

Leslie

Sister Grover

English 314

July 5, 2011

Jane Austen's Feminist Traditions

Jane Austen's birth in the late 18th century occurred during an intellectual movement most notably known as the "Age of Reason or Enlightenment." The French Revolution was in full force in an effort to change the irrational economic, political, and social traditions that were plaguing society. The year 1789 ended the French Revolution as well as the Age of Enlightenment. The 1800's ~~resulted in~~ began what was known as the Romantic Period, a time when society began to focus more on emotion rather than reason. This was Aa period of time when people ~~were able to think~~ started thinking for themselves instead of being told how and what they should feel.

Jane Austen was ~~fortunate to be~~ reared during the Romantic time period where her feminist ideas contributed to the ever changing world around her. Her perspective and ideas on the moral nature of women, marriage, and the societal roles of women made her an authority as a writer on feminist traditions, and even in death her work ~~is continuing~~ continues to empower the women of today in the 21st century.

Jane Austen had the advantage of being reared during a time when feminist writers had already begun forging the way for women. Mary Wollstonecraft, an early 18th century feminist writer, had written several works on what she believed were the feminist traditions that needed changed in order to strengthen the role of the women. Extremely outspoken on the basis of feminist traditions, she wrote in an effort to change the stereotypes of women from being

Comment [J1]: You might want to consider a more exciting and inviting title to draw readers in.

Comment [J2]: Is there a reason this is in quotations? I don't think it needs to be.

Comment [J3]: This would flow better if you combined these two paragraphs together so your thesis statement appears at the end of your introduction paragraph.

Comment [J4]: Seeing as how this is a formal-toned research paper, it comes across as a little odd when you make personal commentary on events. Try to keep your tone objective.

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Comment [J5]: These both mean the same thing, so just choose one phrase to use rather than both.

Comment [J6]: I really like your thesis. It is very clear and concise, and lets the reader know exactly what they will be reading. Well done!

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Comment [J7]: Great topic sentence! Very clear.

Comment [J8]: I don't know why, but I really like this sentence. It's very well-crafted and makes me interested in what you will be writing about.

portrayed as weak with no purpose other than to serve as objects. She wrote decisively to make the nature of women more accepted among a patriarchal society. Jane Austen was at the height of womanhood ~~being at~~ sixteen years old when Wollstonecraft's book, *A Vindication on the Rights of Women*, was published.

Comment [J9]: This sentence is a bit wordy

Comment [J10]: It would be nice if you included a quote or two from Mary Wollstonecraft so readers can see these things for themselves rather than having to just take your word on it. It would also strengthen your paper and, bonus!, make your paper a little bit longer! :D

Jane Austen's feminist traditions were not so political or as sensationalized as Wollstonecraft's, but her works definitely placed the woman as having significance in society.

Comment [J11]: It sounds like you are referring to Jane Austen's personal feminist traditions when I believe you mean to indicate the feminist traditions she wrote about/tried to change.

Jane Austen was not as outspoken on the role of women or the feminist tradition as her predecessor. However, she didn't have to be, ~~because~~ her personal values and ideals have placed her with the feminists authors of her time. Marie Poovey, ~~an~~ author and ~~an~~ expert on feminists such as Wollstonecraft, ~~has stated~~, "Through her irony and skillful manipulation of point of view, Jane Austen developed artistic strategies that ~~"resolved"~~ some of the most debilitating ideological contradictions of this period of chaotic change" (Poovey xvii). Jane Austen didn't speak openly about her views as a female, but she openly portrayed her views through her writing.

Comment [J12]: I love this topic sentence as well, but you don't spend much time discussing this. I personally would like to learn how and why her works changed the view of women and why she did things differently than Mary Wollstonecraft.

Comment [J13]: This is a very similar statement to what you already said in the sentence before. Also, it would be nice if you explained the significance of this, why it worked for her to do things differently. I think you tried to do that with the next sentence, but...

Comment [J14]: This sentence sounds out of place and doesn't really connect with anything else in this paragraph.

Comment [J15]: Always talk about any form of literature, even research sources like this, in the present tense. I'm not entirely sure why, something about how writing is eternal and is always changing and so cannot be talked about as if it's in the past, or something like that.

Jane Austen novels ~~have had~~ a fascination with the woman finding love, a theme that she began writing about early in her life, ~~which led to her and led up to~~ being able to express her views on the feminist tradition. Her father, George Austen established an environment of learning in his home and tutored Jane throughout ~~out~~ her adolescent life, ~~enthraling her into~~ writing her own poetry and plays. At the age of ~~14 fourteen~~, she ~~maturely~~ authored the work, *Love and Friendship*, one of her first satire's written as a novel through the form of letters. Her ~~characters~~ are portrayed as free spirits that let their emotions rule ~~over~~ their mind. Even before Wollstonecraft's book was published, Jane addressed in her letters the same frustration that

Comment [J16]: Again, it sounds like the novels have a fascination rather than the stories, or Jane Austen itself. I would re-word this.

Comment [J17]: Never refer to an author by their first name. Always speak about them with their full name, or their last name.

Comment [J18]: Enthraling her how? This seems like a strange word choice...

Comment [J19]: Again, try to avoid making commentary on what you're writing about and just record the facts.

Comment [J20]: Are these characters women? That would be important to note, given your topic.

Wollstonecraft expresses, that “culture makes women slaves to their emotions . . . blown about by every momentary gust of feeling” (Wollstonecraft 170).

Marriage in Jane’s Austen’s day was a matter that she deemed unnecessary because it was considered a loss of propriety. A wife in the early 19th century did not have any occupation other than being a wife, and the only way for the woman to survive financially was to be married. Jane Austen knew that she could not be considered both a writer and a wife. Once a woman became a wife, they no longer had the liberty of making their own decisions or working outside the home. Marriage in the 1800’s did not make the woman equal with her husband, but property. Her inferior sense of already being a female and a writer led to the action of secretly keep~~ing~~ her name from being printed on her first published works. She instead had printed her works printed-as-being-authored-by under the title “a lady”.

Marriage established social class during the Romantic Period. If a woman you didn’t marry, you were she was not unable to receive any financial support, but if you she did married, you she received your her husband’s inheritance, making a woman her either middle or upper class. Jane Austen, a very independent woman, opposed this idea that women should have to marry in order to be considered middle to upper class. In one of her letters, she satirically states, “Single women have a dreadful propensity for being poor, which is one very strong argument in favour of matrimony” (March 13, 1816). Although a strong argument, she believed that a strong social identity should be inherited and that both the woman and man should be equal. Twenty-first century feminist author and critic, Carol Hielbrun, states, “In Jane’s world, both genders assume moral and social responsibility for their behavior” (Hielbrun 36). The female characters in her novels have been were created so that many of them experience a deep emotional love before accepting marriage; therefore, Jane is not only portraying sing their monetary stability, but

Comment [J21]: How could marriage be considered a loss of propriety? Wouldn’t not getting marriage be considered this?

Comment [J22]: This is just one option of how to rephrase this sentence. It sounds a bit awkward and wordy, though I love that you included this little detail. It says so much about Jane Austen’s character!

Comment [J23]: This paragraph is well-written and very informative.

Comment [J24]: Two problems here. First, never speak directly to the reader by writing in second-person. In a formal paper, you need to keep your point-of-view strictly in third-person. Also, with a formal paper, you should avoid using contractions.

Comment [J25]: From where? Expound on this idea.

Comment [J26]: What if the woman’s husband wasn’t of the middle or upper class? As a reader, I am suspicious of this information, especially since you don’t have any outside sources to back up this information.

Comment [J27]: Is this the quote citation? Where did this quote come from?

Comment [J28]: A strong argument for what?

Comment [J29]: You’ve introduced a lot of quotations with this word, so it would be nice to get some variety.

she also accomplishesed her role of including the feminist tradition into her novels by letting the woman allow her emotions to help make her decision. Very rarely do her works continue into the setting of marriage or motherhood after the characters have been married.

Comment [J30]: You never define exactly what you mean by this...

Jane Austin had good reason to have concerns with motherhood due to being placed in a foster home in her infancy and spending five childhood years in boarding schools. Jane Austin, the seventh of eight children, was like the rest of her brothers and sisters and who were also placed into a foster home at birth until her mother felt she could take care of them. She Austin was also sent to several different boarding schools beginning at the age of six with her eight-year-old sister Cassandra. Jane Austin and Cassandra, as most sisters were inseparable at their young ages as girls and their mother believed that sending them to school together would be in their best interest.

Jane's Austin's absence away from home as a young girl made it impossible for her to experience motherhood, and the loss of time with her mother contributed to their estranged relationship. Jane She shared a close relationship with her sister which permitted Jane her to share more confidences and secrets with her sister than her mother. Jane She lacked her own mother's stabilizing presence and has allowed her own conscious to make her decisions.

Comment [J31]: I don't see the connection here...maybe expound on this idea more?

A lack of emotional attachment to her mother attributed-contributed to her avoidance of motherhood and enabled a close companionship with her sister that caused neither of them to marry. Although, she never had the opportunity to be a mother, she had an excellent relationship with her nieces and nephews and found great satisfaction in being their aunt.

Comment [J32]: This is a great point, but it feels rather repetitious and drawn out. Maybe try to cut this back to just two-three very clear and to the point sentences.

Jane died in 1817 at the young age of 4+forty one, leaving behind a culture that was just beginning to experience the effects of the Romantic Period. People were letting emotion overrule reason, and evidence of these changes was portrayed in Jane's final novel entitled,

Comment [J33]: Not entirely true, given what you have reported in your essay so far. It is more that she chose not to be a mother than she never had the opportunity.

Persuasion. ~~This was the story where~~ In this novel, she powerfully incorporates ~~ed~~ her strong feminist traditions through Anne's character. Anne forms her own opinions based on her emotions rather than reason. Reason is portrayed through her parent's selection and approval of Mr. Wentworth as a husband, and emotion is being portrayed through her rejection of him. However, she later decides that she wants to see him again and meets up with him. She determines that he is the one she wants to marry and consents to marry Mr. Wentworth. Ultimately, Jane Austen inspires shows Anne's decision as a choice that integrates the feminist tradition into ~~her novel~~ the story by giving Anne the final decision as to whether or not she wants to marry ~~him~~ Mr. Wentworth.

Comment [J34]: Again, define this very clearly. Do you mean feminist beliefs?

Comment [J35]: This is plot summary rather than analysis. I also wonder why you didn't include any quotations from the novel to support your points.

Jane's Austen's work was buried with her death, and it ~~wasn't~~ was not until decades later that her works were revisited and realized to have influence upon the female women writers of the 20th century.

Comment [J36]: Not the right word. They couldn't have had influence on the writers if no one even knew about, let alone read, her works. Maybe "be relatable" or something to that effect would work better.

Virginia Woolf was born in 1882 in London, England, at the end of the Romantic period. Like Jane Austen, the majority of Virginia's education took place in her own home, reading from her father's library of works. She had studied the 18th century authors in depth and was well aware of ~~the~~ Jane Austen and her work, as s She states, "Here was a woman about the year 1800 writing without hate, without bitterness, without fear, without protest, without preaching" (journal 1).

Comment [J37]: No paragraph break

Comment [J38]: This detail seems irrelevant since your paper is about Jane Austen, not Virginia Woolf.

Comment [J39]: Citation?

Virginia Woolf openly disagreed with the ideas and values that occurred during the Romantic Period, and in the early 1900's, she began writing with her own emphasis on feminist traditions that included gender relation and social identity.

Leslie,

I want to say that I am very impressed with what you have here. You have a very professional writing style and voice that speaks of much experience, and it is very

informative and interesting to read. I also like your content here. I personally find all of this very interesting and have enjoyed reading what you have so far. I do have two major concerns, though. First, about halfway through what you have here, you shift from using Jane Austen's life and experiences to support the points you are making to writing something more like a biography of Jane Austen's life. It's very interesting, but lacks the focus on your thesis that you'll need in order to complete the next five pages of your essay. This is also a concern because you end the first half of your draft here at Jane Austen's death, which to me as a reader signals that you are almost done with your paper. It might be helpful for you to experiment with writing the points you want to make and then incorporating choice details from Jane Austen's life so you avoid following her life chronologically like you have here, which is one of the reasons it sounds so much like a biography

My second main concern is your lack of citation and sources. There are a lot of facts and statements you include that do not have citations, which you'll want to double check to make sure you aren't plagiarizing. And overall, it doesn't seem like you are using sources to back up your points, or to get your information. Most of it is written as though it all came out of your own head, or what would be considered conjecture, and as a reader, it makes me unwilling to trust your paper since I don't know if I can trust your facts and information, and therefore your main point. The great thing about this, though, is if you go back and include more sources, it will make your paper longer, which is always a good thing when you have such a long paper to write.

I do really like your start on this, though, and I'm looking forward to reading your entire paper as everything comes together!

~Jessica DeLand

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