage” (375). In this speech, he highlights both husband’s and wife’s mutual responsibilities. Specifically Truworth describes the companionate marriage as “that state, when two persons of virtue, honour, and good sense, were by love and law united, and found themselves equally bound by duty and inclination, to make each other’s happiness” (Haywood 375).

Meanwhile, though Burney does not offer such an explicit overture on marital equality within her novel, the fact that Lord Orville and Evelina both work to redeem the false Miss Belmont and Macartney ultimately demonstrates their power-sharing role in restoring the family name and estate. For, as Hamilton observes, “rather than testing how much power he can wield over Evelina” in such a peculiar predicament, instead “Orville seeks to empower her,” thereby adhering to her requests regarding her brother and sister-in-law (429). As for *Northanger Abbey*, Austen returns to a more direct, albeit more parodied, explanation of equality in marriage. With an air of mock gravity, Henry presents “a country-dance as an emblem of marriage” (Austen 69). Through this extremely idealized yet amusing analogy, he explains to Catherine:

...we have entered into a contract of mutual agreeableness...and all our agreeableness belongs solely to each other... Fidelity and complaisance are the principal duties of both...it is an engagement between man and woman, formed for the advantage of each; and that when once entered into, they belong exclusively to each other till the moment of its dissolution; that it is their duty, each to endeavour to give the other no cause for wishing that he or she had bestowed themselves elsewhere... (Austen 69-70)

However serious he may or may not have been, though, Henry’s speech still portrays an image of matrimony in which the partners are mutually bound to perform everything in their power to please one another (Austen 69). Therefore, first through compatible love, then through personal merit, and now through power sharing, the companionate marriage presents an ideal culmination of the father, the suitor, and the fiancé.

In the end, facing the turbulent transition between the patriarchy and capitalism, these eighteenth-century novelists neither reject nor reform either of the competing systems. Instead, through the masculine figure of the fiancé, Haywood, Burney, and Austen manage to blend the best of both socioeconomic structures. By combining the protective role of the father with the liberating role of the lover, these female authors, according to Wikborg, each create “an ideal suitor and future husband who would use his power to authorize a woman’s being rather than to destroy it” (11). Thus, rather than subjugating, commodifying, or exploiting their respective heroines, each of these future husbands values his future wife “as a person in her own right” (Wikborg 150). Ultimately, through such novels of manners as *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, *Evelina*, and *Northanger Abbey*, a sort of socioeconomic prescription emerges which sought to provide eighteenth-century women with not only security and identity, but more importantly, with a certain amount of autonomy and equality.

Conclusion

When I first began to consider my focus for this thesis, I knew I wanted to explore some fresh idea, something different from what I had previously studied. Consequently, because in the past I have favored women's issues, I decided to concentrate instead on the men depicted within my preferred period and genre of literature, eighteenth-century British fiction. However, in spite of my efforts to focus on masculine figures, I found myself returning to the struggles of women through this new venue. Yet, this somewhat circular process has yielded many fruitful discoveries as I now have a larger perspective of and greater appreciation for the obstacles facing women during this time period, particularly women writers.

Of course, however much my understanding has grown, this discussion has not been exhaustive. Indeed, there are plenty of male characters still left to examine in the three texts that I chose to include, and there are plenty of novels of manners left to be examined as well. Instead of attempting a more extensive approach, though, I wanted to establish a basic premise that would enable me to explore the more general pattern of connections between the male characters, the socioeconomic structures, and the novels' heroines. Naturally, there are many complexities related to this topic that remain to be studied. For instance, the socioeconomic aspect of this discussion could lend itself to a further investigation of eighteenth-century political parties and parliament legislation. Meanwhile, the relationship between the male characters and the heroines could easily lead into more of a psychological investigation of male and female subjectivity.

In the end, however, throughout this examination of Eliza Haywood's *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless*, Frances Burney's *Evelina*, and Jane Austen's *Northanger*

Abbey, my objective, though more basic, has been two-fold. First, I hope to have demonstrated that beyond existing as mere plot devices or subordinate cast members, the male characters within each of these texts in particular, and within the novel of manners in general, deserve serious consideration. Although often overshadowed by the female protagonist and her polite social setting, these masculine types nevertheless serve a significant purpose. Indeed, each of the authors discussed in this study, not only use such male figures as the father and the suitor to critique the competing systems of patriarchy and capitalism, but, more importantly, these novelists utilize the male figure of the fiancé to offer their own solution to the socioeconomic turmoil of eighteenth-century England.

In fact, this leads me to the second point of my objective, which was to have demonstrated that the novel of manners, more than merely domestic or didactic, actually possesses national implications. Rather than ignoring or glossing over the debates of this transitional time period, this traditionally feminine type of fiction actively engages in its own cultural context. For embedded within such stories of etiquette, exists a prescription for a new socioeconomic order that could meet the unique needs of the predominately female readership, needs that were more often than not overlooked by Great Britain's institutionalized, masculine government. As exemplified by Haywood, Burney, and Austen, then, the female authors of the novel of manners seem to manipulate male types in order to promote, however subtly, their own political agendas, thereby allowing them simultaneously to anticipate and to advance the growing empowerment of women which would gradually develop in the following centuries.

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