

*The portrayal of women in Richardson and Austen:
A comparison between Samuel Richardson's Pamela and Jane Austen's
Pride and Prejudice*

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“Men have had every advantage of us in telling their own story”
(Anne Elliot in *Persuasion*)

Introduction

In a social context of gender and class repression (and oppression), Jane Austen managed to tell her story and the story of women in a way that still nowadays is controversial and a matter of study. How could she do that in a world ruled by men? As Anne Elliot states in *Persuasion*, “men have had every advantage of us in telling their own story. Education has been theirs in so much higher a degree; the pen has been in their hands” (Austen [1813] 2012, 276). How did Jane Austen portray women and their situation? Which influences did she have and how did she use them? Is there a difference in the treatment of women, their portrayal and the portrayal of their situation in the works of a male and a female writer and, in particular, is there a difference in the way Richardson and Austen portray women? This study will focus on the way Richardson and Austen portray women and their situation in *Pamela* and *Pride and Prejudice*, in the differences that can be established in their portrayal and the motives and purposes behind them. It will also focus on the influence that Richardson had in Austen and in which senses she used this influence, the influence of a man writing about women, to portray women in her novels.

Samuel Richardson

A man telling stories about women

Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded was Samuel Richardson's first published novel in 1740 and it had an immediate great success. It is an epistolary novel that comprises mostly the letters from Pamela (a young maiden) to her parents about the misfortunes and trials that she has to endure and overcome after her Mistress's death and the following attacks and abuses of her former Mistress's son, Mr. B. He is presented as an abusive, tyrannical Master that is obsessed with having Pamela and "ruining" her. Pamela will defend her virtue and innocence to the extent of almost committing suicide; and it is her goodness and virtue what will, by the end of the novel, be rewarded by Mr. B's reformation and their following marriage, really advantageous to Pamela economically and socially speaking.

There is a diversity of opinions from scholars about Pamela's rebellious behaviour and the reasons behind it. Some of them consider *Pamela* as a revolutionary novel because of Pamela's behaviour to her master when he intends to abuse her, and others see Pamela as a subordinated woman who only rebels for religious purposes and who, once married, is completely submissive to her husband.

Pamela rebels against class and gender oppressions in order to maintain her virtue, as she considers God's Will superior to her Master's. According to Jocelyn Harris, "Pamela teaches Mr B. that there is an ordering of duties. According to the domestic conduct books which Richardson knew well, a Christian first duty should be to God's laws, his second to himself, and his third to social relations such as that between master and servant" (1987, 30). Harris also states that "an outsider by birth, education and profession, Richardson found common cause with women in a world that needed change. Employing forms familiar to them, letters and tales of courtship and marriage, he urged his readers to train their powers of reason and morality by debating the issues of his novels" (1987, i).

Margaret Doody considers *Pamela* "revolutionary," precisely because of Pamela's rebellious behaviour to her master: "In defending her virginity so vigorously, Pamela, the first important English heroine to actually work for her living, rebels against the social attitudes which dictated that lower-class girls were not supposed to set a value on themselves. In this respect . . . *Pamela* is revolutionary" (1980, back cover).

Indeed, she does rebel against her oppressor while he is trying to abuse and "ruin" her, but as Jocelyn Harris states, this rebellion ends when, after Mr B's reformation, she becomes her wife. From that moment on, she is subordinated to her husband, "for as soon as Pamela gives up her sole weapon, her chastity, she surrenders rights to her only property, her person. . . . Bound by her vow of obedience, Pamela may no longer resist. Whatever she thinks, she may no longer say it" (Harris 1987, 33).

In fact, after the abuses of her master come to an end, she falls in love with him, they get married and she does everything in her power to oblige him. She writes down in the form of a list all the requirements to please her husband and everything that she has to do to be a good wife; she even refuses to stop calling him "master." According to LeGates,

In exhibiting obedience, our heroines can imagine no better fate than to surrender themselves to the men they love, Pamela, when told to change her form of address to her former master and future husband, replies, 'he shall always be my master; and I shall think myself more and more his servant'. What better precedent for the selfless, sexless woman of Victorian literature. (1976, 23)

So, what is Richardson's purpose for making his heroine rebel (at the beginning of the novel) against her Master, a man and her superior in terms of class? Is he trying to denounce the oppressive and repressive situation of women or is he trying to make a religious defence of the principles of morality, virtue and innocence?

We can think of Pamela as a heroine that rebels against gender and class oppression or as a "selfless, sexless woman" (LeGates 1976, 23) exhibiting obedience to her master. This contradiction could perhaps be explained by Richardson's purpose when writing the novel. Was it to denounce the situation of women or to exemplify a model of Christian virtue, innocence and duty to instruct his readers? The clue to solve this contradiction may be the change of attitude in Pamela, from rebellion to obedience, once Mr B. goes from being her tyrannical Master to her beloved husband.

His portrayal of womanhood in *Pamela*

Women are variously characterized in *Pamela*. They are praised for their modesty, prudence, humility, virtuosity, etc. As Pamela explains by the beginning of the novel, Mrs Jervis is pleased at her for her "prudence" and "modesty:" "and told me that she was very well pleased to see my prudence and modesty, and that I kept all the fellows at a distance" (Richardson [1740] 1980, 49).

When women are criticized it is for being artful, hypocrite, not submissive or rebellious. "O the little hypocrite!" said he; 'she has all the arts of her sex; they were *born* with her." (67). Pamela is criticized, especially by Mr B., when she is rebellious and decides not to please him and be submissive. The feminine character that is portrayed more negatively by Richardson is Mrs Jewkes, a woman that, in fact, is exactly the opposite of what the Christian doctrine predicates: she is evil, not honest, not prudent nor modest. Pamela describes Mrs Jewkes as a "wicked creature" (144) the first time she appears in the novel.

Richardson states and puts forward the many differences and inequalities between men and women, for instance, when Pamela states that "he may, perhaps, think I may be good enough for his harlot; and those things don't disgrace men, that ruin poor women" (73). Another clear example of gender inequality in *Pamela* is the different outcome that Miss Godfrey's pregnancy had for her and for Mr B. While she feels herself forced to emigrate and leave her child behind because of the fear of social repudiation, there are no negative consequences at all for the father of the child, Mr B.

As for Pamela's opinion on the issue of marriage, we can see her rejecting Mr William's proposal, stating that she has no mind to marry. As she tells her parents:

What shall I say, my dear father and mother, to this unexpected declaration? I want now, more than ever, your advice. But, after all, I have no mind to marry: I had rather live with you. But yet, I would marry a man who begs from door to door,

and has no home nor being, rather than endanger my honesty. Yet I cannot, methinks, young as I am, bear the thoughts of being a wife. (183)

This is another example of how Pamela considers maintaining her virtue as the most important thing; she could do or endure anything as long as she remains virtuous. The thought of being too young to marry, that she expresses after Mr William's proposal, does not appear when she is thinking of marrying Mr B.

After getting married to Mr B., Pamela, who was afraid of social censure and repudiation, is praised by her neighbours and considered a "model woman" because of her modesty and beauty: "we have heard what will always make you valued as an honour to our sex, and as a pattern for all the young ladies in the county" (322).

Virtue is, overall, what Richardson presents as the most important attribute that a woman can possess. In fact, it is because of Pamela's virtue that Mr B. falls in love with her:

For, let me tell my Pamela, that, after having been long tossed about by the boisterous winds of culpable passion, I am not now so much the admirer of your beauty, all charming as you are, as of your virtue. My love therefore must increase, even should this perishable beauty fail, as the station of life you are now entering upon, will afford you augmented opportunities to display your virtue! (372)

The attributes for which women are praised are, then, attributes related to passivity rather than to activity; they are praised for attributes related, after all, to the Christian doctrine (humility, modesty, virtue, etc.) and not by attributes implying intelligence or any kind of mental activity.

Jane Austen

Jane Austen and feminism

Jane Austen is considered a feminist in the sense that she places women in an epistemological key position; her stories are focalized through a woman's gaze. Austen makes emphasis on the social differences and inequalities between men and women, and how women are placed in a much inferior, less advantageous position.

Even if all her heroines end up getting married, and marriage could seem the main goal of the narrative, there has to be a difference established between the "story" and Austen's 'discourse'. As Robyn Warhol states, "in Austen, the interplay between *story*, in which the independent heroine must, as some critics have it, 'swindle into a wife', and *discourse*, through which traditional power relationships can be subverted, carries important implications for feminist literary theory" (1996, 22).

Brown also raises questions about whether marriage can be seen as a "narrative goal" in her novels or whether "her satiric treatment of love and marriage in some works . . . does arise from the feminist's skepticism, not about sex and marriage per se, but about the way in which both have functioned in the woman's identity? (1973, 324). We could conclude that Austen, apparently writing stories where all her heroines end up happily marrying, which actually seems to be the goal of the narrative, raises questions

about the situation of women, the inequalities between gender and the oppression and repression that women suffered. As Brown states “Jane Austen’s treatment of marriage in her work is best understood in relation to her skepticism about male definitions of female emotions, sexuality, education and modesty” (1973, 336).

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth ends up getting married to Mr Darcy, so, she actually “swindles into a wife” (Warhol 1996, 22), but throughout the novel we can see her opinions about different matters concerning the situation of women. Elizabeth is, in fact, an intelligent heroine, mostly praised because of her intelligence and her “quickness” and it is this intelligence and her capacity of expressing her opinions what makes Mr Darcy fall in love with her.

Many questions regarding women and their place in society are presented in *Pride and Prejudice*: the problem of inheritance for women, the need of getting married, the education of women, the high expectations and many attributes that a woman must possess to be ‘accomplished’, etc. As we have mentioned, Elizabeth Bennet states her own point of view (that perhaps we could see as similar to Austen’s) in every one of these aspects.

Jane Austen makes use of her characteristic irony to emphasize these controversial questions and satirizes the traditional descriptions of women in order to denounce, or at least make the reader notice existing class and gender oppressions.

Her portrayal of womanhood in *Pride and Prejudice*

In the very first chapter of *Pride and Prejudice* we can see Mr Bennett praising Elizabeth because she “has something more of quickness than her sisters” (Austen [1813] 2012, 5) who he classifies as “silly,” “ignorant” and “vain.” This pattern will be repeated throughout the whole novel: women are praised for their intelligence and criticised for their ignorance or silliness. Mrs Bennet, for instance, who could be considered the more comic and satirized character in the novel, is first described as having a mind “less difficult to develop,” “a woman of mean understanding, little information” (5).

On the other hand, Elizabeth, who has been already described as “quick” by her own father is described by Mr Darcy on their first encounter as “tolerable; but no handsome enough” (12). However, he soon starts taking notice of her: “he began to find it [her face] uncommonly intelligent by the beautiful expression of her dark eyes” (23). We can see that the first positive adjective that he uses to describe her is “intelligent.”

Many instances of the situation of inequality between men and women are to be found in *Pride and Prejudice*. The problem with the Bennet’s state, to be inherited by Mr Collins rather than by the daughters, the incapacity of women to be more or less independent without a father or a husband, etc. As Mrs Bennet states at the beginning of the novel, it is impossible for her and her daughters to go visit Mr Bingley without Mr Bennet’s presence: “Indeed you must go, for it will be impossible for *us* to visit him, if you don’t” (4). Mrs Bennet’s obsession with marrying her five daughters, which is the main goal of her life, speaks for the necessity of young women to get married, especially if not from a high social class, to avoid being left with nothing after their father’s death.

We can see Elizabeth’s own opinion on the matter of marriage after turning down Mr Collins’s proposal, even when really advantageous for her. She does not accept Mr

Collins's proposal because she knows he would not make her happy (regardless of the convenience of the marriage for the family): "I am perfectly serious in my refusal. –You could not make *me* happy, and I am convinced that I am the last woman in the world who would make *you* so" (108). And she is surprised to hear that her friend Charlotte Lucas accepts it, although her motives for accepting his proposal could seem enough: "Without thinking highly either of men or of matrimony, marriage had always been her object; it was the only honourable provision for well-educated young women of small fortune, and however uncertain of giving happiness, must be their pleasantest preservative from want" (123).

Elizabeth, although being in a similar situation, understands marriage in a different way: "She had always felt that Charlotte's opinion of matrimony was not exactly like her own, but she could not have supposed it possible that when called into action, she would have sacrificed every better feeling to worldly advantage" (126). By the end of the novel, when Elizabeth is telling her sister Jane about her engagement with Mr Darcy we can see another instance of the opinion of the sisters on marriage: "Oh Lizzy! Do any thing rather than marry without affection" (374).

Related to the episode of Elizabeth's refusal of Mr Collins proposal we can see an instance of Elizabeth reflecting on the equality of men and women as rational beings: "Do not consider me now as an elegant female intending to plague you, but as a rational creature speaking the truth from her heart" (109). We can see, then, an intelligent and rational woman able to express her ideas.

It is, in fact, because of her mind that Mr Darcy falls in love with her. We have seen how he starts noticing her because of her intelligence and by the end of the novel he confirms it to Elizabeth: "'Now be sincere; did you admire me for my impertinence?' 'For the liveliness of your mind, I did'" (381).

After their marriage, we can see that the situation does not change; Elizabeth keeps challenging Mr Darcy rather than being submissive:

Georgiana had the highest opinion in the world of Elizabeth; though at first she often listened with an astonishment bordering on alarm, at her lively, sportive, manner of talking to her brother. . . . By Elizabeth's instructions she began to comprehend that a woman may take liberties with her husband, which a brother will not always allow in a sister more than ten years younger than himself. (388)

As for Elizabeth's opinion on the expectations that women were supposed to fulfil in order to be "accomplished," a perfect instance of it is the conversation at Netherfield between Caroline Bingley, Darcy and herself. They are talking about the many attributes that a woman must possess in order to be considered "accomplished." According to the two formers an accomplished woman "must have a thorough knowledge of music, singing, drawing, dancing, and the modern languages" (39). This list goes on until Darcy adds the necessity of the "improvement of her mind by extensive reading" (39). To this, Elizabeth answers: "I am no longer surprised at your knowledge of *only* six accomplished women. I rather wonder now at your knowing *any*" (39). She considers these attributes excessive, the expectations on women too high and impossible to fulfil.

Comparison

Similarities in the treatment of women and feminine characters in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Pamela*

Some similarities can be found between the protagonists of *Pamela* and *Pride and Prejudice*. Pamela rebels against the oppressions of her abusive and tyrannical master and Elizabeth does it against social and gender oppression, she finds a way of stating her opinion on those matters affecting the inequality of women.

As for the plot of the novels, there are also some similarities in the lives of our protagonists. They both end up falling in love and marrying the men that they hated at the beginning of the novel, men that are superior to them in social class and that consequently turn out to be really advantageous marriages for both of them. Obviously, their situation is very different too: Pamela is Mr B.'s servant and he actually tries and almost gets to abuse her, she is even abducted against her will by him, she is oppressed almost to the point of committing suicide. The situation between Darcy and Elizabeth is, by far, not similar to that. Taking into account this major difference, they both end up marrying for love, we see how their feelings towards the men change radically throughout the novel and how they both end up with very advantageous marriages.

To get to that marriage, Pamela and Elizabeth both turn down a first proposal of marriage that was also very convenient for them. Pamela turns down the proposal of Mr Williams because of her parents, because she wants to go back to them, and because she considers herself too young to get married. As for Elizabeth we have already seen that she turns down Collins for the sake of her happiness. They have different reasons, but at the end they both turn down proposals made by men that they don't love and that would be very convenient for them.

They both have to confront a powerful, superior woman related to their present (in the case of Pamela) or future (in the case of Elizabeth) husband that is against the marriage. Lady Davers (Mr. B.'s sister) and Lady Catherine DeBourgh (Darcy's aunt) both use their power to confront Pamela and Elizabeth. Lady Davers tries to make Pamela confess about her marriage with Mr B. and Lady Catherine DeBourgh tries to dissuade Elizabeth from marrying Mr Darcy. Neither Pamela nor Elizabeth are intimidated by the powerful women and they maintain their positions and opinions.

Plenty of instances of class and gender inequality can be found in both novels. We have seen in both novels how some situations can be very different for men and for women: virtue and the importance to maintain it in *Pamela* and economic independence in *Pride and Prejudice*.

Richardson and Austen both acknowledge the inequalities women suffered, mostly women of a low social class; and in different ways and perhaps for different purposes they make the readers notice these inequalities and oppressions.

Differences in the treatment of women and feminine characters in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Pamela*

The main difference that can be found between *Pamela* and *Pride and Prejudice* as for their portrayal of women is the way they are described and the attributes they are praised or criticised for. As we have seen, in *Pamela* women are praised for being virtuous, modest and innocent; and in *Pride and Prejudice* they are praised for being

intelligent, for their quickness or liveliness of mind. The attributes for which women are praised in *Pamela* are clearly passive attributes, related to the Christian doctrine, whereas the best characteristics attributed to women in *Pride and Prejudice* imply activity.

As we have seen, Mr B. and Darcy fall in love with Pamela and Elizabeth precisely because of these attributes, virtue and intelligence respectively. What is particularly different in the situation of these two couples after their marriage is the way women behave to their husbands. Once married, Pamela becomes a submissive wife, accepts everything her husband says and does everything in her power to please him. On the other hand, Elizabeth's character does not change after marriage, she keeps being challenging to Darcy.

The concept of virtue, so central in Richardson's novel is also dealt with in *Pride and Prejudice*. After the episode of Lydia's escape with Wickham and their posterior marriage, Mary makes a reflection on Lydia's behaviour:

Unhappy as the event must be for Lydia, we may draw from it this useful lesson; that loss of virtue in a female is irretrievable – that one false step involves her in endless ruin – that her reputation is no less brittle than it is beautiful, – and that she cannot be too much guarded in her behaviour towards the undeserving of the other sex. (Austen [1813] 2012, 290)

This statement of Mary actually comprises the thesis of Richardson's *Pamela*: how important it is to preserve the virtue and how unequal it is to men and women. Even if Mary's idea of virtue and its importance is equal to the one that Richardson exposes in *Pamela*, Elizabeth's answer to Mary's statement could say something about Austen's real opinion on the subject: "Elizabeth lifted up her eyes in amazement, but was too much oppressed to make any reply. Mary, however, continued to console herself with such kind of moral extractions from the evil before them" (290). Elizabeth (and perhaps Austen herself) is "amazed" at Mary's statement; this amazement could be due to the particular situation the family was suffering in that moment. However, we could also consider it as Austen's own opinion on the subject of virtue in women. As we will see in the following section, it is known that Austen was a reader and admirer of Richardson and perhaps this opinion of Mary could be a direct reference to *Pamela*, because of how exactly it describes the main idea of Richardson's novel.

What could be established as the major difference between the two novels is the purpose that the authors had when writing them. They both seem to focus their novels on the situation of women, the oppression they suffered and the existing inequalities between men and women as well as between social classes. However, what was their purpose?

The purpose behind Richardson's *Pamela* clearly seems to be educational or instructive. This idea can be extracted from the subtitle of the novel itself: *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (my emphasis). Pamela seems to be a model of conduct for young girls to follow: if they remain virtuous and innocent against all temptations and dangers, they will be rewarded as Pamela is rewarded by marrying her reformed oppressor. Actually, Richardson himself makes clear his purpose in the title page of the novel: "Published in order to cultivate the principles of virtue and religion in the minds of the youth of both sexes."

According to Blanchard "Richardson intended his work to be an engaging source of education and edification, and the enthusiastic response that he received indicates that

he achieved his goal” (2011, 93). Richardson accomplishes the function of entertaining as well as of instructing. *Pamela* could be compared to a conduct book or to devotional literature because of its main purpose, to defend the values of Christianity and provide a model of conduct that acts according to it: “Pamela permits readers to enjoy the attractions both of fiction and of devotional literature at the same time and in the same work” (Watt 1967, 152). The ultimate goal in Richardson is, then, religious, devotional and instructive.

On the other hand, Austen does not seem to have a religious or devotional purpose when writing her novels. Jane Austen uses irony, satire and the pretext of marriage as a supposed narrative goal to make emphasis on gender oppression and inequality. Her heroines are intelligent, and able to express their own ideas. They are capable of observing reality and questioning it. They question matters related to the situation of women, the inequalities of class and gender, marriages and how important they were for women’s ‘independence’, etc. She does not question or throw light into these subjects in order to create a model of conduct or to devotionally instruct her readers but to make them notice these matters and reflect upon them.

Both Richardson and Austen make emphasis on social and gender inequalities and the situation of women, however, their purposes were very different; that is the main difference between *Pamela* and *Pride and Prejudice*, what lies behind the stories that are told.

Influence of Richardson on Austen

It is known that Austen was a reader and admirer of Samuel Richardson; according to Tanner “James learned as much from Jane Austen as Jane Austen did from Richardson. Which is to say, a great deal” (1986, 9). She read Richardson’s novels, and undoubtedly his writing must have had influenced her: “by all accounts Samuel Richardson was the writer she consistently read, re-read and quoted throughout her life. . . . He is said to have been a big influence on her teenage writing” (Halsey and Dow 2013).

Bray observes that Richardson influenced Austen in her style: “Identifying the epistolary novel, and the neglected *Grandison* in particular, as one ‘genre source’ for the dramatized consciousness that pervades the later history of the third-person novel, helps both to clarify the balance of ‘tradition and innovation’ in Austen’s novels and to specify just what she learnt from her ‘great master’” (2001, 28). According to Bray, Richardson was a stylistic influence on Austen, and he considers him to be an influence for her characteristic dramatized consciousness: “It was from Richardson, amongst others, that Austen learnt how to dramatize consciousness in this way” (2001, 28).

Richardson undoubtedly influenced Austen’s writing, but, was his influence on her just stylistic? Could she be also influenced by the stories of his novels, mostly stories about women? Jane Austen was influenced by the stories about women told by men, in this particular case Richardson, and used them to ironically subvert or to satirize the situation of women or the way they were portrayed by men in literature.

As Brown states, Jane Austen did use Richardson’s novels to make a satire on the way they portrayed women: “In effect, Jane Austen’s satire on Richardson’s illogical notion of modesty raises questions about the male’s attitude toward female sexuality – especially the man’s assumption that sexual instincts in women are, or should be, suppressed to a purely responsive level” (1973, 336). Brown concludes that “Jane

Austen attacks the male's self-serving definition of sexual morality, especially Samuel Richardson's notorious views on female modesty" (1973, 334) and exemplifies these satires or attacks on Richardson's notion of femininity by establishing relations between Richardson's themes or ideas and passages on Austen's novels *Lady Susan*, *Northanger Abbey* and *Pride and Prejudice*. As for the novel that occupies us, Brown states that "Jane Bennet's inscrutability and the 'modest' concealment of her regard for Bingley are perfectly in accord with Richardson's prescription, but they simply convince Bingley, and the watchful Darcy, of her indifference" (1973, 336). Jane Austen, then, uses the model of conduct that Richardson provides and one of the attributes that he values most: modesty (as we have seen in *Pamela*) and it is because of this very modesty that Jane Bennet almost loses Bingley.

Jane Austen used Richardson's novels not only for their style, but for the values they set upon femininity and their portrayal of women to subvert it and to ironically satirize it. She was influenced by the stories told by men, stories told by men for women and about women and used that influence to tell her own story and the story of women in a way that still nowadays is controversial and a matter of study.

Conclusion

Although some similarities can be established between Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* and Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* in the way they put forward and emphasize gender and class inequalities and the oppression suffered by women, their way of portraying women is very different.

Richardson characterizes and praises women for being virtuous, modest and innocent. For being, to sum up, passive and submissive and he only defends rebellious behaviours when told by God's law. Richardson's women don't rebel to prove inequalities but to remain virtuous, they only rebel for religious purposes, and these same religious, doctrinal and instructive purposes are the ones that guided Richardson when writing his novel and his portrayal of women. On the other hand, Austen portrays her heroines as intelligent, able to observe and question their reality and the situation of injustice and inequality suffered by women. Austen's women rebel to defend their own values and to protest against inequality, neither because of religious motives nor to be a model of conduct.

We could conclude that Richardson's and Austen's purposes when writing their novels and portraying women were very different. Richardson writes *Pamela* as a model of conduct, with the purpose of instructing young men and women. Austen, on the other hand, puts forward social and gender inequalities with the only purpose of making her readers aware of the situation. The main difference between both authors (besides the way they describe women, as we have already mentioned) is their purpose when writing their novels.

Austen undoubtedly read and admired Richardson, and she was influenced by his style, that some authors even consider as a source for Austen's characteristic dramatized consciousness. However, she was not only influenced by his style but also by the stories he told about women. She used stories about women told by men, who "have had every advantage of us [women] in telling their own story" (Austen [1813] 2012, 276) and the way women were described in their works to satirize and ironically subvert in her

novels their vision or portrayal of womanhood, women's situation, their role and function in society and the values they set upon femininity.

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