

The year was 1973 when Edna Steeves wrote that Jane Austen was not a bold woman, that she never closely examined the social situation. The year was also 1973 when Lloyd Brown found Jane Austen's themes "comparable with the eighteenth-century feminism of Mary Wollstonecraft" because they question "certain masculine assumptions in society" (324). While Steeves concluded that Austen's time had not been "ripe for rational and meaningful discussion of women's rights," Brown gave more than a dozen examples of Wollstonecraft arguments dramatized by Austen females.