# Private Letters, Public Reading: Pamela

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## 摘 要

英國李查遜 (Samuel Richardson) 所著的《潘蜜拉》 (Pamela: or, Virtue Rewarded, 1740) 與其它以女性爲主角 / 發言人的書信體小說的主要不同點在於其主體自我的建構與解構不僅及於語言層次，更與社會認同緊密相連。

在小說中，女主角潘蜜拉的私人信件到達其目的地——主人畢先生、她的雙親以及社會大衆閱讀並贊同她在信函中所寫的一切。她個人的身份也由一位女僕升格爲女主人畢太太。但也正由於全然仰賴於大衆的認同許可，潘蜜拉的自我無法控制其表現。 到小說結尾時，她終止原本自然舒暢的「即刻書寫」 (writing to the moment) 而屈服於她在小說前半部所挑戰的階級制度。

正如同潘蜜拉書寫聲音的消失顯示了她自我的寂滅，她的信件書寫也顯示她自我的肯定。換言之，潘蜜拉自我的建構與解構都藉由信件的書寫來展現。

本文的閱讀策略爲以書信爲暗喻，討論此暗喻在個人意識與主流文化的互動下的轉換；本文的研究方法則採取解構主義、心理分析與女性主義等理論。

In Samuel Richardson's epistolary novel Pamela: or, Virtue Rewarded (1740),[1] private self-narration becomes the keystone of individual identity within a community. Written in the form of letters and journals that are meticulously transcribed and widely circulated to the interested public, Pamela connects the textualization of the self with social identity. The written record of Pamela's experiences creates a self for Pamela that ultimately displaces her original social identity: Waiting-maid Pamela becomes Mrs. B., an aristocratic

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1 Samuel Richardson, Pamela: or, Virtue Rewarded. Further references to this work will be to this edition and will appear parenthetically in the text.

woman. As such, Pamela is about writing the self through the private familiar letter.

## Textualized Self

Throughout the whole book, the letter writer, Pamela, is preoccupied with the self and subjectivity realized through the deliberate textualization of her life in the letters. My working hypothesis of the possibility of the textualized self is that only in narrative can we discover psychic explanations, or as Jean-Jacques Rousseau claims that the question of identity can be thought only in narrative terms.[2] Narration is an act not merely of perceiving the self, but of creating the self. There is no other way accessible to us outside of or other than this act. In Pamela, we see that writing (letters) turns out to be coterminous with the discovery of the self. The self appears as an expression, a linguistic construction. It is not autonomous and transcendent but contingent on language for its very existence. It follows that dispersed into language, the self has no ontological status within or without the text.

The relation of the self to language, or the textualization of the self, is to be seen in the light of contemporary theories. Friedrich Nietzsche notes that the self is only "a fiction": "the ego does not exist at all."[3] While depriving the self of any ontological status or originary cause, he does not deny it cognitive or affective function. In other words, although resting on no ontological ground, the self, as a historical construct, as an experienced reality, is an effective fiction. It is scattered among the multitudinous languages that constitute it. As an expression of "the will to power," the self is perverted by the ascetic ideals of Judeo-Christian tradition which turned man into a "torture chamber" (270). In Pamela, we see that the self is produced in/through discourse and power itself is not determinant of discursive relation but its effect.

Emile Benveniste argues that the self and language are coextensive. He situates the self in language even more directly: "It is in and through language that man constitutes himself as a subject, because language alone establishes the concept of 'ego' in reality."[4] And Claude Levi-Strauss concurs with Benveniste's argument: " If there is one conviction that has been intimately borne

2 See Peter Brooks, Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative, p. 33.
3 Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 200. Hereafter cited in the text.
4 Emile Benveniste, Problems in General Linguistics, p. 224. See also David Carroll, The Subject in Question: The Language of Theory and the Strategies of Fiction, pp. 14-26.

upon the author . . . during twenty years devoted to the study of myths . . . it is that the solidity of the self, the major preoccupation of the whole Western philosophy, does not withstand persistent application to the same object, which comes to pervade it through and to imbue it with an experiential awareness of its own unreality."[5]

Among the multitudinous voices in contemporary theories, Roland Barthes's writing is almost unique for its consistent critique of the authorial self. In Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes, he speaks in the third person that "he feels bound up with any writing whose principle is that the subject is only the effect of language."[6] He replaces the "person" of the author with the "subject," which appears only when writing is enunicated from the place of language. In "The Death of the Author," he remarks that "writing is the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin. Writing is that neutral, composite, oblique space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost, starting with the very identity of the body writing."[7] When asking of a Balzac text, "Who is speaking thus?", he declares that the author is dead. In the "humanist" tradition, Barthes says "the explanation of a work is always sought in the man or woman who produced it, as if it were always in the end, through the more or less transparent allegory of the fiction, the voice of a singly person, the author 'confiding' in us . . . it is language which speaks, not the author; to write is,through a prerequisite impersonality . . . to reach that point where only language acts, 'performs', and not 'me'" (143). He elaborates further that "linguistically, the author is never more than the instance writing, just as *I* is nothing other than the instance saying *I*: language knows a 'subject', not a 'person', and this subject, empty outside of the very enunciation which defines it, suffices to make language 'hold together', suffices, that is to say, to exhaust it" (145).

Like most of the postmodernists, Michel Foucault attempts to weaken the hold of "the theory of the subject" and to undermine concepts of the subject as "pseudosovereign." He notes that despite Barthes's declaration of the death of the author, the mystique surrounding the concepts of a "work" or of "writing"( ecriture) continually resuscitates that of the author. For Foucault, the

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5 Claude Levi-Strauss, The Naked Man: Introduction to a Science of Mythology, 4, p.625.
6 Roland Baarthes, Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes, p. 82.
7 Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," Image-Music-Text, p. 142. Hereafter cited in the text.

author serves as "a function of discourse,"[8] not the origin of discourse. And writing is an "interplay of signs, regulated less by the content it signifies than by the very nature of the signifier . . . Writing unfolds like a game that inevitably moves beyond its own rules and finally leaves them behind . . . it is primarily concerned with creating an opening where the writing subject endlessly disappears"(116). Through "author-function," a writer creates "a second self." In the product of discourse, one literally and figuratively finds one's "self." There can be no self outside the presence of the text. Every text necessarily participates in the prevailing discourse, the origins of which remain unidentified and unlocalized.

In the work of Jacques Derrida, Barthes's "subject" is displaced by an agent of supplementarity. According to Derrida, the self does not depend on a "subject," but it nonetheless has agent or an operator through whom it passes. This subjectless process in all essential ways is given over to the force of language or textuality. In other words, the self, just as the world or human lived reality, can be conceived or read as a text. And this textuality, Derrida says, "forces us to extend the accredited concept, the dominant notion of a 'text'[to]. . . everything that was to be set up in opposition to writing (speech, life, the world, the real, history, and what not, every field of reference--to body or mind, conscious or unconscious, politics, economics, and so forth)."[9] For Derrida, in short, the self, the world, and every field of reference are generated by language. As Art Berman explains: "Derrida . . . demonstrate not only that truth evades the self because language is metaphor, but also that truth cannot exist because the self is this metaphorical language: it is not that the self cannot be present to its own voice (the self is its voice), but that there is no external reality that can be present to the linguistical self."[10]

In Pamela, the heroine's letter reaches its destination--Mr. B., her parents, and the public read and approve what she writes in her letters.[11] Her letters

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8 Michel Foucault, "What Is an Author?" in Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews, p. 120. Hereafter cited in the text. In the end, Foucault answers the question of who is speaking with a question originally posed by Samuel Beckett: " What matter who's speaking?" (Ibid., p. 138).

9 Jacques Derrida, "Living On: Border Lines," in Deconstruction and Criticism, p. 81.

10 Art Berman, From the New Criticism to Deconstruction: The Reception of Structuraliam. p. 246.

11 According to Barbara Johnson, "The letter's destination is thus wherever it is read." See her "The Frame of Reference: Poe, Lacan, Derrida," The Purloined Poe: Lacan, Derrida, and Psychoanalytic Reading, p. 248.

represent the only release from the confinement of the closed room. But precisely because it is predicated exclusively on the public's approbation, Pamela's self (as "split") does not have control of its presentation. The self is incapable of responding to reality in ways that differ from what the dominant culture has prescribed for women. It is in this sense that the self can be said to be completely fictional, imaginary. In the end, Pamela stops "writing to the moment" and becomes subservient to the hierarchical order she used to challenge in the first half of the novel. Just as the silencing of Pamela's writing voice in the end marks a kind of self-annihilation, so Pamela's letter-writing marks her self-affirmation in the process of her becoming Mrs. B. In other words, both the construction and the deconstruction of the self are through letter-writing.

## The Letter Form: Authenticity and Immediacy

As Richardson's first epistolary novel, Pamela is imprinted with Richardson's method of letter-writing. For Richardson and his fictional characters, the language of correspondence is perfectly transparent. It is "indicative, generally beyond the power of disguise, of the mind of the writer" and shows "soul" as well as meaning.[12] Because of this transparency, this assumption of mimetic precision which the oral converse cannot sustain, the familiar letter is presumed to function as a reliable access to the writer's true self or inner soul.[13] "I don't remember all I wrote," Pamela remarks after Mrs. Jewkes finds her hidden papers, "yet I know I wrote my Heart" (200). And it is precisely because of this assumption of the transparency of letter language that Lady Davers, Mr. B.'s sister, looks to Pamela's journals

12 Richardson's letters to his friends demonstrate his faith in the power and the enduring independence of the written word. He writes to Sophia Westcomb in 1746, "Who would not choose, when necessary absence ...deprive her of the person of her charming friend, to have a delight in retiring to her closet, and there, by pen and ink, continue, and, as I may say, perpetuate, the very agreeable and innocent pleasures that flow from social love, from hearts united by the same laudable ties?... Who then shall decline the converse of the pen? The pen that makes distance, presence; and brings back to sweet remembrance all the delights of presence; which makes even presence but body while absence becomes the soul" (The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson, Ed. Anna Laetitia Barbauld,p. 244).

13 Ian Watt interprets Richardson's use of letter in this way: "What forces influenced Richardson in giving fiction this subjective and inward direction? One of them is suggested by the formal basis of his narrative--the letter. The familiar letter, of course, can be an opportunity for a much fuller and more unreserved expression of the writer's own private feelings than oral converse usually affords." See Ian Watt, "Private Experience and the Novel," The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding, p. 176.

as the only authentic record of what actually happened between Pamela and Mr. B.: "There is such a noble Simplicity in thy Story, such an honest Artlessness in thy Mind . . . the Sight of your Papers, I dare say, will crown the Work, will disarm my Pride, banish my Resentment . . ., and justify my Brother's Conduct"(375).

Richardson once claimed that Pamela was written in the hope that it "might possibly introduce a new species of writing."[14] Certainly, the "new writing" did not refer to the form of letter-writing since it was quite popular before Richardson.[15] Richardson's literary innovation, then, is what he calls "spontaneous writing,"[16] that is, "letters [written] by parties themselves at the very time in which the event happened."[17] The letter-writing is "spontaneous" because "All the letters are written while the Hearts of the Writers must be supposed to be wholly engaged in their Subjects: The Events at the Time generally dubious:-- So that they abound, not only with critical Situations; but with what may be called instantaneous Descriptions and Reflections."[18] In the novel, Pamela's written account is not a retrospective autobiography written in past tense but a self-narration of what is happening to her, from minute to minute, hour to hour, day to day. Such phrases as "just now" (149, 164), "But, hold !" (159), followed by the present tense, abound in her letters. They suggest the simultaneity of her experience and her textualizing of it. The opening words of the novel "I have great trouble" sets the sense of immediacy so characteristic of the whole work. In Pamela's first letter to her parents, one reads: "Just now, as I was folding up this Letter . . . in comes my young Master!" (26).

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14 The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson, I, lxxiii-lxxiv.

15 See Katherine Gee Hornbeak, "The Complete Letter Writer in England:1568-1800," pp. 3-4; Helen Sard Hughes, "English Epistolary Fiction before Pamela"; Robert Adam Day, Told in Letters: Epistolary Fiction before Richardson.

16 Richardson cites "a candid foreigner" who says that Pamela and Clarissa are written in spontaneous writing "and this method has given the author great advantage which he could not have drawn from any other species of narration." Richardson, Clarissa: Preface, Hints of Prefaces and Postscript, p. 36.

17 Preface to Clarissa, p. 36. Richardson later calls this "writing to the moment" in his preface to Sir Charles Grandison: "The nature of familiar letters, written, as it were, to the moment, while the heart is agitated by hopes and fears, on events undecided, must plead an excuse for the bulk of a collection of this kind. Mere facts and characters might be comprised in a much smaller compass: but, would they be equally interesting?" (xx).

18 Preface to Clarissa, p. 36.

One of the effects of spontaneous writing is the decreasing of the cognitive space between language and events. Before marrying Pamela, Mr. B. insists on seeing her letters "because they are your true sentiments at the time" (237). The fact that the lived event is simultaneous with the narrated event transforms the act of writing into the event.[19] Almost every particular plot in Pamela is structured in a way to contribute to this emphasis on the act of writing, the act of textualizing individual's experience. The letter in Pamela is thus not only a means of presenting the story but also a significant agent in the narrative. [20]

As we shall see, along with the two supposed merits of the letter form, the authenticity and the immediacy of the subjective inner state of the writer, the letter reflects the fundamental tension between writing and reading, distance and involvement, presence and absence, and the private and the public in the novel. For Pamela and Mr. B., this tension is at the center of the conflict between self and authority which informs their story.

## Self vs. Authority/ Writing vs. Reading

At the beginning of the novel, Pamela is in a state of psychic ambivalence, her mistress, Lady B., who has taught her to act in ways that conflict with her upbringing and given her "Qualifications above my degree" (25), has just passed away.[21] Her knowledge of self is in disarray; her virtue is under the attack of Mr. B. Her energy in establishing a sense of identity in conditions which separate her from both the nurture of her family-of-origin and the comfort of a surrogate home takes the form of striving for linguistic parity and purity. In order to combat her disordered sense of self, Pamela seeks in letter-writing, the

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19 In Narcisse romancier, Jean Rousset describes some of the implications of the choice of the epistolary form for the plot and themes of a work. He notes the predominance of the present tense and suggests that "cette position temporelle, qui rend le narrateur contemporain de ce qu'il raconte, tend faire de la narration l'action elle-m m e.... [this temporal positioning, which makes the narrator contemporaneous with what he is telling, tends to make the act of narration itself into the action.... ]" Jean Rousset, Narcisse romancier, p. 60.

20 As McKillop observes, "The writing of the letter is only the beginning; they are copied, sent, received, shown about, discussed, answered, even perhaps hidden, intercepted, stolen, altered, or forged." Alan D. McKillop, "Epistolary Technique in Richardson's Novels," Samuel Richardson: A Collection of Critical Essays, p. 139.

21 The death of Lady B. makes Pamela's status in the well-structured household of Mr. B. ambiguous. Pamela is the only character at Mr. B.'s Hall whose social status is not clearly defined. Accordingly, one of the things that characterize Pamela is her ability to transcend class categories. And the novel can be seen as her efforts to find her proper place in a rigid class structure.

only mode of self-enactment available to her, to establish certainty in the uncertain domestic landscape at Mr. B.'s Hall.

However, the institution of language is a discourse of otherness: Mr. B.'s injunction demonstrates that discourse is a form of power; those who have the power continually censor what can be said, thought, and written. In the first letter of the novel, Mr. B. divulges his anxiety about Pamela's potential of insubordination largely becuse Pamela writes. He admonishes Pamela against her writing: "I am not angry with you. Be faithful, and diligent; and do as you should do, and I like you the better for this" (26). But Pamela, though being a servant, is convinced that as far as corresponding with one's parents is concerned, her right equals her master's. She asserts that "Yet I know not for what. For he was always dutiful to his Parents; and why should he be angry, that I was so to mine!" (26).

Thus, from the very beginning of the novel, Pamela directly and strongly suggests writing's potential as a powerful weapon. As long as Pamela meticulously writes about Mr. B.'s indecent behavior and sends the account to her parents and Parson Williams, Mr. B.'s attention to Pamela in the early first half of the novel is primarily focused on her constant writing:

> I am watch'd, and such-like, very narrowly; and he says to Mrs. Jervis, This Girl is always scribbling; I think she may be better employ'd (34).
> I can't let her stay, I'll assure you; not only for her own Freedom of Speech; but her Letter-writing of all the Secrets of my Family (74).

Although Mr. B. openly claims that "my Reputation's so well known . . . that I care not what any body writes or says of me . . . "(74), he privately confides his anxiety to Mrs. Jervis: "I find I am likely to suffer in my Reputation by the Perverseness and Folly of this Girl . . . She has written Letters; for I find she is a mighty Letter-writer! to her Father and Mother, and others, as far as I know; in which she makes herself an Angel of Light, and me, her kind Master and Benefactor, a Devil incarnate!" (45); "I intended no Harm to her . . . I did no Harm neither, but to myself; for I rais'd a Hornet's Nest about my Ears, that, as far as I know, may have stung to Death my Reputation" (68). Mr. B.'s fear that Pamela's "scribbling" will gain wider readership than just her parents and Mrs. Jervis is a fear of being exposed. When Mr. B. is captivated by his love for Pamela and forced to violate the distance between master and servant, he is forced to reveal

himself to her. "And so I am to be exposed, am I, . . . in my House, and out of my House, to the whole World" (41), Mr. B. remarks when he discovers Pamela has told Mrs. Jervis about their encounter in the summer-house. "You may well be asham'd," he tells Pamela: ". . . after your Noise and Nonsense, and exposing me as you have done"(44). Later, the same complaint recurs: "I have of pert saucy Answers from you, besides exposing me by your Letters"(75).

To be exposed is to be delivered into the power of another. In Richardson's fictional world, man and woman feel uneasy toward love because love forces one to reveal oneself to those who do not react likewise, at least in the early stage of their relationship. The fear of exposure in Richardson is best described by Roy Roussel: "This fear grows from the recognition that, with the advent of love, the very form of the lover's new self will be determined by another. The term 'expose' expresses both the character's initial experience of love as a rupture of the bounds of his privacy, a rupture which allows the beloved to shape him in this way, and his recognition that because the beloved is now the ground of his self he must continue to remain open to her. Moreover, exposure is accompanied by fear because this is not a reciprocal relationship. In the beginning, Mr. B. feels himself defined by Pamela, yet he does not serve in an equivalent way as the ground of her self. It is because Pamela maintains her independence while serving as the source of Mr. B.'s self-awareness that he feels possessed by her."[22] It is in this sense of imbalance that Mr. B. feels he has been "robbed" (63) by Pamela. [23]

Mr. B. feels compelled to censor Pamela's letters written to her parents, partly to ensure that Pamela does not take liberties with his private affairs, and partly to uncover secret affirmations of the attraction he hopes she feels for him. But by intercepting Pamela's letters, he does not really escape the classificatory power of Pamela's pen. As Margaret A. Doody observes: "Mr. B. is not the master as long as Pamela can think and write, and yet it is to that thinking self that he is attracted."[24] Mr. B. becomes captivated by her letters: "I have seen more of your Letters than you imagine . . . and am quite overcome with your charming manner of Writing, so free, so easy, and so much above your Sex; and

22 Roy Roussel, "Reflections on the Letter: The Reconciliation of Distance and Presence in Pamela," p. 383. For a discussion of Richardson's sense of the dangers of exposing oneself to others, see Malvin R. Zirker, Jr., "Richardson's Correspondence: The Personal Letter as Private Experience," The Familiar Letter in the Eighteenth Century, pp. 71-91.

23 Later, this imbalanced situation changes when Pamela's journals record the growth of her love for Mr. B. (197).

24 Margaret A. Doody,"Introduction," Pamela: Or, V irtue Rewarded, p 15.

all put together makes me, as I tell you, love you to Extravagance" (83). He constantly suffers from not procuring her papers: "I must see them, Pamela, or I shall never be easy" (201).

To combat the power of Pamela's writing, Mr. B. is not aware that he must keep an appropriate distance from Pamela's narrative. He unwittingly imprisons Pamela in another of his estates, the isolated Lincolnshire, under the watchful eyes of Mrs. Jewkes, cutting the outside world from Pamela. In so doing, Mr. B. actually loses the war between him and Pamela. On the one hand, since Pamela is imprisoned, she is relieved of her duties as an industrious servant and enters a period of enforced leisure: "I have so much Time upon my Hands, that I must write on to employ myself" (134). As a result, the more confined she is, the more productive her writing is, the more ingenious her efforts to circulate and distribute her writing: Pamela contrives with Parson Williams to send out her letters by hiding them beneath the tiles by the sunflower in the garden. This "sunflower correspondence," moreover, proves to be a safer method than the previous delivery of John Arnold, who shows her letters to Mr. B. before sending them to her parents. On the other hand, since Mr. B. must rely on Pamela's journals to understand what he has done[25] to decide how to win any dominance over her, he increases his own vulnerability to her version of interpretations of things. He becomes, in other words, an accomplice to Pamela's valiant struggle for self-determination. In this way, Pamela finds in her very incarceration an unprecedented access to her imprisoner and internalizes the autotelic authority that is Mr. B.'s by birth. As he later realizes: "I have paid so dear for my Curiosity in the Affection they have rivetted upon me for you, that you would look upon yourself amply reveng'd, if you knew what they have cost me" (214). By recording the story between her and Mr. B., by defining their story in her own terms, Pamela forces Mr. B. to devote his energies to countering her version of the story. The writer has the power of interpretation, of selection, and consequently of creating meaning and order.

Indeed, being a self-conscious writer, Pamela depends on the power of language to resist Mr. B.'s aggression. She preserves her chastity by deploying language to a great effect-- using her "pertness" and verbal chastity to repel Mr. B. In her endless verbal contests with Mr. B., she insists on the strict connec-

25 Mr. B. even learns to base his retellings of the plot on Pamela's version of it: "I put it (Pamela's journal) in my Pocket on purpose. . . I find I must read it . . . when she was in the Time of her Confinement, . . . in the Journal she kept, which was intended for nobody's Persual but her Parents, tell them, That she was importuned, . . ." (p.267).

tion that should exist between words and actions: "he professed Honour all the Time with his Mouth, while his Actions did not correspond" (181). What also characterizes Pamela's use of language is her systematic refusal of the figurative meaning of words. When accused of having robbed Mr. B. of his heart, she claims to be "ignorant of his Meaning" (63) and asks to be sent to jail if he can prove it. Mr. B. is thus constantly defeated by Pamela's insistence on calling attention to what he says rather than to what he means. She uses a similar argument, challenging Mr. B.'s hermeneutic skill when she defends herself against the accusation of having written love letters to Parson Williams: "Well, sir, said I, that is your comment; but it does not appear so in the text" (200). Pamela knows that language is her vital resource. As she puts it: "How then, sir, can I act but by shewing my Abhorrence of every Step that makes towards my Undoing? And what is left me but Words?" (182).

So effective is her use of language that frequently Pamela is all but replaced by her language. It is highlighted throughout the novel by the particularly textual nature of Pamela's existence. The meticulous care for the material aspect of writing--the frantic hiding of pen, paper, and the letters--and the omnipresent machinery of spontaneous writing--letters, journals, texts--have the effect of rendering Pamela's incarnation profoundly typographical. The feel and shape of the text becomes itself the object of scrutiny. This characteristic becomes most obvious in the notion that a character's writing style and the turn of phrase become the marks or signs that reveal personality, inclination, and intent. As Pamela takes Mr. B.'s uncivil apostrophes to be the explicit proof of his impure intentions: "I see, my dear Parents, that when a Person will do wicked Things, it is no Wonder he will speak wicked Words" (48). The letter is not merely the graphic trace of the protagonist's personality; it is the only tangible and directly available information that the reader may scrutinize. It is thus appropriate that Pamela's only love poem is written not to a person but to a letter (245-6).[26] For Richardson, then, it is the letter, language, that has taken on a primacy. The emphasis on the letter and on the act of writing within the text are inherent to the genre of Pamela as an epistolary novel, but very few letter-writers are as self-conscious about their activities as Pamela is. As Lennard J. Davis suggests:

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26 Pamela's poem is as follows:
"Go, happy paper, gently steal
And underneath her pillow lie;
There, in soft dreams, my love reveal,
That love which I must still conceal,
And, wrapt in awful silence die" (245).

"Richardson's self-consciousness, and the self-consciousness of his characters within the text, points to the genuine sense of a break with earlier kinds of writing."[27] Pamela acknowledges the importance of her writing early in the novel, when she asks her parents to save her letters so that she may read them when she comes home (51-2). Pamela also understands that her writing is conditional, which explains her continual postponement of returning to her parents' home. In the very beginning of the novel, Pamela's parents have warned her: "If you find the least attempt made upon your virtue, be sure you leave every thing behind you, and come away to us" (28). Until the second half of the novel, Pamela seems to abide by their instructions and seems to desire a happy family reunion in her parents' house. Although her parents' call for her return serves to reinforce her sense of virtue, it ultimately disrupts her writing on the whole, for Pamela is certain that she will have "no writing, nor writing-time" once she returns to her parents'. Later in the novel she expresses the same wish of rereading her own story: "I will continue my Writing still, because, may be, I shall like to read it, when I am with you, to see what Dangers I have been enabled to escape" (85). She is indeed an inveterate letter-writer--"a mighty letter-writer," in Mr. B.'s words. She herself confesses: "I cannot live without a Pen in my Hand" (287). Not satisfied with writing letters alone, she also copies most of the letters she sends or receives, thus accumulating the roles of character, author, editor, and reader. This obsessive urge to turn life into a copy, a text, not only makes writing in the novel a literal substitute for action but also enhances the self, the subject of Pamela's writing.

## Dialogical Reciprocity and the Correspondence

Mr. B.'s desperate attempt to know Pamela and what she writes about him in her journals culminates in his near rape of Pamela. In the near rape scene, when Mr. B. finally removes Pamela's dress, he proceeds not to rape her but to exclaim: " I must say one Word to you, Pamela; it is this: You see, now you are in my Power! . . . if you resolve not to comply with my Proposals, I will not lose this Opportunity . . . Swear then to me . . . that you will accept my Proposals! " (176). At this crucial moment, Mr. B. reveals that his dominant motives are not strictly sexual but political. He no longer finds an erotic body to be possessed at all, but a body of sentiments having no reality other than words. In Lennard

27 Lennard J. Davis, Factual Fiction: The Origins of the English Novel, p. 183.

J. Davis's words, "Pamela-the-heroine becomes replaced by Pamela-the-linguistic simulacrum."[28] Mr. B. senses that Pamela's identity is constructed from language and his bid for power actually depends on changing the way she creates her sense of self through language. He realizes that what he really wants is less physical possession than Pamela's expression of willing subordination. In making this absurd attempt on Pamela's virtue, he sins against his own feelings as much as against Pamela's. He wants Pamela's love but an appropriate way to express it is still to be found.

After perusing Pamela's journals, Mr. B. discovers that what he had earlier thought "artful Wiles" (160) and "little villainous Plots" (161) either to escape or to ensnare him were in fact "pretty Tricks and Artifices, to escape the Snares I (Mr. B.) had laid for her, yet all is innocent, lovely, and uniformly beautiful" (255). Being witnesses to Pamela's moral and literary virtue, the journals convince Mr. B. simultaneously that Pamela's character is disinterested, that his jealousy of Parson Williams is unfounded, and that nothing there is at odds with public decorum. Mr. B.'s heart is melted by the "very moving Tale" (207) of Pamela's trials. He has adopted her viewpoint: "You have too powerful a Pleader for you within me" (200). No longer her adversary, Mr. B. has become instead Pamela's ideal reader. He acknowledges the validity of her constructions of their past and present situation and requests to have a share in deciding the future turns of their story:

> I long to see the Particulars of your Plot, and your Disappointment, where your papers leave off. For you have so beautiful a manner, that it is partly that, and partly my Love for you, that has made me desirous of reading all you write; tho' a great deal of it is against myself; for which you must expect to suffer a little. And as I have furnished you with the Subject, I have a Title to see the Fruits of your Pen.--Besides, said he, there is such a pretty Air of Romance, as you relate them, in your Plots, and my Plots, that I shall be better directed in what manner to wind up the Catastrophe of the pretty Novel (201).

But, interestingly enough, the final reconciliation of Mr. B. and Pamela has to

28 Ibid., p. 185.

come through Mr. B.'s letter to Pamela.[29] Motivated by the "affection which they (Pamela's papers) have rivetted upon me" (214), Mr. B.'s letter is in every sense a response to her writings. Pamela finds herself moved by it just as Mr. B. was moved by her "little History" (184):

> This letter, when I expected some new Plot, has affected me more than any thing of that Sort could have done. For here is plainly his great Value for me confess'd, and his rigorous Behaviour accounted for in such a Manner . . . I found to my Grief before, that my Heart was too partial in his Favour; but now, with so much Openness, so much Affection, nay, so much Honour too, (which was all I had before doubted, and kept me on the Reserve) I am quite overcome. This was a Happiness, however, I had no Reason to expect. But to be sure, I must own to you, that I shall never be able to think of any body in the world but him! (214).

Having failed to subordinate Pamela with various assertions of inherited privilege, Mr. B. wins her complete submission with a letter expressing his love which he writes after her departure for her parents' home. That Mr. B. should use a letter to express his love for Pamela and that the letter should be composed at the moment when Pamela, returning home, is furthest from him, most fully confirms the letter's mediating function. To explain this, we shall return to our point of departure: the nature of epistolary communication.

For Richardson, the familiar letter is the result of a double-hinged movement pointing to the writer's consciousness. On the one hand, the letter-writing requires that the letter writer retire from the company of those who are around him into himself. It speaks for the need for privacy: "The pen is jealous of company. It expects, as I may say, to engross the writer's whole self; everybody allows the writer to withdraw: it disdains company; and will have the entire attention" (L, III, 247). But on the other hand, it requires by its very nature the existence of an addressee. The withdrawal of the letter writer is counterbalanced by a seemingly paradoxical movement which carries him to an intimate communication with another in a letter which fills with "the ever agreeable and innocent pleasures that flow from social love, from hearts united" (L, 244-5). Unlike the pen that writes the diary or journal, the letter-writing

29 This is one of the six letters that Mr. B. writes to Pamela.

pen works toward the breakdown of privacy; it attempts to create its reader even as it asserts the distance that necessitates that creation. And as the language of correspondence is perfectly transparent for Richardson, the access to the letter writer's self is the kind of intimacy which is signified by Richardson's phrase "hearts united." At the same time, because the writer is protected by the absence which constitutes "the soul,"[30] this intimacy is achieved without any destructive intrusion into the privacy of the writer. For Richardson, while the writer represents absence/distance, the reader presence, the letter has the function of making "distance, presence."[31] And to understand how this function of the letter effects Mr. B.-Pamela relationships is thus crucial to read Pamela as an epistolary novel.

Separated from her parents and the friendly fellow servants of Bedfordshire, the imprisoned Pamela can only compose her journals in the "refuge" (291) of her closet in Lincolnshire. Her journals are written under the circumstances of practical withdrawal of the writer but lack the meditative quality of a mind reflecting on itself which a withdrawal might suggest. They are letters in the true sense of the word. Even the most didactic of them are not monologues. On the contrary, they are extremely conversational, filled with comments and questions which invoke the response of a reader who is there not simply as an excuse for writing but as a full and immediate presence. They are unmistakably assocciated with a correspondent and therefore shall be called "letter-journal."[32] The journal continues Pamela's letter-writing and includes copies of several letters exchanged between her and Parson Williams. Even when Pamela is in a most isolated imprisonment, without any immediate possibility of escape or being saved, she still begins her journal by addressing her parents: "O My Dearest Father and Mother." And she continues, "Let me write and bewail my miserable hard Fate, tho' I have no Hope that what I write will be convey'd to your Hands" (94). This epistolary quality of Pamela's journal becomes a special kind of understanding between her and Mr. B. When Mr. B. finds that the imprisoned Pamela keeps her journal in the isolated Lincolnshire, his first

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30 See note 12.
31 Ibid.
32 The words "diary" and "journal" are sometimes used interchangeably, but traditionally, "diary" connotes a more formal pattern of daily entries, serving primarily to record the writer's activities, experiences and observations. Since the word "journal," being looser in definition, may allow for more creative expansion of the entries and does not imply an obligation to write every day, "journal" is used consistently throughout the whole monograph.

question is "Whom . . . are they written to" and her reply is "To my Father, sir" (199). What Jean Rousset says about the function of the letter applies to Pamela's journals as well: "la lettre est naturellement dirigee vers un destinataire sur lequel elle s'efforce d'agir. On s'explore, on se scrute, mais sous le regard d'autrui. Ainsi s'institue un monologüe impur, sur lequel ne cesse de se profiler l'interlocuteur absent [The letter is naturally directed toward an addressee, upon whom it endeavors to bring some influence to bear. The writer explores and scrutinizes him/herself, but under another's gaze. In this way an impure monologue is established, in which the absent addressee's outline is continually present]."[33] Writing her journals in the isolated Lincolnshire, Pamela does not forget to solicit her parents' approval: "I hope my Conduct shall be approved of by you" (168), which is not different from what she says to her parents in the letter: "Was not I right my dear Parents" (39). In the light of the continuity between Pamela's letters and her journals, we can understand what V. G. Mylne means by saying: "when Pamela cannot send off her letters she takes to keeping a journal instead, and the change is not particularly noticeable." [34]

As we have seen, even when her journals are not possible to be delivered, Pamela still addresses them to others. This relational quality of her journal is important in terms of its suggestion of the self-other relationship in Pamela. At this point, Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic theory of the "subject" may help us understand the imaginary relation to the Other in the constitution of self identity. According to Lacan, unlike Descartes, the subject is defined by its position within a net of relationship(s) between "self" and "other." In the prelinguistic "mirror phase, " the child, sometime between six and eighteen months, recognizes himself in the mirror. At this age he lacks the motor control he sees in others. As compensation, he perceives in the mirror image before him a totality and anticipates a sense of identity and wholeness of the self through this specular Other. The subject derives its value from identification with a coherence, an ideal image of coordination, which the subject itself lacks; it gains an identity through its external, reflected image by imagining to coincide with it. Furthermore, by observing that its mirror image imitates the motions it dictates, the infant discovers and asserts its powers of manipulation. It acquires the mastery it formerly lacked. Yet the child's sense of both identity and supremacy is

33 Jean Rousset, Narcisse romancier, p. 115.
34 V. G. Mylne, "Letter-Novels: History and Technique," The Eighteenth-Century French Novel: Techniques of Illusion, pp. 144-55, quotation, p. 149.

clearly fictional, gained from an optical illusion.[35] In other words, it is the image of the Self that appears through the mirror that we call the Other. Thus the pulic, who stand for the Other over against which Pamela has been able to identify herself, is a conceptual given in the process of self understanding and an image built up in that formative process as much as Pamela herself. In fact, a structural characteristic of eighteenth-century concepts of selfhood and authority that emerges as a central theme in the plots of Richardson is that of dialogical reciprocity.[36] The self, and to a less obvious degree the systems of authority framing its endeavors, are grounded in a dialogical relationship to an Other, whose reactions confirm or contest the viability of personal representations.

This Other takes its form in Pamela as those who morally or socially define the heroine.[37] Pamela's conversion is signified primarily by a change in her relation to those people. Pamela addresses her jourrnal to her parents, but its content is the gradual development of her love for Mr. B.--Pamela's journal is now primarily "private thoughts of him" (197). If Pamela begins her journal in correspondence with her parents, she continues writing only "in correspondence" with Mr. B. Her journal records the development of a new self and her growing love for Mr. B., both of which will be confirmed only when Mr. B., Pamela's intended reader, reads her journal.

The journal thus performs this mediation between Mr. B. and Pamela. Since Pamela's journals embody her "heart" (200), they become Mr. B.'s access to her soul. In Pamela's journal, he finds nothing which is not "innocent, lovely, and uniformly beautiful" (255), no "hidden regard for Williams" (227). Underneath the "charming manner of writing" (83), Pamela's journal actually exposes her as much as Mr. B.'s love exposes him. As Pamela's journal establishes a "communication, so equal, and so just" (L, IV, 340), Mr. B. directs his thoughts toward marriage. "If my Mind hold," he confesses his love to her: "and I can see those former Papers of yours, and that these in my Pocket give me

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35 Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I," Ecrits, pp. 1-7.

36 For a discussion of eighteenth-century philosophies of the self, see Stephen D. Cox, "The Stranger Within Thee": Concepts of the Self in Late-Eighteenth-Century Literature.

37 Patricia Meyer Spacks remarks of Pamela that it "testifies the power of public opinion. The heroine knows that her chastity represents a viable resource only inasmuch as its value is extemally affirmed." "The Sense of Audience: Samuel Richardson, Colley Cibber," Imaging a Self: Autobiography and Novel in Eighteen-century England, p. 210.

no Cause to alter my Opinion, I will endeavour to defy the World, and the World's Censures, and make my Pamela Amends" (209).

However, Pamela's journal gives Mr. B. an access to her soul but keeps a proper distance between them. As a kind of writing, the journal spares the face-to-face confrontation which "hinders conversation" (L, VI, 9) and the even more destructive intrusion figured in Mr. B.'s attempted rape. A case of the access/distance function of Pamela's journal occurs when Pamela gives Mr. B. her answer to his proposal of "Sham-marriage," she says: "there is my Answer. But pray let me not see you read it. Is it your Bashfulness, said he, or your Obstinacy, that makes you not chuse I should read it before you? I offer'd to go away; and he said, Don't run from me; I won't read it till you are gone" (168). Written in secret in her closet,[38] Pamela's journals are always read privately in Mr. B.'s. Later when Mr. B. reads Pamela's account of her attempted escape from Lincolnshire, Pamela requests a partial withdrawal: "Let me then walk about, at a little Distance," she explains to him, "for I can not bear the Thought of it" (208).

To a more obvious degree of signification, the first stanza of the song Pamela sings for Sir Simon fully expresses the letter-jourrnal's double function of revealing and concealing:

> Go, happy paper, gently steal
> And underneath her pillow lie;
> There, in soft dreams, my love reveal,
> That love which I must still conceal,
> And, wrapt in awful silence die (245).

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38 Ian Watt suggests that the cult of private experience and individual autonomy can be traced back to the establishment of separate rooms for each member of the bourgeois family. Selfhood comes invariably to be figured in spatial terms, as an enclave or enclosed place within which the individual can truly dominate his or her environment. Throughout the whole novel, Pamela repeatedly reminds the reader that she writes in her closet, the only room in the house to which she has a key: "So I refuged myself in my closet, and had recourse to Pen and Ink, for my Amusement, and to divert "my Anxiety of my Mind"(291). Associated with Pamela's closet is pen and ink: "My Pen and lnk (in my now doubly secur'd Closet) is all that 1 have, . . .to employ myself with" (150). Apparently, the only space that Pamela can occupy in Mr. B.'s world is the space which she creates in her writing. On the relevance of space to Pamela's psychology see John Samuel Bullen, Time and Space in the Novels of Samuel Richardson; J. W. Fisher, "'Closet-work': The Relationship between Physical and Psychological Spaces in Pamela," in Samuel Richardson: Passion and Prudence, pp. 21-37; Robert Folkenflik, "A Room of Pamela's Own," pp. 585-616.

In the light of the letter-journal's revealing/concealing function, it is only natural that the final reconciliation of Mr. B. and Pamela has to come through Mr. B.'s letter to Pamela. At the time of writing the letter, Pamela is visiting her parents. The physical distance from Pamela allows Mr. B. to express most freely and intimately his love for Pamela. From Mr. B.'s letter, Pamela in turn finds in him " so much Openness, so much Affection, so much Honour, too, (which was all I had before doubted, and kept me on the Reserve)" (214).

From this point on, both Pamela and Mr. B. will continue to redefine themselves, each in the image of the other. The marriage of Pamela and Mr. B. appears as a natural development of the knowledge of the other which each has gained through their exchange of letters, the transaction between writing and reading. Secure in a dialogical reciprocity, each can accept the power over himself/herself which love has given the other. "Kind, lovely Charmer!" Mr. B. tells Pamela, "now do I see you are to be trusted with Power, from the generous Use you make of it!" (281). Because he trusts her in this way he consents to be her "prisoner" and puts on "the pleasantest Fetters that ever Man wore" (248). In an equivalent way Pamela now is able to place a "generous Confidence" (217) in Mr. B. and rests calmly in the assurance that she will be "generously used" (217). In conjunction with this agenda of dialogical reciprocity, Mr. B. and Pamela also strive to locate their identity within the larger text of social usages and customs. Predictably, Mr. B.'s first act after marrying Pamela is to invite his neighbors to meet Pamela and communicate their approval. And all of Pamela's subsequent acts, aimed at justifying Mr. B.'s decision of marrying her to his family and friends, primarily take the form of circulating her letters and her journals. [39]

The process of circulation is achieved, ironically, under the auspices of Lady Davers, whose victimization of Pamela is the most violent trial of socialization that Pamela has ever experienced. Having heard about Pamela's journalizing, Lady Davers wants to read Pamela's writings: ". . . I understand, child, says she, that you keep a Journal of all Matters that pass . . . I should take great Pleasure to read all of his (Mr. B.'s) Stratagems, Attempts, Contrivances, Menaces, and Offers to you, on one hand; and all your pretty Counterplottings, which he much praises, your resolute Resistance, and the noble Stand you have made

39 In fact, even before the wedding, Pamela images that her powers of "scribbling" will be exercised explicitly in a role of social mediation, that they "will be employ'd in the Family Accounts, between the Servants and me, and me and your good Self" (227).

to preserve your Virtue" (374). In addition to Lady Davers, Lady Davers' friends and Mr. B.'s neighbors also become part of Pamela's reading public, joining Mr. B. and Pamela's parents. Pamela's writing not only creates her identity and her position in society but also becomes as vital for others as it has been for her. Mr. B. says to Pamela: "I injoin you, Pamela, to continue your Relation, as you have Opportunity; and tho' your Father be here, write to your Mother, that this wondrous Story be perfect, and we, as your Friends, may read and admire you more and more" (255).[40] Practically the presence of Pamela's father in Lincolnshire renders a letter to her mother unnecessary, since he can tell her their daughter's good fortune in his own person upon his return. Mr. B.'s suggestion of letter-writing to Pamela reflects his understanding that what will realize their happy reunion is its being textualized. This importance of the role the letters play is made even more explicit when Pamela says to Longman: "you don't know how much of my present Happiness I owe to the Sheets of Paper, and Pens and Ink you furnish'd me with" (379). The textualized letter intensifies the involved characters' awareness by giving them the opportunity to re-experience the events or emotions. As Soren Kierkegaard's poet-lover in Repetition discovers, living through experience a second time in writing of it raises "his own consciousness... to the second power."[41] In Pamela a case in point occurs when Mr. B. reads the section of Pamela's journals that recounts her contemplation of suicide beside the pond. As he walks by the water reading aloud, he visits the spots where the described action takes place in the company of Pamela (208). It is an extraordinary moment in which Mr. B. tries to materialize Pamela's "history" by uniting the written and the living subjects. By witnessing his own baseness and Pamela's contrasting virtue, Mr. B. then acknowledges his own misconduct toward Pamela. The textualized letter has the effect of making Pamela's "naked Sentiments" (375) available to her readers and consequently allows Pamela's self-identity to be built on the desires of her readers.

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40 cf "Now my dear Mother, must I write to you . . . it was my dear, dear Father, and not Mr. Williams, that was below ready to receive and to bless your Daughter; and both my Master and he enjoin me to write how the whole Matter was, and what my Thoughts were on this joyful Occasion"(247).

41 Soren Kierkegaard, Repetition, p. 135. In Remembrance of Things Past, Marcel Proust describes the effect of re-living events with the metaphor of photography: "Pleasure is like photography. What we take, in the presence of the beloved object, is merely a negative film; we develop it later, when we are at home and have once again found at our disposal that inner darkroom, the entrance to which is barred to us so long as we are with other people" (p. 245).

In the first half of the book, Mr. B. and her parents are Pamela's principal readers. In the second half her audience dramatically increases. This "publication" of Pamela's story is promoted by Mr. B.'s general efforts to make a spectacle of Pamela in other ways--by having her tell her story in salons and even reciting himself one of her poems before a group of guests (267-9). Pamela's letters become the instruments of conversion of both Mr. B. and Lady Davers, who, in different ways, soften upon reading her virtuous resistance to Mr. B.'s wicked advance. The movement from the first half to the second half of Pamela is thus the movement from the privacy of the enclosed closet to the publicity of the society, the movement from private reading to public reading. Pamela herself is aware of the fact that the "very things that I (Pamela) most dreaded his seeing or knowing, the Contents of my Papers" become "a means to promote my Happiness" (261).[42] Pamela's story finally becomes public because Pamela, virtuous as she is, must serve as a "worthy Pattern for all the Young Ladies in the Country" (243) to "cultivate the Principles of Virtue and Religion in the Minds of the YOUTH of BOTH SEXES," as the "editor" says on the title page of the book.[43]

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42 Altman makes an interesting observation that Choderlos de Laclos's Les Liaisons dangereuses (1782) in this respect is an inversion of Pamela: "If Pamela is the novel of 'virtue rewarded,' Les Liaisons is the novel of 'vice punished.' In both cases it is through a publication of letters that justice occurs. The publication of Merteuil's letters brings about her punishment, whereas Pamela's 'rewards' are due in part to B's reading of her letters: 'I still wish to see them [her letters] too . . . to have before me the whole series of your sufferings, that I may learn what degree of kindness may be sufficient to recompense you for them' (284-5). Les Liaisons and Pamela thus offer interesting epistolary approaches to the eighteenth century's preoccupation with verisimilitude and moral justification." Janet Gurkin Altman, Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form, p. 114.

43 However, the content of the novel constantly undermines the editor's intention. The novel is never tired of reminding the reader that Pamela's story is a special case. Pamela repeatedly reports her own exceptional status:"this Girl...has Wit and Sense above her Years, and knows better"(75);"Admirable Pamela,said he, excellent Girl!--Surely thy Sentiments are superior to those of all thy Sex!--1 might have addressed a hundred fine Ladies; but never, surely could have had Reason to admire one as 1 do you"(233);"To say nothing of this sweet Person, that itself might captivate a Monarch; and of the Meekness of a Temper, and Sweetness of Disposition, which make you superior to all the Women I ever saw"(283);"to all who know your Story, you are a matchless Person. You are an Ornament to our Sex"(338). T.C.Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel also observe that ". . .Others saw in *Pamela*, the story of a gentleman who marries a servant girl, a challenge to the social hierarchy; Richardson, after the fact, often denied any such challenge--Pamela's case was too special to be used as a model for other lustful employers and aspiring employees. As Mr.B. tells Lady Davers, a gentleman who marries a serving wench will be easily acquitted--if he 'stays till he finds such a Person as my *Pamela*"(Introduction,V).

As such, the act of writing/reading is unmistakably central to Pamela as an epistolary novel. What is peculiar about Pamela lies in the demonstration that writing and reading are inseparable, and conversely, that self-definition--"that act through which individuals constitute themselves and define their connections with the world of other people"[44]--cannot be singularly confined to either writing or reading, interpretation or narration. William Rays explains that this is because "the one always implies the other; an interpretation of reality comes into being only at the moment of its articulation; there is no act of narration that does not imply an interpretation. Accordingly, there can be no agenda of selfhood based on self-representation that does not enlist and depend on Others" (135). This dialogical reciprocity of writing and reading, interpretation and narrtion, one and the other, private and public together build up the underlining structure of the novel.

The outward movement from private letters to public reading also leads to a kind of eroticization of the text. Throughout the whole novel, Pamela's private letter which contains her "heart" (200) and "private thoughts" (197) is linked to the state of Pamela's sexual integrity. The control of the letters and what they say about Pamela's "true" self parallel the struggles over her body and become the focus of the conflict between her and Mr. B. After the attempted rape, Mr. B. asks to read more of Pamela's journals and says: "Now... it is my Opinion that they [the journals] are about you; and I never undressed a Girl in my Life; but I will now begin to strip my pretty Pamela; and I hope I shall not go far before I find them" (204). As the letter "continues to circulate as a sign for the female body,"[45] the text demands that the reader continually peep into Pamela's private, intercepted discourse. Recognizing this voyeuristic quality of the novel, Davis points out that nothing is "more personal than the intimate letters of a woman written in the privacy of her most protected room--the closet" (187).

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44 Terry Castle, Clarissa's Ciphers: Meaning and Disruption in Richardson's Clarissa, p. 47.

45 Anne Herrmann, "The Epistolary Essay: A Letter," The Dialogic and Difference: "An/Other Woman" in Virginia Woolf and Christa Wolf, p. 36. In Gabriel de Guiller de Guilleragues's Lettres portugaises, the letter is also regarded as a substitute for the female body: "Adieu, je ne puis quitter ce papier, il tombera entre vos mains, je voudrais bien avoir le meme bonheur [Farewell, I cannot let go of this paper. It will fall into your hands; I would very much like to have the same happiness]" (Lettres portugaises, Lettres d'une peruvienne et autres romans d'amour par lettres, p. 73). Referring to Clarissa, Terry Eagleton writes that "letters can be no more than 'supplementary' sexual intercourse, eternally standing in for the real thing. Letters concede yet withhold physical intimacy in a kind of artfully prolonged teasing, a courtship which is never consummated" (The Rape of Clarissa: Writing, Sexuality and

Indeed, nothing is more visible than the letters unfolded before the eyes of the public. This public/voyeuristic quality of the novel in part explains that the increased privacy in the eighteenth century created the fantacy need for the opposite.[46]

## The Contingency of the Self

After getting married, abandoning her personal vision of divinely ordained virtue, Pamela turns her attention to the fulfillment of the social obligations associated with her new status. Whether one interprets Pamela's metamorphosis as a loss of identity--the absorption of individual "discours" by the anonymous "langue" of the gentry[47]--or as the appropriation of collective discourse to an extravagant personal agenda, it is clear that identity cannot avoid the question of its cultural framework and narrational accomplice. Pamela cannot "be" Mrs. B. without a public willing to sanction her performance. The long and dense episode recounting the visit of Lady Davers, her attack on Pamela, and her quarrels with her brother amply illustrates the potential for rivalry between personal narration and public discourse. It also provides a heightened version of Pamela's initial trials at the hands of Mr. B. Enamored of "ancient and untainted" blood far more than her brother ever is, the aristo-

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Class Struggle in Samuel Richardson, p. 45). The formal-thematic link between the letter and the hymen is made explicit in Lovelace's constant attempts to appropriate Clarissa's letters: "if I could find out that the dear creature carried any of her letters in her pockets, I can get her to a play or to a concert, and she may have the misfortune to lose her pocket" (IV, p. 13). "Lose her pocket" in Lovelace's code is a metaphor for "lose her virginity." As William Warner observes, "The course of events establishes an exact parallelism between Lovelace's violation of Clarissa's correspondence and his violation of her body" (Reading Clarissa: The Struggles of Interpretation, p. 100).

46 In The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England, 1500-1800, Lawrence Stone points to the increase in privacy in the eighteenth century. He notes that "the increasing stress laid upon personal privacy" in upper class architectural design in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was predominately aimed at providing "the family itself with some escape from the prying eyes and ears of the ubiquitous domestic servants, who were a necessary evil in every middle-class and upper-class household" (pp. 169-70). Mr. B., of course, reverses this historical condition since he is the ubiquitous voyeur invading the privacy of his domestic servant.

47 For Terry Eagleton, Pamela, who is in part the "bearer of Richardson's ideological project of integration with the gentry," is not a "free agent but the function of an historical plot which the bourgeoisie have been long hatching." And "By the end of Pamela Part 1, discours has yielded ground to langue: Pamela the pert colloquialist has become Pamela the genteel housewife, tirelessly producing anonymous platitudes." The Rape of Clarissa, pp. 35-6.

cratic Lady Davers offends Pamela: "'Thou knowest nothing, Wench,' said Lady Davers, 'of what belongs to People of Condition: how shouldst thou? 'Nor,' thought I, 'do I desire it, at this Rate.' 'What shall I say, Madam?' said I . . . " (330). Although Lady Davers reconciles with Pamela and Mr. B. before the end of the story, in a way their conflict is instructive with respect to the larger instability of the whole narrative. While Pamela's letters and journals play an important role in Lady Davers and the public's ultimate recognition of her "virtue," her identity becomes conscious of itself as the product of a self-presentation that depends on the cooperation of a public for its dissemination within the social economy.[48] This "intertextualization" of individuality entails an obvious reduction of autonomy, and there is no guarantee that it will always function as expected. It is in this sense of an incomplete autonomy that Stephen D. Cox writes: "Richardson clearly believes that one's identity should be based on the moral principles that one discovers within one's own mind, but he cannot describe such principles as the sufficient and unchanging basis . . . He presents no stable solution to the problem of the self because he cannot escape portraying identity itself as unstable."[49] This unstable, incomplete autonomy of the self in Pamela actually renders the notion of the epistolary novel's "new, subjective, individualist and private orientation" enunciated by Ian Watt's problematic.[50] The experience of individual identity in the novel shall be described as a recognition of a self with multiple and equivocal meanings that exceed the bounds assigned by individualism. The self is given meaning in relation to others and thus becomes a social and relative rather than an individual and independent phenomenon: subject to change, and a changing subject. Richardson's

48 In terms of the Lacanian theory of Self/Other, Pamela is now thrown headlong into the "symbolic" world of difference (Self/Other). And according to Ross Chambers, such a self or subject (as "split") does not have control of its presentation: "As a construct of the Symbolic, and consequently a product of alterity, such a subject can have no self-identity that is not an illusion of the Imaginary; inhabited by the Other--that discourse that simultaneously constructs the ego and constitutes the unconscious--the split subject of the Symbolic can have no unity, nor can it have autonomy. . . . because, being discursively constructed, it is constituted as split: its 'I' manifests itself only as a "He,"... it can only say 'I am the other.'" Room for Maneuver: Reading (the) Oppositional (in) Narrative, p. 181.

49 "Defining the Self: Richardson's *Clarissa*," "The Stranger Within Thee": Concepts of the Self in Late-Eighteenth-Century Literature, pp. 59-81, quotation, p. 81.

50 "Considering the eighteenth-century novel in a historical context, Ian Watt identifies "the rise of the novel" with the increasing social, political, and philosophical sovereignty of the individual. At the same time, according to Watt, the letter is a key to the private world of consciousness, and the (Richardsonian) epistolary novel is an exemplar of a "new, subjective, individualist and private orientation" in life and literature. The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding, p. 176.

first epistolary novel suggests that to shift emphasis to "inner lives of fictional characters"[51] does not represent a shift of priorities or a changed order such as an Ian Watt descrides.

Rather than single-mindedly pursuing her own interests, Pamela takes into account the customs and usages of her husband, herself, and their micro-society. And to the extent that this forces Pamela to see herself as a character in a larger social drama, she becomes more of an author in the conventional sense of the term: an individual finding her self-expression in the construction of a persona or character, the various traits of which are elaborated not in isolation, or as the expression of some intensely personal vision, but in conjunction with the discourse of society, and more particularly that subset of society that forms her immediate interlocutionary partner or reader. Pamela's sense of self is not as immovably "enlarged" as some critic suggests: "Once she knows that her letters have a growing public . . . her sense of pride as author protects her virtue as she enlarges her sense of self through writing and being read."[52] Rather, Pamela acknowledges the contingency of her self on its reception by the public. The private account of an inner self elaborated in concert with her parents at the outset of the novel is no longer adequate to her new identity, which has a broader range of possibilities and correspondingly greater need for public approbation.

This wider "readership, " with its complex expectations, heightens Pamela the writer's self-consciousness, which can be seen in the gradual modification of the way she relates to her family-of-origin. From the beginning to the near end, Pamela's family background has remained obscure. The reader is told only that Mr. Andrews, who is barely able to make a living, is a ditch digger. In the end, in defending herself against Lady Davers's violent verbal attack, Pamela argues: "Good your Ladyship, said I, spare my dear Parents. They are honest and industrious: They were once in a very creditable Way, and never were Beggars.

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51 Ian Watt says that the epistolary novel's focus on private experience makes possible a deeper identification between its readers and its characters: "there had never been such opportunities for unreserved participation in the inner lives of fictional characters as were offered by Richardson's presentation of the flow of consciousness of Pamela and Clarissa in their letters" (Ibid., p. 208).

52 Marie-Paule Laden, "Pamela, La Vie de Marianne, and La Paysan parvenu: Self-Imitation-The Appearance of Reality," Self-Imitation in the Eighteenth-Century Novel, p. 85. Patricia Meyer Spacks holds the same idea: "As the public function of the heroine's letters evolves, so does her sense of self. She uses the letters not only to assert her identity . . . but to enlarge it, through a process of communication and dramatization . . . " ("The Sense of Audience: Samuel Richardson, Colley Cibber," p. 194). Laden's and Spacks's argument exemplifies many other critics'.

Misfortunes may attend any body: And I can bear the cruellest Imputations on myself, because I know my Innocence; but upon such honest, industrious Parents, who lived thro' the greatest Trials, without being beholden to any thing but God's Blessing, and their own hard Labour; I cannot bear Reflection" (328). After having the unpleasant encounter with Lady Davers, Pamela flees to Sir Simon Darnford's, where Mr. B. and many neighbors gather. In describing what has passed between herself and Lady Davers to her audiences, she again strenuously attempts to do credit to her family's status: "as long as I knew my Innocence, I was easy in every thing, but to have my dear Parents abused. I said, they were never beggars, nor beholden to any body; nor to any thing but God's Grace, and their own labour: That they once lived in Credit; that Misfortunes might befal any body; and that I could not bear they should be treated so undeservedly" (339-40).

Pamela's repeated defences of her lower-class family background divulge her enormous sense of insecurity of her new identity. She tries to solve the problem inherent in her sudden elevation by narrowing the gulf between her lowly family background and her new aristocratic position. In so doing, she becomes rather an opponent of class fluidity. Tied to Mr. B. by law, financial dependence, and gratitude, she is subsumed into the role of a dutiful wife. Consequently, she makes efforts to learn how to act and speak in accordance with her new status: "I threw myself at his Feet: Permit me, dear Sir, thus to bless God, and thank you, for all his Mercies, and your Goodness. O may I so behave, as not to be utterly unworthy, and then how happy shall I be!" (377). Her ascent to the upper class is paid eventually at the price of subduing her female voice. Once past the stage of confronting Mr. B. with her verbal presentation, Pamela writes increasingly in the sense of larger audiences. In the final stage of the second half of the novel, her relation to the "familiar letter" changes. To a large extent she no longer engages in "spontaneous writing" and adopts a contrived writing style, which is in conflict with Richardson's prior claims that letters must be written "while the Hearts of the Writers must be supposed to be wholly engaged in their subjects . . . what may be called instantaneous Descriptions and Reflections."[53]

Pamela's revised, heightened self-consciousness is clearly shown in her repeated negotiations with Mr. B. of each other's, and particularly her, future conduct, which includes the way she should address her husband and

53 Preface to Clarissa, p. 35. Cf. note 17.

treat the servants, and the conduct that Mr. B. assigns himself.[54] Pamela promises never to "break in upon" (369) Mr. B. when he is angry and he in turn promises to ask "nothing of her, that was not significant, reasonable, or just" (367) so that he "should not destroy her own free Agency" (367). These statements imply that each accepts in the other a limited area of privacy which exists beyond the bounds of their intimacy. They accept marriage as a form which mediates between essentially separate selves, and this acceptance is in contrast to what we have understood of the nature of their love which is embodied in Pamela's phrase "this heart is Pamela" (217) and Richardson's "hearts united."

This contrast, however, is not a strange one. Now that Pamela and and Mr. B. are married, the class gulf between Pamela and Mr. B. has been filled up. What stands between them, instead, turns out to be Mr. B.'s gendered authority. The denouement of the novel is thus presented as "an unconscionable pattern of female self-fulfillment: freedom as a truckling matrimonial subservience."[55] What begins as personal,social, or sexual distinction in the novel comes to collaborate in the re-enforcement of the hierarchical orders they seem to challenge. One must agree, certainly, with Terry Castle, that "After Mr. B.'s proposal, Pamela's narrative-- before, a clandestine, adversary speech-- is usurped: it becomes the banal sign of her acceptance. Her powers of articulation are subsumed, taken over, and exist finally only in the service of this 'master.' She becomes, in short, a mouthpiece of those patriarchal values which have everywhere ordered her experience, and speaks a new discourse of subservience. The primary energy of the text is directed toward, finally, the exorcism of tensions, the dissolution of thematic ambiguities . . . "[56]

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54 On the relation between Richardson's fiction and conduct literature, see Nancy Armstrong, Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel, pp. 108-34; Margaret Anne Doody, A Natural Passion: A Study of the Novels of Samuel Richardson; Katherine Hornbeak, "Richardson's Familiar Letters and the Domestic Conduct Books: Richardson's Aesop," pp. 1-50; Cynthia Griffin Wolff, Samuel Richardson and the Eighteenth-Century Puritan Character, pp. 14-57.

55 Michael McKeon, The Origins of the English Novel, 1600-1740, p. 380.

56 Terry Castle, Clarissa's Ciphers: Meaning and Disruption in Richardson's Clarissa,p. 169. Similarly, Terry Eagleton concedes that Pamela "tells the story of a woman snatched into the ruling class and tamed to its sexist disciplines; yet it contains, grotesque though it may sound, a utopian element . . . its main effect is thus anodyne and oppressive--a cynical displacement of women's sufferings into consolatorymyth, a false, insulting 'resolution' of sexual combat which merely consolidates patriarchal power" (The Rape of Clarissa, p. 37).

Although Mr. B. says it is his wish that Pamela continue her writing after marriage, her "duty" of conforming herself to Mr. B.'s "rules" makes it difficult for her to realize his/her intent: "I will continue writing till I am settled, and you are determin'd; and then I shall apply myself to the Duties of the Family, in order to become as useful to my dear Benefactor, as my small Abilities will let me"(387). Where writing empowers Pamela in the process of achieving and defining her identy, it must be renounced after she is exalted to the gentry through her marriage.

The novel's epistolary format endows Pamela with a dual identity: to construct one's self through letter-writing is to become at once creator and created. Just as the silencing of Pamela's writing voice in the end marks a kind of self-annihilation, so Pamela's letter writing marks her self-affirmation. In each case, it is manifested through letter-writing. When Pamela remarks that "my Story surely would furnish out a surprising kind of Novel" (212-3), or Mr. B. calls her papers "the pretty Novel" (201), they remind us that these letters are the novel Pamela. It is no accident that Richardson thinks of the letter and the novel as fundamentally related forms. Since the ideal human relationship is conceived of as that of dialogical reciprocity in the novel, the letter is naturally the most appropriate medium to express it. As a self-conscious writer, Pamela turns her life into a text, a story by writing letters. Her story is in reality a letter, which requires the reader's reception to activate and complete it. As Altman puts it:"If Mr.B.'s reading of Pamela's papers puts an end to Pamela's first period of trails, the reading by Mr. B.'s micro-society puts an end to her second period, and it is only fitting that the reading by the wider circle--the external public--should put an end to Richardson's novel."[57]

57 Janet Gurkin Altman, Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form, p. 106.

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