The "Persistence" of Ideological "Instability" in Samuel Richardson's *Pamela, Or Virtue Rewarded* and Henry Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*

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Abstract

This essay builds on M. McKeon's premises in *The Origins of the English Novel* (1987) in order to explore how Samuel Richardson's *Pamela, Or Virtue Rewarded* and Henry Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* struggle to diminish social and cultural instabilities that persisted in the fluctuating attitudes, namely; the aristocratic, progressive and conservative, towards the individual's honor in their respective social orders. The novels supposedly, according to McKeon, set to resolve these instabilities; however, the essay underscores the novels' inability to effectively achieve this objective. The essay demonstrates that both *Pamela* and *Joseph Andrews* instead internalized the ideological instability as they failed to uphold distinct reformative perspective at the expense of the other. The novels are usually read as culprits of progressive ideals; that is, they advocate for assessing individuals' worth according to their actions rather than their lineage, which aristocracy historically instilled as a criterion. However, the essay illustrates how the novels simultaneously exhibit the persistence of that conservative model, recycling of aristocracy, which defines people's honor based on their nurture.

Keywords: aristocracy, conservatism, ideological instability, *Joseph Andrews*, *Pamela*, progressive, social status

1. Introduction

Reading Samuel Richardson's *Pamela, Or Virtue Rewarded* (1740) and Henry Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* (1742) through the lens of McKeon's argument on the "origins of the novel" encourages readers to embrace a "dialectic" standpoint. Rather than adhering to prevailing theories linking the novel's emergence to "realism" and the "middle class," McKeon (1978) posits that the novel emerged as a reaction to the significant instability observed in both literary and social classifications (p. 20). The ideological controversies (instability and inconsistency), manifested in the real world as well as the two novels, have challenged the readers of *Pamela* and *Joseph Andrews*, for instances, to determine their distinct ideological and social standpoints.

According to McKeon, literary genres are inherently ideologically oriented, designed to fulfill specific social functions and address a set of questions. He argues that "[The novel] attains its modern institutional stability and coherence at this time because of its unrivaled power both to formulate, and to explain, a set of problems... [which] may be understood as problems of categorical instability, which the novel, originating to resolve, also inevitably reflects" (1987, p. 20). Building on these insights, this essay aims to explore how Richardson's and Fielding's novels align with McKeon's observations. The essay intends to demonstrate that, while the novels struggle to diminish social and cultural instabilities reflected in the fluctuating attitudes concerning the relationship between the external social order and the individuals' morality, they in the meanwhile could not evade the cultural crisis that persists in the outer world and instead internalize it in their fictional worlds.

This cultural crisis is reflected in, as McKeon elucidates, how different social doctrines, namely "aristocratic", "progressive", and "conservative" ideologies vie to establish themselves as the most suitable interpreters of the individual's honor and social status. Therefore, this essay seeks to outline Richardson's and Fielding's treatment of the interaction between these ideologies in their novels and, more importantly, how the novels attempt to draw distinctive lines between these discourses and supplant one by another. In essence, this essay argues that determining the novels' standpoint toward a particular ideology at the expense of others is challenging because instances in the text often contradict such claims. Readers may question the extent to which the novels succeed in achieving their social goals, primarily dismantling the aristocratic ideological social paradigms for the sake of a more progressive ones. The "persistence of the aristocratic ideology" arises from the observation that *Pamela* and *Joseph Andrews* do not effectively endorse alternative reformative social discourses and they perpetuate, consciously or unconsciously, aristocratic imperatives. In effect, this essay maintains that the novels attempt to rupture the essentialized concordance between virtue, status, wealth, and power to determine the individuals' value and replace it with a more revolutionary egalitarian progressive model that redefine individuals based on their deeds appears ineffective. Richardson's

Pamela endorses this perspective by asserting that virtue is not exclusive to the wealthy or noble and that virtue can be attributed to anyone, regardless of their class or noble lineage. However, the novels fail to fully eliminate aristocratic model and simultaneously put forward the adaptive model of birth, nurture and social status, which sustain social distances and hierarchies.

2. Theoritical Framework

The ideological instability that characterized fiction in the 17th and 18th centuries might be understood, in the arena of literary theory, by aligning it with Michel Bakhtin's premises in "Discourse in the Novel". These premises help readers understand what makes these the novels appear anti-aristocratic to some readers and progressive to others. Bakhtin argues that "for the writer of artistic prose . . . , the object reveals first of all precisely the socially heteroglot multiplicity of its names, definitions, and value judgments ... The prose writer confronts a multitude of routes, roads, and paths that have been laid down in the object by social consciousness" (1981, p. 278). Bakhtin's theory of "heteroglossia" emphasizes the diversity of the prose language or object that prose writers grapple with. He also asserts that this object is not isolated but intricately connected to its multifaceted social context. Bakhtin demonstrates that "along with the internal contradictions inside the object itself, the prose writer witnesses as well the unfolding of social heteroglossia surrounding the object... the dialectics of the object are interwoven with the social dialogue surrounding it" (1981, p.278). Bakhtin explains that both the prose object and the social context inherently encompass multiple and competing points of view. This line of argument paves the way for us to conceive both *Pamela* and *Joseph Andrews* as "double-voiced discourse[s] [that are] internally dialogized" (1981, p. 324) in which different social perspectives interact and intersect with each other without any unshakable validity of any of them.

Echoing Bakhtin's premises, McKeon highlights the fluctuations characterizing both the social and fictional realms during 17th and early 18th century England. These fluctuations cuased by the transformations in social mindsets regarding the definitions and representations of truth and virtue. As this transition persists in the social arena, the novel, too, fails to fully accommodate and represent it as complete and whole. Moreover, McKeon adds, "it was through the wholesale adoption of 'antiaristocratic' elements that the aristocracy persisted in early modern England, and the persistence of the category signifies the tenacious strength of status attitudes more than the ascendancy of a discretely definable social body" (1987, p. 167). McKeon underscores that social and ideological transformations meant to replace aristocracy have instead deepened its roots. The ebb and flow between these ideologies in the external world swept in the novel from its inception, internalizing this conflict and projecting it to the reading public. Consequently, it can be hypothesized that the nature of the novel as a genre, its emerging and developing circumstances, in addition to its social-based material make it impossible for Richardson and Fielding to completely espouse progressive or conservative discourses while eradicating the aristocratic discourse.

The aristocratic ideology, as McKeon explicates it, espouses the doctrine of birth equating to worth. According to aristocratic principles, one's "outward" social status is determined by "inward" honor or virtue, and factors such as ancestry, lineage, wealth, and political power necessarily reflect one's "possession or non-possession" of honor, subsequently shaping their social status. McKeon argues that "the notion of honor as a unity of outward circumstance and inward essence is the most fundamental justification of the hierarchical stratification of a society by status" (1987, p. 131). The aristocratic ideology is more concerned with establishing a social order based on moral divisions rather than material ones. Nevertheless, this model does not diminish the significance of class stratification based on material factors. McKeon points out that "during [the early modern social change] period... the traditional, qualitative criteria of honorific status were being definitely infiltrated by the quantitative criteria of socioeconomic class" (1987, p. 162). Therefore, material and moral aspects correspond to each other, with social class reinforcing the moral hierarchy of the aristocratic society.

In response to the social inequities perpetuated by the aristocratic ideology, the progressive discourse started to present itself as a more egalitarian alternative. McKeon highlights that the progressive ideology, as a tool for social stability, aimed to dismantle the essentialized affinity between virtue, status, wealth, and power (created by aristocracy (1987, p. 150). In this system, honor or virtue no longer solely determines one's social status. Indeed, progressivism redefined "honor" to signify the "goodness of character". This ideology paved the way for hope and social reformation, emphasizing the qualification of individuals based on their deeds rather than their birth or wealth.

However, the ascendancy of the progressive ideology has not entirely eradicated the aristocratic mindsets. Rather, the aristocratic ideology, being conscious of the threat of other ideologies, modified itself to sustain its power. McKeon then moves to delineate how the aristocratic social paradigm "undergo the more elaborate sort of 'theatricalization' that is likely to occur whenever social convention is raised to the level of self-conscious practice" (1987, p. 169). The newly adapted ideology, *conservatism*, owed much of its principles to aristocracy, especially the social stratification by status, but with modifications in the instruments to attain its ends. Conservative ideology upheld the belief that "whatever portion of virtue or merit is inborn or natural is not certainly genealogically linked, and that nurture is in any case crucial for its flourishing" (McKeon 1987, p. 169-70). Conservatism also differs from aristocracy in affirming that class stratification and material factors have a vivid connection to the moral order of society. The core of conservative ideology that determines an individual's social status is the financial conditions of their family, which in turn maximizes or minimizes their access to good education, travel, and companionship (McKeon 1987, p. 170). Because the aristocratics enjoy greater financial comfort than those in the lower class, they have more access to such opportunities, thereby influencing their social status. (McKeon 1987, p. 170). In a nutshell, the aristocratic formula of birth, blood, lineage, and worth is re-encapsulated in a more empirical and practically fathomable formula of birth, "nurture" and status.

3. Literature Review

Literary criticis have addressed *Pamela*'s and *Joseph Andrews*' engagements with the ideologies that were shaping public mindsets on defining the individual's social, cultural, economic and political worth. Flint (1989) maintained that *Pamela* endorsed social change by

basically celebrating Pamela's social class ascension to an upper class utilizing her virtue and marriage. In the meanwhile, the novel addressed the upper class, mocking its failure to adhere to its moral and social standards by admitting this radical change. Indeed, *Pamela*, Flint contends, is "more concerned with the enfranchised than with the disenfranchised" (1989, p. 496). This change engenders an anxiety that overwhelmed aristocracy on its ability to survive, which also results in regenerating or remolding aristocracy to "enervated aristocracy" (1989, p. 497) to sustain class stratification. Pamela contributed to the reproduction of this new form of aristocracy through her semi- or full assimilation to its ideological ideals. Her self-fragmentation is reflected in the fact that her moral system is fed by two sets of mindsets: "one teaching the value of bourgeois industry, 'honesty,' and 'virtue,' the other establishing her aristocratic achievements-grace, learning, honor, and philanthropy" (1989, p. 490). Apparently, Pamela aligns herself with aristocratic moral standards, considering her duty to the improvement of her family material conditions.

Emphasizing the disruptive role Pamela plays in Richardson's novel, which Flint also underpins, Alsoud (2023) underscores the progressive allegiances of *Pamela* and *Joseph Andrews* in the sense that the novels promote virtue and honor as catalysts for social mobility and advancement (p. 454). However, Alsoud ascertains the novels' failure to obliterate social status and class boundaries (p. 456). Basically, *Joseph Andrews* paradises Pamela in the sense that it applauds virtue as a merit, and meanwhile derides it among the disenfranchised. Moreover, *Joseph Andrews* replaces virtue in a more realistic and unfairy context that takes into consideration the people's religious and social moral codes (p. 456).

Nadeau (2020) endorses Pamela's quest for social change, her quest to diminish social hierarchies in particular. Pamela's charactization best exemplifies this quest, not by embodying a disruptive radical power that obliterates social, political and economic hierarchies and instead establishes alternative progressive model but by initiating mobility by engaging "sympathetic service" (p. 78). This model represented a moral philosophy that sought sympathy as a catalyst for individuals' endeavors to perform benevolent actions to their human fellows regardless of their class distinctions. Richardson's novel, Nadeau argues, redefines social relations by endorsing reciprocal sympathetic service between individuals from different ranks. She, for instance, attempts to universalize her suffering in order to acquaint the people from the gentry with her own "sad story" and make them identify with her on that level (p. 82). However, Pamela's attempt, Nadeau maintains, does not fully obliterate social boundaries and set her moralizing as a role model to her fellow characters (p. 80).

Reflecting on Fielding's engagement with the ideological debate over public moral refinement, Holm (2010) believes that *Joseph Andrews* does not condense its social and moral improvement project to categorical confinement for two reasons: first, moral and social doctrines fall short from adequately defining people's reality. Second, social categorization encumbers sociability and human communication (p. 269). However, vanity, Holm contends, blurs people's understanding and mars their moral judgments. *Joseph Andrews* thus dramatizes this reality as follows: "we exist in a paradoxical condition in which our best impulses to be moral, sociable, and good-natured are inverted by an inveterate, enslaving, and invisible predisposition to be the opposite" (p. 264). Therefore, Fielding does not seem to propagandize a specific moral doctrine at the expense of others, a thing *Pamela* does. Fielding criticizes, Holm argues, Richardson's novel as Pamela is "bowdlerized by an enthusiastic text, signaling broad concerns about the repression of particulars and their reconstitution through enthusiastic moral categories" (p. 274). Following that, *Joseph Andrews* acts as a reworking of *Pamela*'s idealism to a more realistic account of reality in which individuals are encouraged, not forced to, to define their realities.

In line with Holm's argument on the decentralizing project of *Joseph Andrews*, Dita (2018) writes that the novel involved in the debate that comprised different ideologies over what advancing the public morality, the notion of politeness in particular. In so doing, Dita observes that the novel apparently does not hold any specific ideological standpoint and refute another one. In other words, *Joseph Andrews* appears not to endorse *Pamela*'s idealism nor does it support a more enlightened model that proposes a rational vision of the society (p. 95).

On the other hand, Bartolomeo (2002) believes that Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* has an ideological commitment to execute. Bartolomeo underscores the novel's "conservative" allegiance that ratifies social and gender hierarchies. The novel presents Joseph as a feminized character; a poor and chaste young man, and a target of sexual seduction of aristocracy (p. 88). However, Joseph progresses to occupy higher social and economic spheres. He reclaims masculine traits and discovers his family with its social and economic entailments. In effect, this change is illustrated in how Joseph is not elevated by Lady Booby but instead elevates Fanny, a thing which unfolds him as a "master" at the end of the story (p. 97). Saoudi et al. (2020) supports this line of argument maintaining that characters belonging to different social classes in *Joseph Andrews* insists on distancing themselves from each other. They, especially those from the upper class, have serious concerns about social change that Pamela might endorse (p. 83).

These arguments align *Pamela* and *Joseph Andrews* with a certain moral social reforming stance. This entails that aristocratic, progressive or conservative ideologies act independently and autonomously in the contexts the novels initiate. Or, that the novels underpin one and fully liquidate another from the social arena. This essay, instead, shows how these social and cultural doctrines pervade the fictional worlds of Pamela and Joseph Andrews in ways that defy the readers' expectations by making it difficult to align each novel with a distinct social category or define its ideological allegiance. This sense of indeterminacy results from the incapability of these social doctrines to offer the antidote to the cultural crisis that impeded the actual material contexts of the novels in addition to their failure to accommodate for the constant social, cultural and political transformations that actually affected the life of the people.

4. *Pamela*

Regarding Richardson's *Pamela*, it is easy to see that Pamela's journey, from the moment of her suspicion of Mr. B.'s vicious and sexual intentions towards her and the preservation of her virtue and chastity until the master succumbs to her will and marries her, represents

Richardson's anti-aristocratic, progressive discourse. McKeon argues that "as the progressive critique forces the detachment of 'honor as virtue' from male aristocratic honor, it simultaneously encourages its relocation within not only commoners but women, who increasingly come to be viewed not just as the conduit but as the repository of an honor that has been alienated from a corrupt male aristocracy" (1987, p.158). Richardson's novel demonstrates that Pamela is inherently virtuous, though she is from a lower class, and that her virtue is a gist awarded by Mr. B., as aristocratic paradigms would suggest. Pamela's marriage to Mr. B., keeping in mind that she is not a "lady of birth" as Lady Davers puts it, is a key point that explains how Richardson elevates his progressive thoughts, to a certain extent, over the aristocratic ones. The idea of Pamela's ascendancy to a higher social class as a reward for her virtue underlines the novel's argument about the incompatibility of virtue, money, and social status. Pamela stresses that her "goodness" has nothing to do with her social status when she responds to Mr. B.'s attempts to lure her with money. She says, "I *wore* these jewels outwardly, because I had none inwardly? When I come to be proud and vain of gaudy apparel, and outside finery, then (which I hope will never be) may I rest my principal good in such a trifles, and despise for them the more solid ornaments of a good reputation and chastity inviolate" (Richardson 1980, p. 229).

Pamela supports a humanist and compromising allegiance based on the belief that people, whether poor or rich, "[are] all on a foot originally" (Richardson 1980, p. 294). From a religious perspective, Pamela sees that the aristocratic "despise" of the poor people is groundless, and she believes that advocating such a doctrine is a "vice" from which poor people who live in a "humble state" are exempt. In addition, Pamela questions the ideological vindications of aristocratic social stratification as follows:

> How do these great people know. . . that then the original stems of these poor families, though they have not kept such elaborate records of their good-for-nothingness,. . . were not as deeply rooted as theirs? And how can they be assured, that one or two hundred years hence, some of those now despised upstart families may not revel in their estates, while their descendants may be reduced to the other's dung-hills? (Richardson 1980, pp. 294-95)

Pamela's exposition of the fragility of the aristocratic ideological foundation resonates with McKeon's argument about the procedures, such as "patriline repair" that aristocracy undertakes to secure and sustain its power. Both McKeon and Richardson demonstrate the falsehood of the aristocratic instrumentality of belief and how the assumptions of blood purity and its inevitable continuity are mere "romances" that are informed by inadequate empirical methods.

An alternative reading of *Pamela* unravels certain lapses that circumscribe its attempts to dismantle the aristocratic ideology. In this context, McKeon observes that "Mr. B. and Pamela converge and collide from the opposite corners of industrious 'virtue' and corrupt, aristocratic 'honor.' ... The battle is over who has the power to define these categories and to enforce acceptance of their terms upon the other" (1987, p. 366). While the novel ultimately rewards Pamela's marriage to Mr. B., signifying the victory of the progressive terms, one can easily identify the fact that the aristocratic ideology "persists" in different ways, and its power compels Pamela to assimilate to it. Concurrently, Aldukhayil (2023) states that it is common for 17th and 18th century English novels to propagandize aristocratic patriarchy. To restrict spatial and temporal female mobility, Aldukhayil adds, women "were led to believe that their state of safety lies within their willingness to trade submission to a man for protection from all other men" (2023, p. 77). When women attain this freedom of movement, their virtue is in danger, and it can only be saved by marriage and hence life under a man's protection. This is evident in the way Pamela perceives herself in relation to Mr. B, with Mr. B. successfully maintaining power over her. In other words, it is aristocratic patriarchy that compels Pamela to live under a man's protection if she wishes to preserve her virtue.

Pamela, for some, might not represent a desired model of a strong woman who has unwavering determination to break free from patriarchal norms. Throughout the novel, she frequently asserts her powerlessness and inferiority, while endorsing Mr. B.'s superiority, mastery, and elevated nobility over her. In numerous instances, she insists on remaining self-restrained and indecisive. For instance, she never dismisses the idea that Mr. B. is a true nobleman, despite her awareness of his wicked intentions. Also, in situations where Mr. B. attempts to be sexually intimate with her, she deems it improper for his sake. She says, "You have lessened the distance that fortune has made between us, by demeaning yourself, to be so free to with a poor servant" (Richardson 1980, p. 55). Also, she consistently affirms Mr. B.'s "goodness" and "honour." When Mr. B. permits her to leave his house and return to her parents, she praises him and prays, "May God Almighty bless your honour for this instance of your goodness" (Richardson 1980, p. 280). In this instance, Pamela sanctions the aristocratic belief that Mr. B.'s goodness and generosity correspond to his honor. She believes that his goodness to let her go is inevitable since he is a man of honor. She appears to internalize this belief, as evident in her inner thoughts as she leaves Mr. B.'s house. She reflects: "I think I was loth to leave the house ... I felt something *so* strange, and my heart was *so* heavy... O contradictory, ungovernable heart... but yet, after all, this *last* goodness of his has touched me too sensibly: I almost wish I had not heard what he said; and yet, methinks I am glad I did; for I should rejoice to think the best of him, for *his own* sake" (Richardson 1980, p. 280).Theoretically speaking, Pamela's revealed inner feelings clearly demonstrate the extent to which she is assimilating Mr. B.'s "terms," indicating the influence of aristocracy on her.

One way to understand how aristocratic influence overwhelms Pamela is through her choice to marry Mr. B. She knows that this marriage is necessary to improve her living conditions. After the death of Lady B., Pamela becomes concerned about the possibility of returning to her parents' miserable life. Therefore, her aim is to stay at Mr. B.'s house and win him over. This is why she consistently tries to make him understand that his attempts to seduce her will corrupt both her and him. He will not marry her as a man of honor who insists on marrying a virtuous and chaste woman. Pamela apparently utilizes or commodifies her virtue to climb the social class ladder (Riaz et al. 2021, p. 136). Furthermore, she convinces herself that Mr. B. is a good man, and she must "think the best of him" to maintain her affection for him.

Pamela's decision to marry Mr. B. underscores her endorsement of aristocratic power, even though this marriage contradicts her intended progressive journey. When Mr. Williams, Mr. B.'s curate, proposes to her, she considers it better to marry him since he is a righteous person who will not "endanger [her] honesty," despite his status as "a man who begs from door to door, and has no home nor being" (Richardson 1980, p. 183). However, she declines this marriage, pretending that the right time to marry has not yet arrived. One possible interpretation of her refusal to marry Mr. Williams is related to his material and financial circumstances, emphasizing her determination to marry the wealthy Mr. B. at any cost.

Likewise, it is Mr. B. who designs the terms of their marriage as he wishes, establishing a "male gift transaction" (McKeon 1987, p. 156). In this arrangement, Pamela merely complies with Mr. B.'s requirements and principles. Before the marriage, Mr. B. insists on confirming Pamela's chastity and whether she has an affair with Mr. Williams. Ideologically, Mr. B.'s insistence on Pamela's chastity and its significance reflects the aristocratic "patrilineal culture that required chastity to ensure the direct transmission of inheritance" (McKeon 1987, p. 157). Mr. B. is not only concerned with ensuring Pamela's virtue and love for him, but he also cares about manifesting his power and control over her, as well as the extent to which she will submit herself to his personal preferences and the social imperatives of his social class. He lectures her on how she should manage her household affairs, such as how she should dress herself, the time she serves him his meals, and how to behave in the presence of visitors. Pamela starts enumerating how she will wholeheartedly be obedient to his requests, saying, "'This, sir,' said I, 'is a most obliging injunction. I will always take care to observe it'" (Richardson 1980, p. 393). Mr. B. is overjoyed by Pamela's reply to the extent that he encourages her to continue talking because he "love[s]" her talk" (1980, p.299) about how she will decently and submissively meet his norms.

This might help readers understand. Mr. B.'s attempts to justify his rejection of the idea of marriage, especially when marrying a woman of his same social status. He defends his attitude on the grounds that a marriage will not succeed in the sense that he will not have the chance to pursue his power over his wife. He declares that "'neither of them [the husband and wife from the same social status] having ever been subject to controul, or even to a contradiction, the man cannot bear it from one, whose new relation to him, and whose vow of obedience, he thinks, should oblige her to yield her will entirely to his'" (Richardson 1980, p. 463). It appears then that Mr. B. does not reject the idea of marriage itself but rather is afraid that he will lose his power in this marriage. Therefore, Mr. B. is fully conscious that Pamela is ready to submit to power and control due to her low social status, making her vulnerable to such control. McKeon believes that "when [Mr. B.] … is able to neglect the larger plot to concentrate on smaller episodes, he can be even more inventive with aristocratic themes of paternalistic care and forced marriage" (1987, p. 360).

5. *Joseph Andrews*

Henry Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* apparently shares with *Pamela* the same contempt for aristocratic social status and genealogy. This might be understood as part of the novel's attempt to define new "moral structures" for the public taste during the eighteenth century (Hochmanová 2018, p. 92). At the beginning of the novel, the narrator poses the following rhetorical question: "Would it not be hard that a man who hath no ancestors should therefore be rendered incapable of acquiring honour; when we see so many who have no virtues enjoying the honour of their forefather?" (Fielding 2001, p. 3). According to the novel, honor is a trait all people can attain, even if they do not have deeply rooted and approved family lineages. The novel also unravels the contradictory nature of aristocratic ideology by drawing examples from the real lives of people who value their virtue not because they are genuinely virtuous, but because they supposedly inherited it from their ancestors.

However, *Joseph Andrews* differs from *Pamela* in how it vindicates its standpoint. As one critic puts it, Richardson's narrative ends the conflict between class and social rank with "resolution-through-transmutation," but Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* ends with "resolution-through-restoration" (McCrea 2015, p. 141). According to this observation, Fielding's novel does not dismantle the paradigms of aristocratic ideology but simply re-appropriates them to encompass honor and social status. Fielding presents Joseph as a young man whose family lineage is unknown. He is the brother of Pamela Andrews, which means that he is of low social rank. However, Fielding gives the readers some hints that make them doubt that Joseph descends from a noble family or that he has received elevated nurture, a thing Fielding proves at the end of the novel with the discovery of his true parents. The novel tells the readers that Joseph, for example, receives a better education when he is ten years old. He also "[gives] proofs of strength and agility beyond his years, and constantly [rides] the most spirited and vicious horses to water, with an intrepidity which surprise[s] every one" (Fielding 2001, p. 4). Joseph also exhibits considerable knowledge of the Old Testament, which invokes Mr. Adam's astonishment "to find such instances of industry and application in a young man who had never met with the least encouragement" (Fielding 2001, p. 5). *Joseph Andrews* might appear progressive by endorsing the role of nurture in the moral and social advancement of individuals. However, McDowell (2005) contends that *Joseph Andrews* refutes the essential concordance between education and moral, socioeconomic elevation, especially of people from low orders. Education/literacy, continues McDowell, in *Joseph Andrews*, can actually be harmful to these people (2005, p. 169). Contrary to what readers observe in Pamela's self-apprenticeship and its beneficial material consequence, Fielding's novel does not fervently approve fixed models and, instead, keeps the door open to all possibilities; that education can either improve or ruin individuals. Parson Adams, McDowell remarks, heard a lot of individuals devastated by unregulated education; however, he steadily seeks good education for himself and Joseph Andrews.

In addition, Joseph's characterization, his physical appearance in particular, deepens the readers' suspicions about his possible noble lineage. McKeon (1987) argues that within aristocratic ideology arena, "external appearance itself seemed to substantiate the notion that honor is truly intrinsic, an inherited trait in the biological as well as the genealogical sense of the term, for the privilege also tended to be

physically more distinguished—taller, heavier, better developed—than the rest of society" (p. 132). As Fielding says, Joseph, at the age of twenty-one, is

> of the highest degree of middle stature; his limbs were put together with great elegance and no less strength; his legs and thighs were formed in the exactest proportion; his shoulders were broad and brawny, but yet his arms hung so easily, that he had all the symptoms of strength without the least clumsiness. . . his teeth white and even . . . Add to this the most perfect neatness in his dress, and an air which, to those who have not seen many noblemen, would give an idea of nobility. (Fielding, 2001, p. 16)

The detailed description of Joseph's physical profile reinforces his candidacy to fall within the aristocratic belief on the ontological transmission of nobility.

Mr. Adams' surprise about Joseph's elevated disposition, in addition to the readers' doubts, disappears when Fielding reveals his true parents at the end of the novel. Mr. Wilsons, Joseph's father, "descended from a good family, and was born a gentleman. [His] education was liberal, and at a public school, in which [he] proceeded so far as to become master of the Latin, and to be tolerably versed in the Greek language" (Fielding, 2001, p. 137). He also inherited a "moderate fortune" from his father when he was sixteen years old. At this point, one can say that Joseph was also born as a gentleman, a trait that he gets from his father, which is supported by Fielding's characterization of him as shown previously.

The previous discussion unfolds the controversy that arises when observing Fielding's narrative, which has some underpinnings of aristocratic ideology on the one hand and his declared anti-aristocratic standpoint and his aversion to "romance-writers" on the other hand (Fielding 2001, p. 126). In this regard, McKeon (1987) argues that Fielding's ideology is of a double critique: first of aristocratic ideology by progressives, then of progressive ideology by conservatives. McKeon puts it as follows: "To the progressive mentality, the greatness of the newly risen 'Great Man' is a matter of social stature that implies a corresponding moral elevation. But Fielding shows progressives are the unconscious and stealthy heirs of ancient aristocratic assumptions about the congruity of inner and outer states" (1987, p. 385).

Following this line of argument, the ideological enterprise of *Joseph Andrews* seems inconsistent and unresolved. First of all, the idea of rewarding Joseph at the end of the novel, within the scope of progressive ideology, goes in line with Richardson's rewarding of Pamela in the sense that Joseph, like Pamela, resists succumbing to Lady Booby's temptation and succeeds in preserving his virtue. On the other hand, Joseph's reward is accidental. To clarify more, Fielding does not show that Joseph's virtue is "industrious" like that of Pamela, which supports her in raising her social status. His reward is rather relocated or "restored" but not attained with diligence and determination as in the case of Pamela. This notion questions the effectiveness of Fielding's subversion of aristocratic ideology. In this arena, Fielding highlights Joseph's outstanding "nurture," because of his upper social rank, which fosters his nobility, which aligns with conservative principles. However, Fielding does not include much detail about how Joseph has been nurtured, which also forces Mr. Adams to express the same concern because he knows that Joseph receives no "encouragement[s]." Moreover, McKeon demonstrates that "the romance of discovered parentage mediates the threat of no correspondence by problematically isolating physical beauty and true nobility apart from inherited nobility, only to reconfirm the wholeness of honor at the end of the story" (1987, p. 133). Based on these observations, one can say that though Fielding attempts to demystify aristocratic romances by arguing that Joseph's honor is more instrumental, he romanticizes Joseph's reward as an inevitable outcome of the tenacity of the aristocracy.

6. Conclusion

To sum up, this essay is set to unfold *Pamela*'s and *Joseph Andrew*'s engagements with the social doctrines, namely "aristocratic", "progressive", and "conservative" that competed in the social arena as best exemplifiers of individual's honor and social status. In the course of this competition, the essay underscores, that none of these ideologies solely stood out as the dominating ideology in the social sphere. Rather, the essay, building on McKeon's argument, demonstrates how the selected novels crystalize unstable reigns and inconsistent transformations that characterized the growth and development of these social ideologies. This polemic had its roots in the material social order in which the novels were written. This world was hit by inconsistencies in the attitudes toward those ideologies, which *Pamela* and *Joseph Andrews* were, paradoxically, set to eliminate. Criticism on the novels tend to ascertain the novels' social reformative project in this sense, while alluding to minimal lapses and gaps that confuse the novels' success in presenting their ideological models. By closely examining these lapses and gaps, this essay outlines the social and cultural complexity the novels were caught in. This complexity is unavoidable in the external and internal contexts on the novels. The essay delineates how the novels do not supplant the progressive standpoint at the expense of aristocracy, as aristocracy had to recycle itself into a new adaptive model of conservatism. While this maneuver manifests the durability of aristocracy and progressivism attempt to manifest itself as alternative revolutionary social model, it also emboldens the multiplicity of worldviews that were indeed informing public mindsets toward the ideal form of society. According to Bakhtin and McKeon, this ideological dialogue cannot be fully resolved as those attitudes that feed it are always in constant flux.

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