CHAPTER 1. LINGUISTIC ASPECTS OF LITERARY DISCOURSE

AUGUSTAN WOMEN'S AMATORY DISCOURSE: EXTENDING THE BORDERS OF CANON-FORMATION

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Abstract. This article gives a broad outline of literary criticism related to works of Augustan women writers, in particular, those who explored a love theme. The authors of the study review basic research papers which enable us to see different social contexts in which Augustan female writes worked and identify different aspects of female authorship, in particular, strategies employed by writing women to save and establish their reputation in society (using pseudonyms, claiming to have a masculine type of literary craft), the dominating pattern of women's literary culture (anonymous, metropolitan, professional).

A special focus of this article is Augustan love fiction presented by two opposite literary trends – pious and didactic love fiction of Jane Barker, Elizabeth Singer Rowe, Mary Davis, Penelope Aubin who stress the virtues of chastity or sentimental marriage, and amatory fiction authored by Aphra Behn, Mary Delavirier Manley and Eliza Haywood collectively known as the 'Fair Triumvirate of Wits' or the 'Naughty Triumvirate'. These authors depict love stories full of passion with such inseparable narrative constituents as the feeling of love, the plot of seduction, stunning adventures, intrigues, masquerades.

Until recently literary critics have not shown any academic interest in amatory fiction and have considered Behn's, Manley's and Haywood's

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literary heritage second-rated. However, feminist literary criticism, which declared itself a mature phenomenon in the 1970s – 1980s, has revived love prose of Augustan women writers. Despite a number of objective reasons contemporary academia have been trying to rethink the importance of such a literary phenomenon as amatory fiction and fit Manley and Haywood into the canon of English literature.

In future it would be worth while exploring literary heritage of other Augustan women writers with a view to including their works into a body of narratives considered to be the most important and influential of the indicated time period in England.

Introduction

At present women's writings, in particular, Augustan women's love discourse, is an issue of enormous significance and has been attracting scholars' attention since the 1980s. Traditionally referred to by many historians and critics as "Age of Enlightenment, Age of Reason, Age of Exuberance, Age of Elegance" [16, p. 87], Augustan Age is the time frame whose chronological boundary points coincide with the reigns of Queen Anne, King George I, and George II, ending with the deaths of Alexander Pope and Jonathan Swift in the 1740s.

In philosophy this period was marked by domination of empiricism, in economy – by the development of capitalism and the triumph of trade, in literature – by the rise of the novel, satire, poetry, drama, and melodrama as well as an active interaction of the basic stylistic trends – neoclassicism, sentimentalism rococo, pre-romanticism, thus, pondering over the existing compromise of Augustan worldview after the Glorious revolution in 1688.

A unique atmosphere of transition in English culture in the first half of the eighteenth century turned out to be favorable for many women who began to be quite actively involved in reflective literary writing. Having no access to a proper education and being locked in the domestic sphere of the family women were forced to widen the scope of intellectual stimulation to share their inner knowledge and experience in humble literary pieces.

The combination of such factors as female authorship, the woman as a key character and understanding women's destiny from the point of view of women's psychology encouraged female writers to look for new literary forms expanding the borders of traditional poetics.

In English society women writers had a mean and marginal reputation, in fact, if it was a reputation at all. According to Bridget MacCarthy, the public divided female authors into three groups:

– the dilettante ladies who wrote polite verse, translated plays and pious treatises and managed to escape public condemnation and criticism;

– privileged women writers who were relatives of literary men or enjoyed generosity of literary patronage (Sir Philip Sydney's sister, Countess of Pembroke and others);

– female authors labeled 'Queer' and condemned by the public as they were suspected of either eccentricity or doubtful moral reputation [17, p. 20–21].

Each of them, who took up the pen, entered the competition with male authors, and their act of writing questioned and slowly shook traditional ideas about the role of women in society, leading to a negative reception of female authorship in society.

In the introduction to *Memoirs of the Baron de Brosse* (1725), Eliza Haywood expresses her utter sadness conditioned by gender inequality and unfairness that characterized Augustan literary arena: "It would be impossible to recount the numerous Difficulties a Woman has to struggle in her Approach to Fame: If her Writings are considerable enough to make any Figure in the World, Envy pursues her with unweary'd Diligence; and, if, on the contrary, she only writes what is forgot as soon as read, Contempt is all the Reward, her Wish to please, excites, and the cold Breath of Scorn chills the little Genius she has, and which, perhaps, cherished by Encouragements, might in Time, grow to a Praiseworthy Height" [14, p. 4].

Under such unfavorable circumstances by far the most surprising and incredible was a rise in the number of women who focused their efforts on writing books, periodicals, newspapers, chapbooks, pamphlets. These female writers were: Aphra Behn (1640-1689), Mary Delarivier Manley (1663–1724), Eliza Haywood (1693–1756), Jane Barker (1652–1732), Elizabeth Singer Rowe (1674–1737), Mary Pix (1666–1709), Mary Hearne (?–1718), Penelope Aubin (1679–1731), Mary Davis (1674–1732), Elizabeth Boyd (1727–1745), Arabella Plantin (1700–?) and others.

So the aim of this article is to give a broad outline of literary criticism related to works of Augustan women writers, in particular, those who explored a love theme. The research includes two stages. The first stage

involves a review of basic scientific publications that investigate social context in which women authors worked. It enables us to identify different aspects of Augustan female authorship. The second stage is based on an analytical method used for describing existing theoretical approaches to Augustan women's love discourse.

1. Augustan female authorship

In her monograph *Living by the Pen: Women Writers in the Eighteenth Century* (1992), Cheryl Turner attempts to highlight the major reasons that facilitated the unprecedented growth of the number of women writers early in the eighteenth century. She explains that the mass emergence of female authors during the indicated period occurred due to the rapid development of social and economic conditions with subsequent advances of print culture, an increasing interest in studying the problems of modern politics and ideology, the changing position of women in the family and society, an expanding circle of reading public whose tastes encouraged the rise of literary professionalism [32, p. 3].

Another important factor that influenced the emergence of mass female authorship, according to Janet Todd (1989), was popularity, 'sensitivity', morality and emotionality of the rising genre – the novel. As the literary critic remarks, "the exemplary Richardsonian heroine was an artistic embodiment of intuitive compassion, vulnerability, sentimental chastity, and passivity – those qualities which correlated with the then existing psychological image of the woman" [30, p. 110]. In all probability, the use of sentimental style by female writers eventually helped improve their social status and, most importantly, enabled them to embody their own emotions and values.

Dale Spender (1986) states that "for women who had no rights, no individual existence or identity, the very act of writing – particularly for a public audience – was in essence an assertion of individuality and autonomy, and often the act of defiance. To write was to be; it was to create and to exist" [29, p. 3]. The researcher also pays attention to aesthetic and psychological aspects that literary craft gave women authors: they were engaged in literature in order to find a form of self-expression and consciously reflect on the surrounding reality as well as realize their creative potential which made their life meaningful.

Embryonic signs of women's literary tradition could be observed at the beginning of the 1720s as by this time women authors had already started not only to participate in salon practice but devote their literary works to other writing female colleagues as well. In particular, an unknown author of *The Prude* (1724), 'Madam A', admires Eliza Haywood's writing style, Penelope Aubin dedicates *The Life of Charlotta du Pont* (1723) to her colleague, a respected poetess Elizabeth Singer Rowe. Female writers also practiced using identical names in their literary works. For instance, in an epistolary novel *The Lover's week* (1718), Mary Hearne introduces the character of *Philander* who has the same name as the protagonist in Aphra Behn's *Love Letters between a Nobleman and his Sister* (1684).

Augustan women authors chose different strategies to defend their right to voice their thoughts, opinions, views as well as avoid the negative impact that their sex might have upon the earning power of their writing. The factor in question could damage a proper evaluation of literary merit as "…the stigma of 'underfeminine' behavior remained attached to authorship throughout the period" [32, p. 95]. More than once did Eliza Haywood use her sexual identity as apology for any possible errors in her writing, yet realizing that such an ambiguous argument contributed to the fact that the reading audience had a low opinion of women's literary experiments.

Unlike Haywood, another famous writer Aphra Behn, known in the history of English literature as 'the Incomparable Astrea', announced herself to possess a masculine gift involving poetical skills and intelligence, which immediately earned the author a lot of compliments on her female literary forms from the cohorts of her male opponents. At the same the idea of having a masculine type of literary craft testified to the fact that female authorship was incompatible with femininity.

However, in most cases women authors preferred to publish their works anonymously (Manley, Haywood, Rowe, Boyd). Cheryl Turner (1992) attributes such a preference to a sheer desire of women authors to maintain a good reputation in society. Yet, literary disguise was not necessarily associated with women's intention to remain in the shadow. Anonymity was also employed to add an appropriate stylistic quality to their publication. For example, when Jane West became 'Prudentia Homespun' her educational books acquired an aura of sensible respectability; Lady Eleanor Fenn's anonymous names 'Mrs. Teachwell' and 'Mrs. Lovechild'reflected

her suitability for writing children's books; while 'Mrs. Penelope Prattle' (possibly Eliza Haywood) promised a comfortable casual conversation to the readers of the periodical *The Parrot* (1746). In Turner's opinion, the strategy of using pseudonyms by well-established women authors was just an illustration of their deep understanding of trends in the developing book market [Ibid, p. 95].

In her book *Women, Authorship and Literature Culture 1690–1740* (2003), Sarah Prescott makes a fruitful attempt to identify patterns of female authorship in 18th century Britain by exploring a variety of contexts which influenced women's publications and writings. In particular, she takes into consideration such contexts as the existing system of patronage, sociable literary salons, the commercial network of the London booksellers, publications by subscription. A very important aspect of Prescott's research into women's writing of this period tends to exclusively focus on women's place in provincial literary culture, which was previously neglected in academic criticism.

In general, the history of female authorship in Britain is associated with metropolitan literary life, Grub Street and hack work, however, the researcher argues that there was "a vital interaction between province and metropolis" in this period, and provincial literary culture"…was not only vibrant and productive but also enabling for many women writers" [21, p. 2]. In other words, living in a province (York, Bristol, Norwich, and Ipswich) did not prevent a woman writer from involvement in a literary career and being close to the mainstream literature, participation in literary market and critical recognition. Overall, Sarah Prescott reconfigures current conceptions of women's participation in literature and offers a fluid, pluralist model of female authorship which is both metropolitan (Eliza Haywood, Penelope Aubin) and provincial (Jane Barker, Elizabeth Singer Rowe), influenced by women's political and religious views as well as professional one.

Before the 1980s research papers on the professionalization of women's writing were meager in contrast to those which studied the impact of various publishing market strategies on male professional authorship. In most of them the professional woman writer was associated with Grub Street and ironically compared to a 'Suburban Muse' [26, p. 18]. Sara Prescott (2003) offers a most detailed and objective model describing early professional female authors as those for whom payment was an insignificant component in literary

activity – "independent professionals", and "dependent professionals" for whom writing was the only source of income [21, p. 17–18]. The main reason which influenced women's decision to earn a living by penning was financial difficulties and lack of material support from the family.

Many women authors came to professional English literature after a successful debut in drama which was a very popular genre in the late 1690s. Inspired by Aphra Behn's success in drama other writers – Mary Pix, Kathryn Trotter, Mary Delarivier Manley, showed a considerable talent in writing plays that ultimately led to the unprecedented triumph of the contemporary theatre where more than a third of new plays was written by professional women writers [Ibid, p. 18].

The business partner of Augustan female writers was the publishing elite represented by such names as Curll & Franclin (1718), Parker, Jackson & Joliffe (1733), Becket and de Hondt (1769), Payne & Cadell (1782), and Carpenter & Hookham (1796). They determined to a great extent the development of the literary creative process and positively influenced the social status of women authors.

Another characteristic feature of female publications during this period is patronage. As a rule, women preceded their literary works with long introductions referring to an influential publishing patron. For example, Eliza Haywood devotes the introduction to her novel *Lasselia, or The Self-Abandon'd* (1724) to Edward Howard (1672–1731), the eighth earl of Suffolk, a prominent Whig and a patron of writers: "My LORD, When I presume to entreat your Protection of a Trifle such as this, I do more to express my sense of your unbounded Goodness, than if I were to publish Folios in your Praise. A Great and learned Work honors the Patron, who accepts it, but little Performances stand in need of all that Sweetness of Disposition so conspicuous in the Behavior and Character of your Lordship, to engage a Pardon" [13, p. 105]. The most common dedicatees, extremely popular with Augustan women writers, included the Duchess Dowager of Marlborough, Lady Abergavenny, Lady Elizabeth Germain and others.

It should be noted that the role of the royal and noble patronage of literature became relatively insignificant in the eighteenth century because of an enormous number of those who opted writing as a career. Thus, the institution of patronage gave way to such indirect forms of literary sponsorship as subscription and open book marketing which indicated

the rise of consumer culture in England due to the rapid development of journalism and the professionalization of writing. Traditionally critics associate the probable dates of the introduction and abolition of aristocratic patronage with the time frame of the creative writing activities of John Milton who began his literary career in the system of patronage, and later did everything to eliminate it.

In contemporary literary criticism, the eighteen century literature is presented as a discursive field with a lively rhythm and characterized by countless genre experiments grounded on a variety of prose forms authored by women who consciously learned and creatively transformed fictional traditions of the previous era. It is during this period that, from the perspective of the history of literature, there occurs quite a promising process of destroying the old canons, as well as an active convergence of genres and genre transformations, innovative aesthetic principles are being born. A variety of coexisting literary forms presented in English culture up to the middle of the eighteenth century could be compared to an ever changing mosaic of popular genre mask formations: adventures, lives, memoirs, expeditions, fortunes and misfortunes, tales. This is the moment when, along with love adventures, didactic story, autobiography, a new genre, the English novel, is acquiring power over sometimes unpretentious, sometimes quite sophisticated tastes of the reading public.

2. Augustan female love discourse

To avoid sharp and unjust criticism a number of women writers appealed exclusively to members of their own sex carefully avoiding topics which were considered unacceptable to women. They explored themes related to religion, spiritual practice, housekeeping and motherhood, etc. This limited scope of issues for discussion is originally based on the analysis of women's autobiographies and diaries that the eighteenth century was so much in love with [18].

It is not surprising that in the context of the outlined thematic limitations women writers displayed a considerable interest to the topic of love. The author of a fundamental monograph *Seductive Forms: Women's Amatory Fiction from 1684 to 1740* (1992) remarks that "the early eighteenth century, then, saw a split between female-authored pious and didactic love fiction, stressing the virtues of chastity or sentimental marriage, and erotic

fiction by women, with its voyeuristic attention to the combined pleasures and ravages of seduction" [3, p. 33]. The first group was represented by such names as Jane Barker, Elizabeth Singer Rowe, Mary Davis, Penelope Aubin, while the second one – by Aphra Behn, Mary Delavirier Manley and Eliza Haywood.

The dual character and contrasting impressions of women's prose of this period are quite accurately demonstrated in Jane Brereton's letter *Epistle to Mrs Anne Griffiths. Written from London* (1718). In a poetic message she gives a broad outline of the two opposite literary traditions:

Fair Modesty was our sex's pride,
But some have thrown that bashful grace aside:
The Behns, the Manleys, head this modey train,
Politely lewd and wittily profane;
Their wit, their fluent style (which all must own)
Can never for their levity atone …
First, our Orinda with her spotless fame
As chase in wit, rescued our sex from shame
Angelic Wit and pure thoughts agree
In tuneful Singer , and great Winchilsea" [8, p. 30].

The reasons of splitting Augustan women's prose into two contrasting trends have already been discussed by literary critics. John Richetti (1999) and Cheryl Turner (1992) attribute the literary split to the process of the professionalization of writing in the 1720s–1730s. As a result, some women writers had to conform to the patriarchal ideas of the then English society and attached a mentoring tone to their prose in "a deliberate attempt to sell female fiction to a wider audience by making it impeccably respectable" [24, p. 239]. In other words, the authors of pious fiction were genuinely interested in selling their manuscripts due to financial difficulties and significant limitations of women's opportunities for self-employment. However, Ballaster emphasizes the fact that pious and didactic fiction got the lion's share of the market much later [3, p. 33]

Such writers as Aphra Behn, Mary Delavirier Manley and Eliza Haywood, collectively known as the 'Fair Triumvirate of Wits' or the 'Naughty Triumvirate' particularly championed the theme of love, yet did not intend to please the Puritan circle of readers. They impressed contemporaries with freedom and independence of thinking, the triumph

of feeling, its permissiveness and impunity. They depicted love as passion which was rarely compatible with marriage.

No matter how popular and successful the works authored by Aphra Behn, Mary Manley and Eliza Haywood were, contemporary literary critics treated them skeptically. Approximately thirty years after Haywood's death, in a pioneering study of the English novel *The Progress of Romance* (1785), Clara Reeve mentions in passing the three best known authors of the novel's early literary history. In a similar way, Anna Barbauld considered the trio's writings to be 'pulp fiction' and did not find any place for them in "a canon-making enterprise" – a 50-volume series of *The British Novelists* (1810) No did Walter Scott and James Ballantyne mention those women writers in a ten volume collection *Ballantyne's Novelist's Library* (1821–1824), only referring to Richardson as the originator of the new domestic novel of sentiment.

This skeptical attitude to Behn, Manley and Haywood predetermined a dominant perspective of their neglectful treatment in the literary history and led to their exclusion from the canon of English literature. In particular, two most influential literary critics Ian Watt (1957) and Lewis Davis (1983) depict the novel exceptionally as a male tradition and do not associate amatory fiction with any of the novel's roots. However, feminist literary criticism, which declared itself a mature phenomenon in the 1970s–1980s and turned out to be a significant change in the worldview and aesthetics, revived academic interest in love prose of Augustan women writers.

In the 1990s an American researcher Jerry Beasley (1982) focuses his attention on the importance of finding new approaches as well as extensive and flexible methodologies to the study of Augustan women's love prose with a view to potential revising the existing canon of English literature. His book *Novels of the 1740s* (1982) contributes to academic discussion related to canonization of works written by the three authors and initiated by J. Gardiner (1981) and continued by J. Spencer (1986), J. Todd (1986), M. Schofield (1990) and others.

It is fair to note that one of the first attempts to canonize Augustan women writers' texts was made by James Harrison in a twenty three volume edition of *The Novelist's Magazine* (1786). In his opinion, the four genre categories reflected the aesthetic preferences of Augustan readership, namely: approximately two hundred translations of the best European

literary works, Oriental short stories, prose of famous journalists as well as prose authored by E. Haywood, S. Fielding and Ch. Lennox.

Inside modern academy there can be observed an ever-going philological discussion aimed at rethinking the importance of such a literary phenomenon as amatory fiction. Among objective reasons that cause difficulty in the study of Augustan women's love fiction experts in literature traditionally mention such factors as time distance, cultural and aesthetics barriers as well as its marginalization in literary practice, which obviously leads to lack of unanimity in solving the problem of fitting Behn, Manley and Haywood into the canon of English literature.

There are various definitions used to describe the corpus of Augustan love fiction: *amorous novels*, *amorous fiction*, *amatory novella*, *seduction stories*, *sensational tales of sexual intrigue*, *novel of amorous intrigue*, *sensational novella-fabliau*. These terms emphasize different aspects which the notion "amatory fiction" contains – the feeling of love, the plot of seduction, a stunning nature of adventures, intrigues as well as the women writers' preference of short narrative forms.

Ros Ballaster (1998) describes amatory fiction "a particular body of narrative fiction by women which was explicitly erotic in its concentration on the representation of sentimental love" [3, p. 31–32]. In the last decade the notion "amatory fiction" has been significantly transformed by Karen Harvey (2004). Basing on a deep historiographical research of erotic culture in the eighteenth century, she comes to conclusion that the domineering constituent of fiction authored by Behn, Manley and Haywood is sentimental love, and their "amatory fictions encased sexual events in a moral story" [12, p. 30]. In other words, Augustan amatory fiction also contains a didactic tone which is of great importance in the context of the eighteenth century when relationships between a man and a woman were discussed.

Literary critics often cite Eliza Haywood's statement announced in *Love in Variety* (1726): "Love… is dangerous to the softer Sex; they cannot arm themselves too much against it, and for whatever Delights it affords to the Successful few, it pays a double Portion of Wretchedness to the numerous Unfortunate" [15, p. 6]. This is the phrase which reflects the narrative theme of amatory writings in which the depicted love always brings satisfaction to egocentric and immoral characters, and ruined hopes and dreams is all a woman can expect from the lover she trusts.

It is not a mere coincidence that literary critics show a particular interest in another important constituent of the love narrative structure – the plot which centers around seduction defined in research literature as *the seduction plot*, *the amatory plot* or *the love plot*. Women writers turned their attention towards this topic during Augustan age when sensualistic philosophical ideas (Hume, Locke) liberated society from traditional regulations leading to the secularization of public consciousness. These circumstances forced women writers to start searching for new ways and strategies to ponder over such a sensitive topic with readers for whom "stories of coercive sexual relations offered recognizable narrative rubrics: familiar plot devices, character types, and themes" [7, p. 140].

Literary critics associate the genealogical roots of the seduction plot with poetic messages of Ovid's *Heroides* (5th century BC), Pierre Abelard's medieval romantic story *The Story of My Misfortunes* (*Historia Calamitatum* (1130?)), Madame de Lafayette's *The Princess of Cleves* (*La Princesse de Cleves* (1678)) and *Letters of a Portuguese Nun* (1669) written by Gabriel Joseph Guilleragues.

In the narrative space of love prose authored by Behn, Manley and Haywood, the seduction plot acquires a special functional status, thus, becoming the subject of academic discussion. According to McKeon (1989), the love story was on the level of political allegories and illustrated the problem of power and subordination. Considering the fact that the three women authors sympathized with the Tories, Tony Bowers agrees with McKeon and supposes that the private story which depicted a man's power over a woman served as a pragmatic and hidden means in the struggle for consciousness of the mass readership of amatory fiction, which, from the point of view of ideological sensibility, would eventually support the royal power in their fight against the Whigs [6, p. 130]. Yet, Ros Ballaster refuses to read the love plot solely as such. She states that seduction plots are an integrative narrative device which enables the authors "to articulate sexual and party political interest simultaneously with reference both to the struggle for a specifically female authority in sexual and party political representation and to the more general struggle to resolve ethical and epistemological crises in the social order through narrative form" [3, p. 16].

John Richetti (1999) expresses a different opinion as far as the functional aspect of the seduction plot is concerned and believes that the latter to be the

most effective compositional and narrative technique used in amatory texts and a means of abstracting readers from a conflictive reality in society as well as satisfying their voyeuristic and erotic fantasies [24, p. 39].

Academic discussion also centers around a key role of French literary tradition in the rise and development of Augustan amatory fiction. In this respect it should be noted that a number of French literary works were translated by Aphra Behn. In particular, she translated love fiction authored by Bernard Le Bovier de Fontenelle, Duke De La Rochefoucauld, Balthazar de Bonnercorse (*The Discovery of the New Worlds* (1688), *The History of Oracles, or, the Cheats of the Pagan Priests* (1688), *Reflections on Morality, or, Seneca Unmasqued* (1685), *La Montre, or, The Lover's watch* (1686)).

No less popular at this time were about two hundred forms of romance: the chivalric, the Arcadian, the Euphuistic, the classical, the political, the allegorical, and the heroic. Such specific narrative features of the plot as the theme of love, heroic acts and fantasy element were primarily associated with the heroic-gallant novel (trans. from French *Roman de longue haleine*), which gained popularity not only in France but in England as well. It is this very form which for the first time marks the interrelationship between a literary genre of romance and gender (femininity) and establishes aesthetic foundations for works written by Behn, Manley and Haywood in the late seventeenth – early eighteenth century. At the same time, as Ros Ballaster remarks, amatory fiction in England inherited French models of women's authorship (the use if pseudonyms) as well as feminine modes of literary production and consumption rather than formal elements of the heroic novel [3, p. 43].

Over the time the ideas of French aristocratic idealism lost their importance and the number of readers' interested in imaginary and incredible stories declined. A new tendency of women's rationality was in progress. Such short forms as the *petite histoire, histoire galante*, or *nouvelle* became dominating on the literary arena. Among most influential French literary works were *La Princesse de Cleves* (1678) authored by Madam de Lafayette and *The Love Journal* (1668), *The Love of Sundry Philosophers and Other Great Men* (1673), *The Disorders of Love* (1675) written by Mary Catherine Desjardins.

Reflecting on the dynamics of the feminocentric content of French prose, Rose Ballaster notes that the theme of love continues to be the leading narrative and a driving force in the organization of the plot in the *nouvelle*. But unlike feelings, a woman's heroic act and fantasy depicted in the genre

modification of the gallante-heroic novel, the novelistic story claims the cult of female erotic desire and passion most commonly followed by unhappy experience, collapse of hopes and tragedy [Ibid, p. 50].

A significant segment of French love prose inherited by the English authors Manley and Haywood is represented by the scandalous chronicles traditionally defined in literary criticism as a fictional story of a servant or a confidant who hiding behind stylized names and initials provides narratives of the sexual intrigues of French aristocracy. The formal origins of *the chronique scandaleuse* are notoriously difficult to pin down. Most scholars trace back the genealogy of the scandalous literary genre to *The Secret History* of Procopius, the personal secretary and legal adviser of Belisarius (around 527-540 BC), though academic discussion about the origin of another important source of amatory fiction is far from complete. Peter Wagner describes it as "a hybrid form, with literary, semi-literary, and sub-literary branches offering many degrees of fact and fiction" [33, p. 89], whereas, in Ronald Paulson's opinion, it represents another form of anti-romance, a conscious effort to attain to the real in reaction to romance" [20, p. 221].

The theme of love in this type of the 'feminine' narrative becomes subsidiary turning the heroine into a victim of amorous admiration and ambition. The authors of the scandalous chronicles utilize satirical tools to represent her greed, masculine traits and desire for power eventually devaluated due to lack of common sense. Yet, they adhere to a gallant tone of the heroic novel balancing in the guise of crafty tricksters in the gender dichotomy of the scandalous textual space.

The English followers of Bussy Rabutin, Madame d'Ollone, and Madame de Chatillion in this literary genre turn attention to an innovative narrative technique introduced by Marie Katherine La Motte, Baronness d'Aulnoy – the female gossip based on the natural weakness of the woman's mind – curiosity about other people's private lives. There is also an innovation from the perspective of the character paradigm. Unlike Bussy Rabutin whose main heroes are a polite lady admirer and a seductress, d'Aulnoy's reverses the roles of the major characters in her *Memoirs of the English Royal Court* (1695) and presents the reader with a cunning aristocrat who seduces a virtuous heroine, unable to assess his true villainous intentions. The narrator shows a deep understanding of female psychology and becomes a keeper of women's secrets blaming the male character for initiating a love affair.

Overall, in the scandal chronicle it was almost impossible to tell whether the story was real or a product of the author's imagination.

However, the most popular and ubiquitous literary form of the late seventeenth- early eighteenth century both in France and England was the love letter which "became the trop of absolute sincerity" [3, p. 61]. The rise of this genre is traditionally associated with women and Ovid's classic love specimens of epistolary art – *The Art of Love* (*Arsamatoria*) and *Remedies for Love* (*Remedia Amoris)*. The functional aspect of letters is well defined by Ros Ballaster who says that "…in the heroic romance, little history, and scandal chronicle in France, the letter was mainly employed as a plot device. The loss, discovery, theft, forging, or exchange of love letters function as a means of 'witnessing' (the letter, obtained by the author, supposedly proves the verity of his or her story), as a means of disclosing a secret, or the source of misunderstanding or misinterpretation between lovers" [Ibid, p. 61].

In many ways Augustan women's amatory fiction was influenced by *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise* – a medieval romantic epistolary story about scandalous and tragic love of a renowned scholar and teacher at the cathedral school at Notre Dame to his brilliant and beautiful student. *The Letters* were published in a Latin addition in 1616 and then freely translated into French in 1765 and in 1695. The translators altered the original to make them resemble like another noticeable sentimental literary piece – *The Portuguese Letters* (1669) written by Gabriel-Joseph de La Vergne, comte de Guillerragues. It is characterized by a rare psychological depth and frankness in depicting passion of the unfortunate Portuguese nun to her beloved. Unlike in the genre of romance where the feeling of love is "…a stimulus for heroic denial, refinement of sensibility, and moral sensitivity" [Ibid, p. 63], in *The Portuguese Letters* whose plot is reduced to the struggle of the desperate and lonely woman for a single letter from the object of her admiration, love inspires the triumph of the flesh and idolatry.

Close copies *The Portuguese Letters* in English were Behn's *Otway's Orphan* (1680), *Venice Preserved* (1682), Manley's *Letters in Imitation by a Portuguese Nun* (1696), *Letters of Love and Gallantry* (1693) and others where passion is expressed through all linguistic levels – graphical (exclamation marks, dashes), syntactical (the rhetorical question, inversion, abbreviated sentences), but mostly lexical ('soul', 'heart', 'sigh', 'tear', 'torment') [Ibid, p. 63].

All these four French genre modifications – the romance, the petite histoire, the scandalous chronicles and the love letter, introduced English love fiction the most essential constituents – the topic of love, the seduction structure and various patterns of the character paradigm.

In a different way, the theme of love and sentimental drama about seduction were presented in pious love fiction authored by Jane Barker, Elizabeth Singer Rowe, Mary Davis, Penelope Aubin who warned their readers of the dangers of temptation, cautiously recommending women not to cross the borderline of decency in private situations of flirtation. For example, in most of her novels Penelope Aubin shares with the reader a story of a young girl or virtuous woman resisting the advances of a charming rake in favor of the 'perfect lover' and being rewarded by worldly goods for her virtue, while her wicked tormentor is brought to a horrible and disgraceful death.

The authors of didactic love fiction explore sentimental feelings in the context of such issues as the ephemerality of life, people's equality when faced with death, self-sufficiency as an ideal, stoic adherence to moral principles, the virtuous nature of the individual, and cultivation of intellectual self-development in solitude. They reflect on women's virtues and consider their major aim to provide the female readership with information on how to achieve a better life in a socially limited space, space women were unable to change at all at that time.

The roots of didactic love fiction are attributed to the conduct books *A Serious Proposals to the Ladies for the Advancement of Their True and Greatest Interest* (1694) and *A Serious Proposal, Part II* (1697) Mary Estell (1666-1731). In those works she offered a new type of institution for women with the view of educating them. She also preaches spirituality of a woman and her ability to restrain herself from passion as the only way to avoid sufferings and injustice of the patriarchal society.

It is quite natural that the authors of pious and didactic fiction should take pains to distance themselves from the notorious trio including Behn, Manley and Haywood, which can be illustrated by Penelope Aubin's preface to *The Life of Charlotta du Pont* (1723): "My booksellers say my novels sell tolerably well, but they tell me I shall meet no encouragement and advised me to write rather more modishly, that is, less like a Christian, and in a style careless and loose

, as the custom of the present age is to live. But I leave that to the other female author, my contemporaries whose life and writings have, I fear too great a resemblance" [1, p. 35].

Despite significant differences in general tonality of literary works, love novels written by the authors of amatory fiction and pious and didactic fiction have a number of common features which include sharing solely female experience, the role of love in a woman's fate which is complex and at times unpredictable in the patriarchal society. The authors of both literary traditions also use the seduction plot, fuse fact and fiction, add psychological elements while depicting dramatic trials of the female character in search for her identity in society where a man's power and laws dominate; they employ autobiographical, gossip, carnivalization elements in describing a woman's lot and reflecting on women's problems [30, p. 68]. For example, Jane Barker's pious novel *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies; or, Love and Virtue Recommended: In a Collection of Instructive Novels* (1726) has certain common features with short stories of Aphra Behn, in particular, dynamism and the authors' interest in psychological states of the female characters. Throughout their novels Mary Davis' and Eliza Haywood's selfish and vain heroines grow up and come to understand their spiritual evolution, take responsibility for their actions and show respect for their partners and marriage.

Literary critics note that early in the eighteenth century women's love fiction introduces a new motif – a motif of freedom with its variations prompted by search for different avenues to understand and describe in novels women's lots and the issue of women's position in the patriarchal society, ranging from political and sentimental coloring in Manley's satire to Haywood's works to absolutely tragic tonality in Aubin's prose. For instance, a virtuous beauty Mary, one of the major characters in a popular novel *The Noble Slaves, or the Lives and Adventures of Two Lords and Two Ladies* (1722), chooses a rather shocking and grotesque strategy to preserve freedom and moral chastity in her struggle against the unbridled passion of a Turkish potentate that she encounters on her oriental adventures – she tore the eyeballs out and throws them at her offender.

A number of scholars (Castle (1986), Schofield (1990), Craft-Fairchild (1993) and others) studying theatricality focus their attention on the masquerade motif in love prose penned by women authors of both female literary trends. Masquerade introduced a certain degree of open-endedness into the system

of human relations and perfectly suited the elaboration of the plot which, as Tzvetan Todorov (1969) remarks, "depends on the initial destabilization of the ordinary – a *disequilibrium* at the heart of things" [31, p. 163].

Behn, Manley and Haywood don't only use the masquerade in the thematic plane symbolically defined by Dryden in the comedy *Marriage A la Mode* (1673) and embracing such notions as love, masquerade intrigue, mystification, pleasure, women, deception, and shock. These female authors employ masquerade as a means to destruct old, outdated socio-cultural notions of femininity in the eighteenth century and build new ones as well as seek the ways how to liberate a woman, give her freedom and power, thus, contributing to the development of 'an Amazonian race'. Barker, Davis and Rowe, on the contrary, apply masquerade in an unconflicted way.

In addition to the masquerade motif the authors of amatory fiction and didactic love fiction continue to use the motif of travel to exotic countries, which gives the female character impetus to change her personality and is associated with her sacrifice for the sake of knowledge she gains. Another focus is the heroine's difficulties, hardships and trials she encounters while searching of her identity. In such distant and exotic settings as desert islands, remote Welsh caves, or Russian prisons, her virtue comes under repeated pressure from pirates, seducers and would be-rapists [2, p. 11].

In eighteenth century women love fiction presented by the rival literary trends there appear autobiographical beginnings, confession, childhood memories, and personal love experience. Contemporary literary critics refer to autobiographical narratives in Aphra Behn's prose, Mary Manley's scandalous chronicles *Secret Memoirs and Manners of Several Persons of Quality of Both Sexes, from The New Atalantis, an Island in the Mediterranean* (1709) and *Advetures of Rivella, or The History of the Author of The New Atalantis* (1714), Jane Barker's trilogy *Love Intrigues* (1713), *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies* (1723) and *The Lining of the Patch-Work Screen* (1726).

Conclusions

It can be concluded that in late seventeenth-early eighteenth century the then-existing stereotypes of femininity and masculinity begin to contradict, eventually leading to the gender inversion not only in political and economic spheres of life but in literature as well. Women authors make an attempt to transform

the patriarchal literary canon where the subject is historically associated with masculinity and in contrast to femininity that invariably serves as the object. In other words, the main character in male literary texts is a man with a good capacity for self-reflection, capable of moral progress and discoveries directing his actions at the female character. However, in Augustan women love fiction the gender opposition was being reversed, and the female character was made of central importance. As a result, an ordinary woman – a provincial young woman, a maid, or a middle class girl, – gains a voice and starts to play a significant role in complex and dramatic relationships with a man.

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