

Gender Dynamics, Social Norms, and Erotic Attitudes in Eighteenth-Century England: A Comparative Study of *Anti-Pamela* and *Fanny Hill*

Muhammad K. Alatrash

Department of English Language & Translation, College of Arabic Language & Social Studies, Qassim University, Buraydah, Saudi Arabia

Abstract—This paper examines two influential novels of the 18th century, Eliza Haywood's *Anti-Pamela* and John Cleland's *Fanny Hill: or, the Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, to offer insights into the social norms, gender roles, and erotic attitudes of the time. Through a comparative analysis of the two works, this paper highlights their distinct literary traditions, concerns, and perspectives on the issues of eroticism, virtue, and gender relations. The study finds that while Haywood's *Anti-Pamela* critiques the excesses of the materialistic and libertine culture of the time, Cleland's *Fanny Hill* challenges the concept of virtue and decorum by emphasizing the complexities of human erotic desire. The paper argues that the two works offer unique and valuable perspectives on the social and cultural landscape of 18th century England, contributing to the ongoing debates on gender, social inequality, and erotic exploitation. This study provides a better understanding of the literary and cultural history of the 18th century and its relevance to contemporary discussions on the issues of gender and eroticism.

Index Terms—Eliza Haywood, John Cleland, *Anti-Pamela*, Gender dynamics

I. INTRODUCTION

Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded was a novel published by Samuel Richardson in 1740, which quickly gained popularity and became a cultural phenomenon in the 18th century. The novel followed the story of a servant girl, Pamela, who was able to maintain her virtue and ultimately win the love and marriage of her master. The book was celebrated for its depiction of the protagonist's moral fortitude, but not everyone was enamored with this portrayal. Henry Fielding was the first to respond to the publication of *Pamela* by writing a satirical counter-narrative, *Shamela*, which was published just six months after the original. However, Fielding was not the only one to challenge Richardson's representation of virtue and morality.

Eliza Heywood and John Cleland also contributed to the anti-Pamela movement by presenting their own counter-narratives. Heywood's *The Anti-Pamela; or Feigned Innocence Detected* was a direct response to *Pamela*, and was written from a female perspective. Heywood aimed to subvert the dominant ideologies of the era by exposing the techniques that low-class female servants could use to climb the social ladder by exploiting their master's naivety and gullibility. Her approach was to build a counter-narrative that portrayed the functionality of the sexual gaze as a tool in the hands of the female servant.

Similarly, Cleland's *Fanny Hill: or, the Memoires of a Woman Pleasure* challenged the sexual morality of the time by depicting female sexuality in a frank and unapologetic manner. Cleland's novel was groundbreaking in its portrayal of female sexuality and desire, and it subverted the dominant ideologies of the era by presenting a female perspective that was usually marginalized or ignored. Both Heywood and Cleland made a bold statement in their works and paved the way for more daring and provocative literature in the centuries to come. By challenging the representation of Pamela's virtue, they contributed to a broader conversation about the representation of women and the societal norms and values of the time.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The rise of the novel as a literary form in the 18th century saw an increased interest in the representation of women and gender roles. A significant debate centered around the works of Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* and Henry Fielding's *Shamela*, and their respective anti-versions, *Anti-Pamela* and *Joseph Andrews*. This review provides a critical analysis of four articles that examine the representation of female servants in these works and their impact on the larger discussions of gender, virtue, and the gaze in 18th-century literature.

Bowen (1999) in "A Sawce-box and Boldface Indeed": Refiguring the Female Servant in the Pamela-Anti-Pamela Debate published in *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, examines the representation of the female servant in

Pamela and *Anti-Pamela* to explore the larger societal concerns regarding the changing status of women and the threat they posed to male power. Bowen argues that the depiction of the servant in these works is used to comment on and subvert traditional notions of gender and class. By conducting a close reading of the text, Bowen reveals the ways in which the female servant is utilized as a literary device to comment on the social and political tensions of the time. Her article provides insight into the role of the servant in eighteenth-century literature and its significance in shaping the representation of gender and class in this period.

“Rethinking Gender and Virtue through Richardson's Domestic Accounting” (Roxburgh, 2012). In her article, Roxburgh presents a unique analysis of Samuel Richardson's novel *Pamela* by examining the representation of domestic accounting in the story. Drawing on contemporary economic and cultural debates, she argues that the novel's emphasis on meticulous record-keeping offers a new perspective on the relationship between gender, virtue, and the economy in 18th-century literature. Roxburgh delves into the ways in which the novel's detailed portrayal of domestic labor and accounting practices provides a means of exploring the value placed on women's work and morality in a changing social landscape. By analyzing the novel's use of domestic accounting as a tool for character development, Roxburgh offers insights into the complex interplay between gender, virtue, and social status in 18th-century England.

Scandal and Privacy: Two Eighteenth-Century Women (Spacks, 2002). Spacks provides a nuanced examination of the themes of scandal and privacy in two 18th-century literary works, *Pamela* and *Anti-Pamela*. Through a careful analysis of the narrative techniques employed by the authors, Spacks contends that these works not only offer an insightful critique of societal attitudes towards women's sexuality but also provide a commentary on the complex interplay between gender, class, and public opinion. Drawing on contemporary debates about the value of privacy, Spacks reveals the ways in which these works engage with the cultural anxieties surrounding the desire for privacy in an era of increasing public scrutiny. Furthermore, the author examines the ways in which these literary works serve as a means of exploring the experiences of women who found themselves caught between the contradictory demands of social propriety and personal agency. In doing so, Spacks illuminates the rich cultural and social significance of these works in the 18th-century literary landscape.

Optics, Gender, and the Eighteenth-Century Gaze: Looking at Eliza Haywood's *Anti-Pamela* (Swenson, 2010). In her article, Swenson examines the portrayal of the female gaze in Eliza Haywood's *Anti-Pamela* and its implications for larger societal debates about gender and desire in 18th-century literature. By exploring the narrative strategies employed by Haywood, Swenson sheds light on the ways in which the work challenges traditional notions of gender roles and sexuality, and subverts the dominant male gaze that characterizes much of the literature of the period. Through a close reading of the text, Swenson highlights the ways in which Haywood's representation of the female gaze offers a new perspective on the power dynamic between men and women and the ways in which desire shapes their interactions. Overall, the article provides valuable insights into the ways in which literature can challenge and subvert societal norms and expectations, and offers a fresh perspective on the role of women in 18th-century society.

The literature review above has provided a valuable insight into the various ways in which eighteenth-century literature, particularly the works of Samuel Richardson, Eliza Haywood, and John Cleland, engaged with and challenged societal norms and expectations surrounding gender, class, and sexuality. While scholars have extensively examined Richardson's *Pamela*, less attention has been paid to its counter narratives such as Haywood's *Anti-Pamela* and Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, which challenge and subvert the dominant themes of *Pamela*.

By employing a close reading approach, this study aims to fill this gap by exploring the details in Heywood's and Cleland's works that function as tropes and counter narratives to *Pamela*. Through a detailed analysis of key incidents and literary devices employed in these works, this study seeks to highlight the ways in which they offer alternative perspectives on the themes of gender, class, and sexuality that were prevalent in the literature of the period. In particular, this study will examine the ways in which Haywood's and Cleland's works challenge the traditional gender roles and subvert the dominant male gaze that characterizes much of the literature of the period.

This study is important in its contribution to the wider academic discourse on the representation of gender, class, and sexuality in eighteenth-century literature. By focusing on the counter narratives to *Pamela*, this study expands the scope of analysis beyond the widely studied works of Samuel Richardson and offers valuable insights into the diverse range of opinions and perspectives that existed in the literature of the period. Through a close reading approach, this study offers a fresh perspective on the ways in which literature can challenge and subvert societal norms and expectations and highlights the complex interplay between literature, culture, and society.

III. METHOD

The present study seeks to explore the counter-narratives presented by Eliza Heywood and John Cleland to Samuel Richardson's novel, *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded*, with a focus on the literary techniques and motifs used by the former authors in their works, *The Anti-Pamela; or Feigned Innocence Detected* and *Fanny Hill: or, the Memoires of a Woman of Pleasure*, respectively. The paper aims to investigate the ways in which Heywood and Cleland challenge the representation of *Pamela's* virtue and the dominant ideologies of their time, as well as the cultural, social, and historical contexts that informed the authors' writing and how these influenced the messages they sought to convey through their works.

To achieve these objectives, this study adopts an analytical approach to explore the literary motifs and techniques employed by Heywood and Cleland that subvert the societal norms and values of the time, with a particular focus on the themes of sexuality, gender, and social class. The paper also seeks to examine the narrative styles and literary devices used by Heywood and Cleland, including characterization, dialogue, and symbolism, and how these shape the messages and themes of their works.

In addition to examining the cultural, social, and historical contexts that informed the authors' writing, this paper also aims to highlight the perspectives from which Heywood and Cleland wrote, and how these perspectives influence the messages and themes of their works. By analyzing the literary techniques and motifs used by both authors, the paper seeks to shed light on their bold statements and the ways in which they paved the way for more daring and provocative literature in the centuries to come.

To achieve this, the paper employs a close reading approach, allowing for a detailed analysis of key incidents and literary devices used in Heywood's and Cleland's works that function as tropes and counter-narratives to Pamela. Through this approach, the study seeks to highlight the ways in which these works offer alternative perspectives on the themes of gender, class, and sexuality that were prevalent in the literature of the period. Specifically, the study aims to examine the ways in which Heywood's and Cleland's works challenge the traditional gender roles and subvert the dominant male gaze that characterizes much of the literature of the period.

The aim of this study is to contribute to the wider academic discourse on the representation of gender, class, and sexuality in eighteenth-century literature. By focusing on the counter-narratives to Pamela, this study expands the scope of analysis beyond the widely studied works of Samuel Richardson and offers valuable insights into the diverse range of opinions and perspectives that existed in the literature of the period. Ultimately, by examining the ways in which literature can challenge and subvert societal norms and expectations, this study highlights the complex interplay between literature, culture, and society.

IV. MATERIALS STUDIED

A. *Eliza Heywood's the Anti-Pamela; or Feigned Innocence Detected*

Eliza Haywood, a prominent female writer in the 18th century, published a notable body of work that included poetry, plays, and novels. However, her most famous work is *The Anti-Pamela; or Feigned Innocence Detected*, which was published in 1741. This novel serves as a satirical response to Samuel Richardson's popular novel, "Pamela," which was widely read and discussed during the 18th century. While Richardson's novel portrays a virtuous servant girl who eventually marries her master after resisting his advances, Haywood's novel takes a different approach. She uses her writing to challenge the idea that women must be passive and obedient in order to be virtuous, providing a sharp critique of "Pamela" and its portrayal of female virtue and sexual behavior.

The *Anti-Pamela* stands out from other contemporary works of literature due to its satirical tone and its bold critique of prevailing ideas about female virtue and sexual behavior. As Swenson notes in her analysis of the title page of Haywood's work, the novel's moralistic claims are exaggerated, and it instead attracts cultural interest in the vulnerable male gaze. Through her writing, Haywood demonstrates her wit, intelligence, and her ability to engage with important social and cultural issues of her time. The enduring relevance of *The Anti-Pamela* continues to be studied by scholars of 18th-century literature and gender studies, serving as a testament to Haywood's literary prowess and her contribution to the literary canon.

B. *John Cleland's Fanny Hill: or, the Memoires of a Woman of Pleasure*

John Cleland was a prominent English author who lived in the late 18th century. His most well-known work, *Fanny Hill: or, the Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, was published in 1749 and is considered one of the earliest works of erotic fiction in the English language. The novel is a picaresque story that follows the life of a young woman named Fanny Hill, who is forced into a life of prostitution in 18th-century London. Fanny Hill's frank and explicit portrayal of sexuality and desire, as well as its celebration of female sexuality, has made it a landmark work in the history of English literature.

Cleland's *Fanny Hill* has been widely influential, and its impact can be seen in the works of later writers, such as D.H. Lawrence and Henry Miller. The novel's celebration of female sexuality was particularly groundbreaking, as it challenged the traditional notion of women as passive objects of male desire. In *Fanny Hill*, Cleland creates a female protagonist who takes control of her own sexuality and desires, subverting the dominant patriarchal ideology of the time. The novel continues to be read and studied by scholars and readers alike, and its enduring popularity is a testament to its groundbreaking status as a work of erotic fiction that celebrates female sexuality.

Despite its popularity, *Fanny Hill* was highly controversial at the time of its publication. According to the article "Cleland, John" in *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, Fanny Hill "caused a furor and he was arrested for obscenity and spent some time in debtor's prison" (Harmon & Holman, 2003). The novel's sexual content was widely condemned, and the authorities attempted to suppress it by banning its sale and distribution. Cleland's arrest and trial drew further attention to the novel and helped to increase its notoriety.

Fanny Hill is known for its explicit portrayal of sexuality, which caused controversy and led to the novel's banning. However, despite attempts to suppress it, the novel remained popular among readers and has been the subject of

academic and literary analysis. According to Harmon and Holman, Cleland's frank depiction of sexual experiences in the novel has been seen as significant and revolutionary in the development of the English novel.

V. ANALYSIS

A. *Eliza Heywood's the Anti-Pamela; or Feigned Innocence Detected*

This analysis of Eliza Haywood's *Anti-Pamela* explores how the novel serves as a warning to male readers about the dangers of female deception and the pursuit of social elevation through marriage. The use of the epistolary form delves into the emotional and psychological states of the characters and offers commentary on gender relations and social norms of the eighteenth century. The differentiation between liking and loving is a central theme that runs throughout the novel, and Heywood uses this to guide her female readership in their pursuit of love and marriage, while also cautioning her male readership to be wary of female seductive behavior. The novel encourages women to follow Pamela's manual of virtue to elevate themselves socially and economically. Heywood's critique of lower-class families illustrates her belief that social ascent is possible through the strategic management of one's reputation and image. The novel also highlights the potential dangers of materialism and the pursuit of wealth, warning that those who place too much emphasis on material goods may be morally corrupted. Ultimately, Heywood's novel serves as a cautionary tale for both men and women, providing insights into the complex gender dynamics of the eighteenth century and the various strategies that women of all social classes could employ to navigate their social environments.

(a). *Maternal Pedagogy and Social Advancement*

Heywood's counter narrative in *Anti-Pamela* serves as a warning to male readers about the potential dangers of female deception, especially as it pertains to social elevation through marriage. In the novel, the protagonist Syrena seeks to elevate her social status by marrying a man of condition, and her mother plays a crucial role in coaching her on how to navigate the complex social landscape. The story unfolds through a series of letters between Syrena and her mother, in a narrative structure reminiscent of Richardson's *Pamela*. Like Richardson, Heywood employs the epistolary form to delve into the emotional and psychological states of her characters, and to offer commentary on gender relations and social norms of the time. As Swenson notes, Heywood positions her novel as a "caution to young gentlemen." Swenson argues that:

positioning the novel as a warning about female perfidy...The novel interacts with and exploits cultural anxieties about gazing, especially the vulnerability of the male gaze. At the same time, its story about subversive female behavior that is only ambiguously punished, in the end, by Syrena's removal to a rich Welsh estate contains lessons and warnings for female readers. (Swenson, 2010, p. 33)

Heywood exploits cultural anxieties about the male gaze and male vulnerability to female wiles, and shows how women can use coyness, performativity, and other tactics to manipulate men into marriage. Syrena's encounters with men of condition, such as Mr. Vardine and Mr. D, reveal the various ways in which women of lower social standing can appeal to the male gaze, and how some men are immune to such strategies while others are taken in. Heywood shows that while some men are able to see through Syrena's facade, others are not as discerning, and may fall prey to her charms.

Heywood's novel offers lessons and warnings not only to male readers, but also to female readers. As Swenson notes, the story of "subversive female behavior" in *Anti-Pamela* is only "ambiguously punished" in the end, as Syrena is removed to a rich Welsh estate. This suggests that women who employ such tactics can achieve their desired outcomes, but may face ambiguous consequences. Heywood's novel thus reveals the complex gender dynamics at play in the eighteenth century, and the various strategies that women of all social classes could employ to navigate their social environments. By telling the story from a female perspective, Heywood offers insights into the ways in which women can use their feminine wiles to achieve their goals, and also how they can be taken advantage of by men who are aware of these tactics. Heywood's novel serves as a cautionary tale for both men and women, and provides a fascinating window into the social norms and gender roles of the eighteenth century.

(b). *Likings or Loving: Maternal Instruction and Social Ascent*

Heywood utilizes various literary devices to reduce the possibilities of the Pamela discourse in her novel, including the differentiation between liking and loving. This is a central theme that runs throughout the novel and is exemplified in Ann Tricksey's warning to her daughter Syrena to pursue "loving" rather than simply accepting "likening" from suitors. Tricksey advises an "artful Management to bring this Likening [sic] up to Love" and cautions her daughter to keep her suitor from satisfaction until the point of "Marriage or a Settlement equal to it . . . is gained" (Swenson, 2010, p. 43). Heywood, therefore, uses Tricksey's advice to guide her female readership in their pursuit of love and marriage, advocating for the strategic management of relationships and the practice of restraint.

In doing so, Heywood also warns her male readership to be cautious of their female servant's behavior and their seductive forms and techniques, such as coyness. Through emphasizing the difference between liking and loving, Heywood suggests that men are more likely to "like" their female servants, but they can pursue love through caution and restraint. Heywood's message is important, especially since female servants are more likely to use coyness and other seductive techniques to upgrade their likings to love. As Swenson notes, "the norm is for men to pursue women

who at least seem to resist advances, and overenthusiasm is discouraged” (Swenson, 2010, p. 43). Therefore, Heywood's warning to exercise caution is crucial for men to avoid being deceived by the coyness of their female servants.

Through her novel, Heywood encourages women to follow Pamela's manual of virtue to elevate themselves socially and economically. Bowen notes that Heywood critiques lower-class families for spending money on haircuts instead of meals and for not allowing their daughters to wash dishes for fear of spoiling their hands (Bowen, 1999, p. 261). This critique illustrates Heywood's belief that social ascent is possible through the strategic management of one's reputation and image. Heywood believes that women can use their beauty and chastity to attract suitors of higher social standing and to secure their position in society.

Heywood's differentiation between liking and loving and her warnings about the seductive behavior of female servants demonstrate the importance of maternal instruction in shaping young women's behavior and prospects for social ascent. Through this instruction, women can learn to navigate the patriarchal society's rules and expectations to secure their social and economic status. Heywood's novel, therefore, serves as a guidebook for women seeking to ascend the social ladder and secure their place in society.

(c). *Materialism and the Pursuit of Wealth*

In *Anti-Pamela*, Heywood takes a critical approach to the materialistic ideology and its implications for social and economic mobility. The central focus of Heywood's criticism is the pursuit of economic gains through sexual and romantic labor. Heywood's critique is not just limited to the lower-class mothers who teach their daughters to follow their economic interest over their passion but also to the entire society that puts materialism above all.

Heywood's differentiation between Syrena's economic interest and her passion is significant because it shows the depth of her criticism of the materialistic behavior prevalent in the society of her time. She demonstrates how Syrena's mother, unlike Pamela's parents, teaches her to maintain her value by pursuing economic gains instead of following her passion. Syrena's mother advises her to “bargain hard, and never part with her value for less than it is worth” (Heywood, 2004, p. 66). This type of language of accounting is prevalent throughout the novel, and Heywood uses it to critique the materialistic ideology of her time.

Roxburgh provides an insightful commentary on Heywood's critique of materialistic ideology, where Syrena's management of her accounts is solely to secure a wealthy husband. As Roxburgh notes, Syrena's mother's advice to her is not to lose her virtue, but instead to maintain her value as a potential wife, indicating the overwhelming emphasis on economic value over moral virtue in low-class families. In this regard, Heywood's narrative highlights the pervasive influence of materialism on the behavior of young women from lower classes. Roxburgh's comment aptly captures the essence of Heywood's critique, as Syrena's economic interests and her mother's values shape her decisions and actions. Through this portrayal of Syrena, Heywood's narrative demonstrates the power of the materialistic ideology in shaping the behavior of women from lower classes.

According to Roxburgh (2012), Syrena's mother, in contrast to Pamela's parents who warn about losing her virtue, advises her daughter not to lose her value, indicating the centrality of accounting language in their lives. Roxburgh further notes that Syrena's preoccupation with managing her accounts is solely to marry a wealthy man, thus underscoring the influence of materialism in shaping the behavior of lower-class women (p. 421). Heywood's narrative highlights how the materialistic ideology permeates the psyche of women from low-class families, and how it shapes their decisions and actions. In this regard, Heywood's critique of materialism is not only a commentary on the behavior of women from low-class families but also a reflection of the broader social and economic values of the eighteenth-century society.

Heywood's critique of the materialistic ideology is not just limited to the low-class families, but it also extends to the upper-class society that values materialism above all. Heywood's narrative shows how the upper-class society's vanity and the lower-class servants' envy towards their masters, who possess the material wealth, contribute to the materialistic behavior. Heywood's critique of the materialistic ideology serves as a didactic lesson to the men of condition to be cautious of what can ruin their social and economic reputation.

Heywood's *Anti-Pamela* provides a deeper analysis of the materialistic ideology prevalent in the eighteenth-century society. Heywood criticizes the materialistic behavior and the tendency to favor of the materialism over passion. She shows how the materialistic ideology shapes the behavior of low-class virtuous females and how it permeates the entire society. Heywood's material analysis through her narrative can serve as a didactic lesson to the men of condition to be cautious of what can ruin their social and economic reputation.

B. *John Cleland's Fanny Hill: or, the Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*

John Cleland's novel tells the story of Frances Hill, a fifteen-year-old orphan girl who narrates her life in two lengthy letters to an unknown woman. The novel is set in the city of London and follows Fanny's journey as she faces various challenges and hardships in her pursuit of love and success. After the death of both her parents, Fanny's friend convinces her to move to the city but abandons her upon arrival, leaving her alone and lost. Fanny manages to secure a job as a maid in the house of a wealthy lady, but she eventually becomes the property of Mrs. Brown, a notorious pimp who aims to turn Fanny into a prostitute. Mrs. Brown introduces Fanny to several men, one of whom tries to rape her, but Fanny is saved by one of Mrs. Brown's maids. The novel explores themes of sexual exploitation, gender relations,

and social inequality as Fanny navigates her way through the city's streets, grappling with her own desires and those of the men around her.

Fanny eventually meets Charles, a nineteen-year-old nobleman with whom she falls in love and lives with. They engage in sexual intercourse multiple times, and Fanny becomes pregnant. However, Charles disappears for years, leaving Fanny alone and desperate. She roams the country, living in a brothel and working as a street prostitute, experiencing many sexual encounters along the way. Ultimately, Fanny meets Charles again and confesses her past sins and sexual experiences to him. Charles forgives her, and they marry, living happily ever after.

The novel makes several allusions and critiques of Richardson's *Pamela*. Both novels share a similar pattern of a young girl trying to navigate her way through the city, but they render virtue in different ways. While *Pamela* emphasizes the importance of maintaining moral virtue in the face of sexual temptation, *Fanny Hill* portrays a more libertine view of sexuality and erotic desire. The novel also explores the female sensibility of the 18th century and how it is portrayed differently in the two narratives. Furthermore, Cleland's novel expands on the themes of fetishism and deferred desire, offering a more nuanced perspective on the complexities of human sexuality and desire.

The following analysis examines the similarities and differences between Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* and John Cleland's *Fanny Hill* in their portrayal of virtue and desire. While both novels tell the story of a young country girl who moves to the city and marries a man of status, they differ in how they depict the virtue of their characters. In *Pamela*, the titular character's virtue is tied to her willingness to die before dishonor, while in *Fanny Hill*, virtue is depicted as being honest and genuine. The analysis further explores how Cleland challenges the idea of virtue as a one-dimensional concept and provides an alternative way of achieving social status. Cleland's portrayal of Fanny Hill presents a different form of virtue, where being truthful and open is as essential as denying one's desires. The analysis also delves into the theme of fetishism and deferred desire, which is more evident in *Fanny Hill* than *Pamela*, as seen in Fanny's highly eroticized descriptions of her sexual experiences, and how this theme represents the sexual tastes of the 18th century. Ultimately, this analysis provides a comprehensive view of the two novels and how they comment on the social and cultural norms of the 18th century.

(a). *Truthfulness and Chastity*

The works of Samuel Richardson's and John Cleland's share similarities in that they both tell the story of a young country girl who moves to the city and eventually marries a man of status. As noted by Spack, "*Fanny Hill* tells the story of a young woman from the country who successfully makes her way in London. The account belongs in a sense to the same fictional subgenre as Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*: poor girl makes good and rises in the world" (Spack, 2005, p. 77). However, the two novels differ in their portrayal of virtue and expression of desire.

In *Pamela*, the titular character's virtue is tied to her willingness to die before dishonor, and she refuses to engage in any sexual relationship outside of marriage. On the other hand, in *Fanny Hill*, virtue is depicted as being honest and genuine. Fanny is truthful about her experiences, including her sexual encounters. Fanny's virtue is in her character, which is transparent and unpretentious, a stark contrast to Pamela's character, which is rooted in propriety and decorum. This contrast highlights the differences in how the two novels depict and define virtue, as well as how they express the desires of their characters.

Cleland writes, "virtues and our vices depend too much on our circumstances" (Cleland, 1749, p. 186). This insight is reflected in the experiences of Fanny Hill whose journey from poverty to pleasure is shaped by the contingencies of her environment. Fanny's honest and genuine character, which is the hallmark of her virtue, is also a product of her circumstances. For Fanny, being truthful about her experiences, including her sexual encounters, is a way of navigating a world that is hostile to women's agency and desire. Thus, in *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, virtue is not an abstract ideal, but a dynamic and contingent quality that emerges from the interplay of individual character and social context.

(b). *Fetishism, Virtue, and Sensibility*

Cleland's narrative in *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* takes the fetishism present in Richardson's *Pamela* to a new level. Richardson's work has been critiqued for its fetishistic and sexually appealing narrative, with his technique of deferring the sexual experience as a means to titillate readers. Terri Nickel in his article "Pamela as Fetish" argues that "Pamela seems to provoke in its readers some recognition of their participation in fetishizing the work" (Cleland, 1749, p. 38). Cleland seems to take this critique and play with it, as seen in the extensive use of descriptive language during sexual relationships and multiple pornographic moments in his narrative. In contrast to *Pamela*, the intercourse moment is never deferred in *Fanny Hill* and is instead presented to the reader in a way that satisfies their desires. Fanny experiences a range of sexual encounters, including rape, masturbation, voyeurism, homosexuality, sadomasochism, and an orgy, which sets her apart from Pamela as an opposing model. Nonetheless, both characters end up marrying noblemen. This suggests that the portrayal of virtue in *Pamela* is flawed, given that both novels take place in the same setting. Cleland's portrayal of Fanny Hill presents a different form of virtue, where being truthful and open is as essential as denying one's desires to attain a higher social status.

Cleland's work can be seen as a response to Richardson's *Pamela*, offering a contrasting view of virtue and sensibility. Through the portrayal of Fanny Hill's experiences, Cleland challenges the idea of virtue as a one-dimensional concept and presents an alternative way of achieving social status. While the two novels share a similar narrative structure, their differing portrayals of virtue and sensibility lead to different interpretations of their respective protagonists and different

modes of rewarding within their respective narratives. Through these differences, Cleland provides a subversive commentary on the idea of virtue in 18th century society.

Cleland's provides an intricate exploration of the theme of fetishism and deferred desire, which is not present in Richardson's "Pamela." Fanny's experiences in the novel are highly eroticized, and the novel is often viewed as a representation of the fetishization of sex during the 18th century. Cleland's work is an illustration of the sexual tastes of the period, which were marked by a focus on sensory pleasures and the celebration of the erotic. Fanny Hill's story of sexual awakening represents an exploration of this phenomenon, which is visible throughout the novel.

The theme of fetishism is evident in Fanny's relationship with Charles, where their desire for each other is repeatedly deferred until they finally consummate their love. Fanny's descriptions of Charles reveal a fascination with his body and his sexual prowess, which are emphasized through her use of sensual and detailed language. The depiction of Charles as an object of desire for Fanny is an illustration of fetishism, a practice in which an individual's sexual desire is focused on a particular object or body part.

The novel's eroticism is exemplified in a passage where Fanny describes the encounter with a young man. In the quote,

The transported youth devour'd everything with his eyes, and try'd, with his fingers, to lay more open to his sight the secrets of that dark and delicious deep: he opens the folding lips, the softness of which, yielding entry to anything of a hard body, close round it, and oppose the sight: and feeling further, meets with, and wonders at, a soft fleshy excrescence, which, limber and relaxed after the late enjoyment, now grew, under the touch and examination of his fiery fingers, more and more stiff and considerable, till the titillating ardours of that so sensible part made me sigh, as if he had hurt me; on which he withdrew his curious probing fingers, asking me pardon, as it were, in a kiss that rather increased the flame there". (Cleland, 1749, p. 58)

Fanny describes a sexual encounter in which the young man's touch arouses her and leads to the growth of a "soft fleshy excrescence" under his probing fingers.

The language used in the passage emphasizes the sensory and tactile nature of Fanny's sexual experience. The young man's curiosity and exploration of her body are detailed in explicit terms, emphasizing the physicality of the encounter. The description of the "soft fleshy excrescence" and its growth under the young man's touch is an illustration of fetishism, as Fanny's sexual desire is focused on this particular body part. The young man's actions are also an illustration of the theme of deferred desire, as his attempts to explore Fanny's body are repeatedly thwarted until the point where she experiences pleasure and arousal.

Cleland's *Fanny Hill* is an intricate exploration of the theme of fetishism and deferred desire, which is not present in Richardson's *Pamela*. The novel's eroticism is characterized by a focus on sensory pleasures and the fetishization of sexual desire. Fanny's relationship with Charles and her sexual encounters throughout the novel illustrate these themes, providing a complex portrayal of female sexuality and desire during the 18th century.

Cleland's critique of Richardson's portrayal of sensibility is obvious in *Fanny Hill*. As Spack notes, "in the eighteenth century, [sensibility] meant extraordinary sensitivity to emotional stimuli, expressed through such physical manifestations as weeping, blushing, and fainting" (Spack, 1995, p. 75). In *Pamela*, Richardson utilizes this physical manifestation of female sensibility in the scene where Pamela faints in response to Mr. B's advances. In contrast, Fanny is portrayed as having a different attitude towards sexual stimuli, being open and receptive to a variety of sexual experiences without the same physical manifestations of sensibility as Pamela. This leads to a different mode of rewarding, with Fanny being rewarded for her honesty and openness with Charles rather than her chastity.

The differences in the portrayal of virtue and sensibility in these novels reflect the changing attitudes towards women's sexuality and agency during the eighteenth century. Pamela's strict adherence to moral codes and emphasis on chastity reflect the social norms of the time, which placed a high value on female purity and modesty. In contrast, Fanny Hill's sexual openness and honesty subvert these norms, presenting a more complex and nuanced portrayal of female desire and agency. These differences in portrayal and interpretation highlight the evolution of gender roles and sexuality in eighteenth-century English literature.

VI. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Eliza Haywood's *Anti-Pamela* and John Cleland's *Fanny Hill: or, the Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* offer unique and distinct perspectives on the gender dynamics, social norms, and sexual attitudes of eighteenth-century England. Heywood's novel serves as a cautionary tale for both men and women, highlighting the potential dangers of female deception and the pursuit of material possessions over virtue and morality. Through the story of Syrena and her mother's coaching, Heywood explores the importance of maternal instruction in shaping young women's behavior and prospects for social ascent, providing valuable insights into the patriarchal society's rules and expectations of the time.

On the other hand, Cleland's novel challenges the concept of virtue and decorum by emphasizing the complexities of human sexuality and desire. It portrays a different approach to the Pamela/anti-Pamela controversy of the time, expanding on themes of fetishism and deferred desire, while critiquing Pamela's character as being too restrained and chaste. The novel's honest and transparent portrayal of Fanny's experiences highlights the changing attitudes towards

sexuality and desire, contributing to the 18th-century literary tradition of representing female characters and their experiences in different ways.

Together, these two novels offer a fascinating window into the social norms and gender roles of eighteenth-century England, highlighting the distinct literary traditions and concerns of the time. They serve as a reminder of the importance of understanding the past to better understand the present and future, inspiring ongoing debates on the nature of gender, social inequality, and sexual exploitation.

On the other hand, John Cleland's *Fanny Hill: or, the Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, offers a contrasting perspective to Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* and the anti-*Pamela* works that followed it. While *Pamela* emphasizes the importance of maintaining moral virtue and decorum in the face of sexual temptation, "Fanny Hill" presents a more libertine view of sexuality and desire. The novel tells the story of Frances Hill, a young orphan girl who navigates her way through the city of London, facing various hardships and sexual encounters along the way. Fanny's virtue is depicted as being honest and genuine, rather than rooted in propriety and decorum like Pamela's.

Additionally, Cleland's novel expands on the themes of fetishism and deferred desire, offering a more nuanced perspective on the complexities of human sexuality and desire. *Fanny Hill* takes the fetishism present in "Pamela" to a new level, as seen in the extensive use of descriptive language during sexual encounters and multiple pornographic moments in the narrative.

The novel also explores the female sensibility of the 18th century and how it is portrayed differently in the two narratives. Cleland's work challenges the social norms of his time, exploring the themes of sexual exploitation, gender relations, and social inequality as Fanny navigates her way through the city's streets, grappling with her own desires and those of the men around her. *Fanny Hill* is a significant work of literature that challenges the conventions of its time and offers a unique perspective on the themes of sexuality, desire, and virtue. Cleland's work is an important contribution to the literary canon and continues to be widely read and studied today.

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Muhammad K. Alatrash is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English Language and Translation at Qassim University. He holds a PhD in English Literature and Criticism from IUP. Dr. Alatrash's research interests include Postcolonial, Third World, World Bank, and Ecocriticism literature. He is licensed by NCAAA for Academic Accreditation Practitioner.

As a scholar, Dr. Alatrash has published several articles in various academic journals and presented his research at many national and international conferences. He has also served as a peer reviewer for several scholarly journals. In addition to his academic pursuits, Dr. Alatrash has participated in various community service and volunteer initiatives.

Dr. Alatrash's contributions to the field of English Literature and Criticism have earned him recognition and respect among his peers. He remains committed to advancing knowledge and promoting excellence in teaching and research.