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Samuel Richardson s Fictions of Gender (Hardback)

By Tassie Gwilliam

Stanford University Press, United States, 1993. Hardback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book. In developing a new gender theory for analyzing Samuel Richardson s three major novels - Pamela, Clarissa, and Sir Charles Grandison - the author argues that these novels of sexual threat expose, sometimes unwillingly, the extraordinary labor required to construct and maintain the eighteenth-century ideology of gender, that apparently natural dream of perfect symmetry between the sexes. The instability of that model is revealed notably in Richardson s fascination with cross-gender identification and other instances of transgressive desires. The author demonstrates that these violations of the supposedly unbreachable barriers between masculinity and femininity produce what is most moving and imaginative in Richardson s fiction and create an equally powerful repression in the form of punishment of transgressive characters and desires. She also illustrates, through a reading of recurrent fantasies about the composition of bodies - especially women s bodies - the complex interaction between those fantasies and the construction of masculinity and femininity. The genesis of Richardson s own writing is located in a dynamic, reciprocal idea of gender that allows him to see femininity from the inside while retaining the privileges of the masculine...



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