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The Power of Sex:
Pamela and the Genealogy of a New Tool to Power

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Daniel Defoe once said that, "Lies are not worth a farthing if they are not calculated for the effectual deceiving of the people they are designed to deceive," (Dawson 5) and since then it has become one of the guiding principles of prose fiction to lie circumstantially, to write true stories which merely happen not to be true. This statement is particularly accurate in regard to eighteenth-century novels, for by using the now famous technique of formal realism and regularly labeling their works 'histories', 'autobiographies', 'memoirs', or 'letters', authors tried to make their stories appear true (Spacks 1–19). A good example of stories that appear to be true is what we call short letter fiction in the form of 'letters to the editor'; short letter fiction was widely published in eighteenth-century periodicals such as the Tatler or The Spectator. Periodical fiction contributed both to the development of narrative in letters and to the cultivation of the reader's taste for it, eventually evoking the notion of factual accounts in its readers (Day's 1966 volume Told in Letters is an excellent example of the history of letter fiction before Richardson). Indeed, on the title page of the original publication, Samuel Richardson states that the purpose of Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded is "to cultivate the Principles of Virtue and Religion" through a narrative that "has its Foundation in *Truth* and Nature" (Magill 430; emphasis added).

Theorizing about the novel from a twentieth-century viewpoint, Michel Foucault asserts that the novel is not a convergent phenomenon. Instead, he argues the novel is part of the social discourse, that, with its development into a predominant part of the discourse that exists through newspapers, laws, letters, etc., has the potential to change the previous 'strategies of power'. Eventually, by becoming part of the discourse that establishes, maintains, or alters power structures inherent in every society, these very lies or fictions, presented through literary texts, can become factual truth, and can create the basis for new power structures (Foucault 78–108).

Since one's position within a power structure largely determines one's identity, it is not at all surprising to find eighteenth-century novels preoccupied with character and with

identity, and with the difficulties of human development (Spacks 1). One novel that "might violate...the distinction between memory and imagination" (4) and that might thereby epitomize the formation of a new *social* identity, showing a servant's ascent into the aristocracy, is Samuel Richardson's Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded. The novel, despite the fact that it narrates events that are not real, despite the fact that it is a product of the imagination, can have a reality-altering effect. As David Hartley suggests in his Observations on Man, "The frequent Recurrency of an interesting Event, supposed doubtful, or even fictitious, does, by degrees, make it appear like a real one, as in Reveries, reading Romances, seeing Plays, &c" (I, 331). Upon publication, Pamela was an "immediate and unparalleled success" (Magill 430), and it seems appropriate to not merely suggest that its events may have appeared 'real' to its readers. Hartley believed that the poet consciously sets out to obviate the distinction between the real and imagined, suggesting that "The pleasure of the imagination may lead participants [i.e. readers] 'to the Knowledge of many important Truths relating to themselves ... [and] the external world'" (Spacks 5). Therefore, it also seems appropriate to argue that this novel generates a genealogy that is "concerned with the insurrection of knowledges that are opposed ... to ... the effects of the centralising powers ... within a society like ours" (Foucault 84). This genealogy subverts the eighteenth-century notion that the nobility could use its power to fulfill its desires for commodities such as sex; what happens in Pamela is that a young girl uses her virginity, combined with the physical act of sex, to acquire power. Ultimately, then, novelists like Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson, and Henry Fielding provided — seemingly real — fictional models that describe not merely how existing power structures functioned, but how those power structures could be penetrated and altered under certain conditions. Thus, Jorge Luis Borges is correct when he states that every writer and his work "modify the future" (Bouchard 5).

The invented events in the novel impart eighteenth-century readers with a template for 'inventing' (or insurrecting) knowledge, as defined by Nietzsche. In turn, this invented knowledge was capable of serving the middle-class "will to appropriate" the social status of the aristocracy, thereby 'modifying the future' (Bouchard 202–203). As a literary technique that grew into a literary form in the years after the Restoration, epistolary fiction, presented as fact in the form of Richardson's Pamela, insurrects knowledge that allows for the opposing of hierarchical structures. This knowledge comes, among other things, from the example of a servant girl who knows that she "might as well make a merit of her compliance, when ... refusal will stand [her] in no stead." Pamela, the servant girl,

also knows that being "as inviolate a virgin" as she is (Richardson 182), she has a valuable commodity at her disposal, to be utilized for the fulfillment of her desires. Through these insurrected knowledges, the novel founds a means to overcome the old hierarchy, offering a way in which the desires for power of a member of the lower station can be fulfilled without obtaining the stigma of immorality. Perhaps what Samuel Richardson had in mind when he was working on his first novel was "to instruct handsome young girls who were obliged to go out to service, ... how to avoid the snares that might be laid against their virtue" (Magill 429). However, Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded is not a statement that reinforces the notions of virtues and values preexistent to the discourse of the eighteenth century. Instead, this novel functions as an artifact occupying a strategic place in the power structure of the eighteenth century — a power structure the middle class was able to rearrange through the behavioral templates offered by the novel as a new, discourse-altering element.

The questions that pose themselves, then, are these: who are the people initially in charge and representative of the current power structure, and what do they desire? Who is seeking a change in the established power structure? What means are available to engage in a commercial transaction with the ones in charge, to access the money that constitutes their power source, and penetrate the structures of authority they have created? Lastly and most importantly, how does the text function in order to create a new genealogy of power?

Literary critics from Ian Watt to Michael McKeon attribute the rise of the novel as a literary genre of eighteenth-century prose to the enlarged opportunities of the middle class, noting that "these novels [were] ... inspired by the confidence, the optimism, the enterprise of the class which acquired its wealth and culture through commerce" (Kettle, qtd. in Spearman 21). Despite the notion of its enlarged opportunities, however, the idea of middle-class dominance runs directly counter both to eighteenth-century opinion and to views of modern critics (Barry 207-212). The common phrase for the most conspicuous of the nobility was 'the great', which carries with it an implication of power, as well as of rank and wealth. Even according to critics of the older generation, "social and political life was dominated by the aristocracy," and this idea by is often complemented by discerning "a general hardening of caste during Walpole's life" (Plumb, qtd. in Spearman 22). The perception of "human identity ... [as] absolutely fixed" attests to this notion. As Spackle explains in "Identity in Fiction and Fact," "the optimism ... of the eighteenth century depends on the reassurance of stability" (8-9), and even literary examples such as the

character of Tristram Shandy, who believes that a man's fate is practically determined at his birth, demonstrate a virtual obsession with the concept of consistency. One could consider Moll Flanders, Tom Jones, Evelina, and Pamela as counter-examples to a proposed eighteenth-century obsession with stability as they are representatives of the "atmosphere of social fluctuation" common to the novels of that century. Yet in doing so, one would fail to recognize that these characters manage to rise in the world precisely because of the inviolability of their personal identities (9). Redefining one's *social* position may be possible, but only by maintaining one's *personal* identity.

The family of Mr. B. and various members of the landed gentry represent the current power structure in Pamela. Mr. B., the son of Pamela's "dear good lady," is introduced as his mother's heir and a gentleman. A person capable of giving "comfort," Mr. B. will keep all his mother's servants after her death, and promises to "take care of you all [the servants]" (Richardson 1). He is the "best of gentlemen" (2), full of "graciousness" (7), and even Pamela's parents, who barely know Mr. B., describe him as a "gentleman ... who has so much power to oblige, and has a kind of authority to command as your master" (9). As master of the household, he requires from his servants "to do as [they] should," to be "faithful and diligent" (2); he even refers to the servant Pamela as "my child" (5; 233; 248).

It seems that the master of the house is more than a mere employer, for servants and acquaintances refer to him as the "lord" (12) and his "honour" (4). His appearance can confuse and frighten Pamela, and make her tremble (2). These attributes, together with Pamela's understanding that it must be "God's will" (1) that Mr. B. provide for his servants, raise the aristocratic figure to a godlike level, for the Christian God is referred to as the 'Lord' to whom 'graciousness' is ascribed as well. In the Old Testament, He is the one who asks his servants, his children, to be 'faithful', 'diligent' and 'obedient', too. According to Deuteronomy 28: 1, 2, God said: "If you will diligently obey the Lord your God, being careful to do all His commandments ... all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you." God was able to command, and to promise blessings to the Israelites through his 'power' and 'authority'. Mr. B. and the Christian God seemingly share all of the above-mentioned features: they promise 'care' in return for obedience. Both attempt to exercise their power by oppressing their subjects. More importantly however, their promises of financial wealth in general and bliss in particular (to be granted according to the covenant, or in the novel, according to the seven articles of Mr. B.'s 'business' proposal (164–167)) fail to stimulate the obedience that both God and Mr. B. ultimately desire. While Mr. B. is ascribed sufficient "power to oblige ... and authority to command" (9), his power fails him

constantly when he attempts to fulfill his desires by means of it—that is, to make the 'inferior' class (Pamela) submit to his authority and surrender its valuable commodity (virginity).

As the children of the Lord break the covenant they have made with Him, and power and authority fail God in his attempt to coerce the Israelites into obedience, some of Mr. B.'s servants disobey him as well. By failing to tell the truth or keep a promise, Pamela is the one character disobedient to almost every figure of authority. She disobeys her parents who bid her "be sure you leave every thing behind you, and come away to us" (4) at any sight of danger to her virtue while she pretends "it is not disobedience ... that I stay." Her master tells her to "be secret" about the incident in the summer house, but "when we were alone, I told her [Mrs. Jervis] all that had passed" (14), and Pamela thus disobeys the 'lord'. Moreover, Pamela even lies to herself when she claims, "to be sure I am a very worthless body" (103), and describes herself as "so worthless a poor creature" as to not be deserving of anyone's assistance while in distress (137). Particularly Pamela's attestations of worthlessness stand in stark contrast not only to the rigor with which she insists on her honor and honesty and defends her valuable virginity, but also to the attention shown to her by her master, who thinks her worth so much as to choose to imprison her in order to not lose her. Mr. Williams even portrays Pamela as "incomparable," placing her above all other women (130).

Not surprisingly, Pamela's behavior and attitude can and have been described as "self-righteous" (Magill 430), but she is perhaps no more self-righteous than the authority figures she tends to oppose. After all, it is self-righteousness adopted and appropriated from figures of authority that initially and intimately links Pamela to the aristocracy, and that enables Pamela to disobey the very same figures of authority while proclaiming to defend her virtue — indeed, she defends her virtue by means of her sanctimonious disobedience. Her self-righteous defiance, and her defended virtue, manifested through her intact virginity, place Pamela in a position of increasing authority and lead to her social ascent. At first, however, she hardly possesses adequate authority to counter her master, and finds herself controlled, even imprisoned.

True to his didactic intention, Richardson puts Pamela in a position necessitating that she seek to escape the mechanisms of power surrounding her, for Mr. B., in control of those mechanisms of power, endangers her virginity and thus her virtue. As it turns out, Pamela means to 'escape' in more than one way; since "power is that which represses" (Foucault 90), Pamela is determined to escape from Mr. B. who exercises power over her. Addition-

ally, she means to "find some way to escape" from her 'prison' in Lincolnshire (Richardson 94). Most importantly, perhaps, Pamela means to escape her social status, for as a servant, she is the one receiving orders, trapped inside a hierarchy that largely prevents agency. However, as a young woman of whom even Lady Davers claims is "the prettiest wench I ever saw" (5), Pamela is at the same time very much unlike the other servants in Mr. B.'s household. Pamela "write[s] a very pretty hand, and spell[s] tolerably" (2), she "is always a scribbling" (10). That she can write well at a time when many female aristocrats could not even spell their names properly certainly makes Pamela extraordinary; that she has ample time on her hands to write letters of extensive length to her parents implies the absence of the necessity to engage in servant duties. Pamela's letters are, to be sure, so extensive as to puzzle her parents, who are wondering how their servant-daughter could find time and energy to write so much: "We have not yet had the leisure to read through your long accounts of all your hardships. I say long, because I wonder how you could find time and opportunity for them ..." (138). Critics, of course, have noted that the use of letters as a means of narration has obvious drawbacks, and have suggested that "it takes all of the strength of one's will to suspend disbelief concerning the writing of thoughtful and informative letters by characters during periods of extraordinary stress" (Magill 436). As relevant as the concern about the necessary suspension of disbelief may be, our focus is on the fact that Pamela possesses, for a servant, the unusual ability to write, and at the same time, that she has sufficient time to do so despite her responsibilities as a servant. In fact, by creating the character of the servant Pamela, who possesses the ability to write, Richardson posits his hero above the station of her "remarkably poor" family (Richardson 175), places her within the skill-context of the educated aristocracy, and allows readers to discern a semblance between the servant and the aristocrats.

Furthermore, the text constructs a resemblance between the servant Pamela and the aristocrats through the subversion of the aristocratic notions of pride. The aristocracy justify their notion of pride from the belief that sovereignty is God-given; this automatically puts them in a position superior to that of non-aristocrats. The doctrine of the divine right of kings suggests that political power comes directly from God to a hereditary monarch (see, for example, McIlwain); hence, the aristocracy have a God-given right to be prideful because God has announced them to be leaders in this world; thus, it is no surprise when we find Mr. B. talking of his "pride."

Pride is rarely believed to be a positive trait in humankind; as a "feeling of satisfaction

or pleasure in what one can do or has done" (OED.com), it stands in opposition to the Christian idea that man on earth is merely a humble servant of God and that this world provides no rewards in itself. Due to her announced position as a servant and due to her low station, Pamela should be a humble character. She attempts to meet the reader's expectation in this matter by numerous and repeated phrases such as, "your humble servant" (Richardson 2; 14; 29; 44; etc.) or "your humble and ever dutiful daughter" (54; 57). Yet this is all mere camouflage, for she subverts the ideas of humbleness, poverty and honesty in phrases like "Yes, Sir, as poor and as honest too; and that is my pride" (198). In addition, when she later admits to "great pride," unaware of it, she indulges in the sin of vanity because of her master's interest in her letters — which, of course, a good Christian, or for that matter, a good servant, never should. Indulging in pride the way she does, there is no room for second guessing: humbleness will not take anyone anywhere near the fulfillment of their desires in the material world; one has to show pride in what one possesses in order to impress 'superiors' and become an equal to them, at least in part, by showing justifiable pride. The presence of the word 'pride' should point to its absence in character, but its repeated use only raises the reader's understanding that Pamela is actually as proud of herself as the members of the aristocracy are of themselves due to their (supposedly) God-given right to rule. Downplaying her feelings of pride and vanity, she describes them as a "secret pleasure" (5), as if keeping such feelings secret would make them nonexistent. Even moments when she tries to separate herself from the pride that she finds in others evidence her connection with the aristocracy: she pities "their pride" and equates pride with "vice," the vice of the rich, but this vice is also her vice. With the paradigms of pride and richness subverted in this way, the text establishes another connection between Pamela, the not-so-ordinary servant, and aristocratic attitude. To allow for this subversion means to allow for a vision of the rearrangement of the dominant power structure. And to allow for the rearranging of the power structure in the plot of a novel means to display a credible means of altering society for, as Fanny Burney points out when discussing the nature of the novel, "It is, or it ought to be, a picture of the supposed, but natural and probable human existence" (I, xvi).

The notion that Pamela is not an ordinary servant is fortified throughout different stages of the novel. For example, Mrs. Jervis, the good housekeeper and surrogate mother to Pamela, gives this account of Mr. B.'s position and feelings in order to illustrate the compliment that Mr. B. makes Pamela merely by admitting his desire for her:

My master is a fine gentleman; he has a great deal of wit and sense, and is admired,

> as I know, by half a dozen ladies, who would think themselves happy in his addresses. He has a noble estate; and yet I believe he loves *you* [emphasis added], though his servant, better than all the ladies in the land; he has tried to overcome it, because you are so much his *inferior* [emphasis added]; and it is my opinion he finds he can't ... (28–29)

Looking at this short passage, the reader can already perceive, even if at this point in the novel Pamela does not, that it is not impossible that she may use Mr. B.'s desire in her favor to obtain what she desires. There is a great deal of ambiguity in the text; while the text asks the reader to believe in Pamela's social inferiority, it also points to the absence of this very inferiority by attributing noble traits to her. Pamela not only seems to be the one affected the most by the current power structure; she also seems the one most likely to alter it since she is constantly permeating it. She has the ability to permeate the current power structure because she possesses a commodity that is in high demand: virginity.

If the middle-class acquired its wealth through commerce, then anything considered a valuable commodity by society can be exchanged for money. Pamela is a poor girl; she is one of the servants in a rich household, and her parents "have enough to do to maintain" (1) themselves. Pamela's parents are, in fact, "remarkably poor" (175), and have nothing to offer to their daughter in terms of future prospects for a good life. Therefore Mr. B.'s desire to "undo the little wench" (44) should be attainable through the fortunes he possesses, and furthermore, through the power and authority he presumably holds as a member of the aristocracy. However, the matrix of power and desire is more complex than that — especially since Pamela needs to avoid the stigma of immorality in order not to become an outcast of society and a sinner to God. The "world's censure" (193) looms as a threat above Pamela, should she be undone. The world's censure is also Mr. B.'s concern, even after he decides to, "for the future, change ... [his] conduct, and try to *melt* me [Pamela]" instead of "trying to subdue me [Pamela] with terror" (190). With 'Virtue Rewarded' as the operative phrase in Richardson's title, prior to further investigation into the power structures of the novel, the necessity for a definition of the concept of virtue arises. In the modern understanding, virtue is largely synonymous with 'good behavior', going back to the notion that one must not do to others what one does not want done to oneself. The Oxford English Dictionary defines virtue as "goodness, nobleness, and worth of character as shown in right behavior" (OED.com). This ambivalent statement fails to further the issue at hand, so we will glance at the ultimate textual basis for the Western concepts of good and bad: the Bible provides a specific account of what is good and bad in Leviticus

17–26 (the Holiness Code). In the centuries preceding the novel in question, institutions like the church used the biblical texts to establish a doctrine that made premarital intercourse illegal and stressed that only continuous prayer and the denial of the material world could lead to salvation.

Accordingly, for any Christian, the true reward for virtue should come from God, and be spiritual in nature; in other words, virtue should be its own reward as a freely given grace, but not be given as a material reward, or, as is the case in Pamela, in the form of marriage (Brissenden 165 ff.). However, Pamela foreshadows the modern materialistic concepts of receiving 'goodies' for her behavior. Pamela is also less concerned with God's punishment for her potential indecency, and instead wonders, should she be undone, "in what light ... I must appear to the world" (Richardson 182). The secular environment in which materialistic concepts had become prominent (Brissenden 169 ff.) provides the analogy between virtue/virginity and valuable commodity from the beginning of the novel. In the first parental response to Pamela's letters, her father writes, "we fear - you should be too grateful, and reward him with that jewel, your virtue" (Richardson 3) thus setting the discourse in the realm of materiality. The jewel he talks about is not Pamela's virtue in its all-encompassing yet particularly spiritual Christian meaning, but in the material meaning of female virginity. It is equaled to a jewel — even if only metaphorically so — a gemstone of extreme monetary value that should be of no importance in a Christian world, a world that should not be concerned with material values. If virtue equals virginity, then all the other virtuous characteristics of a person must be rendered obsolete; a young woman cannot buy anything by being charitable or honest. Her market value solely depends on this one aspect of her body. Since a woman cannot regain the condition of *virgo intacta*, it is the ultimate commodity a woman can offer a man in exchange for matrimony. It is thus appropriate to suggest that eighteenth-century popular novels "reflect the rigid and simplistic morality to which society paid lip service" (Spacks 63), for sex is not just any valuable commodity. The extramarital sex Mr. B. desires bears the stigma of immorality and would consequently exclude the transgressors — at least women of a lower station — from society.

Sex is not equal to some labor or service performed by any servant; it means, if desired from a virgin, asking for an once-in-a-lifetime commodity that needs to be traded on specific terms. The text makes the value of Pamela's virginity clear from the very beginning when her parents describe it as her "jewel" (Richardson 3), a gemstone of extreme monetary value. This gemstone, her virginity and her sex, are the means Pamela

has at her disposal to engage in a commercial transaction that might bring her to power. Mr. B. only believes that "Pamela ... [is] a person already in my power" (166), when in fact she is not. Whether through escape or a fit that, "with struggling and terror" make Pamela "faint[ed] away" (179), she manages to maintain possession of her virginity until it is traded on proper terms. *Financial* compensation alone is insufficient; proper terms mean marriage, and thereby financial as well as *social* status. With this example of how to enter the power structure of the socially dominant station, Pamela calls into existence a formerly subjugated knowledge capable of opposing current hierarchical structures and eventually overcoming them. The knowledge that sex can be a tool to power for those not yet invested with authority is the novel's announcement of a vision for change in the structure of power: the non-aristocratic classes have found a way of prevailing over the aristocrats, even if it means subverting the Christian notions of virtue.

The text begins to rewrite the previously dominant cultural story in which a woman had to offer more than her status as a *virgo intacta*; she had, if nothing else, her station to offer to a man who wanted to engage in matrimony. Pamela makes it apparent that now non-aristocrats have something to offer that might even be preferable to the high station of a woman of the aristocracy. When meeting with the neighboring gentry, Pamela ascribes Miss Danford's sister's reserve towards her to the fact that, "about a year before, she would fain have had my master make his addresses to her; but though Sir Simon is reckoned rich, she was not thought a sufficient fortune for him [Mr. B.]" (150). What does the text mean by 'sufficient fortune'? Is her father Sir Simon lacking the proper amounts of money to provide an adequate dowry? This is doubtful, because 'she' had not enough fortune. The text seems to be alluding to a lack of fortune metaphorically, referring to the gem, the jewel that Pamela as a *virgo intacta* has to offer. Lacking virginity, Miss Danford's sister is simply not good enough for Mr. B. even though she and her family have both social status and material wealth to offer to a prospective husband. Thus, virginity as a valuable commodity comes to supersede material wealth and social status.

During the major portion of the novel, the emphasis on the difference in social station between the hero and Mr. B. is supposed to be easily acceptable for the reader because it reflects eighteenth-century reality. This reality, as Foucault argues, is constructed through facticity and historicity, for example of the sovereign as a representative of God on earth, and the constructed reality around this belief (Foucault 147–155). The possibility of overcoming this constructed relation of powers in which Pamela is helpless and powerless is frequently pointed out in the novel. While at first, the text voices its ideas of

power-subversion in a very subtle way, this strategy changes later in the novel with the statement that Pamela's "soul is of equal importance with the soul of a princess" (Richardson 137), and the social ascent of the poor country girl is eventually made reality through her marriage to Mr. B.

The text establishes this new genealogy of power in a number of different ways. It deconstructs the representative of the old hierarchy by disabling Mr. B.'s presumed functionality as a dominating male aristocrat. At the same time that the text expresses Mr. B.'s inability to exercise his God-given power, it constructs the power of Pamela as a female virgin who has an extremely valuable commodity at her disposal. It creates a Pamela who is very much like the dominant aristocracy in her ability to write, in her characteristic pride, and in her desire to exercise power. The setting parallels and supports these signifiers by removing Pamela geographically from her family and their poverty, and by making communication with her parents and their constantly present poverty impossible. Eventually, Pamela shows that power is not the only means to the fulfillment of desires. It becomes clear that even someone outside the current power structure may fulfill her desire by properly brokering virginity delivered through the act of sexual intercourse, under the institutionally consecrated guise of matrimony.

In this sense, Foucault is both right and wrong when he claims that, "it is a fact that we have repeatedly encountered, at least at a superficial level, in the course of most recent times, an entire thematic to the effect that it is not theory but life that matters, not knowledge but reality, not books but money" (81). The knowledge that Pamela exhibits does matter, because it provides a role model for penetrating an established power structure in order to subvert it, gain affluence, and thus establish the basis for a new power structure. Therefore, theory, knowledge, and books matter, too; they provide the ideological foundation for ideas and the medium to communicate and distribute the knowledge that can overcome old hierarchical structures of power. Pamela managed to rewrite the cultural story of the woman, and the middle class in general, by presenting a story that could be accepted by the audience it addressed. The novel told the non-aristocrats how to achieve what they desired by any means necessary and then call it Providence, just as Pamela calls her master's convergence to 'morality' an "act of Providence for His [God's] dutiful servant" (Richardson 197). It is comical that she considers herself a 'dutiful servant' to the Christian God who made it very clear in the Bible that part of being his servant is to pray, for while asking her parents to pray for her deliverance, Pamela herself never prays in a convincingly serious fashion. In the new, material world, where desire for financial

success dominates all other desires, she is a character able to uphold the validity of the established moral system and gain what she desires, but she can only do so by infusing the moral system with a new spirit — a spirit that subverts the previously accepted power structure.

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《SUMMARY》

This essay discusses the eighteenth-century novel Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded, by Samuel Richardson. In its analysis, the essay defines the novel as discourse-altering artifact, and exemplifies how the story of the main character provides a behavioral template that makes possible the permeation of power structures. Through the insurrection of formerly subjugated knowledges, the novel founds a means to overcome old hierarchical power structures, offering a way in which the desires for power of a member of the lower station can be fulfilled without obtaining the stigma of immorality. Instead of giving up her virtue, her virginity and her honor to her master, Pamela manages to trade her virginity on specific terms. The commercial transaction in which this commodity is handed over requires marriage as payment. Through marriage, Pamela elevates not only her financial but also her social station, and enters the ranks of the aristocracy, but she can only do so because she is still in possession of her virginity.