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# THE MALE MENTOR FIGURE IN WOMEN'S FICTION, 1778-1801

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THE MALE MENTOR FIGURE IN WOMEN'S FICTION, 1778-1801

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DISSERTATION

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the  
College of Arts and Sciences  
at the University of Kentucky

By

Jessica R. Evans

Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Lisa Zunshine, Professor of English

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2017

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## ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

### THE MALE MENTOR FIGURE IN WOMEN'S FICTION, 1778-1801

This dissertation follows the development of the mentor figure from Frances Burney's *Evelina* published in 1778 to Maria Edgeworth's *Belinda* in 1801. The mentor becomes a key figure for exploring women's revolutionary ideas on female education and women's roles in society. My dissertation contributes to discussions on mentoring, development of the Gothic mode, and debates over sensibility and sentimental fiction. It considers how the female mentee paradoxically both desires and criticizes her male mentor and his authority. Each author under discussion employed the mentor figure in a way that addressed their contemporary society's issues and prejudices toward the treatment of women and the power of sensibility. Much of this treatment was traced to a conversation of reforming female education from an accomplishment-based pedagogy to a moral, intellectual-based instruction that was more masculine in nature (emphasizing a balance between sensibility and reason).

Frequently, the mentor provides general comments and recommendations about love to his female pupil, who is entering into the marriage market, but his advice often turns out to be wrong or misplaced since it does not fit the actual situation. He is a good spiritual guide but a poor romantic advisor. I assert that the mentor figure's usual lack of romantic sentiment and his pupil's ability to surpass him in matters of the heart reveal a tendency to subvert male authority. Throughout this discussion, questions related to gender arise. Women's desire for their own agency and control over both their minds and bodies underpin much of women's eighteenth-century fiction. My dissertation explores these complex relationships between male mentors and their female pupils.

**KEYWORDS:** Mentor, Female Mentee, Eighteenth Century, Education, Sensibility, Gothic

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THE MALE MENTOR FIGURE IN WOMEN'S FICTION, 1778-1801

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## DEDICATION

I would like to thank and dedicate this dissertation to God, who has blessed me so much,  
and my loving parents, who have supported me throughout.

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There have been many others whose support meant a lot to me whether they were from the University of Kentucky or previous colleges: Drs. Matthew Giancarlo, Michelle Sizemore, Alfred Lutz, Martha Hixon, Marion Hollings, Judith Russell, and Michael Hartman. Judith Prats and Valerie Stevens also provided encouragement when it was needed. I, especially, want to acknowledge my parents, Scott and Beverly Evans. My mother's unwavering faith, willingness to listen (sometimes to entire readings of my dissertation or updates on my research), and loving advice were part of the major factors that helped me to keep working on this project.

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## Introduction: The Mentor Figure in Eighteenth-Century Studies

There is not a lot of critical work on mentoring in eighteenth-century Britain. One of the few who observe this lack of scholarship, Anthony W. Lee argues that more work needs to be done in this area (3).<sup>1</sup> Although Lee is more interested in literary mentors of the first part of the eighteenth century, he asserts that “Given the importance of mentoring, it is surprising to discover that the relationships between mentoring and literature have not been more fully explored. This deficiency of study is especially remarkable given the historical closeness found between mentoring and literary production” (3). This dissertation meets this need and addresses the relationship between mentoring and literary works. Specifically, I focus on the relationship between male mentors and their female mentees in both real life and literature. Though, as Patricia Menon points out “the mentor need not be male” (6), male mentors held powerful positions in women’s lives, and most female mentors did not hold the same authority. By focusing on the strained power dynamics between male mentors and their female pupils, I argue that more is at stake in these relationships than simply a potential love triangle or men molding women into the “perfect” form of womanhood. I posit that women writers in particular (most of whom had male mentors in their own lives) turned the table by depicting what women desired the “perfect” male mentor to be. By looking at the representational patterns associated with mentor figures in the works of eighteenth-century female writers, I discover a significant relationship between women’s fantasy of a kind-hearted, non-threatening male presence in their lives and women’s paradoxical desire to subvert male authority in an effort to show women’s equality to men.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Mentoring in Eighteenth-Century British Literature and Culture*.

The emergence of this approach acts as a reaction against readings of kinship. Much current scholarship on the eighteenth century deals with how characters are connected by kinship. Ruth Perry's *Novel Relations* exemplifies this approach to reading works of the time period. Scholars, like Perry, often consider how characters are connected to one another in terms of their actual relations, whether that be aunts, uncles, cousins, brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers, daughters, husbands, or wives.<sup>2</sup> While this trend has often dominated contemporary criticism of the eighteenth-century novel, I offer a different approach to reading and interpreting these works. By considering the role of the mentor figure (whether he is connected by kinship or not), I argue that the female writers under discussion offer a more complex view on gender roles as well as social reform. As a relatively newer and still developing approach to literary studies, the impact of mentoring both in real life and in fiction offers readers a closer examination of the relationships between men and women, the desire and tension behind those relationships, and the covert criticism of their contemporaries' values. When a father takes on the role of mentor, he is something more than a father. When a lover decides to become an advisor, he complicates his own relationship to his love interest. When a man who is not an eligible suitor becomes mentor to a young female pupil, he often becomes a paradoxical figure: one that is both idealized and criticized by his female mentee. This dissertation expounds upon these relationships of the male mentor and his female pupil.

One of the central aims of this work is to grasp a better understanding of the paradoxical and rather complex relationship between the male mentor and his female

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<sup>2</sup> See Ruth Perry's *Novel Relations*, Mary Jean Corbett's *Family Likeness*, Elsie Michie's *The Vulgar Question of Money*, and Susan Greenfield's *Mothering Daughters: Novels and the Politics of Family Romance* Frances Burney to Jane Austen.

pupil and how it relates to the larger cultural concerns of eighteenth-century Britain. To do this, it is important to define the term *mentoring* as well as to consider the historical development of the mentor figure. I use a combination of both Menon's and Lee's definitions of mentoring. Lee states, "The mentoring relationship, then, can be defined as one in which a more experienced individual—the mentor—through a one-on-one relationship involving guidance and example, leads a less experienced individual—the protégé—into a larger social or cultural community" (16). For my purposes, this definition works to the extent that I view the male mentor as preparing the female pupil for her future role in life (most likely as a wife and mother). Yet, the female pupil pushes further than her male mentor usually intends since she is actually the one who desires to become a part of a "larger social or cultural community." The male mentor tends to prepare his female pupil for a limited role in life, while the female mentee uses his lessons to engage in larger social concerns. For Lee, "transformation and growth" for both the mentor and pupil are aspects of mentoring (16). However, in most cases, the eighteenth-century male mentor figure does not grow, mature, or change. He is a stationary character whose identity is already determined. It is the female pupil who undergoes the transformation and maturation process (whether to her mentor's liking or not). For Menon, the mentor's attributes are "power, judgment and moral authority" (1). While the mentor certainly judges his pupil on her actions and behaviors, his power and judgement are, as I argue, questioned and sometimes even challenged by either his female pupil or society in general. For example, Miss Milner directly challenges her mentor Dorriforth in *A Simple Story*, and Mary is left to be destitute and shunned by others despite her mentor's attempt to prepare a more hopeful future for her in *The Victim*

*of Prejudice*. The mentor may have the moral authority to care for his mentee and guide her spiritual and intellectual growth, but his power to actually affect change becomes limited. Thus, I define the mentoring relationship as one that depicts an individual more experienced in the ways of the world instructing and guiding a typically younger and certainly less experienced individual in spiritual and intellectual matters. The male mentor is an authority figure who judges the female pupil on her actions and manners, but his actual efficacy is questionable.

The origins of the word “mentor” has both a literary and, arguably, subversive background. It derives from the character Mentor from Homer’s *The Odyssey*.<sup>3</sup> The goddess Athena pretends to be Mentor (or in some translations Mentos), an aged man, in order to counsel Telamachus, son of Odysseus. Hence, at its earliest known incarnation, the mentor figure’s authority is subverted by a female. One of the earliest and best known literary descriptions of a male mentor and female mentee can be traced to the twelfth century with the story of Héloïse, an intelligent young woman mentored and seduced by Peter Abelard. Their union was opposed by her uncle, and Abelard was castrated while Héloïse was sent to a convent. Becoming a monk, Abelard wrote of their love affair in *Historia Calamitatum*, which Héloïse (who was now a nun) read and was prompted to begin a correspondence with Abelard about her reawakened sexual feelings toward her former mentor and lover. Their tragic love story became extremely popular in the eighteenth century due to Alexander Pope’s poetic adaptation *Eloisa to Abelard* (1717). From its earliest historical and literary appearances, love and religion are

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<sup>3</sup> See Anthony W. Lee’s *Mentoring Relationships in the Life and Writings of Samuel Johnson: A Study in the Dynamics of Eighteenth-Century Literary Mentoring* and Patricia Menon’s *Austen, Eliot, and Charlotte Bronte and the Mentor-Lover*.

frequently found in relation to the mentor figure. Nevertheless, as I argue, lover-mentors are not the ideal male mentor figure in women's fiction of the late eighteenth century. With changes occurring in nearby France, many women writers saw the French Revolution as symbolic of equality and freedom, potentially to both sexes. Instead of desiring for the mentoring relationship to become one of sexual love, women writers depicted an ideal male mentor figure that was not a romantic interest or sexual threat to the heroine.

The remodeled eighteenth-century mentor figure may still be akin to his medieval ancestor with his religious background, but when potential sexual interest enters into the picture, the male mentor and female mentee relationship becomes much more complex. Matthew Lewis' Gothic novel *The Monk* (1796) takes the figure of the well-educated and spiritually minded monk, Ambrosio, who is to provide guidance for others, and turns him into a sexual fanatic bent on attaining his own physical pleasure through whatever means necessary, whether it is subterfuge, rape, or murder. Most women writers did not dare to encroach on the sexual fantasies and transgress the moral boundaries that Lewis's Ambrosio crosses, especially mixing the sexual with the religious. Radcliffe even wrote *The Italian* as a deliberate revision of *The Monk*. In her version, the heroine, Ellena Rosalba, does not die but is restored to her faithful and valiant lover Vincentio di Vivaldi despite the two villainous characters, Marchesa di Vivaldi and her evil plotting advisor the monk Schedoni. In *The Italian*, Radcliffe illustrates the perniciousness of a negative mentor figure through her depiction of Schedoni's deliberate manipulation of his role as the Marchesa's personal trusted counselor.

The trope of the mentor figure and his influence (whether for good or evil) on his female mentee are also depicted in Elizabeth Inchbald's *A Simple Story* (1791). The opening plot revolves around Dorriforth, a priest, and his young female charge, Miss Milner, who falls in love with her mentor. Her love and sexual desires toward Dorriforth are taboo, especially to her friend and female companion Miss Woodley, who was raised to never consider the idea of a priest as a potential sexual partner. Inchbald attempts to explain it is Miss Milner's more secularized education, as opposed to Miss Woodley's strictly Catholic education, that causes her to be open to the fantasy of Dorriforth as a lover. Despite this forced explanation, Inchbald still allows Dorriforth to turn from the prescribed role of disinterested priest to the role of sexual partner, husband, and lover of Miss Milner, technically fulfilling Miss Milner's sexual fantasy. Dorriforth is released from his vows and is allowed to take his rank as Lord Elmwood. Throughout all of this, he is supposed to be Miss Milner's mentor. However, his marriage with Miss Milner ends tragically because he allowed sexual desires to cloud his moral judgement. When the male mentor fails in his benevolent care for his pupil and allows sexual interest and attraction to play a part in his emotions or in his decisions (like Dorriforth), then he falls short of the ideal mentor and frequently causes unhappiness to both himself and others.

Based on the works that I have surveyed, the typical eighteenth-century mentor figure is usually a religious man (even a clergyman) who prefers the country to the city or creates a safe haven within the city. Frequently, he is middle aged, approximately 40-50 years old and is either widowed, married, or a priest. In other words, the ideal mentor is not an eligible bachelor. This is important since a model male mentor in charge of a young female pupil needs to be a guardian who does not have sexual designs toward his

student. Mr. Villars in *Evelina*, Mr. Percival in *Belinda*, and Albany in *Cecilia* are all examples of male mentors who provide guidance and impart knowledge to their female pupils without ulterior or dubious motives. Other times (sometimes even in the same novel) women's fiction provides examples of mentors with sexual interest or hidden motivations behind their mentoring advice, such as Mr. Monckton in *Cecilia* and Dorriforth in *A Simple Story*. These negative mentor types typically fail by the novel's end. Dorriforth's wife has an affair while he is away on a long voyage, and Mr. Monckton suffers physical and mental pain due to his machinations. Thus, if a mentor figure does not meet fictional expectations of what a male mentor should be, then he is often punished for his shortcomings, which re-emphasizes the necessity for mentors to live in accordance with the ideals set forth in these fictional narratives.

A mentor figure is similar to and can sometimes even be a father (as is the case in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*). Lee claims that "the mentoring relationship is structurally parallel to and deeply rooted within the parental relationship" (6). I assert that the role of the mentor differs from a father in that a mentor figure is concerned with educating and guiding his or her pupil (especially in the moral and spiritual domain) whereas a father provides support—financially and emotionally—to his child. A father may or may not be the primary educator of his children, but a mentor figure's primary role and function is to teach. A mentor may be selected for the female protagonist (sometimes one is even appointed by the father as in *A Simple Story*) or the female protagonist may choose one of her own (like in *Belinda*). If a mentor figure is a father, such as St. Aubert in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, it appears that he is taking on an additional role: one of benevolently teaching a pupil to enter into society.

This leads to another characteristic of the mentor figure: benevolence. The ideal mentor figure cares for his pupil without expecting anything in return except for love and respect. Benevolence seems to encapsulate the ideas of something that is needed and often unasked for but given and provided out of the goodness of the benefactor's heart. This benevolent action is usually thought of in terms of money, and sometimes, it is monetary support that is provided. However, these female writers seem to suggest that the actual benevolent action is that of providing a masculine education for a female mentee, preparing her to be a useful and beneficial member of society. St. Aubert, Mr. Villars, Mr. Percival, and Mr. Raymond are all examples of this benevolent type of mentor. The unideal mentor exploits the mentoring relationship to gratify his own selfish desires, whether they are physical (sexual gratification) or monetary (promotion or an inheritance). In *The Italian*, Schedoni desires a promotion, so he uses his power over the Marchesa to manipulate her to fulfill his own ambitions. In *Cecilia*, Mr. Monckton desires his mentee's body and wealth. Within these situations, the mentee is often under the impression that her mentor is disinterestedly caring for her and that this care is an act of benevolence.

The mentor figure is usually of middle- to high-class status. He is well educated and able to live without worrying over money. However, he is not an active spender on social activities, such as masquerades, parties, or even attending concerts and plays. He lives a more secluded life, and by being retired from society, he is able to live off his income without labor. His female pupil is usually one of high to high-middle class with a fortune of her own or a good dowry. Hence, the pupil may be of a better or equal social class than her mentor, and the education she receives would prepare her for entry into the

more elite and well-educated realm of society. Women writers who proposed changes to the current state of education, such as radicals like Wollstonecraft and Catharine Macaulay, or even conservatives like Hannah More, were preparing women to enter into equal or higher classes than those in which they were born. By attaining an education equivalent—or almost equivalent—to men, women would be intellectual partners in a higher social class. The male mentor is thereby responsible for preparing his young pupil to enter into society. One perceived threat of improving the current state of female education was that it could cause the poorer classes to see education as a way of raising their social status by increasing the chances that their young “accomplished” daughter could marry higher on the social ladder. This is why female mentees, such as Mary in *The Victim of Prejudice*, are ostracized by society. In fact, Mary’s mentor Mr. Raymond is criticized for his benevolent education of her. Nevertheless, much of women’s fiction deals with a high to high-middle class young woman mentored by an older man of equal or respectably close to equal social class.

I posit that male mentors can impart knowledge but cannot provide financial support to their female pupils (unless they are kin to their mentees) because of rather complicated and gendered rules of exchange. While a daughter might inherit money or be supplied with financial support from her father, a female pupil must not be financially supported by her mentor for three main reasons. First, I suggest that money if provided by the mentor figure could potentially tarnish the effectiveness of his spiritual advice. According to Adam Smith’s *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), which was a popular and influential work in the eighteenth century, there was a serious concern that

money could taint the moral sentiments.<sup>4</sup> Mentors are to guide their pupil's minds and hearts. If they were to provide financial support, their lessons could become contaminated or even seen as bribes. Moral sentiments would become not a spiritual benefit of a mature Christian but a commodity to be bought. For example, in *Belinda*, the mentor Hervey supplies financial assistance to his female pupil Virginia, which confuses her moral sentiments to the extent that she cannot determine between right and wrong motives for marriage. Thus, the mentor is to provide knowledge not financial support to his female mentee.

Second, I argue that these young women are encouraged to share their wealth of knowledge (provided to them by their mentors) with others, while, simultaneously, they are supposed to keep their money within the family and avoid spending their material riches. I consider how fathers can pass money (whether in the form of a dowry or inheritance) to their daughters, but the daughters are not to distribute their money too broadly; they keep their fortune safe with the expectation that it will then become the property of a future husband and the inheritance of their future children. For example, in Burney's *Cecilia*, the villainous mentor Mr. Monckton makes this argument to the heroine in an effort to curb her enthusiastic spending in benevolent efforts, arguing that she should keep her money for her future husband whomever that should be. However, Cecilia replies that a suitor who only desires her money and blames her for prudent but benevolent spending would not be a man she would desire to unite herself with. In

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<sup>4</sup> See also Elsie Michie's *The Vulgar Question of Money: Heiresses, Materialism, and the Novel of Manners from Jane Austen to Henry James* (2012).

*Cecilia*, we see an example of the female pupil who wants to engage in the exchange of money but is cautioned to remain within the exchange of spiritual and moral virtues.

Third, I posit that an older man giving his younger female pupil money could be construed by onlookers as one of a man and his sexual partner instead of mentor and mentee. For example, in *Belinda*, Clarence Hervey (based on the real life mentor Thomas Day) attempts to raise and mentor a female pupil to be the perfect wife. He provides financial support for her throughout her childhood and adolescence. Since he is not her father, his financial assistance causes others to believe that Hervey's female pupil is actually his kept mistress. These rumors spread, and when his true love Belinda hears them, she discards him as a potential suitor (until the truth is finally discovered). In *Cecilia*, the eponymous heroine hears that her love interest Mortimer Delvile also has a kept mistress. The rumor is found out to be false, but the cause of the rumor was that Delvile did offer and give money to a woman to help her out of her current distress. Thus, male mentors, if they are not tied to their female charges by kinship, can cause their relationships to be misunderstood and tarnish both their own and their female pupils' reputations by providing financial support.

The mentor figure also plays a central role in the tradition of the *Bildungsroman*. Heike Hartung defines the *Bildungsroman* as "the genre of the novel that is primarily concerned with 'coming of age' or 'growing up'" (40). The women's fiction under discussion deals with the coming of age of the female protagonist, and the male mentor figure serves as guide and educator on her development during her formative years. Ralph Schneider points out that "in a novel of development (or *Bildungsroman*), readers can expect at least one character to develop from childhood to adolescence and maturity

in a number of stages, and at least one other character who provides counsel and guidance, namely the mentor figure” (620). Nevertheless, part of what causes the heroine’s maturity is her decision to take control of her own life and evade, question, or rebel against her male mentor’s advice. Hence, the female protagonist both desires her mentor’s counsel and critiques his guidance. The mentor figure is thus needed in the female *Bildungsroman* to impart knowledge and advice to his pupil as well as provide an authority figure for his pupil to rebel against in order for her to attain full maturity and create her own agency.

I examine Frances Burney’s *Evelina* (1778) and *Cecilia* (1782), Elizabeth Inchbald’s *A Simple Story* (1791), Ann Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and *The Italian* (1797), Mary Hays’ *Memoirs of Emma Courtney* (1796) and *The Victim of Prejudice* (1799), Mary Wollstonecraft’s *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman* (published posthumously based on an incomplete manuscript by William Godwin in 1798), and Maria Edgeworth’s *Belinda* (1801) to see how their female protagonists both idealize and resist the authority of their male mentor figures. In Burney’s *Evelina*, the mentor is depicted as a benevolent figure who is retired from city life in preference for the peace of the countryside. However, readers soon discover that Mr. Villars is an inadequate guide when it comes to matters of the heart, trusting in his fear more than in his female mentee’s intelligence and judgement. Burney depicts a discrepancy between the female mentee’s capabilities and the male mentor’s restrictions.<sup>5</sup> She offers letter writing as

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<sup>5</sup> Leanne Maunu argues that the character of Madame Duval in *Evelina* illustrates “the threat of a dual national identity, of being both French and English” (44). Maunu looks at both Madame Duval and her nemesis Captain Mirvan in order to see how Burney addresses “nationalist stereotypes” (45). Nevertheless, I would argue that Burney’s

Evelina's escape from Mr. Villars' control, enabling Evelina to attain her own agency. Although the social world Evelina must learn to navigate is depicted as masculine and threatening, Evelina's fine moral instinct leads her to a happy marriage with Lord Orville.

In *Cecilia*, Burney explores the negative aspects of multiple guardians and mentors: the spend-thrift Mr. Harrel, the miser Mr. Briggs, the arrogant Mr. Delvile, and the villainous Mr. Monckton. Only in her own chosen mentor, Albany, does Cecilia find someone who cares about her moral duties as an heiress. Even then, Cecilia cannot trust Albany without employing her own rational judgement (since his benevolence would overextend her into poverty). Burney's second novel offers a less idealized mentor figure and shares the frustrations that come when an intelligent, young woman is literally at the mercy of her mentors. Burney's own experiences with three male mentors may also impact the depictions of mentor figures in *Cecilia*. Her father Dr. Charles Burney, Samuel Johnson, and Samuel "Daddy" Crisp were all intelligent, strong-willed men who had clear ideas on how their dear "Fanny" Burney should conduct her life. She was not allowed to become a playwright due to their influences (despite the interest of leading playwright Richard Sheridan). Burney knew first-hand what it was like to be controlled by even well-meaning mentors. In *Cecilia*, Burney offers a bleaker view than in *Evelina* of the negative ramifications of the male-female mentoring relationship.

In *Belinda*, Maria Edgeworth considers Mr. Percival's mentoring as benevolent but not controlling. While in her personal life, her father encouraged Maria Edgeworth's literary ambitions, Thomas Day stubbornly opposed them. After the latter's death, Maria

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stereotyping of Madame Duval is not as simple as satire but as a sympathetic character who has completely bought-in with an accomplishment-based education.

Edgeworth was free to follow her passion and became one of the most popular and influential writers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.<sup>6</sup> Maria Edgeworth adapts her own experiences with male mentors as well as those she witnessed, fictionalizing Thomas Day's real-life Rousseauvian experiment at raising a wife. By doing so, Maria Edgeworth shares the complications behind the mentoring relationship, such as monetary support, physical attraction, and social reputation.

Taking the idea of the sentimental female mentee further, Inchbald centers her novel on a mentoring relationship in both volumes of *A Simple Story*. She illustrates the danger and subversiveness of sensibility in the female mentee Miss Milner as well as the potential power and goodness of that sensibility. Inchbald's criticism lies not on Miss Milner's sensibility but on her improper education (accomplishment-based pedagogy). In the second volume, Inchbald criticizes Dorriforth's lack of sensibility and his unwillingness to acknowledge his role as mentor. For Inchbald, the ideal male mentor must have sensibility in order to affect positive changes in his female mentee's life as well as the social world at large.

Radcliffe's female mentees are also sentimental heroines; more than that, Radcliffe explores the Gothic dimensions of pedagogy with her depictions of positive male mentor St. Aubert in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and the negative male mentor Schedoni in *The Italian*. Radcliffe looks at the persecution of women in a patriarchal world that attempts to stop women from exerting their intelligence in difficult situations. In *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, St. Aubert is depicted as an ideal mentor figure who

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<sup>6</sup> For a detailed account on Maria Edgeworth's life and writings, see Marilyn Butler's *Maria Edgeworth: A Literary Biography*.

prepares his daughter and pupil Emily for the Gothic situations she will face by instilling in her a rational education—blending both Lockean and Rousseauvian philosophies together. In *The Italian*, Radcliffe considers the pernicious influence of a villainous mentor on his female mentee. Schedoni is able to turn Marchesa di Vivaldi into a proud, selfish, and murderous woman. By looking at both of these novels, we can see that Radcliffe illustrates the importance of the mentoring relationship's impact on the female pupil and the choices she makes.

As a Godwinian and English Jacobin, Hays employs revolutionary language and Gothic conventions together, illustrating the female pupil's continual need for agency and the mentor's inefficacy. Although Radcliffe, Edgeworth, Burney, and Inchbald question the male mentor's authority to control his female pupil in matters of the heart, Hays doubts whether the mentor is able to affect any change at all. She depicts her female mentee as desiring his positive influence, but she seems to doubt whether society will accept his female pupil or whether it will simply view her as a threat and attempt to crush her. Likewise, Wollstonecraft considers the Gothic situation that would arise from the absence of positive male mentor figures in *Maria; or, The Wrongs of Woman*. She offers a glimpse of a social world that is filled with Gothic villains, who persecute the unprepared and undefended woman. Employing the Gothic convention of "live burial," Wollstonecraft illustrates the figurative burying of woman's sensibility and intelligence. Taken together, these authors seem to suggest that the male mentor appears to be an important figure in understanding women's desire for agency, their need for a proper education, and their desire for freedom from the constraints of society.

This dissertation not only helps to pave the way to examining the role of mentor figures in Britain and in literature but also enters current conversations in cultural studies about the impact of the French Revolution on writers during this time period as well as women's subversion of the patriarchy in the novels of the 1790s. I often employ the term "proto-feminist" instead of "feminist." The latter term is frequently used by scholars in critical conversations related to the radical or conservative tendencies of the authors under discussion.<sup>7</sup> Broadly speaking, feminism is often defined as a perspective that considers women's lack of agency, the desire for equality to men, and women's critique of patriarchal society. In reference to scholars who employ the term "feminism," I may also use that term. However, I often choose to use "proto-feminist" to clarify that the eighteenth-century writers under discussion were before the recognized feminist movement in 1848 at Seneca Falls. Chapter 1 looks at the role of real-life mentors in relationship to their female mentees, especially in connection with the women writers under discussion. In addition, I consider the French Revolution's impact on female authors, such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Elizabeth Inchbald, and Mary Hays, who employed revolutionary language in their writings to critique patriarchal society, using the mentoring relationship as a way of attaining that goal.

In Chapter 2, I intervene in scholarly debates concerning the over-reliance on sensibility during this time and the presumed "inferiority" of sentimental novels, to create

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<sup>7</sup> See Nancy Armstrong's "What Feminism Did to Novel Studies," Audrey Bilger's *Laughing Feminism: Subversive Comedy in Frances Burney, Maria Edgeworth, and Jane Austen*, Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *Feminist Literary Theory and Criticism*, Annette Kolodny's "Dancing through the Minefield: Some Observations on the Theory, Practice, and Politics of a Feminist Literary Criticism," and Ellen Rooney's "The Literary Politics of Feminist Theory."

a cohesive framework in which to look at the mentor figure's role in women's fiction. The 1790s were known as the era of sentimental novels by women and are frequently faulted by critics for their "excessive" use of sensibility.<sup>8</sup> However, I suggest that women writers relied on sensibility as a way of illustrating their female protagonists' superiority, particularly over their predominantly "rational" male mentors. Frequently, the mentor provides general comments and recommendations about love to his female pupil, who is entering into the marriage market, but his rather conduct-book-like advice often turns out to be wrong or misplaced since it does not fit the actual situation. He is a good spiritual guide but a poor romantic advisor. I assert that the mentor figure's usual lack of romantic sentiment and their pupils' ability to surpass them in matters of the heart reveal a tendency to subvert male authority. In *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (1992), G. J. Barker-Benfield looks at the development of sensibility and its ability to liberate men and women from social conventions. In particular, he considers how many male critics desired to discredit sensibility for its excessiveness and its connection with social reform, particularly in the life and works of Mary Wollstonecraft.<sup>9</sup> I build on the liberating and social reformative potential of

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<sup>8</sup> See Marilyn Butler, *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas*, 7, Gary Kelly, *The English Jacobin Novel, 1780-1805*, 1, and Ian Watts, *The Rise of the Novel*, 290. Claudia Johnson also addresses how these notable scholars have felt the need to apologize for the sentimental literature of the time period. For her discussion, see *Equivocal Beings: Politics, Gender, and Sentimentality in the 1790s: Wollstonecraft, Radcliffe, Burney, Austen*, 1. For more on the role of sentimental novels of the 1790s, also refer to Melissa Sodeman's more recent work, *Sentimental Memorials: Women and the Novel in Literary History* (2015).

<sup>9</sup> For more on social reform, see Ellen Malenas Ledoux's *Social Reform in Gothic Writing*. In Chapter 3 of my dissertation, I look at how Wollstonecraft employs the Gothic mode to make strong social commentary on the current state of female education as well as men's and women's roles in society.

sensibility to support my argument that the female protagonist is able to subvert the ascendancy of her male mentor through her superiority in sensibility. Also looking at the reformative potential of sensibility, in *Equivocal Beings: Politics, Gender, and Sentimentality in the 1790s* (1995), Claudia Johnson considers how Wollstonecraft, Burney, Radcliffe, and Austen employed their writings to relate to contemporary politics. She argues that their use of sentimentality is tied to questions of gender and is political in nature. Johnson states, “During the 1790s, in short, sentimentality is politics made intimate” (2). She asserts that Wollstonecraft, Radcliffe, and Burney’s “careers are organized around the nexus of politics, affectivity, and gender” (15). I agree with Johnson that these authors and their works tended to revolve around these three factors. I look at eighteenth-century Britain’s anxiety over potential changes in men and women’s relationships with one another as well as the sexual threat in those relationships, especially in what was presumably thought the “asexual” or at least “sexually disinterested” realm of religion. Affectivity is prevalent in women’s fictional works during this time with many classified as sentimental novels. I have divided the second chapter into three parts. The first examines the mentor figure in Burney’s *Evelina* and *Cecilia* in order to see how the female protagonist paradoxically desires an ideal mentor to advise her as well as the ability to evade, question, and critique that advice. The second part considers Maria Edgeworth’s fictional representations of the real-life mentors in her life and her radical revisions of the mentor figure’s role. The chapter ends with a close look at Inchbald’s *A Simple Story* where the mentor and mentee completely transgress their boundaries, creating a tragic story revolving around the struggle for

agency. The roles that the older male mentor and younger female mentee should fulfill are complex and telling as this second chapter explores.

Chapter 3 offers interpretations of the mentor figure's role within the constructs of a Gothic narrative in the works of Radcliffe, Hays, and Wollstonecraft. Frequently, in Gothic studies, scholars focus on the male villain, male hero, and female heroine. However, by considering the role of the male mentor and his female mentee, I argue that these novels are actually complicating men and women's relationships with one another as well as criticizing society's unwillingness to accept the female mentee if she challenges class biases. By attaining a more masculine education from her mentor, the female mentee is able to marry higher on the social ladder. However, if she is of low or infamous birth, society still rejects the female mentee's virtue and value. This chapter also contains three sections on each author. The section on Radcliffe considers the "ideal" mentor figure of St. Aubert in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and the "un-ideal" mentor of Schedoni in *The Italian*. The part on Hays looks at the role of sentiment and philosophy in the mentoring narratives of *Memoirs of Emma Courtney* and *The Victim of Prejudice*. The final section discusses Wollstonecraft's Gothic description of the absence of positive mentor figures in *Maria; or, The Wrongs of Woman* (published posthumously in 1798) and her desire for women to attain more control in their own lives.

The Coda contains a brief discussion of how female mentees employ travel as a way of transgressing boundaries of the mentor and mentee relationship. It also offers more directions that literary studies should consider when it comes to the role of the mentor figure.

I argue that the mentor becomes a key figure for exploring women's revolutionary ideas on female education and women's roles in society. The mentor figure contributes to discussions on mentoring, debates over sensibility and sentimental fiction, and development of the Gothic mode. This dissertation considers how the female mentee paradoxically both desires and criticizes her male mentor and his authority. Each author under discussion employed the mentor figure in a way that addressed their contemporary society's issues and prejudices toward the treatment of women and the power of sensibility. Much of this treatment is traced to a conversation of reforming female education from an accomplishment-based pedagogy to a moral, intellectual-based instruction that was more masculine in nature (emphasizing a balance between sensibility and reason). We see these female writers blending their own mixture of the pedagogical theories of Locke and Rousseau while employing revolutionary language and waiting for women's potential to be unleashed from the constraints of a patriarchal society.

## Chapter One: Real-Life Mentors, the 1790s Educational Debates, and Revolutionary Fervor

Many of the writers under discussion were the product of a mentoring relationship or were, at least, well aware of mentoring practices in the eighteenth century. Female education was a topic of controversy. This chapter looks at the role of real-life male mentors and their female mentees to see how the writers discussed in later chapters build on their own knowledge of the mentoring relationship. In addition to pedagogical concerns in Britain, there was also much anxiety over the French Revolution and the threat of overthrowing long-established class biases in preference for equality and freedom. If liberty extended to all men, it might also extend to women. This chapter considers how writers, such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Elizabeth Inchbald, and Mary Hays, were well aware of and deliberately build on the revolutionary fervor in Britain, hoping for a reformation or revolution in both female education and women's roles in society.

On August 4<sup>th</sup>, 1789, the French National Assembly established the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*, which promoted equality, liberty, and freedom of speech. Tom Furniss states, "Despite its groundbreaking nature, the Declaration granted the political rights of citizenship only to men. Yet revolutionary enthusiasm on both sides of the English Channel led some radicals to ask why women should not have the same rights" (62). Amidst this "Revolution Controversy," as Furniss refers to it, several women writers, like Wollstonecraft, Hays, and Inchbald, adopted the French Revolutionary ideas of liberty and equality, applying them to the situation of women in Great Britain. I suggest that women writers were provided with a major event (the French Revolution) that enabled them to take the proto-feminist discourse Wollstonecraft

helped to establish and begin to rewrite and question male authority, specifically that of the mentor figure.

Criticizing the current social status of women in eighteenth-century Britain, especially in her polemic *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), Wollstonecraft made gender a political issue by employing the language of revolution to revolt against a male-dominated society. The implied next step was that the rights of citizens ought to extend to women as well. By criticizing powerful male authority figures, following, as it were, the lead of the French Revolutionaries, Wollstonecraft's radical ideas seemed to suggest that women should rebel against the male authority figures in their own lives. Taken in this way, it is not surprising that many men felt threatened by Wollstonecraft's more liberal concepts concerning women's rights.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, as I argue, women writers during this time started to criticize male authority in their novels through their treatment of the male mentor figure, whose power over the female protagonist was supposed to be an accepted social norm. I assert that women writers, like Ann Radcliffe (1764-1823), Mary Hays (1759-1843), and Elizabeth Inchbald (1753-1821) to name a few, began to question male ascendancy and provided more agency to their female protagonists by criticizing male mentors. Whereas Wollstonecraft illustrates the Gothic situation of women through the absence of positive male mentor figures in her incomplete novel *Maria; or, The Wrongs of Woman*, Burney's *Evelina* evades her mentor figure Mr. Villars' advice while still never officially disobeying him.<sup>11</sup> Burney's *Cecilia*

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<sup>10</sup> For more on how Wollstonecraft was ostracized by society, see *A Cambridge Companion to Mary Wollstonecraft*, edited by Claudia Johnson.

<sup>11</sup> In the time of Burney's *Evelina* and *Cecilia*, the effectiveness of male authority figures was starting to become questioned, critiqued, and scrutinized. King Louis XVI was

finds her three male mentors, who are also her guardians, to be completely ineffective and deficient in various ways, and her childhood mentor Mr. Monckton to be the actual villain bent on controlling her and her fortune through whatever means he deems necessary. Cecilia's chosen mentor Albany becomes the ideal spiritual advisor who encourages Cecilia to make a positive impact in the lives of those around her, but she must still use caution when it comes to the spending of her fortune. Inchbald's Miss Milner decides to rebel openly against her mentor and love interest Dorriforth but still wins his heart and hand in marriage. Hence, the female protagonist is able to enact her own judgement to achieve her desired goal.

My analysis of the mentor figure draws on critical conversations related to the French Revolution, proto-feminist historical discourse, and educational debates.<sup>12</sup> While the 1790s also saw a reaction against the threat of sensibility due to the Reign of Terror in France, sensibility still appears in women's fiction as a powerful resource. As Anne K. Mellor points out, after *A Vindication* and the vilification of Wollstonecraft and her radical feminist ideas, women were forced to decide where they stood on the issue of women's roles in society and how they should be taught (141).<sup>13</sup> Though there were

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already leading the nation to bankruptcy. This served as a major prelude to the beginning of the French Revolution in 1789.

<sup>12</sup> Claudia Johnson points out that Wollstonecraft's work combines education, politics, feminism, and the French Revolution together rather than treating each concept separately (*A Cambridge Companion* 4).

<sup>13</sup> See also Claudia Johnson's "Introduction." Discussing the harsh criticism Wollstonecraft received by her contemporaries, Johnson states, "Horace Walpole famously called the champion of women's rights a *hyena in petticoats*; Richard Polwhele arraigned her as the foremost among modern-day *unsexed females*; and the *Anti-Jacobin Review* of 1798 went so far as to index her under 'P' for *Prostitute*, presumably because no woman could conceivably wish to criticize standards and practices of female modesty unless she wanted to breach them with impunity" (1-2, italics in original).

various opinions as to what roles women should play in society, the majority of women writers agreed that the current accomplishment-based education for girls needed to be changed and many saw education as the key to furthering their feminist goals: equal citizenship with men, more job opportunities, and the rights to their own bodies and minds.<sup>14</sup> As Alan Richardson explains, “most liberal and radical intellectuals of the time viewed education as the cornerstone of any movement for social reform” (25). Since the mentor figure is clearly tied to female education, I consider the role of the mentor within the educational debates of the 1790s, which were simultaneously connected with women’s rights and the ongoing French Revolution.

By considering how these writers employ revolutionary language in their fiction, we can bring more critical insights into individual texts, such as *A Simple Story*, as well as connect them to the larger conversations regarding sentimentalism and the role of the French Revolution in women’s fiction.<sup>15</sup> Gary Kelly points out that it was considered “risky business” for women to be published authors since women were “supposed to be domestic; once published [they] became public, risking loss of femininity” (*Women*,

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<sup>14</sup> Controversy arose as to how women should improve their lives, to what purpose, and to what extent. Mellor points out the “two camps of feminist reform” were between the radical feminist Wollstonecraft and the conservative Hannah More (1745-1833) (152). For Wollstonecraft, women should have the same opportunities as men in both education as well as in their personal and public lives, arguing women have the right to hold professions the same as men. Though a conservative, More also recognized the poor state of women’s education and argued in *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* (1799) for girls to be more properly educated; she viewed women’s potential to be in their service to God and others. See also Alan Richardson’s “Mary Wollstonecraft on Education,” (39).

<sup>15</sup> I find Gary Kelly’s work particularly useful in exploring the connections between education and the French Revolution, especially that of the English Jacobins. Gary Kelly looks at the impact of the French Revolution on writers, such as Inchbald, Hays, and William Godwin.

*Writing, and Revolution* 10). In *The English Jacobin Novel, 1780-1805*, Kelly notes the importance of education and how other women writers like Edgeworth and Wollstonecraft continued to debate this issue. I build where Kelly leaves off by offering an analysis of the role of the mentor figure within the historical framework that Kelly helps to establish. For example, in *A Simple Story*, the male mentor figure contributes to what constitutes a proper education for women and to the roles male mentors should and should not play in the education of their female pupils. Dorriforth is Miss Milner's mentor, and their story eventually ends tragically. Dorriforth also struggles as his daughter's mentor. Dorriforth fails as a mentor since he takes a sexual interest in his first pupil, Miss Milner. He then struggles with his sensibility and his masculine image as he attempts to both be and not be Matilda's mentor.<sup>16</sup> Dorriforth embodies the female pupil's critique of her male mentor's authority.

As a key figure in the fight for women's rights during this time period, Wollstonecraft was interested and involved in mentoring. In "Mothers, Marys, and Reforming 'The Rising Generation': Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Hays," Margaret Kathryn Sloan looks at the literary mentorship between Wollstonecraft and Hays as well as how both women viewed mentoring as an important way of reform. I agree with Sloan that Wollstonecraft and Hays were concerned with the impact of mentoring relationships at both societal as well as personal levels. While Sloan looks at female mentoring, I consider the role of the male mentor figure, which enables my dissertation to push in

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<sup>16</sup> Dorriforth's paradoxical attitude desiring to both be and not be a mentor is discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

another significant direction but still relate to Wollstonecraft and Hays' use of mentoring as a way of achieving social reform for women.

Two of the most popular pedagogical theories during the eighteenth century were those of Jean-Jacque Rousseau (1712-1778) and John Locke (1632-1704). Rousseau emphasized the need to return to nature as the moral guide for youth.<sup>17</sup> Locke promoted the idea that children learn to reason and gather facts about life at a young age.<sup>18</sup> However, underlying the various pedagogical theories prevalent throughout the period was a concern about gender roles. Rousseau suggested that women should be docile and dedicate their lives to pleasing their husbands with their entire education reflecting this extremely limited purpose. Locke's pedagogical theories seemed to allow girls a more liberal education, but he was not attempting to dismiss separate sphere ideology for men and women. By the 1790s, one burning question was whether women should be taught the same as men. Since eighteenth-century British society predestined men and women for different purposes (men to lead and women to serve) and to separate spheres (public for men and private for women) it was thought that education—which was believed to form the identity of the child—must differ to some degree as well. Early childhood education could be practically the same, so long as the girls were reminded of their future roles as housewives, sisters, and mothers while the boys prepared for their future as leaders and workers in society. After early childhood though, girls were usually further prepared for their domestic roles and for how to attain that future (i.e. how to attract a

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<sup>17</sup> See Rousseau's *Emile, or On Education* (1762).

<sup>18</sup> See Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693).

husband).<sup>19</sup> Much of girls' education consisted of non-academic accomplishments: dancing, singing, speaking French, sewing, playing the piano, etc. On the other hand, boys were taught Latin, science, mathematics, philosophy, political history, and so on. Thus, each child was prepared for his or her proper role as defined by gender.<sup>20</sup> Women were commonly believed to be the "weaker sex" and to have more "sensibility"—i.e. refined feelings—than men, so their schooling was not supposed to tax too heavily on their minds.<sup>21</sup> Instead, girls' education emphasized how to display their bodies in the most appealing light to catch the eye of a good husband (or at least a man with money to provide financial support) and fulfill their roles as wives in the domestic sphere. Despite these common practices and beliefs, some men but mostly women fought against the current gendered state of education. These educational innovators argued for young women to receive a rational education much like young men, positing that this "radical" pedagogy needed to emphasize the girl's mind more than her body. Ruth Watts points out that supporters of rational education, like Anna Barbauld and the Bluestockings, were considered "radicals" for such thoughts:<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> See Michele Cohen, Ruth Watts, Catherine Parke, and Mary Jackson to see discussions on education during this time period.

<sup>20</sup> Michele Cohen also looks at the debate concerning public and private education. In addition, she considers the methodology of girls' education, arguing some girls did learn Latin (though it was not part of girls' standard curriculum nor was it encouraged) but what differed was how they learned the subject.

<sup>21</sup> Sensibility, n. "Quickness and acuteness of apprehension or feeling; the quality of being easily and strongly affected by emotional influences; sensitiveness" (*OED* def. 5a) and can also mean "Capacity for refined emotion; delicate sensitiveness of taste; also, readiness to feel compassion for suffering, and to be moved by the pathetic in literature or art" (*OED* def. 6a).

<sup>22</sup> Gary Kelly discusses how "bluestocking feminism developed from the convergence of class and gender issues and interests within a particular coalition of the progressive gentry and the professional middle class" and was involved with "gender issues and women's oppression from the viewpoint of that coalition, but it did so as a feminization

These innovative thinkers were radicals which in this context means those who wished to promote rational education—that is, an education, which in the tradition of Locke, taught students to think, to find evidence for their ideas and knowledge and to understand how things were or worked rather than just know because they had learnt delivered facts by heart. [. . .] This was more than learning science itself; it meant understanding the world in which humans lived. (1)

In the mid-to-late-eighteenth century, women writers began to question and challenge the current state of female education, and I argue that one of their primary ways of doing so was by their depiction of the male mentor figure.<sup>23</sup>

Mentors held important social positions and had significant influences upon many well-known writers. Richard Edgeworth and Thomas Day mentored (in radically different ways) Maria Edgeworth. Samuel Crisp and Samuel Johnson both counseled Frances Burney. William Godwin acted as advisor to Mary Wollstonecraft (his eventual wife), Elizabeth Inchbald, and Mary Hays. In fact, these women novelists included mentor figures in their literary works. To demonstrate that the male mentor figure functions as a compensatory fantasy rather than a reflection of real-life dynamics, I draw on these fallible real life mentors and their fictional counterparts. By doing so, I illustrate how young women in real life were in subordinate positions to the men who were supposed to be their moral and spiritual guides. By comparing real-life male mentors

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of gentry capitalism that also addressed the interests of men of those classes” (“Introduction: Sarah Scott, Bluestocking Feminism, and Millenium Hall” 11).

<sup>23</sup> I primarily identify “young woman” and the time period for “female education” as 12 to 18 years old since these are the formative years for young women; however, in many fictional narratives, the young woman does not receive the proper education during this important time period. Thus, if she is the heroine, she must undergo a reeducation usually from the period of 18 (i.e. on the marriage market) to 25 (usually off the marriage market or already established in society). There are some cases where an older woman may undergo a reeducation, such as Lady Delacour in *Belinda* (1801). These cases are rare though.

with fictional male mentor figures, I posit that women's fiction reveals an idealized vision of what a male mentor could and should be. This fantasy enabled women to both criticize the present state of mentoring in the eighteenth century as well as offer a hopeful vision of men's and women's potential.

One of the most interesting and controversial mentor figures, Thomas Day is probably best known for his experiment at raising and educating two young girls with the intent that one would become his ideal wife. He adopted the girls from the Foundling Hospital and renamed them Sabrina and Lucretia. His actions were technically illegal. After all, he falsified the reasons for adopting a young girl (claiming that it was to employ her) and named her official adopted guardian as not himself but his friend Richard Lovell Edgeworth. Day's rank and wealth allowed him to impose his own will without society's disapproval. Wendy Moore discusses this curious case in detail, stating that "Day knew that he was protected by his rank, wealth and status. He was a rich landowner with influence and connections living in a man's world; they were powerless girls, born into poverty and branded with the shame of illegitimacy, without friends, family or rights" (79). As a mentor, Day already attained moral authority over these girls, but with his higher social status and his rather extensive wealth, his mentoring relationship with Sabrina and Lucretia became an even more one-sided power dynamic. As mentioned earlier, money can tarnish the mentoring relationship. Day starts out with two strikes against him. First, his intended sexual interest in his female pupil. After all, his ultimate goal is to eventually marry one of his mentees. Second, he employs money as a way of quieting social concerns and escaping legal prosecution. In addition, his female pupils' financial dependence on Day causes them to be seen as his possessions

even when he is not with them. Sabrina, his favorite (since Lucretia is soon released from Day's experiment), becomes connected with Day even when he distances himself from her. Moore explains that "Although she [Sabrina] was ostensibly working toward independence as a dressmaker in her own right, she was still financially dependent on Day. [. . .] everyone in her social circle knew that she was invisibly connected with her absentee guardian. He still pulled the strings. She remained effectively Day's property, and he directed her fate just as surely as any master his slave" (181). The mentor, thus, who has a potential romantic or sexual interest in his pupil and financially supports her causes the mentee's reputation to be tarnished and hurts her future options and opportunities in life.

Day's actual attempt to isolate his female pupil as much as possible coincides with the Rousseauvian values of eighteenth-century mentoring. In *Emile: or, on Education* (1762) Rousseau made popular the idea that society corrupts man and that Nature is the best environment for a child. Furthermore, Rousseau made girls' purpose in life clear and concise when he states that they are to be trained to fulfill their one predetermined role which is to please men (373-75). A devoted admirer of Rousseau, Day not surprisingly took these concepts in *Emile* to the usual extreme. Day desires to be the primary, if not only, influence of Sabrina (and Lucretia when she was under his tutelage). In fact, at one point, he takes them to France where the girls will not be able to understand anyone but himself. Day writes to Richard Edgeworth that "They might receive no ideas, except those which himself might choose to impart'" (qtd. in Moore 83). When he is not in France, he keeps his female pupils fairly well isolated and when they are introduced to others, his control and authority over them is made perfectly clear.

Later in life, Sabrina would be recorded as saying that Day “made her miserable—a slave &c!” (qtd. in Moore 129). The image of slavery in this mentoring relationship can clearly be seen as Gothic in nature, and it is not surprising that years later, Wollstonecraft would employ slavery analogies to the situation of women throughout her writing. Day isolates his female pupils as not a way of keeping them safe from actual corruption but as a way to completely control their environment and indoctrinate them to his way of thinking. With now three strikes against him, Day’s educational experiment not surprisingly fails. He does not marry Sabrina, and she goes on to marry Day’s best friend (the profligate John Bicknell who helped Day with this crazy experiment at its inception) who dies leaving Sabrina in financial straits. She remains haunted throughout life by her known former relationship with Day.

The story of Day’s failed wife training experiment was known in eighteenth-century British society, but it was especially known by Maria Edgeworth, daughter of Day’s other best friend Richard Lovell Edgeworth.<sup>24</sup> Day’s desire to exert control over young women did not stop with Sabrina and Lucretia. Day also shared his opinions on how Maria Edgeworth should be educated. Thankfully, Richard Edgeworth did not agree with Day’s limited views toward women’s purpose in life. Richard Edgeworth provided Maria Edgeworth with a liberal education and encouraged her to write. On the other hand, Day strongly discouraged Maria Edgeworth’s writing, and due to his objections, she was not published during Day’s life. Maria Edgeworth was taught to respect him as a

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<sup>24</sup> See also Marilyn Butler, *Maria Edgeworth: A Literary Biography*. When discussing Maria Edgeworth and Richard Edgeworth, I refer to both by their full names in order to avoid confusion. Otherwise, Edgeworth refers to Maria Edgeworth.

second father (even if she and her own father did not agree with his limited views toward women's writing); thus, while Day was alive, Maria Edgeworth was withheld from publishing more than she most likely would have been if Day had not exerted his authority over her. As chance would have it, Day died prematurely due to one of his Rousseauvian experiments with a horse that he had trained by "kindness." Maria Edgeworth was then free to publish, and she did not forget the negative mentoring of her father's best friend. Mitzi Myers rightly observes that Maria Edgeworth is concerned with responding to "the authoritarianism and antifeminism that transgress Day's (and Rousseau's) reformist rhetoric" (124). In fact, Maria Edgeworth deliberately responded to Day's views toward women as well as fictionalizing his own notorious failure of creating the perfect wife. *Letters for Literary Ladies* (1775) creates the fictional correspondence of two men who argue about whether girls should enter into the literary world. Most likely, this correspondence is based off the actual debate between Richard Edgeworth and Day. Moore points out that Maria Edgeworth titled *Belinda* (1801) off Day's own writing that denigrated women's literary and intellectual potential: "Indeed, Day was so eager to deter women from writing that he often quoted lines from a poem, 'Advice to the Ladies,' which warned, 'Wit like wine intoxicates the brain, / Too strong for feeble women to sustain.' First published in 1731, the poem was dedicated to a mythical Belinda" (252). It is not surprising that at the end of Maria's novel *Belinda*, it is the extremely clever Lady Delacour who ends the story with the rhyme: "Our tale contains a moral, and, no doubt, / You all have wit enough to find it out" (478). Maria Edgeworth drives her message home, making it clear that women can certainly handle wit with the best of men. Of course, Maria Edgeworth also incorporates Day's wife training

scheme in *Belinda* with Clarence Hervey's disastrous attempt at raising Virginia to be his wife (who he also renamed to fit his own fantasy, like Day did with Sabrina and Lucretia). Hervey's educational experiment threatens the happiness of all the characters in *Belinda*, but his personal reformation along with the interference of Lady Delacour allow things to be set aright. Hervey learns that intellectual equality in marriage is better than control. Myers correctly notes, "In rewriting Rousseau's, Saint-Pierre's, and Day's patriarchal narratives from a woman's perspective, Maria Edgeworth undoes the commodification and objectification of Day's two foundling pupils and gives her fictional girl a voice denied her prototypes" (117). Denied by Day the right to her own literary voice simply because she was a woman, Maria Edgeworth deliberately transgressed Day's restrictions on female ambition and, through her fiction, directly criticized his misuse of the authority that he held as a mentor over his female pupils.

While Day attempted to control almost every aspect of his female pupil's life and feared the publication of female writers, William Godwin influenced some of the most radical female thinkers of the time period. In fact, Godwin's own first influential teachers were women.<sup>25</sup> Miss Godwin, who was known later as Mrs. Sothren, was a family relative who took a special interest in Godwin as a child. She was an avid reader of religious books. Godwin's first teacher was an older woman named Mrs. Gredge, who was also extremely devoted to religious reading. Most likely, Godwin was impacted by

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<sup>25</sup> See Peter H. Marshall's *William Godwin*, Barbara M. Benedict's "Radcliffe, Godwin, and Self-Possession in the 1790s," and Mark Philp's *Collected Novels and Memoirs of William Godwin* and "Godwin, William (1756–1836)." See also William Godwin, *Autobiography 1756-1772*.

these educated, religious women. It is also interesting since he became a teacher of many young women but was also attracted to their intelligence and strength of mind. Godwin was a supporter of the French Revolution. He saw education as the way to reduce crime and improve morality. Most likely, Godwin began to work on what would eventually become his well-known philosophical treatise *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* in 1791. Published in 1793, "*Political Justice* attacks all restraint on the exercise of individual judgement and the pursuit of knowledge: promising is repudiated as incompatible with morality, marriage is denounced as the most odious of all monopolies, musical concerts as inhibiting regimentation, and the law as a procrustean bed" (Philp par. 8). As an established philosophical writer, Godwin became introduced into a society of intellectual and literary women, such as Inchbald, Wollstonecraft, and eventually Hays. He became a literary advisor and mentor to these women. Inchbald rejected him as a suitor, but Wollstonecraft was another story. When sexual feelings obscured the philosophical basis of the relationship between Godwin and Wollstonecraft, life began to challenge their philosophical ideals (especially in relation to marriage). They became romantically involved in the autumn of 1796 with Wollstonecraft becoming pregnant by December. In 1797, they married, but Wollstonecraft soon died after childbirth, leaving Godwin with his biological daughter Mary and his adopted daughter Fanny from Wollstonecraft's earlier love affair with Gilbert Imlay. Wollstonecraft left more than children with Godwin though. She helped to establish a connection between her husband and her admirer Hays. Godwin became a philosophical and literary advisor and mentor to Hays. In fact, in *Memoirs of Emma Courtney*, the mentoring relationship between Mr. Francis and the heroine Emma is based on Hays' own mentorship by Godwin. Emma

argues with her philosophical friend, advisor, and mentor Mr. Francis through letters and chooses to follow her heart and rely on her judgement instead of his counsel, rendering Mr. Francis' advice ineffective and illustrating Emma's ability to make her own decisions. Hays' protagonist Emma trusts in her womanly intuition when it comes to matters of the heart similar to how Edgeworth depicts Belinda's keen sensibility as one that does not lead her astray but instead complements her reason. I suggest that Hays and Maria Edgeworth used their experiences with male mentors to enter the conversation regarding what a male mentor should be (as well as what he should not be) and thereby depicted the female protagonist as attaining more authority over her mentor by choosing whom her mentor should be as well as how much, if any, of his advice she will follow. Thus, the mentor figure's authority diminishes but his presence allows the heroine to assert her own agency.

Frances Burney had two influential male mentors (not counting the ambiguous influence of her father Dr. Charles Burney): Samuel Crisp, a friend of the family whom she referred to as "Daddy" Crisp, and Samuel Johnson, whom she met toward the beginning of her literary career. Crisp and "Fannikin," as he lovingly referred to her, were extremely close. In fact, Burney considered him as her "second daddy."<sup>26</sup> Margaret Anne Doody points out that Crisp had an extremely playful side, especially when it came to making fun of Burney's stepmother (27-28). In fact, Doody states that Crisp "was never quite a grown up himself" (28). Crisp may not have been as mature as one would expect, but he certainly played the role of advisor to Burney. According to James

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<sup>26</sup> See Sambrook, James. "Crisp, Samuel (1707–1783)." See also Margaret Anne Doody, *Frances Burney: The Life in the Works*.

Sambrook, Burney “idolized him” and Crisp took the opportunity to give “frank advice on her conduct, deportment, marriage prospects, and finances, as well as her writings” (par. 6). Despite Burney’s “idolization” of Crisp, she still clearly had her own opinion on all of the above-mentioned matters. Burney herself becomes an example of a female mentee who both admires and questions a beloved mentor figure in her own life. One of the most positive real-life advisors discussed in this dissertation, Crisp encouraged Burney’s journal and novel writing but not her love and desire for playwriting. In fact, Crisp and her father shut down Burney’s *The Witlings* without even allowing her to send it off to the more credited views of established playwright Sheridan. Johnson, on the other hand, encouraged Burney’s playwriting.

Not necessarily the easiest man to please, Johnson took a liking to the young upcoming novelist Burney. Johnson’s reputation as literary critic was well-established by the time Burney and Johnson became close. His support of Burney would have had a great impact on the talented young writer. Burney’s two mentors, Crisp and Johnson, clearly played important roles in her life, and sometimes, their advice differed. In fact, as Lee observes, Johnson was supportive of Burney writing comedy while Crisp and her father were not (245). Burney would have to navigate the sometimes controversial advice of her male mentors and find her own way. As a single woman (she would not marry until much later in life), she was still under the supervision of her father, and when he forbade her from continuing in play writing, that was that. Despite limitations on her agency, Burney could take her experiences with the powerful male authority figures in her life and rewrite them into fiction.

Her first published novel *Evelina*, an epistolary work, depicts the experience of a young woman's first entrance into society. Evelina is intelligent but naïve due to her isolated upbringing and education by her mentor, Mr. Villars, a clergyman. She travels to London with her friends the Mirvans and eventually with her ill-mannered grandmother Madame Duval where she meets many diverse characters from the rake Sir Clement to the respectable love interest Lord Orville. On her travels, she is without Mr. Villars' physical presence but their correspondence includes Evelina's observations and choices with Mr. Villars' advice and counsel. Sambrook asserts, "Crisp was in some respects the original of Mr Villars in her *Evelina* (1778)" (par. 6). However, Lee suggests that Samuel Johnson may actually have been the model for Mr. Villars (253). This is anachronistic though since Johnson and Burney were not close at this time. Lee also argues that "Evelina can make no substantial decisions on her own without first consulting Villars" (253). This is not accurate. Evelina is frequently forced to make decisions on the spur of the moment since she cannot wait for Mr. Villars' advice through his letters. Whether Mr. Villars is based on Crisp (which is more probable) or Johnson, Burney still undermines the mentor figure by questioning Mr. Villars' efficacy and his powers of judgment. After all, Mr. Villars is not able to restore Evelina to her proper heritage as the legitimate daughter of John Belmont. Mrs. Selwyn's insistence and arrangement of a meeting between father and daughter along with Evelina's own physical (her resemblance to her deceased mother) and emotional appeal are what cause the eventual happy resolution. In addition, Mr. Villars misreads and advises against Lord Orville, the respectable suitor of Evelina whom she desires to marry. Evelina evades her mentor's authority by her use of language and the practical delay of letter writing. She

can claim to await his advice anxiously and still follow her own judgment. Although Burney respected the idea of positive male mentor figures, she still empowers her heroine to illustrate that “woman’s intuition” and her knowledge gained by experience both literary as well as socially enable her to be a better judge of character than even her male mentor.

While Burney was forced to submit to her father’s and Crisp’s judgment on whether to publish and continue her love of play writing, Maria Edgeworth also dealt with contradictory advice on her own writing, especially whether to publish her work or not. As mentioned earlier, Day was firmly against female authors, which forced Maria Edgeworth to postpone publishing until after his death.<sup>27</sup> Mitzi Myers in particular looks at how Maria Edgeworth was influenced by the patriarchal presences of Thomas Day and her father Richard Edgeworth but argues that she “satirized, subverted, appropriated, impersonated, punished, and reformed” (106) Day and his Rousseauvian philosophies in her writings, especially *Belinda*.<sup>28</sup> I agree with Myers, especially because Maria Edgeworth’s choice to write and publish novels was her own and was, in fact, contrary to Richard Edgeworth’s own preferences for what he desired his daughter to do with her ability. He wanted her to spend time writing treatises, but she loved creating stories.

Richard Edgeworth supported the idea that girls should receive a more liberal education

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<sup>27</sup> See Marilyn Butler’s *Maria Edgeworth: A Literary Biography*.

<sup>28</sup> For more on Maria Edgeworth, see Audrey Bilger’s *Laughing Feminism: Subversive Comedy in Frances Burney, Maria Edgeworth, and Jane Austen*, James Newcomer’s *Maria Edgeworth*, Elizabeth Harden’s *Maria Edgeworth*, Deborah Weiss’ “The Extraordinary Ordinary Belinda: Maria Edgeworth’s Female Philosopher.” *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 19.4 (2007): 441-61, and Anna Miegion’s “Biographical Sketches of Principal Bluestocking Women.” *Reconsidering the Bluestockings*. Ed. Nicole Pohl and Betty A. Schellenberg. (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 2003: 25-37).

and be encouraged to enter into the literary profession (against his best friend Day's beliefs). Nevertheless, Richard Edgeworth still out of respect to Day did not encourage Maria Edgeworth's publishing as much while his friend was alive. As a mentor, Richard Edgeworth was a combination of both a father and advisor. Thus, in a way, his power over Maria Edgeworth was doubled in nature. Like Burney, Maria Edgeworth would have to submit to any direct command from her father. Luckily, Richard Edgeworth allowed her (even if it was against his own preferences) to follow her heart when it came to novel writing. Hence, it is in Maria Edgeworth's novels that we can see much of her own thoughts and ideas about mentoring and male authority figures. The next chapter considers how Burney, Edgeworth, and Inchbald fictionalize the mentor figure in ways that both paradoxically idealize and criticize his authority and influence over his female mentee.

## Chapter Two: Fictionalizing the Mentor in Burney, Edgeworth, and Inchbald

### Part One: The Male Mentor in Burney's *Evelina* and *Cecilia*

Scholars debate whether authors discussed in this dissertation challenge the status quo or reaffirm its values.<sup>29</sup> I join scholars who endeavor to show how these female authors challenge society's views on men and women's roles. I, specifically, consider the mentoring relationship's impact on women's social status. Whereas critics in this effort have noted the proto-feminist tendencies of the female protagonist, they overlook the importance of the male mentor figure's role.<sup>30</sup> The difficulty of answering whether these women were radical or conservative is one that continues to fascinate critics. In *Laughing Feminism*, Audrey Bilger looks at how Burney and Edgeworth employ subversive comedy that is, as she argues, feminist in nature. While agreeing that these authors' writings are proto-feminists, I argue that the mentoring relationship between male instructor and female pupil deals with the subversiveness of sensibility to critique patriarchal authority. I assert that the male mentor figure is crucial to how these authors covertly criticize contemporary female pedagogy and challenge patriarchal restrictions on

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<sup>29</sup> I look at Burney, Edgeworth, and Inchbald in this chapter and Radcliffe, Hays, and Wollstonecraft in the next. Radcliffe, Hays, and Wollstonecraft still relate to the concept of sensibility explored in this chapter; however, their contribution to developing this concept is also connected with their use of Gothic conventions, which is one of the main foci of the third chapter. See Marilyn Butler's *Maria Edgeworth: A Literary Biography*, Margaret Ann Doody's *Frances Burney: The Life in the Works*, and Gary Kelly's *The English Jacobin Novel 1780-1805* for the authoritative biographies on the female authors discussed in this chapter and a critical overview of their work. Each of these scholars' work is discussed in more detail further in this chapter.

<sup>30</sup> See Joanne Cutting-Gray's *Woman as 'Nobody' and the Novels of Fanny Burney*, Julia Epstein's *The Iron Pen: Frances Burney and the Politics of Women's Writing*, Leah Larson's "Breast Cancer and the 'Unnatural' Woman in Edgeworth's *Belinda*," and Jo Alyson Parker's "Complicating 'A Simple Story': Inchbald's Two Versions of Female Power."

women's rights to express their feelings. I seek to illustrate in this chapter how the sentimental female mentee is able to subvert patriarchal society through her power of sensibility.

The question as to whether women could handle their nerves and feelings was part of the ongoing discussion related to women's sensibility during the late eighteenth century (Barker-Benfield xviii). As Barker-Benfield points out, there "was a gendered view of the nerves: not only were women's nerves interpreted as more delicate and more susceptible than men's, but women's ability to operate their nerves by acts of will [. . .] was seriously questioned" (xvii-xviii). While men could still exhibit sensibility, they could also engage in other public endeavors unlike women who were more restricted to the private sphere (Barker-Benfield xviii). Barker-Benfield explains the complex use of the term "sensibility" in his book that is devoted to this subject:

"Sensibility" signified revolution, promised freedom, threatened subversion, and became convention. The word denoted the receptivity of the senses [. . .] It connoted the operation of the nervous system, the material basis for consciousness. [. . .] While sensibility rested on essentially materialist assumptions, proponents of the cultivation of sensibility came to invest it with spiritual and moral values. The flexibility of a word synonymous with consciousness, with feeling, and eventually identifiable with sexual characteristics, permitted a continuous struggle over its meanings and values. (xvii)

While the term originally limited women's potential, making them slaves to their emotions, female writers during this time turned the tables and started to write novels of sensibility (also known as sentimental fiction), illustrating the sufferings of women by the hands of men and faulting patriarchal society for its mistreatment and miseducation of women. Often times, women were depicted as morally and spiritually superior to their male counterparts. Barker-Benfield writes, "If feminism was in part born in women's

`awareness of their mistreatment by men,' of `felt oppression' and victimization, then it was born in the culture of sensibility" (xviii). This chapter seeks to place Burney, Edgeworth, and Inchbald not only within the framework of sensibility but also as major contributors to this tradition.

Burney and Edgeworth depict their female heroines as both sentimental and rational, such as Burney's Cecilia and Edgeworth's Belinda. At other times, Burney's female heroines are persecuted and oppressed by men, like Burney's Evelina. In the case of *A Simple Story*, Inchbald provides two different types of sentimental heroines: Miss Milner in the first half of the novel, and Matilda in the second half. I view the sentimentality of these female protagonists as significant to understanding the relationship between mentor and mentee. Often, the female mentee is a sentimental heroine and the mentor lacks the ability to offer guidance on matters of the heart. It is in the "culture of sensibility" (to borrow Barker-Benfield's phrase) that we see the female mentee becoming a stronger version of herself than the mentor intended her to be.

In addition to the conversations related to sentimental literature, this chapter also enters into the educational debates and pedagogical theories of what constitutes a proper female education. Burney, Edgeworth, and Inchbald were all well-educated women for the time period, but they did not receive a strict formal education in the same way as their male contemporaries. As a few of the exceptional "lucky" ones, Burney, Edgeworth, and Inchbald addressed the need for a reform in women's education and embedded these concerns within their fictional works. The 1790s was a time of great controversy over women's roles, education, and purpose in society. With the French Revolution and cries for "freedom, liberty, and equality," women writers, like those under discussion, adopted

revolutionary language and began to apply it to the situation of women.<sup>31</sup> Pedagogy became the starting point for how to affect change in women's lives. As I argue, these female authors explore the controversies of women's education along with revolutionary potential by founding their texts on a mentoring relationship. The mentor, who can so easily be overlooked, becomes the key figure to understanding how these authors were exploring larger social issues during this time.

With two strongly opinionated mentors of her own (Samuel Johnson and Samuel "Daddy" Crisp) and an almost too much involved father (Dr. Charles Burney), Frances Burney had first-hand experience dealing with men whose "advice" was sometimes contradictory and dictatorial. It is not surprising that these mentors, who were major influences in her life, would find their way into her novels. In fact, it is in her fiction that Burney's complex and sometimes paradoxical attitudes toward mentoring and patriarchal authority can be found.

Since *Evelina* was written without the knowledge of Burney's father, it allows readers to attain a glimpse of Burney's idealization and questioning of the male mentor's role in a young woman's life.<sup>32</sup> Of course, Burney still wrote *Evelina* with the desire of pleasing her father and Crisp, especially if the novel was a success, but the writing itself was free from their direction. Johnson was not a major part of Burney's life yet, so it is doubtful that the character of Mr. Villars was based on him, despite scholar Anthony Lee's claim that Burney probably did model Mr. Villars after Johnson.<sup>33</sup> It is much more

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<sup>31</sup> For more on the French revolution and its impact on women's writing, especially that of Mary Wollstonecraft's, see *A Cambridge Companion to Mary Wollstonecraft*. Ed. Claudia Johnson. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2002).

<sup>32</sup> See Margaret Anne Doody's biography *Frances Burney: The Life in the Works*.

<sup>33</sup> See Anthony Lee's *Mentoring in Eighteenth-Century British Literature and Culture*.

likely that Mr. Villars is a combination of Crisp and Dr. Burney. Mr. Villars' offers advice to the young heroine on marriage as well as her conduct much like Crisp's advice to Burney on the same subjects.<sup>34</sup> By closely examining *Evelina*, I assert that the eponymous protagonist both idealizes and questions the role, counsel, and efficacy of her male mentor. In doing so, I suggest that Burney illustrates the female pupil's respect and appreciation of the male mentor while simultaneously questioning and evading his advice and guidance.

Although I largely agree with Marilyn Butler's observation that the plot of *Evelina* and *Cecilia* is that of "the adventures of an *ingénue* making her début in high society" (*Maria Edgeworth: A Literary Biography* 308), I assert that the plots of both novels also revolve around the female protagonists' educational backgrounds as well as the trajectory of their development as rational members of their society. For example, Burney portrays the dangers posed by a male-dominated milieu and faults the patriarchy for not looking beneath the surface in order to see the true nature of a young lady's character. As a woman writer in a male-dominated world, Burney was personally invested in how women create their own identities and give voice to their own ideas despite the strong patriarchal influences that surround them. It is not surprising that Burney originally published anonymously. In fact, Burney kept her authorship a secret even six months after *Evelina* had been published and publically praised (Doody 38). Nevertheless, Burney eventually took ownership of her work and thereby entered into the public sphere of writing. In doing so, Burney placed herself in a position to be judged by

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<sup>34</sup> See James Sambrook's "Crisp, Samuel (1707–1783)." Also, see *The Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney* edited by Lars E. Troide.

society as a woman and a writer (for a woman's reputation was linked to everything she did). Furthermore, she employs the eponymous heroine in *Evelina* as a way to explore a woman's agency when physically separated from her male mentor and the female pupil's ability to establish her reputation (for good or bad) in the social, public world with only letters (and those frequently delayed) of advice from her advisor, which she may or may not follow.

Not only did Burney respond to society's views toward women writers but she also reacted to the prevalent views of women's education and conduct. Joyce Hemlow explains that the "problem of conduct of the young lady was investigated so thoroughly that the lifetime of Fanny Burney, or more accurately the years 1760-1820, [. . .] might be called the age of courtesy books for women" (732). Since young ladies' reputations were extremely fragile, especially when they were on the marriage market and first entering society (which is the plot of both *Evelina* and *Cecilia*), how they conducted themselves in public, their choices in company, their behavior, etc., were of utmost importance for determining their future happiness or unhappiness. Conduct books attempted to guide young women through the confusing world of courtship and high society.<sup>35</sup>

However, it should not be assumed that Burney was simply reaffirming society's standards for women's behavior. Rather than restating the messages found in conduct books, Burney employs *Evelina* as a way of revising, challenging, and undermining the commonly held views toward women's proper roles in society. Julia Epstein argues that

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<sup>35</sup> See Joyce Hemlow's "Fanny Burney and the Courtesy Books" and Julia Epstein's *The Iron Pen: Frances Burney and the Politics of Women's Writing*.

“the chaos, ferocity, and violence of Burney’s prose allow us to unravel the constrained cultural situation not just of her own but of women’s writing in general during a period crucial for the entrance of women into the mainstream literary marketplace, the turn of the nineteenth century” (5). At the surface level, *Evelina* may seem to restate societal values, but beneath the surface, Burney questions and critiques society.

Burney pushes to see how far her heroine can go against the usual advice of male mentors and for how long she can be with the wrong kind of company without completely destroying her reputation. Evelina is seen with prostitutes, holds private meetings with a mysterious man (who is actually her brother, Mr. Macartney), and finds herself in ambiguous and easily misunderstood situations with Sir Clement Willoughby. Amy J. Pawl points out that despite these dangerous predicaments Evelina’s love interest Lord Orville “is able to recognize her” true character, which makes him worthy “to call her all his own” (296). Hence, Burney places her heroine in compromising situations but presents an ideal hero who can see her inner, virtuous nature. Ironically, her mentor Mr. Villars is unable to recognize Lord Orville’s honorable nature and recommends for Evelina to distance herself from this ideal suitor.

Burney provides a heroine who has received a Rousseauvian education. Evelina is taught by the religiously devout Mr. Villars in a secluded location. Joanne Cutting-Gray states, “Though Evelina incarnates artlessness in a world of duplicity and evil, she nonetheless requires ‘observation and experiences’ to make her ‘fit for the world’” (10). Since Evelina has been kept from learning the ways of the world, she is unprepared to enter fashionable society and makes many mistakes that could have—and if this had been real life most likely would have—caused blemishes to her reputation and ruined her

chances at a happy ending. Burney makes it clear that no matter how good Evelina is that she is still at the mercy of the men and the situations—which are also in the favor of men—that surround her. Burney not only criticizes Evelina’s education for poorly preparing her for entering society but also attacks society as a place that oppresses women. Instead of blaming Evelina for her mistakes, Burney makes it evident that it is society’s fault for her blunders in two ways: by not educating Evelina properly and by the patriarchy which threatens Evelina’s innocence. Throughout the novel, men attempt to seduce, rape, and court Evelina. When at Vauxhall Gardens, she is literally caught by a group of men who mistake her for a prostitute and then “saved” by Sir Clement Willoughby, who then desires to seduce her, but she refuses and amazingly works her way back to her original company of relatives (317-20). Katharine M. Rogers notes that Evelina’s “world is distinctively a young lady’s world: it is one in which women are forced into passivity and men constantly encroach on their territory” (26). Evelina’s continual persecution from men throughout the novel demonstrates how society and social rules, such as those found in conduct books, are in men’s hands; women must do their best to evade being hurt—whether physically, emotionally, or both—by a male-dominated society that holds all of the important playing cards.

At first glance, Mr. Villars appears to be an ideal mentor. He is a religious man (a clergyman), who prefers the peace of the country to the chaos of the city. He is not a sexual threat to Evelina and views her as both a daughter and mentee. He educates her with an attempt to cultivate her understanding and practice discretion while also keeping her “innocent as an angel” (107-8). Evelina appears to love and idealize him, looking at him as her father, guardian, and counselor. However, upon closer examination, Mr.

Villars' mentoring is actually rather questionable. In fact, at the beginning of the novel, Mr. Villars may actually be considered an example of a failed mentor, whose first attempts at raising a young female pupil ended in tragedy. Mr. Villars was also the mentor for Evelina's mother, who despite his care and guidance, became pregnant and abandoned by her husband who disavowed that they were legally married. Mr. Villars writes, "Thus it has happened that the education of the [. . .] daughter, and grand-daughter, has devolved on me. [. . .] Should the fate of the dear survivor [Evelina] be equally adverse, how wretched will be the end of my cares – the end of my days!" (104-5). His first female mentee was ignorant in the ways of the world to the extent that she agreed to a clandestine marriage with Sir John Belmont who then would not acknowledge their marriage. Since Mr. Villars' first pupil was thus kept away from the knowledge of society, which contributed to her downfall, it would only make sense if Mr. Villars raised Evelina to be well aware of society's ways unlike her mother. However, Mr. Villars raises Evelina in an extremely secluded location (like many mentors do), leaving her ignorant in social manners and dangers much like her mother. Mr. Villars suggests that his actual mistake was not in his education of Evelina's mother but with the fact that he did not go with her when she left for Paris to be with her mother Madame Duval: "How often have I since regretted that I did not accompany her thither! protected and supported by me, the misery and disgrace which awaited her, might, perhaps, have been avoided" (103). Thus, Mr. Villars sees his role as mentor to also be protector. It is not enough for him to have educated his pupil, but he must also follow her wherever she goes so that she can avoid making mistakes. This is, of course, problematic since a mentor's primary goal

is to prepare his pupils to be capable of making their own decisions and navigate through society successfully on their own.

As Evelina's guardian and mentor, Mr. Villars is responsible for her education and placement into society. When Mr. Villars decides to allow Evelina to enter into society with the Mirvans and without accompanying her, he appears to repeat his previous actions with Evelina's mother. The reader may begin to wonder if Mr. Villars learns from his own past or not. He writes to Lady Howard: "You must not, Madam, expect too much from my pupil. She is quite a little rustic, and knows nothing of the world; and though her education has been the best I could bestow in this retired place, [. . .] yet I shall not be surprised if you should discover in her a thousand deficiencies of which I have never dreamt" (109). Thus, before Evelina even arrives to make her own impression on Lady Howard and others, Mr. Villars actually starts making excuses for Evelina, such as her ignorance and even potentially more faults that he simply has not discovered. He does not appear overly confident in his pupil's ability, and he seeks to clear himself of any blame in Evelina's potential shortcomings. He has kept her purposefully ignorant, but he does not want to be blamed for her ignorance. Mr. Villars becomes a mentor who is unwilling to accept the possible consequences of his own pedagogical mistakes.

It is important to note that Evelina's intelligence appears in the text as a natural gift instead of a learned attribute from Mr. Villars. In fact, Lady Howard writes her impressions about Evelina to Mr. Villars as follows: "Her character seems truly ingenuous and simple; and, at the same time that nature has blessed her with an excellent understanding, and great quickness of parts, she has a certain air of inexperience and

innocency that is extremely interesting” (111). A close reading of this passage reveals that Lady Howard credits Evelina’s ability to quickly understand things as due to nature (not Mr. Villars) and that her inexperience (or lack of knowledge in the ways of the social world) and her innocence is “interesting,” which seems to suggest that it does not logically follow that a young woman who is intelligent and capable of learning should remain ignorant of society’s ways. Evelina’s inexperience is not by nature but by design (not of God but of Mr. Villars). It is Evelina’s lack of preparation for entering into society that causes her much trouble, and her innocence also causes her to misread certain situations. For example, Evelina goes to a group of prostitutes for help since she does not appear to realize what occupation they are involved in. She makes many social *faux pas*, such as declining a partner for one dance and accepting the offer of another. Some of her mistakes are minor, but others could seriously tarnish her reputation. Mr. Villars lack of proper counsel and preparation for Evelina’s entrance into society causes his female pupil much anxiety and confusion.

Despite the negative depictions of most men in *Evelina*, Mr. Villars is praised by the eponymous heroine throughout the novel as a great, caring man who she looks at as a father and mentor. Right toward the beginning, Evelina writes to Mr. Villars requesting that she be allowed to accompany the Mirvans on a trip to London:

Assured, my dearest Sir, of your goodness, your bounty, and your indulgent kindness, ought I to form a wish that has not your sanction? Decide for me, therefore, without the least apprehension that I shall be uneasy, or discontented. [. . .] Adieu, my most honoured, most revered, most beloved father! for by what other name can I call you? I have no happiness or sorrow, no hope or fear, but what your kindness bestows, or your displeasure may cause. You will not, I am sure, send a refusal, without reasons unanswerable, and therefore I shall cheerfully acquiesce. Yet I hope – I hope you will be able to permit me to go! I am, With the utmost affection, gratitude, and duty, Your Evelina. (114-15)

Evelina starts out by acknowledging Mr. Villars' generosity toward her. She grows up dependent on Mr. Villars for her sustenance as well as her education, which complicates the mentoring relationship. Much like Burney was dependent on her own father, Evelina must obey any direct commands from Mr. Villars, whether she agrees with them or not. With a sense of obligation toward Mr. Villars, Evelina feels as though she owes Mr. Villars the right to direct her in all matters (even if it is against her own rational judgment). Evelina's use of language in this letter though reveals a strong desire to go to London along with some almost manipulative tactics, such as compliments and the clever addition that a refusal would need to be accompanied with strong irrefutable reasons. Her signature of the letter is also telling. Evelina truly appears to love and appreciate Mr. Villars, but these feelings are connected with a sense of duty. She views herself as indebted to Mr. Villars to the extent that though she is capable of making her own decision, she must dutifully ask him to make the choice for her. In a way, the mentoring relationship for Evelina is one of ownership and indebtedness. Ideal mentoring would allow the educated pupil to enact his or her own judgment without an imposition from the mentor. However, Evelina is not allowed to think in these ways, though she may desire to attain a certain amount of agency in her own life.

Mr. Villars is well aware of his authority and power over Evelina. Nevertheless, he appears fearful of taking responsibility for her education. In response to Evelina's letter, he writes, "I aim not at an authority which deprives you of liberty, yet I would fain guide myself by a prudence which should save me the pangs of repentance. [. . .] To see my Evelina happy, is to see myself without a wish: go then, my child, and may that

Heaven which alone can, direct, preserve, and strengthen you!” (115). Realizing that he has the power to constrain Evelina’s freedom, Mr. Villars decides to relinquish a part of that authority in order to allow Evelina to explore the social world of London. Yet, this letter also illustrates Mr. Villars’ ownership of his female mentee with his references to “my Evelina” and “my child” demonstrating his possession of her in both a fatherly as well as spiritual manner. Instead of trusting his mentoring of Evelina and her rational capabilities, Mr. Villars places Evelina’s future conduct in the hands of God. Mr. Villars does not appear to trust that Evelina’s intellect will protect and guide her, but she must be guided by a higher power to keep her safe and secure.

Evelina’s trip to London enables her to exercise her judgment and sensibility without the constraints of Mr. Villars, causing his authority and counsel to become unnecessary and even ineffective. While Evelina is in London, she must make decisions on her own and hope that Mr. Villars would approve. His advice and authority are too much delayed to have much impact on Evelina’s actions. He even hints at how the form of letter writing forces him to save his advice for when they will meet in person: “I have much to say to you, many comments to make upon your late letters, some parts of which give me no little uneasiness; but I will reserve my remarks for our future conversations” (382). Although Mr. Villars may feel uneasy and have supposedly important advice to share with Evelina, the reader does not hear these consultations between Evelina and Mr. Villars, and for some reason, Evelina does not share what these conversations consisted of when she writes to her friend Miss Mirvan. It does not appear that Mr. Villars’ comments on her past conduct impact Evelina’s future actions, which is probably why these conversations are omitted from the text. When Evelina goes on a trip to restore her

health with Mrs. Selwyn, Evelina is again allowed the freedom to make her own decisions thanks to the practical delay of letter writing to Mr. Villars. Evelina is able to evade her mentor's authority and advice without directly rebelling against his counsel.

Evelina's sensibility is what makes her a better judge of character than even her mentor Mr. Villars. Evelina recognizes Lord Orville's noble character toward the beginning of their acquaintance with one another, illustrating how she can perceive virtue in others due to her own finely developed sensibility. Of course, Evelina blames and begins to distrust her feelings as well as her ability to judge an individual's character when she receives a forward and ungentlemanly letter supposedly written by Lord Orville. She writes to Miss Mirvan: "Never, never again will I trust to appearances, -- never confide in my own weak judgment, -- never believe that person to be good, who seems to be amiable! What cruel maxims are we taught by a knowledge of the world! --" (386). Evelina believes that she is incapable of rationally judging another's character and that her ability to observe is flawed. She questions her feelings and admiration for Lord Orville, and by doing so, she blames her reliance on sensibility and reason. However, Evelina's sensibility and reason were not wrong. She eventually discovers that Lord Orville did not write that letter, but it was actually the evil plot of Sir Clement Willoughby. Evelina's ability to distinguish noble qualities in Lord Orville and even in her brother Mr. Macartney show her superiority in observation.

Mr. Villars, on the other hand, is unable to assist Evelina in her struggle to fight the sensations of her heart and sends her off with Mrs. Selwyn to restore Evelina's health. Mr. Villars' inefficacy during Evelina's emotional crisis is felt twofold. First, Evelina herself realizes that Mr. Villars is unable to bring her the tranquility that she so much

wishes to find. In fact, Evelina writes: “O Miss Mirvan, to be so beloved by the best of men, --should I not be happy? – Should I have one wish save that of meriting his goodness? [. . .] I had flattered myself that, when restored to Berry Hill, I should be restored to tranquility: far otherwise have I found it” (384). Evelina claims that Mr. Villars is “the best of men” and as such, she should dedicate her life to him, but clearly, something is holding Evelina back. Her sense of obligation to Mr. Villars as her benefactor and mentor is strong, but her desire to break free from the restraints of this mentoring relationship is hinted at within the dashes, rhetorical questions, and complaint against the lack of tranquility. Evelina clearly does wish for more than dedicating her life to her mentor, though she suggests that this may be ungrateful. In fact, Evelina continues to write to Miss Mirvan that “I blush for what I have written. Can you, Maria, forgive my gravity? but I restrain it so much and so painfully in the presence of Mr. Villars, that I know not how to deny myself the consolation of indulging it to you” (384-5). Evelina feels shame (hence, why she blushes) for her complaints, while simultaneously realizing that she must hide her dissatisfaction from Mr. Villars. Though she claims to keep nothing from him, Evelina begins to realize that the “best of men” is not enough for her to be happy. Second, Mr. Villars also realizes his own inability to help Evelina. Mr. Villars decides that Evelina needs to travel with a female guardian to restore her declining health (399). His inability to alleviate Evelina’s emotional suffering may be due to his own lack of understanding romantic sentiment. Evelina’s love for Lord Orville is the cause of her mental and physical decline in health. Mr. Villars is unable to properly sympathize or counsel Evelina in matters of the heart, so he sends her away.

Mrs. Selwyn is able to help Evelina in a way that Mr. Villars cannot. As a woman who is “masculine” in intellect, she can recognize Evelina’s sensibility but can also create a plan to restore Evelina with her father (something that Mr. Villars had not accomplished). Mrs. Selwyn is a strong, well educated, independent woman who accompanies Evelina and eventually brings her to meet Sir John Belmont, Evelina’s biological father. Evelina describes both the positive and negative qualities attached to masculinizing women by describing Mrs. Selwyn as “extremely clever; her understanding, indeed, may be called *masculine*; but, unfortunately, her manners deserve the same epithet” (400, italics in original). Before Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), Burney differentiates between a masculine understanding and masculine manners with the former as positive and the latter as negative. Nevertheless, these negative manners (though perhaps not as appealing) do not hurt Mrs. Selwyn’s effectiveness at reuniting Evelina with her father. Mrs. Selwyn’s positive impact on Evelina’s life has caused some scholars, such as Lee and Patricia Menon, to call Mrs. Selwyn a female mentor.<sup>36</sup> Though this argument can be made, Evelina does not appear to admire Mrs. Selwyn nor to place her in the same category as Mr. Villars. She does not seek her advice or counsel as much as she does Mr. Villars, and Mrs. Selwyn is not in the role of educating Evelina but simply guarding her as an older female companion and chaperone.

Mr. Villars inability to trust in Evelina’s education and judgment along with his own lack of romantic sentiment cause him to advise against Lord Orville as a proper

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<sup>36</sup> See Lee’s *Mentoring in Eighteenth-Century British Literature and Culture* and Patricia Menon’s *Austen, Eliot, and Charlotte Bronte and the Mentor-Lover*.

match for Evelina. When Evelina is again involved in Lord Orville's circle, she begins to restore her health since her heart also starts to mend. She sees Lord Orville for who he is and begins to feel justified in her original feelings for him. However, Mr. Villars distrusts his female pupil's sensibility and, in fact, blames her for lack of judgment. He writes a rather scolding letter to Evelina:

Young, animated, entirely off your guard, and thoughtless of consequences, Imagination took the reins, and Reason, slow-paced, though sure-footed, was unequal to the race with so eccentric and flighty a companion. How rapid was then my Evelina's progress through those regions of fancy and passion wither her new guide conducted her! -- She saw Lord Orville at a ball, --and *he was the most amiable of men!* -- She met him again at another, -- and *he had every virtue under heaven!* [. . .] You flattered yourself, that your partiality was the effect of esteem, founded upon a general love of merit, and a principle of justice: and your heart, which fell the sacrifice of your error, was totally gone ere you suspected it was in danger. A thousand times have I been upon the point of shewing you the perils of your situation; but the same inexperience which occasioned your mistake, I hoped, with the assistance of time and absence, would effect a cure [. . .] Awake, then, my dear, my deluded child, awake to the sense of your danger, and exert yourself to avoid the evils with which it threatens you [. . .] You must quit him! (444-45, italics in original)

Mr. Villars views Evelina as thoughtless and succumbing to her sensibility and imagination rather than reason. He does not trust that she can distinguish Lord Orville's character, and he disregards her feelings as erroneous and misleading. He advises against Lord Orville as a proper suitor for Evelina's affections and does not recognize the power of romantic sentiment on both sides. Mr. Villars even goes so far as to claim that he has come close to counseling Evelina about her mistake many times before but simply thought that her supposed "errors" would correct themselves. He calls her his "deluded child" as though Evelina has been deprived of reason and is completely taken over by her

feelings for Lord Orville. However, Evelina has rightly judged Lord Orville's character; it is Mr. Villars who is mistaken.

After Mr. Villars rather harsh and incorrect counsel, Evelina continues to write of her growing closeness with Lord Orville. If it was not for the delay in letter writing, Evelina would appear to be completely rejecting Mr. Villars' advice in preference for her own judgment. Burney enables Evelina to escape Mr. Villars' authority as mentor and guardian by simply not receiving his commands in time. Evelina goes so far as to comment on anxiously waiting on his letters, and meanwhile, she continues to write to him. Her attachment to Lord Orville continues to grow as she now compares Lord Orville to Mr. Villars: "O Sir! --was there ever such another man as Lord Orville? -- Yes, *one* other now resides at Berry Hill" (457, italics in original). Once Evelina receives Mr. Villars rather bitter criticism of her actions and decisions, her tone changes completely: "I have just received your letter, --and it has almost broken my heart! -- Oh, Sir! the illusion is over indeed!" (459). Evelina's reference to Mr. Villars almost breaking her heart emphasizes Mr. Villars deliberate crushing and forced constraint on Evelina's sensibility. Interestingly, Evelina criticizes Mr. Villars' own mentoring when she writes:

You, Sir, relied upon my ignorance; -- I, alas, upon your experience; and, whenever I doubted the weakness of my heart, the idea that you did not suspect it, reassured me, -- restored my courage, and confirmed my error! -- Yet am I most sensible of the kindness of your silence. [. . .] But I will leave this place [. . .] perhaps, for ever! -- no matter; your counsel, your goodness, may teach me how to recover the peace and the serenity of which my unguarded folly has beguiled me. [. . .] Your Evelina's errors are those of the judgment, -- and you, I well know, pardon all but those of the heart! (459-60)

Evelina blames Mr. Villars' purposeful lack of advice for her situation. She expected him as her mentor to make comments on her conduct and to warn her if she were headed

down a dangerous path (something that would understandably be expected).

Nevertheless, Evelina trusts that his future advice along with his kindness will help her to find peace again. She claims that her error was that of judgment, but she does not say whether it was her own lack of judgment or her mentor's. She still expects to be forgiven by her mentor (for his mistake) since she does not err in her heart. Evelina cleverly defends that her heart was and still is not in error. Evelina's sensibility triumphs in the end.

Mrs. Selwyn ignores Mr. Villars' request for Evelina's speedy return, and Evelina (stuck in the middle) decides to strike a balance between her female chaperone and her male mentor. She stays in Lord Orville's circle but attempts to distance herself from him as much as possible in order to follow her mentor's advice. However, once she is caught alone with him, Lord Orville asks why she has drastically changed her attitude toward him and what he has done wrong to be treated in this manner. Evelina then replies honestly, "Oh my Lord, [. . .] you have done nothing, -- I have never dreamt of offence; -- if there is any pardon to be asked, it is rather for *me*, than for *you*, to ask of it" (489, italics in original). Despite her mentor's counsel, Evelina is well aware of the fact that Lord Orville does not deserve to be mistreated by her and that she has gone against her own judgment and feelings for what was right. Lord Orville, of course, desires to know what or who has caused Evelina to act in such an irrational manner, but she is unable to tell him that it was her mentor Mr. Villars who was the actual irrational one. Evelina's awareness of Mr. Villars' poor counsel becomes evident as she stutters to respond, claiming that she cannot conceal who disquieted her mind (489). Not much longer, Lord Orville makes his intentions clear by asking Evelina to marry him, and she shares her

unconstrained happiness to Mr. Villars. She writes for his approval to the match: “Perhaps the time is not very distant when your Evelina’s choice may receive the sanction of her best friend’s judgment and approbation, --which seems now all she has to wish!” (496). Evelina has clearly made her own decision to follow her reason and heart, hoping that her mentor will finally approve.

Mr. Villars approbation of Evelina and Lord Orville’s upcoming marriage is depicted as desired, but Evelina clearly begins to trust in her own ability to make good choices. Evelina decides her own fate, and her mentor is not even present at her wedding (though he has written consent to the marriage). Evelina writes, “All is over, my dearest Sir, and the fate of your Evelina is decided! This morning, [. . .] she united herself for ever with the object of her dearest, her eternal affection. [. . .] the chaise now waits which is to conduct me to dear Berry Hill, and to the arms of the best of men” (554). The ambiguity of this passage makes it appear that Evelina is to return to Mr. Villars who she again refers to as “the best of men.” Evelina continues to compliment Mr. Villars and his role in her life, but it is her ability to trust in her own sensibility and evade his advice that brings about the longed for happy ending. Mr. Villars may be “the best of men,” but he is not the best of mentors.

After much literary success and fame from her first novel, Burney published *Cecilia* four years later, knowing that the public would be waiting to see if her first work was simply a lucky accident or whether the young female writer had true talent. *Cecilia, or Memoirs of an Heiress* was written both similarly and differently from *Evelina*. One of the major differences was that instead of writing a first-person epistolary novel, *Cecilia* was written in third person. One of the major similarities was that *Cecilia* revolved

around the eponymous heroine's first entrance into society. However, Cecilia was not raised by a benevolent male mentor like Mr. Villars but was actually taken care of by her parents until she was left a rich orphan. According to her parents' will, Cecilia inherits an extremely large estate, but she must reside with one of her three appointed guardians: Mr. Harrel, Mr. Briggs, or Mr. Delvile. With Johnson, Crisp, and Dr. Burney all providing advice on Burney's writing and personal life, it is not surprising that Burney creates a story of a female protagonist who is surrounded by overly opinionated male mentors offering rather contradictory kinds of advice on life, marriage, and money.

Although not listed in her parents' will, Cecilia did have a mentor figure from early childhood, who, after the death of her parents, stepped in as her full counselor and guide: Mr. Monckton. Nevertheless, he is far from the "best of men." In fact, he is depicted as the villain who has decided that Cecilia and her wealth should belong to him. Unbeknownst to the naïve but beautiful Cecilia, her trusted childhood counselor is plotting how to keep Cecilia single long enough for his aged wife to die and leave him free to marry again. Cecilia believes Mr. Monckton to be a kind, generous, and ideal male mentor figure. He is older than herself but not so old as to be completely ineligible as a marriage partner and would probably have been considered a potential suitor had it not been for the troublesome fact that he was already married. As a married man, his advice and interest in Cecilia appears to all (except the suspicious Mrs. Monckton) to be generous and benevolent in nature. Like most ideal mentors, Mr. Monckton lives a more retired life in the country. He is extremely well bred and intelligent and is, presumably, not sexually interested in Cecilia. While Cecilia views Mr. Monckton as having her best interest at heart, the reader is quickly informed of the contrary: "he [Mr. Monckton] had

long looked upon her [Cecilia] as his future property; as such he had indulged his admiration, and as such he had already appropriated her estate” (9). Cecilia is viewed as property and her wealth would, according to the law, become her husband’s. Hence, she is objectified along with her wealth as possessions to be controlled legally and fully by her husband. As a single heiress, Cecilia currently has much agency and control in her life, or so it seems. However, Cecilia is not yet at full age, so she must reside with at least one of her three guardians. Like Evelina, who leaves Mr. Villars to go into new company and enter into London society, Cecilia takes her leave of Mr. Monckton. What might be surprising to readers is that Mr. Monckton’s advice sounds rather similar to that of Mr. Villars. In fact, Mr. Monckton counsels Cecilia: “Be upon your guard [. . .] with all new acquaintance; judge nobody from appearances; form no friendship rashly; take time to look about you, and remember you can make no alteration in your way of life, without greater probability of faring worse, than chance of faring better. Keep therefore as you are, and the more you see of others, the more you will rejoice that you neither resemble nor are connected with them” (18). Isolation as a way of keeping young female pupils pure and innocent appears to be a common practice among male mentors (Mr. Villars practices the same). Mr. Monckton offers this counsel, though, as a way of protecting himself from rivals in Cecilia’s affection. Thus, Burney again questions the tactic of keeping a female pupil isolated from the social world; in the case of Mr. Villars, it is depicted as a mistaken philosophy, but in Mr. Monckton’s case, it is shown as completely selfish.

Leaving the realm of Mr. Monckton’s control, Cecilia enters the guardianship of Mr. Harrel. As one of her guardians, Mr. Harrel is to take the role of mentor and advisor

of Cecilia; however, she soon discovers that Mr. Harrel is a rather flawed mentor to say the least. Married to one of her childhood friends that she has not seen for a long time, Mr. Harrel is no sexual threat to Cecilia. In that one area, he meets the characteristics of a positive male mentor. Nevertheless, he fails miserably in the other areas. Unlike most mentors, Mr. Harrel does not just enjoy amusement, but he seeks it out at every opportunity. He spends his wealth without any prudence and finds himself in financial straits but does not have the moral integrity or will power to follow Cecilia's advice on how to solve his money troubles. The female pupil becomes the advisor, and the male mentor becomes the advisee. Mr. Harrel does not listen to the advice of Cecilia, and his dismissal of her counsel and his manipulation of her generous nature (threatening suicide if she does not take out a loan on part of her inheritance) cause him even more financial problems. D. Grant Campbell writes, "Characters like Mr. Harrel, the 'Man of Fashion,' prefer death to moving beyond this economic stasis. In this instance, he stands in marked contrast to Cecilia, who insists upon interacting within the world of actions and transactions, consequences and payments, and who deploys her money in conscious efforts to relieve distress and mitigate hardship" (131). While it would usually be the mentor's job to teach his pupil the importance of responsibility and accepting consequences of one's choices, Mr. Harrel lacks these desirable traits himself, and only by his negative example does he reinforce Cecilia's already caring, prudent, and thoughtful philosophy on life and money. Instead of guiding Cecilia through London society carefully, Mr. Harrel leaves her with many questionable acquaintances. He even tries to sell off Cecilia through promises of marriage to his rich friend Sir Robert Floyer. Rather than give her good advice on love, Mr. Harrel attempts to make a profit from his

female mentee by recommending his friend to her and not listening to her sound, rational objections. Eventually, Mr. Harrel fails completely and commits suicide, leaving Cecilia without his protection and with the forced promise that she will take care of his wife, Mrs. Harrel, who is just as thoughtless and selfish as her husband.<sup>37</sup>

Cecilia's second guardian and mentor, Mr. Briggs, is financially frugal and desires to look out for Cecilia's money, which would appear to make him a much more positive male mentor if it were not for his own fatal flaws. Much older, Mr. Briggs is no sexual threat to Cecilia, and though he resides in the city, he does not appreciate the luxuries, extravagances, and amusements of society. With these qualifications, one might begin to wonder why Cecilia would not choose him as her mentor. However, Mr. Briggs is frugal to the extent of becoming brutal and ungenerous. His living conditions are terrible, and though he is rich, he lives worse off than a poor man. He does not want Cecilia to use her money in any generous or benevolent efforts, despite the fact that she is an heiress and not spending her money on selfish luxuries. In fact, he does not even approve of Cecilia buying books and wanting to pay off her debts. He claims, "Books? [. . .] what do you want with books? Do no good; all lost time; words get no cash" (181). Everything is supposed to have monetary value, and if it does not, then he advises against it. Intellectual and moral values are not worth anything to Mr. Briggs unless he can discover a way to use them for financial gain. In her "Introduction" to *Cecilia*, Margaret

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<sup>37</sup> As D. Grant Campbell points out (see pages 131-33), Castle and Doody view Mr. Harrel's suicide and the revolutionary potential of Burney's novel differently. Terry Castle reads Mr. Harrel's suicide as melodramatic and the novel as a whole "a dystopia, the projection of failed revolutionary hopes" (*Masquerade and Civilization* 289). Doody views the suicide scene as a criticism of society and claims that "it takes very little stretching to term *Cecilia* the first of the Jacobin novels" ("Introduction to *Cecilia*" xxxvi-vii).

Anne Doody asserts that “Briggs reflects the world around him, the world of getting and bargains and things, as well as the solipsistic tendency of all advertised satisfactions and pleasures” (xx). He is rather vulgar and wants to marry Cecilia off to someone who is preferably as frugal and “practical” as he is so that her money will be safe. He cares more about money than his own health and wellbeing. Whereas Mr. Harrel takes extravagance as far as it can go, Mr. Briggs takes frugality to its most unappealing extreme. Cecilia realizes that she cannot follow the advice or live under the roof of Mr. Briggs.

Cecilia’s third option, Mr. Delvile, would seem to be a much better choice. After all, he is married and older than Cecilia, so he poses no sexual threat. He also prefers more retirement from the city and its amusements. He does not spend too much money nor is he a complete miser (though his family fortune has declined). However, Cecilia soon learns that she cannot respect him as her mentor and advisor. Mr. Delvile happens to be overly prideful, ungenerous, and a bore. Doody notes how Burney employs Mr. Delvile as a way of criticizing class prejudice and social rank (xxiv-xxv). Cecilia cannot condone his aloof behavior to herself. It appears that a positive mentoring relationship must have respect, benevolence, and kindness in order to be the least bit successful. Unfortunately for Cecilia, none of her assigned mentors have these necessary traits.

Cecilia decides to follow the advice of two mentors of her own choosing: Albany (a man who at one point was driven insane but is now on a mission to help those less fortunate in society) and her childhood mentor Mr. Monckton. Albany encourages Cecilia’s benevolence toward others less fortunate than herself. As Doody points out, “Albany, who also figures as an honorary guardian, is the only character who consistently

preaches benevolence and the care of the poor” (xxii). Cecilia discovers that following her sensibility—and finding encouragement from Albany—brings her peace of mind (even when she is in less than ideal positions). When others are praising Cecilia’s beauty or attempting to manipulate her for their own selfish purposes, Albany cries out in pity for her, “Poor simple victim! hast thou already so many pursuers? yet seest not that thou art marked for sacrifice! yet knowest not that thou art destined for prey! [. . .] discard the sycophants that surround you, seek the virtuous, relieve the poor, and save yourself from the impending destruction of unfeeling prosperity!” (68). Albany realizes early on that Cecilia is becoming victimized by her own mentors. Older, intelligent, kind, generous, and a more retired gentleman, Albany embodies the characteristics of the ideal mentor. Cecilia, thus, chooses him to help guide her through the selfish and perilous ways of society. She recognizes that his sanity has been weakened before and that she must still exercise caution when it comes to the spending of her fortune (since she cannot afford to financially support others to the extent that she becomes poor herself). Despite Albany’s many positive characteristics, Cecilia realizes that she must still rely upon her own judgment.

Cecilia’s other chosen mentor, Mr. Monckton, appears to be a good choice, at least on the surface. Since Cecilia is unaware of his ulterior motives, she assumes that his care for her is benevolent and unselfish. He even gives some good advice, such as cautioning her against the suicidal spendthrift Mr. Harrel. Practically all of his advice sounds similar to what one would find in a conduct book. He cautions her against extravagant spending, reminding Cecilia of her obligations to her future husband. However, Cecilia retains the right to spend prudently and benevolently, pointing out that

a man of her choosing would not hold that against her. Cecilia usually seeks Mr. Monckton's advice when it comes to what she should do with the Harrels, but he is frequently not there to give the advice to her when most desperately needed. Cecilia usually tends to rely on her sensibility to guide her, though Mr. Monckton frequently blames her for her susceptibility to emotions (much like Mr. Villars reprimands Evelina). Nevertheless, almost all of Mr. Monckton's counsel is traced back to his desire to possess Cecilia's body and fortune. Eventually, Cecilia discovers Mr. Monckton's sabotage of her first engagement with Mortimer Delvile (the son of her proud mentor), and he eventually ends up rather miserable due to his own machinations.

Mentors in *Cecilia* do not appear in nearly as positive a light as they do in *Evelina*, and though Cecilia clearly desires someone to help guide her, she soon learns that she must rely on her own sensibility and reason. Men's false assumptions (including her love interest Mortimer Delvile) about her character and truthfulness cause Cecilia to temporarily lose her sanity, depicting patriarchal society as at fault for persecuting a young heroine through its irrational and unforgiving rules of proper social decorum. *Cecilia* becomes a tale of troublesome mentors who persecute (in their own different ways) an intelligent and innocent young woman who simply lacks society's approval to enact her own judgment and agency.

## Part Two: Revising Real-Life Mentors in Edgeworth's *Belinda*

While Burney was strongly influenced by the three male mentors that surrounded her (Johnson, Crisp, and Dr. Burney) and took the idea of an oppressive male presence in the life of a young female mentee and placed it into her novels, the fictional mentors and the novels' plots were her own imaginative creations. In other words, Burney did not write a character based on a real-life person but on the idea itself. Maria Edgeworth, on the other hand, took the two most influential men in her life, Richard Lovell Edgeworth and Thomas Day,<sup>38</sup> and created a fictional character based on their philosophies and social experiments. They were members of the Lunar Society, a group of intellectuals who would “try to meet at each other's houses on the Monday nearest the full moon, to have light to ride home (hence the name)” (Uglow xiii). In her book *The Lunar Men*, Jenny Uglow writes, “But the Lunar men are different – together they nudge their whole society and culture over the threshold of the modern, tilting it irrevocably away from old patterns of life towards the world we know today” (xiii). As two notable members of the Lunar Society, both Richard Edgeworth and Thomas Day were innovative thinkers and were engaged with various pedagogical theories and experiments. Richard Edgeworth believed that women should be taught much like men and could even become professional writers. He encouraged his children (both boys and girls) to read, write, question, and learn. Thomas Day, however, believed women were to stay at home and was strongly opposed to female authors. As an aspiring and promising writer herself, Maria Edgeworth lived under the authority of both of these men but clearly preferred her

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<sup>38</sup> In this section, I continue to refer to Richard Edgeworth, Thomas Day, and Maria Edgeworth by their full names in order to avoid confusion and remain consistent.

father's pedagogical philosophy over Thomas Day's. In fact, after Thomas Day's death, Maria Edgeworth published *Letters for Literary Ladies* (1795) where she fictionalized her father and Thomas Day's debate over female education and women's rights to become "literary ladies." Maria Edgeworth had clearly taken her stand against Thomas Day. Furthering her stance on women's potential to contribute to society, in 1801, Maria Edgeworth published what she referred to as a "Moral Tale" but was, more accurately, a novel of manners.<sup>39</sup> I argue that Maria Edgeworth creates a fictional counterpart of both Thomas Day and Richard Edgeworth in order to comment on the powerful influence that male mentors exert over their female mentees' lives. While Frances Burney shares her concerns of dangerous mentors, I assert that Maria Edgeworth illustrates how even positive mentor figures can actually be pernicious to their female pupils' mental health in her novel *Belinda*.

It may seem strange that Clarence Hervey, the love interest to the heroine Belinda, is based upon Maria Edgeworth's father and his best friend. However, Maria Edgeworth was provided with some of the best material a writer could ask for: an intimate knowledge of two of the most interesting men in the eighteenth century. As discussed in the previous chapter, Thomas Day attempted to raise a young girl to be his wife according to his rather extreme Rousseauvian philosophies, but it was unsuccessful. With her father as his confidant (and technically, the legal adopted guardian of Sabrina, the orphaned young girl), Maria Edgeworth was aware of Thomas Day's outlandish experiment and its sad outcome. With such an interesting story at her finger tips, Maria Edgeworth decided to fictionalize Thomas Day's wife training episode into her novel.

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<sup>39</sup> See Maria Edgeworth's "Advertisement." *Belinda*. 1802. (Oxford: OUP, 1999).

By this time, Maria Edgeworth had already written and published *Letters for Literary Ladies* and co-written the treatise *Practical Education* (1798) with her father where they argue for both boys and girls to be instructed in similar manners.<sup>40</sup> Maria Edgeworth's concern with proper female education and the influence of male mentors was one close to home, and she included these themes within her novel *Belinda*<sup>41</sup>. Although her father would have preferred for her to write another educational treatise, Maria Edgeworth wrote a novel of manners that addressed the pedagogical debates of the time.

In *Belinda*, Clarence Hervey attempts to train a young orphan girl to be his perfect wife. She is young, naïve, and pretty. Like Thomas Day, Clarence renames her to fit his own poetic and romantic imagination. Clarence names her Virginia St. Pierre. As Kathryn J. Kirkpatrick notes, “the name combines the surname of Jacques Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre (1737-1814) with that of the heroine in his popular novel *Paul et Virginie*. A follower of Rousseau [. . .], Saint-Pierre described the education of his main characters outside society and according to nature's laws, a system Clarence Hervey adopted for Virginia” (493). Thus, Maria Edgeworth links Clarence's pedagogy of Virginia with that of Rousseauvian philosophy. Clarence keeps Virginia isolated and naïve to keep her pure and uncorrupted by society. This may sound a lot like Mr. Villars,

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<sup>40</sup> See also Marilyn Butler's *Maria Edgeworth: A Literary Biography*, Wendy Moore's *How to Create the Perfect Wife: Britain's Most Ineligible Bachelor and His Enlightened Quest to Train the Ideal Mate*, and Mitzi Myer's “My Art Belongs to Daddy? Thomas Day, Maria Edgeworth, and the Pre-Texts of *Belinda*: Women Writers and Patriarchal Authority.”

<sup>41</sup> I use the 1802 version of *Belinda*, which was the second edition (the original publication of *Belinda* was in 1801). Referred to as “Corrected and Improved,” most of the changes in this edition were grammatical and minor. Edgeworth did not make radical alterations until the third edition, which was published in 1810 where she omitted Belinda and Mr. Vincent's engagement and does not permit Juba, whose ethnicity is African, to marry Lucy, who is English.

who also attempted to follow Rousseau's recommendation of an isolated and pastoral lifestyle. As we have seen so far, most male mentors promote female education away from the social world in order to preserve their "innocence." However, the female mentees must eventually trade their isolation for society, whether they are prepared for it or not. Frances Burney and Maria Edgeworth both appear to fault the male mentor's belief that young girls are incapable of learning virtue anywhere other than in a pastoral setting. Maria Edgeworth attacks this pedagogical tactic of raising a young woman in isolation and naiveté by illustrating its destructive nature through her story of Clarence and Virginia.

At first, Clarence is pleased with Virginia's "progress." Maria Edgeworth writes, "To try and prove the simplicity of her taste, and the purity of her mind, he once presented to her a pair of diamond earrings, and a moss rose bud, and asked her to take whichever she liked best. She eagerly snatched the rose [. . .]" (371). Not knowing what diamond earrings were or their purpose, Virginia chooses what she knows and understands. Maria Edgeworth makes a rather editorial comment to make it clear to her readers that Virginia's response is not to be praised as an example of purity but as naiveté:

"And yet there was more of ignorance and timidity, perhaps, than of sound sense or philosophy in Virginia's indifference to diamonds; she did not consider them as ornaments that would confer distinction upon their possessor, because she was ignorant of the value affixed to them by society. Isolated in the world, she had no excitements to the love of finery, no competition, no means of comparison, or opportunities of display; diamonds were consequently as useless to her, as guineas were to Robinson Crusoe, on his desert island. It could not justly be said, that he was free from avarice, because he set no value on the gold; or that she was free from vanity, because she rejected the diamonds. These reflections could not possibly have escaped a man of Clarence Hervey's abilities; had

he not been engaged in defence of a favourite system of education, or if his pupil had not been quite so handsome.” (371-72)

This excerpt is extremely important since it gives us many glimpses into Maria Edgeworth’s criticism of Clarence Hervey (or the real-life Thomas Day) as a misguided male mentor. To start, Maria Edgeworth illustrates that this “test” of Virginia’s simplicity and goodness is faulty due to the surrounding conditions. Virginia is kept in complete isolation that causes her to react in a way that she might not if she were in society. Furthermore, Virginia is also kept ignorant to the extent that she must ask what the diamond earrings are and “Of what use are they? how can I make them hang?” (371). This is not an example of intelligence or a philosophical stance on the elegance of a rose as opposed to diamonds. Maria Edgeworth compares Virginia with the isolated Robinson Crusoe, a comparison that serves two purposes: first, it shows the barbarity of isolating a female pupil as a way of ensuring her love of virtue, and second, it covertly turns the table on Rousseau, who was an admirer of Crusoe (recommending it as the only fictional book for his imaginary pupil Emile to read).<sup>42</sup> Maria Edgeworth criticizes Rousseauian philosophy even further when she writes that a man as intelligent as Clarence should realize the problems with raising and educating a girl in this manner if he would put aside his own pedagogical ambitions and look at the results logically. She suggests that Clarence is also blinded by his physical attraction to Virginia. Hence, Clarence may start out as a benevolent mentor who desires to raise a young girl in a safe environment, but he ends up keeping her purposefully ignorant, isolated, and dependent on him. He also

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<sup>42</sup> See Rousseau’s *Emile*. See also Helen Evans Misenheimer’s *Rousseau on the Education of Women* and Mary V. Jackson’s “English ‘Rousseauists.’”

allows his own sexual interest in her to cloud his judgment and complicate their relationship.

Virginia feels indebted to Clarence, but she does not want to marry him. Her feelings of gratitude make her willing to sacrifice herself to fulfill any desire that he might have. When she discovers how women create holes in their ears so that they can wear earrings, she reacts by shrinking back and holding her ear, thinking of the extreme amount of pain that would be involved. She exclaims, “‘O, no, no!—unless,’ added she, changing her tone, and turning to Clarence, ‘unless you wish it: if you bid me, I will’” (371). Because of her extreme gratitude to Clarence, Virginia is willing to sacrifice her own will and body to make him happy. Virginia does not actually feel any romantic sentiment toward Clarence. Despite not wanting to marry him, Virginia decides that this is what Clarence wants so she is willing to do so to make him happy and because she owes him. Hence, when the mentor allows sexual attraction and money (buying the mentee’s obligation) to enter into the picture, the mentoring relationship becomes compromised and unhealthy. Instead of the mentee becoming an independent woman who can think for herself, she is molded (by her education) into a woman who lives to please the man who “created” her to the extent of sacrificing her own wishes and desires. Similar to Evelina’s belief that she should sacrifice her own wishes to please Mr. Villars, Virginia acts as a willing martyr for her mentor Clarence Hervey.

Although Clarence Hervey’s wife training episode is clearly taken from Thomas Day’s failed experiment, it is important to note that Clarence is not a completely fictionalized counterpart of Thomas Day. Maria Edgeworth based the plotline itself on Thomas Day, but Clarence is not meant to be read as a complete fictionalization of this

real-life mentor figure. In fact, Maria Edgeworth reforms the misguided Clarence and turns him into a man that resembles her own father, Richard Edgeworth. Unlike Thomas Day, who continued to be a devout follower of Rousseau's ideas (to the extent that he died by training a horse through the Rousseauvian philosophy of kindness), Richard Edgeworth began as an admirer of Rousseau and raised his first son, also named Richard, according to the principles set forth in Rousseau's educational treatise *Emile*. However, the son's education was unsuccessful, and Richard Edgeworth Sr. decided that Rousseau's philosophy was wrong. Thankfully, Maria Edgeworth and the rest of the Edgeworth children were raised in a more Lockean fashion where they were taught to employ reason and logic. In *Belinda*, Clarence undergoes a reformation when he comes to realize that Virginia is not an example of perfect womanhood but is, instead, an ignorant child that can be easily manipulated due to her poor education. He decides that Belinda is a more ideal woman and would make a better marriage partner.

Belinda is offered as an example of the anti-Virginia (anti-Rousseauvian) educational system. Brought up in a social world, Belinda is not naïve when it comes to how society works (unlike Burney's *Evelina*). She soon learns that her matchmaker Aunt Stanhope's reputation of marrying her nieces off due to their outward appearances and talents cause Belinda's own reputation to be called into question. As an intelligent and thoughtful woman, Belinda decides to be seen as the rational and prudent person she is, instead of the thoughtless and artful woman that she came across as toward the beginning of the novel. Belinda employs her ability to reason and solve problems throughout the story, figuring out the tricks of the prankster Harriet Freke and helping to bring peace and

understanding between Lady Delacour and her family.<sup>43</sup> Clarence comes to see Belinda's virtue and wisdom as genuine instead of artificial, realizing that the artless and naïve Virginia is not in the same category as the wise and prudent Belinda. Much like Richard Edgeworth began to teach his children the importance of reason and usefulness after his own failed Rousseauvian experiment, Clarence begins to realize that women are capable of much more intellect and virtue than he started out believing. Clarence also realizes that his educational experiment with Virginia is flawed and hurtful to her potential. In fact, Virginia's sense of duty to Clarence threatens everyone's happiness since she believes that she must marry him to fulfill her obligations. If it were not for some lucky events and the clever Lady Delacour, a happy ending might not have occurred.

Thankfully, Belinda and Clarence have a chance to marry and build a marriage upon intellectual equality and respect, but only after Clarence learns from his pedagogical mistakes and reforms himself to be worthy of Belinda's hand in marriage. Unlike Burney's *Evelina* where Lord Orville remains a perfect suitor and gentleman throughout the narrative, Edgeworth's *Belinda* illustrates how the heroine's love interest, Clarence Hervey, must reform himself and his own philosophical ideas in order to deserve Belinda. Thus, Maria Edgeworth builds on the idea that reason and sensibility are needed in not only the heroine but also the hero.

Although Clarence Hervey is most certainly the central mentor figure in *Belinda*, there is another male mentor, who deserves to be discussed briefly. Mr. Percival serves as Belinda's chosen advisor and mentor. He recommends thoughtful readings for her,

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<sup>43</sup> For a thoughtful discussion on Belinda's powers of observation, see Deborah Weiss's "The Extraordinary Ordinary Belinda: Maria Edgeworth's Female Philosopher."

and he offers a place that appears to be a safe haven in the middle of a crazed social world. His wife is an intellectual equal, and his children continue to develop their actively inquisitive minds. It is difficult to not read the Percival family as a fictionalization of the real-life Edgeworth family where Richard Edgeworth and his beloved second wife Honora raised the children according to their own educational beliefs, and both the boys and girls were taught to ask questions and learn from everything around them. As the oldest daughter of his first marriage, Maria Edgeworth also played the part of an educator to the Edgeworth children. She helped write her father and her stepmother's philosophy on education, and Maria Edgeworth also wrote many educational children's stories throughout her lifetime. Writing, learning, and educating were a usual combination in the life of Maria Edgeworth, and the Percival family certainly does appear to mimic her real-life family. Maria Edgeworth, however, does not hold off covert criticism of Mr. Percival. Though he is most certainly a positive character, he is not flawless. Like Mr. Villars, he recommends the wrong suitor to Belinda, and she, like Evelina, listens despite the fact that her heart lies with another. This unintentional bad guidance from Mr. Percival almost causes Belinda to marry a man who is a gambler and is in a rather desperate financial situation. This illustrates how Belinda may seek the guidance and advice of a positive male mentor figure, but she might be better off following her own heart. Like Frances Burney, Maria Edgeworth seems to suggest that although women may desire the approval of their choices by the educated men that they respect, women are more than capable of making their own decisions and judging for themselves what is best.

### Part Three: Elizabeth Inchbald's Criticism of the Mentor Figure in *A Simple Story*

A writer who both Maria Edgeworth and William Godwin admired, Elizabeth Inchbald was a well-liked, talented woman, whose desire for independence is notable.<sup>44</sup> In fact, as Peter H. Marshall points out, “a somewhat jealous Wollstonecraft dubbed [Inchbald] ‘Mrs. Perfection’” (182). According to Jane Spencer, “As a woman and as a writer, the author of *A Simple Story* was used to treading with utmost care the narrow line between permissible and forbidden female behaviour” (x). Spencer goes on to say that accounts of Inchbald suggest that “her strongest desire, [was] for independence” (ix). After her husband Joseph Inchbald died, Inchbald was free from her rather troubled marriage and did not remarry. Instead, she chose to live alone but was known and, sometimes, warned by friends for her flirtatious behaviour with men. Despite exhibiting questionable behavior, such as dressing at a masquerade as a female crossdresser, Inchbald managed to keep her respectable reputation in society. *A Simple Story* is often viewed as an example of a Jacobin novel since Inchbald was considered a sympathizer of the French Revolution and a close friend of Godwin, and it is thought that Godwin's influence on Inchbald may have affected her writing of this story.<sup>45</sup> As Gary Kelly explains in *The English Jacobin Novel 1780-1805*, there was not just one way to define Jacobins since many of them held different beliefs; however, discussing the common ideals of Inchbald, Godwin, Thomas Holcroft, and Robert Bage as fellow English Jacobins, Kelly states:

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<sup>44</sup> See Jane Spencer's "Introduction" *A Simple Story*, Annibel Jenkins, *I'll Tell You What: The Life of Elizabeth Inchbald*, Gary Kelly's *The English Jacobin Novel 1780-1805*, Gary Kelly's *Women, Writing, and Revolution, 1790-1827*, Terry Castle's *Masquerade and Civilization*, and Catherine Craft-Fairchild's *Masquerade and Gender*.

<sup>45</sup> See Spencer's "Introduction," p. xiii and Kelly's chapter on Inchbald in *The English Jacobin Novel*.

They opposed tyranny and oppression, be it domestic, national or international, spiritual or temporal; they were against all distinctions between men which were not based on moral qualities, or virtue; and they were utterly opposed to persecution of individuals, communities, or nations for their beliefs on any subject. Most of all, they saw history, both past and present, as an account of the efforts of some men to establish the rule of reason against its enemies, *which were not imagination and feeling, but error and prejudice.* (7)

When viewed from this Jacobin perspective, I assert that Inchbald's *A Simple Story* offers sharp criticism of the male mentor's patriarchal tyranny over his female mentee and that this can be viewed as a broader and bolder critique of women's oppressive status in a male-dominated society. Furthermore, Inchbald does not consider feelings as enemies of reason but "error and prejudice" as the opposites of reason. With Dorriforth as a symbol for patriarchal tyranny, Inchbald is able to offer sensibility as the way to destroy oppression and allow reason along with sensibility to reign in harmony. Whereas other fictional male mentors lack a proper understanding of romantic sentiment and are often undermined by their female mentee's superior sensibility, Inchbald takes this a step further by providing a male mentor who attempts to repress not only his own feelings but also the emotions of those around him. By doing so, Inchbald successfully illustrates how patriarchal tyranny is often found when the power of sensibility is denied.

The opening plot of *A Simple Story* is founded upon a mentoring relationship. Miss Milner has been raised by a doting father as a woman of fashion instead of sense. Miss Milner's flawed education is described as follows: "to a Protestant boarding school, from whence she was sent with merely such sentiments of religion, as young ladies of fashion mostly imbibe. Her little heart employed in all the endless pursuits of personal accomplishments, had left her mind without one ornament, except those which nature

gave, and even they were not wholly preserved from the ravages made by its rival, *Art*” (4-5, italics in original). Her father (now on his death bed) is concerned for his daughter’s future and desires for her to become better educated to avoid foolish mistakes and choices. He decides that she needs a positive male mentor figure who can advise and guide her as she begins to enter into society. Her father claims: “Dorriforth is the only person I know, who, uniting every moral virtue to those of religion, and native honour to pious faith; will protect without controlling, instruct without tyrannizing, comfort without flattering, and perhaps in time make good by choice rather than by constraint, the dear object of his dying friend’s sole care” (5). In this passage, Mr. Milner describes his own personal concept of what the “ideal” male mentor figure should be. For Mr. Milner, the ideal mentor would be a religious man, who is benevolent and kind, and is no threat to his young female charge. In addition, tyranny should not be a part of the mentoring relationship. The male mentor should advise but not command his female mentee, and the mentor should not be controlling. As we have seen, this description coincides well with the “ideal” mentor figure in other works of fiction. Although Mr. Milner desires for Dorriforth to be this positive mentor who will help his daughter wisely navigate life, Dorriforth falls short of this model of perfection and is actually the man who will eventually contribute to the downfall of Mr. Milner’s only daughter.

As a priest, Dorriforth is considered by almost everyone in the novel as the one man who will abstain from any sexual interest in the beautiful Miss Milner and that, vice versa, Dorriforth will be the one man Miss Milner will not flirt with or be attracted to. However, what should not have happened is exactly what happened. In one of their first conversations, Miss Milner and Dorriforth share a witty conversation on how attractive

each finds the other (16-17), which is not exactly the beginning of the “ideal” mentoring relationship. Nevertheless, Dorriforth attempts to look out for Miss Milner’s future marital interests, and he recognizes that the young, handsome Lord Frederick is one of her favorites, but “Dorriforth beheld the growing intimacy with alternate pain and pleasure—he wished to see Miss Milner married, to see his charge in the protection of another, rather than of himself; yet under the care of a young nobleman, immersed in all the vices of the town [. . .] under such care he trembled for her happiness—yet trembled more lest her heart should be purloined, without even the authority of matrimonial views” (19). Dorriforth sees it as his duty to protect his female mentee, but he does not appear to distinguish between the “protecting” of a male mentor and a husband. It is also his duty to educate and guide Miss Milner, but he appears unsure of how to accomplish his other responsibilities. His distrust of Miss Milner’s sensibility (her reliance on feelings) begins here and only increases as their relationship continues.

Like Mr. Villars, who warns Evelina to watch and control her feelings, Dorriforth sees emotions as troublesome in both himself and, especially, in his female mentee, Miss Milner.<sup>46</sup> In fact, Miss Milner herself embodies sensibility.<sup>47</sup> She is often

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<sup>46</sup> For an interesting discussion of Miss Milner’s sensibility and her fetishism of inanimate objects, see Jo Alyson Parker, “Complicating ‘A Simple Story’: Inchbald’s Two Versions of Female Power,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 30, no. 3 (1997): 255-70.

<sup>47</sup> The term sensibility is one that has changed meanings since its use in the eighteenth century. See Nelson C. Smith “Sense, Sensibility, and Anne Radcliffe.” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*. 13, no. 4 (1973): 577-590. Smith explains that “The current pejorative meaning is that of a release of emotion, even an excess of emotion, and the cult of sensibility involved people willing to give themselves up to emotion” (578). However, as Smith points out, eighteenth-century writers did not view sensibility in this way; instead, “They used the term more often in the sense of ‘sensitivity’” (578). Smith discusses how “sensibility” was not considered an evil in the eighteenth-century but that the “excess of sensibility” was considered dangerous and was prone to criticism (580).

easily moved to tears, especially when disappointed. Inchbald depicts Miss Milner as a young woman who has been improperly taught how to control her emotions. It is important to note that Inchbald does not fault Miss Milner for her sensibility, but for how Miss Milner was taught in a fashionable school that only emphasized the superficial instead of the intellectual. Inchbald seems to suggest that if Miss Milner had been given a “PROPER EDUCATION” (338) (which appears in all capitalized letters on a line of its own at the end of the novel) then she would have been able to handle her sensibility and avoid becoming the victim of her emotions. The problem is not with women’s nervous system but that they are not allowed the kind of education that is based on reason.

There are hints of Dorriforth’s tyrannical behavior early on in the novel. When Miss Milner mistakenly answers Dorriforth that she is going to stay at home but has actually already agreed to attend a ball, she expects Dorriforth to discover the truth and realize her confusion and mistake. When Dorriforth finds out though, he reacts angrily and commands her to stay at home. To the surprise of everyone, Miss Milner obeys, and Dorriforth eventually repents from his harsh command: “be assured I shall issue my commands with greater circumspection for the future” (33). However, Dorriforth’s early exhibition of a dictatorial attitude toward his female mentee actually increases in intensity. Once he resigns his vows as a priest so that he may inherit the title of Lord Elmwood, Dorriforth is officially an eligible bachelor, and Miss Milner’s attraction to him is no longer “taboo.” Their mentoring relationship was already strained and flawed.

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The *OED* defines *sensibility* as “Quickness and acuteness of apprehension or feeling; the quality of being easily and strongly affected by emotional influences; sensitiveness” (*OED* def. 5a) and can also mean “Capacity for refined emotion; delicate sensitiveness of taste; also, readiness to feel compassion for suffering, and to be moved by the pathetic in literature or art” (*OED* def. 6a).

Early on, Frederick Lawnly alluded to Héloïse and Abelard—the religious male mentor and female mentee who became involved in an illicit affair—making Miss Milner knowingly blush (22).<sup>48</sup> Now that Dorriforth has become the lawful Lord Elmwood, he is free to marry whomever he chooses, including his young female charge. Dorriforth and Miss Milner become engaged, making Dorriforth’s role as her mentor rather questionable. Miss Milner stops seeing Dorriforth as her mentor but as her lover. She decides that the time of their engagement is when she should test Dorriforth’s love for her, meaning that she no longer seeks to obey and please him but see how much he is willing to trust her. Dorriforth, however, has not relinquished his authority and power over her. Inchbald purposefully shows how Dorriforth views his own sensibility and feelings, especially toward Miss Milner, as his weakness since Miss Milner deliberately tests Dorriforth’s affections in such a way that Dorriforth finds “his love struggling with his censure – his politeness with his anxiety” (139). Dorriforth sees his sensibility struggling with his male authority (i.e. his patriarchal power as guardian, mentor, and future husband). He does not know how to justify his romantic sentiment toward Miss Milner and his duty as her mentor. By allowing sexual interest to enter into the picture, Dorriforth has already compromised his role as benevolent advisor and religious counselor. When Miss Milner desires to attend a masquerade and Dorriforth “commands” her not to (much like his command earlier for her to not attend a ball), she disobeys him and goes to the masquerade anyway. Dorriforth responds in a tyrannical manner, and as punishment for her rebellion, he cancels their wedding and decides that they must never see each other again. His drastic behavior is criticized by his own

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<sup>48</sup> Héloïse and Abelard are discussed in my introduction as well.

advisor and friend Sandford, who realizes how much Dorriforth and Miss Milner love each other. Sandford strategically interferes and is able to quickly officiate the marriage between Dorriforth and Miss Milner. Their marriage is a happy one until miscommunication and poor choices cause their relationship to fall apart. Dorriforth goes on a trip to take care of an estate in the West Indies and is gone for over three years and decides to keep the fact that he has become ill a secret from Miss Milner,<sup>49</sup> who decides that his absence is purposeful. She eventually has an affair with Lord Frederick Lawnly but then discovers the real reason for Dorriforth's prolonged absence. Dorriforth cannot forgive Miss Milner and banishes her and their daughter Matilda from his sight. Since their marriage ends tragically, Dorriforth then inverts his sentiment, rejecting sensibility in preference for complete and unquestioned masculine authority, "reason," and patriarchal power.

Inchbald illustrates Dorriforth's repression of his feelings as a result of his distrust toward the power of sensibility. He fears that his and Miss Milner's emotions were to blame for their unhappy ending (instead of simply poor judgment on both sides), so he decides to not have or show any familial feelings for his only daughter, Matilda, even after his wife has died remorseful of her past errors. Inchbald describes Dorriforth's inversion of sentiment as follows: "Dorriforth, the pious, the good, the tender Dorriforth, is become a hard-hearted tyrant. The compassionate, the feeling, the just Lord Elmwood, an example of implacable rigour and injustice" (194-95). Inchbald deliberately points out

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<sup>49</sup> Although Dorriforth is later renamed Lord Elmwood in the novel and Miss Milner becomes his wife, I continue to refer to both of them as "Dorriforth" and "Miss Milner" in order to avoid confusion and because Inchbald will, occasionally, do the same when referring to these characters. In addition, Dorriforth thinks of his wife as "Miss Milner," which is evident in the stair-case incident with Matilda discussed later in this chapter.

that this Dorriforth of the second part of the novel is a “hard-hearted tyrant.” As I argue, it is Dorriforth’s inversion of sentiment and his denial of the mentoring relationship that alters him into this “unfeeling” tyrant.

While mentors in both Burney’s and Edgeworth’s fiction struggle with romantic sentiment, Inchbald’s depiction of Dorriforth illustrates what can happen when the male mentor desires to reject his sensibility entirely. The problem lies in that by inverting his feelings, Dorriforth participates in patriarchal tyranny over Matilda, who he allows to live in his house but refuses to see and threatens her if she disobeys his commands. Though he may relinquish the title of “mentor,” he keeps complete control over her (and her education by recommending who teaches her and what she should read, etc.) Yet, he cannot see this as patriarchal tyranny since he does not acknowledge his daughter, thereby denying his own patriarchy. His tyranny is quite real; he forces Matilda into isolation and requires her to follow his commands, threatening severe consequences (i.e. her banishment and his disavowal of protection) if his orders are not met with completely. The mentor’s preference for isolating his female mentee is taken to extremes, and Matilda is even forced into specific parts of the house at certain times. This patriarchal tyranny is linked to his distrust of sensibility since it is his decision to not allow his heart to be “softened” that motivates him into banishing Matilda from his sight in the first place. Inchbald seems to carefully suggest that this anti-sentimental power is doomed to defeat itself. After all, Dorriforth is Matilda’s father and knows this; thus, his denial seems irrational. Although he denies his role as mentor, he still practices flawed pedagogical strategies (such as isolation and strict orders) and takes them too far. Unlike Mr. Villars in *Evelina* and Clarence Hervey in *Belinda*, who both willingly accept the

responsibility that comes with the role of mentor, Dorriforth desires to have the control and power over his female charge but refuses to acknowledge his own duties as her mentor.

While Mr. Villars fears that Evelina's emotions will cloud her judgment, Dorriforth fears that his own susceptibility to be moved by his female mentee's superior sensibility will cause his heart to be broken yet again. Since Dorriforth has seen the power of female sensibility in Miss Milner, he decides that he must not allow himself to witness the same touching tendencies in his daughter Matilda. Dorriforth, thus, commands everyone to pretend that Matilda does not exist by forbidding them to mention her name (206). Hence, all of those around Dorriforth must act as though Matilda is not in the same house. This acting or "charade" becomes evident, especially when Miss Woodley is in the library choosing books for Matilda, and Dorriforth takes care to advise her on the best ones as "the most cautious preceptor culls for his pupil, or a fond father for his darling child"(272-73). Since Miss Woodley is neither his pupil nor his child and "had never received such proof of his care since all their long acquaintance," the narrator seems to strongly agree with Miss Woodley that "she reasonably supposed Matilda's reading, and not hers, was the object of his solicitude" (272-73). Therefore, Miss Woodley *acts* as though she is choosing books for herself, and Dorriforth *pretends* that he is advising Miss Woodley, but both realize that this is all a charade.<sup>50</sup> Dorriforth's anti-sentimentalism and denial of his role as mentor are clearly illogical. Jo Alyson Parker claims that the simile of Dorriforth acting like a father "is an unnatural one in that it sets

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<sup>50</sup> I carefully use *charade* here instead of *masquerade* since I use *masquerade* as the inversion of sentiment and *charade* to show the outward acting or the putting on a "show" so to speak.

up a comparison—creates a space—between two elements that are actually the same; Elmwood is indeed the fond father, not just like one. The very unnaturalness of the simile reinforces the unnaturalness of the constraints that separate what belongs together—Lord Elmwood and his daughter. [. . .]’.” (“Complicating ‘A Simple Story’” 263). Parker correctly observes that this simile is deliberately “unnatural”; however, it is not only this simile that is unnatural but also the entire passage that shows there is something wrong in Dorriforth’s house. This “unnaturalness” or “wrongness” is Dorriforth’s inversion of sentiment and denial of his role as concerned educator of his daughter.

Throughout the text, Miss Woodley, Sandford, and Rushbrook will begin to become sentimental about Matilda, threatening Dorriforth’s anti-sentimental stance. In fact, when Rushbrook insists upon discussing Matilda, thereby directly disobeying Dorriforth’s commandment that she should not be mentioned, Rushbrook challenges Dorriforth’s actions of banishing Matilda from his sight and disinheriting her as unfair and “wrong” (289-90). Dorriforth re-establishes his anti-sentimentalism at the end of their discussion with Rushbrook agreeing to continue playing along since he has now been threatened with banishment as well (190-93). Hence, Dorriforth employs his rejection of sensibility as a way of tyrannizing the other characters. This seems to suggest that Dorriforth’s tyrannical behavior is not just against women but men as well, thereby hurting the entire household; thus, Inchbald cleverly illustrates how patriarchal tyranny is not only pernicious to women but also to society in general. After all, Dorriforth dictates what role Rushbrook and Sandford must play, implying that anti-sentimental patriarchy forces even men of feelings to unwillingly participate in the oppression of patriarchal order. Instead of embracing benevolence and following the

dictates of his heart, Dorriforth illustrates the dangers of a male mentor who completely rejects the role of sensibility in his life. Without any kind of sensibility, the male mentor turns into a “hard hearted” tyrant who attempts to control every aspect of his female mentee’s life and even the lives of everyone else around him.

Whereas Edgeworth depicts Belinda’s rationality as what causes Clarence to recognize her as a better model of female perfection than his naïve pupil Virginia, Inchbald offers Matilda’s sensibility as the solution to Dorriforth’s rejection of feelings. Only Matilda can unmask Dorriforth because only she is still allowed to show her sensibility and has the ability to reignite Dorriforth’s own refined feelings once again. It is in the important stair-case incident that the reader sees Matilda’s potential power to unmask Dorriforth’s true feelings. When Matilda falls and Dorriforth catches her, Inchbald describes his struggle with his emotions as follows:

[W]hen he found her in his arms, he still held her there—gazed on her attentively—and once pressed her to his bosom. [. . . ] [W]hen her eyes opened and she uttered, ‘Save me.’ —Her voice unmanned him. —His long-restrained tears now burst forth—and seeing her relapsing into the swoon again, he cried out eagerly to recall her. —Her name did not however come to his recollection—nor any name but this—‘Miss Milner.’” (274)

In this scene, Dorriforth’s mask is temporarily torn off by Matilda. By seeing her, he cannot help but stare, but when she speaks, she “unmans” him. Caroline Breashears posits that during the eighteenth-century men were concerned with their “masculine” image; however, masculinity was difficult to define, and it was a hard balance between attaining sensibility and illustrating manly courage.<sup>51</sup> Breashears also points out that the

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<sup>51</sup> Caroline Breashears, “Defining Masculinity in *A Simple Story*,” *Eighteenth-Century*

conflict of men illustrating refined sensibility but becoming too effeminate complicated writers' depictions of men (454). Dorriforth's inversion of sentiment, refusing to be the man of feelings he once was, seems to suggest that Dorriforth may in fact be concerned with his masculine image since he does not wish to be "softened" or become effeminate by succumbing to his affection for Matilda since he is concerned about others seeing him "softened" by a young woman. By demonstrating his "masculine" authority over Matilda, Dorriforth can feel as though others see him as a "hard hearted tyrant," which seems to give him confidence in his "masculinity." However, Inchbald clearly faults Dorriforth for his decision to employ his masculine authority in this way, showing his patriarchal power as simply a way of tyrannizing his own daughter. By inverting his feelings, Dorriforth may believe he is becoming more masculine, as in he has more patriarchal authority, but Inchbald undercuts this by again showing the heartlessness of such unfeeling authoritative power. It is at this point (the staircase scene) that he is unmasked and his emotions are then free to show. He cried "long-restrained tears." Clearly, his mask of apathy has been removed, and the masquerade is temporarily shattered. The sentimental power she has over him is again tied to the power Miss Milner had over him; in fact, it is Miss Milner's name that comes to his mind, symbolizing the power she had to incite feelings of affection and love within him. Dorriforth sees Matilda's ability to reignite his own sensibility as a threat, which is demonstrated further by Dorriforth's decision to flee from her. He must run away from her in order to replace his mask and invert his feelings yet again.

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*Fiction* 16, no. 3 (2004): 451-470. See Breashears' article for a more detailed discussion on the complexities of masculinity in Inchbald's novel and for an in-depth analysis of Dorriforth's struggle with "masculinity."

This second banishment allows Inchbald another opportunity to show the power of sensibility and how it is the solution to the problem of patriarchal tyranny. By choosing to mask his true feelings and affections for Matilda a second time and banishing her from his house, Dorriforth makes Matilda vulnerable to becoming a victim of Lord Margrave's attempt at rape. It is not Matilda's weakness or sensibility that is at fault, but Dorriforth's lack of showing true sentiment and familial affection. Once Lord Margrave sees Dorriforth's apparent apathy toward Matilda, "he was no longer fearful of resentment from the Earl, whatever treatment his daughter might receive" (299). Hence, Dorriforth's mask as the uncaring father places Matilda in a compromising and dangerous situation. By believing Dorriforth does not care for Matilda, Lord Margrave makes the mistake of seeing the masquerade as reality. Although readers have an awareness of Matilda's sensibility and want her to be happy, Dorriforth cannot view her this way until she is kidnapped. Her sentimental appeal (though not in person but in idea as the innocent girl who is threatened with violence) breaks through Dorriforth's inversion of sentiment, forcing him to tear off his mask and acknowledge his true feelings for her by coming to the rescue. Thus, Inchbald considers the female mentee's sensibility as the antidote for anti-sentimentalism and as the way of tearing down the mentor's patriarchal tyranny. Matilda is a sentimental heroine in that she is tyrannized by her own father and persecuted (almost raped) by Lord Margrave, but it is not her sensitive and kind nature that is at fault but men's lack of sensibility that causes Matilda to be victimized.

In *Women, Writing, and Revolution 1790-1827*, Kelly discusses the eighteenth-century's preference for and idealized concept of a "domestic woman" as "naturally restricted to the domestic sphere for her own good, the good of her family, and the good

of society and the nation” (7-9). Dorriforth attempts to mold both Miss Milner and Matilda into these types of “domestic women,” forcing them into the private sphere. He tests Miss Milner’s “domesticity” by requiring her to stay in with him even after she had made a previous engagement to go to a party; of course, he eventually gives her permission to go but only once she proved her willingness to stay (27-33). Likewise, he requires Matilda to stay on his estate. When he is on the premises, he commands her to remain within her own quarters and not venture out into his domain. However, Kelly points out that many women used this concept of “domestic woman” in order to enter the public realm as writers:

They [. . .] were quick to exploit the revolutionary and feminist potential of ‘sensibility’ in the construction of woman and subjectivity. While ‘reason’ and ‘virtue’ guaranteed professional middle-class subjectivity, even when inflected for gender, ‘sensibility’ as ‘sympathy’ guaranteed social relations, co-operation, and cohesion against excesses of individualism. (7)

Since sensibility was more gendered in favor of the female sex, women were able to use it for feminist causes, like the Bluestockings (Kelly 8). However, sensibility was more than just tied to sympathy; it also had revolutionary power:

But ‘sensibility’ was also a contradictory practice. On the one hand it was associated with excessive or sublime selfhood of the imagination and ‘genius’, it validated the authenticity of the subjective self against competing models of identity, such as inherited rank and ascribed status, and it was often treated as aristocracy of soul, equal or superior to aristocracy of birth and designed to subvert it. On the other hand, ‘sensibility’ could lead to social transgression, crime, or ‘madness’, as social categories designed for the willfully or unwillingly extra-social. (8)

Inchbald seems well aware of this revolutionary power of sensibility and uses it as a way of ironically subverting the subversive. Dorriforth has already inverted his emotions, so Inchbald employs sensibility as a way of inverting the inversion, turning things right side

up instead of upside down. Of course, Inchbald would have realized sensibility's power to be transgressive (i.e. Miss Milner), but she views sensibility as a necessary quality of any person whether man or woman. She shows that the inversion of sensibility is damaging and destructive and that sensibility must be given a place in Dorriforth's heart in order to stop his patriarchal tyranny.

While Burney illustrates both the desire for a benevolent and kind male mentor as well as the dangers of bad ones, Edgeworth shares how even the "good" ones are often misguided and wrong. Inchbald depicts the underlying themes of the power of sensibility and the male mentor's distrust and fear of women's superiority in matters of the heart. Burney questions the male mentor's efficacy through the female mentee's clever evasion of his authority. Edgeworth criticizes the pedagogical methodologies of mentor figures, and Inchbald rejects male mentors as proper authority figures but desires for them to strike a balance of mutual respect with their female protégés. Mentors, thus, become paradoxical figures who are desired to be positive influences in a young woman's life but are often questioned, criticized, and, sometimes, even rejected by their female mentees for their lack of sensibility and their misuse of patriarchal authority.

Chapter Three: The Gothic and the Mentor Figure in Radcliffe, Hays, and Wollstonecraft  
Part One: Radcliffe's Gothic Mentors<sup>52</sup>

In the preceding chapters, we have seen that male mentors struggle with both their own sensibility as well as that of their female pupils. In fact, mentors are often surpassed by their female mentees in matters of the heart. In this chapter, I examine how Ann Radcliffe, Mary Hays, and Mary Wollstonecraft employ Gothic conventions in order to explore the limitations of the male mentor, the threat of patriarchal tyranny, and the intellectual strength of the female pupil. The Gothic enables the writers under discussion to question and critique the impact of the mentoring relationship on both the female pupil as well as society at large, making strong social commentary on the roles of men and women. Scholars, such as David Durant and Richard S. Albright, see conservative tendencies in the Gothic, especially in Radcliffe's work; whereas, literary scholars, such as Ellen Ledoux and Claudia Johnson, have noted the proto-feminist tendencies of these authors.<sup>53</sup> However, the importance of the male mentor figure is overlooked in these discussions, and as I argue, he is central to understanding the connection between female pedagogy and reforming men and women's roles in society. By looking at the mentor,

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<sup>52</sup> Much of this section on Radcliffe is also under consideration to be published by Palgrave as a chapter of a critical collection edited by Andrew O'Malley. The bibliographical information for that potential work is as follows: Jessica Evans, "Redefining the Gothic Child: An Educational Experiment?" published in *Literary Cultures and Eighteenth-Century Childhoods*, edited by Andrew O'Malley, Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>53</sup> See David Durant's "Anne Radcliffe and the Conservative Gothic," Richard S. Albright's "No Time Like the Present: *The Mysteries of Udolpho*," Ellen Ledoux's *Social Reform in Gothic Writing: Fantastic Forms of Change, 1764-1834*, and Claudia Johnson's *A Cambridge Companion to Mary Wollstonecraft and Equivocal Beings: Politics, Gender, and Sentimentality in the 1790s: Wollstonecraft, Radcliffe, Burney, Austen*. These texts are discussed more fully later in this chapter.

we see an authoritative male figure and the female's subversion of his authority, but there is still a need for his presence to enhance the female pupil's intellectual development.

Often, the Gothic includes two important male characters: the villain and the romantic hero. Both of these characters focus their attention on the female heroine. The Gothic villain pursues and persecutes the female protagonist to fulfill his own selfish desires while the Gothic hero pursues and attempts to rescue the heroine from her pernicious predicament. His desires are those of a lover; he is motivated by romantic interest. However, the women writers under discussion include another important male character within the Gothic narrative: the mentor figure. Like both the villain and hero, the mentor revolves around the female protagonist. Unlike them though, ideal mentors do not pursue the female protagonist to fulfill their own self-motivated interest (though unideal mentors may). The ideal mentor is altruistic in his care of the heroine. He desires to equip her with the tools needed to overcome whatever Gothic situation she might be faced with, and he is usually absent (often deceased) when his female pupil enters into womanhood and must overcome the Gothic trials before her (such as threats of rape, kidnapping, or even murder). The male mentor is thus not a persecutor or a rescuer; his purpose is that of educator, and education is what the female protagonist needs in order to find her own strength and agency.

Unlike the sentimental novels discussed earlier where the mentor figure's authority is criticized and rejected while he is still alive, Gothic novels deal with the mentor's death (such as in Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and Hays' *The Victim of Prejudice*) or complete absence (such as in Wollstonecraft's *Maria; or, The Wrongs of Woman*). Evelina evades Mr. Villars' authority, Miss Milner rejects Dorriforth's control

over her, and Belinda illustrates superior judgement over Mr. Percival. All of these mentors must deal with their mentee's actions and vice versa. However, as we will see, the Gothic enables women writers to explore what their female pupils are capable of without their male mentors' continual guidance.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the roles of mentoring relationships in eighteenth-century fiction—their appearance in and impact on the literature of the time period—needs more attention in literary studies. This chapter looks at the role of the male mentor and female mentee within the constructs of a Gothic narrative. By doing so, I argue that the male mentor's paradoxical status continues since his presence is both important and helpful for the intellectual development of his female pupil, but his efforts may still prove ineffectual when society itself renounces the ideal mentor's pedagogical philosophy. This chapter enters into larger critical conversations related to Gothic studies. As Ellen Ledoux observes, "Gothic writing has a peculiar power, greater than that of verisimilar writing, to raise audience consciousness about political issues" (1). With Ledoux's recent work on Gothic writing as a means of social reform, the proverbial "door" has been sufficiently opened to consider the political power of eighteenth-century Gothic novels. I, specifically, focus on how the mentoring relationship contributes to the social reform that the women writers under discussion share in their Gothic tales: the need for women's equality in education and their right to traverse the public sphere.

Scholars, such as Betty Rizzo and Margarita Georgieva, have noted a connection between the Gothic and pedagogy. In an earlier work on the Gothic, Rizzo laid the groundwork with her brief but important observation of how education is a theme and

statement in Gothic novels.<sup>54</sup> Rizzo's compelling "Renegotiating of the Gothic" is not concerned with looking at teaching methodologies closely in Gothic texts nor in their pedagogical context. Instead, Rizzo considers how the heroine intellectually combats the patriarchal villain. However, I am more interested in the mentoring relationship, the heroine's education produced from that relationship, and how she employs or departs from it. I also consider how the writer's pedagogical theory fits within the context of women authors who were writing about female instruction both within and outside of the Gothic tradition. This enables us to better understand how these writers were creating their own tradition that was not conservative or reaffirming contemporary values (as some scholars have suggested) but was radical in nature and challenging the status quo. In addition, it enables us to see how these women were questioning and criticizing the current pedagogical system as well as gender roles. As I argue, the often overlooked mentor figure is actually crucial to interpreting these works of literature and connecting them in an effort to reform society's treatment of women.

The writers discussed in this chapter employ the Gothic mode to illustrate women's situation in society, and they consider how the Gothic impacts the mentoring relationship. Since these writers equate the current situation of women as Gothic, they seem to suggest that the mentoring relationship must prepare the female pupil to

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<sup>54</sup>. Betty Rizzo, "Renegotiating the Gothic," *Revising Women: Eighteenth-Century "Women's Fiction" and Social Engagement*, Ed. Paula R. Backscheider (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 62. See also Margarita Georgieva, *The Gothic Child* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). Miriam Leranbaum also recognizes that education plays an important part in this novel. See Miriam Leranbaum, "'Mistresses of Orthodoxy': Education in the Lives and Writing of Late Eighteenth-Century English Women Writers," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 121, no. 4 (Aug. 1977): 281-301, 300. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/986417>.

withstand Gothic trials. More recently, Georgieva discusses the many characteristics and conventions of the Gothic child: the child's exposure to the death of a loved one, the child's subjection to an adult's experiments at raising him or her, the impact of parental figures, the role of mystery, and the relation to sublimity.<sup>55</sup> While not explicitly concerned with issues of education or mentoring, Georgieva's discussion of the characteristics of the Gothic child is worth noting. I argue that the female mentee overcomes her status as Gothic child (looking at Georgieva's conventions of the Gothic child mentioned above) and becomes a strong minded adult due to her relationship with her male mentor. However, this does not always mean that the female mentee attains a happy ending since the Gothic allows for the mentee to attain her own mind but not necessarily the rights over her own body.

During the eighteenth century, novel reading, especially of Gothic literature with its ties to romance, was controversial.<sup>56</sup> As Jacqueline Pearson observes, "The argument about women's reading centred on the novel, with novel-reading one of the most contested areas in cultural debate" (196). Pearson discusses how Gothic literature in particular played an important role in the controversy over women's reading (100). Margaret Maxwell points out that "generally speaking, before the mid-eighteenth century [children's] recreational reading was the same as that perused by their elders" (45). In *The Guardian of Education*, Sarah Trimmer (1741-1810), influential critic of children's literature during the late eighteenth century, cautions her readers of the dangers of fairy

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<sup>55</sup>. Margarita Georgieva, *The Gothic Child* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

<sup>56</sup>. See also Jacqueline Pearson, *Women's Reading in Britain, 1750–1835: A Dangerous Recreation*, (Cambridge UP, 1999).

tales and romance, warning against their potential adverse effects on children.<sup>57</sup> I assert that it is in employing common Gothic tropes that Radcliffe, Hays, and Wollstonecraft participated in the philosophical debates concerning what constituted proper female pedagogy, arguing for women to attain an equivalent education to men. By having a male mentor, these female pupils benefit from a more masculine and individualized instruction. In *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Radcliffe deals with topics such as childhood development and the continuance of female education into adulthood. Since girls were usually prepared for their roles within the domestic sphere, they often did not undergo the specialized training that boys would in their adolescent years.<sup>58</sup> Radcliffe, though, provides Emily St. Aubert as an example of a well-educated young woman who furthers her learning outside of her domestic home. In *The Victim of Prejudice*, Hays depicts the Gothic situation of a young, educated woman who attempts to fight a corrupt system of prejudice, questioning the efficacy of even a positive male mentor figure. In *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman*, Wollstonecraft imagines the live burial of a woman's mind in an insane asylum, exploring the Gothic absence of male mentor figures and the realistic plights women face in a patriarchal society. In this chapter, I look at how Radcliffe, Hays, and Wollstonecraft employed Gothic conventions to contribute to the pedagogical debates of the 1790s in ways that challenged society's prejudice and anxiety over novel reading and women's "proper" social roles.

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<sup>57</sup>. Sarah Trimmer, ed. *The Guardian of Education*, 5 vols. (London: J. Johnson, 1801-1805). See also Andrew O'Malley's *The Making of the Modern Child* (Routledge, 2003) and M. O. Grenby's "A Conservative Woman Doing Radical Things': Sarah Trimmer and *The Guardian of Education*," *Culturing the Child: 1690-1914*, ed. Donelle Ruwe (The Children's Literature Association and The Scarecrow Press, INC., 2005).

<sup>58</sup>. See Andrew O'Malley, *The Making of the Modern Child*, (Routledge, 2003).

Scholars often view Ann Radcliffe (1764-1823) as “The Great Enchantress,” whose novels helped to establish and develop the Gothic mode.<sup>59</sup> As for her private beliefs and convictions, biographers and critics alike agree that there is a scarcity of information, but it is generally believed that Radcliffe was taught at a female school by Sophia Lee (1750-1824), who was also a writer, and her sister Harriet Lee (1757-1851), both of whom were actively involved in the instruction of children.<sup>60</sup> Radcliffe was known to be a recluse in her adult life. I argue that she actively participated in the 1790s debates concerning what constituted a proper female education through her writing and employed the Gothic mode as a way of exploring the role of the mentor figure in a child’s or even adolescent’s life. While I discuss multiple texts, in this section, I first focus on Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), which is representative of how women writers during this time used depictions of mentor figures as ways of exploring various educational theories.

In their introduction to Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Bonamy Dobrée and Terry Castle write, “*Udolpho* has a way of escaping critical formulas: it is always bigger and baggier and more uncanny than one thought it was. [. . .] To say what *Udolpho* ‘is’ is inevitably to reduce it.”<sup>61</sup> In an effort to not reduce but expand our

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<sup>59</sup> For more biographical information on Radcliffe, see Rictor Norton, *Mistress of Udolpho: The Life of Ann Radcliffe*, (London: Leicester UP, 1999), Deborah D. Rogers, *Ann Radcliffe: A Bio-Bibliography* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1996), Robert Miles, *Ann Radcliffe: The Great Enchantress* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), and Aline Grant, *Ann Radcliffe: A Biography* (Denver: A. Swallow, 1951).

<sup>60</sup> See Rebecca Garwood on “Sophia Lee (1750-1824) and Harriet Lee (1757-1851).” Chawton House Library. Web. 26 Jan. 2016.

<sup>61</sup> Dobrée and Castle, “Introduction,” *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, (Oxford: OUP, 1998), p. vii.

appreciation of Radcliffe's complicated novel, I am interested in teasing out Gothic conventions and their impact on the mentoring relationship between Radcliffe's "ideal" mentor figure Monsieur St. Aubert and his female mentee, the heroine Emily St. Aubert.

The importance of Emily's secluded upbringing by her parents in La Vallée is easy to miss. After all, the mansion of Udolpho and the even more mysterious figure of the villain Montoni are much more eye-catching to readers. Nevertheless, the instruction that Emily receives from her mentor plays a major part in this novel (even in the Udolpho scenes). In this chapter, I juxtapose Radcliffe with her female contemporaries, such as Hannah More, Catharine Macaulay, Maria Edgeworth, and Mary Wollstonecraft, who all wrote and addressed the need for major reforms in education. They saw the child as capable of empowerment through radical changes to the current system. I employ Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* as a case study of the Gothic *Bildungsroman* where the child is transformed into an adult through its interactions with various Gothic conventions as well as with the pedagogical theories of the time.

The Gothic was extremely popular during the 1790s.<sup>62</sup> As Robert Miles points out, “there was a Gothic *craze* during the 1790s.”<sup>63</sup> Many writers, such as William Beckford (1760-1844), Clara Reeve (1729-1807), and Matthew Lewis (1775-1818), followed and developed the conventions started by Horace Walpole’s (1717-1797) campy Gothic novel *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), which Walpole asserts is a blend of “two kinds of romance, the ancient and the modern,” which he sees as imaginative improbabilities and realistic nature, respectively (9).<sup>64</sup> Dark passageways, questions regarding the protagonist’s heritage, absent parents, mysterious almost supernatural occurrences, painful separations, crumbling mansions, and persecuted heroines become the trademarks of the Gothic mode. As Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick notes, this type of novel

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<sup>62</sup> For discussions on Gothic feminism, see Diana Wallace and Andrew Smith, *The Female Gothic: New Directions* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), Diane Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism: The Professionalization of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontës*, (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State UP, 1998), Dale Spender, *Mothers of the Novel: 100 Good Women Writers Before Jane Austen* (London: Pandora, 1986), Terry Castle, *The Female Thermometer: Eighteenth-Century Culture and the Invention of the Uncanny* (New York : Oxford University Press, 1995), and Betty Rizzo’s “Renegotiating the Gothic.” For critical conversations of Gothic conventions, see Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions* (New York : Methuen, 1986) where she focuses on Gothic “surfaces,” Rictor Norton, ed., *Gothic Readings: The First Wave, 1764-1840* (London: Leicester UP, 2000), and Jerrold E. Hogle, ed., *A Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) for an overview of Gothic writing. For more discussions of Radcliffe’s connection to the Gothic, see Nelson C. Smith’s “Sense, Sensibility, and Ann Radcliffe” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*. 13.4 (1973): 577-590, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44980>, Yael Shapira, “Where The Bodies Are Hidden: Ann Radcliffe’s ‘Delicate’ Gothic,” *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 18, no. 4 (2006): 453-76, doi: 10.1353/ecf.2006.0068, and Patricia Whiting, “Literal and Literary Representations of the Family in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*,” *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 8, no. 4 (July 1996): 485-501, doi: 10.1353/ecf.1996.0057.

<sup>63</sup> Robert Miles, “The 1790s: The Effulgence of Gothic,” *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, Ed. Jerrold E. Hogle, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 42 (my italics).

<sup>64</sup> Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*, 1764 (London: Penguin, 2001).

is formulaic in nature (10).<sup>65</sup> Tom Hillard observes, “Thinking of the Gothic as a literary mode rather than a genre enables readers to observe the Gothic elements in [. . .] [a story] without having to make any claim that [. . .] [the story] is itself a Gothic novel” (689).<sup>66</sup> By understanding the Gothic as a mode, authors are better able to not only identify but also employ its conventions in various ways in order to question, criticize, or challenge dominant ideologies. Writers, such as those mentioned above, continued to employ and further develop these conventions, but arguably none were as popular as Radcliffe. Her success, of course, inspired both admirers as well as enemies. Contemporary rival Matthew Lewis, author of the Gothic novel *The Monk* (1796), disparagingly alluded to Radcliffe when he wrote, “a Woman has no business to be a public character [. . .] I always consider a female Author as a sort of half-Man” (278).<sup>67</sup> Despite sexist criticism, Radcliffe continued to write Gothic novels, even responding to Lewis’ *The Monk* with her novel *The Italian* (1798). Not only was Radcliffe aware of the Gothic trend she was making extremely popular but she also was clearly concerned with how those conventions were used by others. Her most successful and well-known Gothic novel, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, enables us to see the Gothic tradition that Radcliffe desired to establish as well as how she employed those conventions to comment upon the current state of female education through her depiction of the adolescent heroine Emily.

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<sup>65</sup> Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions* (New York: Methuen, 1986).

<sup>66</sup> Tom J. Hillard, “‘Deep Into That Darkness Peering’: An Essay on Gothic Nature.” *ISLE* 16.4 (2009): 685-695. Web. 29 Apr. 2015.

<sup>67</sup> Matthew Lewis, *The Life and Correspondence of M. G. Lewis: With Many Pieces in Prose and Verse, Never Before Published*, Vol. 1. (Henry Colburn: Oxford University, 1839). Google eBook. Web. 6 May 2015.

The 1790s saw not only the desire for Gothic novels but also the obsession and ongoing debates concerning female education. Many women writers were busy publishing their views on the flaws of current teaching methodologies and on what a proper education for girls ought to look like. Conservative Hannah More (1745-1833) considered childhood as the opportune time to inculcate children with religious instruction. In her *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* (1799), she views education's purpose as instilling a devout Christian faith within the pupil so as to elevate both boys and, especially, girls (whose domestic future would be much more limited) through the vicissitudes of life.<sup>68</sup> Catharine Macaulay (1731-1791) argues more liberally for girls to be taught and amused the same as boys.<sup>69</sup> Macaulay even calls it an "absurd notion" to educate girls differently from boys (*Letters on Education* 47). At the most radical end of the spectrum lie Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) and her unfinished novel *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman* (1798) in which she laments the current state of education with its over-reliance on sensibility as well as its emphasis on an accomplishment-based pedagogy for young girls.<sup>70</sup> Likewise, Wollstonecraft's admirer Mary Hays (1759-1843) illustrates the perniciousness of a girl relying too much on feelings and emotions in her philosophical and sentimental novel *Memoirs of Emma Courtney* (1796). In addition, Hays depicts the dangers of an

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<sup>68</sup> Hannah More, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*, 1799 (Oxford: Woodstock Books, 1995).

<sup>69</sup> Catharine Macaulay, *Letters on education. With observations on religious and metaphysical subjects.* 1790 (London: *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*) Gale. University of Kentucky Libraries. Web. 28 July 2016.

<sup>70</sup> *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, 1792, Ed. Miriam Brody (London: Penguin, 2004) and *Maria, or the Wrongs of Woman*, 1798 (New York: Norton, 1975).

unfeeling patriarchal society in *The Victim of Prejudice* (1799).<sup>71</sup> In her *Appeal to the Men of Great Britain in Behalf of Women* (1798), Hays decries the belief of women's inferiority, arguing for changes to women's education.<sup>72</sup> As we will see, Radcliffe combines More's religious instruction as a means of comfort and strength with Wollstonecraft's desire for both reason and sensibility to guide a young adolescent through both puberty and adulthood.

Debates concerning Jean-Jacques Rousseau's (1712-1778) and John Locke's (1632-1704) theories on pedagogical practices abounded. While there was uncertainty as to whether children should be considered "blank slates," as Locke suggested, or whether children were "inherently good" but corrupted by society, as Rousseau proposed, practically all the aforementioned women authors considered a child's education extremely important and connected with his or her future agency in life.<sup>73</sup> In *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), Locke asserts that education forms the child and that the instruction of reason should be the primary aim and emphasis of childhood pedagogy.<sup>74</sup> Rousseau, on the other hand, saw society as corrupt and believed a child should be nurtured by Nature for as long as possible.<sup>75</sup> Rousseau argues that a young girl

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<sup>71</sup> *Memoirs of Emma Courtney*, 1796, (Oxford: OUP, 2009) and *The Victim of Prejudice*, 1799 (Ontario: Broadview, 1998).

<sup>72</sup> See Eleanor Ty's "Introduction" to *The Victim of Prejudice*, p. xv.

<sup>73</sup> See also Jenny Davidson, *Breeding: A Partial History of the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia UP, 2009), Susan C. Greenfield, *Mothering Daughters: Novels and the Politics of Family Romance Frances Burney to Jane Austen*. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 2002, and Barbara M. Benedict, "Radcliffe, Godwin, and Self-Possession in the 1790s" in *Women, Revolution, and the Novels of the 1790s*. Ed. Linda Lang-Peralta.

<sup>74</sup> John Locke, *Some thoughts concerning education*, (London: *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*) Gale. University of Kentucky Libraries.

<sup>75</sup> Jean-Jacque Rousseau, *Emile or On Education*, 1762, Trans. and ed. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1979).

should be taught to submit to patriarchal society in order to learn how to properly please men, which, according to Rousseau, is her purpose in life. Wollstonecraft, especially, argued against Rousseau's limited views toward women and employed the imagery of slavery to support her argument of liberating women through a more masculine and rational form of instruction. In Radcliffe, we see a blending of both Rousseauian values—the pastoral and isolated surroundings for the ideal childhood schooling of Emily St. Aubert—and Lockean concepts—the need for reason as the foundational building block of a proper education.<sup>76</sup> By providing a Gothic tale, Radcliffe is able to explore and test whether this type of education can withstand cruel treatments and circumstances. In the eighteenth and on into the nineteenth century, women were limited in options (governess, wife, mistress, daughter) and in rights (accomplishment-based education focused on physical and superficial attributes and unfair laws, such as coverture where a woman and her property were legally under the control of her husband). These authors suggest that due to these restrictions, women's position in society is one filled with perils that are indeed Gothic and that the mentoring relationship needs to prepare women to withstand these Gothic trials.

As Claudia Johnson argues, authors' use of sensibility was deliberate and important.<sup>77</sup> Johnson makes a case that writers, Wollstonecraft and Radcliffe in

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<sup>76</sup> Recognizing this theme, Georgieva quickly points out, "Similarly, Radcliffe's *Udolpho* (1794), Roche's *Clermont* (1798), and Crandolph's *Mysterious Hand* (1811) are all about fathers whose chief employment is teaching their daughters in a countryside setting using a model inspired by a combination of Lockean and Rouseauvian ideas of education" (*The Gothic Child*, 79).

<sup>77</sup> Claudia Johnson. *Equivocal Beings: Politics, Gender, and Sentimentality in the 1790s: Wollstonecraft, Radcliffe, Burney, Austen* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1995). See also Melissa Sodeman's *Sentimental Memorials: Women and the Novel in Literary History* (2015) where she "argues that sentimental novels of the 1780s and 1790s reflect on and

particular, employed sensibility as a way of engaging with politics during this time. Radcliffe's use and discussion of sensibility not only ties her to a combination of Rousseauvian and Lockean educational values but also links her with the pedagogical debates (that were sometimes political in nature) of her contemporaries. As Ledoux argues, "women authors use Gothic motifs to imagine female economic enfranchisement, invoke republican politics to argue for gender equality, and draw attention to the sexual exploitation of working-class women. Gothic literature became a major forum for women authors to develop the language of emerging feminism" (56).<sup>78</sup> Hence, I posit that Radcliffe's establishment of the Gothic mode enabled her to both inspire and contribute to the ongoing debates concerning women's social status, especially in relation to how young girls were receiving a deficient education and how positive male mentor figures were needed to alter this current issue. As I argue, mentors become the key to elevating women's position in society.

I begin my analysis at the lengthy exposition of the novel where Radcliffe devotes well over one hundred pages to describing the adolescent Emily St. Aubert's life with her mentor, who is also her father, and especially their educational tour across France. Radcliffe chooses to begin her novel with a depiction of Monsieur St. Aubert: his preferences, childhood, and choices. The reader soon finds out that St. Aubert prefers the country to the city, benevolence to ambition, and intellectual equality in marriage to

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provide ways of thinking about the conditions of cultural and literary survival" and also addresses the negative connotations that sentimental fiction had begun to be associated with (3). See G. J. Barker-Benfield *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* for an in-depth discussion on the role and subversiveness of sensibility in British eighteenth-century culture.

<sup>78</sup> Ellen Malenas Ledoux, *Social Reform in Gothic Writing: Fantastic Forms of Change, 1764-1834* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

marrying for money.<sup>79</sup> St. Aubert loves literature and considers knowledge to be a treasure, and “parental duties” a joy (2). We find out that his library “was enriched by a collection of the best books in the ancient and modern languages” (2-3). As Emily’s father and mentor, St. Aubert employs his background and philosophy on life along with his erudition as significant parts of the curriculum that he shares with his daughter. St. Aubert attempts to mold Emily into the best possible version of both a rational and sentimental being, and he does so by teaching her lessons on the beauties of nature, the knowledge of literature, and the usefulness of reasoning. The emphasis on St. Aubert’s literary knowledge, preference for picturesque landscapes to city life, and benevolent attitude are meant to idealize him as the perfect mentor.<sup>80</sup> In fact, St. Aubert is one of the most positive descriptions of a male mentor. Nevertheless, his early death enables Emily to be free from his control and authority and to exert her own judgment. To see if the mentoring relationship was a true success, Emily must eventually apply St. Aubert’s lessons on her own.

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<sup>79</sup> Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. 1794. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 1-2. References are to this edition.

<sup>80</sup> I discuss these traits more fully in connection with the female pupil Emily St. Aubert and how she employs these lessons from her mentor later in this chapter. As discussed in Chapter 1, the mentor figure usually prefers the country to the city and is benevolent in nature. Radcliffe is not alone in proscribing this curriculum for an ideal mentoring relationship. We see this in Burney’s *Evelina* and *Cecilia* (addressed in Chapter 2) and Mary Hays’ *The Victim of Prejudice* (discussed in Part Two of this chapter). These authors challenge a city life and its emphasis on an accomplishment-based education where girls focus on learning the newest dances, French, and fashion. The writers under discussion offer the mentoring relationship as a way of challenging and offering an alternative to contemporary pedagogy as well as contemporary attitudes on women’s position in society. They suggest women can contribute to society with their minds rather than only with their bodies.

St. Aubert serves as an ideal mentor while Emily exemplifies the model pupil. She reads frequently, draws, plays music, studies birds and plants, and appreciates the beauty of nature (3). Ann Shteir explains that “[i]n the history of botanical culture, daughters worked alongside their fathers, and girls’ botanical interests developed within botanical families” (4).<sup>81</sup> By teaching Emily botany, St. Aubert follows a more modern trend of the eighteenth century where girls benefited from learning science (as opposed to the ornamental education of female accomplishments). Although she has a “native genius,” Radcliffe makes it clear that her intellect was still “assisted by the instructions of Monsieur and Madame St. Aubert” (3). Emily’s pastoral childhood is Rousseauvian in nature, but St. Aubert’s emphasis on reason and on the need to control imaginative abilities places his pedagogy in more of the Lockean school. Although Madame St. Aubert is clearly a co-educator, Radcliffe is much more concerned with St. Aubert as the primary teacher. Madame St. Aubert’s appearance in this novel is short since she soon dies, leaving St. Aubert as Emily’s sole educator. Radcliffe emphasizes St. Aubert’s contributions to Emily’s education more than Madame St. Aubert’s. In fact, Madame St. Aubert’s early death and the lack of detailed contributions to Emily’s early education, most likely, illustrate the importance of the male mentor and female mentee relationship as one that offers the female pupil a more masculine education that will develop her into a beneficial member of society. The ending of *Udolpho* suggests that Emily will be a true co-educator even more than her mother when she is eventually restored to her love Valancourt. Another reason for preferring St. Aubert’s influence over a mother’s could be that Radcliffe desires for fathers to be actively involved in their daughters’ schooling.

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<sup>81</sup>. Ann B. Shteir, *Cultivating Women: Cultivating Science*, (Johns Hopkins UP, 1996), 4.

Emily benefits from a male instructor instead of an “academy” for ladies—where superficial accomplishments, such as dancing and etiquette, were primarily focused upon. In *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), Wollstonecraft criticizes the current state of female education, stating “women are not allowed to have sufficient *strength of mind* to acquire what really deserves the name of virtue” (28).<sup>82</sup> Radcliffe seems to echo Wollstonecraft’s views when she writes:

As she [Emily] advanced in youth, this sensibility gave a pensive tone to her spirits, and softness to her manner, which added grace to beauty, and rendered her a very interesting object to persons of congenial disposition. But St. Aubert had too much good sense to prefer a charm to a virtue; and had penetration enough to see, that this charm was too dangerous to its possessor to be allowed the character of a blessing. He endeavoured, therefore, to strengthen her mind; to enure her to habits of self-command; to teach her to reject the first impulse of her feelings, and to look, with cool examination, upon the disappointments he sometimes threw in her way. (5)

Since Radcliffe clearly prefers reason and “strength of mind” to the susceptibility of emotions or the threat of acute sensibility, her pedagogical values coincide with Wollstonecraft’s. Also like Wollstonecraft, Radcliffe distrusts promoting the superficial charms of an accomplishment-based pedagogy (for example, grace, beauty, and manners) over the development of intellectual accomplishments (that is, strength of mind, reason, and understanding). Radcliffe considers the emphasis on the superficial as pernicious to women and as a desperately flawed version of female education.<sup>83</sup> St. Aubert desires

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<sup>82</sup> Mary Wollstonecraft. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. 1792. Ed. Miriam Brody.

(London: Penguin, 2004), 28 (my italics). References are to this edition.

<sup>83</sup> The need for a rational heroine who uses logic to dispel “supernatural” events and provide logical explanations is one of the trademarks of Maria Edgeworth’s protagonist in *Belinda* (1801). See Robert Miles’ *Radcliffe: The Great Enchantress* for a discussion of how Radcliffe uses the explanations of the supernatural. Miles is interested in the sensibility of the heroine as well.

Emily to attain this strength of mind and to have “self-command” or, in other words, to take care of herself and use reason to make sense out of disappointments and difficult situations. Again, this coincides with Wollstonecraft, who views herself as a woman who has attained reason and is aware of its power: “Thanks to that Being who [. . .] gave me sufficient strength of mind to dare to exert my own reason, till, becoming dependent only on him for the support of my virtue, I view, with indignation, the mistaken notions that enslave my sex” (49). Emily will need to use her reason to confront her strong sensibilities and overactive imagination. What prepares Emily for her mysterious and terrifying encounters at Udolpho is her rational and “masculine” education provided by her mentor.

Radcliffe’s decision to give these details right at the beginning should prepare readers to start seeing this as an educational novel that is concerned with the “coming of age” of the heroine, thereby making this Gothic fiction a *Bildungsroman*.<sup>84</sup> Since Radcliffe focuses on the maturation process of a female protagonist, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* can even more precisely be considered a Gothic female *Bildungsroman*, focusing on the “coming of age” of the adolescent heroine who experiences various Gothic situations (kidnapping attempts, tyrannical guardian, threats of rape, the death of multiple family members, questions of identity, etc.). Emily must apply her previous education along with her experiences to these nightmarish circumstances in order to eventually reach full maturation and attain her own happy ending.

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<sup>84</sup> For a recent discussion on the *Bildungsroman* novel, see Heike Hartung, *Ageing, Gender and Illness in Anglophone Literature: Narrating Age in the Bildungsroman*. New York: Routledge, 2016.

Like young, affluent men in the eighteenth century, Emily must go on her version of the Grand Tour to complete her schooling. The Grand Tour is a significant part of Emily and St Aubert's mentoring relationship since it was usually only for young men of the upper classes. With an inclination to travel herself, Radcliffe wrote *A Journey Made in the Summer of 1794* and published it the following year.<sup>85</sup> In *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Radcliffe incorporates her own interest in traveling as a part of her female protagonist's schooling. She allows Emily to benefit from traveling abroad by coming out of the private sphere of the home into the public sphere, depicting this as an instructional opportunity. She journeys with St. Aubert and her love interest, Valancourt, learning from them as well as sharing her own observations on the nature and landscape that surround them. Emily's continual reflections on what she sees as she travels is a way of her internalizing the educational experience of visiting foreign lands and learning from other cultures.<sup>86</sup> Therefore, Radcliffe boldly gives Emily a cultural experience typically reserved for only young men and proves that Emily is capable of becoming strengthened and improved from such a journey.<sup>87</sup>

Emily's ability to appreciate her Grand Tour and to recognize the beauties of nature also demonstrates her superiority in taste. In *English Fiction of the Romantic*

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<sup>85</sup> Ann Radcliffe, *A journey made in the summer of 1794, through Holland and the western frontier of Germany, with a return down the Rhine: to which are added, observations during a tour of the lakes of Lancashire, Westmoreland, and Cumberland.* 1795.

<sup>86</sup> See Jayne Elizabeth Lewis, "'No Colour of Language': Radcliffe's Aesthetic Unbound," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 39, no. 3 (2006): 377-90, doi: 10.1353/ecs.2006.0009. Lewis provides an application of aesthetic and linguistic theories to Radcliffe's descriptions.

<sup>87</sup> In Jean-Jacque Rousseau's *Emile* (1762), the eponymous protagonist must wait to marry his true love until he completes his two-year-long Grand Tour.

*Period 1789-1830* (1990), Gary Kelly considers Radcliffe's fiction as "novels of description" and claims that "the emphasis in the descriptive passages is on the heroine's 'taste.'"<sup>88</sup> However, Emily's excellent "taste" in the sublimity of nature is part of her schooling. In the first part of the novel, it is taught to her by St. Aubert. In the rest of the novel, she applies her lessons to survive the precarious situations she finds herself facing. Her sense of taste helps her to distinguish between proper and improper situations as she travels with Montoni to his mansion and he attempts to force her into accepting the marriage offer of Count Morano. Thus, Radcliffe's "novels of descriptions" are more than just about taste; they are novels of education, linking good "taste" to proper pedagogy that assist Emily in her coming of age narrative. In "The Gender of the Place: Building and Landscape in Women-Authored Texts in England of the 1790s," William Stafford asserts:

Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Robinson, Charlotte Smith and Ann Radcliffe present sensibility and appreciation of picturesque nature as alternative status-markers, indicators of spiritual superiority which regularly elevate the sensitive and refined woman above the socially superior and classically educated male.<sup>89</sup>

It does not appear as though Emily lacks much, if any, in her classical, literary background. Hence, her talent for appreciating nature may illustrate her ability to excel even more in her educational journey. By considering Stafford's observation that

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<sup>88</sup>. Gary Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period 1789-1830* (London: Longman, 1990), 52.

<sup>89</sup>. William Stafford, "The Gender of the Place: Building and Landscape in Women-Authored Texts in England of the 1790s," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 13 (2003): 317-318, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3679260>.

appreciation of nature can be viewed as a status marker, we can see that Emily's Grand Tour—where she illustrates her appreciation of picturesque landscapes—may also elevate Emily's intellectual status.

In fact, Radcliffe may be hinting at Emily's superiority, especially if we consider how Emily and Valancourt share much of the Grand Tour together with the same guide, St. Aubert. Emily stays true to the lessons she learned about appreciating the beauty and sublimity of nature, enabling her to find strength in difficult times (such as when she is practically held captive in Montoni's mansion). Valancourt, on the other hand, distances himself from nature and becomes engrossed in a society of individuals that corrupt his good morals and values. Emily, not Valancourt, becomes the ideal for her readers to emulate. Thus, Radcliffe implies that Emily is capable of benefiting just as much, if not more, from an educational Grand Tour than a man.

After her Grand Tour, Emily undergoes trials and tests of her mind, fighting the perils of an active imagination. The death of her beloved father and mentor leaves Emily without a protector and forces her to start practicing what St. Aubert has taught her—how to use philosophy and the love of nature to soothe wounds of grief. According to Georgieva, "all Gothic children have to deal with loss" (89).<sup>90</sup> Emily must suffer the loss of both her mother and father, the separation from her love, Valancourt, and the death of Madame Montoni (St. Aubert's sister). However, when her father dies, Emily is without a teacher and becomes the graduated pupil, who is not yet ready to become an educator herself. When Emily faces the mental tortures at Udolpho and considers the potential dangers of living underneath Montoni's "protection," Radcliffe makes it clear that Emily

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<sup>90</sup> Georgieva, *The Gothic Child*, 89.

must rely on her reason and find strength of mind in order to successfully combat the seductive powers of imagination and sensibility:

[Emily] greatly feared he [Montoni] had a heart too void of feeling to oppose the perpetration of whatever his interest might suggest. [. . .] To these circumstances, which conspired to give her alarm, were now added those thousand nameless terrors, which exist only in active imaginations, and which set reason and examination equally at defiance. [. . .] Her heart, as it gave her back the image of Valancourt, mourned in vain regret, but reason soon came with a consolation which, though feeble at first, acquired vigour from reflection” (240).

By looking at this passage from a pedagogical perspective and with an awareness of the 1790s women’s debate, we can make several important observations. To start, Emily fears the heartlessness of Montoni. Clearly, a Gothic heroine, who must be sensitive toward the feelings of others, would be afraid and even threatened by someone who is without sensibility exerting control over her. Radcliffe, like Wollstonecraft, is not against sensibility and seems to desire her readers to agree with Emily that a heartless Montoni is one to be feared and, perhaps, eventually pitied. Nevertheless, too much sensibility is a problem, and a reliance on feelings alone is something that neither Radcliffe nor Wollstonecraft desire for women to attain.<sup>91</sup> Emily is terrorized just as

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<sup>91</sup> In “Renegotiating the Gothic,” Betty Rizzo makes a similar observation “Writers like Radcliffe and Wollstonecraft, who may be seen as suspicious of sensibility in women, are, in fact, only suspicious of sensibility unregulated by reason, and rightfully so” (99). For a thoughtful discussion on reason and sensibility (with special attention to Radcliffe’s other well-known Gothic novel *The Italian*), see the rest of Rizzo’s insightful essay. Dale Spender’s *Mothers of the Novel* also makes many brief but valid observations of Radcliffe’s preference for both reason and sensibility. However, I am much more

much if not more by her own imagination and acute feelings than by the cruelty of Montoni. Emily's "active imagination" when given free rein "set reason and examination equally at defiance" (240). When Emily's imagination and feelings take control, her reason and ability to examine occurrences rationally evaporate. In other words, Emily is not practicing what she has been taught from her training with St. Aubert—where she was inculcated with the need to use reason and acquire a certain "strength of mind." Although her heart is at war with her reason, Emily eventually does rely on her mind along with the powers of reflection to overcome her fears and find a certain amount of peace. Thus, Radcliffe implies that reason, examination, and reflection are the antidotes to overly active imaginations and overpowered sensibility.

Emily also applies her religious faith alongside her study of nature to combat her mental terrors. Radcliffe writes, "Thus, she [Emily] endeavoured to amuse her fancy, and was not unsuccessful. [. . .] She raised her thoughts in prayer, which she felt always most disposed to do, when viewing the sublimity of nature, and her mind recovered its strength" (242). Emily's strength of mind is replenished by her ability to appreciate nature as well as by her religious affiliation. Emily finds peace and comfort in her faith, and Radcliffe is not alone in including religion within her protagonist's education. During the late eighteenth century, religion was frequently an important part of contemporary teaching methodologies. Much of Hannah More's argument on education is based on the inculcation of religious instruction.<sup>92</sup> Nevertheless, some writers did not

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concerned with tying reason and sensibility with Emily's education and contextualizing that within the 1790s.

<sup>92</sup> Also see Patricia Demers, *The World of Hannah More, (Literature in English, British Isles*. Book 8, 1996).

include religion in their pedagogical treatises and, like Richard and Maria Edgeworth with their influential work *Practical Education* (1798), were criticized, typically rather harshly, for the omission.<sup>93</sup> We see Emily's connection to religion throughout the novel; she even considers the serenity of life as a nun, and it is in the convent that she finds comfort after the loss of her father.<sup>94</sup> Radcliffe was, most likely, influenced by her own devoutly religious beliefs, and a moral education for Radcliffe would be faith-based.<sup>95</sup> Radcliffe allows the reader to infer that any proper education would include religion. Nevertheless, Emily's childhood does not center upon attending mass or learning her catechisms, but resembles a more liberal education like those that the Edgeworths proposed in *Practical Education*. Hence, Radcliffe again blends pedagogical theories

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<sup>93</sup> Maria and Richard Edgeworth, *Practical Education*, 1798, (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2003), 282-83.

<sup>94</sup> E. J. Clery notes that Radcliffe's work has often been viewed as anti-Catholic, especially *The Italian* (discussed later in this chapter), but this is often an overly simplified look at Radcliffe's treatment of religion. See Clery's "Introduction" to *The Italian*. Full text citation is listed in my bibliography. While there was certainly an anti-Rome prejudice and a distrust of Catholicism in England, Radcliffe's use of Catholicism in her novels also serve as plot devices (safe havens, serenity, seclusion, hidden identities, etc.). In fact, Radcliffe's personal religious beliefs are uncertain. See the following footnote for more on Radcliffe's religion.

<sup>95</sup> See Robert J. Mayhew, "Latitudinarianism and the Novels of Ann Radcliffe," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 44, no. 3 (2002): 273-301, doi: 10.1353/tsl.2002.0015. Mayhew provides an in-depth look at Radcliffe's religious educational background. In the article, Mayhew posits that "The element of Radcliffe's 'old-fashioned society' that is the key to her writing lies in her religious beliefs. It would appear that Radcliffe was imbued with the tenets of the so-called Latitudinarian school of Anglicans." (274). Mayhew attempts to tie in the landscape descriptions in Radcliffe's novels with the Latitudinarian connection to nature's connection and proof of the existence of God. Mayhew also attempts to tie in the Latitudinarian belief in reason and a distrust of the supernatural with Radcliffe's emphasis on reason and explanations of the supernatural. See also Rictor Norton's *Mistress of Udolpho: The Life of Ann Radcliffe* where he argues that Radcliffe may actually be more of a Unitarian Dissenter than a strictly religious Anglican, thereby connecting her with more radical female contemporaries, such as Wollstonecraft, Inchbald, and Hays.

together to create Emily as an educational experiment that withstands even Gothic situations and obstacles.

Emily must apply her reason and strength of mind in order to deal with the mysteries that surround her. Georgieva asserts that “Mystery is an essential characteristic for the Gothic child’s portrait.”<sup>96</sup> Emily illustrates this “essential characteristic” throughout. She is encompassed by mysteries at Udolpho (who plays the lute? is Montoni a murderer? what is behind the veil?). Her own identity becomes questionable (is she the daughter of the tragic Marchioness?).<sup>97</sup> As Andrew Smith and Diana Wallace observe in *The Female Gothic: New Directions* (2009), female writers of Gothic novels tended to explain the seemingly “supernatural” events in their stories, of which Radcliffe was a master, while male writers, like Matthew Lewis and William Beckford, left supernatural occurrences unexplained.<sup>98</sup> Radcliffe helps to create the rational explanation of the female Gothic, especially with her solution of the mysterious black veil in Udolpho. Emily thinks she sees the remains of a murdered person when she lifts the black veil covering a decomposing body, but later on, it is discovered that what Emily had actually uncovered was simply a wax sculpture (662). Radcliffe allows Emily’s over-active sensibility to cloud her ability to see what is truly in front of her, causing Emily more emotional trauma than she needed to experience if she had properly relied on her reason and the advice of her mentor.

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<sup>96</sup> Georgieva, *The Gothic Child*, 106.

<sup>97</sup> See Georgieva’s last chapter “The Sublime Child” from *The Gothic Child* (2013).

<sup>98</sup> See Diana Wallace and Andrew Smith, *The Female Gothic: New Directions* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

Radcliffe's near-obsession with the sublime is well known. That she was influenced by Edmund Burke is another fact.<sup>99</sup> By experiencing terrifying and pleasing encounters with nature, Emily is better prepared for the vicissitudes of life. As a woman, Emily must face both pleasurable and scary situations. Mountains, which Emily is often fascinated with, serve as lessons in themselves since Emily learns both awe and wonder but is also threatened by the dangerous heights. The sublime itself can become a pedagogical tool. Georgieva lays the groundwork for understanding how the sublime may actually be connected to a child's schooling:

The idea of the sublime and its relation to the beautiful, the awful and the terrible also had a complex influence on the writing for and about children. Edgeworth considered simplicity as 'a source of the sublime peculiarly suited to children' and noted their 'accuracy of observation,' as well as the 'distinctness of perception' in children and their sincerity, which 'are essential to this species of sublime' (*Practical Education*, 33:147). (Georgieva 191)<sup>100</sup>

If we take this relation between the child and the sublime a step further, we can see that Radcliffe may actually be connecting the sublime to the child's schooling. Emily's connection to nature starts when she is young, working in the greenhouse or taking excursions in the valley. St. Aubert employs these activities as part of his pedagogy; the sublime can also be found in these instructional exercises. We must not forget Emily's terrifying yet pleasing experience with the flute and the poem that occurs during one of her outings in the woodland. The beautiful nature and the mysterious, almost ominous,

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<sup>99</sup> See Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) and even his *Reflections on the Revolution of France* (1790). Also, see Bonamy Dobrée, who claims that "Radcliffe's debt to Burke is profound" (*The Mysteries of Udolpho* 675).

<sup>100</sup> Georgieva, *The Gothic Child*, 191.

happenings around her are enlivened by her active imagination. Hence, Emily's love of sublime nature started as a child, and her connection and appreciation of the sublime (especially in her schooling) help define her character.

The novel's ending informs the reader whether the protagonist will benefit from her experiences becoming a fully mature individual and beneficial member of society or whether she will sink underneath them becoming a victim instead of victor. Radcliffe gives her longsuffering heroine a much overdue happy ending with Emily marrying her true love Valancourt: "[Valancourt and Emily] were, at length, restored to each other—to the beloved landscapes of their native country,—[. . .] to the pleasures of enlightened society" (672). Interestingly, Valancourt and Emily's homecoming restores them to not only each other but also to the beauty of their homeland.<sup>101</sup> Again, Emily finds happiness in nature, but Radcliffe does not stop there. Emily still desires to improve her mind and live in an "enlightened society." Emily has now successfully overcome her sensibility enough that her feelings enhance her reason and vice versa. Rousseau and Locke are put in harmony with one another. More's religious instruction and Wollstonecraft's liberating concepts come together in Radcliffe's depiction of idealized vision of the perfectly mature young woman. Emily's education is, therefore, complete, and she can now create her own intellectual society where hearts and minds work together instead of against each other.

Emily transitions from adolescence to adulthood, returning to her childhood home as its matured owner and symbolically taking the place of her parents. Emily and

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<sup>101</sup> Valancourt becomes overwhelmed with fashionable Parisian society and loses his wealth. However, upon his reunion with Emily, he is also restored to the moral virtue he once had. Emily inherits her estate (having not wasted it away) and marries Valancourt.

Valancourt enjoy specific characteristics of their new home together at La Vallée—their pedagogical paradise:

O! how joyful it is to tell of happiness, such as that of Valancourt and Emily; to relate, that, after suffering under the oppression of the vicious and the disdain of the weak, they were, at length, restored to each other—to the beloved *landscapes* of their native country,—to the securest felicity of this life, that of aspiring to *moral* and laboring for *intellectual improvement*—to the pleasures of *enlightened society*, and to the exercise of the *benevolence*, which had always animated their hearts; while the bowers of La Vallée became, once more, the retreat of goodness, wisdom, and domestic blessedness! (672, my italics)

Radcliffe establishes that Emily and Valancourt have escaped oppression. Rizzo, especially, discusses how the Gothic mode depicts the threats of patriarchal tyranny toward women in particular.<sup>102</sup> Emily and Valancourt experienced oppression in that they were both denied the right to follow their feelings, yet Emily arguably suffered more since Montoni denied her the agency to apply St. Aubert's instruction. For instance, Emily can easily discern (much better than Montoni) that Count Morano is not a proper match for her; she also correctly realizes the inappropriateness of certain situations Montoni places her in, such as keeping her as his ward even after Madame Montoni has died. Emily is not allowed to act on her observations that are based upon the skills she acquired via her schooling (observations of both nature and human nature, analytical thinking skills, and so forth). Radcliffe cries out against Emily's physical oppression (held captive in Montoni's mansion) as well as her mental oppression (restricted from applying her education). In contrast, at La Vallée, Emily is free from oppression both intellectually and physically.

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<sup>102</sup> See Rizzo's "Renegotiating the Gothic."

Radcliffe lists the characteristics that make La Vallée an educational Garden of Eden: appreciation of nature, moral improvement, intellectual development, an enlightened community, and benevolence. As has been noted earlier, her landscape descriptions that sometimes seem to overwhelm the reader serve as a way of teaching her heroine. In La Vallée, Emily finds a place where she can continue to practice her lessons on nature and its sublimity but also employ the landscape around her to teach future generations (most likely, her own children). In addition to nature, Radcliffe emphasizes both moral and intellectual improvement. For Radcliffe, *moral* would encompass right and wrong, the differences between vice and virtue, and so forth, signifying the development of one's character and reputation, while *intellectual* improvement would emphasize the exercising of a person's understanding and employing that person's mind.<sup>103</sup> Throughout the novel, Emily must exercise her understanding. She must observe her surroundings and the people she meets in order to determine what kind of

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<sup>103</sup>. One of the most influential critics of the eighteenth-century, Samuel Johnson sets forth the accepted definitions and uses of these terms in his *Dictionary*. *Moral* was typically defined as "1. Relating to the practice of men towards each other, as it may be virtuous or criminal; good or bad. . . 2. Reasoning or instructing with regard to vice and virtue. . . 3. Popular; customary; such as is known or admitted in the general business of life," Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, 1785, vol. 2, *ECCO*, University of Kentucky, 150. It appears that Radcliffe employs the first and second use of the term *moral* the most in her work. *Moral* could also be used to distance humans from physical influences or differentiate themselves from animals. See Jenny Davidson, *Breeding: A Partial History of the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia UP, 2009), especially p. 96. Also according to Johnson's *Dictionary*, *intellectual* as an adjective could be defined as "1. Relating to the understanding; belonging to the mind; transacted by the understanding. . . 2. Mental; comprising the faculty of understanding; belonging to the mind. . . 3. Ideal; perceived by the intellect, not the senses. . . 4. Having the power of understanding," 1068. Emily had to continually exercise her understanding throughout her journey, and it is this intellectual improvement that would most likely be promoted as a necessary part of female pedagogy.

situation she is in and with what kind of people. Whom can she trust? Are appearances what they seem? Emily is surrounded by mysteries, and she must investigate using her intellectual abilities to uncover the truth and escape disaster (whether physical, such as rape, or mental, such as psychological terrors).

The Gothic experiences that Emily encounters force her to employ her education at a more intense level than we see in Burney's *Evelina* (where a social *faux pas* at a dance is one of the events Evelina must "suffer") or Edgeworth's *Belinda* (where Belinda almost marries a gambler). The stakes are higher in a Gothic narrative; Emily is threatened with violence and true isolation. Radcliffe illustrates Emily's ability to eventually cope with these situations due to her ideal mentorship underneath St. Aubert. In addition, Emily's education differed from those mentioned above in that she must suffer the death and absence of her male mentor. Furthermore, Emily's connection to nature and its sublimity is much more prominent. While Burney's *Evelina* and Edgeworth's *Belinda* must learn to navigate a social world, Emily must continue to rely on the comfort of nature to calm her mind from the mysteries and terrors that seem to threaten her at almost every step.

Radcliffe is not alone in her emphasis on improving women's intellectual development. In *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Wollstonecraft desires for women to be treated "like rational creatures, instead of flattering their *fascinating* graces [. . .] I wish to persuade women to endeavour to acquire strength, both of mind and body" (13, italics in original). Wollstonecraft desires for women at all ages to exercise their understanding and attain a certain strength of mind; all of which can be found in Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. Elizabeth Inchbald ends her sentimental novel *A*

*Simple Story* (1791) with a clearly didactic message, faulting the tragic heroine's father, Mr. Milner, for not bestowing on his daughter "A PROPER EDUCATION" written with all capitalized letters on a line of its own.<sup>104</sup> Maria Edgeworth also desires for girls to attain effective instruction that emphasizes reason and strength of mind. In her first published work, *Letters for Literary Ladies* (1795), Edgeworth defends young women's rights to be taught how to employ reason and learn literature. Edgeworth stands by this even in her last work *Helen* (1834) where the protagonist must learn to acquire fortitude and strength of mind in order to obtain a happy ending. Jane Austen implies these lessons as well. For example, in *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), Jane and Elizabeth Bennet exercise their understanding while their younger sisters do not. In fact, Elizabeth pleads with Mr. Collins to treat her as a "rational creature" instead of as "an elegant female," seemingly echoing Wollstonecraft from several years earlier (83). Thus, the vision of La Vallée as a place where moral and intellectual development thrives demonstrates Radcliffe's desire to enter in and identify what constitutes a proper education, for both men and women.

With this case study of *Udolpho*, Radcliffe is not simply writing and defining a Gothic narrative, but she is also writing and defining what she believes constitutes proper female pedagogy through her depiction of St. Aubert as the ideal mentor and Emily, who suffers the death of her mentor, fights internal and external terrors, and embraces the sublimity of nature to find peace and strength of mind. Many writers found the Gothic mode, or at least its conventions, an innovative way to bring their primary concerns of education within the ongoing conversation. Persecuted heroines, patriarchal villains,

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<sup>104</sup> Elizabeth Inchbald, *A Simple Story*, (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009).

limited resources, physical and psychological dangers appear in a vast array of novels from Frances Burney's *Evelina* (1778) and *Cecilia* (1782) to Mary Hays' *The Victim of Prejudice* and Mary Wollstonecraft's *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman*. Gothic conventions become deliberately embedded into the narrative structure, illustrating women's situation as plighted indeed. Looking at Radcliffe's *Udolpho* as an exemplary text of mentoring shows how approaching these novels with a pedagogical perspective on the "coming of age" narrative can bring a better understanding of both the text itself and the culture surrounding its publication.

Whereas Radcliffe provides an example of the positive influence of an ideal male mentor figure in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, she depicts the negative ramifications of an unideal male mentor's influence on his female mentee in *The Italian*. In fact, the mentoring relationship between Schedoni, an evil and ambitious monk, and the Marchesa, his advisee, is much different from the other mentoring relationships discussed in this dissertation. Usually, the mentee is an adolescent, young woman entering into the marriage market, but the Marchesa is already a fully matured woman who is married and has a grown son. While this mentoring relationship is clearly different, it is worth discussing since it offers an uncanny look at the mentor figure, who is distorted and twisted from his original intent and purpose. Schedoni's strange but familiar relationship with the Marchesa serves as a key insight into his unideal and villainous mentor figure status. He attempts to play the role of benevolent mentor figure, while he clearly does not meet the ideal characteristics set forth and discussed throughout this dissertation. From the start, the relationship between the Marchesa and Schedoni seems unnatural. Nevertheless, the Marchesa relies upon Schedoni for advice, and he cultivates her

understanding on moral principles as well as counsels her on difficult decisions. His care for her, though, is the complete opposite of the ideal mentor's and hardly deserves the name of "care." As the mentor of the Marchesa di Vivaldi, he is responsible for guiding her religious, spiritual, and even intellectual growth.<sup>105</sup> However, he uses his authority over her to manipulate the Marchesa into agreeing to murder. In addition, he persuades the Marchesa to listen to her pride instead of her heart. Since the qualities listed below are exactly what Schedoni wants to cultivate in his female mentee, it is not surprising that the Marchesa is described as follows: "[she] was equally jealous of her importance; but her pride was that of birth and distinction, without extending to morals. She was of violent passions, haughty, vindictive, yet crafty and deceitful; patient in stratagem, and indefatigable in pursuit of vengeance, on the unhappy objects who provoked her resentment" (7). Radcliffe offers Schedoni and the Marchesa as examples of just how dangerous an unideal mentoring relationship can be and its impact on the female mentee. Instead of becoming the novel's heroine, the Marchesa is the villain, whose mentor acts as the mastermind in crime. While ideal mentors are to provide advice to their mentees on moral dilemmas and instill in them a strong moral code, Schedoni advises his mentee on questions of morality in an effort to extinguish any thought of attaining good morals.

Schedoni exerts his control over the Marchesa and uses her emotions against her own better judgment. He appeals to her sense of pride in order to have her agree to murdering Ellena (since the Marchesa's son Vivaldi wants to marry Ellena, who is presumably of low birth). Schedoni's unideal mentoring traits are described as follows:

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<sup>105</sup> As discussed in my introduction, an affiliation with religion is one of the common characteristics of the mentor figure.

he cared not for truth, nor sought it by bold and broad argument, but loved to exert the wily cunning of his nature in hunting it through artificial perplexities. [. . .] His was not the melancholy of a sensible and wounded heart, but apparently that of a gloomy and ferocious disposition. [. . .] he could adapt himself to the tempers and passions of persons; whom he wished to conciliate, with astonishing facility, and generally with complete triumph. This monk, this Schedoni, was the confessor and secret adviser of the Marchesa di Vivaldi. (35)

Schedoni exhibits a lack of sensibility and in its place is a dangerously ambitious and angry disposition. Instead of teaching his mentee to control and employ her passions for the benefit of herself and others, Schedoni manipulates her emotions to achieve his own selfish goals (frequently, linked with some sort of promotion). Schedoni's mentoring of the Marchesa is motivated by self-interest and perverts what should be a positive relationship between mentor and mentee.

While Schedoni does not have sexual designs, he does have ulterior motives in his advising of the Marchesa. The narrator explains that Schedoni "hoped to obtain a high benefice for his services" (35). At one point, he is even described as conversing "with almost the ease of a man of the world" (48). This is, of course, an odd, unfitting phrase since it refers to a man of the cloth, who should be devoted to the heavenly realm. Vivaldi (the fiancé of Ellena and son of the Marchesa) becomes suspicious of Schedoni's motives at his mother's house and exclaims, "'The secret adviser, who steals into the bosom of a family only to poison its repose, the informer—the base asperser of innocence, stand revealed in one person before me'" (51). Vivaldi depicts the evil mentor as one who poisons his mentee and destroys innocence. The narrator offers insight into Schedoni's response and character, stating that "Schedoni, indeed, saw only evil in human nature" (52). Schedoni is depicted as the complete opposite of a positive

male mentor that is benevolent, kind, and looks for the good in others. The narrator also informs the reader that if Vivaldi could see underneath Schedoni's calm exterior then he would "have discovered the contempt and malignity, that lurked behind the smile thus imperfectly masking his countenance" (52). Schedoni hides his true feelings and attempts to play the part of the caring mentor and religious counselor. Since female pupils view and desire a mentor as altruistic and trustworthy, they are also more vulnerable to be exploited like the Marchesa when the mentor has ulterior motives. This illustrates the Gothic outcome (one of death and suffering) that can occur when the mentoring relationship is founded upon lies. Radcliffe illustrates how the male mentor is an important figure in determining the moral development of his female mentee whether for good or bad. While Schedoni exploits the mentor's trusted role, the desire and need for a positive male mentor still exist, though his initial absence causes a Gothic tale (one of kidnapping and murder).

The Marchesa's reliance on the wrong male mentor molded her into an unfeeling and cruel mother. In fact, the narrator writes how the Marchesa "was still insensible to the sufferings of her son" (104). Her lack of familial concern for Vivaldi is immediately connected with whom she chooses to listen to for advice. The next line reads: "When the Marchesa had been informed of his [Vivaldi's] approaching marriage, she had, as usual, consulted with her confessor on the means of preventing it, who had advised the scheme she adopted" (106). Schedoni uses the Marchesa's weaknesses against her. As her mentor, he knows the best and worst of her personality, but unlike an ideal mentor, he appeals to the worst side of her in order to convince her that murdering Ellena is the only way to keep the Vivaldi name pure. His manipulation of her is depicted as the complete

opposite of what a positive male mentor would advise: “he knew that by flattering her vanity, he was most likely to succeed. He praised her, therefore, for qualities he wished her to possess, encouraged her to reject general opinions by admiring as the symptoms of a superior understanding, the convenient morality upon which she had occasionally acted; and, calling sternness justice, extolled that for strength of mind, which was only callous insensibility” (111). Schedoni replaces justice with sternness and deliberately refers to insensibility as strength of mind. He takes negative characteristics and represents them as desirable virtues. He inculcates the Marchesa’s mind with bad advice under the guise of positive intellectual accomplishments.

Schedoni uses the Marchesa’s misguided and turbulent emotions and sensibility against her in order to accomplish his own selfish motives (a promotion and simultaneous revenge on Vivaldi). In fact, the Marchesa relies on her mentor to such an extent that she even turns to him before her own husband (166). It is interesting that the Marchesa is a “mature” adult in that she is a wife and mother but is still completely reliant on and guided by her mentor. It is unclear how long Schedoni has been the Marchesa’s mentor, but their relationship is already known by the Vivaldi family. Schedoni keeps the Marchesa in a state of childhood dependence instead of allowing and encouraging her to mature. Usually, the role of a mentor is not needed much (if any) once the female mentee has become an adult and is an active, beneficial member of society. However, Schedoni keeps the Marchesa dependent upon him and his counsel, yet again misusing his power and authority over her. When the Marchesa is upset about her son’s persistent intention to marry Ellena, she turns to Schedoni for advice: “Schedoni observed, with dark and silent pleasure, the turbulent excess of her feelings; and perceived that the moment was

now arrived, when he might command them to his purpose, so as to render his assistance indispensable to her repose; and probably so as to accomplish the revenge he had long meditated against Vivaldi, without hazarding the favour of the Marchesa” (166).

Schedoni sees that he can “command” her feelings to support his own cause. He triumphs in his authority and control over her. Schedoni continues to make injustice look like justice and virtue, becoming a powerful example of how a mentor can (deliberately) pervert the moral sentiments of his pupil. The Marchesa’s sensibility shrinks from the idea of murder. She informs Schedoni that “some woman’s weakness still lingers at my heart” (169). Her heart is actually what she should be listening to instead of Schedoni’s morally twisted “reason.” However, Schedoni convinces her that murder is the virtuous, just, and right choice to make in this situation. The Marchesa believes that she is in need of Schedoni’s mentoring: “I have need of all your advice and consolation. [. . .] my only counsellor, my only disinterested friend” (172). She believes Schedoni to be disinterested and benevolent, like an ideal male mentor would be. As a monk and mentor, Schedoni should meet these expectations, but he actually has several motives of interest (ambition, pride, and vengeance). He claims that she needs “a man’s courage” instead of “a woman’s heart,” putting her hesitancy toward wanting to murder an innocent individual as a woman’s weakness (177). Eventually, Schedoni’s manipulative mentoring works, and the Marchesa agrees to his plot of murdering Ellena. Thus, the villainous male mentor educates and inculcates his female mentee with the “knowledge” and abilities to become a villain herself.

While the villainous monk Schedoni represses his feelings (to the extent that he is willing to kill innocent people) and attempts to wear a stoic mask of unfeeling, Ellena

Rosalba, the novel's heroine, is connected with sensibility from the beginning. Her countenance is described as expressing "all the sensibility of character that the modulation of her tones indicated" (5). Although it may appear problematic that her sensibility can be seen by her physical appearance, this illustrates that sensibility does not need to be hidden but fully expressed. As Sharrona Pearl observes, physiognomy—broadly speaking, the study of a person's physical features—was a widespread practice and dates back to antiquity.<sup>106</sup> Writers, like artists, shared their interpretations of character through physical descriptions. Radcliffe appears to suggest that Ellena's sensibility can be recognized through her voice and appearance while Schedoni is almost void of feelings. It is the suppression or rejection of sensibility that is Gothic in nature.

Schedoni's lack of moral sentiments and sensibility enable him to be the murderously plotting villain. However, Ellena's innocence and purity even cause Schedoni to briefly experience sympathy and compassion. When he is about to kill Ellena, Schedoni's "heart seemed sensible to some touch of pity" (222). The narrator describes the new feelings of Schedoni as follows:

The conflict between his design and his conscience was strong, or, perhaps, it was only between his passions. He, who had hitherto been insensible to every tender feeling, who, governed by ambition and resentment had contributed, by his artful instigations, to fix the baleful resolution of the Marchesa di Vivaldi, and who was come to execute her purpose—even he could not now look upon the innocent, the wretched Ellena, without yielding to the momentary weakness, as he termed it, of compassion. While he was yet unable to baffle the new emotion by evil passions, he despised that which conquered him. 'And shall the weakness of a girl,' said he, 'subdue the resolution of a man!' (223)

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<sup>106</sup> See Sharrona Pearl's *About Faces: Physiognomy in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, (Harvard UP, 2010).

The narrator explains that Schedoni is new to experiencing “tender feeling” and sympathy toward another human being. His lack of sensibility toward others is what enables him to plot Ellena’s murder in the first place. Touched by her innocence, Schedoni feels (for a moment at least) what he intends to do is morally wrong. He genders his emotions, though, and attempts to convince himself that his newfound sensibility is the “weakness of a girl” and that he needs the “resolution of man” to carry out his nefarious plan. Like Dorriforth in *A Simple Story* attempts to shun all emotional sentiment, Schedoni realizes that the only way to accomplish his evil deed is to banish all sensibility and moral sentiments, which he views as feminine and weak. Nevertheless, Schedoni does not actually kill Ellena since he believes she is his daughter (but she is actually his niece) and that he can use this new information to complete his plans for a promotion to a higher office in the church. After he pretends to save Ellena from her assassin, Schedoni begins to experience remorse for his previously murderous intentions: “Schedoni, meanwhile, to whom her [Ellena’s] thanks were daggers, was trying to subdue the feelings of remorse that tore his heart” (248). Much like Matilda unmasking Dorriforth’s apathy, Schedoni starts to feel guilty about his earlier actions toward Ellena. However, in case the reader is too quick to forgive Schedoni, the narrator strikes up the contrast between Schedoni and Ellena’s sensibility: “Her expressive countenance disclosed to the Confessor the course of her thoughts and of her feelings, feelings which, while he contemned, he believed he perfectly comprehended, but of which, having never in any degree experienced them, he really understood nothing” (289). This passage illustrates Ellena’s expressive sensibility and Schedoni’s lack thereof as well as his inability to understand the true nature of sensibility. Eventually, Schedoni’s

machinations are discovered, and he poisons both himself and another (403-4). Ellena is restored to her love interest Vivaldi, and they are allowed to marry. Radcliffe offers a clear punishment to the selfish and ambitious monk Schedoni and rewards her sentimental heroine with a happy ending, correcting the tragic ending of Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* where the heroine dies.

Both Schedoni and the Marchesa die toward the end of the narrative. Although their deaths are depicted as just consequences for their evil intentions, the Marchesa's deathbed scene is shown as one of remorse and forgiveness while Schedoni's deathbed is filled with murder and revenge. Once the Marchesa knows that she is dying, she desires to seek forgiveness for her sins and is informed by a different confessor that she must "make those happy, whom she had formerly rendered miserable" (385). Thus, her last request to her husband is "that he would consent to the happiness of his son" (385). Without the negative influences of her mentor and under the advice of a better confessor, the Marchesa makes the right choice (though she is still motivated by the personal interest of saving her soul). Schedoni's deathbed scene is depicted as gruesome and painful, and his last act is one of killing another in order to gain revenge (403-4). Unlike the Marchesa, Schedoni was more interested in seeking vengeance in this world than in seeking salvation for the world to come. Both he and the Marchesa die as warnings of pernicious pedagogy.

#### Part Two: Mentoring in Hays' *Memoirs of Emma Courtney* and *The Victim of Prejudice*

While Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* offers a depiction of the mentoring relationship's strength to withstand Gothic trials and *The Italian* illustrates the negative ramifications and threats of a villainous mentor figure, Hays shares a more pessimistic

view of the ideal mentor's ability to affect positive change in Gothic situations (persecuted female protagonist, male villain, and isolation). This section explores how Hays offers a Gothic look at patriarchal tyranny in a larger social context. Hays illustrates how an ideal mentor may be ineffectual in his efforts to make a positive difference in a society that has become Gothic in nature (victimizing women both physically and mentally). Before writing her own version of the mentoring relationship, Hays experienced two different types of male mentors in her own life. In addition, Hays was invested in the potential of the French Revolution to affect change in women's current social status. To begin, I consider Hays own personal experiences with mentoring and the French Revolution.

In *Women, Writing, and Revolution 1790-1827*, Gary Kelly claims that Mary Hays (1760-1843) depicts her protagonist Emma in *Memoirs of Emma Courtney* (1796) as one whose struggle "between 'romance' and 'things as they are'" molds her into a female philosopher (105-106). Kelly also asserts that "the internalization of 'things as they are' inevitably produces the conditions, first subjective and then social and political, for their revolutionary transformation" (105-106). However, as Kelly points out: "Emma remains powerless to change 'things as they are'" (106). In *Memoirs of Emma Courtney*, the mentoring relationship between Mr. Francis and the heroine Emma is based on Hays' own mentorship by William Godwin. Emma argues with her philosophical friend, advisor, and mentor Mr. Francis through letters (much like Evelina and Mr. Villars). Emma, though, chooses to follow her heart and rely on her own judgement instead of his counsel, rendering Mr. Francis' advice ineffective and illustrating Emma's ability to make her own decisions. I suggest that Hays took her experience with her own advisor,

Godwin, and shared her own version of what a male mentor should be (as well as what he should not be).

Critical reception of *The Memoirs of Emma Courtney* was mixed with the *British Critic* and *Critical Review* sharing their concerns over the revolutionary tendencies of Hays' female protagonist; overall though, the novel was a success (Ty x). As Eleanor Ty points out, "A few years later, however, the novel and its author became the target of much abuse and satire. This hostility was due, in part, to the strong anti-Jacobin sentiment which rose steadily as the decade progressed" (x). As a supporter of women's rights, an English Jacobin (sympathizer of the French Revolution), and a follower of Godwin and Wollstonecraft, Hays was considered a dangerous radical. Ty goes on to explain that a "more direct cause [of the criticism toward Hays and her work] was the publication of William Godwin's *Memoirs of the Author of a Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1798)" which shared with the public some of Wollstonecraft's own radical behavior (infatuations, affairs, and suicide attempts) (x). Ty states, "Following these revelations, moralists were quick to equate those who spoke for women's rights with sexual liberty and licentiousness. [. . .] Hays was cited among Wollstonecraft's female band of rebels who despise 'Nature's law' in the Reverend Richard Polwhele's poem *The Unsex'd Females* (1798)" (x). Hence, Godwin, a real-life mentor, inadvertently hurt the cause for women's rights and the reputations of two of his own former literary mentees: Wollstonecraft (now deceased) and Hays. Peter Marshall, biographer, states that Godwin "called on her [Hays] regularly, and his letters show that he was ready to discuss moral philosophy, advise her on literature, and inspire her with fortitude—so much so that she considered his friendship one of her 'greatest, and most unmixed consolations.' She was

permanently stigmatized as a Godwinian” (176). Godwin clearly took the role as Hays’ mentor and counselor, but she, like many fictional female mentees, found him unable to help her when it came to matters of the heart. Disheartened after two more failed attempts at love (with William Frend and Charles Lloyd), Hays turned to writing for comfort instead of her mentor. Marshall writes that “Godwin tried to console her, but it was to no avail. She sought relief in the writing of the *Memoirs of Emma Courtney*” (176). Hays, like the female mentees she wrote about, learned she could not find solace in her male mentor but could find it in her own intellectual endeavors.

However, Godwin was not Hays’ only mentor. Early on, at the age of seventeen, Hays became involved with Dissenter John Eccles, who was both her teacher and lover (almost a real-life version of Héloïse and Abelard).<sup>107</sup> Their families were originally against the match, but Eccles and Hays remained in contact despite the opposition until they finally received their families’ consent to marry. Tragedy struck though, and before they were officially married, Eccles died of a fever.<sup>108</sup> Hays knew first-hand what it meant to be mentored by both a lover and a teacher. In *Memoirs of Emma Courtney*, it is Godwin (not Eccles) who is fictionalized as the philosophical mentor and friend Mr. Francis. Marshall writes of *Memoirs of Emma Courtney* that it was “one of the best novels of the day, in which Godwin appears as the sage and steady Mr. Francis” (176). Much like her female contemporaries, Hays represents the ideal mentor figure as kind, generous, and benevolent. Mr. Francis cautions Emma on her reliance of feelings, similar to how Mr. Villars warns Evelina. Although *Memoirs of Emma Courtney* is one

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<sup>107</sup> For more on the tragic story of Heloisa and Abelard, refer to my introduction.

<sup>108</sup> See Eleanor Ty’s “Introduction” of *The Victim of Prejudice*.

of Hays' best-known works, it is in *The Victim of Prejudice* (1799) that Hays offers a more Gothic look at patriarchal tyranny and the ineffectiveness of even positive mentoring in such an oppressive society.

As Ty points out, Hays' optimism about the French Revolution and its potential for creating "a new age of liberalism and egalitarianism" had started to diminish:

Though it appeared only three years after the publication of her first novel, *Victim* is markedly different. Hays was much less hopeful about the changes that the example of the French Revolution would bring about in England, as a result, this novel is less idealistic and more somber in tone. Like Wollstonecraft's *Wrongs of Woman* in spirit and intent, *Victim* is a catalogue of possible 'wrongs' or acts of social injustice perpetrated on the eighteenth-century middle-class female. (xvii)

In *The Victim of Prejudice*, Hays' depicts the Gothic dimensions of society (such as patriarchal villains persecuting female heroines, isolation, and "live burial" of the mind) and how easily a female mentee of a positive mentor can fall prey and victim to authoritative and controlling men. Ty rightly notes: "Written at the end of the revolutionary decade, *Victim of Prejudice* exploits the politicized climate and demonstrates the uneasy tensions and potentially explosive situations between those with power and those without, between male and female, between oppressor and victim" (xix). Ty views male authority figures in terms of fathers and husbands while I look at them in terms of mentors and their function within a faulty system of education. Mentors were charged with the responsibility to instill the moral principles and cultivate intellectual growth in their mentees. By considering the male mentor's relationship with his female pupil, these authors address what the next generation of women should be. The mentoring relationship also provides another avenue to explore in relation to society's expectations of gender roles. The female pupil benefits from a more masculine education

provided to them by their male mentor; however, in Gothic narratives, society is often unwilling to accept these female mentees as educated and beneficial members of society if these mentees are from the lower classes. Hays may be rather blunt in her title *The Victim of Prejudice*, but her depiction of the ineffectiveness of a positive mentoring relationship, though disheartening, is also a strong critique of society's limited views toward women.<sup>109</sup>

Written from the first-person perspective of the "victimized" heroine Mary, the opening line introduces Mr. Raymond as Mary's mentor:

In the first dawns of infant sensibility, the earliest recollections which I have of my being, I found myself healthful, sportive, happy, residing in a romantic village in the county of Monmouthshire, under the protection of Mr. Raymond, a sensible and benevolent man, a little advanced beyond the middle period of life, who, for some years past, had retreated from the pursuits of a gay and various life, and, with the small remnant of an originally-moderate fortune, had secluded himself in a rural and philosophic retirement. (5)

As a benevolent, philosophical older man who prefers a retired life in the country over that of a fashionable life in the city, Mr. Raymond clearly meets the characteristics of the ideal mentor figure.<sup>110</sup> Like other mentors we have read about (such as St. Aubert and Mr. Villars), he raises and educates Mary in a pastoral setting. Unlike Mr. Villars though, he cultivated her understanding to the extent that Mary describes herself as "indebted for [. . .] a vigorous intellect" (5). Mary is an intelligent young woman with "a

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<sup>109</sup> See also Leanne Maunu *Women Writing the Nation: National Identity, Female Community, and the British-French Connection, 1770-1820*. Maunu argues that Hays is like Burney and Wollstonecraft in her use of France and Britain as a way of addressing gender issues, see especially p. 25. Maunu states, "Again, because the idea of France so completely dominated the political discourses of the period, even before the commencement of the Revolution, it became a useful way for women to discuss their own concerns and worries" (37).

<sup>110</sup> See the introduction of my dissertation.

robust constitution,” and she credits Mr. Raymond for her proper education (5). In fact, his pedagogy is based on improving her intellect: “Mr. Raymond instructed me in the rudiments of the French, Italian, and Latin, languages; in the elements of geometry, algebra, and arithmetic. I drew problems, calculated abstract quantities, and learned to apply my principles to astronomy, and other branches of natural knowledge” (6). Mary receives a “masculine” education that focuses on developing her mind rather than her body. She mentions the masculine subjects of astronomy, algebra, and geometry instead of the feminine subjects of dancing, sewing, and cooking. Mary describes how she idealized her mentor: “Mr. Raymond, to my young and ardent imagination, appeared at once my parent, protector, and tutelary deity” (6). Her indebtedness to Mr. Raymond’s benevolence and kindness toward Mary causes her to praise him, much like Evelina does Mr. Villars. Unlike Mr. Villars who apologizes for any unforeseen defects in Evelina or her education, Mr. Raymond does not seek to find fault in his female mentee but is proud of her knowledge and trusts in her virtue.

However, Mr. Raymond begins to fall short of his “model mentor” status due to his misuse of money. Mary calls this mismanagement “embarrassments of a pecuniary nature” caused by a “spirit [that] had not always confined itself within the limits of his income” (7). His monetary difficulties cause him to agree to become mentor of two boys: William and Edmund Pelham, sons of the wealthy “Honourable Mr. Pelham” (7). Their father makes it clear to Mr. Raymond “by adding emphatically, that, above all things, it must be the care of the preceptor to preserve his charge from forming any improper acquaintance, or humiliating connections, which might tend to interfere with his views for their future dignity and advancement” (8). Since Mary’s mother died with an

infamous reputation leaving Mary orphaned and penniless, Mr. Pelham views Mary as an undesirable match (to put it mildly) for either one of his sons. Like Mr. Delvile disapproves of Cecilia as a proper match for his son in Burney's *Cecilia*, Mr. Pelham does not consider Mary's education and virtue enough to counteract her low-class and infamous birth. As a positive male mentor figure, Mr. Raymond kindly adopted Mary to save her from becoming a victim of society, but the fact that she was from low birth and had no wealth caused her to be "unworthy" of and a "threat" to the higher social classes. Mr. Pelham not only illustrates a distinct class bias against Mary but also argues that it is the mentor's responsibility (mentor of both his sons and Mary) to keep Mary in her "proper" place, away from his sons. The threat of Mary receiving "too good" of an education from Mr. Raymond mirrors the concerns of the elite social classes of the eighteenth century that women, if educated like men, could more easily transgress their class boundaries by marrying "up" the social ladder.<sup>111</sup> Mr. Raymond, however, allows Mary and Mr. Pelham's sons to grow up with each other. Raised with these two boys, Mary becomes extremely close to the handsome older brother William, and they eventually become romantically involved. Mr. Raymond even allows them to take their lessons together, with Mary learning more than William and actually helping him with his studies (11). As time progresses, Mary reflects, "I outstripped both my companions: with an active mind and ardent curiosity, I conceived an enthusiastic love of science and literature. Mr. Raymond directed my attention, encouraged my emulation, and afforded me the most liberal assistance" (25). Hays makes a bold move by illustrating Mary's

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<sup>111</sup> To see more on how education could be viewed as transgressive of social classes, refer back to my introduction.

ability to exceed her two male companions in their educational pursuits. Mary becomes an example of how a female mentee can benefit from nourishment of a positive male mentor figure to the extent that she may prove superior in her studies to even young men.

Mary describes herself at the age of seventeen as “Tall, healthful, glowing, my person already began to display all the graces and the bloom of womanhood: my understanding was cultivated and mature, but my heart simple and guileless, my temper frank, and my manners wild and untutored” (25). Mr. Raymond finds himself with a problem: the closeness between Mary and William. Mary writes:

My benefactor had, for some time past, anxiously watched the growing attachment between myself and his pupil. He deeply regretted the painful necessity of checking a sympathy at once so natural, virtuous, and amiable. He knew not how to debauch the simplicity of my mind by acquainting me with the manners and maxims of the world. [. . .] he began to doubt whether, in cultivating my mind, in fostering a virtuous sensibility, in imbuing my heart with principles of justice and rectitude, he had not been betraying my happiness! [. . .] what must be the habits of society, which could give rise to such an apprehension? (25)

Mary blames society for this problem, not her mentor or education. She eventually finds herself in a Gothic situation (destitute, vulnerable, and fleeing from the persecutions of the villainous Sir Peter) because of society’s prejudices. Mr. Raymond, even as an ideal mentor figure, is still unable to protect his female pupil, and Hays suggests that the fault lies not with the student or the mentor but with society itself. Mr. Raymond explains his educational philosophy to Mary, stating that “I have labored to awaken, excite, and strengthen, your mind. An enlightened intellect is the highest of human endowments; it affords us an inexhaustible source of power, dignity, and enjoyment” (28). With a seemingly modern mindset, Mr. Raymond prepares Mary to have a strong and well-developed mind that should enable her to make wise choices and live a happy life.

However, even with these good intentions, Mr. Raymond is unable to ensure Mary's happiness. In fact, social prejudices and pressures force Mr. Raymond to go against both his own reason and heart. Mr. Raymond explains to Mary: "Were it not for certain prejudices, which the world has agreed to respect and to observe, I should perceive your growing tenderness with delight" (31). Mary writes, "Unhappy parent! unhappy tutor! forced into contradictions that distort and belie thy wisest precepts, that undermine and defeat thy most sagacious purposes! – While the practice of the world opposes the principles of the sage, education is a fallacious effort, morals an empty theory, and sentiment a delusive dream" (33). Hays emphasizes that Mr. Raymond's inability to ensure Mary's deserved happiness with William is society's fault. The male mentor is incapable of fixing social prejudices alone. Hays seems to suggest that there must be social reform in Britain in order for an ideal mentor to have a positive influence on society. Without a society that is willing to accept Mary's educated and elevated status, Gothic conventions begin to take control of the narrative. Mary becomes isolated and rejected by a society that persecutes her for her body and denies Mary the right to execute her mind and feelings.

Mr. Raymond decides to sacrifice his own belief in the power of reason. He states that he is going to "dispense with the rule to which I have hitherto sacredly adhered, -- That of imposing no penalty on a being capable of reason, without strictly defining the motives by which I am actuated" (37). As a mentor, Mr. Raymond foregoes his own teaching maxim. Once again the female mentee's superior sensibility touches the mentor's heart, and Mr. Raymond begins to question his own judgment: "your sensibility unmans me. I have, perhaps, been wrong" (45). Like *Dorriforth's* concern of

becoming unmanned by Matilda, Mr. Raymond sees Mary's sensibility as having some type of power to take away his masculinity.<sup>112</sup> Mr. Raymond's response also seems to correlate with Schedoni's gendering of emotions, who considers sensibility the weakness of a woman's heart. Unlike Schedoni though, Mr. Raymond realizes that this is a sincere and positive power, seemingly embracing his unmaning in a way that Dorriforth and Schedoni fight against. As a more positive mentor than both Dorriforth and Schedoni, Mr. Raymond is touched by Mary's sensibility, and he begins to question the justness of separating both himself and William from her. While the mentors discussed in this dissertation usually fear becoming unmanned by their female pupil and overwhelmed with her power of sensibility, Mr. Raymond recognizes Mary's feelings as valuable. Although he technically leaves the decision up to Mary, his influence and request cause her to agree to the separation, deciding to trust in her mentor's judgment rather than her own. Instead of trusting Mary's heart, Mr. Raymond relies upon his own practical reason and sends her to a friend's house where he predicts that she will find comfort and joy in the nature that surrounds her (38). Much like Emily St. Aubert, as a Gothic heroine, finds comfort in nature, Mary must also soothe away the hurtful feelings caused by an unjust society through her appreciation of nature. Unlike Emily though, Mary is not allowed a happy ending. Despite the fact that William desires for Mary to become his wife (opposing class biases), Mary attempts to please Mr. Raymond by following his advice to stay separated from William for a time in an effort to see if he could withstand the ways of the world and earn Mary's hand in marriage. William, though, does not pass the test and becomes "a man of the world" (99). William becomes infatuated with fashionable

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<sup>112</sup> See Chapter 2 for more on the concept of masculinity during the eighteenth century.

society and is eventually obligated to marry a woman for reasons other than love. He attempts to have both his wife and Mary, but not surprisingly, Mary refuses: “it is virtue only that I love better than William Pelham” (127). Once Mr. Raymond dies, she is left in a rather Gothic and pernicious predicament (experiencing the death of her mentor, forced to flee men’s sexual advances, and isolated from society) as a single woman without much money.

It may be surprising that in Radcliffe’s Gothic novel *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Emily is also threatened with rape and persecuted by men, but she does not fall victim to her Gothic situations, while Hays’ *The Victim of Prejudice* seems to embrace a darker side. This may be due to the difference in Mary’s and Emily’s social classes. Emily belongs to a higher social class than Mary, who is a charity case. Hays appears to criticize society’s unwillingness to accept Mary due to her lower class origins. Mary is persecuted as a woman but she also lacks upper-class protection. She is pursued by the Gothic villain Sir Peter, Mary’s brutal neighbor, who attempted to force kisses upon Mary as a child and considered physical gratification as her “proper” way of paying him back for trespassing his land. As an adult, he eventually rapes the unprotected Mary. While the Gothic often employs the concept of “live burial,” we see Mary’s agency, even over her own body and will, become buried underneath patriarchal oppression. It is not just Sir Peter (a man of the upper classes) that is depicted as the Gothic villain but also society, which continues to persecute Mary, forcing her to leave one terrible situation for another. Mary is left raped, without money, and in need of work. The intelligent and talented Mary is not allowed to earn honest wages, frequently affronted with sexual propositions by men (including Sir Peter, who wants to “atone” for his mistreatment of

her). Mary rejects Sir Peter and desires to find a place where she can live in virtue and peace. For a short time, Mary attains a more idealistic life with a former servant James, who becomes her benefactor (155). Hays again questions class biases by allowing a servant to become a benefactor and deliverer of the virtuous heroine. James dies, though, and Mary is again left vulnerable until she finds some old friends, who also die. Mary herself prepares to meet an early but welcome death (174). At the end of her memoir, Mary writes:

The victim of a barbarous prejudice, society has cast me out from its bosom. The sensibilities of my heart have been turned to bitterness, the powers of my mind wasted, my projected rendered abortive [sic], my virtues and my sufferings alike unrewarded, I have lived in vain! unless the story of my sorrows should kindle in the heart of man, in behalf of my oppressed sex, the sacred claims of humanity and justice. (174)

Mary blames society for its persecution and oppression of women. Hays offers one of the bleakest views considering the mentor's inefficacy to affect change by employing Gothic conventions, such as live burial, male villains, and persecuted heroines. She employs a benevolent mentor and an intelligent mentee to appeal to her readers' own sensibilities, asking her contemporaries to offer women more opportunities to use a proper education for the benefit of society at large and not to punish them for seeking to improve themselves and their situations.

### Part Three: Gothic Absence and Live Burial in Wollstonecraft's *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman*

Before Wollstonecraft was able to finish and publish what might have been the most Gothic social commentary of the time, she died after giving birth to her second daughter (who would eventually become Mary Shelley, author of *Frankenstein*).

Wollstonecraft's early life as well as later experiences with both the French Revolution and William Godwin (who would later become her husband) provide readers with important insights on her posthumously published work *Maria; or, The Wrongs of Woman* and Wollstonecraft's use of Gothic conventions to address social issues, especially the lack of proper mentoring and the need to elevate women's roles in society.

Probably best known for *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), Wollstonecraft was committed to improving women's living conditions and social status throughout her life.<sup>113</sup> As a child, Wollstonecraft witnessed her father's mistreatment of her mother, and when older, Wollstonecraft rescued her sister Eliza from an unhappy marriage. Wollstonecraft's devotion to education started early. As a young woman, she established a school with her best friend Fanny Blood and her sisters, Everina and Eliza. However, the death of her best friend Fanny (who died soon after giving birth) and Wollstonecraft's return to a school that was, as Janet Todd describes, "in shambles" caused her to briefly seek employment as a governess and to eventually find a job working for the radical publisher Joseph Johnson (ix-xi). She viewed the French Revolution as a way of expressing her own desires for women's freedom and deliberately employed revolutionary language in her works after 1790 to motivate others to rebel against patriarchal notions and for women to declare their rights as fellow citizens. Toward the latter part of 1792, Wollstonecraft went to Paris where she met Gilbert Imlay, whose own romantic perspective of the revolution most likely appealed to Wollstonecraft (xii). Their affair resulted in the birth of a child, who Wollstonecraft named Fanny (after

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<sup>113</sup> See Part 1 of Chapter 3 for a more in-depth discussion on the similarities between Wollstonecraft's and Radcliffe's philosophies, especially in relation to *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*.

her deceased best friend). However, Imlay soon became indifferent to Wollstonecraft leaving her for long periods of time and their relationship became strained. During this time, Wollstonecraft committed two attempts at suicide (the most serious one caused by discovering Imlay was involved with another woman). Wollstonecraft recovered from her depression and became involved with William Godwin. Despite his public disavowal of marriage, when Wollstonecraft became pregnant, the two were married. It was during her time with Godwin and toward the end of her life that Wollstonecraft wrote *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman*. She died soon after giving birth to her daughter, Mary. After Wollstonecraft's death, Godwin published the incomplete *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman*. Wollstonecraft's reputation became synonymous with warnings of what can happen to a "promiscuous" woman. Nevertheless, the ideas that she espoused throughout her life and works continued to be discussed and debated to this present day.<sup>114</sup>

Wollstonecraft's life experiences clearly influenced her writing, and she molded her own philosophy on women's potential and rights from what she witnessed in her contemporary society. A close examination of *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman* will reveal that Wollstonecraft explores the Gothic absence of positive male mentor figures to illustrate woman's live burial of the mind.

If Hays' Gothic ending to *The Victim of Prejudice* is not depressing enough (with all of Mr. Raymond's positive efforts to help Mary still ultimately failing in the end),

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<sup>114</sup> For several different critical approaches to the life and works of Mary Wollstonecraft, see *A Cambridge Companion to Mary Wollstonecraft*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2002), Claudia Johnson's *Equivocal Beings: Politics, Gender, and Sentimentality in the 1790s: Wollstonecraft, Radcliffe, Burney, Austen*, (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1995), and Margaret Kathryn Sloan's "Mothers, Marys, and Reforming 'The Rising Generation': Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Hays."

Wollstonecraft's *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman* (1798) is even more so since it paints a gruesome picture of the plights women face. As Todd points out, "*Maria* is [...] more socially conscious [...] remarkable for the way it moves from the author's immediate experience to show the complicated miseries of women of many classes" (vii).

Wollstonecraft attacks the oppression of women, suggesting that society is at fault for its mistreatments of women from all social classes. The first part of *Maria* brings attention to the Gothic situation of women as real instead of romantic fantasy. Anne K. Mellor observes how Wollstonecraft's last novel is Gothic in nature and relies on her power of sensibility to express the oppressiveness of women's current situation.<sup>115</sup> *Maria*, like a Gothic heroine, is trapped and tyrannized by a male villain (in this case her husband George Venables). Following more Gothic conventions, she finds comfort in nature and sublime sensibility (like Emily St. Aubert in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and Mary in *The Victim of Prejudice*) (261). The opening line describes the Gothic setting Maria finds herself in: "Abodes of horror have frequently been described, and castles, filled with spectres and chimeras, conjured up by the magic spell of genius to harrow the soul, and absorb the wondering mind. But, formed of such stuff as dreams are made of, what were they to the mansion of despair, in one corner of which Maria sat, endeavouring to recal [sic.] her scattered thoughts!" (61). Ghosts, horror, and mansions are all known Gothic conventions by this time, and Wollstonecraft employs them to illustrate women's desperate situation. As discussed earlier, Wollstonecraft was concerned with education from an early age and her *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* argues for a reformation

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<sup>115</sup> See Anne K. Mellor's "Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* and the Women Writers of Her Day."

and revolution in contemporary female education. Unlike *A Vindication* though, *Maria* focuses on the Gothic absence of positive male mentors and a proper female education. What is not there (opportunities for freedom, positive educators, and free will) is what Wollstonecraft draws attention to, giving readers insight into both subtle and not-so-subtle messages weaved throughout the text.

Maria is raised by a tyrannical father and elder brother without the guidance of a positive male mentor figure. The only truly positive male character in this novel is her rich uncle, but he mistakenly recommends that she marry George Venables. Although she did have superficial feelings for George, their marriage mostly allowed her to escape the unhappy situation at her home. This piece of bad romantic advice is what eventually leads Maria to her tragic ending. George turns out to be selfish, greedy, and a gambler. In some ways, George resembles Mr. Harrel, the unideal, frivolous guardian in Burney's *Cecilia*. While Mr. Harrel was greedy, selfish, and enjoyed the pleasures of the town, George takes these unideal traits to their Gothic extreme. Maria looks past his faults for a while, but he then grows worse (conducting multiple affairs with women of low ranks) and uses Maria for her money. George then legally rapes her, and she becomes pregnant. While she is still pregnant, he attempts to offer her to his friend for money, thereby attempting to make her a prostitute. She refuses and leaves him. Like a Gothic villain in pursuit of the persecuted heroine, George follows her all over the city. Maria's uncle, at his death, gives his great inheritance to her child with Maria as the guardian and provides no rights to the father. Due to coverture though, where a woman has no legal rights (her body and property legally belong to her husband), George is able to take Maria's baby

daughter away from her and throw Maria into a mental institution.<sup>116</sup> It is at this point that Maria's body and mind are figuratively buried alive under the oppression of both George and society. Maria's "live burial" in an insane asylum is legally acceptable, and she is literally caught and forced into captivity by a society that views her as the property of her husband. Wollstonecraft seems to strongly criticize the practice of coverture—where a woman is legally bound to her husband and no longer recognized as an individual citizen. Wollstonecraft associates this legal practice with the Gothic convention of the male villain's persecution and isolation of the female heroine.

While there, Maria relies on her overly-refined sensibility and romantic imagination at the sacrifice of her reason. Envisioning a Rousseauvian romance, Maria becomes seduced by the images of her own mind and falls in love with a fellow inmate called Darnford. Maria lacks the early preparation and education from a positive male mentor figure, who would encourage her to form strength of mind and be cautious of her reliance on sensibility alone by providing a masculine education. Unlike Emily St. Aubert, she falls prey to her own imagination at the cost of her independent mind. Eventually freed, Darnford and Maria live together for a short while, but George prosecutes Darnford and Maria for seduction and adultery. Maria pleads guilty to

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<sup>116</sup> The problems of women's legal status as a married woman without rights to hold property or be acknowledged as an equal citizen continued well into the nineteenth century. Caroline Sheridan Norton would experience and expose the problems behind the marriage, divorce, and child custody laws more than fifty years after Wollstonecraft addresses these problems in *Maria; or the Wrongs of Woman*. Writing of Norton's critique of contemporary law, Mary Lyndon Shanley states that Norton "denounced the obliteration under the common law of a woman's legal personality upon marriage, which made it impossible for a wife to hold property in her own name. [. . .] These stipulations [. . .] implied that a wife was herself the 'property' of her husband, since he could claim her earnings and her body when she could not make similar claims upon him" (22-23).

adultery but not to seduction. She sends Darnford to go and inherit his fortune in Paris while she fights the charges against them, pleading her rights. The judge claims that a woman's feelings have no bearing. Wollstonecraft illustrates patriarchal society's dismissal of the power of sensibility. Hence, Wollstonecraft deliberately brings in contemporary law to demonstrate Maria's helplessness and lack of agency.

In an effort to demonstrate society's problems even further, Wollstonecraft writes of how George divorces Maria, who is also abandoned by her love interest Darnford. After a miscarriage, Maria attempts suicide. At this point, the manuscript offers two different endings. She either dies as a tragic victim of society's wrongs toward women, or Jemima (a madhouse worker who helped Maria and Darnford to escape) finds her in time and informs her that Maria's daughter (who was thought dead after George had forcefully taken the child away) is actually alive, and Maria decides to live for her child. Clearly, Wollstonecraft balanced between a pessimistic or optimistic view of Maria's situation. Wollstonecraft's uncertainty at the ending of *Maria* may have mirrored her own doubts concerning women's future in a patriarchal society where coverture was still in practice and women were still legally owned by their husbands. In *Maria*, Wollstonecraft tellingly asks, "Was not the world a vast prison, and women born slaves?" (253). Her critical commentary on the "wrongs" done to women borrows from the language of slavery, which she also employed in her earlier works as well. It is important to note the absence of Maria's chance of a proper education and the lack of positive male mentor figures. This absence is truly Gothic in nature, and Wollstonecraft, like many of her female contemporaries, desires both a benevolent mentor figure and a female protagonist who becomes her own independent self.

The depiction of a persecuted heroine by a male villain is a standard Gothic convention. Radcliffe, Hays, and Wollstonecraft employ this mode to explore women's oppressive situation in their contemporary society. In *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Radcliffe depicts the ideal mentor figure whose female mentee is capable of withstanding horrific situations and dangers thanks to her well-developed mind. In *The Italian*, Radcliffe considers the negative ramifications of an evil mentor figure and his female advisee, illustrating the dangers of exploiting the powers of the mentoring relationship. With a more pessimistic view, Hays seems to suggest that society is not yet willing to accept and reward the outcome of a positive mentoring relationship if it threatens class prejudices. Wollstonecraft's *Maria* shows women's lack of agency when denied a proper female education where a male mentor provides a masculine pedagogy that emphasizes reason and prepares women to face obstacles that society may throw in their way. What is missing in Wollstonecraft's *Maria* speaks volumes. Maria's desperate need for a better education and a positive male mentor figure are what appear to cause Maria's lack of agency throughout the novel. As a known advocate for reforming female education, Wollstonecraft illustrates the dangers a woman faces when left to the mercy of society without a proper pedagogy to assist her in withstanding the Gothic trials she must face. Taken together, these authors employ the Gothic mode as a way of illustrating their desire for a positive male mentor and a well-educated female mentee, who will eventually choose to listen to her own mind and heart.

Recent scholarship is interested in examining the relationship (one that is often political in nature, challenging social prejudices of class and gender) between the Gothic

and social reform as discussed toward the beginning of this chapter.<sup>117</sup> I have considered how mentor figures contribute to this relationship. By examining the role of mentor figures, we have seen how these writers advocate for social reform of female pedagogy as well as men and women's roles through the use of the Gothic.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Refer to the beginning of this chapter. Ledoux notes the need for scholarship on the relationship between social reform and the Gothic with her book *Social Reform in Gothic Writing* devoted to this connection.

<sup>118</sup> While some critics, like Richard S. Albright and David Durant, might suggest that the Great Enchantress (Radcliffe) was a writer of the conservative Gothic and her female protagonist, Emily, does not grow, I have argued that these writers did, in fact, create radical novels of social reform for both men and women's roles as well as challenging the status quo in relation to female pedagogy. In "Anne Radcliffe and the Conservative Gothic," David Durant argues against reading Radcliffe's novels as novels of education and argues that they should be considered as belonging to the conservative Gothic. He even argues that Emily never truly matures and must remain a child. However, according to my reading, I see the mentoring relationship as key to interpreting this novel with her receiving a "formal" education, then traveling abroad and experiencing the Grand tour, later applying her education in order to overcome obstacles, and then becoming the ideal educator herself. I argue that *Mysteries of Udolpho* is a picture of the mentoring relationship and the conversation that Radcliffe is participating in is the debate concerning female education: what it is and what it should be. Furthermore, I posit that her view on education is a mix of both conservative and liberal values; Radcliffe's novel is not simply a "conservative gothic" it is a complex mixture of both conservative and liberal views in order to create the perfect blend of the proper education for women. Richard S. Albright asserts: "It is easy to see why the novel has so often been read as a story of an inner journey—or perhaps not a journey at all, for "journey" implies "progress" and whether any occurs in *Udolpho* is debatable—but read at least as a narrative of inner space" (53). However, there is progress: Emily's educational journey. It is an inner journey (developing Emily's mind), but it can be seen via her actions and thoughts. This chapter clearly argues against Albright's reading in an effort to recover these writers' contributions to a more radical form of the Gothic.

## Coda: The Making of a Mentor

My dissertation intervenes in scholarly conversations concerning the proto-feminist tendencies of the writers under discussion by considering the female mentee's subversion of her male mentor's authority. In addition, I look at how these women writers criticize patriarchal society and offer their own reformation of female pedagogy. In connection with this critique of a male-dominated society, my dissertation also contributes to the ongoing discussions of the role of sensibility in literature as well as in eighteenth-century life. The subversiveness of sensibility plays a key role in determining the relationship between female mentee and male mentor. The latter part of my dissertation enters critical discussions of the development of the Gothic mode and its relation to pedagogy, sensibility, and gender roles.

As a developing critical approach, the role of mentoring in literature deserves further research and scholarship in eighteenth-century studies. One area that deserves further exploration is the part that travel plays in the mentor's pedagogy in women's fiction. As discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, part of Emily St. Aubert's education in Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* is a Grand Tour. Emily benefits from traveling abroad with her mentor St. Aubert and her love interest Valancourt. During the eighteenth century, young, affluent men would travel with a companion across Europe. In Rousseau's *Emile*, the mentor forces his pupil to postpone his upcoming marriage until he finishes a two-year tour. Upon his return, Emile is allowed to marry. Often in mentoring narratives, a young man must go on the tour and prove his worthiness and love to his current fiancé, and if found worthy, he may marry. However, in Hays' *The Victim of Prejudice*, the mentor encourages William to travel abroad while keeping Mary

isolated in a pastoral setting. William, though, does not pass the test and marries someone else. Mary's constant set of restrictions, both physical as well as emotional, cause her to continually be persecuted by those setting the restrictions: patriarchal society. Inchbald also employs travel as a benefit belonging to men not women. In *A Simple Story*, Dorriforth travels across the country, entertains guests, and runs his estates while he literally forces Matilda into the private sphere of his home where she is not given any authority except that she may roam the grounds, but only if he is not there. When Dorriforth is at home, he demonstrates his patriarchal authority by simply making his presence force Matilda into hiding within the private sphere of her bedroom. In Wollstonecraft's *Maria; or the Wrongs of Woman*, Maria attempts to navigate society on her own and make plans to travel away from her abusive husband George, but he is able to travel more efficiently, prohibiting Maria's full escape. He then literally locks her within the confines of a mental institution. Women's attempt to travel (to finish off their education like young men) seems to be viewed as a threat to the social order. These writers depict the female protagonists as either succeeding (like Radcliffe's Emily St. Aubert) or desiring and attempting to travel (like Wollstonecraft's Maria) in an effort to address the unfairness of these patriarchal restrictions on women's travel. Many women writers, such as those under discussion, questioned and transgressed private and public spheres through writing and travel.<sup>119</sup> Not only did many of these women traverse national boundaries but also depicted their female protagonists as deserving of the benefits of a Grand Tour.

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<sup>119</sup> See Elizabeth Eger, Charlotte Grant, Cliona Ó Gallchoir, and Penny Warburton's *Women, Writing and the Public Sphere, 1700-1830* and Leanne Maunu's *Women Writing the Nation*. Also see Mary F. McVicker's *Women Adventurers 1750-1900*.

In addition to viewing travel as a pedagogical tool that the mentor either embraces or resists, one might also consider other types of mentors, such as the female mentor and the lover-mentor.<sup>120</sup> The purpose of this dissertation was to examine the relationship between a male mentor and his female mentee, but there are other types of mentors. Female mentors become more prevalent in Victorian literature. In the eighteenth century, they were emerging but not yet fully developed. Some scholarship has already been started on both female mentors and lover-mentors in eighteenth-century fiction. For example, some may view Mrs. Selwyn as a female mentor to Evelina; however, I consider Mrs. Selwyn as more of a female companion since she is not in charge of Evelina's education nor does Evelina turn to Mrs. Selwyn for advice like she does to Mr. Villars. In addition, mentors need authority over their female mentees, and Mrs. Selwyn is only in control of Evelina due to her age. Nevertheless, considering the role of female mentors and female mentees is one direction for further studies. Likewise, other scholars might consider Dorriforth in *A Simple Story* or Valancourt in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* as lover-mentors. The complexities involved in a romantic relationship with a female mentee has been discussed to some extent already in this dissertation. This is still a useful approach to mentoring and literary studies that scholars should continue to develop in the future.

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<sup>120</sup> See Patricia Menon's *Austen, Eliot, and Charlotte Bronte and the Mentor-Lover*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, Margaret Kathryn Sloan's "Mothers, Marys, and Reforming 'The Rising Generation': Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Hays," and Margaret Sloan's dissertation *Exercising the Mind: Mentorship, Models of Learning, and the 19<sup>th</sup>-Century British Novel*. I look more at gender relations and politically revolutionary ramifications whereas Sloan looks at the role of confession in the mentoring relationship and is interested in mother-daughter relationships. A lot of her dissertation is on the nineteenth-century British novel and desires to look at slaves and abolitionists.

The writers under discussion employ the mentor figure in an engaging and thoughtful effort to address contemporary issues affecting women's lives and potential. The mentor becomes an idealized and criticized figure who is both desired and rejected by his female mentee. The paradoxical attitude toward mentor figures illustrates women's struggle for agency. Many of these female writers experienced the benefits and oppressiveness of male mentoring in their own lives. In their fiction, they employed the mentor figure to strategically enter the 1790s debates concerning men and women's social roles as well as the controversy over what constituted a proper female education. A benevolent male mentor who would welcome his female mentee as an equal member of society was one that these writers desired but could not realistically find. They saw the Gothic plight of women and addressed it in their writing. Much like Mary Wollstonecraft's uncertain ending of *Maria; or The Wrongs of Woman*, these women writers shared both their hopes and fears of what would happen to the male mentor and female mentee relationship and its impact on women's position in society.

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