

Literature Review of *Pamela*

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As one of the best renowned English novelists in the 18th century, Richardson has created several excellent literary works, among which his first epistolary novel *Pamela* pioneered English Sentimentalism literature. Since publication, *Pamela* has been paid much attention to and studied by scholars at home and abroad from different perspectives. As for me, I'd like to mainly give an introduction of the research situation of *Pamela* at home and abroad. It will be of great benefit to promote our comprehensive understanding of the novel, thus bringing us much practical significance.

Keywords: *Pamela*, Literature review, At home and abroad

Samuel Richardson is one of the best renowned English novelists in the 18th century. His representative works include *Pamela*, *Clarissa*, *The History of Sir Charles Grandison*, and so forth, among which his first epistolary novel *Pamela* pioneered English Sentimentalism literature. Since its publication, *Pamela* has received extensive attention and multi-angle research from scholars at home and abroad.

Foreign scholars have carried out plenty of systematic research on *Pamela* since its publication.

Numerous foreign scholars liked to analyze and study *Pamela* from the perspective of Feminism. In "A Room of Pamela's Own" (1972), Robert Folkenfilk believed that Pamela's freedom had always been strictly limited and Pamela had failed to strive for women's freedom even after marriage, which further verified the essence of bourgeois society and the limitations of the era. In Jane Spenser's opinion, Richardson's literary creation represented by *Pamela* made a great contribution to the rise of female novelists, as was revealed in her book *The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen* (1986). As far as Flint (1989) was concerned, Pamela's thought and behaviors were deeply influenced by her family and class. In "Pamela and the Duplicitous Body of Femininity" (1991), Tassie Gwilliam attached great importance to feminine hypocrisy and duplicity. In "Enclosing the Immovable: Structuring Social Authority in Pamela, Part II" (1991), Betty Schellenberg mainly focused on Pamela's development process. In "Public Context and Imaging Self" (1996), Morris Golden held the view that Pamela's struggles in her life was essentially Samuel Richardson's own resistance in the patriarchal society, reflecting the nature of that era.

Psychological analysis is another significant perspective to study *Pamela*. For instance, in *Samuel Richardson: Dramatic Novelist* (1973), M. Kinkead-Weekes thought highly of the skills applied in psychological description in *Pamela*. And Ian Watt focused on the modern narrative techniques in psychology in *Pamela* in the book *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (1981).

Many scholars also studied Pamela from the perspective of Narratology. In "The Time Scheme of *Pamela* and the Character of B" (1969), Parker analyzed the narrative skills of the novel from the narrative time of Pamela's letters. In "The Trial Narrative in Richardson's *Pamela*: Suspending the Hermeneutic of Happiness"

(2007), Soni analyzed the narrative strategy of *Pamela* from two aspects: Pamela's virtue and Mr. B. In the chapter "Pamela and Plato: Ancient and Modern Epistolary Narratives" of the book *Defining Greek Narrative* (2014), A. D. Morris compared the ancient and modern epistolary narration in detail, which is beneficial for readers to have a better understanding of the narrative methods in *Pamela*.

Other scholars paid attention to the text analysis of *Pamela*, and made a specific analysis from the aspects of novel structure, plot, language, and so on. In "Richard's Pamela: An Interpretation" (1973), Stuart Wilson analyzed the composition structure of the novel *Pamela* and believed that it realized the unity, balance, and symmetry in structure. In "'A Geometry of His Own': Richardson and the Marriage-Ending" (1986), Stevenson focused on the last part of *Pamela* from the perspective of plot analysis. In "Corresponding Freedom: Language and the Self in Pamela" (1985), Mckee's attention was paid to the language of the novel *Pamela*, so as to highlight its unique role in the composition of the text.

It should be noted that the morality advocated by Samuel Richardson in his novel *Pamela* has attracted a large number of foreign scholars, and there has been a mixed reaction towards morality in the novel. For example, from this perspective, Catherine Ingrassia paid much attention to Pamela's virtue in the book *Authorship, Commerce, and Gender in Early Eighteenth-Century England: A Culture of Paper Credit* (1998). In addition, some critics has adopted other perspectives, such as Marxist approaches, the reader-response perspective, dramatic technique, and so forth. For instance, In *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (1983), Terry Eagleton focused on *Pamela* from the perspective of Marxist Criticism. And Malvin Zirker made an analysis of *Pamela* by taking the perspective of reader-response in "Richardson's Correspondence: The Personal Letter as Private Experience" (1966).

Domestic research on *Pamela* started late and the perspectives mainly focused on the concept of chastity, Feminism, epistolary style, morality, and parody.

Pamela is also known as "Virtue Rewarded". The concept of chastity is undoubtedly a research angle that cannot be ignored. In "Chastity, Virtue and Reward—On the Concept of Chastity in *Pamela*" (2006), Zhu Weihong analyzed the relationship between chastity, virtue, and reward, believing that the "chastity reward theory" put forward by Samuel Richardson exactly catered to psychological need of the bourgeoisie at that time. In "*Pamela's* Virtue of Chastity" (2019), Zhang Lin concluded that the successful narration of the virtue of chastity in *Pamela* is the result of the joint action of society, the author, the work, and readers by analyzing the virtue of chastity embodied in the novel.

Many scholars analyzed *Pamela* from the perspective of Feminism. For example, in "Pamela: The Distorted Female World Under Male Discourse" (2008), Liu Miao explored the inner contradictions of the characters on the basis of the female psychology in the novel, revealing the control of patriarchy over female discourse. In "Reading Samuel Richardson's View on Female From Pamela" (2010), Huang Bihui analyzed Pamela as a female image and came to the conclusion that Samuel Richardson's view of women is negative which had certain limitations. In "Pamela in 'Captivity': Women's Predicament in the Eighteenth Century" (2018), Huang Fangfang combined Feminism with Psychoanalysis to analyze Pamela's imprisonment in several aspects and argued that Pamela had never broken away from the spiritual shackles imposed on women in the patriarchal society.

Some scholars analyzed *Pamela* from the perspective of epistolary style. In "On the Characteristics of British Epistolary Novels in the 18th Century" (2010), Liu Qiong analyzed the basic characteristics of epistolary novels which include privacy, immediacy, and dialogue in *Pamela*. In "The Epistolary Narrative Strategy in

Pamela” (2015), Si Ruolan analyzed *Pamela* from the first person and the Sentimentalism in the epistle to explore the heroine’s inner emotional world. In “On the Narrative Mode of British Epistolary Literature” (2015), Zhu Zhanwei revealed the era environment for the development of epistolary novels, the characteristics of epistolary novels as well as the evolution and development of epistolary novels.

Morality is also a very important research angle. In “Pamela: Women’s Moral Model and Resistance Consciousness” (2009), Zhao Qing analyzed the revolution and resistance consciousness of the protagonist, believing that Pamela’s resistance is incomplete and limited. In “The Construction of New Moral Paradigm in *Pamela*” (2015), Zhang Li analyzed the deconstruction of traditional moral paradigm and the construction of new moral paradigm with middle-class moral quality, believing that *Pamela* reflected the middle class’s desire to realize the restructuring of social power structure through moral reform.

Some scholars have shown great interest in the parody of *Pamela*. In “On the Parody of Pamela by Shamela” (2015), Yang Wenhui analyzed the failures of *Shamela* in plot setting, characterization, and theme. In “Parody: The Anti-Pamela Factors in *Joseph Andrews*” (2017), Du Juan analyzed the parody of *Pamela* in *Joseph Andrews* through the setting of character relations and the comparison of character images, holding that the creation of anti-Pamela is the starting point of Fielding’s moral construction. In “Pamela or Shamela—Interpretation of the Complex Contradiction in *Pamela*” (2017), Shang Shi made an analysis of the complex contradiction of Pamela’s image from three aspects: social level, the author’s reason, and stylistic factors.

To sum up, in terms of *Pamela*, foreign scholars have conducted comparatively systematic research, while domestic research on it lags behind in the 20th century and there are relatively fewer research results; nevertheless, multi-angle analysis and exploration are involved.

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