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On the Persistence of Quest-Romance in the Romantic Genre: The Strange Case of *Pamela*

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Although taxonomic genre studies have increasingly come under attack, the notion of genre as an evolutionary category capable of clarifying both the social and the conceptual contexts of literary productions has recently been reinvigorated. The present paper focuses on each of these contexts in relation to the other, exploring in general how the evolution of literary forms participates in social change, and in particular, how the persistence of quest-romance redefines the *kind* of transformation which can be traced in literary as well as social norms of the Romantic period. Except for omitting a consideration of the factor of patronage in these changes, the assumptions followed here otherwise correspond to those of Lefevere: (1) “the stability of the poetic concept[s] as fixed source[s] of information on which the generic system . . . is based, mainly determine the evolution of genres”; and (2) “these contentions can only be understood against a background of genre-study rooted in cultural relativism and which considers history as an evolving series of events” (1985: 665). In the case of the romantic genre per se, the major ground of contention has involved how much stability, rather than how much evolution, can be attributed to its poetic concepts. However, since its dominant critics agree on the genre’s incorporation of traditional forms such as quest-romance, but differ as to the definition of not only the original but

also the later components of such forms, both aspects of the question remain controversial.

In this controversy the role of quest-romance has proved particularly problematic. Its primary definition and the nature of its persistence/transformation in its secondary, high-romance form alike have been the subjects of an ongoing debate which has done less to define either form than to emphasize the instability of the terms that define both. As a result of this confusion, important questions concerning the foundations and the horizons of the Romantic project have become progressively more difficult to formulate, let alone resolve. Any satisfactory approach to these questions will thus require a fundamental review of the terms which, in attempting to construct solutions to such problems, preliminarily construct a position concerning the primary nature and evolutionary form of the quest. To begin, then, with a central formulation of the process whereby the latter transforms the former, such as Northrop Frye's (1968) description of how the quest's original archetypal and cosmic orientations are refigured by high romance, would therefore seem in order. In this view, the fundamental quest-romance pattern is inverted, then largely collapsed when the traditional schema of Christian cosmology undergoes a similar process. Fredric Jameson maintains a related position, but describes the transformation semiotically; in his view Romanticism can be understood as a "mode of substitutions" (Jameson 1981: 134). Harold Bloom likewise employs the same basic model, but uses Freudian categories of consciousness to trace the "changes in figuration" charted by Frye (Bloom 1970: 4). Paul de Man (1983) continues the analysis of transformations in figuration along rhetorical lines, describing the Romantic moment as the confrontation and eventual appropriation of the symbolic by the allegorical mode. Each consequently views the struggle with and displacement of the quest-romance form as essentially Romantic, but none agrees on precisely what the original form *is* or what happens to it.

The project of the present essay, then, should be understood as determining both what remains essential to the quest-romance as it is integrated into the romantic genre and what distortions arise when, due to the prestige of Frye's formulation, the innovations of this genre are assumed to depend upon an inevitable collapsing or displacement of the quest pattern and/or its cosmological field. For a well-documented definition of the essential plot elements which structure the primary quest, we will therefore turn not to the model developed by Frye but to that of Vladimir Propp (1958 [1928]). If the essential functions he isolated in the fairy tale are not now thought to apply equally well to every form of folk tale, their accuracy in describing the progress of the quest (or more narrowly, the dragon-slayer) narra-

tive has been substantially corroborated (Bremond and Verrier 1982: 76). By borrowing the “deviation principle” outlined in Jameson’s examination of “Magical Narratives” and by using Propp’s model as a control against which to measure the norms of quest-romance proposed by Romanticism’s dominant theoreticians, we can first measure these norms against each other and then retroactively against Propp, on the assumption that any disjunctions produced in these critical narrations will, like others, “become productive at the moment when the narrative text in one way or another *deviates* from its basic schema” (Jameson 1981: 126). Here, “the value of such narrative models lies in their capacity to register a text’s specific deviation from them, and thereby to raise the more dialectical and historical issue of this determinate formal difference” (*ibid.*). The same essential principle has, of course, already been applied to Propp on various levels of discourse (see, e.g., Lévi-Strauss 1973: 139–73; Bremond and Verrier 1982: 63; and Jameson 1981: 120–25). In this case, however, my project will be more narrowly construed to determine what norms or functions of quest-romance are excluded from some models but included in others, and what these exclusions initially conceal but ultimately reveal about quest-romance’s actual function. This relatively narrow focus should produce a more reliable definition of the stabilizing as well as the evolutionary role played by the quest-romance formula, not merely in regard to Propp’s basic plot functions, but also in regard to their spatiotemporal and allegorical dimensions.

The interdependence of plot, space/time, and allegorical field should be understood as a necessary corollary of the progressive dynamic inherent in the quest itself. It conducts its actants along a plot line whose moments figure the primal significance of the romance journey, and the places of this journey imply both a temporal framework or cosmology and a seeker whose journey derives meaning from the symbolic or ethical system which informs this framework, its allegorical medium. In “The Rhetoric of Temporality,” de Man (1983) defines the pre-Romantic innovation of Rousseau’s *Julie, ou La Nouvelle Héloïse* as having been produced within just such an interdependent system of narrative and allegorical time. A consideration of the deviations within these structures leads him to a radical revision of the determinate conditions at work in the pre-Romantic and Romantic moments; we will later examine the validity of his findings by exploring them in reference to a pre-Romantic work of roughly the same period, Richardson’s *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1980 [1740]). First, however, we must explore how Jameson’s semiotic synthesis of Frye’s archetypes and Propp’s structuralism, as well as other explorations of romance narrative descending from Frye, leads in precisely the opposite direction from that taken by de Man and locates the rup-

tures between its primary and high-romance forms, not merely in the dimension of allegorical time, but in every dimension of the quest-romance form.

The unexpected continuity between Jameson's model of the romantic genre and that of his predecessors derives from the fact that he appropriates much of their terminology and, with it, some of their internal contradictions. This is clearest not so much in his discussion of Frye himself, but in his incorporation of Bloom's equally influential adaptation of the latter, that is, Bloom's proposal that the romantic genre depends upon the "internalization of quest-romance" (1970: 3). The influence of this hypothesis is apparent in Jameson's representation of the Romantic as an individual who is typically engaged in a symbolic retreat from "'the reality principle,' the censorship of the new bourgeois social order, from which the longing for magic and providential mystery must be smuggled in order to find symbolic appeasement. The reinvention of romance finds its strategy in the substitution of new positivities (theology, psychology, the dramatic metaphor) for the older magical content" (Jameson 1981: 134). Here, romance is reinvented when the transcendence or "providential mystery" associated with the older cosmos is "smuggled" inside the new in rational/individual disguise, in the process of which it is inevitably deprived of the external validation or cosmic sanction it would formerly have been accorded. Thus, although Jameson avoids posing the transhistorical subject implicit in Bloom's "psyche" and Frye's "myth," his formulation remains essentially allied to both in its assumptions about the changes that the "older magical content" undergoes. Since the content of these contents is unspecified, the same process of inversion and/or collapse posited by the earlier models is implied by his.

Although not wholly continuous with Frye's, Bloom's Freudian terminology to a large extent, in turn, recapitulates and reassesses his Jungian archetypes. Like Frye, he posits the Romantic project as internalizing quest-romance and modifying its allegorical dimension in the process of spatially inverting its cosmology, a process which also constricts its temporality. Consequently, the quest-functions themselves are reduced in both plot and purpose. In each mythography, the Romantic poet/hero rediscovers the quest by moving it onto a new plane and transposing its inherited direction and goal. As Frye summarizes, "In Romanticism the main direction of the quest of identity tends increasingly to be downward and inward, toward a hidden basis or ground of identity between man and nature" (1968: 33). Bloom modifies this view by displacing the goal of the quest from that of achieving an "identity between man and nature" to that of achieving an identity between man and himself, that is, in Keatsian terms, an "identity-with" rather than an "identity-as." The conflict between these

two identities determines the Freudian path and context of the quest: "It is within the ego itself that the quest must turn, to engage the antagonist proper, and to clarify the imaginative component in the ego by its strife of contraries with its dark brother" (Bloom 1970: 16).

Thus the descriptions of high romance proposed by Frye and Bloom place its progress in parallel but opposed planes where it produces parallel if opposed allegories, the latter the darker twin of the former. The motivating factor in this dichotomy is that Frye situates the quest within the nature/culture continuum, while Bloom situates it in the individual psyche. As a result, both the extent of the physical universe and of the ethical goals the hero achieves in it are even more radically reduced in Bloom's model, which intensifies the pattern of condensation and reversal first formulated by Frye as follows:

Pre-Romantic literature in Western Europe was contained by a structure that, for the critical purposes of interpreting the imagery of poetry, is best understood as a structure on four spatial levels. Romanticism brought in a new mythological construction. We can still think of it as a four-tiered structure, but it is much less concretely related to the physical world as we ordinarily perceive it. What corresponds to heaven and hell is still there, the worlds of identity and alienation, but the imagery associated with them, being based on the opposition of "within" and "without" rather than of "up" and "down," is almost reversed. (Frye 1968: 46–47)

Thus, according to an anthropological paradigm Frye may have appropriated from Lévi-Strauss, cosmology reflects sociology: inverted social conditions call for a reorientation of the spatial/allegorical configuration of the natural world. In this instance,

the two inner worlds of nature, human nature and physical nature, are also still there, but their relation to each other is also usually reversed. In pre-Romantic imagery the world of social and civilized life, however evil or corrupt, and however thoroughly denounced, was still the gateway to identity: man for pre-Romantic poets was still primarily a social and civilized being and could not progress except through his social heritage. In a great deal of Romantic imagery human society is thought of as leading to alienation rather than identity, and this sense increases steadily throughout the nineteenth century as literature becomes more ironic in both tone and structure. (Ibid.: 47)

In general, we find that for both Frye and Bloom modern alienation is coterminous with the Romantic's combat against alienation from nature (Frye) or from the "natural" self (Bloom), but that Bloom uses a similar nature/culture opposition at once to further specify and to strengthen Frye's valorization of nature over culture. Bloom's substitution of the id for nature and of the ego identity for culture translates the progress of the quest into an exclusively interior, individual allegorical dimension, with the result that in progressing ever downward

and inward, one of its levels, that of external, social, or cosmological meaning, actually drops out. In this version of the transformation,

there are thus two main elements in the major phase of the Romantic quest, the first being the inward overcoming of the Self-hood's temptation, and the second the outward turning of the triumphant Imagination, free of further internalizations—though “outward” and “inward” become cloven fictions or false conceptual distinctions in this triumph, which must complete a dialectic of ongoing creation of love by uniting the Imagination with its bride, who is a transformed ongoing creation of the Imagination rather than a redeemed nature. (Bloom 1970: 17)

Significantly, any agreement between Bloom's and Frye's formulations, like that of Jameson's with both of theirs, concerns only certain sets of nature/culture oppositions *within* the Romantic period, and even these subsequently prove unstable. Initially, both Bloom and Frye conclude that the Romantic poet/hero finds himself in opposition to culture, in search either of “redeemed nature” (Frye) or of his own higher, imaginative nature (Bloom), a selfless self rather than a social self, a transformed ego rather than either a possessive id or an objectified superego. At this stage the analyses appear to differ only in the level at which they are performed, with each charting a parallel program of introspective reversal during the Romantic period.

However, the deviation principle reveals that when Bloom's reformulation further shrinks the allegorical framework of the quest, it must also critically redefine the goal or “bride” of *primary* quest-romance. Bloom's strategy of resituating this earlier horizon of plot and meaning now radically alters Frye's fundamental schema: Bloom locates the pre-Romantic object of the quest on the side of nature, while Frye had placed it on the side of culture. For Bloom, “the movement of quest-romance, before its internalization by the High Romantics, was from *nature to redeemed nature*, the sanction of redemption being the gift of some external spiritual authority, sometimes magical” (1970: 5–6 [emphasis mine]). Yet, as Frye is quoted above as saying, “Man for pre-Romantic poets was still primarily a social and civilized being and *could not progress except through his social heritage*” (italics added). In thus reframing Frye's position that the Romantic “turns away to seek a nature who reveals herself only to the individual” (Frye 1968: 37) and applying it in different senses (external and internal) to pre-Romantic and Romantic quest alike, Bloom effectively suppresses all social relevance for *either* form of quest-romance. Both “brides” become “nature” in some form, an interpretation which, in changing the direction Frye maps for the Romantic in search of identity, must also radically reroute it for the original search. Frye stresses that, in primary quest-romance, “to regain his true identity man had to keep the

barrier of consciousness against nature, and think of himself first as a social being. The supreme symbol of the distinction between human nature and physical nature was the city, along with the constituent of supporting images of the city, such as the court, the cathedral, the highway, the castle" (ibid.: 8–9). In Bloom's chart all these highways and destinations disappear, with the result that the apparently interdependent schemas of Bloom and Frye agree only with respect to the essential search for identity. Not only have the originative sites of its scene, passage, and goal become problematic, but any allegorical affiliation of the Romantic quest with *both* nature and culture is first bracketed by Frye, then removed by Bloom.

The deviation principle thus uncovers a meaningful opposition, a problematic division of quest-romance, not only into antithetical domains, but also into antitheses originally as well as eventually foreign to its terms. Such a result necessarily follows from the fact that the nature/culture oppositions, which both Frye and Bloom need to pose as exclusions that "explain" either the later or both versions of the form, are not present as exclusions at all in primary quest-romance, where they act as related levels of a unitary discourse concerned with allegorical transitions between worlds, transitions whose unfolding constructs the larger temporal frame or "worldness" of quest-romance. Nature and culture, like scene and passage, reality and enchantment, are cohesive elements of the quest's cosmology which can be neither opposed nor isolated as contradictions without ultimately collapsing its search for identity. Instead of serving as end points or goals, still less as antithetical Other of the quest, these elements must be understood as operating in a dialectical medium where they serve as chronotopic intersections between interdependent cosmic levels. Jameson incidentally captures the nature of this dialogic medium when he describes the quest in Burke's dramatistic terminology instead of in Bloom's language of exclusions and escapes:

In romance the category of Scene tends to capture and to appropriate the attributes of Agency and Act, making the "hero" over into something like a registering apparatus for transformed states of being, sudden alterations of temperature, mysterious heightenings, local intensities, sudden drops in quality, and alarming effluvia, in short the whole semic range of transformation scenes whereby, in romance, higher and lower worlds struggle to overcome each other. (1981: 112)

Frye, too, seems to be on the verge of describing the romance in terms of transformation amid convergence, rather than in those of exclusion and divergence, when he discusses the apotheosis of the city in the garden. Here, "if man could completely recover his lost identity as a child of God, through the social disciplines of law, morality, and

religion, he would also find a renewed identity with nature, back in the garden in which God had originally put him, the garden being the symbol of nature made over in the image of conscious man" (1968: 9). Mistakenly, however, he identifies this mode with pastoral rather than with romance, an erroneous identification that Bloom repeats. Quest-romance, of course, exhibits pastoral along with epic or conquest motifs, the result being that shifts from one dimension serve as another form of "registering apparatus" for transformations in allegorical meaning and in the world/time continuum. Yet such transitions generally become significant not *in* their deviation from pastoral stasis but *when* they alter, in this capacity serving as markers of the stages traversed by the allegorical progress (Fletcher 1964: 182–85).

In this sifting of definitions a general pattern emerges: the role of quest-romance becomes problematic when it is viewed from the standpoint of high romance precisely because it is commonly assumed that the quest motif itself must form the basis of the alterations in romance convention beginning in the mid- to late eighteenth century, and that these alterations are generally associated with a constriction or collapse of the temporal "depth" and allegorical significance of the quest's progress. Primarily, certain terms and implications of its pattern thus undergo an obligatory reversal, condensation, and/or removal when the quest is integrated into high romance; and secondarily, these exclusions tend to generate related oppositions, such as that between its epic and pastoral modes. Finally, when these and other levels of the primary quest are neither adequately differentiated nor correlated, not only the levels but also the transformative capacity associated with them are severely circumscribed, if not altogether removed. As a result, since all redemptive impetus cannot be easily severed from the mode, this impetus is conceived as limited to the exclusive domain either of "nature" or "culture." Yet, as the persistence of the full range of quest-romance motifs in the proto-Romantic novels of mid-century reveals, the quest's primary concern *remains* the integration of individual and social redemption, while its secondary one is that of the reflexive recuperation of nature and culture.

Before turning to our example, Richardson's *Pamela*, in more detail, it will be useful to substantiate the details of the foregoing critique by comparing Frye's statements about quest-romance in the framework of his high-romance scholarship, *A Study of English Romanticism* (1968), with his earlier assessment in the *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957). In the latter he clearly specifies the simultaneously individual and social, natural and cultural, allegory of integration implicit in the quest, for which Jameson provides a convenient summary:

Romance, therefore, does not involve the substitution of some more ideal realm for ordinary reality (as in mystical experience, or as might be sug-

gested by the partial segments of the romance paradigm to be found in the idyll or the pastoral), but rather a process of *transforming* ordinary reality: "the quest-romance is the search of the libido or desiring self for a fulfillment that will deliver it from the anxieties of reality *but will still contain* that reality." (1981: 110)

The corollary of this broader definition of quest-romance is that magic or enchantment, far from becoming an agent of escape or withdrawal, as Bloom and later even Jameson imply,¹ in fact functions as a neutral translational device that provides the means for transition between higher and lower realms, figuring the abrupt, often arbitrary rises and falls from earthly or "normal" existence, which occupies the middle plane of the system. Such a system also requires three operative elements, as Jameson notes:

Romance is thus at once staged as the struggle between higher and lower realms, between heaven and hell, or the angelic and the demonic or diabolic. . . . This description rewrites the form in terms of three distinct operative elements: its "world," its twin protagonists (hero and villain), and its semic organization (high and low, angelic and demonic, white and black magic, winter and spring), each of which demands comment. (Ibid.: 111)

Jameson's further comment concerns the exclusions performed by the ethical categories of Frye's *Anatomy*, a problem not immediately relevant here. More to the point is his description of the "three distinct operative elements" in romance, elements which can be shown to parallel the three levels described above: its plot functions, its allegory, and its spatiotemporal "world." What is remarkable about these parallel categories is that, while all the major critics of Romanticism allude to some of them, none employs all three systematically, and most exclude at least one. To see how these omissions variously affect the critics surveyed so far will require a final comparison of terms, one that is warranted by the fact that, although none uses precisely identical categories, the range of effects each takes in is generally symmetrical. Thus, for instance, what Jameson calls the "world" of romance and what de Man describes as its "temporality" largely overlap, a fact demonstrated by Jameson's explicit definition of "world" as that which "in the technical sense [is] . . . the transcendental horizon of our ex-

1. Bloom specifies the role of magical functions less clearly than does Jameson, but its result ("solipsism") seems quite similar to the Romantic retreat Jameson associates with magic (1981: 134). According to Bloom, "The sanction of redemption . . . [was] the gift of some external spiritual authority, sometimes magical. . . . The high cost of Romantic internalization [of quest-romance redemption], that is, of finding paradises within a renovated man, shows itself in the area of self-consciousness. The quest is to widen consciousness as well as to intensify it, but the quest is shadowed by a spirit that tends to narrow consciousness to an acute preoccupation with self. This shadow of imagination is solipsism" (1970: 5-6).

perience [that] becomes visible in an inner-worldly sense" (ibid.: 112). Similarly, since Jameson's "opposed protagonists" construct the actantial poles around which the quest narrative revolves, these protagonists are clearly allied to Propp's quest-romance functions, his seekers and antagonists, senders and receivers. And finally, since what Jameson terms "semic organization" translates these narrative functions into categories of good and evil, it acts as the obvious analogue of the quest's allegorical level.

Beginning with Frye, and in particular with the Jamesonian critique of Frye, which takes his ethical categories as central to the *Anatomy*, we find that here the "semic organization" or allegory is, predictably, central to the analysis of romance. Equally, we find that Jameson's attention to plots and actants, or quest-functions, while constructed in different terms, is nearly as detailed as Propp's. Thus if, as proposed above, Frye in common with other standard interpreters of quest-romance systematically condenses and ultimately excludes one of its levels, this omission should appear in the category of "worldness," where the space of the quest unfolds in its time. In Paul de Man's examination of the "rhetoric of temporality" (1983), this process becomes fully meaningful only in its linearity, its particularity, and *not* exclusively in its circular recurrence, its eternity. Hence, since Frye's anatomy of time is seasonal and cyclical (spring/summer/fall/winter) rather than progressive or linear, and since Jameson, as quoted above, associates seasonal order with semic rather than temporal organization, the *Anatomy* does generally appear to circumscribe the temporality of its modes, just as it specifically confines romance to the temporal climate of summer. From the perspective of de Man's analysis, then, Frye's system reveals a rhetoric not of temporality but of eternal return (Frye 1957, 1963).²

Turning to Bloom's more condensed "internalization of quest-romance," we find that temporality has been incorporated in this system, but only at the expense of the quest. Essentially, Bloom's Freudian model requires him to find actants essentially without action. The higher and lower realms of allegory are present, but in the process of being internalized they are in constant danger of falling into solipsism and nihilism (1970: 5–6). Since the social or mid-level is no longer functional, the oppositions of its "semic organization" consistently threaten to cancel one another out. Bloom's system is full of heroes (the creative imagination, the Muse, Prometheus, identity-with) and villains (the Superego, Selfhood, Urizen, identity-as), but the limi-

2. Alistair Fowler (1974: 87–89) reviews his charges against Frye's "simplified synchronic analysis of genres" and "cyclical theory," as well as Angus Fletcher's attempted defense in "Utopian History and the *Anatomy*" (Krieger 1966: 34 ff.).

tations placed upon them as operative elements mean that his senders and receivers are nearly interchangeable. Consequently, if the domain of their temporality is not as fully cyclical as Frye's, the Freudian basis of its allegory makes it nearly as atemporal: the progress of the soul is not only limited but virtually invisible, internalized and purely symbolic, lacking any social analogue and *almost* any time. When the quest becomes dubious and its goal ambiguous, its scene, including its world or temporality, necessarily suffers a reduction in transformational scope and significance.

These general consequences are specifically demonstrated by Bloom's discussion of Romantic love, a love with only a self-made Bride and no Beatrice. Thus he admits,

Nothing in Romantic poetry is more difficult to comprehend, for me anyway, than the process that begins after each poet's renunciation of Prometheus; for the incarnation of the Real Man, the Imagination, is not like psychic maturation in poets before the Romantics. The love that transcends the Selfhood has its analogues in the renunciatory love of many traditions, including some within Christianity, but the creative Eros of the Romantics is not renunciatory though it is self-transcendent. It is, to use Shelley's phrasing, a total going-out from our own natures, total because the force moving out is not only the Promethean libido, but rather a fusion between the libido and the active or imaginative element in the ego; or, simply, *desire wholly taken up into the imagination*. (1970: 13 [*italics added*])

Although the severely circumscribed quest described here is neither vulgarly nor even rigorously Freudian, Bloom concludes that it finds its "useful contrary in the melancholy wisdom of Freud on natural love" (*ibid.*: 14), an affiliation which suggests that his depiction of the "high-romance" quest is constructed largely as an alternate, positive valorization of Freud's pessimistic "family romance." Yet when the semic structure of the quest is organized along the lines of Freudian allegory and its self-transcendence depicted as purely internal, mysterious, and *non*-renunciatory, it loses along with its goals of social and otherworldly redemption even the *illusion* of its agents' autonomy, traditionally a vital element of the form.³ Allegory remains but with a greatly compressed, largely binary interchange of agents, senders, donors, helpers, and receivers, all of whom are condemned to a cycle of mystification and ironic demystification, an eternal return of *action*. Temporality exists in the form of Freud's Thanatos, but its implication with Eros compromises the quest.

3. As Fletcher emphasizes, the traditional romance hero is neither completely autonomous nor powerless: "We have said, following Frye, that the heroes of myth are truly gods, those of allegory (Frye's 'romance') are either daemons or daemonically empowered humans. The former have all power, the latter only a conditional power, as they frequently have only a 'conditional immortality'" (1964: 356).

Propp (1958 [1928]) poses a more difficult set of deviations to analyze since his work has not been directly confronted so far, except in the appropriation, above, of his eight “spheres of action” to describe Bloom’s reduction of these spheres. Further, although Jameson as well as numerous other critics have, of course, found gaps in Propp’s methodology, considered from the standpoint of the quest these omissions tend to appear outside the historical category of the subject where Jameson situates them, just as earlier his critique discovered Frye’s exclusions outside the temporal dimension in which their most relevant deviation now appears. The question of whether or not these disparate results represent an inadequacy in Jameson’s attempted deconstruction of the two systems, Frye’s semantic system and Propp’s syntactic one, lies outside the scope of the present paper, although one peculiarity of his project remains worth noting. As Jameson states his methodological assumptions, “Every universalizing approach, whether the phenomenological or the semiotic, will from the dialectical point of view be found to conceal its own contradictions, and repress its own historicity by strategically framing its perspective so as to omit the negative, absence, contradiction, repression, the *non-dit*, or the *impensé*” (1981: 109–10). Considering this framework, what is remarkable about his procedure is that it concentrates its dialectic or deconstructive efforts not on the *non-dit* of Frye and Propp but on the *dit*, that is, on Frye’s ethical categories and Propp’s category of the subject. These are not formal/dialectical so much as historical/material omissions. With this in mind, it then appears that while Propp’s category of the subject *does* seem to be an ahistorical one, it is certainly no more ahistorical than Frye’s, and in *neither* case are its contents suppressed. Frye’s category of the subject, like Propp’s, is abundantly stocked with a large supply of faceless, eternal heroes and villains, such that his *Anatomy of Criticism* can be construed as the Anglo-American, positivist-taxonomical parallel to Propp’s structural narratology. Yet since the similarities of their systems by no means cancel out the differences, Propp’s deviations from Frye (as Jameson and others suggest) continue to be as instructive (Martin 1986: 19–26) as those proper to his own model.

Like most structuralists, and in contrast to Frye’s taxonomical procedure, Propp’s sense of temporality is fully linear: both the source of the quest and its goal are charted in detail. At least within the tales he examines (if not, as Jameson notes, within the larger sociohistorical context), Propp’s focus is not, as in Frye’s case, upon motifs, myths, and recurring thematic patterns, but upon linear, essentially temporal order. According to Robert Scholes’s convenient synopsis, Propp’s basic findings are these:

1. Functions of characters serve as stable, constant elements in a tale, independent of how and by whom they are fulfilled. They constitute the fundamental components of a tale.
2. The number of functions known to the fairy-tale is limited.
3. The sequence of functions is always identical.
4. All fairy tales are of one type in regard to their structures.

(Morphology of the Folktale: 21–23, in Scholes 1974: 63)

The third proposition is crucial to the present consideration: “The sequence of functions is always identical.” If Propp’s system is atemporal, it is only relatively so, developing as it does parallel rather than circular plot sequences. The nature and number of narratological “functions . . . is limited,” but Propp’s cataloguing of all thirty-one more than adequately accounts for the progress of the seeker and his opponents. What then about the third operative element, that of “semic organization” or allegory? This seems to be the level at which Propp’s deviation appears so that, like virtually every other critic either of the quest-romance core of Romanticism, of high romance, or of both, Propp, by using a structuralist, essentially syntactic methodology, suppresses a major formal element, in this case the semantic “struggle between lower and higher realms” (Jameson 1981: 111). Nor should his omission of semic or allegorical organization prove surprising, given the evolution of Propp’s system from Saussurean linguistics, with its emphasis on formal, rather than semantic or “meaningful,” difference; for Frye’s multiplanar universe, Propp substitutes a linear, unidimensional one.

This final sifting of omissions now allows us to determine definitively that *each* of its three levels (and their operative elements) is necessary to one or more formulations of the quest-romance pattern, even if suppressed or neglected in another. This then allows us to pose two final questions: Assuming that all three levels should be integrated in an adequate definition of the form, how do they combine or recombine in high romance, and what, if any, alteration do they undergo in this generic adaptation? If any are altered, which ones and why? Since, due to their mutually exclusive theories, none of the scholars examined so far agrees or can agree on the answers to these questions, a departure not only from their omissions but from their backward-looking perspective on Romanticism is necessary. Here, more or less following the lead of Paul de Man (1983), the pre-Romantic structure observable in Richardson’s *Pamela* will serve as a test case whereby to establish concretely the nature and extent of the genre’s formal transformations, that is, what becomes of the cosmological levels and traditional functions associated with the quest: its plot elements and

agents, its “semic organization” or allegorical meaning, and its world or temporality.

The choice of *Pamela* as a test case of proto-Romantic sensibility, as a paradigm or cornerstone for later evolutions of the genre, can be defended on several grounds. As Richard Harvey Brown points out, the novel and Romanticism grew up together: “With romanticism the novel received its major ideological underpinnings” (1985: 579). Further, quest patterns, from *Faust* to *The Prelude* and “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner,” remain equally common both in verse and narrative during the Romantic period. Last but not least, written close to the mid-point of the eighteenth century, *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* shares with Rousseau’s *Julie, ou La Nouvelle Héloïse* (the latter, for de Man, a paradigmatic pre-Romantic composition) a similar sense of rupture. In its time it created a sensation, perhaps equaled only by Richardson’s later novel, *Clarissa*, of which *La Nouvelle Héloïse* is a direct descendant. Sensational, controversial, and pointedly unconventional, *Pamela* posed a revolution within the tradition of the eighteenth-century sentimental novel in terms both of its formal structure and its ethical standards. Of special interest from the present point of view, *Pamela* is structured along the lines of quest-romance. If we then test the novel for its potential inclusion or exclusion of all three operative elements, we arrive at two conclusions: (1) *Pamela* is structured by, in fact demands, the deployment of all aspects of the quest; and (2) patterns of deviation within, *not* between, its three levels are the source of its revolutionary force. Here we find that Richardson, far from reversing or condensing any levels or elements, alters and generally transforms their social/ethical affiliations; in this, to adopt the Jamesonian standpoint on genre, “something like a history of the form may be said already to have begun” (1981: 119).

To begin, then, not by applying Jameson’s first operative element, that of world or temporality—always the most difficult to assess, not only because it is in some ways the most subjective and least “factual” of the elements, but also, more importantly, because it tends to evolve out of the other two—but at the most literal level, the narrative space of *Pamela*’s plot,⁴ involves a tedious, if necessary, graphing of functions. Yet *Pamela*’s conformity to the pattern of Propp’s quest model, as well

4. See Gabriel Zoran (1984: 309–35); Zoran’s discussion of the “three levels of structuring” of space in narrative, although differing from my own, shares many of its formal distinctions. His first or topographical level, if static, since it serves to map textual space (ibid.: 315–16) in terms of plot, must thus supply the stable basis for the journey of the quest’s actants. The remaining two levels of his system similarly parallel mine.

as some transformations within it, can be conclusively demonstrated and analyzed only in reference to all thirty-one of its characteristic actions. These are listed by Scholes as follows:

1. One of the members of a family absents himself from home.
2. An interdiction is addressed to the hero.
3. The interdiction is violated.
4. The villain makes an attempt at reconnaissance.
5. The villain receives information about his victim.
6. The villain attempts to deceive his victim in order to take possession of him or of his belongings.
7. The victim submits to deception and thereby unwittingly helps his enemy.
8. The villain causes harm or injury to a member of a family.
- 8a. One member of a family either lacks something or desires to have something.
9. Misfortune or lack is made known: the hero is approached with a request or a command; he is allowed to go or is dispatched.
10. The seeker agrees to or decides upon counteraction.
11. The hero leaves home.
12. The hero is tested, interrogated, attacked, etc., which prepares the way for his receiving either a magical agent or helper.
13. The hero reacts to the actions of the future donor.
14. The hero acquires the use of a magical agent.
15. The hero is transferred, delivered, or led to the whereabouts of an object of search.
16. The hero and the villain join in direct combat.
17. The hero is branded.
18. The villain is defeated.
19. The initial misfortune or lack is liquidated.
20. The hero returns.
21. The hero is pursued.
22. Rescue of the hero from pursuit.
23. The hero, unrecognized, arrives home or in another country.
24. A false hero presents unfounded claims.
25. A difficult task is proposed to the hero.
26. The task is resolved.
27. The hero is recognized.
28. The false hero or villain is exposed.
29. The false hero is given a new appearance.
30. The villain is punished.
31. The hero is married and ascends the throne.

(Scholes 1974: 63–64)

Let us now examine how and where *Pamela* follows these functions:

1. Pamela absents herself from home.
2. Upon the death of Mrs. B., Pamela's parents forbid her to spend time alone with Mr. B., commanding her to remain chaste.
3. B. forces Pamela to violate part of the interdiction (spending time alone with him); she unwillingly receives his advances but (magically) remains chaste.
4. The villain (B.) tries many new devices, and then attempts to rape Pamela.
5. The villain purloins Pamela's letters, obtaining new information *both* harmful *and* helpful to her, that is, proof of the sincerity of her morals, as opposed to the artfulness he thought they concealed.
- ** [First minor deviation occurs here: the villain receives information about his victim which exonerates her, and which he is able to use against her only at his own peril.]
6. The villain deceives Pamela into thinking that she is returning home.
7. Pamela submits to this deception, willingly complying with his plans, which she wrongly interprets as sincere.
- 8a. Pamela's parents depend on her financial help *and* desire her virtue; they are poor-but-honest.
9. Her family's misfortune or lack is brought home to Pamela in her plight; she accepts lack rather than lose her virtue.
- ** [First major deviation occurs here: unlike the situation common to most earlier quest-romance patterns, *lack is deflected from the hero to the villain and, by extension, to society*: the servants, then later B.'s education, and societal double standards. This deflection of responsibility clearly follows from the reflexive, ambiguous, and now morally charged implications of the act of gaining information (power) in the first minor deviation, above.]
10. Pamela decides on various plans of counteraction: enlisting the sympathies of the other servants, writing urgent letters to her parents, arranging alternative means of transportation, and adopting country dress to signify both her expected return and her acceptance of lack.
11. Pamela leaves her "second home," B.'s London house, to find herself effectively kidnapped and removed to B.'s country house.
12. Pamela is tested, interrogated, and attacked all through the latter part of the novel, where her sincerity is usually doubted. The first incident occurs at the home of a farmer who clearly represents the older, quietistic peasant values, with their im-

PLICIT acceptance of a double standard. This pattern is repeated with much greater emphasis by the characters of Colbrand and Mrs. Jewkes.

13. Pamela reacts to the actions of Williams (the donor), who with her prepares a secret receptacle of writing, a stone in the garden, near a sunflower.
 14. Pamela in this way receives a magical agent, her *writing*, which now becomes untransmissible except in secret; she discovers its true power only in isolation, when there are no receivers and even the donor is expelled.
 15. Pamela receives a letter at long last, an “object of search” delivered by gypsies.
 16. Pamela and B. engage in direct combat: his most carefully planned attempted rape, aided by Mrs. Jewkes.
 17. Pamela is wrongfully branded by most of the neighborhood, who believe her to be a kept woman, as well as by B. and Mrs. Jewkes, who accuse her of ingratitude, stubbornness, and a “male” adherence to honor. (She is really meek and mild, as the author takes pains to demonstrate later, when he depicts her composing a poem to “humility.”)
 18. The villain is defeated; B. consents to Pamela’s return to her family.
 19. One lack—of liberty to maintain her virtue—is reversed, and another is eased; money, gifts are to return home with Pamela.
 20. Pamela begins to return home to her family, and reaches an inn.
 21. She is pursued by B.’s servants with news of his illness.
 22. Pamela rescues the *villain* by returning to him voluntarily, thus beginning his transformation.
- ** [Second major deviation: villain and bride/bridegroom are equated, hence the location of “home” is also redefined.]
23. Pamela returns to B.’s London house, not unrecognized but under a new name and status in which she is barely recognized by others.
 24. A false hero presents claims: Sally Godfrey, the mother of B.’s illegitimate child, must be recognized through the person of their child.
 25. Pamela has a difficult task: to accept the illegitimate child with neither resentment nor apprehensions about B.’s loyalty.
 26. Pamela accepts the task.
 27. Now Pamela truly becomes B.’s wife in two fundamental senses: (1) she is socially accepted as his wife, and (2) her virtue graces that status. She has passed all tests, risen above her low social origins and womanly jealousy, and demonstrated Christian

- humility. B. grants her all the privileges of a woman of his own class.
28. The false hero is exposed: B. admits he never loved Sally Godfrey.
 29. It is revealed that the false hero is married and living in Jamaica.
 30. B. is punished/rewarded: punished for his treatment of Sally Godfrey through his exposure by his sister, and by a marriage far beneath him in rank; but he is rewarded by a marriage far above him in virtue in the person of Pamela.
- ** [Third major deviation follows the second: punishment/reward distinction is blurred like villain/bridegroom.]
31. Pamela is now fully married and accepted into society with the rank of her husband; she “ascends the throne” by becoming the beneficiary of his Will and the designated bearer of his child.
- ** [Fourth major deviation: the marriage segment of the quest takes place in three stages.]

According to this chart, major deviations occur in *Pamela*, not in its fundamental deployment of the quest pattern, but in several important role changes and in the pattern of displaced or deferred marriage,⁵ which balances the parallel pattern of displaced or deferred rape. These deviations, although to some extent separate, revolve around a central substitution in which the sexual identities of hero, villain, and bride are inverted and recombined. Not that a feminine “hero” is itself anomalous, still less so, a male villain. Previously, however, female heroes have acted chiefly as “projected mirrors of masculine self-differentiation” (Greenblatt 1986: 47), a role that Pamela rather pointedly denies and ultimately demystifies. Similarly, the “bride” role is traditionally closed off to villains of either sex, an exclusion which Mr. B.’s (semi)transformation subverts. Although Pamela’s character retains much of the passivity associated with the role of princess or bride, at the same time she presents herself in terms of a male ethical/linguistic discourse. Serving to mark the intersection of opposed narratives as well as allegorical axes, that of inverse actant

5. A major advantage of interpreting the novel in terms of the quest-romance paradigm is that it resolves a persistent problem in *Pamela* criticism: Why does so much of the novel take place after the resolution of its major conflict has been achieved? The very positing of this question indicates that the nature and relevance of the quest in the novel have been largely ignored; positing its centrality, on the other hand, clarifies not only the novel’s structure, but also the structural necessity of the fully developed quest pattern for Romanticism as a whole. For an illuminating treatment of a parallel exclusion of allegorical elements from critical examinations of the Romantic novel, see de Man (1983: 187–228).

or object (passive, enchanted, repetitive or obsessional, and fetishized) and of its *non-inverse* active hero or subject (male, dominant, rational/ethical—but these reappropriated as the specific domain of the female), Pamela's inversions operate as a kind of switchboard, transferring female terms into male and male into female, the core deviations that Richardson's novel achieves.

In regard to the romantic genre, the consequences of the allegorical revisions of this fully formed quest pattern are far-reaching. With reference to the paradigms proposed by Bloom and Frye, it should now be clear that Pamela, far from seeking either an exclusively "redeemed nature" (Frye) or a "redeemed selfhood" (Bloom), instead manages, in conformity with the pattern of earlier quest-romance, "magically" to redeem both self and society, and thus to attain a "fulfillment that will deliver [her] from the anxieties of reality *but will still contain that reality*" (Jameson 1981: 110). She in fact becomes a model for women in a regenerated Protestant/bourgeois society, that is, the very embodiment of "virtue rewarded." Nor is Pamela's achievement by any means restricted in its worldness. The reward she wins through her virtue is temporal as well as eternal, gaining her financial security, the reparation of her original lack, as well as exalted social and moral status—the full authorial stamp of "true virtue." Yet her "eternal" progress, while retaining semic affiliations with the highest realm, is specifically set apart from any ultimate, if projected escape from temporality. Instead, she finds her identity within time. Reflecting on the possible death of her young husband, Pamela writes,

Oh! what a poor thing is human life in its best enjoyments! Subjected to *imaginary* evils, when it has no *real* ones to disturb it; and that can be made as effectually unhappy by our apprehensions of even remote contingencies as if we were struggling with the pangs of a present distress! This, duly reflected upon, methinks, should convince every one, that this world is not a place for the immortal mind to be confined to; and that there must be an hereafter, in which the *whole* soul shall be satisfied. (Richardson 1980 [1740]: 513)

These lines reflect the temporal as well as "semic organization" of Pamela's universe, the three-fold registers that mark the distance between its extremes of bourgeois marital heaven and aristocratic libertine hell, within which is located the present social "purgatory" of everyday earthly existence. However, its final horizon, although pointing *toward*, is not identified *with* eternity, which becomes at most a vanishing point in space; in fact, the warrant and precondition of her postponed redemption is Pamela's acceptance of temporality.

The revolutionary aspect of a pre-Romantic work like *Pamela* thus consists, not in the exclusion of any of the quest-romance's operative elements or levels, but in a reconfiguration of their contents.

Less empowered and more “female” than the traditional hero, Pamela accepts her quest more from a sense of duty than from conscious self-determination; as a result, her objective tends to waver in focus, achieving positive rather than negative definition only as the novel draws to a close. Avoidance of the interdiction (fornication) at first seems to be her goal, but this interdiction is later transformed into a “redeemed” goal: illicit sexuality is translated into licit marital intercourse, figured in the legitimate birth Pamela can now expect. Similarly, since the villain, Mr. B., is transformed into the co-hero or prince of the romance, gender even more than goal identification becomes blurred for the seeker(s); his thwarted attempt at objectifying Pamela paradoxically authenticates both as subjects. At the level of good and evil, ethical values, especially sexual mores but also class standards, are radically altered so that the letter of the law ironically gives new life to the spirit. Sexual relations have become only rigidly negotiable, with chastity interpreted as a universal code applicable to both genders and to every social degree; but the result is that formerly fixed class positions are conceived as universally “open” or fluid, now serving as elective vehicles of personal “grace.” Finally, *writing* substitutes for magic as the concrete device that performs the translation between higher and lower realms—here, quite literally, between higher and lower classes, the earthly analogues of higher and lower worlds, but also more allegorically of “higher” and “lower” moralities. Writing, like earlier forms of enchantment, directs the progress of the hero/heroine and reveals his/her inner virtue. Nor can we say that these aberrations are atypical in relation to later developments of Romanticism: the reluctant, passive, or enchanted hero can be widely found in Wordsworth (the classic text being the “Intimations of Immortality” ode), Coleridge (“The Rime of the Ancient Mariner,” “Christabel”), and Keats (“La Belle Dame sans Merci”). Heroes in general, whether male or female, begin to take on the “feminine” qualities of passivity, strongly internalized conscience or ethics, and sexual repression. Limited to neither Richardson’s Pamela nor Rousseau’s Julie, these transcontinental heroes range from Goethe’s Werther and Hoffman’s Anselmus (“The Golden Pot”) to Longfellow’s Evangeline and Shelley’s Frankenstein; all express a desire for and attempted acquisition of a regenerated form of human society, if at times only negatively. In the most extreme cases, like that of Frankenstein, the hero fails to save himself or his family, instead serving, Christlike, as an example not only to individuals like Walton but also to humanity as a whole. Not until Stendhal, when the period of high romance is nearly over, does social alienation become integral to the genre, or to what its evolution has made of it (Auerbach 1953 [1946]: 400–34).

Finally, to confirm this description of the persistence by all three

operative elements of quest-romance into the pre-Romantic, and thence into the high-romance genre, we can turn to Paul de Man's consideration of *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. Regarding the typical misinterpretation not only of the novel's dynamics but also of its romantic elements, he says:

Subsequent interpreters of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* have, in general, ignored the presence of the allegorical elements in shaping the diction of the novel, and it is only recently that one begins to realize how false the image of Rousseau as a primitivist or as a naturalist actually is. These false interpretations, very revealing in their own right, resist correction with remarkable tenacity, thereby indicating how deeply this correction conflicts with the widespread "*idées reçues*" on the nature and the origins of European romanticism.

For, if the dialectic between subject and object does not designate the main romantic experience, but only one passing moment in a dialectic, and a negative moment at that, since it represents a temptation that has to be overcome, then the entire historical and philosophical pattern changes a great deal. (De Man 1983: 204–5)

The temptation specifically to be overcome in the "dialectic between subject and object" concerns the primacy of the symbol, which, since Coleridge, has been generally accepted as the rhetorical basis of Romanticism's organic aspirations (Abrams 1958 [1953]: 124; Fletcher 1964: 15–19). Yet, instead of affirming the functional priority of the symbol, Romanticism remains true to its romance heritage, according to de Man, in asserting the necessity of allegory and, along with it, of temporality: "The example of Rousseau shows that we are dealing instead with the rediscovery of an allegorical tradition beyond the sensualistic analogism of the eighteenth century. This rediscovery, far from being spontaneous and easy, implies instead the discontinuity of a renunciation, even of a sacrifice" (1983: 205). This renunciation does not hinge upon the rejection of temporality, as Bloom in a Freudian sense and Frye in a Jungian sense suggest, but instead upon an acceptance of the subject's nature as Other with respect to eternity, as destined to realize itself in time. This demystification or "unveiling takes place in a subject that has sought refuge against the impact of time in a natural world to which, in truth, it bears no resemblance" (ibid.: 206). As a result, eternal longings are renounced in favor of social redemption, in favor of a salvation only in and through earthly time, a time to be reconciled with eternity only at the Last Day, when the subject's "*whole* soul shall be satisfied" (Richardson 1980 [1740]: 513).

This re-entry into time, if it originates in a moment of affirmation (marriage, the garden, the mountain top) which has eternal or otherworldly connotations, concludes with a descent into secular and linear time. Although both quest-romance and Romanticism are con-

cerned with a redeemed self *and* a redeemed society, the primary quest-romance typically progresses through social to individual redemption and concludes by signalling the return of Eden. Either the rose is won or the dragon is slain, but in both cases the temporal scene has been transformed along the route of a purgatorial highway leading from a city of humankind to the city of God. The pre-Romantic and high-romantic followers of the quest *reverse without internalizing* this progress. The Romantic hero completes his or her journey with a descent from metaphysical into social time: vision fails. A change has been effected, but it is clothed in earthly, social garments, the vestiges or mere "intimations" of immortality. Hence the price of mortality is immortality, *not* vice versa: "The secularized allegory contains the negative moment which in Rousseau is that of renunciation, in Wordsworth that of the loss of self in death or in error" (De Man 1983: 207).

In *Pamela*, the negative moment appears with the heroine's sacrifice of hymeneal bliss and entry into the expectation of her son's birth, which signals her re-entry into time and death. The persistence of the quest in this form suggests some final conclusions about the romance genre, conclusions which suggestively revise Jameson's dictum that, while "comedy is social in its ultimate perspective, . . . romance remains metaphysical" (1981: 142). We may now postulate instead that, while primary quest-romance begins at the level of the city, the social realm of good and evil, it concludes in the metaphysical or garden realm, beyond the categories of good and evil, in the imagined realm and the stasis of eternity. Secularized romance, on the other hand, the evolutionary form developed in the romantic genre, performs its initial quest-functions in the metaphysical, magical realm of enchanted good and evil—the realm of the eternal garden, castle, or, as in *Pamela*, mystified and remote country house—yet paradoxically, even ironically, returns by a renunciation, a shedding of its magic "writing" for the social realm of birth and death, a world circumscribed by a merely linear time and a largely secular confrontation of good and evil.

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