

An Analysis on the Psyche of Richardson's *Pamela*

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Abstract—*Pamela* is Samuel Richardson's great masterpiece. Since the initial publication of *Pamela* in 1740, it has received extensive attentions. It's generally accepted that Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* is a prime example of the epistolary novel. However, the first rise of the psychological novel as a genre is said to have started with the sentimental novel of Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*. Many factors contribute to the success of *Pamela*, the most important one is the vivid description of heroine's psychological activities. It has profound impact on the later writers and played a significant role in the world literature. Pamela's inner world is incompatible, she suffered a lot from the upper class and she was longing for an independent life and social position. Also she could not cast off the shackle of the patriarchy society. Recently, most researches are focused on the novel's moral value, the epistolary form, feminism, history and religious perspective. However, this paper will mainly focus on the heroine's inner world and intend to conduct a psychological analysis of Pamela.

Index Terms—*Pamela*, psyche, virtue

I. INTRODUCTION

After the Restoration and English Civil War, Britain marched towards a modern society and the ascending bourgeoisie needed to establish their moral superiority and social status. In response to the instruction for young servant girls how to avoid the snares that might be laid against their virtue, the improvement of the interpersonal relations, the moral philosophy and the Movement for the Reformation of Manners, Samuel Richardson published his masterpiece *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*. The publication of *Pamela* marked a defining moment in the literature history, the novel was not only a love story, but also a great masterpiece with a perfect layout, a study of ethics, female's psychology and as a case of depicting and recording the life and affection of ordinary people by delineating a lavish presentation of Pamela's private emotion and conditions of her everyday life. Richardson incorporated aspects of the different literary predecessors into his work: the educational and the entertaining literary nutrient in those novels and united them with the description of social environment and the analysis of characters' psychological activities.

The story is told in a series of letters from the heroine, Pamela Andrews. Pamela is a 15 year-old maid, her young master, the squire Mr.B takes a dishonorable advantage of her position, pursues her unremittingly. However, Pamela refuses him resolutely. She even leaves the estate. But Mr.B continuously aspires her, Pamela only has to escape from his stratagems and snares by resorting to her innocence and virtue. Finally, Mr.B was touched by her kindness and virtuous heart, he decides to marry her. After their wedding, Pamela suffers her married life with the burden of a profligate husband. Then, she behaved herself with honor pleasantness and humility that she made herself beloved of everybody including her husband's relatives who at first despised her. By rendering the struggle over Pamela's virtue in her own humble idiom, Richardson expresses his moral and aesthetic claim that the soul of a servant-girl is as important as that of the princess. The combination of a high moral tone with an elaborate analysis of the heroine's emotions and state of mind made it irresistible to readers.

The purpose of choosing Pamela's psyche as the subject of my dissertation is because Pamela's inner world is fascinating and intriguing. Especially, according to Bingshan Liu's *A Short History of English Literature*, this literary work is "the first English psycho-analytical novel."(Liu, 2007, p10) The first time I came to know *Pamela* was an Italian TV drama I watched, with a fascinating plot: Love and conflicts between the cynical master and the beautiful servant girl. It said that the show was based on British novelist Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*. Thus, the novel evokes my interests greatly. By doing some research and conducting a survey, I believe that most research concerning about *Pamela* are focused on the novel's moral value, the epistolary form, feminism, history and religious perspective. However, few scholars would focus on the heroine's inner world which does not really make any sense because Pamela's psychological activity is the best way to understand Richardson's nearly anatomical definition of his core concept of virtue. The majority of the 18th century readers' responses to *Pamela* leads to many issues which is worth for our modern readers paying attention to, such as gender equality or social hierarchy, and all of these problems, modern people also have to face and solve. So, it is very pragmatic to conduct a psychological analysis of the novel's heroine.

Since the initial publication of *Pamela* in 1740, controversy and debate over the character Pamela had long

flourished in Britain. According to *The Pamela Controversy: Criticisms and Adaptations of Samuel Richardson's Pamela, 1740-1750*: "Pamela vogue and surrounding quarrels that one contemporary wrote of a world divided into two different parties, Pamelists and Antipamelists." (Keymer, 2003, p97) Moreover, a lot of literary critics question the values which Pamela extols and represents. According to Henry Fielding and some other literary figures: that Pamela is a women who first maintained her morals despite her struggles with temptations from her master Mr.B and later becomes the wife of her Master. The change is so great that it had a subversive impact on social order. In addition, Pamela seems to be a naive young girl, but sometimes, the reader can find weak point in many aspects. Some people believe that deep down in Pamela's heart, she is very hypocritical, scheming, calculating and skilled at manipulating other people.

Through the novel, Pamela seems to be humble and faithful to her religion and have great respect for her family. These traits fit for the traditional definition of virtue. Historically speaking, it was the value of virginity that contributes to a marriage, it also affects on male-female and dominate-submissive relations. As a matter of fact, in the process of composing *Pamela*, Richardson endowed heroine the feature with his own pragmatic moral values of the bourgeoisie, which makes Pamela a little complicated: on one hand, Pamela is the representation of a middle class girl who resists the corruption of the upper class, on the other hand, she is in the progress of reconciliation with the upper class, she compromises her principles and becomes a part of her opposite sides. The victory of Pamela's virtue, in fact, is the progress of the middle class establishing its own position in the social life. Her success marks the success of the middle class, her story predicts the necessary of the rising of the bourgeoisie. Richardson's pragmatic moral values in shaping the characterization of the heroine are an outcry for his class. However, there are some academics who adopt a positive attitude towards the novel.

According to Gerald Levin's *Richardson The Novelist: The Psychological Patterns* "Richardson shows his deeply sympathy for women from things emerges in his presentation of certain contrasts between the feminine and masculine psyches." (Levin, 1978, p78) Other scholars like John Richetti states that the conception of virtue of Pamela is actually more capacious than its detractors have allowed. Ian Watt emphasizes that Pamela has a right to stand on her own principles, whatever they are. The controversy still remains, one of the beauties of *Pamela* is that for readers, you have to read, think, and then find your own interpretation of Pamela.

The story of *Pamela* is also a typical "English Dream". Richardson told us, as long as one could honestly live his or her life, insist to do the right thing and resist all the temptations, he or she will be handsomely rewarded for his or her virtue. This is another reason why this novel is so popular, because the logical thinking of the book is a representative of the faith of the newly emerged bourgeois class. The material gains and losses was closely linked with the spiritual morality, this feature of the novel embodies the Protestant spirit for its worldly realization of the religious thought.

This novel also has the significant impact on the British society, for its application of epistolary form, innovative ideas, combination of education and entertainment, also ethical edification and description of woman's psychology. Richardson's *Pamela* also initiated many precedents, such as using complicated and contradictive love life and psychological activities as the main line of the story. In order to better understand Richardson's world view and moral values, this thesis intends to analyze Pamela's psychological activities changing through her self-positioning, outlook on life and other external factors which affect her relationship with Mr.B.

II. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CHANGES OF PAMELA

Pamela is a maid who has been in service to a good lady, Mrs.B for many years. On her deathbed, Mrs.B introduced Pamela to her son Mr.B and this was the first time Pamela met her young master, Mr.B said "I will take care of you all, my Lasses...I will be a friend to you, and you shall take care of my Linen." (Keymer, 2001, p 67) Also, Mr.B gave Pamela four Guineas for her comfort. Pamela's first impression of her new master Mr.B is not bad, because later Pamela wrote to her parents: "In deed he is the best of Gentlemen, I think!" (Liu, 2007, p 71) But, Pamela noticed the ominous intimacy from his behavior. Here, the readers could easily find out that Pamela is a little confused but overall she believes in her master. Then, after reading her parents letters, she became a little annoyed and troubled because of her parents accused Mr.B is suspicious and fearful. However, she still did not believe that her master will act unworthy of his character. In the sixth letter, Pamela said that she always thought her young master is a fine gentleman as everybody says he is, he gives these good things to all the servants with such graciousness and he looks like an angel. So far, all the evidences suggest that Pamela is lucky enough to have a decent new master. However, things take a sudden turn and developed rapidly which neither Pamela nor her parents would expect. In the tenth and eleventh letter that Pamela wrote to her parents, she claimed that she was sexually harassed by her master Mr.B and that all her parents' worries were well-grounded. Because of her master's attempted to kiss her and hug her, Pamela wrote: "He has now showed himself in his true colors and to me, nothing appears so black and so frightful." (Keymer, 2001, p 107) Pamela's mood is like a roller coaster, from heaven to hell, it only took few minutes. However, Mr.B seems took this issue as harmless flirtation. After the first insult of Mr.B, Pamela became depressed, frustrated, insecure and anxious not to mention how shocked she was when she found out that her master, the fine gentleman was only a imagination of her naivety. Pamela felt that she was betrayed, confused and powerless. But this is only a beginning of her nightmare. Pamela is a dignified girl who has an independent consciousness. She declared since her master forgot what belongs to a master well she may forget

that she was his servant and there was nothing could change her mind not even gold or a prince. Pamela's determination to defend her chastity only made things worse and aroused further malicious intentions from Mr.B.

In Pamela's eyes, Mr.B is a master of confusing right and wrong, confounding black and white. In the fifteenth and sixteenth letter, Pamela wrote to her parents that Mr.B slandered her as an artful, hypocritic liar: "She has all the arts of her sex; they're born with her...She makes herself an angel of light, and me, her kind Master and Benefactor, a devil incarnate!" (Levin, 1978, p 115) Here, speaking of the "arts" of female gender the readers have to understand that in the Restoration and the 18th century England, accusation of feminine duplicity were quite common. Duplicity is one of the cardinal sins in the traditional model of femininity that he both employs and questions; it recurs as a basis for attacks on women throughout history. During the process of Mr.B's second harassment, he mentioned Lucretia, a virtuous Roman matron, raped by a son of a tyrant. Pamela believes that the real intention of Mr.B mentioning this historical figure is devious for he said: "Who ever blamed Lucretia, but the Ravisher only? And I am content to take all the blame upon me; as I have already born too great a share for what I have deserved." (Shen, 2005, p 47) Then, after a horrible scene that all the readers could imagine, fortunately our heroine Pamela managed to escape and later passed out. When she woke up, she felt so embarrassed and ashamed. Although deep down, she knew that what happened was not her fault but she could not help blaming herself for causing so many troubles. Now, we could say that Pamela was completely distraught due to her master's disgraceful actions, though, it is not wise to say that Pamela was suffering a mental breakdown.

But how would Pamela reciprocate his feelings? In her journal she wrote: "he was charmingly dress'd. To be sure, he is a handsome fine gentleman! What pity his heart is not as good as his appearance! Why can't I hate him?" (Keymer, 2001, p 79) It is clearly for readers that Pamela was already fell in love with her evil master simply because she who denies all confesses all and the more one tries to hide, the more one is exposed. Later the night, Mr.B who was in disguise as another servant girl and approaches to the bed while Pamela was sleeping. Mr.B offers Pamela a deadline that is Pamela either follow his articles or ready to be taken by force. Before she can answer his demand Pamela disapper. When she have consciousness that Mr.B treats Pamela more kindly and promises to stop his attempts on her virtue. He asks for Pamela's forgiveness and shows great care toward her, though Pamela suspects that the appearance of his kindness may be a further trick. On Tuesday, Mr.B asks Pamela to come, shows his love to her, and makes a promise that never to force himself on her again, though he continues to refuse to let her return to Pamela's parents. He asks her to stay for two more weeks without attempting to escape. Pamela agrees to this proposal. Mr.B shows his admiration of her, and let her know that her defense of virtue has only increased his respect. In defense of himself, he knows that if he were demoralized he could not have let Pamela to frustrate him for so long time. Pamela hopes that she can believe Mr.B's goodness, though Pamela still is not wholly self-assured that he is not playing an complex trick on her. She is afraid of that Mr.B's new gentleness is simply a more devilish ruse.

One notable thing about Mr.B is that as the head of household, in which position would have likened him to an absolute king, Mr.B has claimed the power to own his way with Pamela. To offer her a contract, however, he has simply admitted her personal freedom and the necessity of her consent in his plans. This detail suggests that on some level, Mr.B does have some advanced thoughts and he might not be as devilish and rakish as Pamela described. In the second volume of Pamela's journal she professed when she finally got the opportunity to depart the Lincolnshire estate, she is surprised to discover how reluctant and upset she is to leave. Robin the coachman sends her a letter from Mr.B in which the landlord disclose that he was on the point of proposing marriage to her when he let her go. She flouders from the emotional influence of the letter and confesses to herself that she has fallen in love with this man, Mr.B. Although Pamela still worried about that her squire might set up a trap and trick her into a sham-marriage, when she knew that her master was ill she went back without any hesitation. Pamela comes to recognize Mr.B's moral reformation, and begun to love and forgive him. In this portion of the journal, Pamela and Mr.B finally got married, and Mr.B compromised by having the wedding at his family chapel.

III. THE COMPLICATED INNER WORLD OF PAMELA

During the process of composing Pamela, Richardson wanted to explore human psychology in ways that no other writer had. Critics recognized that Pamela is the most profound psychological portrait which arises from the depiction, in the heat of the moment and of spontaneous and unfiltered thoughts. Richardson was famous for his "mastery in the literary delineation of the female heart." (Levin, 1978, p61) For which many contemporary readers and scholars celebrated him, that Richardson possessed insight into the female psyche. Pamela instinctively resists her employer's attempts to expose her private thoughts, as she wrote "Indeed I am Pamela, her own self!" (Freud, 2013, p46) Pamela makes this announcement of her identity during the early time in which he pretends not to know her in her country clothes and uses his excuse of confusion to be close to her. The incident and her reaction emphasize the fact that the battle to decide whom she will sleep with is also the battle to decide who she is.

Pamela, in committing herself to a personal set of compelling principles, establishes her own identity, which Mr.B threatens to erode by inducing her to violate those principles. The country wardrobe Pamela has selected manifests to the world her choice of honest, cheerful poverty over corrupt luxury. However, there is a controversy over Pamela's hypocrisy and duplicity. As a maid, Pamela is a woman who first maintained her morals despite her struggles with temptations from her master Mr.B and later becomes the wife of her Master. The change is so great that it had a subversive impact on social order. For people who loves and worships Pamela, especially the female readers, Pamela

seems to be a sweet, kind and naive young girl. And Richardson seems to be a wiser man, a prophet and the master of moral rules. Meanwhile, during the process of the winning of Pamela's virtue, she behaved dubiously and calculated shrewdly. Her deeds not always match her words. There are reasons why Henry Fielding and other people find Pamela suspicious and believe that deep down in Pamela's heart, she is very hypocritical, scheming, calculating and skilled at manipulating other people.

To begin with, after the first time Mr. B gave permission to let her go home, she still stayed in this dangerous place, she wrote to her parents "May-hap I may not come this week, because I must get up the linen, and leave every thing belonging to my place in order." (Keymer, 2001, p37) As we mentioned before, the word "linen" suggests an inappropriate intimacy between the master and his maid, whether Pamela understand the real meaning of this word, it seems rather odd that she gave up this opportunity to escape from her evil master with such an unconvincing excuse. There are plenty examples of Pamela find herself some excuses to delay the time of going home. Even Mr. B's sister, Lady Davers admitted that Pamela is quite sophisticated. Although Pamela claimed that her virtue is the most valuable thing in the world and she is willing to give her life for defending it, readers can easily find the inconsistency from her actions. Pamela declares that she does not care about money and no one can buy her virtue but when her master gave her some beautiful clothes, jewelry and Guineas she sometimes would accept them without hesitation. And the most ironic part is that when her master rushed into her room and tried to rape her, the first thing she noticed was that he was wearing a fine silk night-robe. Another example is that when Pamela tried to escape from the Lincolnshire estate, she came to the pond-side and fell down. The first thing came to her mind was that "my angry master will then forget his resentments, will he say, and is no hypocrite, nor deceiver, but really was the innocent creature she pretended to be!"^[4] At the life threatening situation, all could Pamela think about is Mr. B's impression of her. She was already fell in love with her young master yet she still did not know.

According to Mary Leigh's *Pamela: A Narrative, one has two aspects of self*, "Pamela at least has two personalities, one is the social self, another is the narrative self." (Keymer, 2001, p53) The social self of Pamela is revealed by her acting one way in her reaction with others and writing her from her true self in her letters to her parents. Pamela's unconscious self is the true self is that she expresses emotions and thoughts that she cannot reveal in any way through her social life. Pamela's interiority is functionally subordinate to the external social and political drama that she insistently keeps in front of others and her would-be seducer. She is constantly refusing Mr. B's advances, yet she does feel an attraction and willingness to forgive is something that Pamela does not feel can be translated into any action that would be socially acceptable.

For instance, Mr. B would be a lovely person if only he can straighten up and fly right. She used to wondering why she could not be really mad at him? Why she felt happy for him once he was out of danger of drowning? Why she felt sad and reluctant to leave when her master evicted her from the estate? The fact is that she did not want to lose her master Mr. B and she already fell in love with him. However, there was a great disparity between their social identities. She could not dare to expect to be loved by her employer. The very idea of gaining her master's love seems like an idle dream, let alone the thought of getting married, but Pamela does love him. This kind of psychological complexity has led to many emotional conflicts of Pamela. However, the feminine code in Richardson's time forbade the woman to admit love for a man until he had proposed marriage. Pamela also believed that everything she had been suffering through is the God's test for her, all the happiness she found comes from God's gift. Hence, every time she was in danger, she prays to God and when things get better, she praise for God. She was never able to understand that there is no God at all. Pamela thinks that in order to improve the relationship between the poor and the rich, the rich should take a small portion of their fortune to help the poor so as to face "the last judgment" smoothly. This side of Pamela also shows some traits of her persona, she is pious, devout, a little bit fatuous and very naive.

In this novel, Richardson attempts to legitimize possible means of self-display and self-exploration for women. Although Pamela has been successfully get rid of the sins of duplicity and deception, they go on to circulate in the novel, unailing elements of the 18th century ideology of femininity. Pamela creates her narrative in her letters, and this narrative reveals a distinct separation between her unconscious and social selves. Mr. B recognizes the dichotomy between Pamela's selves and attempts to help her see it as well. By approaching Pamela's social self and eventually gaining access to her unconscious self, Mr. B helps Pamela to adjust the reactions of her social self. As a result, she is able to attain happiness for herself, and Mr. B Finally obtains his happiness as well, marriage to Pamela and being incorporated into her narrative.

IV. CONCLUSION

From some theme-related papers, books and publications which I have selected, I have come to some conclusions of the novel: Pamela is a novel of sentimentalism, psychologism, individualism and realism; Richardson's intention and real purpose of adopting a particular narrative method is in order to better unfold the heroine's inner world; Pamela is struggled between her complicated self, she has multiple personas; According to John Richetti's *The Cambridge Companion to The Eighteenth Century Novel*, he stresses that "Pamela's interiority is functionally subordinate to the external social and political environment that she insistently keeps in front of us and her would-be seducer." (Blewett, 2001, p37) Therefore, moral values, ideologies, hierarchy, gender inequality and other external factors of the 18th century England affect Pamela's behavior and psyche. Pamela's psyche is complicated because of the injustice of the

society. She is a paradox. Sometimes she feels that she is an ordinary maid, other times she considers herself as a great beauty. Sometimes she desperately wants to get rid of her master and other times she hates to leave him. Sometimes she despises her master and other times she could not help thinking about him. From the beginning of the novel, Pamela displays herself in front of the readers as the superego figure. Her parents are devout Puritans and told her chastity is more important than her life. Pamela's id comes quietly, when Mr.B expresses his affections for her, Pamela feels that her heart beats rapidly and she prays to God because she did not know what she was thinking. As for her ego, she prays to Mr.B not to harass her anymore, she wants to keep her virginity. The moral idealism which Richardson praised in his work was based on the bourgeois religious ethics rather than the dignity of human being himself. However, Richardson has many contributions to the British literature. This thesis attempts to study Pamela, the heroine's actions and deeds in order to analyze her inward world and dissect her emotional motivations. Furthermore, from the exploration of Pamela's psyche, one can have a peek at the 18th century British society, including its class system, moral values, female status and etc. It has certain significance for the research of the early British novels.

The inconsistency of Pamela's psyche is in accordance with the external causes and internal causes. Pamela is raised by her old lady in a ladylike way, she only skills at singing, dancing, reading and other aristocratic talents; Richardson's time is a time honors the traditional values such as titles, classes, possessions and the Puritan spirit; Both hierarchically and sexually speaking, she is the inferior side; However, she is a great beauty and her master's romantic overture makes her indulge herself in fantasy. At the end of the novel Pamela receives things that everyone is longing for: Love, money, social status and recognition. Although this is only a silver lining in the dark reality, the whole book is fulfilled with optimism and idealism. Pamela is a humble servant girl but she has the guts to fight for her freewill and follow her dreams. This novel renders people with hope. It tells an inspiring truth, an ordinary people who dares to fight against the power and stick to his or her believes is somewhat heroic and extraordinary.

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