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**HENRY FIELDING'S *JOSEPH ANDREWS* CENSURING SAMUEL
RICHARDSON'S MORAL CODES IN *PAMELA***

Abstract

The paper shares the appreciation of and approach to morality in *Joseph Andrews* and *Pamela*. Henry Fielding and Samuel Richardson represent the same age; however, their understanding of morality widely differs from each other. Fielding's work embodies the idea that man is susceptible to weakness. Whereas Richardson's characters define and epitomize morality as a fixed idea. Certain examples are representing the impracticality of Richardson's idea of moral philosophy. Henry Fielding creates an atmosphere wherein the characters are neither good nor bad but have human-like traits. The paper reflects on the ideas relating to morality including chastity, hypocrisy and vanity. *Joseph Andrews* debates over morality as

a comparative perception whereas *Pamela* propagates the Christian concept of virtuousness. Criticizing Richardson's gender biasedness concerning morality, Fielding seems to communicate that both sexes could encounter dissipated sexual cravings, and it would be an injustice act to tag man as the offenders. Opposing Richardson's linear concept of morality, Fielding adds few more aspects of morality referring to material corruption and professional corruption.

Keywords: Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, Samuel Richardson, morality, *Pamela*

The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews, and of his Friend Mr Abraham Adams; Written in Imitation of the Manner of Cervantes was published in 1742, two years after the publication of Samuel Richardson's *Pamela or Virtue Rewarded* (1740). There are several similar characters with certain names and traits, *Joseph Andrews* is mentioned as the parody of *Pamela* or a literary response to Richardson's acclaimed work and, "In the most immediate way, *Pamela* gave rise to Fielding's career as a novelist" (Cruise 255). *Pamela* earned the hearts of the contemporary readers, for it advocated morality, chastity and virtue as presented by Miss Pamela Anderson. However, it was evenly criticized by several claiming that it encouraged immorality owing to its presentation of sensual inclinations of Mr B; glorification of licentiousness and sexual abuse, the commodification of virtue, morality referred to as a showpiece, practised for applaud and success. Henry Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* provides substantial evidence to approach it as a parody and an antithesis of Richardson's concept of morality. As some describe: "Pamela thus had the honour to provoke the production of *Joseph Andrews*" (North Am. Review 59). The paper will draw a parallel sketch of characters, events, and writers' respective emphasis on their particular moral standpoints presented in their selected works.

According to *The Oxford Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms*, a parody is "a mocking imitation of the style of a literary work or works, ridiculing the stylistic habits of an author or school by exaggerated mimicry. Parody is related to Burlesque in its application of serious styles to ridiculous subjects, to satire in its punishment of eccentricities, and even to criticism in its analysis of style" (Oxford con. dic.). The age in which these two works were written and presented to the readers had the debate of morality, both in the religious and social contexts. Fielding's philosophy for contemporary readers had a new interpretation of the word. The writer was at once at war against the existing moral standards and the religious interpretation of confused morality. When Richardson's *Pamela or Virtue Rewarded* was published, it was a continuation of widely propagated religious doctrines. Confronting the concept of virtues, though Fielding keeps a rapprochement between him and the religious teachings, he continues to harness the tendency to argue the philosophy of good and evil and morality and immorality.

Family connections between Pamela and Joseph and Lady Booby and Mr B make it the most striking point of Fielding's parody; and Joseph's stance that he is "the brother of Pamela, and would be ashamed that the chastity preserved in her should not stand in him [...] I wish they [unvirtuous people] had the opportunity to read the letters [...] of my sister Pamela" (10). By adopting Pamela's brother Joseph yearning to keep the "excellent patterns of his sister's virtues" (6); by defying Richardson's gender biasedness concerning morality Fielding seems to convey that both sexes can be stricken by the menace of dissipated sensual desires, and it would be an injustice to tag "men" as the sole sexual offenders in the society. Fielding questions, the

virtue in men that Joseph sets an example for “his sex in the vicious age” (6)—also asks an ironical question about men's chastity through the words of Lady Booby, “did ever mortal hear of man's virtue” (9).

Joseph Andrews debates over morality as a relative concept. Morality can be associated with minor to major concepts in life. Fielding opens additional dimensions to discuss these ideas. The religious idea of goodness reserves a particular subjection to worship and tags of religious institutions. To Fielding it is different, he deals with these as relative concepts in human society which differ from person to person. In *Joseph Andrews*, Parson Adams may be seen as a thorough humane individual, but there are some weaknesses like he is obsessed with his erudition, and behaves like a child; as innocent as a newborn baby. On that Fielding declares “here, once for all, I describe not men, but manners; not an individual, but a species [...] particular characters we mean not to lash individuals, but all the like sorts, so, in our general descriptions” (186-88). In contrast to Adams' character, there are corrupt religious figures in the work. Fielding negates ideas such as “the parson's ineffectiveness, which can be seen as representative of the larger ineffectiveness of the Anglican Church, is a serious matter” (Stuchiner 875). Rejection of stereotyping individuals and acts as moral or immoral describe Fielding's understanding of human frivolities. The writer does not sketch evil characters, but living characters — Parson Adams is perfectly thriving; so is Mrs Slipslop. As Baines says the understanding of ‘character’ here is not subtle, extended, and described to the core but it is truer to the idea of characterization that selfhood has to be quickly recognizable, not subject to change or development (50). Richardson's *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*, deals with the life and experiences of the central figure Pamela and a most probable conclusion: “you will be rewarded” (81). Compared to *Pamela*, *Joseph Andrews* encompasses a wide range of characters. It gives him the freedom to explore more social issues than Richardson. Jeffrey says that it may be linked to Fielding's own experience as a magistrate and then as a social critic and a writer the experience provides him plenty to describe characters like “physician, advocate, magistrate, innkeeper, church figures, and “invites his readers to have a general survey” (153).

Fielding appears unenthusiastic to glorify the concept of virtue and defies perspectives demarcated by *Pamela* and her society. His righteous characters neither belong to the church nor do they get the reward for their virtuous deeds. By advocating a more universal concept Fielding defines morality in simpler terms and closer to its true definition as Downie in his book *A Political Biography of Henry Fielding* says that: “If generally followed, would make Mankind much happier, as well as better, than they are” (8). Unlike *Pamela*, who, according to Leslie Morrison in *Serialized Identities and the Novelistic Character in Eliza Haywood's Fantomina and Anti-Pamela*: “*Pamela* as [is] a performer who manipulates the reader, as well as Mr B, into seeing her as an appropriate match for a gentleman [...] *Pamela* as a scheming actress who withholds sex in order to entrap Mr B in marriage” (26-44). It is *Pamela*, the beacon holder of virtue, on one hand, while on the other the characters like Joseph, Parson Adams, and Fanny Goodwill declaring that virtue and goodness are unconscious and innate qualities that need not be celebrated, propagated and commodified. Compared to a girl character Betty in *Joseph Andrews*, *Pamela* appears an advocate of hypocrisy who appears to be of more help and consideration to the society than any other character in the novel, “Fielding, with large stores of knowledge about women, saw right through little *Pamela Andrews* and knew her virtue was not without motive” (Elizabeth 668). Though marked unvirtuous by the society, Betty aggressively defines herself as in the reflection of Fielding's idea; she acts as the mouthpiece of Fielding and

says, when abused: "I am a woman as well as yourself," she roared out, "and no she-dog... "That's no reason you should call me out of my name" (89). Likewise, Betty, unlike Pamela, does not offer the impression to brag about her goodness that she displays to Joseph when brought to the inn seriously injured. Pamela's character appears After being convinced that her master had a "wicked" mind and was "cunning as Lucifer," she takes a long time only to return the stuff that she has received from him which he gives her: "My master gave me more fine things" (17). Whereas in the case of Joseph, he borrows clothes because he is deprived of them. By mentioning this matter, Fielding seems to encourage the reader to feel the inner call. Feeling threatened and leaving without convincing everyone at the house of his chastity seem more effective than Pamela's excuse that the world outside was as dangerous as the one there at the home.

In Fielding's work, these intrinsic human qualities do not come with the physical purity, family background, religious and ideological background but relate to the goodness within; similarly, physical impurity does not portray immorality and vice versa. He asserts that "a man who has no ancestors should, therefore, be rendered incapable of acquiring honour; when we see so many who have no virtue, enjoying the honour of their forefathers" (15). Fielding redefines religious morality. Perhaps the most interesting contrast of characters may be found in the characters between Mrs Tow-ouse and Betty. Mrs Tow-ouse, a rich woman compared to Betty, refuses to help a Joseph in the most desperate need of help. Whereas, Betty, a poor working girl, accused of having illicit relationships with many men, tries to ease the agony Joseph faces. Unlike Pamela's later status, Betty refers to a lack of material and physical superiority but claims the truer definition of moral behaviour. Hence, the question is asked that who is virtuous, is it Pamela or Betty?

Pamela looks to be mentally strong; she manipulates Mr B as he increases the worth of her chastity after being denied several times; it is retained in the beginning and later sold for the best market value available; "And I see you so watchful over your virtue, that though I hoped to find it otherwise, I cannot but confess my passion for you is increased by it" (164), the statement by Mr B declares the commodification of Pamela's virtue in Richardson's world of morality. The morality which is priced very high and kept so dear by the beautiful girl finally succumbs to Mr B to declare that "you have moved me more than any lady in the world" (199). While the war-of-tug is on, she ensures she does not fall prey to pity financial help offered by Mr B. Natalie Roxburgh in *Rethinking Gender and Virtue through Richardson's Domestic Accounting* mentions her business inclinations; "It is important that she stays out of debt or obligation to him because by accepting any gifts she might end up owing to him what he desires: to become his mistress. In this sense, she desires to maintain a zero balance with Mr B by the end of the novel, her supposed virtue is the reason that Mr B marries her and also why his family comes to accept the marriage" (412).

Lady Booby and Mrs Slip Slop, who have significant physical and mental attributes in their respective names, unhesitatingly portray depravity, debauchery and sensuality. Unlike Pamela, who regards men as immoral, and profligate "dreadfully wicked man [...] O the deceitfulness of the heart of man!" Fielding portrays a young boy marrying a girl with no fortune in hand. Joseph is referred to as Pamela's brother, but his concept of life appears not only different but more acceptable. Hence, by characterization of siblings with different outlooks towards life Fielding mocks at Richardson's Pamela who swears to retain the virtue and goodness she inherited from her parents: "your poverty is my pride, as your integrity shall be my imitation"

(223) There is also a contrast between Mr B and Lady Booby; reader observes a forceful conversion of Mr B solely because of Pamela virtue and beauty, Lady Booby does not appear to change at any level.

From Pamela's statements at the outset of the play declaring that she is "quite fearless of anything" (15), her master gave her "fine things" (14), her father's "cautions coming to my [her] mind" (17), her father's sermons on virtue "and committing her to divine virtue" (Rich), to her master's blatant attempts to seduce her, including the attempt to look at her through the keyhole, everything seems to be staged to prove Pamela a virtuous lady and later defies her statements on the master for instance "cunning as Lucifer [...] wicked wicked man [...] dreadfully wicked man [...] impudent gentleman [...] treacherous gentleman [...] Naughty master [...] designing master" (44-138), when she accepts her as her charmingly dressed and handsome gentleman. Whereas with *Joseph Andrews* there seems to be a display of human feelings of love and commitment admitting—that he has small weaknesses like he offered kisses and would try to control them. Fielding gives the impression to keep the individual weaknesses of mankind. However, there are characters like Beau Didapper, Lady Booby, and Mrs Slip Slop, whom the reader does not expect to reform in the course of the novel.

To Fielding, there are more problems relating to morality in the society than the exhaustion of a literary work merely on Pamela's epic struggle to keep her virginity and her fear that "The trouble is [...] I should be destitute again" (11). Compared to Pamela's condition, Joseph and Fanny's intimacy confirms nothing immoral and; "despite the consummation of Joseph and Fanny before the marriage, they remain completely uncorrupted by what they have gone through" (Seay126). Fielding's idea of morality encompasses multifold social religious and cultural issues ranging from individual to social concerns. He is committed to the cause of satire as a tool to reform and mocks at the follies and frivolities of the human species.

In *Joseph Andrews*, the most important role of the characters is to reveal hypocrisy and vanity, which arise from affectation, perhaps the characteristics of characters put on display by Richardson, "Vanity poses a significant moral and epistemological problem for characters in Fielding's fiction" (Melanie 269). Such affectations are mainly attributed to the top class or the elite of the society by Fielding. The rich characters in *Joseph Andrews* have the qualities of laughter for the people as he declares they are worth to be mocked at:

The only source of the true Ridiculous (as it appears to me) is affectation [...] Now affectation proceeds from one of these two causes; vanity, or hypocrisy [...]: for as vanity puts us on affecting false characters, in order to purchase applause; so hypocrisy sets us on an endeavour to avoid censure by concealing our vices under an appearance of their opposite virtues [...] discovery of this affectation arises the Ridiculous.

Fielding speaks for the uncelebrated goodness that dwells in the heart of a common man: "I could name a commoner, raised higher above the multitude by superior talents than is in the power of his prince to exalt him, whose behaviour to those he hath obliged is more amiable than the obligation itself." (188) Pamela retains her virtue and earns a high social status and respect after the "open declaration of love" by Mr B and sharing his social status and respect with her. Fielding's moral outlook is articulated in its more positive forms: in his celebration of natural decency, the good heart, openness, an instinctive benevolence, and sexual feelings which are affectionate and giving rather than merely selfish.

Lady Booby appears to hold the banner of hypocrisy and vanity. Lady Booby is Sir Thomas's widow, whose grieving process involves playing cards and propositioning servants. She is powerfully attracted to Joseph, her footman, but finds this attraction degrading and is humiliated by his rejections. She exemplifies the traditional flaws of the upper class, namely snobbery, egotism, and lack of restraint, and she is prone to drastic mood swings. But whatever opinion or suspicion, the scandalous inclination of defamers might entertain Lady Booby's "innocent freedoms" (63). With Lady Booby, the change in the life perspective seems too difficult to attain. She is put forward as an example of unchanging behaviour and natural reluctance to admit faults, whereas Mr B's conversion in *Pamela* seems dramatic and hypocritical where change does not come within but appears to have been orchestrated by Pamela's sheer authority over him. Thus, introducing a relative of Mr B in the shape of Lady Booby might mean a question: would Mr B be able to stay true to his words?

Parson Adams is a benevolent, absent-minded, impecunious, and somewhat vain curate in Lady Booby's country parish. He notices and cultivates Joseph's intelligence and moral earnestness from early on, and he supports Joseph's determination to marry Fanny. His journey back to the countryside coincides with Joseph's for much of the way, and the vibrancy of his simple good nature makes him a rival of Pamela's concept of reward and Fielding stages him as a figure worthy to be called a protagonist. Compared to other church figures, he owns a very strong character. In fact, by presenting the goodness in Adams' character, the reader is told about religion and its concept of goodness. Unlike the idealization of goodness in Pamela's character, Parson retains mortal qualities of happiness, pride, weaknesses and human emotions.

Similarly, the realistic presentation of the character goes on in different chapters: the Hunter of Men is an eccentric and sadistic country gentleman who sets his hunting dogs on Mr Adams, allows his friends to play cruel jokes on him, and attempts to abduct Fanny. Fielding seems to be very harsh on such people but they remain true to their type throughout the novel. He describes him as a "dog" and unlike Mr B they will remain so: "indeed, he had hitherto followed the sport only with dogs of his own species" (231).

Material corruption and professional corruption do not have enough consideration in *Pamela*. Fielding takes morality from the micro-level to the macro-level by including characters from all spheres of life and questioning certain things in society. Besides the clergymen, the doctor and the magistrate, there are some other examples as well. Tom Suckbribe is the Constable who cannot guard an imprisoned Ruffian and may have some financial incentive for failing in this office. The Surgeon is too vain of his expertise but cannot examine Joseph properly and tells him he would soon die. When Joseph asked him if he is in danger, he replies, "He feared he was; for that his pulse was very exalted and feverish, and, if his fever should prove more than symptomatic, it would be impossible to save him" (66).

Suppression of feelings in Mrs Slipslop is bitterly criticized. Fielding calls her "Slip Slop" because once, very early in her age, she committed an immoral act (slipped) but ever since then she has remained pure and chaste. Ironically, she is a hideous and sexually voracious upper-class servant in the Booby household. She may be like Pamela in her early days, who yearns to defend her virtue at any cost. With almost all her weaknesses one can imagine, she still lives in the world of vanity. Like Pamela, "for she [Mrs Slip Slop] was a mighty affecter of hard words," (34), and Pamela who minded her "pen more than you do your needle" (39), and is regarded as "a mighty letter writer" (30). Fielding defies the idea of the suppression of emotions

and physical needs of man, otherwise, such suffocated people may cause greater problems for society. However, in Fielding's world people love to remain hypocritical. The mask of hypocrisy can be found anywhere, but its shapes are too many. According to Fielding, its impact is significant for human society as it deceives them by utilizing pity, sometimes generosity and heroic virtues. Though philosophers, poets and writers have ridiculed it, it will continue its journey in human society as "all our passions are thy slaves" (77).

Like Pamela, Joseph has the secrets of his master. Lady Booby asserts that if Joseph has the secrets of the master; "would you [Joseph] not be my master?" (12). By focusing on this Fielding revitalizes the repeated affirmations of Mr B regarding the "family secrets" and ensues a question that whether Mr B's emotions are of love or of fear arising from the anxiety of public awareness of his secrets; resulting in the master-like attitude of Pamela when she drives Mr B all the way long.

The readers may find a beautiful blend of satire, "comic-epic in Prose" style, and artistic characterization in the work Joseph Andrews however, several events and characters reflect the contrast of Richardson core idea of morality. He not only seems to question them at large but also responds to the Richardson honourable codes by giving examples from the day-to-day life: as he declares "it is a trite but true observation that examples work more forcibly on the minds than precepts [...] and far greater use in that narrow circle than a good book" (5).

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