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The Paradoxes of Female Authorship in Samuel Richardson's *Pamela, Or Virtue Rewarded*, Jane Austen's *Emma* and Henry James' *The Portrait of a Lady*.

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Table of Contents:

Introduction

Chapter 1: Conflicting Narratives and Conflicting Selves in Samuel Richardson's *Pamela, Or
Virtue Rewarded*

Chapter 2: The Quest for Self-Expression versus the Marriage Plot in Jane Austen's *Emma*

Chapter 3: The Victory of the Bildungsroman and Multiple-Consciousness in Henry James' *The
Portrait of a Lady*

Introduction

“You wanted to look at life for yourself—but you were not allowed; you were punished for your wish. You were ground in the very mill of the conventional!” (551), Ralph Touchett says to Isabel Archer, the heroine of Henry James’ *The Portrait of a Lady*. Luckily, he adds, “I don’t believe that such a generous mistake as yours can hurt you for more than a little” (552). Touchett’s words capture the limits and triumphs of female autonomy in three novels that, each in its own way, defined what the English novel would be for their successors: Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela, Or Virtue Rewarded* (1740), Jane Austen’s *Emma* (1815), and Henry James’ *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881). While it may be tempting to see the heroines in those novels as women who rebel against conventions and are punished for their rebellion—when they enter matrimony, they lose their subversive potential—I suggest that reading them side by side reveals tensions that center around the paradoxical position of eighteenth and nineteenth century women, namely self-expression versus the conventional plot of romance. I further suggest that Richardson, Austen and James explore those tensions by portraying their female protagonists as authors. According to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, an author is: “1. the person who originates or gives existence to anything; a) an inventor, constructor or founder... c) he who gives rise to or causes an action, an event, circumstance, state, or condition of things” (89). Pamela Andrews, Emma Woodhouse and Isabel Archer meet, or at least they think they do, the above criteria: they create their own identity, which I will also refer to as selfhood, by constructing narratives, either of their own life or of the lives of others. And yet, as I will demonstrate in this work, their quest for self-expression is sabotaged by the conventional plot of romance which requires the heroines to marry and live happily ever after.

Additionally, while Richardson, Austen and James depict their heroine as authors, they also continuously question their authorship. For example, the female protagonists are, at times,

represented with irony, either through the first-person letters, or through the use of free independent discourse, leading the reader to doubt whether the heroines' authorship is legitimate. While the above definition of an author, as *The Oxford English Dictionary* informs us, has been in use since the late Middle Ages (89), and therefore it is safe to assume that the three authors whose work I discuss were familiar with it, by the early eighteenth century authorship, as the philosopher Michel Foucault asserts, authors, as individuals, no longer had power; instead, discourses did. Accordingly, I argue that by depicting their heroines as authors and by challenging and/or by taking away the heroines' authorship, Richardson, Austen and James also explore the tension between the traditional definition of an author as creator of meaning and the Foucaultian definition of an author as inferior to discourse. Consequently, as the three literary heroines negotiate their authorial power, they are also limited by it; what is more, when they marry, they appear to be the product, not the creator, of what Ralph Touchett calls "the mill of the conventional," and what I will refer to as "the marriage plot." While the heroines assert their authorship through their autonomy and subjective voice (I will call the latter "subjectivity"), both of which empower them, the marriage plot disempowers them. And yet, even though in each case a more powerful male figure overwrites their subjectivity with their own agenda, I suggest that reading the three novels together reveals the contrast between the bildungsroman, a novel about a protagonist's journey to self-development, and the conventional romance plot, which ends with a wedding. For instance, although *Pamela* and *Emma* end on happy note, the happy ending is questionable: Pamela loses her authorship when she is transformed into a conduct book wife, whereas in *Emma*, since the heroine is represented as an author for most of the novel, her embrace of the marriage plot in the final chapters points to a disjunction between her identity as an author and her sudden identity as a bride. James, on the other hand, while he, like Richardson

and Austen, first sets his *Portrait* as a bildungsroman and then allows the marriage plot to mute his heroine's journey of self-development, he also, ultimately, empowers the heroine as an author, allowing her self-expression to continue. By doing so, I claim, he resolves the tension between the bildungsroman and romance that Richardson's and Austen's novels explore; consequently, James rewrites the traditional plot of the nineteenth century novel. As Isabel constructs a counter-narrative to her marriage plot, she, I believe, becomes an author. Accordingly, as I will prove, based on the three novels, the female author gradually acquires more power than her predecessor, even though the power is limited. What is more, while all three novels celebrate female autonomy and subjectivity, they also show their constraints and their failures. As I will demonstrate in this work, what we learn from seeing Pamela, Emma and Isabel side by side is that the concept of female authorship is intertwined with the paradoxical position of women, as well as the position of authors, in the eighteenth and nineteenth century: the tension between self-expression and convention and the tension between the ability and the impossibility of controlling language. As Richardson begins this debate in the 1740s, and Austen continues and complicates it in the early nineteenth century, James, over sixty years after Austen and almost over a century after Richardson, completes the debate. His novel, I argue, ends with a triumph of female authorship, and this triumph is made possible not only by Isabel's prior delusion that she was an author of her own life, but also by the struggles of her two literary predecessors. And, since authorship in these three novels is closely related to power and self-development, some of the big questions I will try to answer in this work are: 1) how do Richardson, Austen and James represent female agency, or, as I will also refer to it, femininity, as a tool of power? 2) Why do Richardson, Austen and James empower their heroines as authors and then, seemingly, punish them for this power? 3) Why does the marriage plot discredit self-

expression? 4) What do the tensions between how language is used in these novels reveal about authorship and about language in general? 5) And finally, what do Richardson, Austen and James show us about heroines in the eighteenth and nineteenth century British fiction? Before I begin to explore those questions, I will first provide relevant historical and cultural background for my argument.

Context

In his essay titled “What is an Author?,” Michel Foucault traces the history of authorship. Anonymous texts, he informs us, were common until the seventeenth or early eighteenth century when what he calls the “author function” became central to the work itself. As he explains, discourse used to be an act, but once “a system of ownership for text” appeared, including author’s rights and publication rights, at the end of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, what also became prevalent was “the possibility of transgression” (108-109). In other words, according to Foucault, writing became dangerous. Not coincidentally then, the rise of the novel in Britain is generally associated with the early eighteenth century. In fact, because novels belong to the popular culture these days, it is difficult to imagine that the novel as a genre did not exist until the end of the seventeenth-century. Before then, the word “fiction” was a synonym for deception, and the novel genre was at first regarded as corruptive. This is why, even during the time of the rise of the novel when Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding and Daniel Defoe were canonized as the first novelists, they prefaced their work with a “truth claim,” trying to convince the readers that their work was based on true events. According to the critic Ian Watt, one of the main characteristics of a novel is “formal realism,” which he defines as portrayal of “an authentic account of the actual experience of individuals” (*The Rise of the Novel* 27). Writing in 1957, Watt adds that “the majority of readers in the last two hundred years have found in the novel the

literary form which most closely satisfies their wishes for a close correspondence between life and art” (33). In other words, the main characteristic of the novel is that it represents life. Just like the novel emerged as a marginalized genre in Richardson’s time, was increasingly accepted in Austen’s time and given full status in mainstream print culture by James’ time, so do those three writers, by portraying their heroines as authors, explore the progression of authorship between 1740 and 1881. For example, Isabel Archer’s authorial power at the end of James’ novel, however limited it may be, reflects, I claim, the changes in the history of authorship in the mid-nineteenth century. As Michael Gorra, the author of *Portrait of a Novel: Henry James and the Making of an American Masterpiece*, points out, the publication of magazines like the *Atlantic* and *Macmillan*, opened in the 1850s, led to the serialization of novels, making them more accessible to the general public. As a result, the serialization of novels increased the authors’ popularity and cemented the author’s role as that of a legitimate voice on culture, politics and society.

Additionally, each of the three writers whose work I discuss influenced what the novel genre would be for their successors. What distinguishes Richardson from his predecessors is that in *Pamela*, as Watt notes, he was the first writer to introduce unity through “a single plot of courtship” (140). Also, Watt attributes *Pamela*’s popularity to the fact that “Richardson’s novel represents the first complete confluence of two previously opposed traditions in fiction; it combines ‘high’ and ‘low’ motives, and even more important, it portrays conflict between the two” (172): romance, with high class heroines who represented female chastity, and other fictional tales featuring low class heroines whose chastity tended to be compromised. This is why, Watt explains, for a servant-girl to see chastity as her “supreme value” was unprecedented (172). Similarly, in *A Natural Passion*, Margaret Anne Doody, also a literary critic, claims that

“In Richardson’s period, there is something unorthodox, almost something essentially ‘low’ in a man’s bothering to write a novel about a woman” (15). Doody explains that the English female novel of this time either involved seduction and rape, or courtship. While the first category served a moral purpose (18), novels of courtship, which depicted women as virtuous and obedient, resembled conduct books. Doody claims that even though those female novels did not rebel against patriarchy, they did present women in a new light by showing that women’s experience can be important (21). Accordingly, Doody notes that in *Pamela* Richardson rewrites the love stories written by his female predecessors and contemporaries (24). I agree, but also suggest that in rewriting those stories, Richardson empowers his heroine to rebel against the traditional plot of seduction/ rape and that of courtship, and that, as a result, by placing his heroine between the bildungsroman and romance, he points to the wide gap between those two plot alternatives for literary heroines.

On the other hand, while the critic William Warner, in “Hegemony in Literary History,” acknowledges that Defoe and Richardson are considered the fathers of the novel, he questions the very notion of a literary canon, adding that Richardson and Fielding wrote about the same topics as their female, often marginalized, predecessors, Aphra Behn, Eliza Haywood and Delariviere Manley, in amatory fiction: namely, about “the adventures of the protagonist as developed through a story of love, passion and (sometimes) marriage” (580). While Richardson and Fielding wanted to “introduce ‘new species’ of English novels by displacing the popular novels, they dismissed, according to Warner, the novels written in the six decades before 1740” (577). Warner thus asks why it was Richardson’s and Fielding’s novels, and not the other ones, that became famous and tagged as “models” for future novels. In trying to explain the phenomenon, Warner points out that the elevation of the novel depended on two events: the

literary market and “a hegemonic articulatory ‘moment’” during which Richardson and Fielding made it a part of their agenda to promote their work (579). While, in my subsequent chapter on *Pamela*, I will demonstrate how Richardson’s male character, Mr. B, overwrites Pamela using similar methods, for now it will suffice to say that, as Warner implies, Richardson and Fielding were not necessarily better writers than their female predecessors, but they were better prepared to meet their readers’ needs; additionally, they were better at selling their work to the public.

Similarly, Jane Austen, in her own way, revises the novels of her predecessors, including Richardson’s *Pamela*. While literary criticism has traditionally categorized novels of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century as either dangerously liberal and pro-French Revolution or as conservative and thus anti-Jacobin, Austen, as well as some of her contemporaries, do not fit into those categories. As Claudia Johnson writes in *Jane Austen: Women, Politics, and the Novel*, Austen and her contemporaries “developed stylistic techniques which enabled them to use politically charged material in an exploratory and interrogative, rather than hortatory and prescriptive, manner” (xxi). This was necessary, in part, to avoid associations with the scandalous Mary Wollstonecraft, whose pro-feminist arguments for women’s rights in *Vindication of Rights of a Woman* were followed, after her death, by a publication of her sex life and suicide attempts. What is more, as Johnson adds, “the fear of being branded a treasonous Jacobin obliged moderately progressive novelists to appear more conservative than they really were” (xxiii). If, as Johnson says, after the French Revolution women’s lives became a political issue, then Austen’s novels place her in the center of the debate. In *Jane Austen and the Province of Womanhood*, Alison Sulloway adds that, despite the commonly established belief that Jane Austen ignored politics in her writing, she, in fact, followed Wollstonecraft’s footsteps, but with a less radical agenda. Sulloway argues that “the implications of ‘the woman question,’ as it was

often called, shape the plots, invigorate the satire, inform the emblems, and reverberate in the dialogues and the authorial voices throughout Austen's fiction" (5). While liberal female writers, such as Wollstonecraft and Charlotte Smith, demanded reform for women's rights, including equality and education, the challenge for more progressive-minded writers was how to incorporate social criticism and arguments for women's rights without fully embracing the radical (at the time) ideas of Wollstonecraft. According to Johnson, Austen, alongside with Elisabeth Hamilton, Elisabeth Inchbald, Maria Edgeworth and Fanny Burney, uses subversive techniques to "advance modest but distinctly reformist positions" (22) about women's rights (23). For example, by questioning the notion of a perfect woman as subordinate to men, Austen challenges paternalistic authority. While Johnson notes that Austen dismantles conservative myths by depicting her female protagonists as "antithetical contrasts and simplicities" (23)—Johnson exemplifies this claim by discussing the two Dashwood sisters from *Sense and Sensibility*—I would like to intervene by adding that, in *Emma*, Austen creates a heroine who embodies contradictions not only outside of herself, but also, and more importantly, within herself. By depicting Emma ironically, as an author whose power to create meaning is undercut, Austen not only subversively enters the political debate of her time about women's rights, but she also exposes the tension between the power of an author versus the power of discourse. Henry James further complicates this project.

While James' legacy includes not only works of fiction but also literary criticism—Dorothy J. Hale credits James's Prefaces to be "generally regarded as the foundational documents of the Anglo-American novel theory" ("Henry James and the Invention of Novel Theory" 79)—what he did for the English novel genre is of equal, if not greater, importance. Although, as Gorra points out, James criticized Flaubert for *Emma Bovary's* "poverty of

consciousness” (202), he did not agree with the motto of English fiction writing of the eighteenth and nineteenth century: that it must be “fit for young ladies to read” (194), implying that in his work James would challenge certain rules of propriety, especially as they applied to women. While many Victorian novels, *Gorra* reminds us, were multiplotted, to accomplish his goal, James returns to the unity of plot that Watt credits Richardson with and that Austen continues in *Emma*. James, for example, admired George Elliot, but he also thought that her *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda* “marked the limits of old-fashioned English storytelling,” because of “too many seemingly separate plots,” which, according to James, distracted the reader from the novels’ core (63). Consequently, like Richardson and Austen, James places his heroine at the center of his narrative. However, as I will demonstrate, he also rewrites his predecessors’ plots by empowering his heroine in the end of the novel: in other words, I argue, James uses the tension between the bildungsroman and romance that Richardson and Austen expose and, while pretending to follow the conventional plot of romance, he allows his heroine to remain in the bildungsroman.

What is more, to further illustrate how Richardson, Austen and James present their heroines as simultaneously powerful and powerless authors to explore the paradoxical status of women in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, I will discuss women’s place in history and in literature during this time period. Accordingly, in Richardson’s time, as Watt states, the rise of the novel was, among other things, connected with “the much greater freedom of women in modern society,” which was greater in England than in other European countries (143). While, as Watt reports, women’s freedom in England dates back to the Elizabethan times, in the eighteenth century it was strengthened by the rise of individualism. For example, economic individualism weakened the parent-child relationship and led to the development of “a new kind of family

system” based on marriage as an autonomous unit socially and economically, separate from parents. Nonetheless, in the eighteenth century, women, according to Roman law, were ruled by patriarchy: the head of the household was the father and later then husband. For example, a wife could not file for divorce but a husband could (146-147). Similarly, women could not achieve economic individualism outside of marriage. Even though Watt claims that no woman on record in the eighteenth century supported herself only by her pen (151)—and Ann Radcliffe, who was a professional author, did—opportunities for female authorship of any kind, whether literary or metaphorical, were limited, thus contributing to the conflict Richardson, as well as Austen and James, explore. What is more, according to Watt, the rise of individualism in the eighteenth century complicated women’s lives: while their choice of a husband determined their fate—spinsters, for example, started to be looked down upon—it was also more difficult to marry, because marriage was seen as a business transaction. For example, women needed dowry (154). Accordingly, Watt argues that, when Pamela, a maid, marries her empower, she “symbolized the aspirations of all the women in the reading public” who were affected by those changes (154). She also, as I contend, represents the cultural and historical paradoxes of femininity: the heroine can be successful as an author or as a wife, but not as both.

The critics Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar take a more feminist approach to those paradoxes in *The Madwoman in the Attic*, which they begin with a question: “Is a pen a metaphorical penis?” (3). They add that in patriarchal Western culture “the text’s author is a father, a progenitor, a procreator, an aesthetic patriarch whose pen is an instrument of generative power like his penis” (6). Women, as a creation written by men, are their properties, imprisoned in their power (13). Since, according to Gilbert and Gubar, the male author creates his female characters, but he also “silences them by depriving them of autonomy” (15), the challenge for

women is to “escape” from such oppressive male texts. Hence, the authors claim that “a woman writer must examine, assimilate, and transcend the extreme images of ‘angel’ and ‘monster’ which male authors have generated for her” (17), including the Victorian angel in the house, a paradigm of angelic perfection and submission outlined in conduct books of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. “Whether she becomes an *objet d’art* or a saint (...), it is the surrender of the self which dooms her both to death and to heaven” (25), Gilbert and Gubar comment on a woman’s fate during this time period. They argue that Lilith, the first woman and Adam’s wife according to Jewish folklore, represents female authorship, as well as the steep price women have to pay for that authorship: Lilith, as Gilbert and Gubar relate, refuses to submit to Adam’s will and chooses the company of demons instead. Soon, God gives her an ultimatum: return to Adam or her demon children will be killed. In response, Lilith, “who preferred punishment to patriarchal marriage,” enacts her revenge on both Adam and God by injuring male babies. Because of her rebellion, Lilith will forever suffer. To Gilbert and Gubar, Lilith’s “one woman revolution... reveals, then, how difficult it is for women to even attempt the pen” (35). They add that the story emphasizes two bad options for women: submission, “which is a life of silence, a life that has no pen and no story,” or rebellion, which must be “silenced” with punishment (36). Moreover, Gilbert and Gubar suggest that a female author “must redefine the terms of her socialization” (49) before she can define herself. In other words, she must confront the images that men use to depict her so that she can reinvent herself. This process, according to Gilbert and Gubar, is painful, because women writers see their gender as a “painful obstacle” or “debilitating inadequacy” (50). This causes, among other things, alienation and loneliness. All these elements make the women’s effort to be a writer, her effort of self-definition, different from men’s effort, whose place in the literary tradition is already established. Since, as Gilbert and Gubar argue,

literary women have always faced “degrading options” when they tried to be artists, the literature produced by female authors has been marked with “an obsessive interest in these limited options,” as well as in “obsessive imagery of confinement” (64). For example, the rebellious nineteenth century writers dealt with their socially prescribed subordination by presenting themselves as male—George Sand and George Elliot by using male pseudonyms (65)—which allowed them to enter into a sphere of male authors, but also triggered an identity crisis. And yet, according to Gilbert and Gubar, despite the limited options for female writers in the nineteenth century, some, like Jane Austen, Mary Shelley, Emily Bronte, “managed the difficult task of achieving true female literary authority by simultaneously conforming to and subverting patriarchal literary standards” (73). Accordingly, women in the nineteenth and twentieth century had to face the “images of women inherited from male literature,” especially the angel and monster ones, to revise them. (76) Even when those female authors do not overtly criticize the male culture, “they obsessively create characters who enact their own, covert authorial anger” (77). By projecting their anger not into their female protagonists but to “mad or monstrous women,” Gilbert and Gubar claim, “female authors dramatize their own self-division, their desire both to accept the patriarchal society and to reject them” (78). Even though, I suggest, Richardson’s Pamela, Austen’s Emma and James’ Isabel are neither mad nor monstrous, the three writers represent female agency as self-conflicted in the context of the above paradoxes.

Similarly, in *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer*, Mary Poovey, highlights the paradoxes of femininity in the context of female authorship in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Writing about writing about Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley and Jane Austen, she claims that their struggle to assert themselves professionally was dependent on

“the social and psychological force of this idea of proper - or innate – femininity. Because gender roles are part of familial, political, social and economic relationships, the terms in which femininity is publicly formulated dictates, in large measure, the way femaleness is subjectively experienced” (x). Poovey explains that a woman writing during the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, a time when self-assertion was considered “unladylike,” revealed contradictions in propriety (xv). Furthermore, Poovey points out, as the eighteenth century marked the political and economic triumph of the English middle class—and women’s duties at home supported capitalist values—women internalized their duties into their desires (10). And yet, this process created a conflict between women’s desire to perform their duties well and their desire for self-assertion. Poovey thus defines the paradoxes of propriety: by the end of the eighteenth century, femininity was called innate but it also had to be improved, and the increase in conduct materials after 1740 promoted the latter (15). Poovey also defines women’s emotional responsiveness as ambivalent: a woman’s imagination and sensibility, if properly governed, could be used for social good; if, however, if exposed to temptations, it could degenerate into sexual appetite (18). To Poovey, the notion of modesty was also a paradox because it revealed and concealed sexual desire (23). Chastity, on the other hand, had to be displayed negatively, by not speaking, by not showing desire. And finally, marriage was the only acceptable occupation for women, as opposed to writing since the latter occupation challenged male authority (36). One way that female authors subversively promoted their desire for self-expression was, according to Poovey, by publishing their work anonymously or for friends only. Poovey points out that, even though Wollstonecraft moved to London in 1787 to become “the first of a new genius—a self supporting professional writer” (55), her imagination was soon linked to female sexuality (77), and thus discredited. Consequently, Poovey argues that in the eighteenth century female

autonomy was short lived as the ultimate goal was to be a Proper Lady; this goal, she adds, could be accomplished through marriage (113). Richardson, Austen and James, I argue, employ the above paradoxes to highlight the contradictions between female need for self-expression and the role of a conduct book wife prescribed to them by society.

On yet another hand, in *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* offers a different kind of feminist alternative to interpreting the fate of female heroines in the literature of eighteenth and nineteenth century: she sees the rise of the domestic novel, a novel for women, as the driving force in the rise of the novel. She also places the domestic novel outside of the realm of politics, and thus independent of men. To Armstrong, the rise of the domestic woman is a major event in political history (3), because a woman like Pamela had authority over “the household, leisure time, courtship procedures, and kingship relations,” as well as authority to develop “the most basic qualities of human identity” (3). Armstrong adds that novels that focused on romance and marriage actually began searching for “what was female” (5). In *Pamela*, Armstrong points to “the transfer of erotic desire from Pamela’s body to her words” (6) during the infamous rape scene. What is more, as “written representations of the self allowed the modern individual to become an economic and psychological entity,” the domestic women gained more power. In fact, Armstrong claims that the history of British fiction is based on the “empowering of the middle classes in England through the dissemination of a new female ideal” (9). Armstrong also points out a new “gendered form of subjectivity,” which, according to her, first emerged as a feminine narrative in literature for women, then spread to nineteenth century culture and defined individual desire and identity (14). Armstrong adds that the cultural roles we associate with women, such as mother, nurse, and teacher, “have been as instrumental in bringing the new middle classes into power and maintaining their dominance as

all the economic take-offs and political breakthroughs we automatically attribute to men” (26). Consequently, Armstrong, who believes that the novel “exercised tremendous power by producing oppositions that translated the complex and competing ways of representing human identity into a single binary opposition represented by male versus female” (253), opposes any victimization of women in literature. On the contrary, she believes that modern culture empowered middle-class women, (254) and gave birth to a new woman: the domestic entity. Armstrong explains that it was the domestic woman who in the eighteenth and nineteenth century was depicted as the only one capable of beginning and inspiring the process of creating a modern household, in which different individuals had to be accommodated (258). Similarly, in *How Novels Think: The Limits of Individualism from 1719-1900*, Nancy Armstrong, citing *Pamela* as an example, argues that the history of the novel and history of the modern individual are the same (3). In the seventeenth and eighteenth century, Armstrong distinguishes between a social contract written by men and a sexual contract written by women. She sees Pamela as a woman who acts accordingly to her sexual contract: the heroine is free to marry whom she wants; when she marries up, she elevates her family and reforms the libertine practices of the ruling class (42-43). On the other hand, “Austen’s novel marks the simultaneous modernization of the individual and the maturation of the novel” (7). (James, as I will argue, completes this project.) Austen creates exemplary subjects who, according to Armstrong, reflect the state of self-expression and self-government in accord. She claims that eighteenth-century Enlightenment intellectuals, Austen included, curb individuality to guarantee full citizenship (48). Armstrong also notes that Victorian literature features a subject divided against itself, because desire essential to growth poses a threat to individuality (18). Accordingly, more self-government meant limiting or killing self-expression (54). In Victorian fiction, in the context of the French

Revolution and the rise of capitalism, self-governance and stability had to win (54-55). And yet, as acting for the greater good was promoted, a new ambivalence emerged: individuality became both attractive and loathsome (58). Soon, excessive individualism turned out to be destructive (61). Hence, as Armstrong suggests, extreme individualism in female characters in Victorian fiction had to be punished (79). Armstrong also notes a new conflict: between femaleness, associated with expressive individualism, and femininity, associated with the domestic woman (80). She explains that this duality was welcome in the eighteenth century but in the following century it symbolized a contradiction, giving birth to two separate characters: while individualism in men meant socioeconomic success; in women, it needed to be punished. Only the domestic woman could be easily managed. Ultimately, Victorian literature, according to Armstrong, focused on the modern individual who keeps their savage side in check. The basis of one's identity depended on how one redirected this savage side to a social good (81). While I disagree with Armstrong about the power she associates with the domestic woman—as I argue, domesticity in the novels I discuss is synonymous with the end of self-expression and with the embrace of the marriage plot—Armstrong's above account of the history of the novel adds another layer to understanding my claim about the ways in which Richardson, Austen and James, when read together, enter a conversation about the conflict between female individualism and female domesticity.

And finally, since the implications of this work center around British literature, it is important to point out that the purpose of reading the American-born Henry James (who nonetheless spent most of his life in Europe, especially in England) alongside his British predecessors is not to prove that James does not belong to the American canon, but rather to show how he completes the project that Richardson begins and that Austen continues—of

writing about female authorship in the context of the paradoxes of representing female agency. Because of a woman's limited freedom to go and do what she wants, "woman... can never be a complete artist" (Gorra 175), Constance Fenimore Woolson, a close friend of the author (rumor has it, as Gorra informs, that she was in fact in love with him and that she committed suicide when he stood her up in Venice), wrote to him in a letter. In *Portrait*, Henry James challenges his friend's, as well as, to some degree, Richardson's and Austen's, assertion, but he first tortures his heroine with challenging her notion of autonomy and with an unhappy marriage. Writing in the late nineteenth century, James can give his heroine more freedom than his predecessors because women's status in society has shifted since 1815, and certainly since 1740. The feminist movement, which promoted women's rights and demanded the right to vote, was, by 1880, in full bloom. And yet, the paradoxes remained. In *The Portrait of a Lady: Maiden, Woman, and Heroine*, Lyall H. Powers states that the conflict that Isabel faces is between "freedom and necessity—or rather the conflict between them: one cannot hope to enjoy absolute freedom." (16). Powers adds that James' work "argues, implicitly, that true maturity consists in examining life and oneself honestly, in accepting the necessary limitations and exercising one's consequent freedom fully (17). Similarly, in "The Heiress of All Ages," Rahv notes the irony surrounding James' heroine: "her wealth is at once the primary source of her so lavishly pictured 'greatness' and 'liberty' and the source of the evil she invokes in others" (45). On the other hand, Rahv views the marriage theme of an "eminent new-world bride to an equally eminent old-world groom," even if it doesn't go well in *Portrait*, as "symbolic of the reconciliation of their competing cultures," Europe and America (47). While many other critics focus on James' international plots which, according to them, feature American innocence and European tradition, my reading of *Portrait* presents Isabel as a heroine who struggles to maintain her

bildungsroman status instead of morphing into a heroine from a conventional romance. James, as I will demonstrate, employs the paradoxes of female agency while simultaneously transferring them to a broader context of the struggle of both female and male protagonists: the conflict between freedom and its limitations.

My Claim Restated

While critics have made numerous associations between Richardson and Austen, and while some critics have acknowledged, however reluctantly at times, Austen's influence on James—in *The Portrait of a Lady: Maiden, Woman, and Heroine* by Lyall H. Powers names Emma, as well as *Jane Eyre*, Flaubert's *Emma Bovary*, and George Elliot's Gwendolyn Harleth, and Dorothea Brooke, as Isabel Archer's predecessors—no link that I know of exists between Richardson and James, nor about the three authors read side by side. Reading *Pamela*, *Emma* and *The Portrait of a Lady* in conversation with each other, I argue, reveals that these heroines, in their own specific way, tell us about how the novels wrestle with the idea of female agency. Representing the heroines as authors allows the three writers to explore the paradoxes of femininity (rebellion versus submission), authorship (authorial control of language versus the power of discourses), and the novel (self-expression versus marriage plot conformity). In all three novels, as I will demonstrate in subsequent chapters, the heroines lose their authorial power, whether it was real or imagined, when they pursue romance. And yet, Richardson complicates the notion of a happy ending by transforming his rebellious heroine into a conduct book paradigm. Similarly, Austen's use of irony in the end of *Emma* creates tension between the heroine's subversive potential and the "happy" resolution of the novel. Finally, James resolves this tension by empowering his heroine to remain in the bildungsroman, allowing her to rewrite the marriage plot of the eighteenth and the nineteenth century. By granting his heroine the status of an author, James himself rewrites Richardson's and Austen's marriage plots.

In fact, because all three writers portray their heroines as powerful women, they revise the conventional romance plots of their predecessors. Even while the marriage plot disempowers Pamela, Emma and Isabel, the tension that remains between the heroine's self-expression and convention in *Pamela* and in *Emma* suggests that the happy ending is misleading. Moreover, James completes what Richardson and Austen started by empowering his heroine in the end of the novel by having her acknowledge that the romance plot is no longer suitable for a woman with a mind of her own. While the ending of *Pamela* and *Emma* seems conventional—both heroines marry and become exemplary wives—the two novels, I will prove, nonetheless transcend the conventional plot. To do so, I will use *Writing beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writers* by Rachel Blau DuPlessis as a reference. DuPlessis suggests that twentieth-century women writers such as Olive Schreiner, Virginia Woolf, Dorothy Richardson and Adrienne Rich reexamine and delegitimize the romance plots of their predecessors. She notes that in nineteenth century fiction there is a disconnect between narrative discourse—a quest for development, which she also refers to as the *Bildung*—and resolution—happy ending, marriage plot. “Once upon a time, the end, the rightful end, of women in novels was social—successful courtship, marriage—or judgmental of her sexual and social failure—death” (1), DuPlessis explains, adding that in nineteenth century fiction *Bildung* and romance, even if they coexist during the narrative, cannot do so at resolution. This contradiction, according to DuPlessis, leads to “an ending in which one part of that contradiction, usually quest or *Bildung*, is set aside or repressed, whether by marriage or by death (3-4). According to DuPlessis, twentieth century women writers resolve the contradiction by rewriting the narrative and presenting “a different set of choices” (4) to women. These choices include female bonds and sibling bonds and parent-child bonds, as well as homosexual and bisexual bonds, among

others. “As a narrative pattern, the romance plot muffles the main female character” whereas writing beyond the ending reflects a “critical dissent from the dominant narrative” (5). This process, DuPlessis suggests, begins when the author realizes that they are “outside the terms of this novel’s script,” (6), outside the conventional plots of romance in which woman’s happiness depends on a marriage. Even though DuPlessis writes about twentieth century female authors, her argument is relevant to mine. As I claim, since Richardson, Austen and James present their heroines as authors and simultaneously challenge their authorship, they create and explore the tension between Bildung and romance DuPlessis refers to. This tension, as I see it, is resolved by James when he subversively follows the marriage plot only to reveal his heroine’s final rejection of thereof, which allows her to continue her quest for self-expression. Isabel, I contend, becomes an author at the end of the novel because she realizes that she can be, to echo DuPlessis, outside the script of romance. To further demonstrate my claim, I will also, echoing W.E.B. Du Bois, introduce the term “multiple consciousness.” Du Bois, writing about the plight of African-Americans, defines “double-consciousness” as debilitating because blacks, according to him, cannot help but see themselves through the lens of those in power. He says, “It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity” (“Strivings of the Negro People”). I, on the other hand, suggest that a female author can be successful precisely through having not only double, but, in fact, *multiple-consciousness* and using it as a tool of empowerment. Once the heroine of the English novel can see herself through the eyes of those or that having power over her—namely, the marriage plot—she can transcend convention and explore other possibilities for self-expression. It is this quest for what I refer to as multiple-consciousness that ultimately binds Richardson’s Pamela, Austen’s Emma and James’

Isabel together. As Rachel Brownstein puts it, “To want to become a heroine, to have a sense of the possibility of being one, is to develop the beginnings of what feminists call a ‘raised’ consciousness” (*Becoming a Heroine* xix). This state of raised consciousness is, according to Brownstein, liberating, but, as Richardson, Austen and James reveal, it can also be dangerous. James, finally, shows how a heroine can live with the danger. It is this danger, I will argue, that the three writers explore, expose, and exaggerate. Writing about several nineteenth century authors, including Jane Austen, Charlotte Bronte, George Elliot, and Henry James, Powers argues that, by revealing their heroines triumphs and failures of self-representation, those writers leave us with portraits of women who “wanted more than to be a mother and a wife or a spinster.” As such, Powers argues, they anticipated the contemporary concern with the ‘new woman,’ who was beginning to assert herself as a personage to be reckoned with during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and the woman’s movement for reform” (8). Although Powers does not mention Richardson here, his statement, I believe, is also true about *Pamela*.

What is more, as Richardson, Austen, and James present their heroines’ paradoxical quest for self-representation, they also explore the paradoxes of being an author. As Foucault states, the author is a “certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses,” adding that “the author does not precede the work” (“What is an Author?” 119), contradicting the dictionary definition of authorship according to which the author creates meaning. Instead, he suggests that an author is a product of a text. Foucault’s claim that an author is constructed through discourse, and not the other way around, complicates the notion of authorship in general, suggesting that authors are not in full control of language. As Richardson, Austen and James explore the tension between the notion of an author as generator of text and the Foucaultian notion of an author, they represent the struggle of all writers, as well as the

changes in the status of authorship in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. And yet, it is by presenting their heroines as female authors that those three writers reveal the paradoxes of being an author, a woman, and a heroine.

Foucault further claims that the author function does not refer to an individual only “since it can give rise to several selves, to different subjects” (113). He adds that in the context of a discourse, “one can be the author of a theory, tradition, or discipline...” (113), a position the philosopher calls “transdiscursive.” He further explains that in the nineteenth century, in Europe, “founders of discursivity” emerged: they are, according to Foucault, more than the authors of their own works, because they create the possibility of creating other texts. While this confirms that an author’s discourse can exceed an author, it also suggests that a discourse can become a powerful medium of expression. Accordingly, I suggest that Pamela’s and Emma’s authorship is, to borrow from Foucault, transdiscursive, and that James’ portrayal of Isabel at the end of the novel implies that she is, to use Foucault’s terminology, a founder of discursivity. After all, in good literature more is at stake than just the adventures of the protagonist; in this case, the author-heroines, though they cannot control language, make powerful statements about authorship and about female agency. As Brownstein states, “The protagonist of the English novel is at the center of a web of questions about how much her fate is just a woman’s, or characteristically a heroine’s, or authentically her own” (xix). As the three heroines grapple with those questions, so do the readers. As such, the heroines’ plight for self-development in the midst of the paradoxes of being a woman and of being an author allow us to rethink our ideas of authorship, female agency, and the English novel.

Armstrong expresses a similar sentiment when she states that “the modern individual was first and foremost a woman” (*Desire and Domestic Fiction* 8). Although Armstrong places the

power in the hands of the domestic woman, I will show that this power—of self-representation, of femininity, of creating one’s identity—lies in acquiring multiple-consciousness. It is only when the heroine of an English novel rejects the marriage plot and confronts the multiple plots that shape her life that she can become an author of one’s own fate, and even then, she can do so in a limited capacity. As Richardson, Austen and James demonstrate, independent-minded women in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, because of their secondary status in patriarchal culture, are in a particularly poignant position to fight for authorship in many shapes and forms. By rebelling against the status quo and by insisting on their right to authorship, their quest for self-representation is transdiscursive. What Richardson, Austen and James create is more than heroines who are, or at least who strive to be, authors of their own narratives; they create three distinct literary, cultural and psychological portraits of a woman’s quest for self-definition.

Roadmap

In Chapter 1, I will demonstrate how Pamela’s portrayal as an author in the first half of the novel and her subsequent embrace of the marriage plot reveals the tension between the heroine’s quest for self-expression and the conventional plot of romance. I will argue that as Pamela loses her authorship in the second half of the novel and Mr. B gradually achieves full authorial victory over her life, the narrative shifts from the heroine’s quest for development to suppressing that quest in order to make room for the marriage plot. Additionally, I will explore Mr. B’s relationship to Pamela as a reader, as a rapist, and as a writer, revealing the paradoxes of authorship: while language can be used as a tool of power, Pamela’s writing also suggests that she cannot control language. Finally, I will explore the ending of the novel. The fact that Richardson gives his heroine, a woman of the lower class, the power of authorship, is revolutionary and suggests female victory. However, when he takes her power away, he asserts the patriarchal status quo, both in the literary market and in society: the victory of male

authorship. And yet, despite the novel's ending, I will demonstrate that the disjunction between Pamela's rebellious potential and her submissive behavior as Mr. B's wife nonetheless encourages the readers to be suspicious of the heroine's "happy ever after."

In Chapter 2, I will discuss how Austen's portrayal of her heroine in *Emma* both empowers her through granting her the status of an author and disempowers her because of Austen's ironic depiction of the heroine. While Emma not only tries to manipulate the lives of others, but she also frequently overpowers the narrator's voice, thus kidnapping the novel itself, Austen nonetheless challenges her heroine's claim to authorship through the use of free indirect discourse, suggesting, similarly to Richardson, that individuals cannot control language. The ending of the novel, on the other hand, reveals the tension between the heroine's self-expression and her agreement to wed. In fact, Austen allows Emma to have "rather too much way" for most of the novel; by abruptly taking the heroine's power away, Emma, on the surface, resembles her predecessors and contemporaries—she embraces the marriage plot. And yet, I argue, Austen's ironic depiction of her heroine highlights the limited choices that women had in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. What is more, since Emma acquires self-knowledge and maintains some of her autonomy in the end of the novel, Austen, I claim, suggests that Emma is not a tragic heroine. After all, she takes a necessary step to gaining multiple-consciousness.

In Chapter 3, I will argue that, while James portrays Isabel as an author in the early stages of the novel, he simultaneously challenges her self-proclaimed autonomy by setting her up ironically. The heroine must, I claim, be naïve and lose the limited subjectivity she has in order to become an author. Next, when Isabel embraces the marriage plot, James sets the novel up as a romance; and yet, I argue, he then empowers his heroine by portraying her as a true author. James, I will demonstrate, allows his heroine to follow into Emma's footsteps, and to

then surpass her predecessor by rejecting the marriage plot as the plot that defines her. Accordingly, James rewrites the conventional romance by transforming it into the bildungsroman. As James grants his heroine an unlimited quest for self-expression, he transforms the debate that Richardson and Austen begin—about the tension between the bildungsroman and romance, and about the tension between an author with and an author without control—by opening a new set of alternatives for female heroines in British fiction and beyond.

In his Preface to *The Portrait of a Lady*, Henry James famously states, “The house of fiction has in short not one window, but a million—a number of possible windows not to be reckoned, rather; every one of which has been pierced, or is still pierceable, in its vast front, by the need of the individual vision and by the pressure of the individual will.” What we see, he continues, “the human scene, is the ‘choice of subject’; the pierced aperture, either broad or balconied or slit-like and low-browed, is the ‘literary form’; but they are, singly or together, as nothing without the posted presence of the watcher—the consciousness of the artist” (xxvi). Although James speaks here about his own authorship and proposes his theory on the art of fiction-writing, I apply it to the heroine of the English novel. It is the birth and the rise of this consciousness, I will argue, that Richardson, Austen and James explore, and that the latter fully develops. In this work, I suggest that reading the three novels side by side, and that reading them in the context of the paradoxes of femininity and authorship, reveal new ways of thinking about female agency, authorship and the eighteenth and nineteenth century British heroine.

Chapter I

Conflicting Narratives and Conflicting Selves in Samuel Richardson's *Pamela, Or Virtue Rewarded*

Rumor has it that when some of Samuel Richardson's contemporaries read about Pamela's marriage to her master, they rang church bells to celebrate the event, as was the custom when a real wedding was announced. The *Pamela* frenzy was not only sparked by its unusual plot, but also by the author's aggressive media campaign which produced Pamela cups and Pamela portraits. What is more, Richardson's 1740 epistolary novel, a tale of a teenage maid who says "no" to her aristocratic boss until he wins her heart, ignited not only enthusiasm, but also contempt. As Ian Watt informs us, two parties formed, especially among female readers: Pamelists, who sang praises of the virtuous heroine and who wanted to follow her example, and Antipamelists, who condemned her as a hypocrite who entraps a wealthy man through her cunning schemes (175). In fact, *Pamela's* popularity contributed not only to Richardson's ascent as an author, but also to the rise of authorship in general: while the novel as a genre was marginalized in the seventeenth century, *Pamela's* impact on its readers reflected the genre's growing status in print culture. Nonetheless, it was necessary for Richardson to preface his work with a truth-claim—he informed us on the title page that the book was "a narrative which has its foundation in Truth and Nature," in an effort to ensure readers that the work was based on true events. What is more, to avoid association with the amatory fiction of his time, regarded as scandalous and sinful, Richardson announced that his novel's agenda was "to cultivate the Principles of Virtue and Religion in the Minds of the Youth of Both Sexes." Pamela, the young heroine, is indeed virtuous, but, more importantly, in the first half of the novel, she rejects her master's authority and asserts her right to tell her own story through letters. As such, she is, as I will argue, depicted as an author. And yet, she has competition: Mr. B, her employer, generates a

counter-narrative of seducing the heroine, and it is his authorial vision that ultimately wins. However, while many read the novel as a tale of social mobility and as a celebration of the female voice, the ending of *Pamela*—the protagonist's elevation into the upper classes through her marriage—suggests that she loses her radical, subversive potential that she initially demonstrates. What I define as the heroine's loss of authorship suggests that when a woman constructs and asserts her identity in opposition to a more powerful male, her success can only be temporary.

In this chapter, I will explore Pamela's and Mr. B's relationship to language, both oral and written, and demonstrate how language is linked to power and identity. Pamela, I believe, is an author through letter-writing, which reveals the heroine's autonomous spirit and a unique voice, both of which allow her to construct her selfhood. Undeniably, the maid's insistence on telling her own story is, in the eighteenth century, transgressive for a woman of her class. Furthermore, the fact that a powerless heroine gains power through language suggests the existence of a new type of authority: as the cultural dominance of the church and of the state diminishes, the power of individuals to express their identity through print increases. For Richardson, then, language is a tool of self-expression; Pamela's act of writing demonstrates that writing can be a source of power regardless of one's gender and background. And yet, writing not only represents one's world but can also be persuasive. As the reader gains unlimited access to the heroine's interiority through her letters, the question of whether Pamela's account is subjective, objective, or both, is a legitimate one, especially in the light of Richardson's representation of his heroine as a paradigm of virtue and innocence. In fact, many of Richardson's contemporaries, including Fielding, insisted that the heroine's defense of her chastity was camouflage for her plan to become Mrs. B. While my reading of the novel is less

skeptical, it is nonetheless important to point out that Richardson's use of the epistolary form not only enables him to provide the reader with a first-person account, delivered by a female voice, but also complicates that delivery. Even if Pamela's voice is genuine, doesn't she, nevertheless, persuade the reader, as well as her master, her parents, and her community, to read her story from her subjective perspective? Furthermore, Pamela's discourse of chastity and rebellion produces an effect contrary to her agenda: the more chaste and rebellious the young maid presents herself to be, the more Mr. B desires her. This reveals that Pamela's language, to follow Foucault's notion of authorship, is out of her control. Accordingly, I will suggest that Richardson's novel offers two conflicting ideas of authorship and power: of an author as a creator of meaning and of an author whose text defines him. In *Emma*, Jane Austen will revise Pamela's voice and further complicate it through the use of free independent discourse, also implying that language can be a source of power but also a source of disempowerment; by the time Henry James writes *The Portrait of a Lady*, his response to Richardson and Austen will offer yet another paradox: Isabel's interiority can be both liberating and destructive.

What is more, Richardson's novel presents two conflicting narratives: Pamela's narrative of resistance against her master's attempts to seduce her, and Mr. B's narrative of seduction and conquest. Letter XI, in which Pamela relates the exchange between her and Mr. B, exemplifies this:

Now you will say, all his Wickedness appear'd plainly. I shrugged, and trembled, and was so benumb'd with Terror, that I sunk down, not in a Fit, and yet not myself; and I found myself in his Arms, quite void of strength, and he kissed me two or three times, as if he would have eaten me. – At last I burst from him, and was getting out of the Summer-house; but he held me back, and shut the Door. ...

And he said, I'll do you no Harm, Pamela; don't be afraid of me. I said, I won't stay! ... He was angry, and said, Who would have you otherwise, you foolish Slut! Cease your blubbering! (23-24)

In her letter, Pamela is represented as an author, because she begins to construct the narrative of her life. She also, following the definition of an author from *The Oxford English Dictionary*, originates an idea—that her employer is her aggressor and that he tries to seduce her. In her narrative, Pamela first depicts herself as a powerless victim: she “trembles” and is “void of strength.” Soon, however, when she verbalizes her fear of being “eaten” or consumed by Mr. B, she empowers herself through physical, and then verbal, resistance. And yet, Mr. B almost immediately challenges the heroine’s version of events and originates a counter-narrative: first, he confines her to his space, next, he promises not to hurt her, and finally, he accuses her of “blubbering.” By projecting his good intentions and by discrediting Pamela’s rebellion, he asserts ownership of her authorship. What is more, while he associates Pamela’s disobedience with her language, he appears more powerful than the heroine: after all, he uses both physical force and language against her. By depicting this battle of the sexes in the context of authorial success, Richardson enters into a debate about the novel’s role and place in the eighteenth century literary market. While tales of love and seduction were common in the amatory fiction of Eliza Haywood and Aphra Behn, those women’s novels and stories, because of their popularity in the early part of the century, posed a threat to Richardson’s own authorial vision, as well as to his work. As Warner suggests, when Richardson and Fielding promoted their own work, they discredited the work of their female predecessors. By granting the ultimate authorial victory to his male character, Richardson, we can imply, denies the success of his female competitors as he, simultaneously, rewrites their work. For example, as opposed to Behn’s and Haywood’s episodic

plot, Richardson introduces what Watt calls “a single plot of courtship.” Moreover, he avoids the scandalous nature of amatory fiction by ending his novel with a happy marriage. While the first half of Richardson’s novel offers a narrative of female rebellion against patriarchal authority, the second half of the novel follows the conventional plot of romance. By first depicting Pamela’s struggle to preserve her virtue, and by then depicting Pamela’s and Mr. B’s married life, Richardson asserts his belief that literature should both educate and entertain. And yet, as I will demonstrate, the contrast between Pamela’s rebellious nature and her subsequent submission to her new husband also points to what DuPlessis calls “a disconnect” between narrative discourse, in this case the heroine’s quest for development, and the novel’s resolution. This disconnect, I believe, reveals that the novel explores the tension between the heroine’s authorial power and a woman’s traditional role as a wife. Accordingly, I contend, Richardson begins a debate about female self-expression, a debate that Austen and James will continue.

To demonstrate how Richardson empowers his heroine when he gives her the pen and how he disempowers her when he takes that pen away, I will refer to several prominent literary critics, as well as to Foucault. In Pamela’s case, while the heroine’s poverty, class status, and her gender make her dependent on Mr. B, she asserts herself through writing. By verbalizing resistance to her master, she establishes her own identity. Foucault challenges the notion of power as repressive and argues that power can be used as a tool of constructing one’s identity. He states that power “induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse” (*Power/Knowledge* 119). I will draw on Foucault’s idea to prove how Mr. B’s power over Pamela is productive in Volume I, when Pamela’s self is based on opposing him, because the rebellion allows her to construct her selfhood. However, when in the second half of the novel Pamela marries Mr. B, she becomes more subordinate to him than before, and so does her voice.

Meanwhile, Mr. B's power over her story increases. He becomes an author by first learning to read Pamela and finally by overwriting her. When Pamela falls in love with her oppressor, her identity shatters. This allows Mr. B to insert his own narrative into Pamela's story, and to, subsequently, create a new Pamela: a wife straight out of a conduct book. While in the early stages of the novel Mr. B's power is, to use Foucault's terminology, productive, since it creates an opportunity for Pamela to explore and strengthen her selfhood, Mr. B's power transforms into repression when Pamela's selfhood loses its core. Watt argues that Richardson's prose "aims exclusively at what Locke defined as the proper purpose of language, 'to convey the knowledge of things'" (30). In Pamela's case, however, writing serves a higher purpose—not only to convey the knowledge of the self, but also to construct that self in this process, and to persuade others that she has a right to assert her identity. And yet, after her wedding, Pamela's writing no longer serves as a tool for building her identity. Many critics insist that Pamela's matrimony to her oppressor represents a female victory. In *Desire and Domestic Fiction*, Armstrong claims that Richardson redefines "the desirable female;" she interprets the ending of the novel as a victory of the domestic woman, who achieves power in the household. Similarly, in *A Natural Passion*, Margaret Anne Doody claims that both Pamela and Mr. B are rewarded in the end by true love. Rachel Brownstein expands on their claims in *Becoming a Heroine* by adding that Pamela reaches her full identity not when she marries, but when her community accepts her as a wife of a squire. Ian Watt, in *The Rise of the Novel*, echoes the three female critics by stating that "Pamela's marriage to one so much above her economically and socially is an unprecedented victory for her sex" (159). Contrary to all of those critics, my claim is that Pamela's marriage conditions her fall from authorship, which coincides with the loss of selfhood. Since Pamela's identity is based on opposing her oppressor, when she falls for him, her identity is compromised.

Ultimately, the loss of self coincides with the loss of language. It should come as no surprise that Pamela is often speechless in the later part of the narrative. “I could not speak” (494), she writes in response to Mr. B’s acts of financial generosity. As I will contend, by silencing her voice and overwriting it with his own narrative, Mr. B deletes Pamela. What is more, as Pamela’s identity is increasingly compromised, Mr. B’s identity is solidified throughout the narrative. His selfhood is based on being a master and an aristocratic male who seduces women when he so pleases. He is a dictator when the novel begins, and he is a greater dictator when the novel ends. Doody claims that Mr. B reforms throughout the narrative as he achieves victory over his masculine pride and fear of being laughed at for marrying a servant girl (68). I claim that the contrary is true: because of his strong authorial vision, Mr. B not only maintains his identity; he also strengthens it through the conquest of Pamela. Consequently, I suggest that both Pamela and Mr. B are authors, that the novel is a battle between those two authors, and finally, that the male author wins through overwriting Pamela’s narrative. To argue my point, I will draw on Jessica L. Leiman’s article titled “‘Booby’s fruitless operations’: The Crisis of Male Authority in Richardson’s *Pamela*.” Leiman argues that Mr. B projected powerlessness, sexual and discursive, allows him to achieve authorial victory over Pamela. I will build on Leiman’s claim and prove that Mr. B’s authorial agenda includes reading, metaphorically raping, and finally rewriting Pamela. I will also use Foucault’s theories from *Power/ Knowledge* to demonstrate how Mr. B uses surveillance to execute his plan. Before, however, I can discuss how and why the heroine loses her authorship, I must explain what makes her an author in the first place.

Pamela’s authorship

One way Pamela is represented as an author is through her uniqueness as a heroine. First of all, she is a woman of the lower class who writes her own story. The first time Mr. B crosses the line between a master and a servant when he shows interest in his mother’s maid and reads

the letter the maid writes to her parents, Pamela also transgresses a status quo—while most maids can neither read nor write, *she* is caught composing a letter. In fact, she instinctively wants to hide the letter in her “Bosom,” implying that she herself recognizes her act of writing as an illicit activity. By linking female writing to sexuality, Richardson echoes the criticism about the seductive undertone of women’s amatory fiction. As such, he foreshadows Pamela’s identity crisis. Furthermore, since Pamela’s now deceased Lady, Mr. B’s mother, educated Pamela, the latter is conditioned to be above her class. Ironically, as she opposes her Master’s consequent rape attempts, she both constructs her selfhood through language and writing, and she becomes more desirable to her employer. What is significant here is that the maid’s quest for self-definition overtakes the first half of the novel, implying that it is this quest, and not the plot of courtship, that is important. For example, when Mr. B tells Mrs. Jervis, the housekeeper, that if there was a young handsome man employed on his estate, the girl “would soon make a market of one of them if she thought it worthwhile to snap at him for a Husband,” Mrs. Jervis interjects that the heroine “does not yet think of a Husband” (28). Pamela’s rejection of the marriage plot, at least for the time being, further suggests that she does not intend to follow the conventional marriage plot. What is more, as Doody indicates, it is not only Pamela’s voice that sets her apart from other heroines of the seduction novel; it is her “lowly station” as well, as her literary predecessors were mostly women from the middle and upper classes (33). Watt adds that Pamela’s detailed accounts of the domestic sphere and duties set her apart from previous romance heroines who travel to exotic lands but who never before Pamela “had been so real as to confront them with the varied perplexities of assembling a suitable travelling wardrobe” (159). The fact that a servant girl can become a heroine and an author implies that one can transcend both literary conventions and class through language. Doody calls Pamela “a country bumpkin”

who “possesses intelligence and sensibility, and a soul which is as important as that of a princess” (34). While her reference to the heroine as a “country bumpkin” is dismissive of Pamela’s struggle to create and to maintain her selfhood, it is, indeed, her soul that takes the center stage of the narrative. Richardson’s first-person epistolary account of his heroine’s inner and outer life gives the reader access to her interiority, implying that writing, and letter writing especially, can be a key to get to know another human being. Additionally, as Ian Watt points out, the letter form makes the reader feel “a continual sense of actual participation in the action,” something that no other writer before Richardson did with so much intensity and completeness (25). For example, when Pamela writes, “He then put his hand on my Bosom, and the Indignation gave me double Strength, and I got loose from him, by a sudden Spring” (32), the reader experiences the heroine’s quandary through her eyes. Pamela’s detailed account of her struggle encourages the reader to sympathize with her, and to take her side. Also, by marrying up, Pamela transgresses class barriers. As previously mentioned, many critics see Pamela’s matrimony as her success. While I don’t, Pamela’s social ascent is undeniable. After all, the fact that many female readers found the heroine’s fate inspiring proves that they hoped for the same. And yet, because Pamela’s marriage to Mr. B. requires her to sacrifice her authorial subjectivity, she loses her selfhood. Brownstein states that what the female protagonist of a traditional English novel desires is to achieve a “finished identity, realized in conclusive union with herself-as-heroine” (xxi). While Brownstein believes that Pamela does, in fact, achieve this union at the end of the novel, and I claim the opposite, I agree with another point Brownstein makes. There is, as she states, an irony in being a heroine: the self-awareness that makes Pamela see herself as a heroine of her own story, someone unique, forces her to choose a fate that is banal, too banal for a heroine but also a heroine’s fate (xxii). In other words, the more Pamela uses her pen as a tool

of self-expression against her employer, the more interested he becomes in overwriting her narrative. Authorship, then, is a source of the heroine's power and her disempowerment.

While Armstrong defines Pamela's power as her self-representation of a struggle against Mr. B.'s advances (109), I take her claim a step further and add that Pamela is an author through her act of self-representation. In fact, despite her low status as a maid and as a female, she is the most powerful in Volume I, when she is in charge of her own narrative. As Pamela writes letters to her parents, she establishes and maintains control over her story. Pamela's act of recording her story, her confidence in her parents' interest in it, and her own desire to reread the story define her authorial identity right from the beginning. For example, the heroine says that she "loves writing" (17), that she knows her parents read her letters "over and over again" (44). She also hopes that "it may be some little Pleasure" to her to read her own letters when she returns home. Soon, her writing begins to represent the heroine's challenge to patriarchal authority: her master. When, for instance, Mr. B accuses Pamela of "exposing him" to the world, Pamela is not intimidated. She says, "it is not me that expose you if I say nothing but the Truth" (31), thus opposing her master's accusation through language and reason. The fact that after Mr. B.'s initial attempt to seduce Pamela he starts to see her "scribbling" as a threat further demonstrates her power as an author. He even warns Mrs. Jervis, the housekeeper, that Pamela cannot continue to "write the Affairs of my Family purely for an Exercise to her Pen and her Invention" (29), acknowledging, however, indirectly, that the heroine's act of writing is dangerous. By insisting that her chastity is more important than Mr. B's orders, Pamela rebels against her master's claim that a servant should be first and foremost "dutiful and grateful" (31). While his words imply that he views his ownership of Pamela, and his subsequent right to her body, as indisputable, her words insist on her value as a human being. By sharing Mr. B.'s advances towards her, Pamela

creates a narrative of the seducer and the victim, which clearly is not the way he wants to be represented. On the other hand, Mr. B, who calls Pamela “a subtle artful Gypsey” (29), begins to compose a counter-narrative; in his story, Pamela’s virtue is questionable, and so is her “scribbling” and “blubbing.” While Pamela wants to escape the seduction plot, Mr. B is eager to discredit her self-representation.

What is more, as Pamela constructs her identity through the first-person account of her struggle, she uses language to both tell her story—and thus to promote her authorship—and to manipulate. When Mr. B imprisons Pamela in his Lincolnshire estate, she pleads in a letter to him: “Don’t drive the poor distressed *Pamela* upon a Rock, I beseech you, that may be the Destruction both of her Body and Soul” (118). As she tries to appeal to Mr. B’s emotions, she comes close to blackmail. Here, her dramatic language can be seen both as representation of her desperate desire to be free, as well as a tool of persuasion. As Pamela knows, Mr. B would like her to communicate with her parents to assure them she is safe in Lincolnshire; in fact, he wants to “prescribe the Form” (116) for the letter. In her response, after begging for mercy, Pamela subversively rebels against the master’s effort to convey her story to her family in his words by making slight “Alterations” to the letter. She explains to Mr. B. that she “follow’d pretty much the Form you have prescrib’d for me” (118). She assures the master that she follows his orders and she simultaneously acts against his orders by inserting her own voice to the letter. As Pamela rebels against her master’s plan to control her narrative, she also tries to influence his counter-narrative. However, her effort to persuade her employer to set her free backfires against her. For instance, when Mr. B learns that Pamela does not eat nor drink in a rebellion against her imprisonment, he begs her to see him, adding that he cannot live without her (133). The effect that her letters and her hunger strike have on Mr. B is opposite to her intentions, suggesting that

Pamela is not in full control as an author. This further suggests that the novel explores a tension between the traditional definition of authorship according to which an author controls language and Foucault's notion of authorship according to which it is language that precedes and defines an author. As Richardson challenges his heroine's confidence in her unlimited power of self-representation, he also implies that her identity may not be as safe as the heroine has us believe.

Pamela's Loss of Authorship

While in most of Volume I Pamela gains and enacts her power through writing, her relation to writing changes towards the end of Volume I and in Volume II. I disagree with Doody, who claims that the language of the novel transforms into more poetic in the second half of the novel, because Richardson wants to show that Pamela and Mr. B's love is genuinely romantic (61). Armstrong, on the other hand, is right to say about Pamela that "on her language alone depends the power of her resistance" (119), but this is only true for as long as the heroine resists. For as long as Pamela suspects that her master's kindness is a "plot," she is able to fight back against his narrative. However, once she begins to doubt her selfhood, she is in trouble. For example, shortly after she is kidnapped, she becomes confused about her identity. Doody cleverly points out that "She is, for a heroine, an ignominious failure at escape attempts" (56), despite the "prosaic obstacles." I agree with Doody that Pamela is to some extent "her own prisoner" (60). As the heroine continues to contemplate her escape, she says, "I have not the Courage to go, neither can I think to stay" (153). Her language here suggests that she is literally divided in two: a part that wants to run away, and a part that wishes to remain a prisoner. What is at stake here are not the logistics of her escape, but her internal conflict between a desire for freedom and ambivalence about it. When Pamela attempts to escape, she sees two bulls: one which, to her, represents her master, and the other one, Mrs. Jewkes (153). Even though she soon

realizes that the bulls are cows, her fear of escaping remains. Surrounded by two dominant male figures (Mrs. Jewkes, even though she is technically a woman, resembles a man, both in stature and behavior), Pamela begins to accept their power. In other words, she gradually embraces the process of submission to Mr. B's narrative. In addition, Pamela begins to use language of enslavement when she refers to her own condition. She calls her state "lawless tyranny" (166) and guesses that she "should be much closer watch'd than before" (166). She also says that "till yesterday Evening, I have not been able to hold a Pen" (170), implying that her authorial power diminishes. When she finally attempts to escape in the middle of the night, she falls down and hurts her head, shoulder and hip. As Pamela lists her ailing body parts, her language suggests that parts of her identity are damaged. She reports, "Then I began to wish myself most heartily again in my closet, and to repent my Attempt" (171). Her words indicate that she does, to some extent, accept her imprisonment. This point marks a split in Pamela's narrative: her narrative of resistance is no longer consistent. What is more, as Pamela contemplates suicide that night, her language continues to represent division: "What to do, but to throw myself into the Pond, and so put a period to all my Grievs in this world!" she relates, adding, "And my Master, my angry Master, will then forget his Resentments, and say, O! this is the unhappy Pamela! that I have so causelessly persecuted and destroy'd" (171-172). Here, Pamela wishes to die to escape her oppressor and she simultaneously wishes her oppressor to regret his efforts to seduce her. Accordingly, as she herself is literally stuck between her own narrative of rebellion and her desire to control her self-representation, even if posthumously. Moreover, the heroine's belief that only suicide can persuade her Master that she is not a "Deceiver" suggests that she begins to lose faith in the power of her language. Even though she soon regrets her suicidal fantasy and drowns her clothes in the pond to create an illusion of suicide, she further relies on her actions,

not her written word, to preserve her selfhood. The “Weakness of Body” she refers to is also the weakness of her mind: Pamela creeps, crawls, and can barely stand (171) not just physically, but also metaphorically. When she begins to lose control of her narrative, she becomes her own enemy. Soon, as she confesses that she “cannot hate” (179) the master upon hearing that he almost drowned, she renounces at least a part of her narrative. Until then, her hatred of Mr. B and her disgust with his attempts to rape her are her weapons against him. It is, then, significant that when the master arrives in the house, Pamela can barely write, producing “crooked and trembling lines” (182). Her authorial strength weakens. When Mr. B once again offers her to be his kept mistress, she still has enough power to refuse. And yet, she admits that he is “charmingly dress’d” (196), implying that she begins to develop romantic feelings for him. As Pamela replaces her own narrative of seduction with Mr. B’s narrative of romance, she gradually loses her plot. In the process, as I will further demonstrate below, she gives up her authorial power, suggesting that one’s control of one’s narrative is always incomplete, because it is affected by the narratives of others.

After Mr. B. confesses his love for Pamela, he asks to see all of her letters. He explains his demand as follows: “And as I have furnished you with the Subject, I have a Title to see the Fruits of your Pen” (232). Mr. B.’s logic is that he should have full access to everything that Pamela writes because he is her inspiration. After all, without him there would be no story. The master’s words imply that he continues to see Pamela’s letters as a threat, as a part of her that he must read so that he can control her, as well as his property. At first, Pamela stands up for herself, and refuses to let the master see her letters. “Indeed, Sir, you must not, if I can help it” (233), she protests. Since letter writing, and the ability to tell her story, is Pamela’s source of power, then sharing her narrative with Mr. B, who is, at this time, still imprisoning her, would

mean giving up that power. When she finally agrees to allow Mr. B. to read the letters, she tries to hold on to her narrative. “And I will then give my Papers to you, without the least Alteration, or adding or diminishing” (235), she says, but insists that her master must wait until the following morning. Her plan is to reveal some of her writing and to keep her most recent letters a secret. When she creates an inventory of the letters she will show to Mr. B, she tries to continue to assert her right to tell her story. Also, she wants to make sure that her narrative remains unified, even if her master does not return her letters after reading them. Her effort to hold on to her authorial power further echoes Foucault’s notion that it is a text that defines an author, not the other way around. Pamela may wish to control her narrative’s reception, but whether she can is, to say the least, debatable. Soon, Pamela’s words confirm that writing is an integral part of her identity, and that her identity will be compromised if Mr. B is granted full access to the heroine’s inner life. “And, truly, I shall have but little Heart to write, if he is to see all” (237), she writes. By having his heroine assert her identity through writing and by then having her give up that identity, Richardson explores the relationship between the notion of identity as fixed and independent of others and between the notion of identity as flexible and influenced by others.

When Mr. B finally sets her free, Pamela feels, once again, confused about her identity:

I think I was loth to leave the House. Can you believe it? – What could be the matter with me, I wonder! – I felt something so strange, and my Heart was so lumpish. ... and so I resign’d myself to my Contemplations, with this strange wayward Heart of mine, that I never found so ungovernable and awkward before. ... A few Hours before in my Master’s Arms almost, with twenty kind things said to me, , and a generous Concern for the Misfortunes he had brought upon me; and

only by one rash Word exasperated against me, and turn'd out of Doors, at an Hour's Warning. (244-245)

After uncountable pleas for liberty Pamela is, at last, on her way home, to her parents, but her ambivalence about leaving Mr. B indicates that her narrative has lost its core. The heroine's realization that she cannot govern her narrative—her heart is “ungovernable”—implies not only that the heroine is no longer in control of her narrative, but also that, perhaps, she never was in the first place. What is more, Pamela feels “turn'd out of doors” (245), as if Lincolnshire, the place of her imprisonment, was her true home. By expressing sadness over her newly regained freedom, the heroine begins to submit to Mr. B's counter-narrative: she is no longer a victim of seduction but a free woman, while Mr. B, even if a former oppressor, now repents for his sins and is kind to her. Additionally, Pamela's shift in feelings indicates the novel's shift from what DuPlessis calls the *Bildung* plot of self-development to the romance plot. As the heroine's quest for self-definition becomes secondary to her feelings for Mr. B, she embraces the marriage plot. Even though, when Pamela receives Mr. B's letter with a marriage proposal, she acknowledges that she has “made an Escape, to be more a Prisoner!” (248), her self-awareness is short-lived. “I resolved to obey him” (252), Pamela soon informs her parents. The more she trusts Mr. B, the more vulnerable she becomes to his narrative, and the further removed she becomes from her quest for self-representation. Conversely, as Mr. B first develops an appetite for Pamela's narrative, he also begins to develop his own authorship, and a desire to overwrite Pamela's story with his own.

Mr. B Reads, Rapes and Writes Pamela

In the course of the narrative, Mr. B's desire undergoes a shift: first, he desires Pamela (or Pamela's body, to be precise); next, he desires *Pamela*. His initial sexual appetite for his maid's body transforms into an appetite for Pamela's story. Even while Mr. B continues to view

Pamela's "scribbling" as a threat, he also starts to believe in her narrative. Pamela, thus, moves from the object to the subject of his desire. While Mr. B's interest in Pamela's narrative reveals that language has reformatory potential, he ultimately uses his knowledge of her narrative to overwrite it with his own. For example, when Mr. B visits Lincolnshire, where Pamela is his prisoner, he disguises as a maid and listens to Pamela's conversation with Mrs. Jewkes. Pamela, unaware of her master's presence, says, "So, being not sleepy, and in a prattling Vein, I began to give a little History of myself" (200). She tells the housekeeper how her parents, as well as Mr. B's mother, taught her to be virtuous, and how the master turned her life into misery. She also adds that, contrary to her master's suspicion, she does not want to marry Parson Williams. She thus feeds the master's ego and lessens his jealousy. (Mr. B's subsequent attempt to rape Pamela will be discussed in the next section of this essay.) The next day, Mr. B's behavior is altered: he is tender towards her. He calls her "a nice carver" (211). He says that Pamela's insistence on her virtue increased his passion for her, and he refers to the bedroom scene as her "pretty Chit-chat" (213). When Mrs. Jewkes confiscates a pile of her letters, Mr. B calls Pamela "a great Plotter" (228), implying that he still recognizes her authorship. And yet, he also wants "to see the Particulars" of her "Plot" (231). As Mr. B reads Pamela, her narrative engages him. He adds that "there is such a pretty Air of Romance" (232) in her writing. When Mr. B proposes to Pamela, he reveals that her "admirable Journal" caused him to fall in love with her. He asks to see all her letters, including the ones she sent to her parents. He explains that he has "no other Motive for my Curiosity, but the Pleasure I take in reading what you write" (277). Mr. B, a reader of Pamela's plot, is clearly enjoying the story. In fact, Mr. B. stays up until "Three o'clock" (300), unable to stop reading. Accordingly, Pamela's letters seem to be transformed from a personal narrative to a... novel. While her narrative may be a page-turner, Mr. B does not repent for the

suffering he causes the heroine. Instead, he insists on reading all of *Pamela* in order to rewrite Pamela.

The attempted rape scene in Lincolnshire proves that Mr. B has been a careful reader of *Pamela*, as well as a careful plotter. It also suggests that, to accomplish full authorial control over the heroine, he is willing to revise his narrative of overpowering Pamela's story. Armstrong, who calls this scene "one of the least erotic bedroom encounters between male and female in literature" (5), claims that Pamela's body transforms into words when Mr. B tries to rape her. For Armstrong, the scene signifies "a transfer of erotic desire" (6)—Mr. B no longer desires the heroine's body; he desires her language and emotions. To explain this phenomenon, Armstrong relies on Foucault's theory about modern desire. According to him, beginning in the eighteenth century, the discovery of desire "hidden within the individual" triggered the verbalization of desire, a development which, in turn, displaced it. Consequently, this previously suppressed desire was analyzed and expressed in writing (12). Armstrong's addition to Foucault's theory is that male desire is redirected to a woman who embodies domestic duties, and that Pamela's repeated "no" points to female empowerment. As Armstrong claims, Mr. B's desire shifts—from sexual desire to a desire for a woman who "embodies domestic virtues" (110). Armstrong writes, "Mr. B's repeated failures suggest that Pamela cannot be raped because she is nothing but words" (116). Doody, on the other hand, sees the bedroom rape attempt as filled with irony since the rape does not work. Mr. B, according to her, is more clumsy than brutal; he is also vulnerable because of his desire for affection. To Pamela, Doody adds, he may be horrifying, but the scene is "grotesque humor" (48). While I agree that there are comic elements in the bedroom scene, I believe that Mr. B's violent attempt to seduce his maid and his subsequent fiasco demonstrate that he grows as an author. When the use of physical force fails, he revises his narrative

accordingly, in order to fully control the heroine. While Mrs. Jewkes holds Pamela's hands, Mr. B "clasps" her around his waist (203): Pamela is literally a prisoner—her hands are tied, and she cannot move her body. Mr. B insists on "one word" with her, and announces that she is in his power. "But if you resolve not to comply with my Proposals, I will not lose this Opportunity" (203), he assures her. First, he wants her to agree to be his mistress. Pamela begs her master to leave, and then faints, thus putting an end to the sexual encounter. In response, Leila Silvana May argues that Armstrong misinterprets both Foucault's theory of desire, as well as Pamela's resistance to Mr. B's rape attempts ("The Strong-Arming of Desire: A Reconsideration of Nancy Armstrong's *Desire and Domestic Fiction*" 270). May claims that Armstrong's insistence on proving her "Foucauldian thesis" places her "into the curious position of denying that Pamela, a character in the novel of the same name, can be raped *in the novel*" (270). According to May, by ignoring Mr. B's power to rape his maid, Armstrong weakens her argument about female resistance. Similarly to May, I disagree with Armstrong's argument that the bedroom scene in *Lincolnshire* proves that Mr. B is no longer interested in sex with his maid. On the contrary, while Armstrong is right to note that Pamela transforms into a text in the course of the narrative, it is also true that Mr. B could have raped Pamela, if he chose to do so, and that his desire to possess his maid sexually will continue. Mr. B is also more interested in Pamela as a text, a text that he wants to overwrite. When she faints, he decides not to rape her, not because he realizes that she is nothing but words, but because he realizes that he has to revise his counter-narrative of seduction. After all, if Mr. B forces himself on Pamela, he will follow her narrative: the evil master ruins his virtuous maid so that she can hate him forever. However, Mr. B, by now, wants Pamela to give herself, her body and her mind, willingly to him. His counter-narrative requires, precisely, that he does not force her into bed. The critic who makes a similar point is Jessica L.

Leiman, who argues that Mr. B's inability to rape Pamela is staged, and that this "weakness" is Mr. B's tool to gain control over Pamela ("Booby's Fruitless Operations": The Crisis of Male Authority in Richardson's *Pamela*"). Indeed, Mr. B will soon use his weakness, his supposed inability to rape the young woman, to his advantage. Leiman writes about Mr. B, "While he fails to penetrate her body, he ultimately succeeds at insinuating a competing narrative within her epistolary text—a narrative that highlights his own discursive powerlessness and depicts her writing as an act of sexualized boldness" (223). While I also interpret Mr. B's failure to rape Pamela as part of his larger plan to overwrite her narrative, I differ with Leiman on the strategies that he uses. By not raping Pamela, Mr. B, in fact, does rape her: he rapes her figuratively, by forcing his own authorial power onto her. This figurative rape begins with the attempted (physical) rape towards the end of Volume I, and it begins when Pamela faints: "With Struggling, Fright, Terror, I fainted away quite, and did not come to myself soon" (204), she relates. Because Mr. B silences her, he suppresses Pamela's tongue, her language and her narrative. By doing so, Mr. B inserts his own narrative into the open space (of her silence). He violates Pamela, because he ejaculates his own narrative into her story. As he tells Pamela when she regains consciousness, "give me but your Hand, and say you forgive me, and I will leave you to your Repose" (205). Mr. B's words suggest that, in order to dominate the heroine, he must persuade her to suppress her own narrative so that she can accept his.

After the figurative rape, Mr. B proceeds to rewrite Pamela. Armstrong claims that Mr. B transforms over the course of the narrative. According to her, when he negotiates with, and later marries, Pamela, he accepts her as an "an independent party," and a "female self who exists outside and prior to the relationships under the male's control" (113). I disagree with Armstrong. While Mr. B's effort to negotiate with Pamela in various parts of the narrative create for Pamela,

and, perhaps also, for the reader, an allusion of the heroine's increasing power in the relationship, Mr. B ultimately "gets his way"—he not only possesses Pamela sexually, but he also wins her emotionally. Temma Berg claims that Pamela subconsciously follows the Cinderella plot, that Mr. B is, to her, Prince Charming ("From Pamela to Jane Gray: Or, How Not to Become the Heroine of Your Own Story"). I would like to suggest that Mr. B creates a counter-narrative to Pamela's narrative, and that in his narrative he presents himself as Prince Charming. He also encourages Pamela to see herself as Cinderella, the poor virtuous woman who is rescued by an honorable prince, a view that Pamela eventually subscribes to. Thus, the ending of the novel suggests that Mr. B's counter-narrative wins. As I will demonstrate below, over the course of the narrative, as Pamela challenges the patriarchal status quo by writing her own story, Mr. B skillfully overwrites her narrative. He employs several techniques to accomplish his authorial victory.

First, Mr. B. tries to invalidate Pamela's narrative. While Pamela's subversive methods to tell her story in the first part of the novel reveal the heroines' consistent belief that she has a right to be the author of her own life, Mr. B continuously denies her that right. Shortly after Lady Davers' death, Mr. B complains to Mrs. Jervis, "This Girl is always scribbling; I think she may be better employ'd" (22). Mr. B is not only threatened by Pamela's writing, but he also believes that women should perform domestic duties, such as sewing, sorting linen, and planning meals. What is more, he discredits Pamela's discourse: "Your perverse Folly will be your Ruin! I tell you this, that I am very much displeas'd with the freedoms you have taken with my Name to my House-keeper, as also to your Father and Mother" (32). What he calls Pamela's folly and freedoms is, in fact, the heroine's use of language to tell her story and to portray her employer as an aggressor. One can further imply that Mr. B considers authorship to be a male occupation;

when a woman takes up a pen, he feels threatened and criticizes her attempt in self-expression. In fact, the more Mr. B. accuses Pamela of disobedience, the more he manages to shift the debate from female rights to employee duties and, by doing so, he begins to create a counter-narrative that ultimately overpowers Pamela. What is more, after his first attempt to seduce the heroine, he refers to the latter's account of the incident as "an Exercise to her Pen." He wants to convince Mrs. Jervis that Pamela is not to be trusted, because she invents stories to practice her writing, implying that the maid uses language to manipulate others. When in Volume III, Mr. B marries Pamela, his authorial victory is complete. Pamela's writing is no longer an act of resistance against her master; she now writes about her domestic duties. "I had a good deal of Employment in chusing Patterns for my new Cloaths. He thought nothing too good; but I thought everything I saw was; and he was so kind..." (470), she reports. Her words prove that Mr. B's effort to discredit her narrative is successful: Pamela's occupation with her domestic duties, and her idealization of her husband, indicate that her rebellious potential is gone. Pamela's letters and her journal, which formerly provided her with a space for self-expression, are now an account of household chores. It is not surprising that Mr. B, who used to call Pamela a "Hussy," a "Fool, and a "Sawce-box," now refers to her as "Angel," "Lovely Creature," and "Dearest." Mr. B's successful transformation of Pamela from an author to a subject further suggests that he managed to transform her narrative of quest to his narrative of romance.

Another strategy Mr. B uses to overwrite Pamela's narrative is to keep it under control. Mr. B imprisons Pamela, both literally and figuratively, tries to control her within the seduction narrative. When Pamela is locked in Mr. B's Lincolnshire estate, Mrs. Jewkes informs her that she has "a Letter of Instruction" (110) from her master regarding Pamela's fate. By keeping the instructions secret from Pamela, Mr. B reinforces the idea that her fate is in his hands. As

previously mentioned, Mr. B also controls Pamela's narrative by reading her letters. First, he intercepts her mail. Next, he demands to see all of her letters. Finally, he claims that he is simply curious to keep on reading. While he says he admires Pamela's "happy Manner of Narration" (301), he does not respect Pamela's right for privacy, for an inner life that is separate from her new identity: as his wife. What is more, Mr. B keeps all of Pamela's mail, even though it is addressed to her parents. He allows Pamela to send her new letters to her parents, "only let me beg they will preserve them, and let me have them when they have read them, as also those I have not seen" (353), he insists. By confiscating most of Pamela's writing, Mr. B asserts his control over her story. He knows what she feels, does, and says. If he does not approve of something he reads, he can ask Pamela to revise it. While in the first half of Pamela's correspondence there are many lines Mr. B would be happy to delete, there are no such lines in the second half of the novel: the new Pamela sings praises of her husband. In addition, she takes the initiative to show Mr. B her correspondence, and asks him to approve it. For example, when shortly after their wedding Pamela writes a letter to Mrs. Jervis, she presents it to her husband unsigned. She explains that she does not want him to think her ungrateful. In turn, Mr. B "took a Pen himself, and wrote after Pamela, his most worthy Surname" (362). This scene signifies that Mr. B's control over Pamela's writing is so efficient that Pamela has internalized it. Mr. B does not even have to ask her for the letters.

In order to transform Pamela from a woman who fights against her oppressor through writing into a woman who willingly obeys that oppressor when she falls in love with him, Mr. B also controls her through surveillance. In *Knowledge/ Power*, Foucault explores the relationship between power and surveillance. He claims that, as opposed to the earlier forms of power, which relied heavily on the use of physical force, a new form of power emerged in the seventeenth and

eighteenth centuries: surveillance. This surveillance, according to Foucault, is, in turn, internalized by an individual. “There is no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints. Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorizing to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against, himself” (155). Following Foucault’s theory, I suggest that, towards the end of Volume I, Pamela internalizes Mr. B’s power over her. While in the early stages of the narrative Mr. B has to use violence and emotional blackmail to assert his power over the young woman, she gradually loses her rebellious narrative and embodies Mr. B’s surveillance. For example, after Pamela’s previously mentioned failed escape from Lincolnshire, she begins to feel ambivalent about her prison. She wants to run away and she does not. Also, she internalizes her fear of Mr. B so much that when she sees two cows, she thinks they are bulls and, what is more, she associates the animals with Mr. B and Mrs. Jewkes, her oppressors. In other words, Mr. B’s gaze surrounds her even when he is not physically near her. Later on in the narrative, after her wedding, Pamela says, “my prison is become my Palace” (349). While she seems aware of the contradictory nature of the change in her status, she does not realize that she has transformed into a voluntary prisoner in the palace. Mr. B’s consistent effort to enact power over his maid produces the best result he could hope for. As his wife, Pamela not only internalizes Mr. B’s chains; she also accepts them as a happy development. “Sir, said I, I will endeavor to conform myself, in all things, to your Will” (443), she says, proving that she will remain his prisoner.

Additionally, Mr. B overwrites Pamela’s narrative by creating his own counter-narrative. Leiman makes a similar point, but she claims that Mr. B manages to accomplish this by equating Pamela’s act of writing to an act of sexual transgression. I agree that, at times, Mr B’s language

in regards to Pamela's writing implies that she is committing a sin, but I believe that his agenda of rewriting her narrative is much broader. For example, in Volume I, Mr. B calls Pamela a rebel. When, towards the end of that volume, Pamela admits that she has feelings for Mr. B, she refers to herself as a rebel. She calls her heart "ungovernable" (245), implying that she now agrees with Mr. B's counter-narrative. Just like Pamela internalizes Mr. B's surveillance, she also internalizes his language. Following this logic, she discredits her own authorship. Mr. B happily accepts the latter development. In addition to forcing his own narrative into Pamela's life, he also oppresses her. In Volume I, he oppresses Pamela with his body and with his power as a master. When he demands to see Pamela's letters, the scene resembles a trial, and Mr. B, a prosecutor. He says, "If a Criminal won't plead with us here in England, we press him to Death, or till he does plead" (234). Mr. B compares Pamela to a criminal, and Pamela does not object. In Lincolnshire, Mr. B also says, "I should have melted her by Love, instead of freezing her by Fear" (209). With his words, he expresses his new authorial vision. Since abuse and blackmail did not work, he will try a new method of seduction: kindness. Shortly afterwards, Pamela is indeed "pressed" with too much of his goodness. Additionally, when Mr. B outlines his expectations of Pamela as his wife, he essentially writes a conduct book and imprints it onto her narrative. Eventually, Pamela says, "He shall always be my Master; and I shall think myself more and more his Servant" (303). Her words point to the power of Mr. B's counter-narrative: it "impresses" Pamela so much that she must submit to it. Moreover, her submission to the marriage plot coincides with her departure from the quest or *Bildung*. As DuPlessis points out, the two cannot coexist together.

Also, Mr. B rewrites Pamela through inserting her into other narratives of male dominance and seduction. For example, after the wedding, he tells her about Sally Godfrey, a

woman he seduced in his youth, but blames the incident, and Sally's subsequent pregnancy, on her "Mother's Plot" (432). By taking no responsibility for the love affair, Mr. B presents himself as a victim, even though he is clearly an oppressor. Mr. B also dedicates a poem to Pamela, which, as he himself openly reveals, he wrote for another woman, presumably Sally. Doody misses the point when she sees the garden scene as evidence of genuine expression of love between Mr. B and Pamela. She argues that for Richardson, it is only when Pamela and Mr. B are "in a correct relationship, the traditional language of love is appropriate," adding that the novel transforms from mock-pastoral comedy into a traditional pastoral comedy that "delights" the reader (62). While Pamela is indeed delighted by Mr. B's poem, the reader should not be. The two myths that Mr. B inserts into the poem point to the author's dominance over the women he seduces. The first myth is of Philomel, a mythical figure. Ovid tells her story in *Metamorphoses*, and Shakespeare refers to it and rewrites it in *Titus Andronicus*. Philomela is raped by Tereus, her sister's husband. After the rape, he cuts off her tongue to silence her. Using a piece of clothing, Philomela communicates Tereus' crime to her sister Procne. While Procne and Philomela manage to enact revenge over Tereus—he unknowingly eats his own son—the ending of *Pamela* implies no hope for Pamela's rebellion. The second myth in Mr. B's poem is of Persephone. Similarly to Philomel, Persephone is a goddess taken from her natural habitat and raped. While both myths depict men who assault women, shockingly, Pamela does not seem to notice the analogy between those men and her new husband. Her response to the morbid poem is, "The charming Taste you gave me, sir, of your poetical Fancy" (496). Just like Mr. B subversively rapes Pamela with his counter-narrative, he also forces her into other narratives of sexual assault. Pamela, however, having lost her narrative of resistance by now, admires Mr. B's authorial talents. All those allusions suggest not only that in a patriarchal society men dominate

women, but also that they are conditioned—by culture, by literature, by their parents—to dominate, just like women are conditioned to submit.

Mr. B's counter-narrative also includes instructions for Pamela after his death. According to his will, which he announces to Pamela, the heroine cannot marry Mr. Williams. Mr. B explains his motif as follows: "it would reflect a little upon my Pamela, if she was to give way to such a Conduct, as if she had marry'd a Man for his Estate, when she had rather have had another" (494). In other words, Mr. B blackmails Pamela in order to maintain control over her even after his death. He claims that it is her reputation, and his, that he is worried about, but his main objective is to remain in control of his narrative of conquest. If Pamela marries Mr. Williams, she will lose her inheritance. Mr. B claims that his intention in writing the will is to make her "free, and independent" should he pass away, but really, it is a way to posthumously assert his authority over her. While Mr. B's will proves that he is still terrified of Pamela's language, which could, after his death, expose a part of her he would not be able to control, the heroine's acceptance of his will assures her husband that she is, in fact, under his complete authorial power. One hundred and thirty years later, George Elliot's Dorothea Brooke from *Middlemarch* will discover a similar will from her jealous, controlling husband, Casaubon: she is not allowed to marry Ladislaw. Casaubon's desire to control his wife after his death, however, backfires against him. When Dorothea learns of the provision, she begins to gradually develop romantic feelings for Ladislaw. The young woman will ultimately recognize Casaubon's destructive power over. In turn, she will defy her deceased husband, reject his fortune, and assert her autonomy by marrying Ladislaw. Unfortunately, the ending of *Pamela* suggests that the heroine will never, not even after his death, disobey her master.

Authorship unrewarded?

The question that critics and readers alike have wrestled with is whether Pamela is better off after her marriage. Doody, Armstrong, Watt and Brownstein all believe that she is. Doody, for example, argues that “Mr. B. has now ceased to be the lustful predator and has taken his proper role as the woman’s suitor” (61). While Mr. B may not appear to be a lustful predator after he marries Pamela, it is because he does not need to be one: after all, Pamela is all his. As I have demonstrated in this chapter, Mr. B solidifies his authorial power throughout the narrative. While he is always Pamela’s master, before and after the wedding, his ownership of the heroine’s narrative increases as she loses her own voice. While Doody acknowledges that Pamela’s “membership” in Mr. B.’s life is the same before and after the wedding—“duty, allegiance, affection”—the heroine is, according to Doody, also rewarded by being turned into a mistress of his estate (67), a point I disagree with. Similarly, according to Armstrong, Pamela the wife, at the center of the household, is a female who exists outside of politics and outside of male control. While Armstrong admits that Pamela’s voice, “no longer a form of resistance” in the end of the narrative, “flattens into that of pure ideology” (125), she insists that, through her writing, the heroine continues to enact her power over Mr. B as he “internalizes her moral authority” (124). Pamela, as I have demonstrated in this chapter, does enact her power through her letters, but only until she replaces her quest for self-definition with the romance plot. Additionally, Armstrong’s argument that the novel must continue after Mr. B and Pamela wed in order to show Pamela’s domestic self is flawed. Even if Richardson, and Armstrong, would like the reader to believe that Pamela has reformed the aristocratic male with her female qualities, Mr. B does not change. I partially agree with Leiman’s interpretation of the ending of the novel. She states that it is a victory for Mr. B’s “narrative authority,” and thus “far from celebrating the power of Pamela’s voice” (226). However, given that the novel celebrates two authors, first Pamela and

then Mr. B, it can be implied that, just like the heroine and Mr. B grapple with defining their authorship, so does Richardson grapple with two conflicting notions of authorship: the traditional one versus the one Foucault outlines. What is more, if Pamela, or any author, cannot fully control language, then wouldn't the same be true of Mr. B? Undoubtedly, the latter appears to be in full control of Pamela after the wedding. And yet, even he has to pay a price for his success as an author: the rebellious woman he was so attracted to turns into a conduct-book wife. In other words, Mr. B's authorial vision transforms Pamela from a unique woman and a powerful author into a submissive wife that resembles other married women. If Mr. B is conditioned to be the dominant male, then he himself rebels against the status quo by desiring a woman who, by asserting her right to self-representation, is the opposite of a submissive female that the dominant male should marry.

As Watt points out, one of Richardson's contributions to the rise of the novel is that he revises the episodic plot of his predecessors and introduces narrative unity through the marriage plot. Richardson also equips his heroine with unprecedented power: despite her low class and despite her gender, he gives her a subjective voice and grants her authorial power. And yet, Richardson confiscates that power when he decides it is time for Pamela to embrace her seducer and the marriage plot. *Pamela*, as Richardson announces on the title page, is a tale of "Virtue Rewarded." In the preface to the novel, Richardson also assures us that Pamela's example will instruct "the modest Virgin, the chaste Bride, and the obliging Wife," and that vice will be painted in "Odious colors" (3). We are supposed to admire the virtuous Pamela, and detest Mr. B until he reforms. In fact, when Richardson revised the novel later on in his life based on reader feedback, he toned down Pamela's language and her rebellion, in an effort to elicit a given response. Doody agrees that Richardson's novels are didactic, and that *Pamela* is about a

powerful, wicked individual who abuses his power but who is eventually defeated by virtue as “the destined victim at the outset becomes a victor in the end” (33-34). She believes that “Richardson does not advocate the leveling of social classes, but he makes a strong claim for human quality” (44). Similarly, Armstrong claims that the novel promotes Pamela’s individuality—a coherent self that exists outside of the realm of politics. She adds that Richardson’s novel shows how a domestic woman can achieve power in an ideal marriage, even if she is subordinate to her husband. I agree that a part of Richardson’s agenda seems to be to prove that one can transgress one’s social standing through writing. That Richardson found a new way of writing about an individual, a lower class woman who is, both literally and figuratively, an author, is undeniable. What is more, despite Pamela’s loss of authorship in the second half of the novel, Richardson’s bestseller demonstrates that writing can be a source of power and a tool of self-expression, regardless of one’s social status and gender. This message echoes the Enlightenment, a time of increasing literacy rates, decreasing authority of the church, a time of individualism and the rise of the novel. And yet, as Armstrong claims, reading and writing during Richardson’s time was emerging as power “but had not yet become the dominant form of social control” (134). I add that, in a patriarchal culture, writing was, in general, a more powerful tool for men than it was for women. Pamela’s subversive act of writing, if it were to continue throughout the novel, would be far more scandalous than the marriage to her master. Consequently, the heroine’s loss of power is inevitable. In Richardson’s novel, and in the real world, the (male) author with a stronger vision wins. While Pamela’s virtue is not rewarded, Mr. B’s determination in rewriting the young woman is.

Richardson’s portrayal of a battle between two authors also suggests that writing can be used as a tool of manipulation, and that, moreover, authorial intentions do not always correlate to

reality. The master cleverly uses Pamela's letters to understand his opponent and to then seduce her through language. Language here is a source of control and a source of danger. The more Pamela writes, the more she exposes herself to Mr. B's agenda. Accordingly, Richardson's novel helps us rethink both authorship and readership. As Pamela's case demonstrates, if we reveal everything about ourselves, if we allow others to read every page of us, they can manipulate us. Language, it seems, can also disappoint. Writing, which starts out as Pamela's weapon against Mr. B, transforms into his weapon of seducing her. While Pamela's initial narrative of resistance implies that language may have reformatory potential, the unreformed Mr. B skillfully uses language to establish full control over the heroine. What is worse, Mr. B transforms Pamela into a conduct book wife, while he himself becomes a conduct book author. Women, it appears, can use language as a tool of self-empowerment; however, once they become wives, they have to leave their pen of resistance behind. If female empowerment is, then, possible, it can be achieved, at least partially, through writing, and not, as Pamela's story shows, through social elevation: Pamela the maid is in control of her narrative, unlike Pamela the wife. When, for example, Mr. B outlines his expectations of a wife, his vision is more powerful than ever. Mr. B lists forty-eight rules for Pamela, all of which resemble a conduct book agenda. Even if Pamela inserts her own comments in response to some of the rules, she does not rebel against them. In fact, she accepts the rules with gratitude. Pamela's writing, formerly the embodiment of her power and selfhood, is transformed into Mr. B's property. Sadly, Pamela does not seem to mind anymore. As I have argued, Pamela resists the master-slave dichotomy in the first half of the novel, and that, in the second half of the book, she fully embraces it. Pamela-the-wife, even though elevated into the upper classes, is more subservient than before.

The question remains as to why Richardson grants his heroine so much authorial power only to take it away in the end. In “The Elevation of the Novel in England: Hegemony and Literary History,” Warner’s inquiry into the rise of the novel offers, I believe, a partial explanation. Warner demonstrates that Richardson and Fielding reuse the themes and plots of earlier amatory fiction by Alphra Behn, Delariviere Manley and Eliza Haywood; they revise it, according to Warner, by making it ethical (583). And yet, Richardson and Fielding fail to acknowledge what they owe to their predecessors. Instead, they claim to develop a “new” species of writing and “seek to assert the fundamental difference of their own projects from these antagonists—the notorious trio of Behn, Manley and Haywood—who continue to circulate in the market as threatening rivals...” (580). As Warner points out, in order to hegemonize the novel, Richardson and Fielding must dismiss the infamous trio, because it is only then that they can call themselves the first “real” novelists (581). In the process, the elevation of the novel “produces ‘high’ and ‘low’ as judgments about what constitutes coherent ethical design” (582), but those labels, Warner suggests, are arbitrary. Consequently, Warner questions Richardson’s and Fielding’s hegemony on the literary market. If Behn’s and Haywood’s novels are successful, then they are competition for Richardson and Fielding. For example, even though, as Warner indicates, *Pamela* is a revised version of Haywood’s *Fantomina* (584), a novel about a woman who takes on different identities in order to secure the love of a man, Richardson must classify it as inferior to his own work: since Haywood’s popularity threatens Richardson’s success, the latter finds a way to assure readers that she is not his equal. By labeling Haywood as “low culture,” Richardson effectively advertises his own work and establishes his cultural dominance. What is more, Richardson’s insistence on his authorial dominance sheds some light on the conduct-book ending of *Pamela*. If his heroine is modeled to be the opposite of the promiscuous

Fantomina, as Werner suggests, then Richardson's heroine must abandon her subversive potential; otherwise, if she continues to assert her selfhood through writing, she will transgress the patriarchal status quo just like Fantomina does, and she will set a dangerous example for other young women. Therefore, to set a proper example, Pamela must transform into a conduct book wife. By robbing her of the rebellious side, Richardson asserts male dominance in the literary market: his novel, not Haywood's, is instructive and entertaining, and it is the first real novel.

And yet, Richardson complicates this notion of the loss of female authorship and the victory of male authorship by the contract between the first half of the novel in which Pamela enacts her power and between the second part of the novel in which the heroine submits to Mr. B's power. This contrast, as I have argued, suggests an ongoing tension between the heroine's quest for development and between the marriage plot she eventually succumbs to. DuPlessis, who locates this tension in nineteenth century fiction, claims that it is only twentieth century female authors who offer alternate solutions to resolve it. While Richardson certainly does not resolve the tension in *Pamela*, he does, nonetheless, create a space for his successors, namely Jane Austen and Henry James, to further explore this tension. Gubar and Gilbert claim that for nineteenth century female writers, as well as for women in general, their options were limited to rebellion or submission. Pamela's narrative implies that for eighteenth century female those options were the same. And yet, Pamela's shift from rebellion to submission, her empowering quest for self-representation and her subsequent fall from authorship, alert us to the existence of this tension and indicate that those two conflicting narratives of a woman's fate are limiting.

Chapter 2

The Quest for Self-Expression versus the Marriage Plot in Jane Austen's *Emma*

“I planned that match from that hour; and when such success has blessed me in in this instance, dear papa, you cannot think that I shall leave off matchmaking,” Emma Woodhouse informs her father and Mr. Knightley, a friend and neighbor, in the first chapter of Jane Austen's *Emma*. Here, Austen's heroine not only takes credit for the recent marriage of her former governess, Mrs. Weston, but also announces her intention to continue her matchmaking in the future. In this way, Emma defines herself as an author. In fact, as I will argue, her portrayal throughout the first half of the novel corresponds to the definition of an author from *The Oxford English Dictionary*: as a matchmaker, the heroine asserts to be a creator of romance, and thus, she writes, figuratively speaking, the lives of others. What is more, she writes the story of her own life, a story in which she depicts herself as an influential figure, a heroine, in the town of Highbury. And yet, since Emma's authorship is revealed and expressed through free indirect discourse—a third-person narration that combines a character's thoughts with a narrator's voice—Austen alerts us to the possibility that, what her heroine states to be a truth universally acknowledged may, in fact, be her very own subjective reality. This narrative technique, as I will contend, contradicts the dictionary definition of authorship and echoes the Foucaultian notion of an author whose language precedes and exceeds them. Similarly to Richardson in *Pamela*, then, Austen presents us with two conflicting views of authorship. While Austen centers her novel around a heroine who, like Pamela, is represented as an author, she also rewrites Richardson, and the English novel in general, both through her use of free indirect discourse, and through her focus, until almost the very end of the novel, on her heroine's quest for self-development. Even though Emma, like her predecessor, embraces the marriage plot, her wedding does not take place until the very last page in the novel. Moreover, when Emma does marry Mr. Knightley, Austen

dedicates so little space to the nuptials (one paragraph, to be precise) and describes them with so much irony that she encourages the reader to view Emma's marriage in an ambivalent light. Additionally, as I will argue, while Emma's loss of authorship, as in the case of Pamela, coincides with the heroine's submission to the marriage plot, and while Mr. Knightley overwrites Emma's narrative, Austen also creates a disjunction between Emma's subversive potential in the first ninety percent of the novel and her subsequent transformation into a woman whose marital bliss defines her in the remaining ten percent of the novel.

Unlike Samuel Richardson, who in his prologue to *Pamela* outlines his authorial intentions, Austen lets *Emma*, published, anonymously, in 1815, stand on its own. While many critics, including Sir Walter Scott in his review of the novel shortly after it appeared in print, claim that nothing happens in Emma ("Sir Walter Scott on Jane Austen" 218), and while many nineteenth and twentieth-century critics dismissively tag Austen's fiction as a comedy of manners, as Austen's legacy has been reevaluated in the recent decades, the image that reemerges nearly two hundred years after her death is that of a political, even feminist writer actively engaged in the social debates of her time. While calling Austen a feminist is, I believe, limiting to the author, she does, in all of her work, and in *Emma* especially, explore the glory and limitations of female autonomy and female authorship. D.A. Miller, a prominent Austen critic, calls *Emma* "the most perfect and the most melancholy" of Austen's novels, because Emma achieves perfection of style and must give it up (*Jane Austen, or The Secret of Style* 67). The choice that Austen's heroine has to make, between authorship and romance, indicates that the novel engages in a critique of the limited options that existed for women in the early nineteenth century, when, despite the French Revolution's call for liberty, equality, and fraternity, the English society was still, predominantly, a patriarchal one. Even if several prominent female

authors, the most successful of whom was Ann Radcliff, appeared on the literary market, it was nonetheless a time when, as Poovey explains, self-assertion was considered “unladylike,” and thus contradictory to propriety (xv). For example, after Mary Wollstonecraft died in 1797, shortly after childbirth, Sulloway informs us that Reverend Richard Polwhele used the term “Wollstonecraftian” as derogatory, and condemned any woman who echoed Wollstonecraft’s feminist rhetoric, as well as her scandalous personal life, to “an equally horrible death” (7). Not surprisingly, Austen’s agenda is less extreme and less obvious. For instance, by depicting Emma as an author, as well as a rational, as opposed to an emotional, creature, Austen echoes Wollstonecraft’s ideas; however, Austen also questions her revolutionary predecessor’s viewpoints when she undercuts her heroine’s authorial power. Consequently, Austen, I argue, enters the political discussion of her time about women’s rights, female identity, and about women’s role in society because she explores and subversively promotes women’s rights: Emma is neither black nor white, she embodies neither conservatism nor radical liberalism. In other words, Austen plays by the rules of her times and simultaneously breaks them. She rebels against traditional conceptions of women while keeping her heroine within the domestic sphere where she supposedly belongs. While Austen presents the heroine as an author, she also explores the contradictory nature of Emma’s authorship. Her heroine’s contradictions allow Austen to ask crucial questions about women and to promote women’s rights without embracing a conservative agenda and without risking an association with Wollstonecraft and the radical Jacobin ideology. Consequently, I contend, if Emma were successful as an author, Austen would be discredited and associated with Wollstonecraft’s radical agenda and scandal. If, on the other hand, the heroine remained lonely and never married, she would support conservative agenda, in which her eternal loneliness would serve as punishment for her misconduct.

In this chapter, I will explore this contradictory nature of female authorship. I will first demonstrate that Emma is an author like Pamela, even though she is not an author in the conventional sense. I will argue that her matchmaking is a means of expressing her selfhood, and that Austen's use of free independent discourse both creates space for this self-expression and discredits it. I will also demonstrate that, even though Mr. Knightley, similarly to Mr. B. in *Pamela*, overwrites Emma's narrative, his less authoritative power over Emma suggests that the institution of marriage increasingly steered towards equality between men and women. The fact that Emma, even though wounded from her loss of authorship, is left with more power than her predecessor, Pamela—she acquires some self-knowledge, and she learns about the limits of authorship, and she gains some autonomy within her marriage—suggests that the options for an early nineteenth century woman with authorial ambitions have improved since Pamela's time. Moreover, I will point to the contrast between most of the novel and its ending and suggest that this contrast is key to rereading the novel. While Austen, as I will demonstrate, dedicates most of the novel to her heroine's quest for self-definition, and while Emma's quest reveals her complicated relationship to authorship, the heroine's ultimate embrace of the marriage plot ends the bildungsroman plot and transforms the novel into romance. And yet, as Austen encourages us to question *Emma's* self-proclaimed happy ending, she suggests that, despite its perfect resolution, the novel engages in playful criticism of the genre, of authorship, and of the relationship between power and self-expression.

To further demonstrate my claim, I will enter into a conversation with prominent Jane Austen scholars: Claudia L. Johnson, Nancy Armstrong, D.A. Miller, and Mary Poovey. Additionally, I will debate other scholars of eighteenth and nineteenth-century literature whose work is relevant to my topic: namely, Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, as well as Elsie B.

Michie. Accordingly, in *Women, Politics and the Novel*, Claudia L. Johnson sees Austen's novels as moderately progressive. She includes Austen among female writers who used subversive techniques to "advance modest but distinctly reformist positions" about women's rights. Austen, according to her, questioned the ideal of women as subordinate and challenged paternalistic authority. For instance, Johnson views *Emma* as a novel that celebrates female power, and insists that despite Emma's mistakes and transgressions she continues to rule after she marries Mr. Knightley. While I agree with Johnson's overall reading of *Emma*, I will dispute her interpretation of the novel's ending. Similarly, in *Desire and Domestic Fiction*, Nancy Armstrong writes that Emma achieves linguistic victory through her matrimony. Given her mistakes in misreading the feelings of others, Armstrong thinks, the heroine learns how to express and how to know her own feelings. Accordingly, as Emma learns how to self-regulate her behavior, the novel introduces a new form of literacy: "polite speech," as Armstrong calls it, becomes a new currency which guarantees a stable community. I agree with Armstrong's claim about the lessons Emma learns, but my reading of the novel also reveals a paradox that Armstrong ignores: that Emma's newly gained ability at the end of the novel, the ability to self-regulate her behavior, also limits, if not halts, her quest for self-expression. Similarly, in *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer*, Mary Poovey notes that Austen, responding to the fact that for women writers in the eighteenth and nineteenth century the act of writing was synonymous to self-assertion and thus considered unladylike, found a way to criticize the way propriety shapes and deforms women's desires. While Poovey sees Austen as a conservative writer who educates her protagonists and readers, she believes that Austen also explores the difficulty of reconciling female desire and female propriety. I agree with Poovey's latter claim although I do not view Austen's writing as purely instructive. The critic whose claims I mostly support is D.A. Miller

who, in *Jane Austen, or The Secret of Style*, argues that while Austen's typical heroines are stylists, the author explores not only their accomplishments, but also, predominantly, their transgressions and failures. He states that the relationship between style and the marriage plot is "perverse"—while the heroine's style creates the marriage plot, the heroine must give up the style to fulfill the marriage plot. This, according to Miller, ultimately proves the alienation of style from self. In order to further explore the perverse relationship between style and the marriage plot I will draw on DuPlessis' notion of the tension between the bildungsroman and romance. I will also address claims from *The Madwoman in the Attic*, a feminist text by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, who argue that in the nineteenth-century male writers depict women as either the "angel" or the "monster." Both representations are, according to the authors, inaccurate and harmful to women. Gilbert and Gubar state that women writers must destroy both those representations in order to escape male-dominated culture and to find their own identity. They also claim that some nineteenth-century writers, Jane Austen included, manage to achieve true female literary authority by simultaneously conforming to and subverting patriarchal literary standards. Finally, I will engage with Elsie Michie, who in *The Vulgar Question of Money* claims that in the eighteenth and nineteenth-century fiction the marriage plot reveals the social dilemma of the time: the rise of capitalism in England, and that the marriage plots depicted in literature contribute to an ongoing debate about the impact of money on individuals and culture. In *Emma*, according to Michie, the heroine's wealth leads her to indulge in matchmaking plans for other people and, while she internalizes assumptions about class distinctions, she must learn to sympathize with those she initially sees as below her. I agree with the latter claim, but add that the marriage plot in *Emma*, since it is contradictory to the heroine's quest for self-definition, also serves as a vehicle for exploring the contradictions of female authorship.

Emma the author

“I am going to take a heroine whom no-one but myself will much like” (Austen-Leigh 158), Jane Austen famously writes of her new heroine, Emma. Indeed, compared to Elisabeth Bennet, Elinor Dashwood and Fanny Price, the heroines of her three previously published novels, Emma is unique. Emma’s uniqueness, as I see it, allows her to be an author. First of all, unlike her literary predecessors, she is wealthy, and thus does not need to find a husband. As Emma herself explains, “I have none of the usual inducements of women to marry” (82). Johnson points out that Emma is unlike other heroines of her time because she doesn’t see herself as “incomplete” as a single woman. What is more, Johnson adds, Emma has power and enjoys it (124). Similarly, Mary Poovey adds that the power of the unmarried woman was the right to resist a suitor (29). Emma certainly exercises that right when she turns down Mr. Elton’s proposal. In fact, she insists that she has “no thoughts of matrimony at present” (125), implying that she might refuse other proposals should they arrive. Since, as I discussed in my Introduction, in the eighteenth and nineteenth century British literature the conventional marriage plot overshadows a heroine’s quest for self-expression, the fact that Emma, for most of the novel, rejects the marriage plot in order to continue her matchmaking schemes suggests that Austen’s novel explores the contradiction between the two alternate notions of female fate.

Also, Emma is the only Austen heroine whose name is a title of a novel. Richardson dedicates his title to his heroine but he adds an alternative title—*Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*—as if giving readers a choice whether the novel is about Pamela or about virtue rewarded. Austen’s Emma is just *Emma*, short and definitive, suggesting her God-like status in the novel as well as in town. Interestingly, in a letter to her publisher, Austen instructed, “The Title page must be, Emma ...” (Austen 189). The fact that the novel *Emma* is about a character named Emma

who is depicted as an author places the female protagonist at the center of the story before the story even begins. The very first line in the book starts with “Emma Woodhouse,” thus confirming the heroine’s place in the novel. From this first line, we also learn that Emma is “handsome, clever, rich, with a comfortable home and a happy disposition,” and that she “lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her” (7). In other words, Emma is perfect, and so is her life. And yet, if we pause here and examine Austen’s use of free indirect discourse, a fair question to ask is: who exactly is speaking, the narrator or the heroine? If it is the latter, then is her egocentric opening an objective reality or is it only she who sees herself as the center of the narrative, both as heroine and author? What is more, while *Pamela* begins in distress, *Emma* pretends to begin with no conflict, as if there was nothing at stake here. Not even the death of her mother, when Emma was very young, seemed to cause her much suffering, we learn from the first page. Emma, surrounded by her “most affectionate” father and Miss Taylor, her friend and governess, leads a happy life. By revealing Emma’s good fortune within the first few paragraphs of the novel, the narrator encourages the reader to put their guard down, implying that all is well. However, if all is well, if the protagonist’s life is so perfect, then why should the reader keep on reading? Besides, a heroine so “handsome, clever, and rich” poses a problem: if she is better than everyone else, then what if, as Austen playfully predicts in her letter, no one will like her? And yet, Emma, as we soon learn, does have one fault. She has “rather too much her way” (7). It is this very fault that signals a possible conflict, and it is this problem, together with Austen’s use of blending the heroine’s voice with the narrator’s, that will set Emma’s authorship in motion.

As previously mentioned, Emma is depicted as an author because she is, or at least she believes she is, a creator of romance. As she tries to manage the fate of others, she composes her

life's story featuring herself in the central role of a heroine. What is more, while Pamela's authorship originates from writing, Emma's authorship does not require a physical pen. Nancy Armstrong writes that, since Emma, through her use of language, creates desire where it wouldn't otherwise exist, "Matchmaking is for Austen simply another word for fiction-writing" (143). While I also claim that matchmaking is synonymous to authorship, I see Emma's authorship in broader terms. As the heroine enacts her god-like power and manipulates the lives of others, she also, in the process, creates an outlet for self-definition. Mr. Elton, for example, is, according to Emma, "an excellent match" for her friend and protégé Harriet Smith, which implies that he is not an excellent match for Emma. Thus, by plotting the romance of others, the heroine gradually discovers what she wants, including her own perfect match, Mr. Knightley. And yet, her eagerness to secure matrimony for her friend indicates that Emma, at least on some level, perceives the marriage plot as the goal of a woman's life. Consequently, even as the heroine rebels against the patriarchal, conduct-book culture, she also internalizes the culture's notions about a woman's proper place in society. What is more, paradoxically, when Emma embraces the marriage plot, she must reject her authorial power, an act that highlights the antagonistic nature of the two paths of a woman's life.

While in Volume I, Austen allows Emma unlimited reign as an author through the heroine's matchmaking attempts, she also challenges Emma's god-like authority through the use of irony and free indirect discourse. As Austen's use of free indirect discourse, which sounds like third person omniscient point of view except that the narrator's and a character's thoughts become indistinguishable from one another, allows the heroine to have an independent voice and encourages the reader to believe and sympathize with her, it also, ironically, distances her from the reader. When the narrator abandons the omniscient perspective and transforms it into her

heroine's perspective, Emma's point of view kidnaps the novel. As a result, she gains autonomy, she can freely express herself, and yet, because she stays in her own world, she is in danger of mistaking her own subjectivity for objective truths. For instance, as the young heroine demonstrates her authorial ambitions when she decides to "improve" the seventeen-year-old Harriet Smith, Austen also suggests that Emma's power of judgment might be impaired. As Emma's plan for Harriet reveals, "She would notice her; she would improve her; she would detach her from her bad acquaintance, and introduce her into good society; she would form her opinions and her manners. It would be an interesting, and certainly a very kind undertaking; highly becoming her own situation in life, her leisure, her powers" (24). This passage reveals not only that Emma feels she has the authority to rewrite Harriet's narrative, but also that she sees herself as superior to her young protégé. Austen's use of irony to express her heroine's state of mind suggests that while Emma herself might think that she will "improve" Harriet, others may disagree. Moreover, Austen's use of free indirect discourse here suggests that to Emma, whose voice overpowers this passage, as well as the novel, her designs on Harriet are "kind." And yet, since we hear only Emma's voice, blended with the narrator's subtle irony, Austen encourages us to question the heroine's convictions, even if they are presented to us as facts. Soon, Emma's authorship is again compromised, this time by events outside of her control, when it turns out that Mr. Elton, the perfect match for her friend, is, in fact, in love with Emma. In response, the heroine resolves to be "humble and discreet" and to "repress imagination all the rest of her life" (130). And yet, Emma's eagerness to be what Poovey would call the Proper Lady is difficult to believe, given Austen's prior representation of her heroine as someone who loves the power that matchmaking gives her. Furthermore, Emma's designs for Harriet suggest that she manipulates language. For example, when Harriet brings Emma a letter from Mr. Martin, who proposes to

Harriet, Emma cleverly convinces Harriet to refuse the marriage proposal: “Emma assured her there would be no difficulty in the answer, and advised its being written directly, which was agreed to, in the hope of her assistance; and though Emma continued to protest against any assistance being wanted, it was in fact given in the formation of every sentence” (53). As this passage reveals, Emma uses her influence over Harriet to ensure that her protégé does not marry a farmer, even though, as we learn from Harriet herself, the latter returns Mr. Martin’s feelings. While Emma’s success in convincing her friend to reject the suitor confirms her power as an author—she, quite literally, writes Harriet’s fate here—Austen also seems to imply that language can be dangerous when used to manipulate others.

What is more, in Volume II, Emma’s quest for self-expression weakens as she begins to entertain romance in her own life. Even though Emma focuses her authorial creativity on rewriting Jane Fairfax and her possible love affair with Mr. Dixon, the heroine conceives a marriage plot between Frank Churchill and herself. This suggests that the marriage plot plays a double role in Austen’s novel: it offers a path to Emma’s authorship, but it also weakens it when Emma herself becomes an active participant, not just an author, in a love story. As Emma thinks, “I must be in love; I should be the oddest creature in the world if I were not...” (244), implying that, contrary to Emma’s assurances that she does not need to marry, it is natural for a young woman to seek romance. Emma’s susceptibility to the marriage plot reveals the tension between her authorial ambitions and the conventional plot of a woman’s life, as well as the tension between the *bildungsroman* and romance in early nineteenth century fiction. It is through this tension that Austen explores the contradictory notion of femininity: as Poovey claims, any woman writer in the nineteenth century had to confront the Proper Lady model versus an aggressive desire for self-assertion (48). Consequently, as more young women around Emma

search for husbands, the heroine feels compelled to do the same, even if she is not in love with Frank Churchill. Poovey asserts that Austen exposes and criticizes the way propriety shapes and deforms female desire (47), and Emma's gradual submission to the conventional romance plot is, I believe, an example of this.

Not surprisingly then, in Volume III, while Emma's authorship becomes increasingly passive, her eagerness for romance increases. When Harriet, for instance, confides that she is in love again, Emma promises not to interfere. "There could be no harm in a scheme. A mere passive scheme" (314), the heroine reflects, suggesting that even though matchmaking is still a tempting endeavor, she must, at least partially, distance herself from it. In fact, Emma's authorship disintegrates completely when she realizes that she must marry Mr. Knightley: "It darted through her, with the speed of an arrow, that Mr. Knightley must marry no one but herself" (382), she thinks. The violent language here suggests that her epiphany is like a wound, not like a happy discovery. This wound, I argue, is a signal of the tension between, to use DuPlessis' language, the heroine's quest for development and the romance plot. As DuPlessis asserts, the narrative pattern of the romance plot "muffles the main female character" and "represses quest" (5). As Emma's thoughts confirm, "She was most sorrowfully indignant; ashamed of every sensation but the one revealed to her—her affection for Mr. Knightley.—Every other part of her mind was disgusting" (386). By having Emma reject her authorial power, and to reject it with such force, Austen highlights the limited options for women in the early nineteenth century: what Gilbert and Gubar refer to as the choice between rebellion and submission. Accordingly, Austen's heroine must relinquish her rebellious identity—her drive to be an author in a patriarchal society—and submit to a man. Austen, I believe, does not imply that a woman is better off when she marries; instead, she suggests that a woman's happiness depends

on two contradictory notions: self-assertion and love. Since she cannot have both, she must choose one or the other. What is more, each choice comes at a price. Emma's wound, as I contend, is evidence of that. While Emma comes close to acknowledging the wound—a process that would open a path to multiple-consciousness—she stops short of facing the contradictory nature of her fate when she dismisses her authorship as “madness” and “blindness.” Even though the heroine points out that her most important endeavor will be “to understand, thoroughly understand her own heart” (386), suggesting that Emma does have a deeper understanding of herself by the end of the novel, she also, by refusing to acknowledge her desire for self-expression, is in self-denial about the part of herself she must relinquish.

And yet, while Austen explores the tension between her heroine's desire for self-definition and her embrace of the marriage plot, she also further complicates Emma's quandary by questioning whether Emma ever had power as an author. In Volume III, when Emma learns that, contrary to her predictions and designs, Harriet is in love with Mr. Knightley, and that Frank Churchill and Jane Fairfax are engaged, the narrator relates:

She was bewildered amidst the confusion of all that had rushed to her within the last few hours. Every moment had brought a fresh surprise; and every surprise must be matter of humiliation to her.—How to understand it all! How to understand the deceptions she had been thus practicing on herself, and living under! The blunders, the blindness of her own head and heart! (385-386)

As this passage suggests, Austen not only reminds us of the manipulative power of language; she also, echoing Foucault's notion of authorship, further explores the contradictory nature of Emma's self-expression: Emma's belief that she can manipulate the lives of others as she pleases versus Emma's inability to control her discourse. What is humiliating to Emma is the realization

that, unlike an author who possesses god-like power over his subjects, the heroine was, in fact, deceiving herself when she insisted on her success at matchmaking. Harriet was supposed to fall in love with Mr. Elton, and then, when that scheme did not pan out, she was supposed to fall in love with Frank Churchill; Jane Fairfax, according to Emma's vision, was involved in a clandestine affair with a married man; and Frank Churchill, of course, was meant to harbor romantic feelings for Emma herself. Emma's failure as a creator of discourse implies that Austen's own definition of authorship may be closer to Foucault's: after all, as it turns out, Emma belongs to language, and not the other way around. When Harriet reminds the heroine of her talent for "seeing into everybody's heart," Emma, towards the end of the novel, "doubts" that she ever had such a "talent" (379), suggesting that, since what happens is opposite to her intentions, the heroine's belief that she could manipulate language was a delusion. Emma discovers not only, as Gilbert and Gubar state, "the ambiguous nature of discourse that mystifies, withholds, coerces, and lies as much as it reveals" (159); she also learns that individuals cannot have full control of language.

Although Emma's authorial designs reveal that language cannot be controlled, they are nonetheless an expression of Emma's selfhood. Austen's use of narration, and specifically of free independent discourse, creates an outlet for the heroine's subjectivity. The loss of the heroine's voice in the final chapters of the novel coincides with Emma's personal growth, as well as with the sacrifice of Emma's authorial identity. D. A. Miller states that even though Austen's typical heroines, Emma and Elisabeth Bennet included, "are all stylists, we are ceaselessly directed to observe the excesses, the failings, even the evils in their performance of style..." (42). Miller's theory is that Austen's style "splits into two mutually exclusive, and definitive, styles of being: (godlike) narration and (all-too-human) character" (42). The first one is a superior

achievement, the latter—an unobtainable dream. What he says of Elisabeth Bennet—that style as character is useful because her uniqueness gets her married into “full socialization” (45)—can be applied to Emma. Interestingly, Miller points out that this can only work if the heroine convinces herself that she isn’t using her style for matrimony. He calls the relationship between style and the marriage plot perverse: the heroine’s style creates the marriage plot but for the plot to fulfill she must give up her style “or rather, what is much more demanding, she flattens it into merely decorative reminiscence of itself, like a flower pressed into a wedding album” (45). Indeed, as exemplified above, Emma’s voice in the final chapters of the novel is either generic or non-existent. Miller argues that “this fall” “aborts whatever ambition the heroine has harbored to “Absolute Style” and that, by giving up her style, the heroine becomes “Woman at last.” While I disagree that Emma transforms into a Woman, a fully unified self, when she throws away her authorship, I also see her matrimonial decision as a paradox. She must give up a part of herself to accomplish another part of herself. Miller suggests that Emma must marry because shame is style’s alter ego (49), and because she realizes that style is temporary (50). At first, her friends are single, so she, too, can be single, but as everyone marries, she must too: because, Miller reminds us, women of her generation are divided into wives and old maids. If she becomes single, her style will become a substitute for something she cannot have. But when she gives up her style, she discovers a desire “*to be a Person*” (51). Next, Miller claims, she chooses to be the Person: while style pretended to be a reward, being the Person is the reward (52). While I don’t share Miller’s viewpoint that choosing the Person and matrimony is a better choice than the first option, I agree that Emma’s matchmaking could be seen as a substitute for something that she cannot have. Miller continues, “Style, then, gets you the things it fools you into thinking you don’t want, but only, finally, by being abandoned for the Person, which makes you *know* you

want them” (53). In other words, the heroine throws away her authorship when she catches the man she wants. Miller points out that the heroine doesn’t fully realize that her style was social ambition and that so was dropping it (53). Miller also notes that when Mary Crawford, from *Mansfield Park*, refuses to acknowledge “the pathology of her style,” she must suffer because she chooses style over self. Emma, on the other hand, has the sense to give up her career for marriage (55). But Emma, I contend, is also punished, however differently. She gains a part of her selfhood but only after she gives a part of it up. What is more, her ultimate embrace of the marriage plot ends her quest for self-expression.

Mr. Knightley’s marriage plot

While Mr. Knightley is not the only man who opposes Emma’s authorship— John Knightley informs Emma that Elton seems to be in love with her, not with Harriet, thus discrediting her narrative, Mr. Elton traps Emma in a carriage and ruins her plans for Harriet by proposing to her; her father asks her not to make any more matches,—it is Mr. Knightley whose ongoing criticism of Emma leads the heroine to abandon her quest for self-expression and to thus give up her career for marriage. Johnson sees Knightley as not quite the moralist and conservative as he may appear and points out that he, like Emma, misreads people. What is more, Johnson states, he does not know everything about Emma. For example, he remains ignorant of Emma’s plot for Jane. Johnson continues, “Austen’s determination to establish a discrepancy between what he knows and what we know about Emma is daring” (140-141). I agree that Mr. Knightley is not always the perfect moral authority he appears to be, and that he is not omniscient. And yet, unlike Johnson, who sees Emma and Knightley “on equal footing” (141), I see Mr. Knightley’s effort to tame Emma’s imagination as a way to establish his superiority and to impose the conventional plot of romance on the heroine. I agree with D. A.

Miller who believes that, since Emma's style, and style for women in general, is shameful, Mr. Knightley tries to shame Emma all the time (49). He clearly believes that a woman's place is in the kitchen, not behind a writing desk. For example, Knightley tells Emma to invite Mr. Elton to a sophisticated dinner "but leave him to choose his own wife" (15). The fact that the last words in this chapter belong to Mr. Knightley, not to Emma, implies his verbal superiority. And while it is true that Emma does not generally listen to Mr. Knightley's advice, which Johnson cites as evidence of their equality, neither does Emma discredit his actions the way he does hers. When Knightley says, "You are more likely to have done harm to yourself, than good to them, by interference" (14), Emma lets her father answer for her. Additionally, when Knightley tells Emma that she is wrong to think that Mr. Elton will marry Harriet, Emma is "uncomfortable," and laughs when Knightley adds that her matchmaking work will be "all labor in vain" (64). Her laughter indicates that Emma, despite her talent for self-expression, does not know what to say. Knightley also tries to discredit her authorial creativity to her closest confidante, Mrs. Weston. He says to Emma's friend, "But I have done with expecting any course of steady reading from Emma. She will never submit to anything requiring industry and patience" (36). What is more, he wants to see Emma in love but knows that "there is nobody hereabouts to attach her" (39), implying that marriage would tame her. While Knightley's brutal honesty does help Emma realize her faults, his overall agenda is to censor her quest for self-definition. His technique begins to work when Emma begins to seek his approval. For example, she is "gratified" (310) when Knightley admits that Harriet does have some fine qualities. As Knightley's power of censorship over Emma increases, he literally takes away her voice. Emma's "tongue is motionless" (352) when Knightley scolds her after she makes a rude comment to Miss Bates. Knightley achieves his final victory when he proposes to her: Emma is speechless. "She could

really say nothing” (402), we are told. In fact, Knightley’s voice is the only one the reader hears in this scene. The narrator informs us that Emma says “just what she ought, of course. A lady always does” (404), implying that Emma’s sense of propriety takes over her authorial ambitions. I strongly disagree with Armstrong who sees the scene as a moment in which language is “reborn,” despite Emma’s silence, as it reveals “the core of the individual.” Armstrong, apparently, is not bothered by the fact that Knightley silences Emma with his marriage proposal, and that his language dominates the scene. “Not borrowed and used, as it emerges directly from the individuals in question, word by word, each loaded at least with real meaning, because each is fixed to a feeling that already exists before the individual finds words and occasion to pronounce it,” Armstrong argues, calling the language between Emma and Knightley “the language of pure desire uncolored by any form of value other than its own” (152). While Armstrong equates Emma’s language during her matchmaking schemes with impurity because it creates fraudulent desire, Knightley’s and Emma’s language is, according to her, pure and thus natural. I also disagree with Michie who claims that Emma’s decision to marry Knightley, a man who represents virtue, allows her to find a “unified self” (5). On the contrary, the self that Emma finds as she embraces the marriage plot is wounded. As the last line in the novel suggests, “the perfect happiness of the union” symbolizes the end of individuality. Consequently, by transforming Emma’s autonomous voice into a voice within a union, Knightley successfully overpowers Emma’s authorship. And yet, unlike Mr. B., he agrees to Emma’s limited autonomy within this union. Emma’s sacrifice of her imagination will be rewarded: the heroine can remain on her own turf, in Hartfield, where Knightley agrees to move, and she learns an important lesson about the dangers of manipulating the lives of others. Austen, thus, rewrites Mr. B, whose perfect wife exemplifies conduct-book agenda: Mr. Knightley ‘s willingness to share some

power with his wife reflects not only the fact that marriage in the early nineteenth century is increasingly based on equality, but also that, while the novel's ending is conventional, there is hope that the heroine's married life may not imply the extreme submission that her predecessor's does. And yet, since, by the end of the novel, Emma seems to have learnt everything she needs to know, and since she is ready to submit to the marriage plot, her quest for self-expression is over.

Emma the Authoress

Unlike Pamela, who writes to her parents out of distress, Emma's authorship begins with boredom, solitude, and wealth. When Miss Taylor marries, Emma is "in great danger of suffering from intellectual solitude" (8). She has everything—money, youth, beauty, intelligence—but she is also lonely. Her father cannot "meet her in conversation, rational or playful" (8), and so Emma is left to her own devices. While she spends a lot of time socializing, her companions are no substitute for Miss Taylor. Emma feels intellectually superior to everyone in the town, including Harriet. Her only possible equal, Mr. Knightley, is a man who constantly criticizes her behavior. He says, "Emma is spoiled by being the cleverest in her family" (36), implying that being clever is, for a woman, dangerous. As Gilbert and Gubar note, "If Emma is an artist who manipulates people as if they were characters in her stories, Austen emphasizes not only the immorality of this activity, but its cause or motivation: except for placating her father, Emma has nothing to do" (158). This points to Emma's frustration of living in a society that doesn't allow her to explore her interests and express her talents. Another source of Emma's authorship is her wealth. Michie, who claims that Emma's imaginary impulses stem from her financial prosperity, states that there are three women poorer than Emma in the novel: Harriet Smith, Jane Fairfax and Miss Bates. As Emma injures all three of them, the novel, according to Michie, "represents the self-interest triggered by wealth as embedded at a deeper and more psychological level" (32) than in

Austen's previous work. Michie notes that Austen engages with Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* where the eighteenth-century philosopher says that while self-interest is unavoidable in capitalism, one must have sympathy to conduct interpersonal exchanges. While I don't think that Emma shows no sympathy for other during her matchmaking days, she does learn how to be kinder to others by the end of the novel. What is more, Emma is the natural patriarchal figure at home, given her father's selfishness and obsessive fear of disease. She is the one who entertains guests and she is the one who appears to listen to her father but who gets her own way, including with matchmaking. "I believe few married women are half as much mistress of their husband's house, as I am of Hartfield" (82), she explains to Harriet. She is clearly more intelligent than her father too, which further provides a portrait of her rule in the house. Mary Poovey writes that the eighteenth-century woman who conducted their household duties, did charity work, and also taught children morality and self-discipline felt satisfied because, while they performed socially constructive chores, their duties began to be the same as their desires (10). And yet, Emma's authorship also stems from the fact that, while she might have internalized some of her household duties, they aren't enough to fulfill her intellectually. This signals a problem of professionalism for female writers: how can they assert their professional identity if they are not taken seriously as authors, Austen seems to be asking. Emma's intellectual needs pose a danger to the stability of the community. This is why Knightley, together with Emma's father and Emma, tries to censor Emma to restore social order. The moral of the story is that it is a truth universally acknowledged that a single woman in possession of a large fortune must be in need of a husband; otherwise her quest for self-expression, paired up with an unruly imagination, poses a threat. Viewed in this light, marriage kills the source of Emma's authorship—her

boredom and solitude—and it thus reshapes and flattens Emma’s desire from authorial ambitions to pleasing her husband.

Mary Poovey, who offers a critique of the way propriety redirects female desire, writes that, while marriage was the only acceptable occupation for women in the eighteenth century, to be a female author meant to challenge men, seek praise and thus go against propriety. She adds that there were two ways around it: write for friends and not to publish and write anonymously. The latter offered a “disguised entrance into the arena of literary creation” (35-36). It is no coincidence that the author of *Emma* is introduced as “the author of *Pride and Prejudice*.” What is more, the novel *Emma* is about Emma’s anonymous authorship. While Emma acknowledges her matchmaking schemes to several people in town, there is not one person in Highbury who realizes the extent of her plots. And yet, while Austen continues to write after she completes *Emma*, her heroine loses her imaginative drive. Johnson points out that critics condemn Emma for playing God, by which, according to Johnson, she plays “man” (123). She adds that Emma rejects the romantic plot at first and thus “neglects” the role she is supposed to play according to critics and in agreement with her times (124). I agree that Emma creates her own rules for what it means to be a woman, but her authorship also makes her lonely. In fact, her home Hartfield, which belongs to Highbury but has “separate lawn and shrubberies and name” (9), is like Emma, a part of the community but also isolated. Her loneliness and single status also expose her quandary. When Emma befriends Harriet, she once again has a walking companion. Austen does not directly state that Emma cannot or should not walk alone, and yet her joy at Harriet’s presence indicates that the heroine is quite limited in her outdoor activities. Also, when Mr. Elton proposes to her in the carriage, Emma feels trapped, again reminding the reader of her enclosed existence. Furthermore, since Emma, following Poovey’s logic, acts improperly in engaging in

female self-expression, in the end of Volume I she begins to feel “ashamed” of her matchmaking schemes and decides “to do such things no more” (129). Her shame leads her to decide to curb her authorship by “repressing her imagination” (134). While her matchmaking designs turn out to be misguided, her freedom to pursue them nonetheless confirms her authorial powers. By setting up this double bind here, Austen represents the paradox of female authorship, and female autonomy in general: her heroine’s sense of power originates from exactly the same place as her disempowerment.

Mary Poovey states that after the backlash of the French Revolution, women were once again celebrated for their angelic qualities, adding that anything non-angelic was “monstrous.” She continues saying that an autonomous woman was autonomous at a cost of social ostracism or personal denial (35), like Frankenstein, the tragic scientist in Mary Shelley’s novel published three years after *Emma*. Even though Shelley’s protagonist is a male, he is severely punished for creating a monster. The novel thus echoes the fear of Austen’s time: that imagination can be powerful, but also destructive. In fact, Poovey calls imagination Frenkenstein’s “original transgression” (131) and adds that the novel calls into question the egotism of an artist’s self-assertion (122). Similarly, Emma’s authorial designs point to the selfishness of her desire for self-expression. Gilbert and Gubar correctly agree that in many of Austen’s novels imagination is associated with danger. In the end of *Emma*, as Johnson states, “The ‘resources’—beauty, wit, employment and money—which Emma thinks can preserve her from sharing Miss Bates’ ignominious destiny as a poor old maid finally amount to very little. It is single womanhood itself... that turns out to be the real evil.” I agree with Johnson that Emma’s fate serves as a reminder that her power is always limited by “the restrictions common to her sex” (139), and that her fear of becoming like Miss Bates, the poor and constantly chattering old maid, further pushes

Emma to enter into the marriage plot. Gilbert and Gubar note that many of Austen's heroines are 'saved' when they "relinquish their subjectivity through the manipulations of a narrator..." (144). They add that Austen dramatizes "the necessity of female submission for female survival" (154) and that this is especially flattering to men because they tame the rebel-women. I agree with their claim, to a certain extent. While Mr. Knightley's taming of Emma is one of the central themes of the novel, and while Emma's submission to the marriage plot certainly is a safer choice for her than authorship, Emma nonetheless could survive without a husband. If Austen's work, as Gilbert and Gubar suggest, "reinforces women's subordinate position in a patriarchal culture" (154), it also forces the reader to question their own desires, which are often a part of the culture. Additionally, Gilbert and Gubar correctly assert that by writing about heroines who are divided, Austen examines what it means to be a woman and a writer in her times (155).

What is more, by setting up Mrs. Elton as Emma's double in the novel, Austen further explores the paradoxes of female agency. While Mr. Knightley encourages Emma to abandon her matchmaking schemes, it is, as Johnson points out, the contrast between Mrs. Elton and Emma that shows the difference between how to misuse and how to use power (129). Gilbert and Gubar, on the other hand, argue that the "obnoxious" women in Austen, such as Mrs. Elton, "enact impulses of revolt that make them doubles not only for the heroines but for their author as well" (170). My argument is that while Mrs. Elton helps Emma see her own abuses of power, her "bitchiness" also reflects her desire for power outside of the domain prescribed to her by society: her home. By portraying Mrs. Elton as Emma's double, Austen suggests that any ambitious woman can transgress social boundaries. Consequently, while Mrs. Elton is an author very much like Emma—she tries to manipulate Jane Fairfax' narrative—she is a lot more insistent and vulgar. For example, when Emma says there are no limits to her "tongue" (264), the reader can

state the same about Emma. When Mrs. Elton insists on finding a governess position for Jane, Jane continuously rejects her offer to help, thus verbalizing her desire to be left alone. In other words, Jane does not want to be authored, which is what Emma tries to “do” to her as well, but in a more secretive manner. Soon, Mrs. Elton “insisted on being authorized to write” a note stating that Jane accepts the position Mrs. Elton finds for her, Emma is “astonished” at how Jane can “bear it” (337). While the language Austen uses to describe Mrs. Elton confirms that she, like Emma, has authorial ambitions, Emma herself acknowledges that the woman’s tactless behavior puts Jane in a very uncomfortable position.

Michie argues that the way in which the rich woman is represented in eighteenth and nineteenth century literature reveals anxiety about recent economic developments through the marriage plot in which the man chooses a poor and moral woman over a rich and vulgar one. While she acknowledges that Emma is an exception in Jane Austen’s fiction, her theory might be applied to Mrs. Elton. In fact, the latter resembles the wealthy, power-hungry, and often vulgar Lady Catherine from *Pride and Prejudice*. Following Michie’s logic, if Mrs. Elton’s wealth is associated with vulgarity and lack of tact, her character also serves to reveal the society’s thoughts and choices about money. Of Lady Catherine, Michie says that Austen uses her to show how “wealth-fueled egotism transforms concern for others into an occasion to assert one’s own superiority” (38). Similarly, Mrs. Elton’s wealth, together with her authorial ambitions, provides an occasion for her to treat all the other Highbury inhabitants with superiority. While Mrs. Elton represents an abuse of power when she tries to manipulate Jane Fairfax’ life, she also reminds us that wealthy women with nothing to do are in a particular danger of abusing their power. By juxtaposing Emma’s quest for self-expression with Mrs. Elton’s more vulgar quest for the same,

Austen reveals both the dangers of manipulating language and the limited opportunities for woman's authorship.

Emma: authorship rewarded or punished?

While, as previously mentioned, Austen sets up *Emma* as the bildungsroman that eventually morphs into romance, nowhere is this division more clearly expressed than in the ending of the novel. As the narrator relates Emma's and Mr. Knightley's wedding:

The wedding was very much like other weddings, where the parties have no taste for finery or parade; and Mrs. Elton, from the particulars detailed by her husband, thought it all extremely shabby, and very inferior to her own... But, in spite of these deficiencies, the wishes, the hopes, the confidence, the predictions of the small band of true friends who witnessed the ceremony, were fully answered in the perfect happiness of the union. (453)

Here, Austen seems to be aware of the fact that while a happy ending of a novel must include a wedding, it is also a cliché: the wedding's resemblance to other weddings encourages this interpretation; also, by saying that the heroine's wedding "was much like other weddings," Austen not only implies that all weddings are the same, but she also distances her novel from the high point of all romance narratives. Moreover, while the fact that the last paragraph in the book does not include Emma's voice signifies the end of the heroine's quest for self-expression, given the tension between the first ninety percent of the novel, which explores Emma's search for self-expression, and the ending, which undercuts it, Austen encourages us to question just how perfect "the perfect happiness of the union" will be. While Austen does not resolve this tension, she does exaggerate it by creating a disjunction between Emma's rebellious quest and her embrace of the marriage plot. This allows Austen to explore the contradictory nature of female

authorship and of female fate in the early nineteenth century, and to, subversively, criticize it. While many critics see the novel's ending as happy, my reading of it is different. Johnson, for example, acknowledges that *Emma* offers a view into female fate—the self-sufficient heroine realizes that unless she wants to be an old maid like Miss Bates she must marry—the novel is, according to her, a celebration of female power. She argues that Emma marries her equal, and that Knightley, who moves into her house, gives up some of the traditional power that conservatives would want him to keep, thus allowing Emma to continue her rule. However, as I argue in this chapter, by imposing the marriage plot on the heroine, Knightley establishes his superiority over Emma, but the latter maintains some of her autonomy, suggesting that Austen shifts the notion of power: instead of the oppressor and the oppressed, Austen depicts power as more flexible, less black and white. Furthermore, Johnson sees the ending of the novel as a book of social criticism by portraying figures both of moral authority and of abusive authority, and also by promoting social arrangements that do not fit into the conservative agenda of the times (143), as exemplified by Emma and Knightley. Again, Knightley's willingness to move to Hartfield is unorthodox. And yet, Emma's embrace of the marriage plot implies partial victory of conduct book etiquette—but also a revised version of Richardson's *Pamela*. Michie, on the contrary, argues that as the couple's marriage maintains social distinctions since they both belong to the upper class (59), the marriage plot also forces us to examine social inequalities (50). I agree that Emma learns a lot about the world, including that a poor farmer is not necessarily an inferior creature. Michie says it well when she states that “Emma charts a series of violent efforts, one might call them revolutions, in which the habits of thinking that rule the heroine's judgment and actions are overthrown and she is compelled to recognize a state of affairs other than the one she desired” (52). However, while Michie is not concerned with

Emma's authorial power, she omits the crucial point that Austen makes about female creativity and its discontents. Poovey, for example, even though she does not dedicate a section to *Emma* in her book, makes a claim about the marriage plot in Austen that applies to *Emma*. Echoing Gilbert and Gubar, she sees the marriage plot and wedding as fantasy which promises to fulfill women's lives but doesn't" (237). Gilbert and Gubar add that "Austen could not punish Emma more thoroughly than she does (159) as Emma's wit, celebrated at first, comes to be associated with self-delusion." Gilbert and Gubar continue, "Through Emma, Austen is confronting the inadequacy of fiction and the pain of the "imaginist." According to them, the female artist fails and "her efforts are condemned as tyrannical and coercive" (159). While I agree that the ending of *Emma* suggests that the loss of female authorship is inevitable, Emma, because of her privileged status, continues to have some, however limited, power in Highbury, and certainly in Hartfield. Gubar and Gilbert think that Emma must become like Jane Fairfax and "learn how to be secondary" (160). Undoubtedly, Emma's submission to Knightley and to the marriage plot suggests that all women face the same destiny in a patriarchal society. Still, Emma is in no danger of becoming as passive as Jane. Gilbert and Gubar insist that "Assertion, imagination, and wit are tempting forms of self-definition which encourage" Emma, among other Austen heroines, "to think that she can master or has mastered the world, but this is proven a dangerous illusion for women who must accept the fate of being mastered (162). While Austen explores the limited options for self-expression available to women, I contend that her agenda is more complex than a simple critique of patriarchy. I agree with Gubar and Gilbert's claim that as Austen's "heroines *seem* to submit as they get what they both want and need," the process of "doubleness" is beneficial to them, but it is also degrading (163). Emma, who rules the world as

an author for a big part of the narrative, must abandon her power in order to enjoy a marriage plot of her own. She will not be like Miss Bates, but she must also suffer from a painful loss.

Armstrong's, who, as stated in the previous chapter, views the ending of *Pamela* as a victory of the domestic woman, claims that *Emma*, too, ends with the heroine's victory. She points out that while in Richardson only males need to reform, in Austen the females do too. According to Armstrong, Austen, like Richardson, depicts different modes of representation "as a struggle between male and female" (151). She adds that in *Emma*, the struggle is about language. When fiction is uncensored, Emma's power, inherited from Pamela as the woman in the house, is "disruptive." But when she gives up the power of speech to constitute desire, she acquires another power: the male-female equality. While I share Armstrong's viewpoint that by the end of the novel Emma and Knightley agree about what constitutes a value in an individual (for example, Mr. Martin), that does not automatically imply that they are equals. And yet, because, as Armstrong indicates, the conflict between them doesn't require them to change their system of values, only to find "the right kind of currency to represent what was in the interest of both" (151), Emma is granted more autonomy than Pamela. Since the latter has to turn her system of values upside down when she agrees to marry Mr. B., Emma has to *only* crush her desire for self-expression; otherwise, she can remain "handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition" (7). Perhaps she can even continue "getting her way," in limited quantities.

D.A. Miller would disagree with Armstrong's insistence that Emma's language is the most powerful at the end of the novel when Emma gives up her authorship. He states that while Emma is Austen's favorite heroine, Emma's ultimate alienation of style from self is a loss. He believes that Austen's critique of style is "camouflage," but it also promotes the dream that it

may “correspond to the plentitude of a Person” (67). The beauty of style, Miller suggests, is that it shuts out the world that would otherwise shut out the stylothete (67). In other words, Emma’s authorship distances her from the culture that would ostracize her anyway. Miller calls *Emma* the most perfect and melancholy of Austen’s novels because “the perfection of style, of No One, opens the secret of its impossible desire to possess the perfection of a Person who has, who is, everything” (68). I share Miller’s opinion that Emma’s choice between style, which can be equated to a quest for self-expression, and the marriage plot is essentially a tragic one not only because she cannot have both but also because she should. However, referring to Emma’s perfection of style as “No One” is an exaggeration. After all, when Emma describes what her life will look like as an old single woman, her fate does not sound as bleak as Miller would have us believe. She explains to Harriet that “mine is an active, busy mind, with a great many independent resources; I do not perceive why I should be more in want of employment at forty or fifty than one-and twenty.” She adds that she will also always have the company of her nephews and nieces (83). As I also argue in this chapter, since Emma’s departure from authorship requires her to give up an integral part of her selfhood, the loss implies a wound. However, the loss of her own marriage plot would also, it appears, mean a painful sacrifice. As Emma embraces the marriage plot and gives up plotting the marriages of others, she also learns about the importance of self-knowledge. However, by not acknowledging the loss of her authorship, she cannot make the necessary step that Isabel Archer will make to become a true author of her life.

D. A. Miller writes that “Jane Austen’s novels will never state what is widely opposed, or at least widely required, to be obvious: that their author is a woman, and an old maid” (39). He adds that because Austen, a single woman who represents style, makes happiness depend on getting married, her work is the “negation of her subjectivity” (56). Similarly, Gubar and Gilbert

say that “Emma is clearly an avatar of Austen the artist” (158). Whether Austen the author acquires marriage plots of her own through her writing, the way Emma does over the course of her narrative, her novels, and *Emma* especially, examine female authorship in the context of limited choices available to eighteenth and nineteenth-century women. Gilbert and Gubar state that in the literary world dominated by male authors the only hope for women is to learn to reflect on their status as “subject and object” (162). While I stay away from portraying Austen’s masterpiece, and Emma’s fate, in such bleak categories, I do agree with their claim that Austen is “centrally concerned with the impossibility of women escaping the conventions and categories that, in every sense, belittle them” (113). As I have argued in this chapter, through portraying her heroine as an author and through simultaneously discrediting that power, Austen promotes female agency and female self-expression. Emma’s choices—between quest for self-definition and between the marriage plot—expose the paradoxical position of women in the nineteenth century fiction and culture. As Austen enters the debate of her time about the woman question, she both promotes liberal and conservative agendas and escapes them. Additionally, while Austen celebrates the power of imagination, she also reveals that language, when used incorrectly, can be dangerous. What is more, it cannot be controlled. While Richardson, according to Armstrong, sees the household as a place where “the rights of the individual can be realized, Austen writes the mechanism of self-regulation into that individual” (163). Armstrong, then, claims that Emma rejects Pamela’s power as a domestic woman and discovers power in self-control. However, while Emma does learn self-control, Austen, I believe, revises the eighteenth century novel by representing new forms of female subjectivity—a subjectivity that will, eventually, lead to multiple-consciousness. Austen takes Emma’s authorship away so that the heroine can discover that her actions to control the fate of others are morally wrong. The

heroine's submission to the marriage plot, the heroine's best alternative, reveals an irony: in order to marry, Emma must correct her behavior and thus Emma must sacrifice an integral part of her identity. By revealing this tension between self-expression and romance, Austen suggests that women's identity is based on conflicting ideas: since female power is linked to repression, the novel helps us rethink the notion of female self-expression. In *Emma*, the ambitious heroine must experiment with new forms of power in her quest for authorship. The fact that this quest dominates most of the novel suggests that Austen's legacy is that she revises the conventional romance plots of her predecessors and exaggerates the tension between female self-expression and convention. In *The Portrait of a Lady*, James will begin his narrative with this very tension.

Chapter 3

The Victory of the Bildungsroman and Multiple-Consciousness in Henry James' *The Portrait of a Lady*

It all started with the idea of “a certain young woman affronting her destiny,” as James wrote in the Preface of *The Portrait of a Lady*, adding that since millions of young women daily affront their destiny, he had to find a way for Isabel Archer to be special (xxvi). He knew that one way to make the heroine “special” would be to thoroughly depict her internal life. At first, in 1876, when James was writing *The American*, a story of a New World’s Christopher Newman’s courtship and adventures in Europe, he contemplated creating its female version, *The Americana*. He wrote to William Dean Howells, his friend and editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, that it would be “the portrait of the character and recital of the adventures of a woman—a great swell, psychologically... (Gorra 43). What James accomplished in *The Portrait of a Lady*, published in 1881, was considerably longer than he initially planned, and not only far superior to *The American*, but also a novel that would set the stage for twentieth century fiction by building “the bridge across which Victorian fiction stepped over into modernism” (Gorra xvi). In it, James takes the inner life of his heroine to unprecedented heights. As one of the first reviews from 1882, from *The Atlantic Monthly*, confirms, “By a fine concentration of attention upon the heroine, Mr. James impresses us with her im-portance, and the other characters, involved as they are with her life, fall back into secondary positions (“The Portrait of a Lady”). When James revised the novel in 1906, he himself explained in the Preface that even while in Shakespeare and George Elliot the heroines are important, the two authors compromise the importance of those heroines, because the women only matter to some, not to all, the other characters (xxvii). James’ solution was to “place the centre of the subject in the young woman’s own consciousness” (xxviii). And that he did. By depicting Isabel’s consciousness, together with her

self-proclaimed autonomy, as the center of the novel, James represents Isabel as an author. And yet, while the heroine perceives herself as one that originates or creates her own narrative, and, accordingly, she seems to fit the *Oxford English Dictionary*'s definition of an author, James' ironic portrayal of his heroine challenges her belief that she is in control of her destiny.

Moreover, by presenting his heroine as an author who is unable to control her discourse, James, similarly to Richardson and Austen, suggests that the Foucaultian definition of authorship—an author whose discourse precedes them—offers a more accurate insight into the theory of authorship than the traditional definition of an author as creator of meaning. James, thus, like his predecessors, explores the relationship between those two opposing notions of authorship.

Additionally, while Isabel's loss of autonomy when she marries Gilbert Osmond, implies the loss of authorship, James further complicates this loss by suggesting that his heroine did not have authorial power in the first place. As I will also argue, Isabel becomes an author in the end of the novel, partially because she accepts the fact that language cannot be controlled. Following into his predecessors' footsteps, James also exposes the tension between the heroine's quest for self-definition and the marriage plot. What is more, I contend, he resolves this tension by offering an alternative ending to his novel, and to Isabel's fate: instead of the happy ever after, James' heroine will have to face an unhappy marriage, and reflect on the consequences of her choices. In contrast to many critics who read the ending of the novel—Isabel's implied return to her tyrannical husband—as tragic, I propose that James empowers Isabel when he equips her with what I call multiple consciousness, an awareness of multiple narratives that preside over our lives, including the awareness of one's inability to control language. Isabel, I suggest, rewrites the marriage plot by manipulating it so that it morphs back into bildungsroman. In this chapter, I

will prove that *The Portrait of a Lady*, while it resembles, at times, a romance, is, in fact, a bildungsroman.

At first, Isabel is presented to the reader as an author in control of her narrative. As the twenty-three years old heroine, originally from Albany, New York, embarks on a maiden voyage to Europe, she wants to not only “affront her destiny,” but also to be in charge of her fate. However, James, through the use of free indirect discourse and irony, soon questions the heroine’s authorship. While she continues to see herself, metaphorically speaking, as an author of her life, James suggests that the heroine’s naïve confidence in her own power might be unrealistic. While Isabel rejects her two suitors, she seems to prove, at least to herself, that her authorial power has no limits. However, soon after she inherits a fortune, a third suitor appears on the horizon—Gilbert Osmond—and the latter one Isabel cannot resist. Because the reader knows what Isabel does not—that Osmond marries her for the money, as part of a script written for the heroine by Madame Merle, a close friend of hers—Isabel’s authority is compromised. Moreover, I contend, as Isabel’s loss of imaginary authorship coincides with the moment she embraces the marriage plot, James presents this loss as a necessary step to becoming an author. Finally, as Isabel begins to learn and accept the truth about her marriage, and about the influence of others on her fate, she gradually acquires her own voice and takes control of her narrative. This new control, James seems to suggest, is incomplete, but also realistic. As I will argue, Isabel becomes an author in the last third of the novel by taking responsibility for the choices she made, and by acknowledging the limits of her autonomy. In this way, she rewrites the romance plots of her predecessor and maintains her quest for self-development long after the ending of the novel. Even though she does not leave her oppressive husband, as she overwrites Madame Merle’s and Osmond’s narrative of her life, she acquires multiple-consciousness, a state, as I will

demonstrate, of necessary awareness for an author. Undoubtedly, this new authorship comes with a price—Isabel’s control over her fate is imperfect and stained by her disastrous marriage—and yet, James suggests that this awareness of is empowering. Through the heroine’s ability to accept the various conflicting narratives of her life, of herself as an author and of herself as an individual whose life story depends on others, she becomes an author, as well as a powerful woman.

To demonstrate how the novel traces Isabel’s journey from false authorship through the loss of this authorship to mature, modern authorship, I will enter into a conversation with several literary critics. Similarly to Lyall H. Powers, Philip Rahv and Michael Gorra, I agree that James depicts Isabel as an Emersonian heroine, but only in the first part of the novel. While, as I will argue, Isabel’s Emersonian nature is what further defines her as an author, it also, I suggest, compromises her authorship. As the American philosopher and essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson writes in “Self-Reliance,” “Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind” (“Self-Reliance”). Emerson advocates for self-reliance, self-expression and self-trust as the ultimate goals of every individual. He also celebrates the power of individualism, saying that “a true man belongs to no other time or place, but is the centre of things,” and that “the man must be so much, that he must make all circumstances indifferent. Every true man is a cause, a country, and an age...” (“Self-Reliance”). Accordingly, while Isabel, in the first half of the novel, insists on writing the narrative of her life, she is erroneously convinced that her autonomy to act as she pleases is unlimited regardless of circumstances. By taking Isabel’s delusion away, James implies that the philosophy of complete self-reliance is non-sustainable, because it is based on naïve ignorance, and not on true knowledge. It is only when Isabel gains knowledge, or multiple-consciousness, that she can claim the crown of authorship. While both Michael Gorra in *Portrait*

of a Novel: Henry James and the Making of an American Masterpiece and Philip Rahv in “The Heiress of All Ages” interpret the ending of the novel as unhappy and tragic, I will demonstrate that even though James follows the conventional romance plot, he simultaneously rewrites it when he depicts Isabel’s unhappy marriage to Osmond as empowering to the heroine.

Consequently, as I suggest, James resolves the conflict that Rachel Blau DuPlessis, in *Writing beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writers*, calls the conflict between the *Bildung* plot of a quest for self-discovery and the romance plot that ends in a happy marriage, or, alternatively, death for the central heroine. While DuPlessis writes about twentieth-century women writers who reexamine and delegitimize the romance plots of the nineteenth-century, in this chapter I will use her argument to demonstrate how James’ *The Portrait* is a precursor to the project of twentieth-century women writers who, according to DuPlessis, empower women as they rewrite the romance plots of their predecessors. By empowering his heroine as an author in the end of the novel, James promotes her right to continue her quest for self-expression. To further strengthen my argument about Isabel’s victory in the end of the novel I will draw on Robert Weisbuch’s claim, from “Henry James and the Idea of Evil,” that *Portrait* offers a revised narrative from Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, because Isabel’s “fortunate fall,” as he calls the heroine’s marriage, and her acceptance that it is unhappy, suggests that she recognizes a self that is constructed of “accumulated experience.” In fact, the latter term is similar to the term I use when I call Isabel’s ultimate authorial victory as dependent on multiple-consciousness, although, while Weisbuch focuses on Isabel’s growth as a heroine, my claim goes further in that the heroine’s awareness of the different simultaneous narratives of her life defines and empowers her as an author. Additionally, two other critics whose interpretation of the ending of the novel I will also draw from are Rachel Brownstein and Lyall H. Powers. In *Becoming a Heroine*,

Brownstein states that Isabel, in the end, learns how to become her own best reader, and Powers, in *The Portrait of a Lady: Maiden, Woman, and Heroine*, argues that Isabel's return to Osmond is a "triumph for James' 'new woman' because she reawakens her self-reliance. While I agree with Powers that Isabel's new self-reliance is a revised version of the Emersonian one, I will challenge her argument that the heroine achieves her new autonomy because she confronts the "evil" in the world. Instead of using such black and white terms, I will try to show that Isabel's authorial victory in the end of the novel, namely her multiple-consciousness and ability to remain in the bildungsroman, suggests that she becomes an author of her own narrative. To prove that, I will also draw on Paul B. Armstrong's reading of the novel in *The Phenomenology of Henry James*. Armstrong, who defines the conflict between freedom and necessity as central to James' fiction, reads *Portrait* through the lens of existential philosophers like Kierkegaard, Sartre, Martin Heidegger, and Paul Ricoeur, as well as Henry James' own brother, William. Using the language of Heidegger, Ricoeur and William James, he demonstrates how Isabel's story reflects all the necessary stages of developments for modern individuals. According to Heidegger, for example, once we accept our limits, or "a ground," as he calls it, we also gain power, because we choose how to live (102). Ricoeur, similarly, calls it "the paradox of the servile will" because we can be free only when we know our limits (103). According to William James, the individual first feels that absolute freedom exists, but this state of "once-born healthy-mindedness" is a naïve, unrealistic belief; next, when one acknowledges "the evil facts" of life, one transforms into a "sick soul," and loses faith in freedom; next, through self-reflection, the individual becomes "twice-born" as he or she recognizes that freedom is to recognize necessity (103). I agree with Armstrong that Isabel travels through all of the above stages, and suggest that at the

end of her journey she reaches the state of multiple-consciousness, which, in turn, leaves the door open for the heroine's ongoing self-development.

To support my argument, I will first show Isabel's self-proclaimed authorship, as well as her God-like presence in the novel. Next, I will demonstrate how James's use of irony and free indirect discourse reveals that Isabel's authorship may be an illusion. Additionally, while I will indicate that Isabel's marriage to Osmond is simultaneous with her loss of subjectivity, which, as I argued in the case of Pamela and Emma, is synonymous with the loss of authorship, I will also suggest that James' heroine loses something she never had. Additionally, I will point out that James' use of ellipsis further confirms that the heroine transforms into a voiceless entity—during the two breaks in the narrative, her voice is nonexistent. Finally, I will demonstrate how Isabel gradually gains her authorship as she acquires multiple-consciousness through knowledge: her opposition to Osmond, her altered relationship with Madame Merle, and, most importantly, her ability to confront the fact that language cannot be controlled. Not coincidentally, James' use of free indirect discourse in his famous chapter 42, in which he depicts the emergence of the heroine's consciousness, is devoid of irony, suggesting that the heroine's subjective reality is much closer to the narrator's objective reality. Finally, I will discuss the ending of the novel, which I interpret as a triumph of Isabel's authorial power, and suggest that the lack of resolution regarding Isabel's fate allows James to rescue her from conventional romance plots and to reinvent her as a new woman and a precursor to twentieth century heroines in British, and American, fiction.

Isabel as a false author

Even though Isabel Archer does not appear in the novel until Chapter 2, she, like Emma Woodhouse, resembles a God-like figure. Despite her initial physical absence from the narrative, she is “the centre of things,” to borrow from Emerson, from the start: three men await her arrival,

revel in her mystery, and struggle to define how exactly Isabel is “quite independent.” When Isabel does finally make an appearance, in Chapter 2, she seems larger than life, even to a dog: “The person in question was a young lady, who seemed immediately to interpret the greeting of the small beast. He advanced with great rapidity and stood at her feet, looking up and barking hard; whereupon, without hesitation, she stooped and caught him in her hands...” (13). The language of the passage implies that Isabel is someone to whom others look up to, as well as someone powerful. Isabel’s subsequent effect on the men in the novel, namely her cousin Ralph Touchett, Lord Warburton, and Caspar Goodwood, all of whom fall under her magic spell, confirm her supernatural powers and contribute to Isabel’s initial portrayal as an author. This portrayal coincides with the heroine’s own belief that she is in full control of her life. For example, when Ralph Touchett notices, “I don’t believe you allow things to be settled for you,” Isabel’s response reflects this belief: “Oh yes; if they’re settled as I like them” (17). And yet, as Isabel promotes her autonomous status, James undermines it. When the heroine meets the English lord, she exclaims, “Oh, I hoped there would be a lord; it’s just like a novel!” (15), pointing to her naivety. Similarly, Isabel’s aunt, Mrs. Touchett, describes her as naïve and pitiful: “I found her in an old house at Albany, sitting in a dreary room on a rainy day, reading a heavy book and boring herself to death. She didn’t know she was bored, but when I left her no doubt of it she seemed very grateful for the service” (39). Mrs. Touchett’s report suggests that, despite the heroine’s self-proclaimed autonomy, Isabel was quite immobilized until her aunt invited her to England. What is more, the language in the passage points to Isabel’s confinement—to an old house, to a dreary room, to a life away from movement and progress. While Isabel’s subsequent ability to travel around the world—she even calls herself a “vagabond”—lends itself to interpreting the heroine as an author in charge of her life, the fact that Isabel travels thanks to her

aunt and later thanks to Ralph, who ensures that she receives a fortune after his father's death, further undercuts her power. Times, James seems to hint, might have changed for women since Pamela's time, but Isabel may be as confined as Pamela when her master imprisons her, and as Emma to the place of her birth. Another irony that James exposes is that, even though Pamela's and Emma's marriage options are limited to only one suitor whom they deem worthy of consideration and while Isabel seemingly bathes in options, the man she chooses to marry is no better than Mr. B and Mr. Knightley.

While Isabel insists on her ability to do what she pleases, her belief that her freedom to act is unlimited also weakens her authorship. James implies this by setting her up ironically through free indirect discourse. Many critics note that Isabel is an Emersonian heroine. According to Powers, Isabel is "Emersonian" because of her self-reliance, and her desire to choose for herself (35). For Gorra, Isabel's self-sufficiency also reminds us that she is a very American heroine (52). Similarly, Rahv calls Isabel an Emersonian heroine, and adds that happiness for an American heroine "is really their private equivalent of such ideals as progress and universal justice" (52). Those critics, however, miss the irony in James' representation of the heroine. For example, Isabel's rejection of her two suitors, Lord Warburton and Caspar Goodwood, while it proves that she rebels against the traditional role of women as wives, it also undermines the heroine's self-reliance. Isabel explains her rejection of Lord Warburton as follows: "... she held that a woman ought to be able to live to herself" (49). To Caspar Goodwood, she says, "I don't need the aid of a clever man to teach me how to live; I can find it out for myself" (149). Even though her rejection of two respectable marriage proposals points to Isabel's rebellious spirit and to her effort to distance herself from the conventional marriage plot, her assertion that she can "live to herself" suggests that the heroine is overly confident about her

control of her destiny. Like Emma, Isabel states, "I'm not sure I want to marry any one" (101), and yet, like Emma, Isabel falls into the danger of believing that she can always have her way.

Reflecting on her act of declining the two marriage offers, she thinks:

Mixed with this imperfect pride, nevertheless, was a feeling of freedom which in itself was sweet and which ... occasionally throbbled into odd demonstrations.

When she walked in Kensington Gardens she stopped the children (mainly of the poorer sort) whom she saw playing in the grass; she asked them their names and gave them sixpence and, when they were pretty, kissed them. (133)

This passage implies that Isabel views her rejection of the two suitors as a sign of her freedom: if she can turn down a marriage offer, that surely means that she is an agent of her own destiny.

And yet, as James suggests, her logic is false. In fact, James undercuts Isabel's belief in her autonomy when he shows her aimlessly handing out money to poor children. If she truly is as autonomous as she claims to be, why, then, does she need to demonstrate her freedom to the world?

Moreover, James' final blow to Isabel's self-reliance is when, contrary to Isabel's Emersonian belief that she can "make all circumstances indifferent," she inherits a fortune, an event that sets in motion a chain of events that will reshape Isabel's life. While Isabel still blindly believes that she is in charge of her life, James' message to the reader is quite the opposite. In the scene between the dying Mr. Touchett and his son Ralph, the latter tells his father that he would like to help Isabel, who up to this point is not financially independent, by putting "a little wind in her sails" (173). Ralph's words imply that he intends to rewrite her destiny. He reasons that while she is poor now, if she has money "she'll never have to marry for support." While the young Touchett seems to, at least partially, believe in Isabel's self-proclaimed autonomy, he also

discredits her autonomy by sharing his inheritance with her. “She wishes to be free, and your bequest will make her free” (174), he persuades his father. Ralph adds that he would find it painful to “think of her coming to the consciousness of a lot of wants she should be unable to satisfy” (175). His words reveal a certain irony not only of his intentions, but also of the concept of freedom in general: if Isabel is indeed the author of her fate, isn’t her independence compromised when another individual transforms her into an heiress? What is more, Ralph’s statement suggests that by making her rich he wants to protect her from knowledge—in this case, the knowledge of her poverty and financial limitations. And yet, if she is truly free, she should be able to discover the truth by herself, not be sheltered from it. Also, Ralph’s intentions, unlike Madame Merle’s and Osmond’s, are noble, but he will, he hopes, profit from his act of generosity: his charming cousin will provide him with entrainment. “You speak as if it were for your mere amusement” (174), Mr. Touchett notes to his son. Ralph, like a Renaissance patron, encourages Isabel’s experiment with life and he embraces her artistic vision. As he does so, he also, ironically, proves that the heroine’s claim to being an agent of her own destiny is false, and that she is, in fact, a character in someone else’s novel. The fact that Ralph’s request, and his father’s subsequent agreement, comes in chapter 18, the same chapter in which Isabel first meets Madame Merle, further indicates that Isabel will soon lose her plot.

In this part of the novel, Isabel’s circumstances literally overwhelm her, and, what is worse, she does not even realize it. This lack of self-awareness further confirms that Isabel was never an autonomous woman. As I argue in this chapter, she must first lose her false authorship in order to realize that she never had it in the first place. To borrow from Armstrong’s reading of the novel through William James’s philosophy, Isabel is, at this stage, “once-born;” her childlike naivety must transform into self-awareness. Consequently, while everyone in the book wants to

“write” Isabel, not just Madame Merle and Osmond, it is the latter pair that manages to compose a script that the heroine will blindly follow. Isabel believes that her decision to marry Osmond is a result of free choice; however, the very opposite is true. By presenting the heroine both as a fictional character dependent on her author and dependent on all the other characters in the novel who want to “write” her life, James suggests that unlimited freedom does not exist.

In the ominous meeting between Madame Merle, Isabel’s compatriot and a friend of her aunt, and Isabel, James continues to depict his heroine as *not* in control of her fate. He does this, I argue, to allow the heroine to become an author of her own life: ironically, she can only gain autonomy when she realizes that her autonomy was a delusion. Both Madame Merle and Osmond, because they initially manipulate Isabel’s fate, are themselves necessary components in the heroine’s quest for self-expression. Thus, Isabel must ignore the “shadows” that “deepen in the room” (164) when she first meets Madame Merle, and she must trustingly allow the widow to create a script for her life: a marriage to Madame Merle’s former lover, Gilbert Osmond, as well as the role of a stepmother to Osmond’s and Madame Merle’s daughter Pansy. This is also why James must keep Isabel, but not the reader, in ignorance about their intentions. When Madame Merle pitches her plan to Osmond, they both refer to Isabel as if she were their puppet: he asks, “what do you want to do with her?”; she admits, “I want you of course to marry her” (231). Additionally, when Isabel finally meets Osmond, the Italianized American and Madame Merle must control the heroine’s perception of him. Osmond, a man without money, a title or any accomplishments, appears to Isabel to have excellent taste in art and life; to the reader, however, and to many of Isabel’s friends, he appears to be no one. As Goodwood puts it, Isabel thinks Osmond is “grand,” but “no one else thinks so” (315). While Isabel perceives him as “content with little” (251), the reader knows that, in fact, Osmond desires Isabel’s money. The

heroine's ignorance about Osmond's motives further weakens her autonomy: paradoxically, the more she thinks she chooses for herself, the more Osmond and Merle choose for her. Brownstein points out that "Isabel is caught up and made a minor character in another woman's love story" (262). While James presents his heroine as a tragic figure here, I contend that her initial gullibility is a necessary step in becoming a heroine of the bildungsroman. The fact that Isabel is soon "oppressed" with all of Osmond's knowledge and good taste (250), and, according to Countess Gemini, Osmond's sister, she is "sacrificed" in marrying Osmond (259), suggests that the heroine will either wake up from her illusion, or she will end up like Pamela: a conduct book wife. The language of oppression and sacrifice here is reminiscent of both Pamela and Emma when they embrace the marriage plot. James, for the time being, seems to suggest that the bildungsroman must gradually transform into a conventional story of romance. Accordingly, he continues to set up his heroine ironically. Shortly before Isabel marries Osmond, for example, she travels around Europe and returns to Italy with a false sense of maturity: she "surveyed much of mankind, and was therefore now, on her own eyes, a very different person than the frivolous young woman from Albany" (305). While Isabel's confidence in her newly gained life experience makes her believe that she is still in charge of her narrative—at this time she still feels that "the world lay before her—she could do whatever she chose" (307)—she is under a delusion, as the reader, as well as Madame Merle and Osmond, know.

When Ralph sees Isabel again, after the wedding, he thinks she changed, that she wears a mask: "The free, keen girl had become quite another person; what he saw was a fine lady who was supposed to represent something. What did Isabel represent? Ralph asked himself; and he could only answer by saying that she represented Gilbert Osmond" (376). While Isabel begins to echo Pamela in the end of Richardson's novel when she tells her cousin that "she hopes she will

always gratify her husband's taste (330), she will not end up like her predecessor. To Isabel, the marriage plot is the first step in becoming an author of her life. According to Armstrong, who uses William James' theory of freedom and free will, Isabel marries Osmond when she realizes that the only way to be free is to limit her freedom (111). Armstrong states that "Only by giving up the false possibility of unlimited possibility will she gain a particular field of possibility that she can engage with a particular project" (112). Isabel herself feels that she is "touching the earth" (332) when she weds. While Isabel's decision to marry Osmond erases her dream of self-reliance, her conviction that she must "touch the earth" signifies that the heroine knows, at this point subconsciously, that her prior narrative of self-reliance was not realistic.

In order to become an author of her own life, Isabel must not only continue her quest for self-development, but also acknowledge that her prior claim of authorship was false. This is why, I believe, James takes away the heroine's voice through two large ellipses in the novel: one shortly before Isabel's marriage, and one after the event. Isabel's voice, which in the first half of the novel expresses her naivety, must collapse in order to make room for what I refer to as multiple-consciousness. Accordingly, the first ellipsis leaves out most of Isabel's and Osmond's courtship. We know, for example, that Isabel sees Osmond during her voyage around Europe with Madame Merle, but we do not know what happens between them. When James finally reveals that Isabel is to marry Osmond, he does so in the most unromantic and anticlimactic way possible. Caspar Goodwood arrives in Italy after receiving a letter from Isabel, a letter in which she informs her of her nuptials "... he only asked, presently when her marriage would take place" (314). The fact that we learn of Isabel's forthcoming marriage not from her, but from her former suitor, suggests that the heroine's voice is dead. Following William James' trajectory of personal development, Armstrong claims that Isabel becomes a "sick soul" when she marries.

And yet, becoming a sick soul is a necessary step for an individual. Additionally, James gives voice to Madame Merle after the second ellipsis, three years after Isabel's wedding. It is from Madame Merle, for example, that we learn that Isabel had a child who died shortly after birth: "She had a poor little boy, who died two years, six months after his birth," (345), the widow informs us. The death of Isabel's son echoes the death of the heroine's quest for self-expression. We learn, for example, that everything in Mr. and Mrs. Osmond's house "was a taste of Osmond's own—not at all hers" (349). Armstrong claims that the break in the narrative "is a way of emphasizing how Isabel deceives herself" (116) and that it also reflects the shock Isabel feels as her dream crushes down to the reality of marriage. I contend that, by taking her voice away, James, subversively, creates an opportunity to reward the heroine with a true voice of her own. As I will argue in the subsequent section, James' use of free indirect discourse, while it initially creates an ironic portrait of the heroine, ultimately allows Isabel to continue her self-development.

Isabel as a true author

As previously mentioned, James' use of irony in his representation of Isabel serves to undercut her belief in self-reliance. And yet, when Isabel begins to gain multiple-consciousness, James abandons his use of irony, suggesting that the new Isabel can be in charge of her own narrative. In the famous Chapter 42, the use of free independent discourse allows James to fully express his heroine's voice, so much so that her voice overtakes the chapter. When Isabel admits that her husband hates her, she thinks:

He had discovered that she was so different, that she was not what he had believed she would prove to be. He had thought at first that he could change her, and she had done her best to be what he would like. But she was, after all,

herself—she couldn't help it; and now there was no use pretending, wearing a mask or a dress... She had effaced herself when he first knew her; she had made herself small, pretending there was less of her there really was. (407)

The passage makes clear that Isabel is fully aware of the fact that her marriage to Osmond led her to giving up her voice. As I argue, through the use of free independent discourse, we penetrate Isabel's consciousness and together with her discover that, even though she did "efface herself," her selfhood is dependent on her ability to acknowledge the reality of her marriage and of the choices she made in life. What is significant here is that, as Gorra points out, while many Victorian novelists used free independent discourse, Isabel discourse is unusual here not only because it covers many years of her life, as opposed to Jane Austen's and George Elliot's heroines, for example, who reflected on recent events only; it is also unusual because it doesn't lead to any resolution (234). As we learn from the last sentence in Chapter 42, Isabel "stopped again in the middle of the room and stood there gazing at a remembered vision—that of her husband and Madame Merle unconsciously and familiarly associated" (416). Instead of a resolution, Isabel's inner monologue ends with an ambiguous image of her husband's intimacy with another woman. The heroine does not resolve to ask Osmond about it; nor that she resolve to do anything else. However, the freedom with which she pursues her thoughts and feelings in this chapter indicate that Isabel's subjectivity is back, and that, most importantly, it is much more empowering to the heroine than before. Gorra frames James' narrative technique within the context of William James' "stream of consciousness." For the novelist's brother consciousness wasn't "a set of conclusions" but "a process, unbounded" (236). Gorra states that "no writer in English had yet offered so full an account of the inner life" (235). This is true, but we need to go no further than to the novelist himself to define consciousness. In his essay, "The Art of Fiction"

James states that “Experience is never limited and never complete; it is an immense sensibility, a kind of huge spider-web, of the finest silken threads, suspended in the chamber of consciousness and catching every air-borne particle in its tissue” (5). And so Isabel visits many chambers in this chapter, opens many doors, her past, her present, her future, to regain her voice. Throughout her internal journey, “she was in a fever ... Her mind, assailed by visions, was in a state of extraordinary activity ... “ (415). Finally, even though Isabel does not come to any conclusions at the end of the chapter, she embraces what I call multiple-consciousness.

In order to gain her authorship, Isabel must revise her self-knowledge. Chapter 42 demonstrates the heroine’s reawakening from self-delusion and her subsequent journey to more knowledge. Gorra, among other critics, calls the chapter “a turning point in the history of the novel” (229). The more Isabel thinks, the more she confronts the difficult reality of her life, and, in turn, the stronger her voice becomes. She wonders, for example, if Warburton is still in love with her and if this is why he wants to marry Pansy, and admits that he “had still an uneradicated predilection for her society” (404). This knowledge frightens her, but her ability to think about the situation without any censorship allows her to gain control over it. What is more, she admits that her marriage to Osmond “led rather downward and earthward, into realms of restriction and depression where the sound of other lives, easier and freer, was heard as from above... It was her deep mistrust of her husband—this was what darkened the world” (406). The significance of the moment lies in the fact that Isabel, for the first time in the narrative, acknowledges her unhappiness in her own voice. As she refers to the decline of her marriage as Osmond “deliberately” putting “the lights out, one by one,” she further suggests that knowledge is power. After all, it is only when she accepts her fate that she can begin to alter it. Similarly, it is only when she admits that by marrying Osmond she gave up her selfhood that she can begin to regain

it. As her inner monologue continues, she compares her life with Osmond to a prison, echoing Pamela during her days of entrapment: “Between those four walls she had lived ever since; they were to surround her for the rest of her life. It was the house of darkness, the house of dumbness, the house of suffocation” (411). The language of imprisonment indicates that Isabel acknowledges the gravity of her situation. She also admits that she cannot be an author if she hides her subjectivity to please Osmond: “The real offence, as she ultimately perceived, was her having a mind of her own at all. Her mind was to be his—attached to his own like a small garden-plot to a deer-park” (413). Additionally, verbalizing Osmond’s power over her subjectivity empowers Isabel to ask difficult questions, “When a man hates his wife what did it lead to?” and “how could anything be a pleasure to a woman who knew she had thrown away her life?” (414). Isabel does not find answers to those questions, but that is not the point here: the point is to gain awareness of her life, her voice, herself. As Powers confirms, one of the things that happen after chapter 42 is Isabel’s “reawakening of her old sense of self-reliance and independent-mindedness (53). Powers also states that James rewards Isabel with giving her two pieces of information that are necessary to reach her full development, and that gives her a passive triumph” (58). Armstrong contributes to the debate by stating that Isabel has to become twice-born but that her options still seem limited to either “submission” or “defiance.” According to Armstrong, as the heroine examines her expectations and “begins to reshape her understanding of her world so as to know better what to expect in the future” (123). Consequently, as I suggest, Isabel must acknowledge and accept the two different narratives that shape her fate: the Merle/Osmond script that she follows, and her own script which she begins to rewrite. By doing this, she will be able to revise the marriage plot of the eighteenth and nineteenth century novel and transform it into her quest for self-expression.

As Isabel gradually learns to recognize the plot that has been written for her by Madame Merle and by Osmond, she decides to create a counter narrative to reassert ownership of her life. As she gradually develops multiple-consciousness and gains her autonomy, she manages to reconstruct her selfhood. One way Isabel asserts her autonomy is through her eventual refusal to follow her husband's wishes to influence her former suitor, Lord Warburton, to marry Pansy. Isabel has, by now, learned a few things about Osmond. "You're not rich enough for Pansy" (359), she tells Rosier, clearly echoing her husband. While Isabel admits that she always tries to please her husband, she hesitates to unite her stepdaughter with Warburton: "After all she couldn't rise to it; something held her and made it impossible" (398). Her words imply that something deep inside her, deeper than Osmond's control over her, is gradually gaining force. She proves this during her subsequent conversation with Osmond, the first one, in fact, that the reader sees after their marriage. The news that he "was terribly capable of humiliating her" (401), while not surprising, reveals that Isabel may be getting ready to confront the sad reality of her life. After all, humiliation implies self-awareness, something that will ultimately empower Isabel to gain authorial power. What is more, the scene marks a change in her attitude towards Osmond: when "she was face to face with him and although an hour ago she had almost invented a scheme for pleasing him, Isabel was not accommodating, would not glide" (401). No longer submissive, the heroine must now recuperate her lost selfhood. What is more, she must revise it and strengthen it in order to remain in the bildungsroman.

Another indication of how Isabel regains her authorship and gains this multiple-consciousness is the change of her relationship with Madame Merle. At first, Isabel is certain that Madame Merle "certainly had not made Isabel Archer's" marriage (385) and that "there had been no plot." And yet, after she witnesses Osmond and Madame Merle talking—her friend is

standing and her husband is sitting—Isabel does not deny that “there was an anomaly in this that arrested her” (390). The meeting between her husband and her friend implies an intimacy that goes far beyond a friendship, Isabel knows. As she gradually opens to the idea that Madame Merle’s influence over her life might be greater than Isabel initially cared to admit, the heroine insists on taking responsibility for all of her actions: “It was impossible to pretend that she had not acted with her eyes open... A girl in love was doubtless not a free agent; but the sole source of her mistake had been within herself” (387). Isabel’s decision not to blame her friend for her unhappiness is admirable, but it is also significant as it suggests the rebirth of her subjectivity. After all, it is Isabel, not anyone else, who claims responsibility here. However, it also implies a denial: she still refuses to admit that Merle authored her life. Furthermore, when she finally realizes how invested Madame Merle is in Pansy’s possible marriage to Lord Warburton, she is more than alarmed: her eyes begin to open. “More clearly than ever before Isabel heard a cold, mocking voice proceed from she knew now where, in the dim void that surrounded her, and declare that this bright, strong, definite, worldly woman, this incarnation of the practical, the personal, the immediate, was a powerful agent in her destiny” (491). Even though Isabel does not yet form a clear image of Madame Merle’s role in her life, “she seemed to wake from a long pernicious dream” (491). This reawakening coincides with the awakening of her multiple-consciousness, which eventually equips Isabel with enough strength to ask her friend, “What have you to do with me?” Madame Merle’s answer is similarly direct: “Everything” (494). At this moment, Isabel can no longer hide under her shell of submission and ignorance. “It had come over her like a high-surfing wave that Mrs. Touchett was right. Madame Merle had married her” (494). This high-surfing wave, not surprisingly, confirms that the heroine’s selfhood once again flows within her, and that, more importantly, nothing can ever stop it again.

Soon, Isabel learns the full truth from Countess Gemini: Pansy is the child of Osmond and Madame Merle, from an affair they had when he cheated on his wife. Here Isabel, like a god-like figure, pities the friend who betrayed her: “She has worked for him, plotted for him, suffered for him” (523). She sees Madame Merle as yet another one of Osmond’s victims. During the final confrontation between the two women, Madame Merle sees that Isabel knows her secret. “The tide of her confidence ebbled, and she was able only just to glide into port, faintly grazing the bottom” (527), Isabel describes the widow. This suggests that Madame Merle, the author of Isabel’s fate, is no longer in control; in fact, she is now near the bottom. “Isabel enjoyed that knowledge,” we learn, and this knowledge offers a clear victory for the heroine. Isabel is once again strong, in fact, stronger than she was before, so that even Madame Merle’s final effort to undermine her voice by telling her that it was Ralph, not Mr. Touchett, who made her rich, Isabel is ready to fight back:

Isabel went to the door and, when she had opened it, stood a moment with her hand on the latch. Then she said—it was her only revenge: “I believed it was you I had to thank!”

Madame Merle dropped her eyes; she stood there in a kind of proud penance. “You’re very unhappy, I know. But I’m more so.”

“Yes, I can believe that. I think that I should like never to see you again.”
(534)

Isabel’s heroic decision not to punish Madame Merle further indicates that, despite the shocking news of the latter’s role in the heroine’s life, the heroine is more focused on regaining her own voice than on revenge. What is more, as Isabel enjoys her almost silent victory over her vicious friend, she is nonetheless able to see that the latter is also unhappy. By sending Madame Merle to

America, Isabel skillfully erases her from her future. As Weisbuch points out, Isabel “chooses, with her eyes painfully open, not to live in a world of moral absolutes, or to act upon others as if moral attitudes could sum them” (118). Armstrong makes a similar point when he argues that “knowledge is power because it allows her to transform her situation by engaging it practically” (126). As Isabel accepts the two contradictory narratives about her life—that Madame Merle authored her marriage and that Isabel herself must claim responsibility for her marriage—she gains the multiple-consciousness that will grant her authorial power.

Furthermore, Madame Merle is Isabel’s tragic double. By first identifying with her and then distancing herself from her the heroine, Isabel escapes her friend’s destiny and revises her own. When Madame Merle recalls that her dreams when she was young were “preposterous” and “enchanted,” she sounds like Isabel in the beginning of the novel. Not surprisingly, Isabel identifies with the widow right from the start. In fact, she identifies with her excessively: “Sometimes she took alarm at her candour: it was as if she had given a comparative stranger the key to her cabinet of jewels” (177). Ultimately, however, Isabel must not only separate herself from Madame Merle, but also embrace her friend’s narrative, but only within limits. The following exchange demonstrates the often-quoted exchange between the two women (Madame Merle speaks first):

When you’ve lived as long as I you’ll see that every human has his shell and that you must take the shell into account. By the shell I mean the whole envelope of circumstances. There’s no such thing as an isolated man or woman; we’re each of us made up of some cluster of appurtenances. What shall we call our ‘self’? Where does it begin? where does it end? It overflows into everything that belongs to us—and then it flows back again. (191)

Isabel denies her claim, saying, “I don’t agree with you. I just think the other way. I don’t know if I succeed in expressing myself, but I know that nothing else expresses me” (191). Ultimately, however, Isabel’s multiple-consciousness will lead her to embrace Madame Merle’s theory about individualism while, simultaneously, retaining her own: by the end of the novel, Isabel learns that she is not and cannot be an isolated woman, because she is surrounded by people who will affect her life; this acknowledgment allows her to revise her life as she accepts the limits of her autonomy.

Finally, Isabel’s trip to England to visit her dying cousin is a direct defiance of her husband’s wishes, and thus a reaffirmation of her new authorship. When Isabel learns that her cousin is dying, she naturally desires to see him, but Osmond warns her that if she leaves Rome, “it will be a piece of the most deliberate, the most calculated, opposition” (511). At first, Isabel hesitates. She is afraid of “the violence there would be in going if Osmond wishes her to remain” (516). Even though she already admitted that she threw her life away when she married him, she insists on remaining with her husband as part of her taking full responsibility for the choices she made. And yet, empowered with her newly gained knowledge about Osmond’s relationship to Madame Merle, she travels to Gardencourt. On her way, there, she feels both detached and hopeful:

It might be desirable to get quite away, really away, further away than little gray-green England, but this privilege was evidently to be denied to her. Deep in her soul—deeper than any appetite for renunciation—was the sense that life would be her business for a long time. And at moments there was something inspiring, almost enlivening, in the conviction. It was a proof of strength—it was a proof

that she should some day be happy again. It couldn't be that she was to live only to suffer; she was still young, after all ... (536)

Even as she dreams of an escape—from Osmond, from her unhappiness, from the responsibility for her life—she instantly rules it out. The full awareness of her reality, however miserable it may appear, empowers her to hope for happiness. Unlike in the early parts of the novel, when her Emersonian fantasy of her own self-reliance and the possibility of full personal happiness reflected the heroine's lack of experience and naivety about the world, she is now, a few years later, aware that she does not live on a desert island, and that her choices, even if autonomous, must be affected by other people. In other words, she acquires a more mature and realistic vision of mankind, as well as of her own freedom. While she can become an author of her fate, she must revise her narrative to include the world and her “circumstances.”

Accordingly, Isabel's response to the famous kiss that Goodwood forces upon her in one of the final scenes of the novel strengthens her multiple consciousness because it creates yet another possible narrative for the heroine's life. When Goodwood appears at Gardencourt, he insists that Isabel run away with him, and promises eternal love and happiness. Isabel “had wanted help, and there was help; it had come in a rushing torrent. I know not whether she believed in everything he said; but she believed just then that to let him take her in his arms would be the next best thing to her dying. This belief, for a moment, was a kind of rapture, in which she felt herself sink and sink” (563), the narrator informs us. As much as the reader may want Isabel to leave Osmond and elope with Goodwood, the language suggests that James compares the heroine's possible future with her determined suitor to sinking, to death. Armstrong correctly points out that that the final kiss offers “false freedom and renewed tyranny” (131). I also agree with Powers that the American man's promise “is a delusion” (71),

and that Goodwood's bold offer symbolizes the danger of "succumbing to it" (73). As Power explains about Isabel: "to yield to her own urgent desire would be to risk giving herself up, relinquishing self-reliance, abdicating from her newly won position of independence" (73). Accordingly, if Isabel accepts Goodwood's proposal, she will once again become a victim of passion and self-delusion, even if the latter will turn out to be a much better partner than the despotic Osmond. Now that Isabel regained her subjectivity and gained ownership of her life, she cannot allow herself to lose her voice ever again. This is why Goodwood's kiss is, to her, both aggressive and oppressive: "His kiss was like white lightning, a flash that spread, and spread again, and stayed" (564), we learn. The kiss, in other words, is so powerful that it is dangerous because it can disempower Isabel. It is "an act of possession," and Isabel no longer agrees to be possessed. "So she had heard of those wrecked and under water following a train of images before they sink. But when darkness returned she was free" (564), we read. While the kiss symbolizes to Isabel yet another wreckage, when she frees herself from the embrace she is free. By having the heroine reject romance here, James allows his heroine to mute the marriage plot. This, in turn, gives the heroine an opportunity to rebel against convention and to secure her place in the bildungsroman.

Finally, the ending of the novel also underscores Isabel's victory as an author of her quest for self-expression. After Isabel frees herself from Goodwood, we read that "She had not known where to turn; but she knew now. There was a very straight path" (564). Although James does not explicitly state that Isabel returns to Osmond, most readers and critics assume that she does. After all, Isabel's choice to return to Osmond is consistent with her emotional rebirth: instead of escaping from the unhappy marriage, she will respect the "sacred act" of marriage but, as I argue, establish and maintain her own voice within the union. Nonetheless, the novel is open-

ended because it offers no resolution. Unlike Richardson in *Pamela* and Austen in *Emma*, and unlike eighteenth and nineteenth-century writers in general, James does not try to deliver a happy ending. In fact, James himself insists that “The *whole* of anything is never told” (*Notebooks* 15). While many critics and readers view Isabel’s return to Osmond at the end of the novel as evidence of her ongoing ruin, I suggest that she, on the contrary, regains her power. I disagree with Rahv, who says that in the end Isabel thinks she cannot escape from the Osmond prison except through “heroic suffering” (57). The book, according to him, ends on this tragic note. Gorra, on the other hand, states that what makes this book the great American novel is its account of the limits of self-sufficiency (115), but he, too, fails to acknowledge Isabel’s final victory. While many see the novel as a tragic tale of an independent-minded woman who is punished for her quest for development, I suggest that, on the contrary, the novel is about the painful process of gaining knowledge. Drawing on DuPlessis’ argument that nineteenth-century fiction limits women’s options to two alternate endings: a happy marriage or death (1), as well as her claim that the bildung plot, even if pursued throughout a novel, must be repressed in the end to accommodate one of the two above mentioned alternatives (3-4), I suggest that in *Portrait* James, in fact, forces us to rethink both the conventional plot of romance and the bildungsroman. DuPlessis argues that it is only twentieth-century women writers who resolve the contradiction by rewriting the narrative and presenting “a different set of choices” (4) to women. My reading of *Portrait* reveals that James, in fact, resolves this contradiction in the late nineteenth-century, and that he does so not only by ending the novel, and Isabel’s fate, on an ambiguous note, but also by empowering his heroine with the multiple-consciousness of an author. As Brownstein points out, the ending of the novel rewrites romance since it is open-ended (248). Similarly, Robert Weisbuch sees Isabel’s choice to return to Osmond as triumphant, and calls it “a fortunate

fall.” He argues that because Isabel, in the end, recognizes that her selfhood is based on “accumulated experience,” she is no longer in denial about the forces in her life. Weisbuch notes the Miltonic echoes in the ending of the novel and points out that James “rewrites the Miltonic epic” (116). Isabel’s inheritance is, to him, like free will, which Osmond, like Satan, takes away. Despite the analogy, Weisbuch acknowledges that the Miltonic world is too inflexible for James. I would add that it is Isabel’s multiple-consciousness that allows her to transcend Eve’s punitive faith. Similarly, I agree with Powers that Isabel’s return to Rome is a “triumph” for Isabel because she returns self-reliant (77). Powers is also right to say that “in figurative terms, Isabel Archer’s marriage to Gilbert Osmond is a *necessary* step to maturity, and a condition of Isabel’s maturity is her recognizing that necessity—and recognizing further that while the *nature* of that marriage can be altered (there is the arena for the possible exercise of freedom), the marriage itself must be maintained...” (81). Powers echoes Armstrong’s argument about Isabel’s stages of development as outlined by William James and other existential philosophers. Armstrong believes that Isabel’s story “dramatizes the paradox of the servile will” (103), and that the end of the novel depicts her as “twice-born”: an individual who embraces one’s suffering and thus is able to reshape one’s happiness. Accordingly, Isabel’s road to maturity, and her refusal, at least at the moment the novel comes at an end, to separate from her husband, empower her to compose a revised narrative of her life, one in which she becomes an author of her quest for self-expression, even if her authorship is compromised by a tyrannical husband. In this way, as Powers indicates, James, who called Emerson an optimist, offers “a corrective to the optimistic Emersonian conception as he developed Isabel’s career and so expressed the urgent necessity of recognizing and coming to terms with (that is, not denying or attempting to escape) the evil of the world” (102). Echoing Weisbuch, she adds that if Isabel “has been obliged to ‘fall’ because

she has eaten of the fruit of the tree of knowledge,' the fall has yet been fortunate. To call such a career tragic is surely to disregard the actual possibilities of human life" (103). Weisbuch's an Powers' reading of Isabel's fate corresponds to my own, except that the latter's reference to evil simplifies the heroine's quest for self-development. Instead, I suggest the term multiple-consciousness: it is this ability to acknowledge and live with contradictory narratives of one's lives, and not classifying events and people as "evil," that ultimately allows the heroine of the English novel to be empowered.

This is why Isabel gains the power of authorship. She explains, "One must accept one's deeds. I married him before all the world; I was perfectly free" (466). Even while, in front of the dying Ralph, she acknowledges, clearly and shamelessly, that Osmond married her for the money" (550), it is her loss of "all wish to hide things" (549), that allows her to construct her selfhood. As Weisbuch states, if she blames others for her fate, then she "defines herself as Osmond's creature." But if she takes responsibility for the marriage, "that confession allows her to retain a choice of her earlier self as free. By returning to Osmond, Isabel thus literally defeats his freedom-killing powers and affirms herself" (116). Based on Weisbuch's reading, Isabel asserts her right to authorship when she returns to him, because, by doing so, she discredits Osmond's authorship of her life. As Brownstein states, "Becoming a heroine, realizing her most shapely self, she becomes her best reader, in thrall to her own self-consciousness" (246). While Brownstein adds that James' heroine must be "undone by becoming the heroine-victim of her own awareness" (241), I suggest that it is her new stance based on her self-consciousness that creates a path to her authorship. This authorship, however, is no longer Emersonian: it is imperfect, and therefore real. Again, Isabel's multiple-consciousness allows her to see her marriage as unhappy and at the same time to acknowledge that it was her choice. As Armstrong

suggests, when the heroine decides to return to Osmond, “finding strength by discovering the truth of the servile will, Isabel freely consents to being bound and becomes free because bound” (131). In other words, her awareness of the paradox of freedom opens her path to freedom. While Armstrong states that since Isabel does not question the institution of marriage itself, “we have here a rare instance where James’s political conservatism limits his novelistic imagination” (132), I suggest that Isabel’s acceptance of her commitment to Osmond implies that she is ready to accept the world as it is: imperfect.

Isabel as the bildungsroman heroine and author

Ralph says to Isabel on his deathbed, “You wanted to look at life for yourself—but you were not allowed; you were punished for your wish. You were ground in the very mill of the conventional!” (551). He adds, “I don’t believe that such a generous mistake as yours can hurt you for more than a little” (552). Accordingly, while I have argued that Richardson’s *Pamela* and Austen’s *Emma* alert us to the conflict between the heroine’s self-expression and romance, James’ novel, in addition to also exploring this conflict, resolves it. By giving his heroine space within the novel to reflect on her embrace of the marriage plot, and by having her acknowledge that her previously self-proclaimed autonomy was, in fact, an illusion, James uses Richardson’s and Austen’s narratives about the conflict between self-expression and romance and, in place of suppressing self-expression, he suppresses romance. As James’ heroine learns that her control of discourse cannot be complete, the novel echoes the Foucaultian definition of authorship. Rahv states that to James, “‘the great world’ is corrupt, yet it represents an irresistible goal ... James never faltered in the maze of these contraries; he knew how to take hold of them creatively and weave them into the web of his art” (70). In other words, since the world is full of contradictions, Isabel must learn—and does—to live with those contradictions. Because the Miltonic world, as

Weisbuch claims, is too rigid for James, it is only the “full and empathizing consciousness, and complete recognition of self and other, which is Jamesian salvation” (118). Isabel’s authorship then, unlike Emma’s and Pamela’s, is salvaged though the heroine’s “complete recognition of self and other,” in a world full of contradictions. What is more, the heroine’s realization that language cannot be controlled and that, paradoxically, a heroine can only be an author of her narrative when she acknowledges this, further empowers her. Armstrong adds that as a figure of the “servile will,” Isabel shows that discovering a right relation between freedom and necessity does not end our conflicts; it only grants recognition to the terms within which we must struggle to decide our existence.” Subsequently, according to Armstrong, recognizing the paradox doesn’t solve our problems, it just makes us aware of how we struggle to live (134). Isabel, through her newly gained consciousness, is, accordingly, a heroine who rejects convention and who asserts her right to self-expression. As such, she is a precursor of the heroines of the twentieth century novels that DuPlessis writes about. James’ refusal to grant Isabel any kind of resolution further indicates his insistence on the irrelevance of past romance plots on the brink of the twentieth-century. As DuPlessis states, writing beyond the ending reflects a “critical dissent from the dominant narrative” (5). This process, according to DuPlessis, begins when the author realizes that they are “outside the terms of this novel’s script,” (6). James not only realizes that, but also empowers his heroine to realize it. He thus connects the disconnect between what DuPlessis calls narrative discourse—a quest—and resolution—happy ending through marriage. It turns out that, while many characters in *Portrait* want to write Isabel’s life, Isabel, in the end, does not follow anyone’s plot. Brownstein puts it well when she says that Isabel “must revise, to reread, to see more inescapably the significance of her own story, to be the conscious heroine of a novel. Such virtue as hers can have no other reward” (269). Finally, what stands as the basis of Isabel’s

power as an author is her ability to reread her own romance plot, which is symbolic of Pamela's and of Emma's marriage plot, and to revise it. As Armstrong adds, "we become more free as we clarify the ambiguities and obscurities of our original experience and thus take charge of it by assimilating it into self-conscious understanding" (123). James grants Isabel power because she embraces the ambiguities of her life. She couldn't have done it without Pamela and Emma: as Richardson's and Austen's "happy" endings for their heroines depict the tension between their autonomous, authorial power and their embrace of the disempowering marriage plot, James' heroine, despite her decision to marry, fights for, and wins, the status of a bildungsroman heroine. While, by depicting the female experience in the context of authorship, all three authors reveal the paradoxical position of women in the eighteenth and nineteenth century—women's quest for self-expression versus repression—the final novel in this sequence, when read alongside the other two, helps us revisit the marriage plot and replace it with the bildungsroman. As the three novels seem to suggest that the bildungsroman, not the marriage plot, offers opportunities for self-expression for women—Richardson does this by replacing his heroine's subversive potential with the marriage plot straight out of a conduct book and Austen does this by giving the reader the conventional happy ending and by simultaneously satirizing it—James completes the project by allowing his heroine's quest for self-expression defeat the marriage plot even while she, paradoxically, remains within the convention of romance. The twentieth century heroine of the English novel, as well as the twentieth century woman, can become an author of her quest for self-development, but only when she acknowledges, and embraces, the paradoxes of femininity and the paradoxes of authorship. In other words, she must learn from her predecessors.

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