

Sentimentalism and Morality in *Pamela* and *Evelina*

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Abstract

Sentimentalism and the epistolary novel go hand in hand in eighteenth-century British literature. Morality is an important recurring theme in sentimentalism. This research paper aims to analyse the use of sentimentalism and importance of morality in Samuel Richardson's *Pamela, Or Virtue Rewarded* and Frances Burney's *Evelina*. Richardson's use of the epistolary form and his heavy emphasis on virtue were a pivotal point in the rise of the sentimental novel. Burney's use of sentimentalism paved the way for later female authors such as Jane Austen. The conclusion is that both these novels and the way sentimentalism and morality is used in them proved to be influential to the rise of the sentimental novel and eighteenth-century British literature.

Introduction

In 1740, Samuel Richardson's novel *Pamela, Or Virtue Rewarded* was first published. This novel stood out through its use of the epistolary form, its female protagonist and its use of sentimentalism. Incorporating a deliberate appeal to the reader's sentiment was a new development that had started during the Restoration (1660 – 1700) but was not commonly used yet in prose fiction by 1740. *Pamela* is therefore widely regarded as the first epistolary novel that explores sentimentalism as such and has supposedly paved the way for further exploration and development of this kind of narrative. Almost four decades later, Frances Burney's *Evelina* was published in 1778. Like *Pamela*, *Evelina* is an epistolary novel with a female protagonist and a marriage plot, and is also written from a female perspective, but Burney uses these features in a very different manner than Richardson.

It has been 280 years since the first publication of *Pamela*, and much has since changed in the literary landscape. Richardson's use of sentimentalism can be viewed as a pivotal point in the rise of the novel. How did he use sentimentalism in *Pamela*, and how did he use the epistolary form? How did he, as a male author, use the female perspective? Similarly, it is interesting to look at the reception of *Evelina*, and to see how this novel relates to *Pamela*. How does Burney use sentimentalism in her novel, and how does she use the female perspective? Burney as a female author is considered to be an important precursor to the works of for example Jane Austen, and *Evelina* was received with critical acclaim by esteemed critics such as Dr Johnson. The leading research question in this paper is: "What are the similarities and differences in the use of sentimentalism in Richardson's *Pamela* and Burney's *Evelina* and how can they be explained, and how were these works instrumental in the rise of the sentimental novel?"

To find an answer to this question, this paper will make a comparative analysis of both works, to be divided into three parts leading up to the conclusion. The first chapter will explain the significance of *Pamela* in its time, Richardson's use of sentimentalism, the importance of the epistolary form and its leading theme of virtue. The next chapter will be dedicated to Burney's use of sentimentalism in *Evelina*, as well as this novel's form and leading themes, and will additionally explore *Evelina*'s importance for the place of female novelists in the literary development of 18th Century British literature. The last chapter of this paper will focus on an explanation of the most significant similarities and differences between these novels, as well as their place in the rise of the sentimental novel. The conclusion will critically recap the findings of this paper and end with an answer to the research question.

Chapter 1: Sentimentalism and Morality in *Pamela*

It is generally accepted that with *Pamela*, Richardson originated the first epistolary novel (The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica), which is one of several key features that made the novel stand out. The other notable key features are its marriage plot, the female protagonist and consequently the female narrative perspective, Richardson's use of sentimentalism and of course the overall theme of the importance of virtue. In order to examine the significance of *Pamela* to the rise of the sentimental novel, it is important to establish what is meant by sentimentalism, as well as how this relates to developments in early-eighteenth-century British literature. This chapter will also look into the significance of the novel's epistolary form and Richardson's emphasis on morality.

Sentimentalism is a term applied to the pathos and sympathy the author attempts to extract in the reader. In regard to eighteenth-century literature, Abrams summarizes "sentimentalism" as "highly exaggerated forms of sympathy and manifestations of benevolence" (Abrams and Harpham, 291). Richardson incorporated sentimentalism in his work through what he referred to as "writing to the moment": using the epistolary form and having his characters experience the events they describe. This technique is used in *Pamela* and it gives the reader an intimate view of Pamela's thoughts and feelings and, more importantly, her experiences as they occur. In Letter Twenty, Pamela writes to her parents about the new clothes she bought with money she earned so she could leave all of Mr. B's presents behind when she would return to them, but she has to end her writing abruptly: "So, as I was saying, I have provided a new and more suitable dress, and I long to appear in it, more than ever I did in any new clothes in my life; for then I shall be soon after with you, and at ease in my mind. But I am forced to break off. – Here comes Mrs Jervis" (45).

The reader lives through every moment and experience together with Pamela through this technique.

Janet Todd gives the following description of “sentimentalism”: “the arousal of pathos through conventional situations, stock familial characters and rhetorical devices is the mark of sentimental literature. Such literature buttonholes the reader and demands an emotional, even physical response” (2). This is a rather negative view on sentimentalism, and indeed the word itself has a derogatory connotation nowadays, but this is not how sentimentalism or sensibility were regarded at the time *Pamela* was published. For eighteenth-century readers, sentimentality “spoke to the moral virtue of being able to imagine yourself in another’s situation” (MacKay 204), something *Pamela*’s popularity at the time attests to. Inspiring the reader through stirring up (strong) emotions was exactly what Richardson aimed for, as *Pamela* was meant to highlight and inspire virtue in its readership. After all, the subtitle on the title page to *Pamela* is “Published in order to cultivate the principles of virtue and religion in the minds of the youth of both sexes”, and is followed by a preface that states as its purpose: “to effect all these good ends, in so probable, so natural, so *lively* a manner, as shall engage the passions of every sensible reader, and attach their regard to the story” (ix).

Engaging the reader in such a way that they could imagine being part of the story is precisely one of the ways in which *Pamela* was revolutionary, and Richardson accomplished this through his use of the epistolary form: “Richardson’s use of the letter form also induced in the reader a continual sense of actual participation in the action which was until then unparalleled in its completeness and intensity” (Watt 25). The epistolary form is a vehicle that lends itself particularly well to sentimentalism, as it gives the reader a direct, intimate view into the inner life, thoughts and feelings of the letter writers. Todd explains that “Richardson used the epistolary form to investigate the key problems and concepts of

sentimentalism: the expression and moral implications of sensibility and the ideal of benevolence and social harmony. In addition he made the sentimental construction of woman a dominant motif and the minute recordings of emotional and physical states a central purpose” (66). Watt elaborates further in explaining Richardson’s use of the epistolary form:

The letter form, then, offered Richardson a short-cut, as it were, to the heart, and encouraged him to express what he found there with the greatest possible precision, even at the cost of shocking the literary traditionalists. As a result, his readers found in his novels the same complete engrossment of their inner feelings, and the same welcome withdrawal into an imaginary world vibrant with more intimately satisfying personal relationships than ordinary life provided, that they had afforded Richardson in the writing: both author and readers, in fact, were continuing the tendencies and interests which had originally led to the development of the formal basis of the narrative mode of *Pamela* – the development of the cult of familiar letter-writing. (195-196)

The emphasis on virtue is perhaps the most important feature of *Pamela, Or Virtue Rewarded*; the inclusion of virtue in the very title of the work is as deliberate as it is a crucial element in its relation to the sentimental novel. “The sentimental work reveals a belief in the appealing and aesthetic quality of virtue, displayed in a naughty world through a vague and potent distress. This distress is rarely deserved and is somehow in the nature of things; in later sentimental works it even overshadows virtue, which may in fact be more manifest in the sympathy of the observer than in the sufferer” (Todd 2-3). Pamela consistently places her virtue above her life; she reassures her parents time and again that she is their “dutiful daughter”; she beseeches the farmer and his family that she meets on the journey to Mr. B’s Lincolnshire estate to “take pity of a helpless young maiden, who valued her honour above her life” (116); and even though she already suspects Mrs. Jewkes is Mr. B’s true

accomplice, Pamela tries to appeal to her better nature when she asks her “And do you not think, that to rob a person of her virtue, is worse than cutting her throat?” (129). Richardson meant for the novel to become a religious and moral inspiration to the young men and women of his time. This is clearly stated in the preface by the editor: “to *divert* and *entertain*, and at the same time to *instruct* and *improve* the minds of the YOUTH of both *sexes*: If to inculcate *religion* and *morality* in so easy and agreeable a manner, as shall render them equally *delightful* and *profitable*” (ix). Pamela’s insistence on protecting her virtue with her life and making this well-known in her conversations as well as her writings gains her everything a girl of her time could dream of and turns out very profitable indeed.

According to Watt, “sentimentalism in its eighteenth-century sense denoted an un-Hobbesian belief in the innate benevolence of man, a credo which had the literary corollary that the depiction of such benevolence engaged in philanthropic action or generous tears was a laudable aim” (174). This certainly rings true for *Pamela’s* characters on the whole. While she can be quite judgemental of others at times, Pamela starts out and remains good and virtuous, and also brings out the benevolence in other characters. Her virtue inspires both her friends like Mrs Jervis and Mr Longman to try to help her against their master’s orders, but also Mr Williams, who is a stranger when she first asks him to help her escape from Mr B’s estate. Most importantly, however, Pamela’s virtue turns Mr B from a relentless would-be rapist to a virtuous man and redeems him to the point where he has become fit marriage material for her. After her marriage, it is her virtue that convinces her new peers that her low birth is not an objection to her new station at all and, much against Pamela’s own expectations, they all welcome her into their ranks.

Pamela is very clear throughout her journey: living a virtuous life is of the utmost importance, and this life is only temporary and a preparation for the eternal. When her virtue is still under siege from Mr B, she briefly contemplates suicide through drowning herself in

the pond when she sees no other escape, but she experiences an epiphany: “How knowest thou what purposes God may have to serve, by the trials with which thou art now exercised? Art *thou* to put a bound to the Divine Will, and to say, ‘*Thus much will I bear, and no more?*’ And wilt thou *dare* to say, That if the trial be augmented and continued, thou wilt sooner die than bear it? Was not Joseph’s exaltation owing to his unjust imprisonment?” (204). She resolves to leave her fate in the hands of her God and prays for Mr B to come around. She writes about this in her letters as well, and when these eventually are confiscated by Mr B it is her letters to her father that convince him of her true innocence and honest, pious nature. This starts his redemption, and Pamela’s exaltation. Her captors are forgiven and redeemed because of her virtue and she gets a marriage above her station and delivers her parents from poverty through it when Mr B pays off all their debts. It is Pamela’s beauty that drew Mr B’s attention, but it is her virtue that makes him decide to marry her once he is convinced of her nature: “You, my Pamela, are not good by chance; but on principle” (383).

While at times tedious to read, Richardson’s message on virtue is unmistakably clear, and the novel’s contemporary popularity indicates that at least the plot resonated well with the public. Richardson was one of the first writers in British literature who did not take his plots from mythology, history, legend or previous literature (Watt 14). He was inspired by a real-life account of a servant who protected and preserved her virtue and was allegedly rewarded with a marriage (Sale). During a time when the future of women depended “much more completely than before on their being able to marry and on the kind of marriage they made, while at the same time it was more and more difficult for them to find a husband” (Watt 148), this was an important theme that helps explain the novel’s enormous success at the time. Watt states that Lady Mary Wortley Montagu “thought that Pamela’s matrimonial triumph had made her ‘the joy of the chambermaids of all nations’” (148).

As stated at the start of this chapter, *Pamela* stood out through several key features, including the epistolary form and virtue as a theme. Richardson's use of the epistolary form and sentimentalism proved both influential and inspirational to the development of the sentimental novel as well as other authors, one of whom was Frances Burney.

Chapter 2: Morality and the Female Perspective in *Evelina*

In 1778 Frances Burney published *Evelina*, at first anonymously. *Evelina* was met with critical acclaim and became a best-seller, as is evidenced by the many editions of the novel, of which there were at least eighteen during Burney's lifetime (*Evelina* xxxiv). *Evelina* is an epistolary novel with a marriage plot like *Pamela*, but it has different additional key features. The novel's subtitle reads "The history of a young woman's entrance into the world", and the reader is taken on a detailed journey of Evelina's introduction into high society. Burney states in the preface:

To draw characters from nature, though not from life, and to mark the manner of the times, is the attempted plan of the following letters. For this purpose, a young female, educated in the most secluded retirement, makes, at the age of seventeen, her first appearance upon the great and busy stage of life; with a virtuous mind, a cultivated understanding, and a feeling heart, her ignorance of the forms, and inexperience in the manners, of the world, occasion all the little incidents which these volumes record, and which form the natural progression of the life of a young woman of obscure birth, but conspicuous beauty, for the first six months after her Entrance into the World. (7-8)

Evelina was not intended to educate and inspire virtue and religion. The novel is in part a reflection of the standing morals of its time, but it simultaneously forebodes the shifts in the literary and social landscape. Many of its characters are written representations of certain characteristics, often adhering to typical male and female stereotypes; Evelina herself is a representation of many traits that were desired in a young woman, such as her virtue, sensibility and amiability. Most of the male characters are representations of negative qualities: Captain Mirvan is a xenophobe, Lord Merton is a misogynist, Captain Willoughby is described as foppish. One exception is Mr Villars, who is Evelina's guardian, after serving

in a similar capacity to Evelina's mother and maternal grandfather, so he can be considered a family guardian of sorts. Lord Orville is the embodiment of a gentleman, as Evelina observes herself:

In all ranks and all stations of life, how strangely do characters and manners differ! Lord Orville, with a politeness which knows no intermission, and makes no distinctions, is as unassuming and modest, as if he had never mixed with the great, and was totally ignorant of every qualification he possesses; this other Lord, though lavish of compliments and fine speeches, seems to me an entire stranger to real good-breeding.. (113)

Burney used sentimentalism differently than Richardson, even though she cites him, among Rousseau, Johnson, Marivaux and Fielding, as inspirations in the preface. On the one hand, like Pamela, Evelina is the embodiment of virtue, which compensates for the accident of her birth. Evelina she has to navigate numerous challenges and incidents placed on her path, the biggest challenge being her 'illegitimacy': she cannot claim her father's name or station as he denies his marriage to her mother and destroyed the marriage license that could prove it, leaving Evelina to be regarded as a bastard child born out of wedlock. This consequently means that Evelina essentially has no place in high society, especially not during a time when social class and station mattered as much as it did during the late eighteenth century. Evelina gets by through merit of her beauty, her innocence and her intelligence. While she is utterly inexperienced and makes several faux pas, such as her refusal to dance with the first gentleman that asks her to subsequently accept the next, she is easily forgiven due to her virtue. Evelina's intelligence enables her to learn quickly about social rules and expectations as well as to assess the characters of the people that surround her and to adapt her behaviour accordingly. The fact that she is able to adapt, and to make decisions based on her experiences, is something that sets Evelina apart from a protagonist

like Pamela. Evelina has her own agency and her own agenda; her intelligence helps her navigate new social circles and her virtue draws people in that help her achieve her goals. She ends up married to Lord Orville, the embodiment of a sentimental gentleman, but not before her father indeed legitimizes her. Her achieving the goal of being legitimized and using her father's name is much more defining for Evelina than her marriage to Lord Orville.

Throughout the novel, Burney supplements her use of sentimentalism with a sense of realism and satire. She follows Richardson's example in her minute presentations of daily life, albeit in London society, and through reading her descriptions of Ranelagh and Vauxhall the reader gets a good sense of what social events were like at the time. Burney also adds satiric comedy to this in the form of Mrs. Selwyn, who acts and speaks at times as at that time only a man would. Burney giving Mrs. Selwyn these "masculine" traits, but in a woman of a certain station, suggests that she also saw moral value in satire beyond entertainment purposes. Mrs. Selwyn teases Evelina about her affection for Lord Orville and she intervenes and enables Evelina to speak to her father and thus gain the name and station she is entitled to, while she helps preserve Evelina's reputation through chaperoning her. She also calls out misogyny, as is illustrated in the following conversation:

"I have the honour to be quite of your Lordship's opinion," said Mr. Lovel, looking maliciously at Mrs. Selwyn, "for I have an insuperable aversion to strength, either of body or mind, in a female."

"Faith, and so have I," said Mr. Coverley; "for egad I'd as soon see a woman chop wood, as hear her chop logic."

"So would every man in his senses," said Lord Merton; "for a woman wants nothing to recommend her but beauty and good nature; in every thing else she is either impertinent or unnatural. For my part, deuce take me if ever I wish to hear a word of sense from a woman as long as I live!"

“It has always been agreed,” said Mrs. Selwyn, looking round her with the utmost contempt, “that no man ought to be connected with a woman whose understanding is superior to his own. Now I very much fear, that to accommodate all this good company, according to such a rule, would be utterly impracticable, unless we should chuse subjects from Swift's hospital of idiots.” (361-362)

Mrs. Selwyn, while not conforming to typical feminine standards, does benefit from both her womanhood and her station in the sense that were she a man, she could not have been as forward with a woman as she is with Evelina, or speak her mind as freely as she does around her male peers. Using satire in this manner is part of Burney's legacy that can be considered a pivotal point in the history of the novel. As Watt states:

In this as in much else Jane Austen was the heir of Fanny Burney, herself no inconsiderable figure in bringing together the divergent directions which the geniuses of Richardson and Fielding had imposed upon the novel. Both women novelists followed Richardson – the Richardson of the less intense domestic conflicts of *Sir Charles Grandison* – in their minute presentation of daily life. At the same time, Fanny Burney and Jane Austen followed Fielding in adopting a more detached attitude to their narrative material, and in evaluating it from a comic and objective point of view. (296)

By deviating from traditional sentimentalism and through incorporating satire, Burney opened a door to a new kind of female authorship, of which Jane Austen is probably the most well-known.

Chapter 3: Comparative Analysis of *Pamela* and *Evelina*

As has been established, *Pamela* and *Evelina* were both best-selling epistolary novels of their respective times. They are both considered sentimental novels, yet each employs sentimentalism in a different way. Both novels have a female protagonist that values her virtue dearly, but their virtue manifests itself and is emphasised in different ways. Both authors wrote from the female perspective, but, given their own gender and inherent motivations, their perspectives were very different. This chapter aims to look at the features stated above and to examine the similarities and differences

In *Pamela*, Richardson wrote his characters' letters 'to the moment', meaning that Pamela jotted down events as they were in the process of unfolding. The reader truly experiences every moment together with Pamela, from her perspective. Burney uses the epistolary form as well, but *Evelina* has a much broader perspective compared to *Pamela*'s. *Evelina* has much more to describe, as there are far more characters for her to interact with and more occasions and events during which those interactions happen. *Pamela*'s world is very small and limited to Mr B's residences, and she spends a lot of her time indoors until her marriage. On the contrary, *Evelina* goes from the small and secluded Berry Hill to London, and later travels to Bristol and attends all kinds of assemblies and social events. Burney made a point of elaborately describing notable locations of the time, as well as the events that transpired there and the social conventions *Evelina* was being introduced to. This use of location corresponds with the way both novels deal with the notion of virtue.

Pamela's virtue consists of her virginity, her honesty and innocence, and her piety. *Pamela*'s very essence is defined by this, she has no true agency beyond her virtue. Her parents emphasise time and again that her virtue is more important than her life. When *Pamela*'s father comes for her in Lincolnshire, he even expresses that he wishes to see her if

her virtue remains intact but says that he would disown her if she has lost it: “But you say I shall see my child! And I shall see her honest! If not, poor as I am, I would not own her!” (341). Her honesty and innocence are traits that her friends, fellow servants in Mr B’s employ, recognize and that make them love her, but Mr B does not believe in either until he reads all of Pamela’s letters. She repeatedly manages to escape being assaulted or raped through falling into fits, but the fainting is something that happens *to* her, not something she actively *chooses* to do. She has very little agency beyond praying for her chastity. Pamela is very introspective before her marriage; she questions her thoughts and feelings and tries to navigate them through her faith, and she does all this on paper. This ultimately saves her, but she again has no true agency, as her words require physical proof for Mr B. Richardson meant to write a novel that would inspire virtue in his readership and Pamela is meant as an exemplary character, her virtue and her resistance to all kinds of temptation something to aspire to. Pamela is also very devout, she prays often, and truly surrenders herself to Providence in her darkest moments, and this is in the end rewarded. Richardson’s intentions are noticeable in every aspect of *Pamela*, from the way the protagonist is described herself, as well as her thought processes and development. *Pamela* is quite serious in tone, which suits the solemn message Richardson wanted to get across. After her marriage, Pamela’s virtue shifts from protecting her virginity to becoming a good wife and upholding her husband’s status. Mr B gives her a set of rules of what being a good wife means to him, including how she should dress at home and how she should conduct herself in public, and Pamela strives to go above and beyond, even going so far as to continue to call him her master. There is also a notion of how virtue inspires virtue: Pamela’s virtue redeems Mr B, because, inspired by her innocence and honesty he turns from a rakish villain into a dutiful husband. He exclaims that although it was her beauty that drew his attention, it was her virtue that made him love her and want to marry 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!” (394)

Virtue encompasses much more than mere chastity and piety in *Evelina*. Burney chose a different approach that echoed the social values of her time. While Evelina’s virtue incorporates her chastity, the emphasis on her virtue concentrates on her overall sense of sensibility: her good nature, her intellect, her morality, her appreciation of the arts, and the way in which she manages to hold her own in an environment she was not raised in. If Lord Orville is the embodiment of a gentleman, Evelina makes a suitable counterpart through her sensibility and virtue. The elite characters in *Evelina* are often flawed: they show how difficult it is to be sensible and virtuous, even when it seems to come so naturally to Evelina. Religion is far less prominent in *Evelina*. She does not surrender to Providence the way Pamela does, nor does she pray as much, but Evelina has much more agency.

Both *Pamela* and *Evelina* have a female protagonist, but they have very different female perspectives. Richardson places a heavy emphasis on virtue, religion and a meek protagonist who will do what is expected of her.

Male creators of female exemplars much appreciated the faithful wife. In 1714 the *Spectator* announced of a woman: “All she has to do in this world, is contained within the Duties of a Daughter, a Sister, a Wife, and a Mother.” It considered that “a right Woman . . . should have a gentle Softness, tender Fear, and all those parts of Life, which distinguish her from the other Sex,

with some Subordination to it, but such an Inferiority that makes her more lovely” and it gives these words to the wifely paragon: “I . . . have no other Concern but to please the Man that I love: he is the End of every Care I have.” (Todd 111)

Burney deviates from that type of perspective. She does so through some of her characters, for instance Mrs. Selwyn, and she gives her protagonist more agency.

Richardson’s Pamela, “an affectionate *wife*, a faithful *friend*, a polite and kind *neighbour*, an indulgent *mother*, and a beneficent *mistress*”, as her author expresses it, is the great fictional model; despite her sprightliness in Part I, she learns obedience in all areas in Part II, even when wifely duty conflicts with judgement.

Women writers usually paid lip-service to this extraordinary wifely ideal. But, after the mid-century, they tended to change the emphasis, so that the contingency of the long-suffering wife was obscured by her worldly as well as spiritual potency. (Todd 111)

Evelina is inexperienced and makes a few social mistakes when she is first introduced into society, but later on as she is more knowledgeable of what is expected, and she knows who to turn to in order to further her own plot, for instance her helping Mr. Macartney.

Conclusion and Reflection

Samuel Richardson and Frances Burney are both authors that have been influential enough to be included in the canon of eighteenth-century British Literature. Where Richardson is widely recognized as having written the first epistolary novel, Burney is widely recognized as being an influential author for female writers that succeeded her. The leading research question of this paper is: “What are the similarities and differences in the use of sentimentalism in Richardson’s *Pamela* and Burney’s *Evelina* and how can they be explained, and how were these works instrumental in the rise of the sentimental novel?”

In the previous chapters we have seen that both authors wrote sentimental novels, although they used sentimentalism in different ways. Richardson sought to educate and inspire with *Pamela*, whereas Burney claimed no such intentions when she published *Evelina*. Regardless of her intentions, Burney ended up educating and inspiring the social norms and literary authors of her time. Both *Pamela* and *Evelina* turned out to be influential novels that helped shape the rise of the sentimental novel.

“Samuel Richardson is clearly the most important figure in early sentimental fiction, for in the mid-eighteenth century his novels made the new form serious and respectable” (Todd 66). Richardson used sentimentalism in order to inspire virtue and religion in his readership. He put heavy emphasis on his protagonist’s virtue and innocence through the hardships that she suffers: “Richardson accepted the sentimental theory that moral improvement derived from pity. So in a letter he tells of his aim to ‘soften and mend the Heart’. Since virtue could be generated through an exciting to compassion, that reader would be most improved who had been most deeply affected. The supreme spectacle was innocence wronged, virtue in distress” (Todd 75). In order to achieve this, Richardson wrote *Pamela*: a

female protagonist who complied with the contemporary ideals of a devout, honest girl who elevates everyone around her through her virtue and becomes an exemplary wife.

Frances Burney took a different approach to both sentimentalism and virtue. Her protagonist is also a young, virtuous girl, but even though she is from a rustic background, she is intelligent, and she learns quickly how to behave in higher circles. She finds friends in all places, and through her good nature manages to achieve her legitimization. Apart from this, she finds happiness in marriage, but that was never a singular goal. Through creating a heroine with more agency, and writing more comedy and satire into her work, Burney left Richardson's sentimentalism and started a new chapter in eighteenth-century sentimental writing that eventually led to the works of Jane Austen. Watt says the following on Jane Austen's novels:

Jane Austen's novels, in short, must be seen as the most successful solutions of the two general narrative problems for which Richardson and Fielding had provided only partial answers. She was able to combine into a harmonious unity the advantages of both realism of presentation and realism of assessment, of the internal and of the external approaches to character; her novels have authenticity without diffuseness of trickery, wisdom of social comment without a garrulous essayist, and a sense of the social order which is not achieved at the expense of the individuality and autonomy of the characters. (Watt 297)

Jane Austen would not have been able to write her novels without Burney's influence, which makes Burney's work instrumental to the development of the sentimental novel.

There are many factors to take into account when researching the development of the sentimental novel and making a comparative analysis between two works. The analysis in this paper is far from complete, given the number of elements that factor into the importance

of both works and the influence on eighteenth-century literature they each have had and all other literary developments at the time. However, this paper, and therefore the research conducted for it, is bound to limitations, and hence restricts itself to the current findings.

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