A ROMANCE WORLD OF THEIR OWN: GENERIC AND PATRIARCHAL BOUNDARIES UNSETTLED IN "EVELINA" AND "THE FEMALE QUIXOTE"[1]

KENDİLERİNE AİT BİR ROMANS DÜNYASI: "EVELINA" VE "THE FEMALE QUIXOTE"DE TÜRSEL VE ATAERKİL SINIRLARIN SARSILMASI

Hakan YILMAZ
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi, Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy Üniversitesi, Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi, Batı Dilleri ve Edebiyatları Bölümü, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı, hknylmzz@gmail.com

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Abstract
The continuity between the romance and the novel genres has been undermined since the latter's emergence in the eighteenth century despite the conceptual confusion regarding these genres at the time. Many critics de-contextualize the novel as if it came into being merely as a reaction to and through a complete break with the former literary genres, and hence fail to see its many connections to the romance in terms of structure and content. Though we have today made more or less clear-cut distinctions between romance and novel, the flexible and interchangeable use of these terms for the better part of the eighteenth century demonstrates that they overlap more than differ in their qualities. Therefore, by bringing into the spotlight the romance elements and qualities prevalent in the eighteenth-century novel, this paper aims at unearthing and exploring how certain romance elements and generic instability of the novel genre open up a space and serve a liberating function for Arabella and Evelina in the strictly patriarchal eighteenth-century society in Charlotte Lennox's The Female Quixote (1752) and Frances Burney's Evelina (1778).

Öz
Romans ve roman türleri arasındaki süreklilik romanın ortaya çıkığı on sekizinci yüzyıldan beri, bu dönemde bu türlerle ilgili kavramsal karmaşaya rağmen, göz ardı edilmiştir. Birçok eleştirmen romanı, ondan önce gelen edebi türlere sanki sadece bir tepki olarak ve onlardan tamamıyla kopmasıyla vuku bulmuş gibi bağlamından bağımsız inceler ve böylelikle yapı ve içerik açısından onun romansa olan birçok bağlantısını göremez. Günümüzde romans ve roman arasında aşağı yukarı belirgin ayrımlar yapmış olmamıza rağmen, bu terimlerin on sekizinci yüzyılın büyük bir kısmında esnek ve birbirinin yerine kullanımı, onların özelliklerinin farklı olmasından çok örtüştüğünü gösterir. Böylelikle, bu makale, on sekizinci yüzyıl romanında yaygın olan romans elementleri ve özellikleri ön plana çıkararak, roman türünün belli başlı romans unsurlarının ve türsel istikrarsızlığının, Charlotte Lennox'un The Female Quixote (1752) ve Frances Burney'nin Evelina (1778) adlı romanlarında, kesin surette ataerkil olan on sekizinci yüzyıl toplumunda Arabella ve Evelina için nasıl bir alan açtığını ve özgürleştiren bir işlev görevi gördüğünü ortaya koymayı ve incelemeyi hedeflemektedir.

Introduction

The emergence of the novel genre is traditionally and yet contestably associated with the rise of the middle class and its demand for a narrative form reflective of their lives and tastes. Not until the mid or late eighteenth century, however, did such narrative forms begin to be called "novels" as distinct from other forms or labels prevalent at the time. Rather, "*we are confronted with a much more complicated usage*" of the term "novel" at the time because "*seventeenth- and early*

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eighteenth-century writers often use the terms 'romance,' 'history,' and 'novel' with an evident interchangeability that must bewilder and frustrate all modern expectations" (McKeon, *The Origins…* 25). Though more or less clear-cut distinctions have been made among history, romance, and novel, such a flexible and interchangeable use of these terms for the better part of the eighteenth century demonstrates that they overlap more than differ in their qualities and characteristics. For instance, in *A Dictionary of the English Language*, Samuel Johnson defines "*novel*" succinctly as "*a small tale, generally of love*" (1374). With this very brief definition that emphasizes the theme of love, Johnson already establishes a link between the novel and the romance. In his rendition, the novel appears as a somewhat shorter version of French romances the examples of which were quite popular in England at the time. This close association between the novel and the romance disturbed many prominent novelists of the time like Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding who felt uncomfortable calling their works novels, took care to avoid such labels as novel and romance, and instead promoted their otherwise fictional works under the rubric of history or historical account.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, however, the muddy waters of conceptual confusion regarding these genres started to clear with attempts coming from writers themselves. One notable figure that alluded to the problematics of generic categories was Horace Walpole who, in the second preface (1765) to his immensely popular gothic novel *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), draws attention to "*the two kinds of romance, the ancient and the modern*" (65). He further writes that "*[i]n the former, all was imagination and improbability: in the latter, nature is always intended to be, and sometimes has been, copied with success*" (65). His distinction points to the difficulty of completely marking one from the other; however, the modern one apparently refers to the novel genre in which "*[i]nvention has not been wanting; but the great resources of fancy have been dammed up, by a strict adherence to common life*" (Walpole 65). His understanding of the modern romance indicates a revision of the ancient one, especially in the former's subscription to "common life" which is missing in the latter. A similar and yet more robust attempt to demarcate the novel from the romance was undertaken by another novelist, Clara Reeve who makes the following comparison in *The Progress of Romance* (1785):

> The Romance is an heroic fable, which treats of fabulous persons and things. The Novel is a picture of real life and manners, and of the times in which it is written. The Romance in lofty and elevated language, describes what never happened nor is likely to happen. The Novel gives

> a familiar relation of such things, as pass every day before our eyes, such as may happen to our friend, or to ourselves; and the perfection of it, is to represent every scene, in so easy and natural a manner, and to make them appear so probable, as to deceive us into a persuasion (at least while we are reading) that all is real, until we are affected by the joys or distresses of the persons in the story, as if they were our own. (111)

In the course of the eighteenth century, there was much confusion and also a growing concern about these concepts and what they indicated, and thus Reeve's attempt to come to terms with them by identifying their differences demonstrates that confusion was giving place to the establishment of relatively more stable and more clearly defined categories. Her brief characterization or differentiation as such not only overlaps with Walpole's emphasis on "*common life*" (65) but also, in a prescient fashion, has laid the foundations of a traditional understanding of the novel genre "*whose primary criterion was truth to individual experience*" (Watt 13) for the next two hundred years.

Uneasiness about the interchangeable usage of the romance and the novel common in the eighteenth century has found voice in many of the twentieth-century critical approaches to the novel genre, too. This interchangeability has been much denounced and rejected by some critics who situate the novel in stark opposition to the romance. For Arnold Kettle, for example, "*[t]he novel, we may say, arose as a realistic reaction to the medieval romance and its courtly descendants of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; the great eighteenth-century novels are nearly all anti-romances*" (Kettle 207). In a similar vein, for Ian Watt, the works of the eighteenth-century writers constituted "*a break with the old-fashioned romances" and realism is "the defining characteristic which differentiates the work of the early eighteenth-century novelists from previous fiction*" (10). These critics de-contextualize the novel as if it came into being merely as a reaction to and through a complete break with the former literary fashions, and hence fail to see its many connections to the romance in terms of structure and content. The aforementioned interchangeable and ambiguous use of various terms (history, romance, novel) in the eighteenth century already hints at a process in which each term draws upon others to develop their own distinctive features. As Northrop Frye emphasizes, "*[w]hen the novel was established in the eighteenth century, it came to a reading public familiar with the formulas of prose romance. It is clear that the novel was a realistic displacement of romance ...*" (38). What Frye calls "*displacement*" is "*the adjusting of formulaic structures to a roughly*

credible context" (36). Frye seems convinced that plausibility and credibility lie at the heart of the novel genre as indicative of the newly emerging novel genre's difference from previous fiction, especially romances. However, he ostensibly has some reservations about the much-promoted rigid differentiation of the novel from the romance. Many eighteenth-century novels, says Frye, "*use much the same general structure as romance, but adapt that structure to a demand for greater conformity to ordinary experience*" (38–39). Indeed, the eighteenth-century novel drew upon some qualities of the romance and refashioned them in accordance with the eighteenth-century contemporary daily life. Approaching the "*categorial instability*" from a dialectical perspective without reducing the novel to a new genre that completely broke up with the previous established tradition of romance, Michael McKeon maintains that the eighteenth-century "*narrative procedures ... may explicitly subvert the idea and ethos of romance, but they also draw, without apparent irony, on many of its stock situations and conventions*" ("Generic Transformation…" 383). Therefore, this paper aims at unearthing and exploring how certain romance elements and generic instability of the novel genre open up a space and serve a liberating function for Arabella and Evelina in the strictly patriarchal eighteenth-century society in Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote* (1752) and Frances Burney's *Evelina* (1778).

Generic Instability: Romance in *Evelina* and *The Female Quixote*

The surge of interest in the eighteenth-century studies and the rediscovery of the so-called "*minor works*" (Hunter 11) in the 1980s triggered a myriad of critical studies that contested the traditional conception of the novel genre envisioned by critics like Ian Watt and Arnold Kettle, and instead explored the potential unbreakable links between the novel and the romance. For example, comparable to Northrop Frye's aforementioned argument, Jane Spencer writes that "*the novel depends heavily on those romantic elements*," and further maintains that "*[n]ovels use structures derived from romance such as the quest, the rise and progress of a low-born or apparently low-born hero, the unknown protagonist's discovery of his or her real identity and parentage*" (181). Such patterns were, indeed, observable in many novels of the time by either male or female writers the most glaring example of which is probably Richardson's *Pamela* whose low-born heroine climbs the social ladder from the lowest rungs to the topmost in an unprecedented fashion. Similarly, in Henry Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* (1742), the supposedly low-born titular hero turns out to be the son of a rich aristocratic family, the Wilsons, at the end of the novel. With their

adoption of a more or less similar romance structure and elements, Frances Burney's *Evelina* and Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote* are no exceptions.

Published anonymously in 1778 for fear of ubiquitous marginalization and condemnation to which women writers were exposed by their male counterparts (Bartu 109–110), Burney's *Evelina* recounts the story of the young eponymous heroine who leaves the rural Berryhill where she is raised as an orphan by Rev. Mr. Villars to live with her relatives in London. At the end of the novel she is revealed to be the daughter of Sir John Belmont, thereby discovering her real identity and parentage as in romances. On the other hand, Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote*, which, like *Evelina*, was published anonymously, follows the adventures of Arabella who grows up reading her deceased mother's French romances without any guidance and, "*[a]s a result of reading so many romances she is completely immersed in a romantic world*" and apparently mistakes the chivalric values and rules of romances for those of the real world (Spender 202). With its centralization of a world of romance, Lennox's novel—which John Skinner dubiously calls "*(anti)-romance*" (22)—holds a precarious position in its ambivalence with regard to whether the author denounces or praises romances. The use of such romance structure and elements, as will be argued presently, provides the heroines with a vantage point from which they not only construct their own reality but also affirm their existence. It further enables the heroines to carve out and appropriate a metaphorical space of their own within the otherwise stifling patriarchal scene. As such, the use of romance elements makes it possible for the heroines to imagine a new order that both undermines the present one and threatens to displace it.

Both Evelina's and Arabella's first encounters with eighteenth-century reality and etiquette backlash in both cases since Evelina is not familiar with the codes and conduct of manners of London society and Arabella lives in her own imaginary reality which comes as a stark contrast to that of the eighteenth century. When Evelina leaves the countryside and her father-like mentor Mr. Villars, and comes to London for the first time, her journey in London begins with social *faux pas*. Commenting on this situation, Judy Simons notes that

> Evelina's artlessness, the quality so admired in women, initially leads her into unacceptable actions. At first, ignorant of the rules which govern London's stratified society, she commits social faux pas, refusing a partner who asks her to dance, because she dislikes him and laughs openly at what she finds to be ridiculous behavior. (131).

In this scene, Evelina rejects the hand of a fashionable and "*foppish*" man, Mr. Lovel, and is even entertained by his ridiculousness and foppishness to such an extent that she "*turns to Miss Mirvan to conceal [her] laughter*" (Burney 31). Evelina assumes the ultimate right to choose her first dance partner herself, and she is already convinced that it is her right to do so. Evelina continues to voice her real thoughts about the situation at the ball as follows: "*The gentlemen, as they passed and repassed, looked as if they thought we were quite at their disposal, and only waiting for the honour of their commands …*" (Burney 30). As an outsider at this point, Evelina inhabits a critical detached position from which she can directly observe and evaluate the situation without being compromised by the existing normative codes of London society. As Bartu puts it, for Evelina, the ball turns out to be an event where "*one cannot have fun because of the rules of the ballroom*" and where "*men choose women and lord it over other men*" (113).[2] Evelina shines a critical light on the already accepted forms of conduct by making the sharp observation that courtship is dominated and controlled by men since, according to the etiquette, they are the ones that are entitled to choose their partners in the first place. Put differently, when they ask women to dance with them, women should not reject the offer according to decorum. Hence, while decorum prescribes a set of appropriate behaviors and manners that helps regulate the conduct of all members of the society, Evelina's artlessness in this scene and ignorance of these manners create an antithetical position that questions the regulatory system itself.

The naïve reaction of Evelina to the dance offer, thus, highlights a number of issues. First, Evelina inhabits a position that is not amenable to or is oblivious to the norms of London society. Second, her not coming from a shared background or her not sharing the same background as that of other guests at the ball equips her with a pair of fresh eyes that can critically evaluate what she witnesses. From this point of view, the dance incident not only "*proves that Evelina is unaware of the social norms*" but also, more importantly, "*demonstrates that she has not yet succumbed to … [nor] internalized the patriarchal rules of the time*" (Bartu 115). In this sense, Evelina, not yet versed in eighteenth-century etiquette, could see through the societal normative veil that normalizes and naturalizes male-dominant courtship pattern. Moreover, Evelina's rather unbecoming behavior (rejecting the dance offer straight away) creates a contrast to the polite and decorous London society in which free will

[2] Unless otherwise stated, all translations from Turkish sources belong to the author of this article.

seems to be stifled by the societal norms that were encouraged via conduct books as well as journals like *The Tatler*, *The Spectator*, *The Female Tatler,* and *The Female Spectator*. Her obliviousness is further revealed when she accepts Lord Orville's hand for dance (because she finds him attractive) *after* having rejected Mr. Lovel's—which constitutes the *faux pas*.

Evelina's firm stance with regard to the presumption that *she* has the right to choose, not the other way around, harks back to romance ladies' attitude toward their lovers. This scene in *Evelina*, therefore, operates on two levels. First, people think of Evelina as a very naïve and countryside girl (in fact, she is) so she can be excused for her misdemeanor. Second, her unwitting *faux pas* defies men's patriarchal command over women because the social obligation of accepting the first hand offered to women for dance is another name for submission. In this respect, this patriarchal social order imposes passivity on women while attributing agency to men who play a more active role. Choosing or being in a position to choose requires being the active agent whereas being chosen, that is, not having the option to reject the first dance partner's hand, inevitably cripples women's potential of acting on their own desires and free will. Such seemingly innocuous social practices have immense political ramifications that socially immobilize women. Evelina's *faux pas* in this scene (in)advertently questions the current patriarchal order and revitalizes the agency of woman by replicating a typical romance scene where the lady preserves all rights to do whatever she likes with her suitor. And such sidestepping of the current order, albeit unconsciously, enables Evelina to not only inhabit a powerful active position but also express herself freely. In other words, this ballroom scene powerfully "*contests the place allotted to women*" and foregrounds "*the exploration of female experience*" and perspective (Aydoğdu-Çelik 41).

On the other hand, Arabella in *The Female Quixote* seems to have constructed her world on romance reality *per se*. From the very beginning, she assumes the identity of and thinks of herself as a romance heroine who, taking her cue from French romances, expects to be treated decorously and tries to control the conduct of others. Since Arabella is of age, her father thinks of marrying her off and "*for the first time, insinuate[s] his Design of giving [her cousin Granville] to her for an Husband*" (Lennox 27). This was a long implemented practice in which the father figure retained his power over his household, especially regarding the prospective marriage of his children. Women were regarded as the "property" of their fathers and, after marriage, this "property" was transferred to the husband. Until The Married Women's Property

Act 1882 in the UK, women had not been recognized as legal entities separate from their husbands, and could not own anything to their name, or keep their own money (Hayward 71). Given the circumstances of the eighteenth-century society, decisions concerning the marriage of his children ultimately rested with the father. Moreover, such prospective marriages were for the most part arranged marriages that were guided by monetary or other motives: to keep money within the family; to climb the social hierarchical ladder; to make peace and resolve feuds between families, etc. So in Arabella's case, for an eighteenth-century reader, her father's plan for her daughter is quite ordinary and even natural by the period's standards. However, Arabella is shocked to hear such a proposal since she expects to marry, as do all heroines of romances, after "*a great Number of Cares, Disappointments, and Distresses of various Kinds*" and after "*her Lover should purchase her with his Sword from a Croud of Rivals*" (Lennox 27). Margaret Anne Doody writes that

> [i]t is through assuming the powers the romances offer that Arabella can command a space … and take upon herself the power to control the movements and behavior of others. She succeeds amazingly in making her male kinsmen pay attention to her wishes and not assume that she is automatically under their control. (xxiv).

Arabella, thus, projects the world of romances she is familiar with through her extensive readings onto her own life which would under normal circumstances be bound by the very societal norms that encapsulate Evelina's life in London.

However, Arabella's father had moved to the English countryside upon marrying Arabella's mother who died during the childbirth, and Arabella grew up in a castle in the countryside, reading her mother's French romances which indelibly shaped her outlook on life, social relations, and love. Accordingly, the world she imagines herself to be in clashes with the real one. The world of romances she is familiar with situates the lady at the center by investing her with ultimate power over her suitors. The lady in romances not only retains her power over men but also appears as the active agent by keeping exclusive rights to any decision she is to make about her own life. As Aytül Özüm argues, "*Arabella can only achieve freedom by identifying with the women in the books she reads because the female heroines in [these] books … are superior to their lovers, [and] in a sense can control them*" (136). In this regard, in Arabella's perception of the world, the lady is unquestionably the sole decision maker—which explains why Arabella is shocked to hear her father's proposal and immediately rejects it. Similar to Evelina's lack of knowledge about the eighteenth-century social etiquette, Arabella's detachment from the eighteenth-

century reality provides her with a powerful position where she easily confronts and undermines patriarchy, and creates a space for herself in which she can act according to her will without the limitations of societal prescriptive norms. Her immersion in romances and their alternative reality endows her with power to steer clear of patriarchal limitations imposed on women. She enjoys the very space opened up by her readings of romances as seen in her cousin Glanville's willingness to play along. For instance, early in the narrative, the narrator reveals that although Glanville thinks there is an "*oddity*" about her, "*he could not help admiring her ... as he was really passionately in Love with her, he resolved to accommodate himself, as much as possible, to her Taste, and endeavor to gain her Heart ...*" (Lennox 45–46). Likewise, even after Arabella orders her uncle (Glanville's father) to leave her room, Glanville still praises her to his father: "*[T]he native Elegance of her Manners give an inimitable Grace to her Behaviour; and as much exceed the studied Politeness of other Ladies ... as the Beauties of her Person do all I have ever seen*" (Lennox 64). Therefore, Arabella's world of romance not only serves a liberating function for her but also presents a glimpse of an alternative world order which is in contradistinction to the patriarchal one.

World of Gentlemen *sans Peur et sans Reproche* and Charming Women

The presentation of an alternative (fantasy) world in romances and romance-tinted narratives has been taken to be the decisive marker of their difference from novels. Arguing for the realism of the novel genre, Arnold Kettle writes that it "*presupposes a more objective, controlled and conscious view of reality*" in stark opposition to the romance which offers "*a world of chivalry and exciting adventures, of gallant men and charming women, of bad magicians and Christian gentlemen sans peur et sans reproche, above all of idealized love*" (211, 209). Despite Kettle's persistent attempts to differentiate the two genres as neatly as possible, many qualities usually attributed to romances had already made their way into the eighteenth-century novel through French prose romances that were very popular and widely translated into English at the time. In this respect, Kettle fails to discern many of the continuities and similarities between the two genres. Kettle's "gallant men" and "charming women" in romances are, in fact, simply turned into gentlemen and beautiful heroines. To give an example, Lord Orville in *Evelina* is the embodiment of, what Kettle calls, a complete gentleman *sans peur et sans reproche*, that is, perfect and beyond criticism. Similarly, with his ultimate care and concern for Arabella, Granville appears to be a perfect gentleman reminiscent of the attentive and doting

lover in romances. Moreover, idealized love—the very motif Arnold Kettle identifies in the romance genre as that which marks it different from the novel genre—makes its way into most of the eighteenth-century novels, and "*romantic love, disparaged by moralists, was essential to most novels*" (Spencer 186). It was not just essential but at the same time occupied a central place in many of the novels of the time, and *Evelina* and *The Female Quixote* were no exceptions. For example, while attempting to please Arabella and fulfill her wishes, Granville finds himself entangled in the midst of a romance world in which he gradually takes on and embodies almost all the qualities attributed to romance heroes. Arabella's rebukes notwithstanding, Glanville does not give up on her and is almost ready to renounce his reality only to join her alternative reality so as to be with her. The extent of his love for her reveals to him that the only way to reach her is to play by the rules of her world. For instance, when Arabella forbids Glanville to ever make advances to her, he has no other option than to obey *her* command: "*tho' it was my Uncle's Command I should make my Addresses to her, she received me so ill, as a Lover, that I have never dared to talk to her upon that Subject since*" (Lennox 64). In a sense, if "*the most important trait of a romance hero is being noble and gentle, and sacrificing everything and risking death for a lady*" (Özüm 136), then Granville is much like a romance hero who is tested and, albeit reluctantly, goes through a myriad of ordeals to win the love of his lady.

Similarly, in Evelina's case, although Lord Orville sees Evelina with a number of prostitutes in a park (since Evelina takes them for good people and seeks their help after being lost in the park), he does not think of Evelina as an immoral person. Instead, upon seeing her thus with two women of dubious character, what he feels is concern for Evelina, not indignation or disdain. Upon this incident, Evelina writes in a letter to Mr. Villars that "*Good God, with what expressive eyes did [Orville] regard me! Never were surprise and concern so strongly marked ... he looked greatly concerned ...*" (Burney 236). Given the circumstances in which she was spotted by Orville, Evelina is surprised to find only concern in his eyes and to see how different and well-mannered his response was. As Evelina further writes in her letter to Mr. Villars,

> [h]e 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:—perplexed, indeed, he looked, and much surprised:—but it was benevolently, not with insolence … But 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.... (Burney 239).

Despite the odds, Orville appears to be the embodiment of a gallant knight we are used to encounter in romances—a gentleman that sees no fault in his lady and adores her sincere character. Moreover, when they meet in Holborn, Orville feels obliged to assure Evelina that he "*seek[s] no explanation, for [he] [has] no doubt*" of her purity (Burney 241). Instead of seeking explanation from her or making judgmental remarks, Orville apologizes to her for broaching this sensitive subject: "*[I] feared you might be deceived. A something which I could not resist, urged me to the freedom I have taken to caution you; but I shall not easily forgive myself if I have been so unfortunate as to give you pain*" (Burney 241). In this respect, much like a romance hero, "*the socially impeccable hero*" Orville (Epstein 202) takes it on himself to keep an eye on his lady and assumes the role of a protective lover/suitor as seen in his saving Evelina from Sir Clement Willoughby's attempt to "*detain Miss [Evelina] Anville by force*" (Burney 344). Although his typecasting as a perfect gentleman makes it "*unlikely, that, in real life, a well-bred young man would have displayed as much patience and perseverance as Lord Orville to decipher the character of a timid young girl met by mere chance*" (Paluchowska-Messing 113), it nevertheless demonstrates how the qualities of a typical romance hero made their way into the purportedly realist novel, accordingly bringing along another set of male-female relations which prioritizes women over men and thus is inimical to the eighteenth-century patriarchal social relations.

Reconfiguration of Power Relations: Patriarchal Order (Con)tested

In seventeenth-century French romances, writes Jane Spencer, "*the normal hierarchy of the sexes was reversed, and the woman reigned*," and further draws attention to the fact that "*[t]hese romances, much read in England in the seventeenth century, were soon overtaken in popularity by the novel in the eighteenth; but when the novel centered on a heroine, it usually reproduced the romance's emphasis on the power of love*" (184). Given the influence of romance on the novel genre, in both *Evelina* and *The Female Quixote*, we see the heroines resist being incorporated into the patriarchal order and thus oppose the traditional patriarchal (im)position that expects women to unconditionally yield to men. For instance, in the latter half of the novel, while staying with the Branghtons in Holborn, Evelina meets Mr. Macartney—a sad lonely lodger at Mr. Branghton's shop (who later turns out to be Evelina's brother)—whom she finds on the verge of committing suicide and dissuades from

killing himself. Since Macartney feels a sense of gratitude to Evelina for saving him, he pays her a visit in Clifton and Orville sees them talking to each other in the garden. Orville becomes presumably jealous and displeased upon this sight but he struggles to contain it: "*[Macartney] bowed, and went away; while I, turning again to Lord Orville, saw his countenance so much altered ... He did not again offer me his hand; but walked, silent and slow, by my side*" (Burney 298). When Lord Orville makes some inquiries about Mr. Macartney, he assumes there is an affair between him and Evelina, and demands an explanation from Evelina. At this point, Evelina holds her ground and refuses to disclose anything about the nature of her relationship with Mr. Macartney, and instead tells Lord Orville that she will explain everything when the time comes: "*I determined not only to keep [Macartney's] secret, but to delay any sort of explanation [to] Lord Orville ...*" (Burney 303). Lord Orville, without any protest, complies with her wish and even apologizes for prying into her affairs: "*'I know not what evil genius pursues me this morning, but I seem destined to do or to say something I ought not: I am so much ashamed of myself, that I can scarce solicit your forgiveness'*" (Burney 304). Convinced of her purity and sense of judgment, Orville goes so far as to offer unconditional help to her to arrange a meeting with Mr. Macartney: "'*I will myself assist you!—Miss Anville ... I will ask no questions, I will rely upon her own purity, and, uninformed, blindfold as I am, I will serve her with all my power!*'" (Burney 319). By rejecting to answer to Lord Orville, Evelina refuses to submit to the will of patriarchy.

In a similar way, Arabella's treatment of Glanville, instead of distancing him from her, attracts him to Arabella more. As Helen Thomson puts it, Arabella's persistence in imposing her romance reality on others "*has its risks—her uncle thinks her mad more than once—but it succeeds in testing Glanville's heart and in teaching him to be her loyal knight, whose function is solely to please his mistress and shield her*" (115). Indeed, despite Arabella's censures on him, Glanville reveals both his attraction to and fear of Arabella, especially after Arabella's banishing him from her sight. Arabella does so because an actress disguised as Cynecia, a romance princess, convinces Arabella that Glanville is, in fact, Ariamenes (a romance hero) who was her unfaithful lover. This is a scheme set up by Sir George who, exploiting Arabella's obsession with romances, attempts to get rid of Glanville and marry Arabella himself. Despite not knowing the reason why Arabella expels him, Glanville comes closer to embodying the qualities of a romance hero in his reaction to this situation: "*Mr. Glanville, excessively shock'd at this Sight, instead of leaving her, threw himself on his Knees before her, and taking her Hand, which he tenderly prest to his Lips ...*" (Lennox

352). Glanville's love for Arabella makes him more than willing to suffer the treatment he receives at her hands because, as Margaret Anne Doody puts it, "*[l]ike her favorite heroines, [Arabella] is to be served with long and ardent devotion*" (xxii). The power of Granville's unconditional love for her makes it possible for Arabella to sidestep patriarchal norms by empowering her "*to impose her romantic visions on the real world. She turns Glanville's courtship into something closer to the long term devotion required in romance...*" (Spencer 190). In this regard, the world of romance in which the power of love prevails and which Arabella imposes on Granville reconfigures the patriarchal world order. The deeper Glanville is drawn into the depths of Arabella's world where she is the reigning lady, the more she is able to exercise her free will without being bound by patriarchal norms that would restrain her.

Through the end of both novels, however, the defiance and liberty of Evelina and Arabella provided by romance structure and elements are curtailed to a great extent and brought to an end because both heroines find themselves pulled back and incorporated into the web of patriarchal order by virtue of their marriage to Lord Orville and Glanville respectively. Their marriage eradicates the alternative world order envisioned by the heroines and removes them from their powerful position that enabled them in the first place to act rather freely. In the patriarchal society of the eighteenth century, marriage institution further strips them of their individuality and legal existence, and turns them into their husbands' properties. Their autonomous position which they could enjoy and maintain during the courtship phase now comes to an end. In other words, having been displaced from their previous independent position, they are now completely subjected to their husbands. In a sense, the space opened up by their romance world is confiscated by the male figures upon marriage. Arabella's and Evelina's reigns end when they choose to marry their suitors. In so doing, they conform to the societal norms and rules so as to unite with their lovers. Arabella has to renounce her romance world and reality to marry Glanville, and in a similar vein, Evelina replaces her mentor-protector Mr. Villars with Lord Orville.

Evelina could have liberty only after her departure from her guardian Mr. Villars to go to London where she has not an authoritative figure to supervise her. In addition, since she is raised as an orphan (her father did not acknowledge her at birth), she does not have a father figure to whom she belongs: "*I hardly know, my Lord [Orville], I hardly know myself to whom I most belong*" (Burney 353). Upon this dialogue, Orville proposes to her and wants to "*hasten the time when that [the issue of Evelina's not knowing of whom she belongs to] shall no longer admit a doubt ... [he]*

may call [her] all his own" (Burney 353). However, as she is fully aware, Evelina's freedom to act on her own will probably come to an end if she confronts her father Sir John Belmont and he acknowledges her as his legitimate daughter. This explains why she responds to Orville's proposal as follows: "*you ask what I have no power to grant. This journey [to see her father] will deprive me of all right to act for myself*" (Burney 354). Upon seeing Evelina and her resemblance to her deceased mother Caroline, Sir John Belmont realizes that he was, in fact, tricked into acknowledging the daughter of Caroline's nurse who is about the same age as Evelina, and thus acknowledges Evelina as his rightful heiress. The recognition of Evelina as Sir John Belmont's daughter immediately strips her of any claim to her freedom to act for herself, and all the marriage arrangements already start without her being in the know, as Mrs. Selwyn informs her: "'*you are next week to be married to Lord Orville!' … 'Next week!—dear Madam, what a strange plan!—without my being consulted…*'" (Burney 376–377). Apparently, Mrs. Selwyn had introduced Orville to Sir John Belmont and they "*proceeded to business*" (Burney 377). In the face of all these preparations, Evelina's question, "*But why, my dear Madam, why all this haste? why may we not be allowed a little longer time?*" (Burney 377), is quite telling in that, although Evelina also desires to marry Orville, she is aware that marriage as a patriarchal institution in the eighteenth century brings to an end the freedom women enjoy during courtship. On the day of her marriage, Evelina writes her last letter to Mr. Villars, saying "*All is over, my dearest Sir, and the fate of your Evelina is decided!*" (Burney 406). Indeed, this last letter of hers falls on an ironic note because her fate is to be integrated into the web of patriarchal social relations and adopt the role of a submissive daughter and wife at the end of the novel.

Likewise, Arabella's romance world provides her with a prolonged courtship with Glanville during which she retains her power. However, as Doody states,

> [q]uixotes must be … made to recant. Certainly a young woman must find out that she cannot order the world in which she lives … and must be brought back to what the world acknowledges as a reality. For a woman, that reality means the end of all story, and a cessation of all power. (xxix).

And Arabella's transition into eighteenth-century reality is mediated—*after* a failed attempt by a female figure, the Countess (Lennox 328)—by a male figure, the doctor (an implicit reference to Dr. Johnson), who, through a form of Socratic dialogue or what Özüm calls "*a persuasion dialogue*" (140), works a "*miracle*" (Lennox 382) by convincing Arabella that "*these Histories*," that is, romances she so reveres, are in

fact "*fictions*," "*absurd*," and "*criminal*" (Lennox 374–382). Having been cured of her "*follies*" (Lennox 383), she can now be reintegrated into the patriarchal social order and assume her role of obedient and submissive wife through her marriage to Glanville. As such, Arabella "*forgoes her own control of the world, renounces narrative power, and submits to the role of object of the paternal authority which also claims to be the name of reason*" (Doody xxxii). Although both Arabella and Evelina marry their ideal lovers, the life that awaits them is, nevertheless, one in which they have no longer power and are subjected to the will of their husbands. As Aydoğdu-Çelik notes, women ultimately "*remain within the boundaries of the patriarchal system and the most autonomous choice they make is still as far as the social forces offer*" (49). Despite their marriages at the very end, these heroines, nevertheless, manage to steer clear of the patriarchal impositions nearly throughout the space of the novels.

Conclusion

Romance structure and elements employed strategically in Burney's *Evelina* and Lennox's *The Female Quixote* enable the heroines to have a transgressive space of their own where they contest gendered power relations and exercise their authority and free will. Burney and Lennox ingeniously achieve opening up such a liberatory space in their narratives by predicating their novels completely on the adventures of their independent female protagonists who put up a resistance to the patriarchal order. These heroines enjoy their freedom almost throughout the physical space of the novels in question because Evelina comes to London on her own in the early pages of the novel and Arabella refuses to submit to the patriarchal world order from the very beginning. Put differently, within the large physical space between the early and the final pages of the novels, these heroines break free from the restraining and stifling patriarchal norms. In a sense, Burney and Lennox make what is unthinkable in the strictly patriarchal eighteenth-century society thinkable within the space of their novels by playing on the novel genre's inherent generic instability. This instability empowers women in a fashion not likely to happen in the real world by allowing for prolonged courtships which constitute the whole subject matter of the novels, thereby making Evelina and Arabella relish their liberty until the very last pages. Their marriages literally occur on the final page of the respective novels with no fanfare and are allotted very minimal space in the form of a five-line letter, probably the shortest in the novel, in Evelina's case, and only one line in Arabella's. Hence, almost all of the available narrative space is usurped and taken up by the story of their prolonged courtships throughout which they have the upper hand. In

this regard, the liberatory space for these heroines is the very space of the novel itself which can accommodate, *qua* its categorial instability, the unimaginable adventures of such self-governing female figures as Evelina and Arabella.

Accordingly, the maneuvers enabled by romance qualities in these novels make it possible to open up venues of resistance to the established male-dominant order and offer a glimpse of change and alternative order within the otherwise seemingly immutable patriarchal system. Moreover, the rigid categorization of the romance and novel genres that inclined to associate romances with women writers in the eighteenth century can be seen as an extension of the patriarchal urge to keep in place the current order which marginalizes women writers. The categorial instability that we perceive upon closer inspection in eighteenth-century fiction reveals how the unyielding attempts to demarcate the two genres are, in fact, artificial attempts to place and contain women in the margins. In this respect, Frances Burney's *Evelina* and Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote* problematize the very premises of the novel by deriving and integrating many elements from the romance genre, hence blurring the romance/novel boundaries. Therefore, by virtue of such integration of romance structure and content in their novels, Burney and Lennox trouble the gendered power relations prevalent in the eighteenth century and instead envision a different world order where women have a say over their own lives, express themselves freely, and act on their free will.[3]

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Summary

The emergence of the novel genre is traditionally and yet contestably associated with the rise of the middle class and its demand for a narrative form reflective of their lives and tastes. Not until the mid or late eighteenth century, however, did such narrative forms begin to be called "novels" as distinct from other forms or labels prevalent at the time. Rather, "*we are confronted with a much more complicated usage*" of the term "novel" at the time because "*seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century writers often use the terms 'romance,' 'history,' and 'novel' with an evident interchangeability that must bewilder and frustrate all modern expectations*" (McKeon, *The Origins…* 25). Though we have today made clear-cut distinctions among history, romance, and novel, such a flexible and interchangeable use of these terms for the better part of the eighteenth century demonstrates that they overlap more than differ in their qualities and characteristics. Uneasiness about the interchangeable usage of the romance and the novel common in the eighteenth century has found voice in many of the twentieth-century critical approaches to the novel genre, too. This

interchangeability has been much denounced and rejected by some critics who situate the novel in stark opposition to the romance. These critics de-contextualize the novel as if it came into being merely as a reaction to and through a complete break with the former literary fashions, and hence fail to see its many connections to the romance in terms of structure and content. Therefore, in the light of such discernible continuity between the two genres, this paper aims at unearthing and exploring certain romance elements in Frances Burney's *Evelina* and Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote* and at analyzing how the generic instability of the novel genre opens up a space and serves a liberating function for the heroines, Evelina and Arabella, in the strictly patriarchal eighteenth-century society.

The surge of interest in the eighteenth-century studies and the rediscovery of the so-called "*minor works*" (Hunter 11) in the 1980s triggered a myriad of critical studies that contested the traditional conception of the novel genre (e.g. Ian Watt, Arnold Kettle) and instead explored the potential unbreakable links between the novel and the romance. Jane Spencer writes that "*the novel depends heavily on those romantic elements*," and further maintains that "*[n]ovels use structures derived from romance such as the quest, the rise and progress of a low-born or apparently low-born hero, the unknown protagonist's discovery of his or her real identity and parentage*" (181). Such patterns were, indeed, observable in many novels of the time by either male or female writers. With their adoption of a more or less similar romance structure and romance elements, Frances Burney's *Evelina* and Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote* are no exceptions.

Published anonymously in 1778 for fear of ubiquitous marginalization and condemnation to which women writers were exposed by their male counterparts (Bartu 109–110), Burney's *Evelina* recounts the story of the young eponymous heroine who leaves the rural Berryhill where she is raised as an orphan by Rev. Mr. Villars to live with her relatives in London. At the end of the novel she is revealed to be the daughter of Sir John Belmont, thereby discovering her real identity and parentage as in romances. On the other hand, Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote*, which, like *Evelina*, was published anonymously, follows the adventures of Arabella who grows up reading her deceased mother's French romances without any guidance and, "*[a]s a result of reading so many romances she is completely immersed in a romantic world*" and apparently mistakes the chivalric values and rules of romances for those of the real world (Spender 202).

Romance structure and elements employed strategically in Burney's *Evelina* and Lennox's *The Female Quixote* enable the heroines to have a transgressive space of their own where they contest gendered power relations and exercise their authority and free will. Burney and Lennox ingeniously achieve opening up such a liberatory space in their narratives by predicating their novels completely on the adventures of their independent female protagonists who put up a resistance to the patriarchal order. These heroines enjoy their freedom almost throughout the physical space of the novels in question because Evelina comes to London on her own in the early pages of the novel and Arabella refuses to submit to the patriarchal world order from the very beginning. Put differently, within the large physical space between the early and the final pages of the novels, these heroines break free from the restraining and stifling patriarchal norms. In a sense, Burney and Lennox make what is unthinkable in the strictly patriarchal eighteenth-century society thinkable within the space of their novels by playing on the novel genre's inherent generic instability. This instability empowers women in a fashion not likely to happen in the real world by allowing for prolonged courtships which constitute the whole subject matter of the novels, thereby making Evelina and Arabella relish their liberty until the very last pages. Accordingly, the maneuvers enabled by romance qualities in these novels make it possible to open up venues of resistance to the established male-dominant order and offer a glimpse of change and alternative order within the otherwise seemingly immutable patriarchal system. Therefore, by virtue of such integration of romance structure and content in their novels, Burney and Lennox trouble the gendered power relations prevalent in the eighteenth century and instead envision a different world order where women have a say over their own lives, express themselves freely, and act on their free will.