Jane Austen, James Beresford, and the Comedy of Complaint

LINDA ZIONKOWSKI

Linda Zionkowski is Samuel and Susan Crowl Professor of Literature at Ohio University, and the author of books and essays on gender and culture in eighteenth-century Britain. Most recently, she has co-edited *Women and Music in the Age of Austen* (2023); her current project is another co-edited volume, *Narratives of Displacement in the Anglosphere, 1718–1819*.

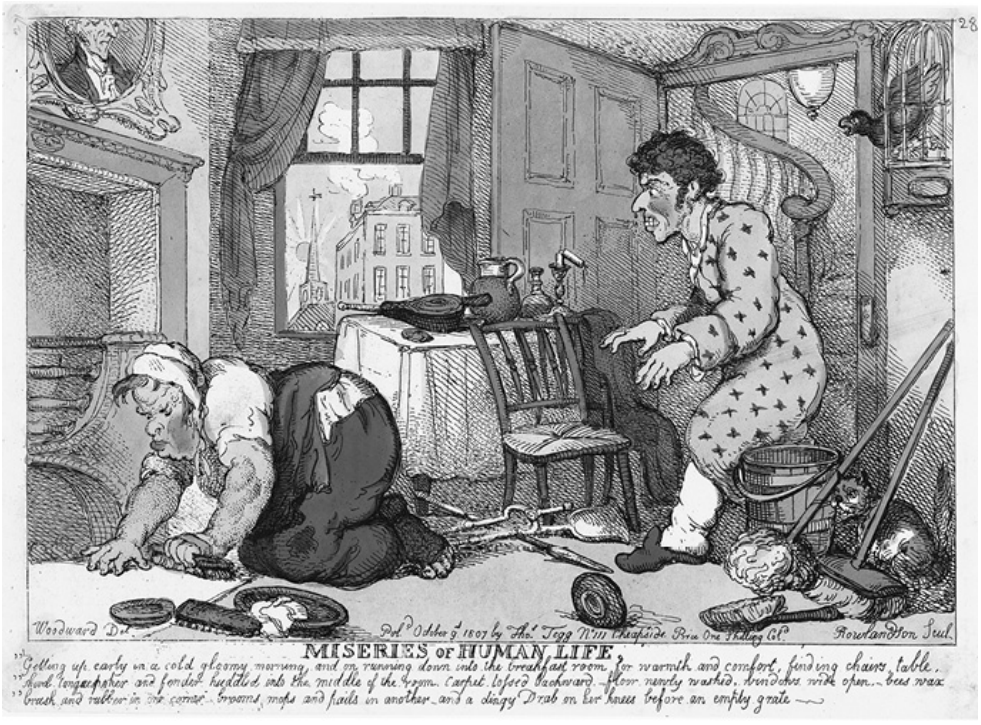
"'NOBODY CAN TELL WHAT I SUFFER!'" (*PP* 126–27); "'[N]o stomach can bear roast pork'" (*E* 184); "'[M]y sore-throats . . . are always worse than anybody's'" (*P* 178). These remarks by Mrs. Bennet, Mr. Woodhouse, and Mary Musgrove express the overblown reaction to trivial annoyances that Jane Austen satirizes throughout her fiction. While her novels censure characters who are truly insensible to the pains, misfortunes, and feelings of others, those excessively affected by inattentive companions, food preferences, or slight maladies fall into her group of "whiners." This well-populated category of individuals is distinctive to Austen's fiction yet may have been influenced by an earlier text: the Reverend James Beresford's comical treatise titled *The Miseries of Human Life* (1806) prefigures and may have offered a paradigm for Austen's depictions of chronic complainers. In a series of twelve dialogues, Beresford's Timothy Testy and Samuel Sensitive lament the grievances, both physical and psychological, that comprise the

"EMPIRE OF MISERY" (5). These include annoyances that befall them in country and city, at home and abroad, in public and in private, with a section on "Miseries Miscellaneous" that covers incidents difficult to classify. Accompanied a year after its initial publication with illustrations by Thomas Rowlandson, *Miseries* enjoyed enormous popularity: more than a dozen editions quickly appeared in Britain, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States. Perhaps alarmed by readers' delight in Beresford's work, Harriet Corp published two responses steeped in Evangelical faith —*An Antidote to the Miseries of Human Life* (1808) and *A Sequel to the Antidote to the Miseries of Human Life* (1809)—both of which feature the Quaker Widow Placid earnestly counseling reliance upon God as the remedy for evils small and large.

Despite Beresford's own brief conclusion advising "submissive patience" (321) and "self-government" (333) under the trials of petty grievances, the attraction of *Miseries* clearly lies in its portrayal of the art of whining in all its colorful varieties, as Testy and Sensitive vie for "the honours of perpetual precedence in the ranks of woe" (9). Reading the incidents, scenes, and characters in Austen's fiction against the backdrop of Beresford's text suggests that her novels found inspiration in this new cultural focus on complainers. Like Beresford, Austen satirizes the excessive refinement that distinguishes the privileged classes from the less polished and reveals how complaints express anxieties about distributions of social power and maintenance of social hierarchies. Despite some differences in their approach to the objects of humor, Austen may have discovered in Beresford's work a model for a wholly new source of comedy and critique—one she adopted, transformed, and incorporated to perfection in her fiction.

The Miseries of Human Life begins with Testy and Sensitive in a lively debate over who has the better right to whine: that is, whether Testy's "tangible tribulations" (3) of physical discomfort or

Sensitive's "elegant agonies" (3) of nervous affliction produce more pain for the sufferer. Both, however, unite against "Usurpers"—those people facing hurricanes, shipwreck, even scalping—who assume "a prescriptive and exclusive right of . . . complaining" (6): Testy and Sensitive argue that cumulative small annoyances endured over time eventually inflict more misery than singular disasters that at least end quickly. Even the chronically ill and the poor have no "pretensions to the palm of sorrow" (8), since illness allows the sufferer to rest in quiet and enjoy the attentions of family and friends, while the "*coarser* class" is exempted from situations that produce mental misery: "whining dogs! . . . they deserve a few of *our* sort of sorrows, if 'twere only to teach them the difference between hard and soft" (11). Throughout the rest of the book, Sensitive and Testy (with occasional assistance from Mrs. Testy and young Ned Testy) engage in eleven more dialogues detailing everyday activities in which expectations are confounded and distress occurs.



Miseries of Human Life *(1807), by Thomas Rowlandson. Courtesy of Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University.*

"Miseries Domestic" include the inconvenience of encountering household cleaning, which disturbs the family's morning routine:

> Getting up early on a cold gloomy morning . . . and on running down into the breakfast-room for warmth and comfort, finding chairs, tables, shovel, poker, tongs, and fender, huddled, two or three yards high, into the middle of the room—dust flying in all directions—carpet tossed backwards—floor newly washed —windows wide open—bees-wax, brush and rubber, in one corner—brooms, mops, and pails, in another—and a dingy Drab on her knees, before an empty grate. (212)

Rowlandson's illustration of this scene conveys the grievance, even outrage, of the gentleman, who, expecting a cozy room and hot breakfast, finds himself displaced by the imperturbable, well-muscled charwoman intent on her task. The overturning of social hierarchies that are supposed to order this elegantly furnished domestic space adds to the humor, with the lower-class "Drab" unapologetically usurping the master's domain for her own purposes; the master's impotence in the face of this upset only adds to the distress he experiences.

Distress and embarrassment also attend the entertainment of company. In "Miseries of the Table," an elegant dinner party is disrupted by a dish of game gone rotten: "Inviting a friend, (whom you know to be particularly fond of the dish,) to partake of a fine hare, haunch, &c. which you have endeavoured to keep exactly to the critical moment, but which is no sooner brought in, than the whole party, *with one nose*, order it to be taken out" (194). In portraying this scene, Rowlandson highlights the chagrin and anger of the host humiliated by the stinking food that the inattentive servants produce; the image also depicts the insult to the guests, who are offended and left gagging by the foul odor. The host's failed attempt to impress his neighbors exposes the vulnerability of the higher classes: the entertainment falls flat, revealing the master's lack of control over his household's activity and, by

extension, his inability to perform the role required of his social position. Variations on this theme compose the entirety of *Miseries*, along with the characters' complaints that they alone have been singled out for such misfortunes: "it is our fate:—*other* men never meet with these things, while *we* meet with nothing else" (181). This sense of exclusivity apparently validates the right to whine, since misfortunes that are common to all people might not render Testy and Sensitive victors in the "contests of Despair" (8).

Whether Austen owned or had access to a copy of *Miseries* remains unclear: her letters do not refer to the text, nor does a copy appear in the library catalog of books at Godmersham Park, the estate of her brother Edward. But *Miseries* could be considered literary ephemera, a book to be enjoyed yet not usually retained in one's permanent collection. Despite the lack of evidence definitively linking Beresford and Austen, incidents from her fiction closely reflect the annoyances that Beresford describes. For instance, in "Miseries of Social Life," Sensitive complains about the practice of the hosts' introducing children into company after a dinner party: "a string of staring babies [is] brought in, and carried round, to be caressed and admired, during the rest of the sitting;—an outrage from which there is not even a bye-law . . . under our otherwise happy constitution, that will afford you the smallest redress" (138). Sensitive's description prefigures the scene in *Sense and Sensibility* where Lady Middleton witnesses "with maternal complacency" her children's abuse of her guests: "She saw their sashes untied, their hair pulled about their ears, their work-bags searched, and their knives and scissars stolen away, and felt no doubt of its being a reciprocal enjoyment" (139). This misery ends only when three-year-old Annamaria, screaming and sobbing over a slight scratch from a pin, is hauled away to the solace of apricot marmalade. Similarly, in "Miseries of the Country," Testy articulates an annoyance that Elizabeth Bennet experiences in *Pride and Prejudice* as she walks three miles the day after a rainstorm to attend to her sister: "after heavy rains . . . standing, or rather tottering, in blank despair, with both bare feet planted, ancle-deep, in the quagmire"

(Beresford 25). Sensitive elaborates on the hazards of walking in the country, expounding on the embarrassment of appearing disheveled before company and "arriving, too late to repair yourself" while the rest of the party are "clean and fresh" (32). The Bingley sisters' mocking of Elizabeth's untidy hair and "'petticoat, six inches deep in mud'" (*PP* 39) calls to mind Sensitive's apprehensions.

Mansfield Park also shows significant parallels to Beresford's work in its portrayals of country and city inconveniences. Like Sensitive, who bewails "[r]esiding at a solitary place, where . . . you are obliged to get at all the necessaries of life by stratagem" (39), Mary Crawford is appalled that her harp cannot be delivered by a farmer's cart at harvest time: "'I found that I had been asking the most unreasonable, most impossible thing in the world, had offended all the farmers, all the labourers, all the hay in the parish'" (68). Finally, Fanny Price's unspoken revulsion against the puddings and hashes served with "half-cleaned plates and not half-cleaned knives and forks" (479) at her parents' Portsmouth home mirrors Sensitive's disgust over a "coarse, grimed, slopped, scanty table cloth" and "gritty and greasy" cutlery that accompany an ill-prepared chop-house dinner (186–87).

The correspondences between Beresford's *Miseries* and Austen's fiction strongly suggest a common thematic focus for both authors: individuals' reactions to the "finer disquietudes" (Beresford 3) of everyday life over which they have little control. Yet while the *Miseries* assumes the readers' sympathetic response to (or at least recognition of) the grievances of Sensitive and Testy, Austen substitutes satire for sympathy, critiquing characters who allow themselves to be consumed by such grievances. Her fiction also intensifies Beresford's focus on the complex social dynamics underlying the act of complaining itself: whereas the *Miseries* primarily centers on the wide range of annoyances that provoke displeasure and despair, Austen more deliberately investigates the class of people who assume the license to whine, the expectations of power and privilege that provoke whines, the relation between

whining and gendered cultural norms, and the didactic function of whiners. Although Austen's complainers, like Beresford's, are certainly comical, they are also more profoundly instructive. Through their unmodulated, excessive reactions to the fairly minor disappointments they experience—and through the narrative strategies that highlight and satirize these reactions—Austen's whiners surpass Beresford's in emphasizing the necessity of self-regulation: a composure that enables men and women to perform their social roles despite real or imagined miseries.

In Austen's fiction, as in the *Miseries*, whining is not a universal human activity, but a form of discourse exclusive to the privileged classes. Despite the severity or precarity of their circumstances, those characters living on the margins of society never utter a groan, since doing so might provoke annoyance and avoidance rather than good will from those who could offer assistance: in this way, even protests against what Beresford terms "real affliction" (352)—including the brutality of economic and social hierarchies—remain silenced. For instance, the unnamed, unseen cottagers in *Emma* endure "sickness and poverty" (93) yet are given no voice to whine; rather, their purpose in the narrative is to highlight Emma's benevolence and good intentions by accepting her charity wordlessly (and entirely offstage). Significantly higher in status than the cottagers, *Emma*'s Miss Bates and her mother also have reason to complain. The daughter and wife of the late parish clergyman, both women have "'sunk from the comforts'" they were born to and, as George Knightley predicts, "'must probably sink more'" (408) in the future as their income dwindles. Yet Miss Bates in part secures her remaining comforts and her toehold in the social life of Highbury by never emitting a whine. Instead, other characters find her a "'standing lesson of how to be happy'" (275), grateful for her neighbors' occasional gifts and delighted with shreds of their attention. *Persuasion*'s Mrs. Smith likewise suppresses her complaints for fear of alienating her friend, Anne Elliot, whose assistance she needs; Anne consequently marvels at her former schoolmate's cheerful "elasticity of mind" (167) under

the burdens of widowhood, ill health, and financial ruin. Mrs. Smith only ventures to inveigh against the man who helped cause her distress—Anne's own cousin, William Walter Elliot—when she is assured that Anne has no intention of marrying him. No matter how serious their troubles, characters who lack wealth and social influence simply cannot afford to whine, and Austen's fiction lays bare the power dynamics that encourage their contentment (or at least silence) under duress.

Austen's whiners, by contrast, enjoy comfortable lives and yet believe themselves pitiably disadvantaged, ignored, imposed-upon, and vulnerable. This contrast between their actual circumstances and their perception of their own affliction is the source of Austen's comedy and, of course, satire: in the novels, the emotional and even physical malaise that whiners endure arises principally from thwarted assertions of individual desire, especially when that desire is frustrated by social customs and institutions or communally enforced standards of behavior. All whines, however, are not alike. Austen's fiction distinguishes between female and male whiners, with their gender determining the cause and effect of their complaints.[1]

Female whiners, who are mostly well-cared-for gentlewomen, lament their lack of power, but their complaints only underscore how that power would be abused. When Mrs. Bennet—*Pride and Prejudice*'s most accomplished whiner—discovers that Elizabeth refuses to marry Mr. Collins and keep the Longbourn estate in the family, she laments her situation "in a melancholy tone": "'[N]obody is on my side, nobody takes part with me, I am cruelly used, nobody feels for my poor nerves,'" later adding, "'But it is always so. Those who do not complain are never pitied'" (126, 127). Mrs. Bennet's reliance upon absolutes such as "nobody" and "never," and her failure to recognize that she is in fact voicing a complaint, serve as linguistic markers of her self-absorption; because her parental authority does not extend to compelling her daughter's marriage, she assumes that her family conspires to neglect and ignore her.

Just like their mother, Lydia and Kitty Bennet resort to whining when they cannot bend social norms to their will. “[R]epining at her fate in terms as unreasonable as her accent was peevish” (255), Kitty complains that her sister Lydia alone has been chosen to accompany their friend Mrs. Forster to the army camp at Brighton. Since conventions of genteel behavior dictate that the hostess may invite whom she pleases, Kitty’s response to her exclusion reveals her unwillingness to recognize the established rules of social life. Lydia’s whines are more successful. Although Elizabeth rightly fears that her sister’s flirtatious behavior among the officers will lead to big trouble, Mr. Bennet refuses to restrain his daughter as his paternal role demands, because he dreads the disturbance she will cause: “‘We shall have no peace at Longbourn if Lydia does not go’” (257). Just the thought of Lydia’s whines is enough for her father to cave in to her wishes. Finally, *Persuasion*’s Mary Musgrove vehemently resists the responsibilities of motherhood and whines about being expected to stay at home and nurse her injured son: “‘I knew how it would be. This is always my luck! If there is any thing disagreeable going on, men are always sure to get out of it, and Charles is as bad as any of them’” (60). In this case, Mary’s whine gets results: realizing that her sister will never heed the cultural dictate that a “‘sick child is always the mother’s property’” (61), Anne Elliot makes herself a maternal surrogate, caring for the boy while Mary departs for a dinner party with “great exultation” (62) at shirking her socially prescribed role.

Refusing to regulate their desires according to the norms expected of their gender makes Austen’s female whiners targets of laughter: their “peevish” speech and “unreasonable” demands appear selfish and foolish when set against the established values of the novels’ social world. Yet these characters’ complaints also call attention to inequities that laughter cannot obscure: by exposing how the ways of their world operate primarily to men’s advantage, Austen’s female whiners disrupt what Regina Barreca calls “conservative conventions of comedy” (18), those forms of representation that naturalize and support institutions that inhibit

and even oppress women.[2] The complaints of characters such as Mary Musgrove and Mrs. Bennet not only reveal their subordination and relative impotence in comparison with men but also call attention to the resentment and anxiety caused by this imbalance: as Mary observes, her husband Charles frequently exercises his masculine privilege to escape "disagreeable" domestic scenes, heading out to shoot game and avoid engaging with this wife. Although Mary knows that "opposition will be vain" (60), her laments—selfish as they appear—nevertheless illuminate the effects of the gender hierarchy.

Mrs. Bennet's whines appear even more justified: she has good reason to fear for her future, as the entailment of the Longbourn estate to Mr. Collins might easily result in hardship, even homelessness, for her and her daughters. By wailing, "'Why should *he* have it more than anybody else?'" (147), Mrs. Bennet poses a question that neither her husband nor the narrative ventures to answer, for an explanation would involve the legal intricacies of strict settlement in favor of male heirs and the admission that Collins—"a mixture of pride and obsequiousness, self-importance and humility" (78)—fills this role purely by chance of his birth.[3] As Rachel Bollinger notes, Mrs. Bennet's laments "tap into the daily restrictions and economic disadvantages that women face: the awareness that their fates are precarious, dependent upon the good will and affection of powerful men." Yet since their repeated complaints prove ineffectual, female characters' refusal to accept the status quo of male prerogative renders them ridiculous: although women identify and resist the patriarchal system that represses them, the comedy lies in how little their whines can do to change things.

By contrast, a hallmark of manhood in Austen's fiction is the refusal to whine—"to lament in low murmurs; to make a plaintive noise; to moan meanly and effeminately," as defined in Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary*.[4] While Beresford makes expressions of misery into a competitive game between men, Austen's male characters who venture to complain risk compromising their masculinity: they

appear inadequate to perform the tasks specifically allotted to men in their culture and thus relinquish the sense of mastery that their gender confers. Old and cautious of his health, *Emma*'s Mr. Woodhouse moans about disruptions to his routines, whether large or small, including invitations to dinner ("'I am sorry Mr. and Mrs. Cole should have done it'" [225]); unpredictable weather ("'[I]t is never safe to sit out of doors'" [50]); and the marriage of his daughter Emma's companion, Miss Taylor ("'I wish she were here again. What a pity it is that Mr. Weston ever thought of her!'" [6]). Emma "allow[s] her father to talk" (24), trying to preempt any possible complaints by providing him with the environment and company she knows he enjoys; more sympathetic listeners, like his daughter Isabella, even echo his whines, responding to him in "the plaintive tone which just suited" (101) his mood.

Yet despite having his feelings and preferences indulged, Mr. Woodhouse—much like a child or a woman—finds himself removed from the kinds of activities and decision-making exclusive to men. Knightley's occasional "business with Mr. Woodhouse" involves virtually managing the older man's estate, and their consultations end with the complete abrogation of Mr. Woodhouse's agency: he "had been talked into what was necessary, told that he understood, and the papers swept away" (182). For gentlemen, the price of whining is a loss of authority and respect. Complaining indicates their incapacity or unwillingness to assume control of their households and subordinate their comforts to their responsibilities; as Michael Kramp notes, even an inadequate father like Mr. Bennet, who responds to his daughters' problems and dilemmas with cynicism rather than support, appears "charming and amusing rather than rude or negligent" (158) by virtue of his rhetorical strategies, none of which involve moaning and groaning.

Austen's male whiners also risk making themselves unattractive as potential partners in marriage. The contrast between Knightley—Emma's future husband—who happily walks about the countryside at all hours and in all weather, and Mr. Woodhouse, who fears any discomposure, could not be more extreme, but

younger men come under censure for complaining as well. Isabella's husband, John Knightley, receives the same kind of soothingly indulgent response that Isabella gives her father—"'Very true, my love'" (122)—when John peevishly vents about visiting neighbors in a snowfall, highlighting the perilously close similarity between his behavior and that of Mr. Woodhouse. Bachelors, too, give way to unmanly complaints. Having quarreled with his secret fiancée, Jane Fairfax, *Emma*'s Frank Churchill emits a long whine on the miseries of traveling about nine miles from the house of his Aunt and Uncle Churchill in Richmond to a picnic at Knightley's Donwell Abbey:[5]

> [H]ad he known how hot a ride he should have, and how late, with all his hurry, he must be, he believed he should not have come at all. The heat was excessive; he had never suffered any thing like it—almost wished he had staid at home—nothing killed him like heat—he could bear any degree of cold, &c. but heat was intolerable—and he sat down, at the greatest possible distance from the slight remains of Mr. Woodhouse's fire, looking very deplorable. (395)

In its diction, hyperbole, repetition, and length (as the "&c." implies), Frank's speech imitates the style and syntax of Mrs. Elton's earlier complaints about the toils of picking strawberries on a summer day ("'delicious fruit—only too rich to be eaten much of—inferior to cherries—currants more refreshing—only objection to gathering strawberries the stooping—glaring sun—tired to death—could bear it no longer—must go and sit in the shade'" [389–90]).

In these two examples, free indirect discourse offers a parodic imitation of the characters' self-absorbed whines, allowing the whiners to satirize themselves through their rhetorical excess. Narrated monologues like those of Frank and Mrs. Elton also indicate how whines must sound to characters forced to listen and respond: in these instances, listeners are aligned with the authoritative perspective of the narrator in their ability to comprehend and assess the subjectivity of others.[6] Emma herself responds to Frank gracefully but not favorably. Although she

mistakes the cause of his discontent (which is romantic frustration), she realizes that Frank is irritable and "out of humour" (395); while kindly advising him to take some refreshment, she privately notes that he would make a bothersome husband: "'I am glad I have done being in love with him. I should not like a man who is so soon discomposed by a hot morning'" (396). Emma tolerates the complaints of her father and brother-in-law but clearly believes that a man who whines is not marriage material—at least not for her.

Since whining proves so unattractive in both sexes, how can this behavior be reformed or resisted? Beresford offers a hastily appended lesson. At the conclusion of the *Miseries*, Sensitive finds himself reprimanded by his older brother, who urges him to "give up the privilege of whimpering" (329) for laughter at minor afflictions or risk being judged a half-wit:

> [I]t may be said that the general firmness, or imbecility, of the human mind is to be measured by its habitual deportment under these apparently slight, but, in *my* view, really important, vexations;—*important*, I say, in-as-much-as they make up, in great part, the history of every day, and every hour. . . . From habit, as before remarked, arises discipline; and by discipline we are schooled to the sublimest efforts, whether of knowledge, or of virtue. (335)

Sensitive quickly capitulates to his wiser brother's advice, vowing to pursue the "direct road of happiness" (335) by practicing resignation and self-restraint instead of "cultivating habits of petulance and discontent" (326). His reformation and Testy's are verified through the existence of the *Miseries* itself: both men have apparently followed the elder Sensitive's suggestion to present their "woeful collections, to the public, in the character of a MORAL JEST-BOOK" (337).

Whiners in Austen's fiction serve a disciplinary function as well: while complaints about their circumstances make these characters objects of amusement and critique, their whines also reveal a lack of self-regulation and a self-centered disregard for the well-being of people around them, who must, after all, listen to their grievances.

The novels' comic portrayals of whines and their consequences for community life offer readers an unforgettable model of annoying behavior. Yet Austen also departs from the didactic ending of *Miseries* by depicting her whiners as incorrigible, for their contentment depends upon constantly having their own way: despite her "delighted pride" at the marriages of Jane and Elizabeth, Mrs. Bennet still remains "occasionally nervous and invariably silly" (427); Mary Musgrove "would not change situations" (272) with her sister Anne, provided that Anne and her husband remain beneath her in status; Mr. Woodhouse resigns himself to Emma's marriage only because having a resident son-in-law calms his "nervous system" (528); and Frank Churchill regains his happy disposition when "'every thing turns out for his good'" (467). Unreformed whiners like these not only provide Austen's fiction with a vibrant source of humor but also offer a serviceable paradigm for future forms of comedy—the sitcom, the stand-up routine—that make articulation of complaints integral to their art.

NOTES

1. Jan Fergus astutely analyzes gendered complaints in Austen's fiction, contending that Austen portrays male whining "somewhat more tenderly" than female whining, in accordance with her culture's greater censure of female discontent ("Male Whiners" 102).

2. Erin N. Goss provides a thorough overview of scholarship on Austen's use of comedy, noting its "dual possibility" or capacity both to critique and endorse structures of social life, especially their effects on women: "Hers is not an ideological laughter. Neither, though, is it one that can be deemed simply rebellious" (10). According to Jillian Heydt-Stevenson, because Austen's fiction "laughs both at and with women who break rules governing gender" (101) and behavioral norms, it cannot be easily categorized as inherently feminist or conservative.

3. Sandra Macpherson argues that "Austen uses Mrs. Bennet's obtuseness about land law to make [a] point" about entailment: this legal structure diminishes even male agency, since "Mr. Collins is a mere cog in an elaborate conveyance that preexists him and will outlast him" (11, 10).

4. Fergus points out that Admiral Croft also links whining with effeminacy in the only instance of Austen's use of the verb ("'My sore throats'" 143): "'Frederick is not a man to whine and complain; he has too much spirit for that'" (*P* 187).

5. Kenneth Smith computes this distance in identifying the possible real-life models for Donwell Abbey and the village of Highbury.

6. Angus Fletcher and Mike Benveniste observe that in *Emma* the narrator's parodic free indirect discourse is employed to "model self-restraint" (12) and develop a sense of propriety for readers to emulate.

WORKS CITED

Austen, Jane. *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Jane Austen*. Gen. ed. Janet Todd. Cambridge: CUP, 2005–08.

Barreca, Regina. *Untamed and Unabashed: Essays on Women and Humor in British Literature*. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1994.

Beresford, James. *The Miseries of Human Life*. 8th ed. London, 1807.

Bollinger, Rachel. "'I Hope He Will Overlook It': Mrs. Bennet as Ironic Clown." *Persuasions On-Line* 43.1 (2022).

Corp, Harriet. *An Antidote to the Miseries of Human Life*. London, 1808.

_____. *A Sequel to the Antidote to the Miseries of Human Life*. London, 1809.

Fergus, Jan. "Male Whiners in Austen's Novels." *Persuasions* 18 (1996): 98–108.

_____. "'My Sore Throats, You Know, Are Always Worse than Anybody's': Mary Musgrove and Jane Austen's Art of Whining." *Persuasions* 15 (1993): 139–47.

Fletcher, Angus, and Mike Benveniste. "A Scientific Justification for Literature: Jane Austen's Free Indirect Style as Ethical Tool." *Journal of Narrative Theory* 43.1 (2013): 1–18.

Goss, Erin M. Introduction. *Jane Austen and Comedy*. Ed. Erin M. Goss. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 2019. 1–17.

Heydt-Stevenson, Jillian. *Austen's Unbecoming Conjunctions: Subversive Laughter, Embodied History*. New York: Palgrave, 2005.

Johnson, Samuel. *A Dictionary of the English Language*. London, 1755.

Kramp, Michael. "Lost in the Comedy: Austen's Paternalistic Men and the Problem of Accountability." *Jane Austen and Comedy*. Ed. Erin M. Goss. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 2019. 146–64.

Macpherson, Sandra. "Rent to Own; or, What's Entailed in *Pride and Prejudice*." *Representations* 82.1 (2003): 1–23.

Smith, Kenneth. "The Probable Location of Donwell Abbey in Jane Austen's *Emma*." *Persuasions On-Line* 39.1 (2018).